# HERE. NOW

**POWERFUL TOOL** 

Actor Elnaaz Norouzi says social media has emerged as a great platform for people to help one another during Covid-19 LEISURE P2



# 3RD WAVE MAY HIT KIDS

Maharashtra preparing for a third wave of the pandemic which is expected to hit children

TWO STATES P7



### MISHAP IN MEXICO CITY KILLS 23

Mexico City metro crash sends a subway car plunging toward a busy boulevard, killing at least 23 people

INTERNATIONAL P10

OLUME 11, ISSUE 34 | www.orissapost.com

**BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY, MAY 5 | 2021** 

#### 12 PAGES | ₹4.00



How do I know he is a pollster? Well, only pollsters are covering their faces and maintaining social distance these days!

#### SHORT **TAKES** JEE-Mains put off

New Delhi: Engineering entrance exam JEE-Mains scheduled from May 24 to 28 has been postponed in view of the COVID-19 situation, according to the Ministry of **Education's National Testing** Agency. Earlier, the April edition of the exam was postponed following an exponential rise in Covid cases. "The JEE-Mains scheduled from May 24 to 28 is being postponed in view of the current pandemic situation.' the NTA said in an order.

#### Jagmohan dies at 93



Former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Jagmohan passed away after a brief spell of illness. He was 93.

**VARIATION** 

465.01

₹0.44

**1** ₹72

**1** ₹291

Jagmohan had started his career as a bureaucrat and was seen by many as a tough and efficient administrator. He had also served as the lieutenant governor of Delhi and Union minister. Several dignitaries, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Ram Nath Kovind, paid tributes to him. Jagmohan was appointed J&K Governor in 1984 and completed his five-year tenure.

**MARKET WATCH** 

SENSEX 48253.51

DOLLAR **74.62** 

SILVER **₹70,162** 

31.8°(

5.2mm

EURO

GOLD

**WEATHER** 

14496.50

₹47,391

CTK

**INDEX** 

**Courts censure Centre** for Covid mishandling

- YOU CAN BURY YOUR HEAD LIKE OSTRICH, BUT WE WON'T: DELHI HC
  - **HOW MANY MORE PEOPLE DO YOU WANT TO DIE?: KARNTAKA HC**

New Delhi, May 4: The Delhi High Court Tuesday told the Centre that it intends to see the compliance of its order in connection with the oxygen supply to the national capital. The Centre's failure to implement the order also irked the court and brought the government close to a contempt case.

A division bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli asked the government to explain why a contempt case should not be initiated against it. It directed the Centre to show-cause why no action should be taken against it for failure to comply with the Supreme Court and High Court orders to supply required oxygen to the Delhi government.

"Enough is enough. We will not take a 'no' regarding oxygen supply. There is no way that you will not supply 700 metric tonne oxygen immediately. We will not hear anything except compliance,' the judges said.

Making strong remarks, the bench asked the Centre: "Are you living in an ivory tower? Where are you living? The bench further added that because the Delhi government didn't raise the demand, people should be allowed to die. "Is this what it's come to? You want to quibble while people are losing lives?"

The Karnataka High Court Tuesday came down heavily on the state government in the wake of the acute short-



age of medical oxygen required in the treatment of COVID-19 patients. While holding a hearing on the COVID-19 crisis in the state, the Karnataka HC made strong remarks on the death of 24 people in Chamarajnagar due to lack of oxygen for over a horrific two hours in the early hours of Monday and called for a judicial inquiry into the incident by a retired Judge of the HC

The High Court also noted that the hospital had requested 300 cylinders of oxygen which was not supplied by the state government. Chief Justice Abhay Oka asked, "How many more people do you want to die? Keep aside the process, forget about the process tell us now when will you increase the quota (of oxygen)?" "Is it correct that hospital au-

thorities informed local authorities that they are in bad need of oxygen?

On shortage of oxygen in Delhi, the High Court told the Centre, "you can put your head in sand like ostrich, we

The top court's April 30 order shows it directed the Centre to provide 700 MT of oxygen and not just 490 MT, said the High Court. It further emphasised there is already a top court order and now, it will also say the Centre will have to supply 700 MT oxygen daily to Delhi right away by whatever means.

The court noted that it sees grim reality everyday of people, who are not able to secure oxygen or ICU beds in hospitals, which have reduced beds due to shortage of oxygen.

#### **COVID DOWNS IPL**

# League suspended after multiple cases

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 4: A barrage of COVID-19 cases forced the IPL's indefinite suspension Tuesday, a move that was welcomed by the franchises even as the league's jittery foreign recruits waited for BCCI's plan of action to ensure their return amid some strict travel restrictions.

The decision to postpone the league was announced after SunRisers Hyderabad batsman Wriddhiman Saha and Delhi Capitals spinner Amit Mishra joined the infected players' list, which already had Kolkata Knight Riders' Varun Chakravarthy and Sandeep Warrier.

Chennai Super Kings' bowling coach L Balaji was among the prominent non-playing staff to test positive. "The Indian Premier League Governing Council and BCCI in an emergency meeting has unanimously decided to postpone IPL 2021 season, with immediate effect," a statement from the IPL read after the development was confirmed by its chairman Brijesh Patel to PTI.

"The BCCI does not want to compromise on the safety of the players, support staff and the other participants involved in organising the IPL. This decision was taken keeping the safety, health and well-being of all the stakeholders in mind," it added. The IPL said BCCI will do all it can to ensure that players in the event get back to their homes safely.

IPL features cricketers from England (11), Australia (14), South Africa (11) and New Zealand (10) among other countries



1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

# Petrol up 18 paise, diesel 23 paise/ltr

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar. May 4: Petrol price Tuesday was increased by 15 paise per litre and diesel by 18 paise as state-owned fuel retailers started passing on the increase in international oil prices to consumers after an 18-day hiatus.

Petrol now costs ₹90.55 per litre in Delhi, up from ₹90.40, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. A litre of diesel comes for ₹80.91, as against ₹80.73 previously.

Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending on the local incidence of taxation (VAT). Oil companies, who have in recent months resorted to unexplained freeze in rate revision, had hit a pause button after cutting prices marginally on April 15. This coincided with electioneering hitting peak to elect new governments in five states including West Bengal.

No sooner had voting ended, oil companies indicated an impending increase in retail prices in view of firming trends in international oil markets. Despite the concerns about rising COVID-19 cases in India denting demand, crude oil prices in the international market have risen prima-

#### **CITY FUEL PRICE (MAY 4)** PETROL: ₹91.29 (**+0.18**)

rily on account of strong

DIESEL: ₹88.19 (**+0.23**)

US demand recovery and a weak dollar.

Prices have been on a continuous uptrend since April 27. Dubai crude oil price has risen by USD 2.91 per barrel. Crude oil prices in the international market may remain firm in the near future, exerting upward pressure. Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation are supposed to revise rates daily.

# 2 cops suspended HC nixes school merger plan for custodial death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Gopalpur, May 4: A day after a youth allegedly committed suicide on Golanthara police station in Ganjam district, the Berhampur SP Tuesday suspended an assistant sub-inspector of police and a constable on charge of negligence and dereliction of duty leading to the custodial death.

SP Pinak Mishra also transferred the Golanthara IIC Babuli Nayak to the district police headquarters till the completion of the probe. The suspended cops were identified as ASI Prakash Chandra Acharya and constable DP Jena. The two policemen were suspended following a probe report submitted by ASP Prabhat Routray Gopalpur IIC Bibekananda

Mahanta has been posted as the new in-charge at the Golanthara police station. The development comes after Southern Range DIGP Satvabrata Bhoi, Berhampur SP

in that mission and will continue our

work together at the foundation.

but we no longer believe we can

grow together as a couple in this next

Pinak Mishra and Sadar SDPO Jayant Mohapatra visited the police station for a preliminary probe into the incident.

A case has been registered at Baidyanathpur police station while a special team under the supervision of DSP Prakash Jena has been formed to conduct a thorough probe. Sources said the deceased,

Ganesh Dakua of Rangipur village under the Golanthara police limits, had unleashed a reign of terror in the village. The villagers informed the police following which the latter reached the spot and nabbed him. They brought him to the police station and interrogated him by keeping him in the reception room as per Covid protocol.

However, Ganesh tied his belt with a window railing of the room and committed suicide at around 8 pm. The sentry noticed and rushed him to MKCG Medical College and Hospital where he was pronounced brought dead.

said. The duo, two of the richest

persons in the world, asked for

"space and privacy" for their fam-

ily "as we begin to navigate this



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, May 4: The Orissa High Court Tuesday scrapped a notification issued by the state government for the merger of schools having less than 20 students with the nearby schools.

Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi pronounced the verdict while hearing a batch of petitions challenging the state government's decision on the merger of schools.

The High Court also directed the state government to take steps for the restoration of the schools which have already been merged with the

### **FRESH CHALLENGE**

- The S&ME department had identified around 14,000 schools having enrollment of 20 or less students for their merger with nearby schools
- Process initiated for closure of around 7,700 schools in the first phase of which nearly 900 schools have already been shut
- The HC directed the govt to take steps for the restoration of schools which have already been merged with nearby schools

nearby schools. The court also asked the state government to arrange proper infrastructure for the smooth functioning of such

The state government had laid own a set of guidelines for the merger of schools May 14, 2018. Taking into account the guidelines,

the School and Mass Education (S&ME) Department had issued a notification March 11, 2020, stating that schools having less than 20 students would be merged with the nearby schools for consolidation of the education infrastructure.

The S&ME department had earlier identified around 14,000 schools having enrollment of 20 or less for their merger with nearby schools in the state. It had initiated a process for closure of around 7,700 elementary and secondary schools in the first phase of which around, 900 schools have already been shut.

The petitioners, however, informed the court that the school merger plan is violating the right to education of the students. They also told the court that the state government had not taken the views of the people's representatives and guardians before devising the school merger plan.

# Serum to invest 200mn GBP in UK



AGENCIES

London, May 4: The Serum Institute of India will invest 240 million pounds in the UK to expand its vaccine business and set up a new sales office creating a large number of jobs, Downing Street announced as part of plans for a 1-billion pound India-UK Enhanced Trade Partnership creating around 6.500 jobs in Britain.

The announcement came ahead of a virtual summit between Prime Ministers Boris Johnson and Narendra Modi Tuesday. The Punebased vaccine maker headed by CEO Adar Poonawalla is among a list of nearly 20 Indian companies across sectors such as healthcare, biotech and software services to announce significant investment plans in the UK this week. It was also revealed that the Serum Institute of India (SII) has started phase one trials in the UK of a

nasal vaccine against coronavirus. "The sales office is expected to generate new business worth over USD 1 billion, 200 million pounds of which will be invested into the UK," Downing Street said in reference to the company's plans for

the UK market on Monday. "Serum's investment will support clinical trials, research & development and possibly manufacturing of vaccines. This will help the UK and the world to defeat the coronavirus pandemic and other deadly diseases. Serum has already started phase one trials in the UK of a one-dose nasal vaccine for coronavirus, in partnership with Codagenix INC," it said.

Poonawalla, who is currently in London and had recently hinted at plans to expand vaccine production outside India, described his meetings in the UK as "excellent".

# Bill, Melinda Gates divorcing after 27 years of marriage

THE TWO HAVE FACED RELATIONSHIP STRUGGLES OVER PAST SEVERAL YEARS AND THERE WERE TIMES WHEN THEIR TIES NEARED COLLAPSE

AGENCIES

New York, May 4: Billionaire philanthropists Bill and Melinda French Gates have announced they are divorcing after 27 years of marriage, saying they no longer believe "we can grow together as a couple", but will continue to work together at their foundation that has an endowment of about USD 50 billion.

In a joint statement posted on Twitter by both, they said: "After a great deal of thought and a lot of work on our relationship, we have made the decision to end our mar-

They said that over the last 27 years they built a foundation that works all over the world to enable all people to lead healthy and productive lives.



new life." The divorce announcement puts focus on the couple's sprawling

Seattle-based organisation, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which had reported total net assets of USD 43.3 billion at the end of

Bill, 65, co-founder of Microsoft, had met Melinda, 56 when she had joined the technology giant as a product manager. After dating for a few years, they got married in January 1994 in Hawaii. The couple has three children aged 18 to 25.

The foundation said in a statement that the two would remain co-chairs and trustees and no changes were expected at the organisation.

'They will continue to work together to shape and approve foundation strategies, advocate for the foundation's issues and set the organisation's overall direction," the statement said.

Late last year, the Foundation had announced new commitments totaling USD 70 million to global efforts to develop and distribute safe, affordable, and timely vaccines for low-and middle-income countries amid the COVID19 pandemic.

Bill, formerly the world's richest person, was named by Forbes as the fourth richest person in the world with a net worth of 124 billion

dollars. A report in The New York Times quoted Rob Reich, a professor of political science at Stanford University as saying that, "The Gates Foundation is the most im-

portant and influential philan-

thropic entity in the world today. The

divorce may have huge repercussions for the foundation and for its work across the globe.' The report said the Gateses have

faced relationship struggles over the past several years and there were times when their relationship neared collapse but they worked to keep it together. "When he was having trouble

making the decision about getting married, he was incredibly clear that it was not about me, it was about 'Can I get the balance right between work and family life?' Melinda Gates had said in an interview to The Sunday Times of London in 2019.

"And, believe me, I can remember some days that were so incredibly hard in our marriage where you thought, 'Can I do this?" she had said.



# leisure



#### 'THE ROCK' WAS OFTEN **MISTAKEN TO BE A GIRL**

Dwayne Johnson aka The Rock recalls how, as a child, other children would ask him if he was a girl. "I would say between the ages of seven and 11, people thought that I was a little girl because I had really soft features," recalled Dwayne while talking to Sunday Today.

#### 'CINEMA IS MEANT TO BE A SHARED EXPERIENCE'

Indian origin filmmaker Ben Rekhi feels film festivals hold a lot of significance at any stage in one's career. Rekhi, whose documentary The Reunited States has been shown at multiple film festivals, adds that cinema is meant to be a shared experience, which is suffering now owing to the closure of movie theatres.



# FORTUNE **FORECAST** GaneshaSpeaks,co™

accuracy • reliability • trust

### ARIES

Right now you need to abilities as you will have to take quick, on-the-spot decisions. However, Ganesha cautions you to take proper advice as your decisions may have a long-term impact, more so if they involve monetary matters.

#### **TAURUS**

You will not lose your cool today despite the feels Ganesha. Rationale and reason will be the rhyme of your attitude as you diagnose the problems and uproot them successfully. Success beckons and you are ready to reach out and grab it by hook or by crook

#### **GEMINI**

Emotions, not acidity, will be the cause of your uneasiness. Something important is going on in your life and you are nervous. It can be related to a matter concerning law, ethics, prejudice, education, or social customs. You are, however, likely to win admiration from all quarters for your fine taste in arts, says Ganesha.

#### **CANCER**

Today, you will be at the centre of all your plans. Your responsibilities at home are likely to be unnecessary digressions for you, with your help-your self-only attitude. However, you may feel that you are not getting enough returns of your hard work

#### **LEO** If you are wondering

whether you'll get the today, then Ganesha has some good news for you: the day promises to bring only rewards for you. This will be especially true for your workplace, where your innate talents get recognised today. Expect positive support from your colleagues, and oodles of inspiring tips from your superiors. Just be careful not to get carried away by

#### VIRGO

your success.

A sudden bend in the iourney of life is stand it better, says Ganesha. Excellence will drone on throughout the day today. Top on the list are money matters and your loved ones - not necessarily in that order! Much of your time may be spent in appeasing the Gods.

since it is very likely that today shall prove to be a money-making day for you. It might deal that this may happen, predicts Ganesha. Destiny lends you a helping hand and guides you in your goals. But it is your sentiments that may darken your

# **SCORPIO**

Two words will define your day - eloquence and elegance. Sweet talk and compliments may take you a long way, but do not become complacent and get carried away with your success. Sometimes, saying the right thing may be more beneficial than saying what the other person wants to hear Communicate carefully, advises Ganesha.

#### SAGITTARIUS Upholding all that is right and just will be the highpoint today. You wil

fight injustice and discrimination. The day promises to be as splendid as your will. Ganesha advises you to stand up and conquer all today.

# CAPRICORN

Paradise is where patience leads you, success is the other terminus, says Ganesha. Keeping your cool will benefit you in more ways than you would have imagined, so think twice before you unleash your vengeance on your foes. You are also likely to have a heart-to-heart conversation with your beloved and make him/her feel wanted Colleagues will appreciate the amiable and amusing side of you.

### **AQUARIUS**

Today, you will understand the value of your job. You decide to do away with everything that has been hampering your work till now. You realise you need to set some long-term goals in your career. Grab the opportunity while the intention lasts,

#### says Ganesha. **PISCES**

the cup and the lip!

Your inherent talents. competitive colleagues and supportive superior will spur you on to great heights at the workplace, beginning today. Make sure that you do not get carried away by little victories, says Ganesha. There is many a slip between

# Aditya wants to vaccinate 30K cine workers

MUMBAI: Filmmaker Aditya Chopra has come forward to vaccinate daily workers of the Hindi film industry, and has requested Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to allow his production house Yash Raj Films (YRF) to purchase 60,000 Covid-19

The filmmaker, in a statement, says: "We have sent a request to the Honourable Chief Minister of Maharashtra to allocate and allow us to purchase Covid-19 vaccines for 30,000 registered workers, who are members of the film industry's federation in Mumbai at the earliest.'

The letter also mentioned that The Yash Chopra Foundation would bear all other costs associated with vaccinating the workers including raising awareness, transportation of workers and setting up of the required infrastructure for the immunisation programme. "We hope our kind request is approved which will enable our members to

be safe and also get them back to work at the the statement concluded.



Kangana's a/c "Distressed beyond words, death of democracy, important message

> #BengalViolence.' Reacting to the suspension, Kangana said: "Twitter has only proved my point they are Americans and by birth a white person feels entitled to enslave a brown person, they want to tell you what to think, speak or do.'

> for our government #BengalBurning

She added: "Fortunately, I have many platforms I can use to raise my voice including my own art in the form of cinema but my heart goes out to the people of this nation who have been tortured, enslaved and censored for thousands of years and still there is no end to the suffering.'

# 'Social media has kept life moving'

MUMBAI: Actress Elnaaz Norouzi says social media has emerged as a great platform for people to help each other during these tough times.

"As the world hit the pause button owing to Coronavirus, social media has kept life moving forward. In such trying times, the power of new media made it possible for everyone to come together and fight the deadly virus. From crowdfunding to making people aware of Covid to sharing the resource details, all these platforms have been contributing to a very large extent to bring lives back on track again," she said.

The actress adds that she, too, is trying her best to reach out and help as many people as possible.

"At such a critical time, every post,

every request, and every query is crucial. To pitch in my contribution in

helping the nation get back on its feet, I am trying to amplify Covid related information through my social media handle. Only together we can fight this virus," she says. Elnaaz, who shot to fame with a role in the web series Sacred Games, was recently seen in the OTTreleased film Hello Charlie.

# Int'l award in memory of Manoj Das

Manoj Das International Literary Award carrying a cash prize of ₹10 lakh will be conferred on Odia writers every year for their exceptional works in English

POST NEWS NETWORK

BHUBANESWAR: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday announced that an international award in literature carrying a cash prize of ₹10 lakh will be given every year in the memory of literary genius late Manoj Das.

Titled Manoj Das International Literary Award, the prestigious honour will be conferred on Odia litterateurs for their exceptional works in English.

Besides, the government, honouring the wishes of Manoj's family members, will take over his ancestral house at Shankhari, the birthplace of the bilingual writer in Balasore district, and convert it into a museum-cum-library. It will be named as Manoj-Manmath Memorial. The library will have the books in History and Literature authored by Manoj and his illustrious brother late Manmath Nath Das.

This apart, the state govern-



The state government will give away Manoj **Kishore Sahitya Samman** to attract high school students towards creative writing in **Odia and English** 

ment, in a bid to attract high school students towards creative writing in Odia and English, will give away Manoj Kishore Sahitya Samman

every year. The winners will get a cash award of ₹1 lakh each.

The Chief Minister also announced that special issues of Utkal Prasanga and Odisha Review will be published in the memory of Manoj Das while Odisha Sahitya Akademi will also release a special edition of its annual magazine Konark.

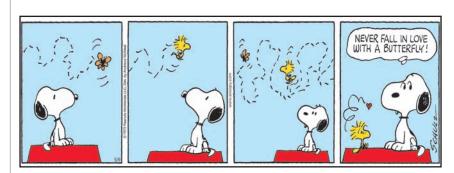
Earlier, Information and Public Relation department director Krupasindhu Mishra released a special magazine on Manoj Das written by Bijay Nayak.

The eminent bilingua author passed away April 27 at the age of 87 following a prolonged illness in Pondicherry

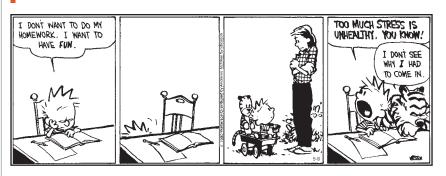


the video:

# **PEANUTS**



### CALVIN AND HOBBES



### BREVITY



# POST

# **CROSSWORD** 23 Copyright ©2021 PuzzleJunction.com 19 Photographer's

# Across

- 6 Bogus
- 7 Large dark-red
- oval organ
- 8 Ode or haiku 9 Really angry
- (2,2,4)10 Unswerving 11 Unfolds

- 16 Mandarin dialect
- 14 Greet the day
- **Down**

setting

22 Injury

23 Flip over

21 Shade of black

- 1 Loud harsh
- outcrys

- 2 Having ceased

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

- 17 Reprimand
- to exist 3 Savory jelly
- 18 Cougars

4 Dog bane

5 Roaches and

rats, e.g.

12 Mulled over

13 Words to a sad

sack (5,2)

15 Explosive

sound

6 Rime

- 20 Beat badly

# SOLUTIONS 6 5 8 9 1 2

SUDOKU

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

3

4

5

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a

manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains

7 6

6

9

3

9

5

8 3

6

the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

5

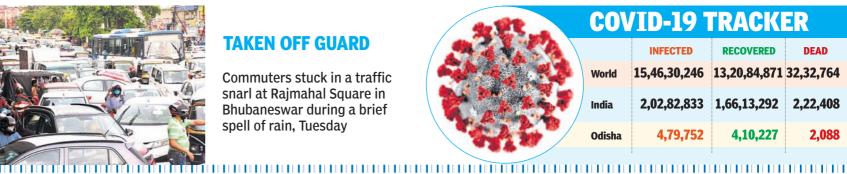
6

8

9

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

# downtown



#### **TAKEN OFF GUARD**

Commuters stuck in a traffic snarl at Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar during a brief spell of rain, Tuesday

22.23	C
	Wor
	Odis
48.8	

**OVID-19 TRACKER** 

15,46,30,246 13,20,84,871 32,32,764 2,22,408 2,02,82,833 1,66,13,292

4,10,227

# **POLITICKLE by MANJUL**



# Doorstep FIR service in twin city

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 4: A day before commencement of the 14-day lockdown, the twin city Commissionerate Police Tuesday introduced 'Doorstep FIR' service for the residents.

This was revealed by Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Bhubaneswar, US Dash.

He said the doorstep FIR will help people to avoid going outside during the lockdown for redressal of their grievances. People can lodge complaints by making calls to 100 following which the personnel from nearby police station will reach their homes to record complaint. They can also call the inspector in-charge of their local po-

People can lodge plaints by making calls to 100 following which the personnel from nearby police station will reach their homes

lice station, he said.

The people will be given copy of the FIR electronically either by WhatsApp or e-mail, Dash said, adding that the doorstep FIR service will benefit the people who can make complaints regarding dacoity, burglary, or any other crimes.

Replying to a question, the DCP said there will be no question of any lackadaisical approach in the investigation into the complaints received from the people over phone.

He said that a total of 20 platoons (1 platoon comprise 30 personnel) of police and 200 police officers will be deployed in the city. The DCP said persons from the exempted category will be allowed to visit different places in the city during the lockdown by producing identity cards provided to them by their organisations.

If anyone has some urgent work to finish, but unable to produce a document validating the concerned person's purpose of being out of home during the lockdown, the person can call up 100, the DCP said, adding that the same person will provide personal details and reasons behind going somewhere in the city.

# Van Dhan Yojana boon for 6K Odisha tribals: Centre

New Delhi, May 4: The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs Tuesday said that the Van Dhan Yojana is gaining ground in Odisha and has become a major source of livelihood support for the tribals of the

The ministry said that the implementation of the scheme in Odisha is gaining quick ground and more than 6,300 tribal people have reaped the benefits of the scheme through 660 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, subsumed into 22 Van Dhan Vikas Kendra Clusters

'Training, procurement of machinery required for processing. branding and packaging are in progress for the past few months in these clusters which are spread over Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Rayagada, Sundargarh and Koraput districts. Production and processing of raw materials by the tribals have commenced earlier this month," the ministry said.

According to the ministry, the tribal beneficiaries in three clusters, Luguburu VDVKC, Maa Dharithri VDVKC and Bhimkund VDVKC in Mayurbhani district will work on processing sal leaves, sal seeds, kusum seeds and wild honey to produce plates, cups made of sal leaves, Kusum oil and processed honey.

"In Keonihar district, tribal beneficiaries of Anchalika Khandadhar VDVKC will process raw mango, mustard and turmeric into Aam papad, mango pickle, turmeric powder and mustard oil. In Ban Durga



The ministry said that the implementation of the scheme in Odisha is gaining quick ground and more than 6,300 tribal people have reaped the benefits of the scheme through 660 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras

Training, procurement of machinery required for processing, branding and packaging are in progress for the past few months in these clusters spread over Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Rayagada, Sundargarh and Koraput districts

n Keonjhar district, tribal beneficiaries of Anchalika Khandadhar VDVKC will process raw mango, mustard and turmeric into Aam papad, mango pickle, turmeric powder and mustard oil

VDVKC cluster, the minor forest produces (MFPs) which will be value-added are: Tamarind, sal seeds and char seeds to be made into deseeded tamarind, tamarind cake, sal shampoo and packed char seeds," the ministry said.

Other value-added products that will be processed at the VDVK clusters in Koraput, Rayagada and Sundargarh districts include tamarind cake, mahua oil, organic packaged rice, neem oil, neem cake, deseeded chironji and turmeric powder, the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry said

According to the ministry, Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) is implementing Van Dhan tribal startups programme for value addition, branding and marketing of MFPs by establishing VDKs to facilitate creation of sustainable livelihoods for the forest-

# State gets 6 more courts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, May 4: Orissa High Court (HC) Chief Justice S Muralidhar inaugurated six courts at as many districts of the coastal state through videoconferencing from the Silver City here, Tuesday.

The new courts are Court of Senior Civil Judge (Leave Reserve and Leave Training Vacancy) at Nayagarh, Court of Senior Civil Judge-Cum-Assistant Sessions Judge (Women's Court) at Jeypore in Koraput, Court of Senior Civil Judge-Assistant Sessions Judge (Women's Court) at Rayagada, Court of 2nd Judicial Magistrate First Class at Barbil in Keonjhar, Court of Senior Civil Judge (Leave Reserve and Leave Training Vacancy) at Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi and Court of Senior Civil Judge (Leave Reserve and Leave Training Vacancy) at Jharsuguda.

Justices Pramath Patnaik, KR Mohapatra, BP Routray, SK Panigrahi and Savitri Ratho were present during the inaugural occasion.

On Monday, the Chief Justice inaugurated three courts at Sohela, Berhampur and Cuttack Sadar through videoconferencing in presence of Justices Biswajit Mohanty and Debabrata Dash. It was April 30 when the Chief Justice inaugurated digitisation centres at the district courts of Cuttack, Balasore, Ganjam and Sambalpur in virtual mode. Scanning and digitisation of case records of disposed-off matters will be done

# Annual report hints at raw deal to prisoners

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 4: The performance of state Prisons directorate with regard to rehabilitation of prisoners and provision of amenities for the inmates is poor, if the data for 2020 released by the directorate itself is any indication. As per the data released by

Prisons directorate Tuesday, the number of convicts receiving financial assistance has reduced to 86 in 2020 from 162 in 2019.

The financial assistance provided by the department has been a great help to the prisoners who managed to live a decent life after their release from jails.

Similarly, the state witnessed a decrease in the number of prisoners who received legal aid through the respective District Legal Service Authorities (DLSAs) in 2020 as compared to 2019. The para legal staffers of DLSAs provided legal aid to 1,175 prisoners lodged in jails across the



THE NUMBER OF CONVICTS RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE HAS REDUCED

738 PRISONERS RECEIVED EDUCATIONAL **FACILITIES LIKE ELEMENTARY** EDUCATION, ADULT EDUCATION, HIGHER **EDUCATION AND COMPUTER COURSES INSIDE THE PRISONS DURING 2020 EDUCATION FACILITIES IN 2019** 

EIGHT PRISONERS HAD COMMITTED SUICIDE INSIDE THE JAILS DURING 2020 AS AGAINST FOUR IN 2019

state in 2019. The number reduced to just 626 in 2020.

The directorate often boasts of providing ample opportunities to the inmates to continue their educational pursuits. It is considered one of most important parts of correctional activities in jails.

However, statistics revealed that 738 prisoners received educational facilities like elementary education, adult education, higher education and computer courses inside the prisons during 2020 while 1,106 inmates received education facilities in 2019.

Meanwhile, the jails in the state witnessed a surge in number of inmates in 2020. As per the data, 18,881 prisoners were lodged in 87 jails of the state by the end of 2020 as compared to 17,542 in the beginning of

The prisons were housing 3,245 convicts including 107 females by

As many as 61,571 persons were lodged in the prisons of the state in 2020 while 60.232 were released during the period. The data says 15,619 under-trial prisoners (UTPs) were lodged in various jails of the state till December 31, 2020.

According to the annual statistics. eight prisoners had committed suicide inside the jails during 2020 as against four in 2019.

# **MASKING UP IS THE MANTRA**



An artist draws murals near Kalpana Square in Bhubaneswar to create awareness on the highly infectious novel coronavirus, Tuesday

# 3 shops gutted in Capital city

Bhubaneswar: Three shops were destroyed in a major fire broke out at KIIT Road under Infocity police limits here Tuesday. No casualty was reported as the shops were closed when the incident took place. According to sources, a fire broke out at the Archies Gallery in the area around 7:30pm. The fire soon engulfed the other shops, a restaurant and a cafeteria on the first floor. Though locals called the firemen immediately, the latter allegedly reached the spot after one hour, after the intervention of a local MLA. Three fire tenders took almost an hour to douse the blaze. The exact reason behind the incident could not be ascertained till the last report came in.

# Sixth batch of logs reaches Puri



POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, May 4: Preparations for this year's Rath Yatra are in full swing even as the sixth batch of logs for the construction of chariots reached the Holy City Tuesday, said sources in the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA)

"Two trucks carrying around 50 Dhaura and Asana logs from Boudh forest division reached the Holy City today. Till date, we have received a total of 237 logs in six phases for the construction of char-

According to the official, the carpenters require 865 logs for the construction of chariots for this year's Rath Yatra. "There were 69 surplus logs from last year's Rath Yatra. The temple administration has taken steps to arrange the remaining 796 logs from Nayagarh and Boudh forest divisions," said

Notably, the 12th century shrine has been shut for devotees till May 15 in the wake of the recent surge in Covid-19 cases

# 14-day quarantine for people State loses 15 more coming from AP, Telangana

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 4: With reporting of a virulent variant of the novel coronavirus in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the state government Tuesday made 14-day quarantine mandatory for people coming from these two states to

In an order, Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra said, "Anyone coming to Odisha from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana by personal/hired vehicles and trains or entering the state on any other mode shall undergo mandatory institutional quarantine for 14 days in cluster temporary medical centres (TMCs) to be managed by BDOs or executive officers of urban bodies.

All passengers coming from the two states through airway (Bhubaneswar or Jharsuguda airport) and railway to Odisha, will have to undergo institutional quarantine or paid quarantine for 14 days. Collectors of Ganjam, Gaiapati, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur have been directed to put border check posts (BCPs) on all inter-state roads (NH, state roads and local roads) along Andhra Pradesh and Telangana border with immediate effect. The district administrations were further directed to en-



Collectors of Ganjam. Gajapati, Rayagada. Koraput, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur have been directed to put border check posts on inter-state roads

sure border tracking for all the major and minor entry points for incoming people from state of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana or adjoining their districts to the state. They have been asked to make adequate police arrangement for such

tracking. The district administrations will have to ensure appropriate facilities

and logistic support to cluster TMCs. However, people travelling from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to other states through Odisha will be allowed without disembarking from the vehicle en-route inside Odisha, the Chief Secretary said in

his order. "Sarpanches/ward members of PRIs & volunteers shall be mobilised to create awareness in their areas and further report to BDO/police station/Local Authorities about any person coming from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana not quarantined in institutional facilities.

Any one, who has been administered two doses of vaccines and produces a certificate to this effect or tests negative in RTPCR test within 48 hours before entering Odisha, will have to stay on home quarantine for seven days. If there is no suitable facility for home quarantine, he/she may go for institutional/paid quarantine for a week. Persons coming on emergency works related to Covid-19 management by government and private hospitals as well as those coming in connection with work permitted by the state government have been exempted from this order.

Transport Commissioner has been instructed to provide necessary assistance and guidance to the Collectors in operationalising the border check posts.

Violation of these measures will invite actions in accordance with the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and Regulations

# lives to Covid-19

State logs 8,216 new cases taking the caseload to 4,79,752

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 4: Odisha's Covid-19 caseload mounted to 4,79,752 Tuesday as 8,216 more people tested positive for the virus, while 15 fresh fatalities pushed the coronavirus death toll to 2,088, a Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

Of the new cases, 4,684 were reported from quarantine centres and 3,532 detected during contact tracing.

Khurda district, which comprises the state capital Bhubaneswar, reported the highest number of fresh cases at 1,271, followed by Sundargarh (636), Cuttack (447) and Puri (402).

The remaining cases were recorded in several other districts. Khurda district registered the

maximum number of fresh Covid fatalities at five, while three patients succumbed to the disease in Rayagada, two each in Kalahandi and Sundargarh and one each in Cuttack, Puri and Subarnapur, the official said.

Odisha now has 73,548 active cases, while 4,04,063 people have recovered from the disease.

The state has so far conducted



Khurda district registered the maximum number of fresh Covid fatalities at five, while three patients succumbed to the disease in Rayagada

Two each succumbed to the virus in Kalahandi and Sundargarh and one each in Cuttack, Puri and Subarnapur

novel coronavirus, including 43,682 Monday, and the positivity rate

stands at 4.67 per cent. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had Sunday declared working journalists of the state as front-

line Covid warriors. Following the government's decision, a special session has been organised here to inoculate the iournalists covered under-Gopabandhu Health Insurance

the order said. over 1.02 crore sample tests for the Scheme, the official added.

# **Collectors asked to dispose of** land conversion cases online

Bhubaneswar, May 4: In an aim to streamline process for disposal of revenue cases, the government has asked all district Collectors to dispose of agricultural land conversion cases via online mode within 60 days.

To reduce physical visit of people to revenue offices during Covid-19, Revenue and Disaster Management department has taken this decision. Department secretary Bishnupada Sethi has recently written a letter to all district Collectors in this regard.

The department has facilitated filing of online applications for conversion of agricultural land under Section 8-A of OLR Act, 1960. Now, such cases will be handled through online platform dwistodisha.nic.in.

After receiving several complaints from citizens about the unusual delay in disposal of the agricultural land conversion cases at tahsil level, the government has directed the Collectors to dispose of the cases within 60 working days. The service has also brought under Odisha Right to Public Services

"The government has viewed such attitude of tahsildars seriously, specifically when the department is simplifying existing procedures for quick, transparent and efficient delivery of public

No vaccination

in 15 dists today

Bhubaneswar, May 4: The state

Health department Tuesday said

that there would be no vaccination

sessions for Covid-19 in 15 dis-

tricts Wednesday owing to short-

These districts where the vac-

cinations sessions have been halted

are: Angul, Balasore, Bargarh,

Boudh, Cuttack, Deogarh, Ganjam,

Jagatsinghpur, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Koraput, Nabarangpur,

Rayagada, Sambalpur and Sonepur

91 vaccination sessions have been

planned across the state for

On Tuesday the state saw in-

oculation of 25,211 persons through

119 sessions. Till now, the state

government has been able to vac-

cinate a total of 59,29,525 persons.

The government till Tuesday night

was left with a stock of 1.09 lakh

Covishield and 3.09.050 Covaxin

Thunderstorm likely

Bhubaneswar, May 4: The India Meteorological Department (IMD)

Tuesday warned about thunder-

storm with lightning in some parts

of the state in the next four days.

and gusty surface wind reaching

40-50 km per hour is very likely to

occur Wednesday at one or two

places over the districts of

Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Deogarh,

Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri,

Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur,

Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda,

Nayagarh, Ganjam and Gajapati.

in some places of Balasore,

Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara,

Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Deogarh,

Angul, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj,

Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada

Predicting thunderstorm and

lightning May 7, the IMD issued

warning for Bargarh, Jharsuguda,

Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh,

Angul, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj,

Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Koraput

and Rayagada districts. Besides,

the Met department said that few

places like Cuttackwould witness

similar climatic condition, May 8.

and Kandhamal the next day.

Similar condition will prevail

Keonihar.

Cuttack

Jagatsinghpur,

Nawarangpur,

Thunderstorm with lightning

for four days: IMD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh.

Kendrapara,

Nuapada,

. Wednesdav.

The department said that only

age of Covisheild shots.

POST NEWS NETWORK

### **ALL WITHIN 60 DAYS**

The applicant's online application will be auto forwarded to the concerned tahsildar without any delay. The tahsildar will carefully verify the attached documents and forward it with remarks to the concerned RI for field verification

RI will conduct field enquiry and will ascertain that the classification of the applied land is permissible without violating any of the provisions as provided under rules and instructions of government issued from time to time



conversion fee for the land and submit his report to the tahsildar, who will verify it and obtain the views of concerned authority if the land comes under any development authority area

The concerned authority will have to furnish their opinion within 30 days from the date of receipt of the same, failing which it shall be deemed that there is no objection to the conversion applied for

services," Sethi told Collectors in his letter.

He laid down new rules for dealing the conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purpose.

As per the new norms, the applicant will submit online application, which will be auto forwarded to the concerned tahsildar without any delay. The tahsildar, upon receiving the application, will carefully verify the attached documents and later forward the application with remarks to the concerned Revenue Inspector (RI) for field verification.

RI will conduct field enquiry and will ascertain that the change of classification of the applied land is permissible without violating any of the provisions as provided under

rules and instructions of government issued from time to time.

The RI will also calculate conversion fee for the land and submit his report to the tahsildar, who will verify it and obtain the views of concerned authority if the land comes under any development au-

The concerned authority will have to furnish their opinion within 30 days from the date of receipt of the same, failing which it shall be deemed that there is no objection to the conversion applied for.

In case the land is not covered under any town planning or development area, the tahsildar may pass necessary order. After depositing the required fees, the case

# Fraudster dupes loan seekers of ₹20 lakh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 4: A fraudster from Telangana has duped several loan aspirants of Rs 20 lakh. The employees of the sham finance company have sought the help of Commissionerate Police to nab the

According to sources, the employees have alleged that they came across an advertisement, posted in a local daily, asking job seekers to apply for various posts like computer operator, manager and assistant manager March 3, 2021. Several youths from across the state sent their applications to the company 'Easy Finance' at Ashok Nagar under the Capital police

The complainants were selected by the company among all the applicants. The company imparted training to the complainants as well. During the training period, ous fake documents like a fake registration letter issued by RBI, GST number and the Aadhar card of the owner Muhhamad Faruk of

Later, various branches were opened in Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur and other places of the state. The company published regular advertisements in various local regional dailies claiming easy loans at cheaper interest rate.

The employees of the company have alleged that the fraudster collected around 20 lakh from 400 loan seekers from the state between March and April, 2021. They also accused Faruk of collecting more money through one of his aides. Subsequently, when the deposi-

tors started putting pressure for the disbursal of their loan amount, the accused owner gave cheques of different amounts varying between Rs 50,000 and Rs 3 lakh from 21 to 23 April.

However, all the cheques were bounced due to insufficient balance in Faruk's bank account. Meanwhile, Faruk sneaked out of Odisha along with the collected money. His phone was found switched off when the employees tried to contact him. The Capital police have started investigation into the matter after registering a case

# **Ex-OP journo Sumit Onka dies of Covid**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 4: The novel coronavirus has claimed the life of another journalist in Odisha. Sumit Onka, a native of Jeypore in Koraput district succumbed to Covid-19.

Tuesday. was working as a principal correspondent with English daily 'The

Pioneer' and was based at Vishakhapatnam.

Prior to this, Sumit was working with Deccan Chronicle (Vishakhapatnam) and Orissa POST at Bhubaneswar. He was a student of Central University in Koraput. He passed away at a hospital in Vishakhapatnam, reports said. The media fraternity in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh expressed deep condolences on the sad and untimely demise of the young journalist.

# **SUMMER VACATION FOR COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES**

Bhubaneswar, May 4: Keeping in view the grim Covid-19 situation in the state, the Higher Education department Tuesday announced summer vacation for all higher education institutions.

"All higher education institutions coming under the administrative control of Higher Education department will remain closed for Summer Vacation from May 5 to May 31," a notification from the department read.

In a letter to all the vice-chancellors and principals of universities and colleges, Principal Secretary of Higher Education department Saswat Mishra said that standard vacation programme should be put in place for functioning of higher education institutions during the summer vacation including Covid-19 related lockdown/shut-

The department also directed

the institutions not to conduct online classes/examinations during the vacation. However, pre-scheduled viva voices/interviews of PhD and other research scholars due for the summer vacation would be

held on the scheduled dates. Earlier, the state government had said that physical, theory and practical classes and examinations at all higher educational institutions will remain suspended with effect from April 19.

These institutions can hold online classes in order to complete the courses in time. The government had advised students to avoid staying in hostels in the interest of their personal health, the order said.

Like higher educational institutions, all technical or professional institutions under the iurisdiction of Skill Development and Technical Education department would remain closed with effect from April 19, it

# **Movement of vehicles** allowed for vaccination $\rightarrow$

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 4: To facilitate smooth movement of people for vaccination during lockdown and shutdown period, the state government has relaxed norms for movement of vehicles.

The government has allowed plying of two wheelers with the rider only and four wheelers, auto rickshaws & taxis with driver plus two passengers in the back seat for the permitted purpose only. Cabs and autorickshaws by aggregators like Ola, Uber etc have also been permitted to operate during the lockdown period i.e. from May 5 to 19.

The vehicles can travel to and from places of residence to Covid testing centres, vaccination centres, airport and railway station, marriages, funeral and last rites etc.

The city buses service provided by Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) has also been allowed to operate with limited number of services to and from airport & railway stations during lockdown.

While going to the airport or railway stations, the city buses can only pickup passengers for the above destinations only and not for any stoppages in between. Similarly, such services from airport and railway station will not pickup any passenger enroute. The services will be operated without exceeding the seating capacity of the bus. No standing passengers are allowed.

#### **Paikray now DCP** at CP Headquarters

Bhubaneswar: The state Home department Tuesday appointed Additional DCP Raj Kishore Paikray as the DCP Headquarters, Police Commissionerate, following his promotion to the rank of Superintendent of Police. Paikray along with Biswanath Mishra was promoted to the SP rank by the Home department Tuesday. Meanwhile, Mishra who currently holds the post of Additional SP **IUCAW** at Jagatsinghpur has been appointed as SP PMT at the state police headquarters.

A flyover at Khandagiri in Bhubaneswar thrown open to traffic on a trial basis, Tuesday

# Cardiologists bust nCoV myths from social media

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 4: Several cardiologists in the state claimed that various unsubstantiated and misleading information related to cardiac health with respect to Covid-19 are doing rounds on social media.

The doctors warned that these misleading suggestions, home remedies made by quacks can be hazardous for the cardiac patients However, they claimed that certain sections of heart patients are more prone to the aftermath of Covid infection.

"Cardiac patients, whose heart pumping capacity is not good, have had their lungs partially compro-

The trains include Puri-

Sambalpur Special, Puri-

Durg-Puri Special, Puri-

**Indore-Puri Special and** 

Gunupur-Puri Special.

Sambalpur-Puri-



mised. They also have little tolerance towards fever or inflammation. Someone who has recently suffered heart attack is more vulnerable to the severe effects of Covid-19," said

Dr Anupam Jena, a cardiologist from Central Railway Hospital, Mancheswar.

When asked about any harm the vaccination poses to the cardiac patients who are taking anti-coagulant drugs, Dr Jena clarified that the claims are myths. People, who are on anti coagulant or anti platelet therapy, can take the vaccines. Covid infection triggers clots and thus these drugs are essential to maintain normalcy in their heart and body function. He also added that such patients need to keep the in-

jected site pressed for 3-5 minutes. Dr Jena claimed that most of the Covid drugs are safe for cardiac patients. "Ivermectin, steroids or vitamins could be taken during Covid treatment. Ivermectin theoretically has a possibility of affecting the heart beat. Those who have abnormal ECG need to be cautious and

take preventive measures," he added Another cardiologist Dr Sushanta Shaila said that such patients should get their Prothrombin Timing Test done before the vaccination and after consulting the cardiologists they can go for the vaccines. She remarked that the heart pa-

tients should consult cardiologists on the medicines they are taking during Covid-19. The intake of drugs would be safer under their supervision as certain drugs may not be good for all heart patients.

# 5 trains cancelled as cases surge



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 4: Due to poor passenger patronisation in five special trains originating from East Coast Railway (ECoR) jurisdiction and the surge in Covid-19 cases, it has been decided to cancel five pairs of special trains.

They are Puri-Gunupur-Puri Special, Sambalpur-Puri-Sambalpur Special, Puri-Durg-Puri Special, Puri-Indore-Puri Special and Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam-Secunderabad Special.

Puri-Gunupur-Puri special from Puri and Gunupur stand cancelled from May 5 and 6 respectively till further notice.

Similarly, Sambalpur-Puri-Sambalpur Special from both the directions will remain cancelled from

Puri-Durg-Puri Special stands cancelled from May 5 from both ends. Indore-Puri-Indore Special will stop running from Indore from May 4 and from May 6 till further advice.

On the other hand, Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam- Secunderabad Special stands cancelled from Secunderabad from 3 to 31 May and from Visakhapatnam from 4

May to 1 June. Meanwhile, Railways have deSecunderabad-Visakhapatnam-Secunderabad Special cided to run a Special Train between Secunderabad & Guwahati. Secunderabad-Guwahati-

Secunderabad Special will provide stoppages at Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam Road, Palasa, Berhamapur, Khurda Road, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, and Bhadrak under ECoR jurisdiction along with other important stations between Secunderabad & Guwahati. The Special will leave

Secunderabad at 07:30 hrs every Sunday from May 9 to May 30. In the return direction, the train will leave Guwahati at 06:45 hrs every Wednesday from May 12 to June 2.

### **Engineers to repair** weak embankments

Bhubaneswar: The state government has asked all field engineers of Water Resources department to complete rework of the weak embankments by June 15 in order to tackle possible flood like situations during monsoon period. Holding a pre-flood preparedness meeting recently, the Water Resource secretary Anu Garg has directed the department engineers and district administrations to hold joint field survey by May 10.

#### **Odisha Natya Sangha** thanks Culture dept

Bhubaneswar: Odisha Natya Sangha, a collaborative body of the theatre troupes in Odisha, Tuesday expressed its gratitude to Culture Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, department's Principal Secretary Bishnupada Sethy and director Ranjan Kumar Das for extending a helping hand towards its ailing secretary. Odisha Natya Sangha secretary Lala Biren Prasad has suffered a massive stroke a few days ago and is undergoing treatment at a private hospital on City's Lewis Road. After learning about Lala Biren Prasad's situation, a delegation from Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi met the former's wife and handed over an assistance of Rs 1 lakh to her.

# Ensure safety of orphan kids, DMs told

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 4: Women & Child Development and Mission Shakti department Tuesday directed the district Collectors to take measures to provide safety to children orphaned due to Covid-19.

In a letter to all the district Collectors Aravind Agrawal, Director, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) & Social Welfare, said, "As per the direction received from Ministry of Women and Child Development April 30, 2021 on the subject cited above. I am directed to intimate that immediate measures be taken for the rehabilitation of children recently orphaned due to Covid-19 under the provisions of Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act and rules

there under.' He said that such children must be produced before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) within 24 hours physically or virtually as the situation warrants, and in turn. the CWC shall ascertain immediate need of the child and pass appropriate order for rehabilitation

The decision regarding institutional or non-institutional care



The CWC shall ascertain immediate need of the child and pass appropriate order for rehabilitation of the child

should be taken on case-to-case basis keeping in mind the best interest of the child.

Preference should be given to non-institutional care, as far as possible, while ensuring safety and safeguarding best interest with a regular check on wellbeing of the child.

The assistance of all the stakeholder agencies including those for protection of children i.e. local police, district child protection unit, local child line unit, CWC and others may be taken to bring normalcy in their life.

# OR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

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

# **Wetlands face threat** from prawn gherries

*In the past, demolition drives by the administration have failed to end the* prawn gherry menace. Following an HC order, the state government and the district administration are on their toes for another drive in Kendrapara

ficials of the district administration

will hold review meetings on dem-

olition drive every Friday. However,

some local environmentalists were

skeptical of the success of the

gherry demolition drive in the dis-

They pointed out that the ad-

ministration had pulled down gher-

ries in the past, but their owners re-

stored the gherries overnight. They

observed that the administration

should toughen its stand in this re-

gard by taking stern action against

Environmentalists such as

Hemant Kumar Rout, Ashok Kumar

Swain, Laxmikant Swain,

Bibhuprasad Mohapatra and

Harekrushna Patra said that wet-

lands need to be protected for a

healthy biodiversity, but the mush-

rooming of prawn gherries has

been taking a heavy toll on the bio-

Prawn gherries have illegally

All such illegal activities are pro-

hibited in Bhitarkanika national

park area, but illegal prawn farm-

ers continue to carry on their ac-

come up in over 15,000 hectares of

wetlands in Mahakalpara, Rajnagar

diversity in the region.

and Rajkanika blocks.

the prawn gherry owners.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, May 4: Even as illegal prawn gherries are mushrooming in various parts of the coastal pockets in Kendrapara, the High Court has suo motu taken a strong stance on such illegal activities.

Large tracts of wetlands in the district have been gobbled up by thousands of prawn gherries in this coastal district. Demolition drives against such illegal prawn gherries have been unsuccessful thus far, a report said

Meanwhile, the HC has directed both the state government and the district administration to pull down all unauthorised gherries by the end of May.

This time, the HC has directed the state government to toughen the stand against the illegal prawn enclosures. The government has also been directed to initiate criminal cases against some owners of prawn gherries in connection with cases lodged against them earlier.

A platoon of special police force will be pressed into service during the demolition of the illegal gherries, while funds have been allocated for the purpose from the Revenue and Disaster Management

on the protection on the protection of wetlands, the High Court has suo motu admitted the case and appointed an amicus curiae to look after the issue, it was learnt

he Chief Secretary and the officials of the district administration will hold review meetings on demolition drive every Friday. However, some local environmentalists were skeptical of the success of the gherry demolition drive in the district

The chemical-laced water released from prawn gherries is damaging the mangroves. Toxic water from these prawn gherries also blends with the sea water, thus taking a toll on the marine and aquatic lives, they lamented.

Following a Supreme Court order on the protection of wetlands, the High Court has suo motu admitted the case and appointed an amicus curiae to look after the issue, it was learnt.

This directive has come in the backdrop of the administration's unsuccessful bid to wipe out the prawn gherries in the district

For the last four years, the administration has been carrying out demolition drives against the prawn gherries, but again the prawn farmers restore the broken gherries overnight or in few days.

Despite the HC order, the administration is not initiating criminal proceedings against such errant prawn farmers. When contacted, Sub-Collector

Niranjan Behera said that demolition of prawn gherries is being carried out. Till date, the district administration has removed gherries in 3,008 acres. Police have been asked to register cases against the



Angry over water scarcity, women block a road in Koksara area of Kalahandi district

# Woman murdered for opposing illicit liquor trade

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, May 4: A woman had to pay with her life for opposing illegal sale of liquor at Barei village under Mangalpur police limits in Jajpur district.

A severely injured Lakshmi Jena breathed her last while undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack late Monday night.

According to sources, Bijay Jena of Barei village was selling liquor illegally. But Lakshmi had been opposing liquor sale in the village. She had even asked Bijay to refrain from the illegal trade. Later, she had lodged a report at the local police station seeking action against the boot-

Acting on her complaint, police asked Bijay to stop his illegal trade and warned him of action if he continues with the business. Bijay had since been harbouring a grudge against Lakshmi. He attacked

Bijay Jena of Barei village was selling liquor illegally. But Lakshmi had been opposing liquor sale. She even

her with stones and sticks

asked Bijay to refrain

from the illegal trade

A critically injured Lakshmi

was rescued by the villagers and

dition deteriorated. While undergoing treatment, she succumbed to her injuries on the same night.

rushed to the Jajpur district head-

quarters hospital. Later, she was

shifted to SCB Medical College and

Hospital in Cuttack after her con-

Lakshmi's family members have lodged a complaint against Bijay at the police station on the basis of which he and three of his family members were arrested. A probe is underway, it was learnt. Liquor shop in slum opposed

Paikamal: Locals have opposed the opening of a foreign liquor shop in the midst of a slum in Paikamal area of Bargarh district. Scores of local women staged a sit-

in here Tuesday demanding the closure of the liquor shop. They alleged that the liquor shop located between Paikamal and Salepalli along the Sohela-Nuapada road will create law and order problems.

The shop is a few yards away from Bindhyabasini Mahavidyalay, Jamuna Kanduni Girls' High school and Jawahar Navoday Vidyalay. Hundreds of students commute on the route every day and tipplers will create menace for them, the agitating women warned.

Jugal Kishore Meher, president of the local traders' body, said that the liquor shop is being opposed keeping in view safety of the students.

President of Citizens' Committee, Saroj Kumar Samal wondered how officials allowed a liquor shop to be opened in such

### **Rajnagar: Two youths** succumb to Covid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rainagar, May 4: Two more youths from Rajnagar area in Kendrapara district have succumbed to Covid-19 in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, a report said.

One of the victims has been identified as Harekrushna Mohanty (35), a resident of Belapal village. He used to work in a private company in Bangalore. Mohanty was under treatment in a private hospital where he succumbed to the disease Monday

The other Covid victim was identified as Dr Parthasarathi Mohanty, a resident of Phikiridandigaon. He was a scientist in Agra. It may be noted here that Covid cases are on the rise in coastal pockets with migrants returning from other states.

# Man dies of 'starvation' in Bolangir village

POST NEWS NETWORK

Loisingha, May 4: In a shocking incident, an elderly man allegedly died of starvation at Dumdumi village under this police limits in Bolangir district, Monday after-

The deceased was identified as Biswamitra Chhatria, a destitute who wandered in the village. Socials workers have alleged that he died of starvation after failing to get food for days together. The victim had married off his

only daughter and was living alone for a long period after his wife's death. He had become insolvent after selling his land and house.

His only daughter and kin too abandoned him at his old age forcing him to take shelter in the village club house. As a result, he was living on alms and food given by the



villagers. He often used to go without food when he did not receive any food from the villagers.

A week back his health condition deteriorated following which he left the club house and went to the village weekly market. However, intolerable heat made his life further miserable. On being informed, members of a voluntary outfit Being Human Foundation' reached the spot and provided him with

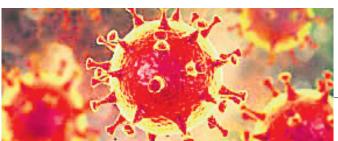
However, Biswamitra's health continued to deteriorate rapidly and he breathed his last Monday af-

ternoon. His body lay there for a long time till local social workers learnt about his death and reached the

They talked to the villagers and some of his relatives regarding his last rites but none came forward to do the needful. Later, the social workers informed the Loisingha police and cremated him with their help, the outfit's local president Aiay Behera and member Jagatpat Dani said. Sarpanch Chudamani Seth acknowledged the incident and said that the deceased had become extremely feeble, while his

limbs had swollen. BDO Ramachandra Khadia said the deceased was receiving pension and rice from the panchayat. Khadia, however, said that he was unaware about Biswamitra's deteriorating health condition and

# **Covid patient commits suicide in Angul**



POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhendipada, May 4: A Covid-19 patient allegedly committed suicide at Sapoinali village under Chhendipada police limits in Angul district Tuesday. It is said that the 65-year-old patient took the extreme step as he was apprehensive about the stigma he would face for being infected by the virus. The deceased has been identified as Jagabandhu Bag.

According to sources, some villagers first spotted Jagabandhu's body hanging from a tree near the village. They immediately informed his family members and the police. The police brought down the body and sent it for post-mortem following all Covid-19 guidelines.

Jagabandhu had tested positive for Covid-19, May 2. Some health workers reached his house and wanted to take him to a treatment centre. However, Jagabandhu refused to leave his house. Since then he was been under tremendous mental stress. The fear of neglect and lack of proper treatment kept haunting him. He could not bear the mental stress anymore and ended his life.

Panic in Boudh special sub-jail As Covid-19 positive cases are

on the rise across Boudh district, the deadly virus has made its foray into the special sub-jail here. This has triggered panic among inmates as well as the jail staff.

According to reports, so far Covid-19 has claimed 15 lives in the district. On the other hand, 17 inmates and a sweeper in the Boudh special sub-jail were found to be Covid-19 positive. Assistant jailer Tuna Mallick confirmed about the spread of Covid in the jail. One of the infected was sent to a local hospital. As per Covid guidelines, the infected inmates are being treated under special arrangements, he added.

# Minor dies, scores taken ill after consuming 'lassi'; 2 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

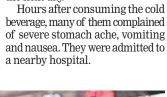
Malkangiri, May 4: A minor girl died while over 120 persons were taken ill after consuming spurious 'lassi' at a weekly market in Kurti village under Padia block of Malkangiri district, police said The matter came to the fore

after MV-79 police in Malkangiri arrested two persons in this connection, Tuesday.



The accused were identified as Sukadev Paddar and Samal Paddar. It has been learnt that the accused mixed ice kept in fish storage container, rotten bananas and stale curd to prepare the cold beverage.

The minor girl died while undergoing treatment at a hospital. All the victims had consumed the drink at the weekly market, April 30, to beat the scorching heat and fell ill the next day.





Migrant returnees undergo thermal scanning after their arrival at a railway station in Sundargarh

# MKCG to have its own oxygen plant soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, May 4: MKCG Medical College and Hospital in the city will soon have its own oxygen plant on its premises. The proposed oxygen plant is expected to become operational by June, a re-

Work on the plant is going on in a wartime footing and it will be operational within a month, MKCG hospital superintendent Professor Santosh Kumar Mishra said. The plant will be of immense help for the critical patients admitted to the hospital after it becomes operational.

Establishment of the oxygen plant will end the hassle of carrying oxygen cylinders near the patients, after the plant is operational.Oxygen will be supplied straight to their bedside through pipes connected to the plant. The news has spread cheers among the denizens and members of various outfits in the region who have been consistently demanding establishment of an oxygen plant in the

MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Silk City is termed as the lifeline of people inhabiting South Odisha as well as for people in adjoining Andhra Pradesh. The hospital is visited daily by

over 4,000 patients and their attendants from these areas to avail various healthcare facilities.

Prof Mishra said that stress is being laid on upgradation of various facilities in the hospital for providing better healthcare services to the patients. All the departments functioning from the old building have been shifted to the new building.

Currently, obstetrics and gynaecology, PMR, radio diagnostic, casualty, medicine, surgery, orthopaedics and paediatrics departments are functioning from the new building.

Many wards in the new building have been connected with oxygen pipes through which oxygen is being supplied to the patients by their bedside. Oxygen is also being supplied to the patients directly from the cylinders.

Earlier, the hospital authorities had decided to set up an oxygen plant. However, the issue cropped up again following the spike in Covid cases in the country last vear. The authorities floated a tender again. A private firm, Linde, has identified land for the plant near the superspecialty block

Meanwhile, work on the plant has started, which is expected to be completed in the first week of June. the superintendent added.

#### **GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, **RWSS DIVISION, KORAPUT**

e-mail-eerwss\_kpt@rediffmail.com, Ph.No. 06852-250281(Off), Ph.No. 06852-250680 (Res), Fax.No.06852-251098 National Competitive Bidding Through E-Procurement Tender Identification No.01/EE/RWSS/KPT/2021-22/27.04.2021

No.O-124:- The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Koraput on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate Bids in Single cover (P1 contract) from the eligible class of experienced registered contractors through e-Tendering system for the Piped water supply works as detailed in DTCN. The bid should be submitted on-line in the website www.tenderorissa.gov.in separately for the works.

1 Nature of work Rural piped water supply work(Civil) Varies from 7.11 Lakhs to 30.21 lakhs No. of works Rs.4000 & Rs.6000 Tender cost Class of contracto

6 Availability of bid document Dt. 05.05.2021 17 hours to 14.05.2021 17 hours During the office hours of 05.05.2021

to 13.05.2021

8 Date of opening of bid Dt. 17.05.2021 at 11 hours

Further details can be seen in the bidding documents which is available in the e-procurement portal https/www.tendersorissa. gov.in subsequent corrigendum if required shall be appeared in the website. Authority reserves the right to reject any or all tenders

without assigning any reason thereof

Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Koraput OIPR-25034/11/0002/2122



He who chooses the infinite has been chosen by the infinite.

RI AUROBINDO



# **Cookie Crumbles**

The BJP's rout in West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the recent Assembly polls is symptomatic of the fate of the BJP's brand of politics centring around communal polarisation and the slogan of "sabka sath, sabka vikas".

The defeat of the widely respected 'Metroman' E Sreedharan, the BJP's undeclared Chief Ministerial face of Kerala at the hands of the Palakkad sitting MLA, Shafi Parambil, of the Congress symbolizes the rejection of the pseudo-Hindootva that the BJP has been championing for capturing power by manipulating the religious sentiments of the majority Hindoo population. The BJP has suffered crushing defeat in West Bengal and Kerala not because minorities supported the political party or alliance that they felt would protect their interests against the rabidly anti-minority BJP but a bulk of the majority Hindoos too have also realized the false veneer behind which hides the BJP's corruption and greed.

Sreedharan's defeat, that too from the Congress, epitomizes this new realization. Despite commanding respect from one and all for his stellar role in providing metro connectivity to people, he lost in a Hindoo-majority constituency. The majority community as well as the minorities stood solidly behind the Moslem candidate belonging to the Congress, seeing through the hollowness of the BJP's claim of good governance most exposed in its miserable response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In West Bengal the BJP made communal polarization the main thrust of its electoral plank demonizing its arch rival Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress as a friend of the Moslems and enemy of the Hindoos. It made a strident pitch for implementing National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) if it is voted to power. This was directed against the nearly 30 per cent Moslems living in the state. This must have scared the minorities who, obviously, rallied behind the Trinamool Congress without splitting their votes between the TMC and Left-Congress-Indian Secular Front alliance as they clearly felt only Mamata Banerjee is in a position to thwart the BJP's declared communal agenda.

Many Hindoos in Bengal also found with their own experience that while most parties, including the BJP make only tall and hollow promises, the Trinamool Congress-government implemented many dole-oriented schemes that benefited the poor, especially women, in both rural and urban areas. The BJP government at the Centre, on the contrary, inflicted untold sufferings on the people by way of Demonetisation, skyrocketing prices of cooking gas, petrol, diesel, GST and horrifying healthcare system that collapsed in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In case of the CPI (M)-led LDF's thumping victory in the Kerala polls, there is also a clear shift of two minority communities, Moslems and Christians, who used to be traditionally the backbone of Congress-led UDF. Both communities seem to have different reasons to rally behind the CPI (M), deserting the Congress

After the anti-CAA protest of 2019, the Moslem community got closer to the CPI (M) as the party got identified as the force to take on the BJP. The immediate response of the CPI (M) in Kerala – a human chain against the CAA and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's announcement that the amended citizenship law would not be implemented in Kerala – found favour with even pro-IUML Moslem organisations. In the run-up to the elections, Vijayan iterated his party's resolve not to implement the CAA.

Also, the BJP manifesto in several ways was a cause of concern in the Moslem community. It promised a law against "love jihad", take steps against foreign remittance that benefits a large population in Kerala and also against religious organisations in the name of preventing extremism. The party mobilised a battery of senior leaders from outside the state to campaign on a strong Hindootva agenda.

The biggest lesson of the Assembly poll results could be that the BJP's aggressive Hindootva politics will not work anymore without a parallel economic agenda to uplift the poor and deprived. Added to this is the BJP government's non-performance and hollow promises. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that only the rhetoric and gift of the gab of the BJP's mascot, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, would not get traction from the people since the pandemic has been ravaging the population irrespective of their religious beliefs and the BJP government has no competence whatsoever to save the people from the scourge.

From now on the dynamics of national politics may not be as it has been since 2014. It may not be the beginning of the end of the BJP but the party has to reinvent itself with much more seriousness and search for moorings beyond Modi-Shah era if it does not wish to crumble like today's Congress.

### WISDOM CORNER

Your own mind is a sacred enclosure into which nothing harmful can enter except by your permission.

ARNOLD BENNETT

The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to go beyond them into the impossible.

ARTHUR C. CLARKE

How little do they see what really is, who frame their hasty judgment upon that which seems.

DANIEL WEBSTER

### WORDS**WORTH**

# Muggins

t's usually said by a person about himself, as a slightly bitter indication that he feels he has allowed himself to be exploited: But did the MP offer to put the fare on his expenses? Aye, right. He stepped imperiously from the car, leaving muggins here to pick up the tab (Daily Mail, 11 Oct. 2008). As in this example, the word is often followed by here, with the speaker literally or figuratively pointing to himself. It's not just British, though: Australians have Billy Muggins. And Americans know of it, too, though they encounter it mainly as the optional rule in the card game cribbage in which, if a player fails to claim his full score on any turn, his opponent may call out Muggins and take the overlooked points for himself. This is clearly a specialist use of the same term. Muggins appears as a family name several times in eighteenth-century literary works — in particular by Tobias Smollett, John O'Keefe, Oliver Goldsmith and Charles Dibdin often for an exciseman (a British official who collected excise duties and attempted to prevent smuggling) or some other person who is foolish or easily tricked. The earliest example in the Oxford English Dictionary is from 1703. The OED also points out that Muggins belongs with a small set of supposed family names that indicate unsophisticated country attitudes, or a person easily imposed upon or lacking common sense.

### LOL

# Just cut your hair first

A young man comes home and says "Dad, just got my driver's license and would like to use the family car." Father replies, "O.K., son. But, first, you have to get good grades in school, keep your room clean, make the yard is neat, and cut your hair. Come back in a few months and then we'll see."

Well, several months pass and the young man comes into the house with

his report card in his hand. "Dad, I got great marks on my report card. I've been keeping my room as

neat as a pin, and the yard is always ship-shape. How about letting me use the car?"
Father replies, "That's all true, but son you didn't cut your hair."
Son says "But dad legus had long."

Father replies, "That's all true, but son you didn't cut your hair."
Son says, "But, dad, Jesus had long hair." Father replies, "Yes, son, you're perfectly right. And he walked everywhere he went."

### FOCUS SELF-HELP

# **SMALL STEPS TO SUCCESS**

hen my host Federico Giovanni, a fifty-something, tall, athletic, and handsome Italian offered to take me cycling about four months ago, I was sceptical, not without reason. The beautiful Sai Kung country park in the New Territories in Hong Kong is a scenic haven for cyclists, hikers, trekkers alike. But unlike Federico, although of similar age, my fitness level was nothing to write home about. The cycling route involved many steep uphills and distances of tens of kilometres. I wasn't sure if I was up to the challenge. The last year of the pandemic

has been devastating for most of the world, to say the least! Hong Kong has been somewhat of an exception in that it didn't have to clamp a total or even partial lockdown at any point in time. However, it had borne the brunt of the global calamity having to impose precautionary restrictions on international travel, restaurants, bars, gyms that have restricted business and life to a large extent. The economy of Hong Kong is dependent on travel, tourism and international commerce have seen a significant slow down following on from the similar impact of the pro-democracy movementrelated protests a year earlier. It has been a period when most people have experienced major changes - mostly negative. Fortunately for me, the two new acquisitions have been entirely positive - cycling and learning the basics of Indian classical music.

Dhanada K

**CONTRARY TO** 

**THE POPULAR** 

**NOTION THAT** 

**BIG SUCCESS** 

**REOUIRES BIG** 

**COMES FROM** 

**SMALL BUT** 

**EFFORTS TO** 

REPEATED

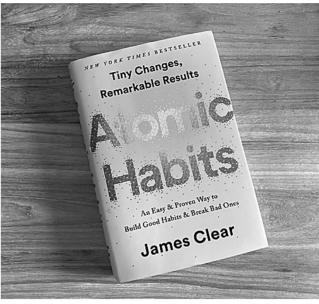
**IMPROVE** 

**MOST CASES, IT** 

**EFFORT. IN** 

Mishra

Before starting cycling seriously, I was well above the upper end of the normal weight range for my height. My Body Mass Index (BMI calculated as weight in kg divided by the square of height in metres) was about 27.5 while the healthy BMI range is from 18-24. At that time, my exercise regime consisted of long walks and weekend trekking and the occasional game of badminton or basketball at the university gym. It kept me reasonably fit but didn't bring my weight down despite my vegetarian and frugal diet. It's that stage of life (on the wrong side of fifty!) when one starts to hear the footsteps of chronic health issues



James Clear didn't go on to become a professional baseball player although he was among the best at the university level. What the power of atomic habits did for him was to fulfil his potential

cholesterol, blood pressure, sugar that have thankfully remained at bay so far. Then one afternoon about a year ago, I felt breathless as I went for a casual jog on the road uphill. Cycling looked daunting looking at the meandering steep roads of Sai Kung country park!

Then I came across a remarkable book 'Atomic Habits' by James Clear. Two stories inspired me in the book. The first was that of the author himself who survived a terrible near-fatal accident in 2002 when a baseball bat slipped out of the hands of the batter and crashed into his face. After recovering from a medically induced coma with a broken nose, multiple skull fractures, damaged eyes, James went on not only to make it to the University Baseball team but also made it to the All American team of his senior year while earning academic honours at the same time. The other was the story of the remarkable recovery of the British Cycling team which had won only one Gold medal in the Olympics since 1902. On top of that, no British cyclist had ever won the

Tour de France. It all changed starting in 2003 with the hiring of Dave Brailsford as the performance director. By the time of the Beijing Olympics in 2008, the British cyclists won 60 per cent of all the gold medals on offer. At the London Olympics of 2012, they set nine Olympics records and seven world records. Between 2007 and 2017 British cyclists won an astounding five Tour de France vic tories. From a team that cycle manufacturers had refused to sell their bicycles to for fear of being associated with mediocrity, they had come a long way

The secret behind both these inspiring stories - one on a personal level and the other across a national sports team was attributable to what James Clear called the power of Atomic Habits or otherwise known as the aggregation of marginal gains. In the case of James, his desire to get back on the baseball team made him adopt several habits on his long road to full recovery that helped him excel both in his chosen sports and academics. On the other hand, the

dogged pursuit of tiny improvements (sometimes called 1 per cent rule) is everything a British cyclist did; be it adjusting the seats to perfection or rubbing alcohol on the tires for better grips or using sensors to monitor performance showed remarkable results as they added up over time. Contrary to the popular notion that big success requires big effort, in most cases, it comes from small but repeated efforts to improve. In the words of the author, there is no such thing as an overnight success!

Prof Kiran Seth, founder of

SPIC MACAY, often gives the example of how a continuous drop of water can make a hole in a stone but the same amount of water poured at once will not be able to make even a mark. Faced with the daunting challenge of learning to bicycle with experienced and almost professional cyclists who were much fitter than me was a great opportunity for me to test this principle. Indeed, starting with my awkward first steps when I could barely ride a few kilometres without running out of energy and breath, with consistent incremental improvement, I have been able to come a long way to at least ride up to 60-70 km at a reasonable clip with my co-cyclists. As a result, I have managed to lose about 10 kg of excess baggage in the form of unnecessary fat with my BMI at a healthy 24. My experience with learning to sing for one who was considered tone deaf has been something similar - a topic for another article.

James Clear didn't go on to become a professional baseball player although he was among the best at the university level. What the power of atomic habits did for him was to fulfil his potential. I have no illusion of becoming a top cyclist, but I am confident of being able to use cycling to keep myself fit and fulfil my potential. If I can do it I am sure and so can every one of you.

The author is a civil engineering professor on leave from KMBB College of Engineering under the Biju Patnaik University currently based in Hong Kong. He can be reached at dhanadam@gmail.com

### IN JEST THIS

# Work hard, but think of the big picture too



Melvin Durai

LOOKING AT THE
BIG PICTURE IS
WHAT ATHLETES
DO WHEN THEY
MAKE SURE
THEY'RE FULLY
RECOVERED FROM
AN INJURY BEFORE
RETURNING TO
THEIR SPORT

n Odisha man was recently photographed studying for the Chartered Accountants exam. He was sitting cross-legged on a bed, with a textbook, notebook and calculator in front of him. That's not an unusual sight, of course, until you realize that he was in a hospital, undergoing treatment for COVID-19.

Vijay Kulange, the District Magistrate and Collector of Ganjam district, took a photo of the man while visiting MKCG Medical College Hospital in Berhampur. He shared the photo on Twitter with this message: "Success is not coincidence. You need dedication... Your dedication makes you forget your pain. After that, success is only formality."

As an IAS officer, Kulange knows how much dedication it takes to pass a professional exam. His message is a positive one: work hard and you will be successful.

But here's my message to the man in the hospital: survive Covid

first, then try to survive the CA exam.

I know how tempting it is to keep working hard, even when you're sick. But you have to look at the big picture. You have to get better first. Once you're fully recovered, you'll be able to dedicate all your energy, all your attention to pleading with the authorities to

postpone the exam. Looking at the big picture is what athletes do when they make sure they're fully recovered from an injury before returning to their sport. It's tempting to return soon. especially if you've got a big championship like Wimbledon to compete in, but you are risking re-injury and your performance will probably suffer. And while many professional leagues present annual trophies to the MVP (most valuable player), none of them present trophies to the MIP (most injured player).

If you asked the Professional Golf Association (PGA) why they don't hand out such a trophy, their answer would be concise: "Tiger Woods already has enough trophies." You may be glad to hear that the

man in the Odisha hospital got a reprieve of sorts. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India recognised the hardships of students during the pandemic and decided to postpone the final and intermediate CA exams, which were scheduled for May 21 and 22. The new dates haven't been announced, but students will be given notice of at least 25 days, enough time to get their affairs in order before taking the exam. I'm not suggesting that the exams will kill them, but it's always good to be prepared for any result. In fact, I'd recommend that students write letters to their parents and other loved ones before taking the exam.

"Dear Father and Mother: As you know, I am about to take the most important exam of my life. It will determine whether I become a Chartered Accountant or continue to live at home with you.

It will determine whether I can find a match easily for myself on Shaadi.com or whether I need to rely on Sima Aunty. I have spent many hours studying for the exam, and I hope it will be easy. I hope I will be able to leave the exam room on my own power. But if something happens to me during the exam, I just want you to know that I love you. An IAS officer tweeted that you need dedication to achieve success. I hope he is right. I have been so dedicated to passing the exam that I have been taking special pills that help me stay awake at night. My eyes and stomach hurt a lot. The IAS officer says that my dedication will make me forget my pain, but perhaps I need more dedication. He also says that success is only a formality. I hope this is true. More than 4 lakh students take the exam every year and only 15 per cent pass. Failure can also be a formality, I suppose. Anyway, please pray for my success. God only knows how hard I have worked.

TO THE EDITOR

etters

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

to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

# Healthcare collapse

Sir, Apropos "O2 crunch kills 24 in Karnataka", Orissa POST, May 4, Karnataka's fight against Covid-19 has faced many pitfalls right from the start with CM BS Yediyurappa failing to rein in his warring ministers during the initial days. Then his inability along with that of concerned ministers to evolve a strategy to counter the second wave explains the lack of strong political leadership in this hour of crisis. Authorities insist that the deaths in Chamarajanagar were not linked to non-availability of oxygen and that the deceased had comorbidities. But the fact remains that all the dead were on oxygen support and it is unlikely that they would all succumb together to their comorbidities in a span of 24 hours. The government has repeatedly assured that there is no scarcity of medical oxygen in the state, but the ground realities are completely different. Many deaths are getting reported from across the state due to shortage of oxygen. In October last, six Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen plants were sanctioned to Karnataka under PM Cares, but not one of them is operational as yet. While neighbouring Kerala exports surplus oxygen to other states, it is baffling that Karnataka has still not got its basics right, be it hospital or ICU beds, Covid Care Centres, vital medicines or vaccines. And, more outrageous is - deaths have become a matter of mere statistics without humane impulse

*N Sadhasiva Reddy,* BANGALORE

### Scarce resources

Sir, Thousands of people in India have lost their lives due to severe shortage of oxygen, ventilators, medicines, beds, ambulances and other health-related items. People have to pay between Rs 20,000 and Rs 1 lakh for oxygen. Even then, it may not be available. It must be admitted that the government of India has been unable to prevent the second wave and the health model is completely faulty and unscientific. The government has also declared itself incapable to vaccinate all people leaving them to rely on the market. This is because the government is focusing on benefit private pharma owners. The government has spent Rs 2,500 crore for the Ram temple, Rs 4,200 crore for the Kumbh Mela, Rs 3,000 crore for the Statue of Unity, Rs 400 crore for Modi's foreign trips, Rs 125 crore for Trump's visit to India and Rs 20,000 crore for the Central Vista project. Now the government is asking people for donations to fight the pandemic. Even after donating, the people could not ask for an account of where the money was being spent on.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR



# TWO STATES





# Covid third wave may hit kids, MP govt 'hiding' real death toll **BMC** prepares paediatric wards

Mumbai, May 4: Preparing for a third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic which is expected to hit children, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and Maharashtra government are gearing up by setting up Paediatric Covid Care Wards in the city and elsewhere, officials said here Tuesday.

Taking an early initiative, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray last week directed all district collectors and municipal commissioners in the state to be ready for the Covid third onslaught which may also hit children in a big way. Tourism Minister Aditva

Thackeray who is Guardian Minister of Mumbai Suburban District has held discussions with BMC Mayor Kishori Pednekar, Additional Municipal Commissioner Sanieev Jaiswal and

other top officials in this regard. Among other things, he suggested to the BMC to create separate Paediatric Covid Care Wards anticipating the next wave and the

demographics it may target. "Since last year, our jumbo covid care centres also have units of Covid +ve dialysis and maternity

care as well. As the virus mutates and targets different age groups, our response to it must actively mu-

tate as well," said Aditya Thackeray.

As per latest health data of the Public Health Department, nearly two-thirds of the state's infections reported now are in age groups below 50, with the highest new cases reported in the 31-40 age (22.09 per cent), 41-50 years (18.15 per cent), 21-30 age (17.51 per cent).

Children in the 0-10 years account for 3.04 per cent, and older children-and teens in the 10-20 years are more than double at 6.80 per cent, As the virus

mutates and targets different age groups, our response to it must actively mutate as well

ADITYA THACKERAY I TOURISM MINISTER

of the state's new cases, giving rise to huge concerns as the situation is vastly different from the 2020 first Covid-19 hit. The Paediatric Covid Care Ward is slated to come up at the NESCO Jumbo Covid Care Centre in Goregaon east suburb of Mumbai - and 700 beds are expected to be added.

This would include 300 for a dedicated Paediatric Covid Care Ward comprising Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) with a capacity of 25 beds each to cater to the infants PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, May 4: The Congress Tuesday accused the Madhya Pradesh government of under-reporting COVID-19 cases and deaths, claiming that over one lakh people have died due to the viral infection in the state so far against the official figure of 5,905.

The ruling BJP dismissed the claim, saying the Congress was only making allegations instead of helping people. "About one to 1.5 lakh people have died due to the pandemic in Madhya Pradesh and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has been misleading people," State Congress working president Jitu Patwari alleged, talking to reporters here.

Around 5,000 people have died in the state capital Bhopal alone since the outbreak of the pandemic and of these over 2,500 bodies were cremated as per the COVID-19 protocol, the opposition leader claimed.

The same is true of other cities including Indore, Jabalpur and Gwalior; and about 3,000 persons have died in each of 52 districts during the pandemic, Patwari claimed. But the government records show only 100 to 200 deaths per district, he said. The government is also not carrying out testing properly to hide the real number of COVID-19 patients, the Congress



leader alleged.

The situation was grim on the medical facilities front too, he claimed. "Madhya Pradesh Congress will give a reward of ₹11 lakh to the chief minister if he shows us a hospital where all facilities to fight COVID are available. He could not build even a good hospital during his 17-year tenure as CM,' Patwari said. He also demanded that power bills and school fees be waived, and financial assistance be given to lower and middle-class families. Alleging rampant black marketing of Remdesivir injec-

tions, a drug used to treat coronavirus patients in certain cases, Patwari said BJP MLAs and leaders were distributing the injections.

"The government should also file criminal cases against those who are responsible for deaths due to the shortage of oxygen. A financial assistance of ₹four lakh should be given to (the kin of) those who died due to shortage of oxygen," he demanded.

Reacting to Patwari's allegations, state BJP secretary Rajneesh Agrawal said, "The pandemic is spread across states including the

Congress-ruled ones. All parties should come forward to save people. The state government and BJP workers are helping people. But where is Congress and what it has been doing? It is only making allegations."

There could be a dispute over the data of deaths, but "a huge population is to be saved from the infection and Congress should tell what is its role in that," Agrawal said. According to the state health department, as of Monday evening Madhva Pradesh's COVID-19 caseload had crossed the six lakh-mark while the death toll was 5,905.

# Consider providing masks, sanitizers to homeless, poor: HC to Maha govt

Mumbai, May 4: The Bombay High Court Tuesday asked the Maharashtra government and civic bodies to consider using part of fines collected from the people not wearing masks for distributing sanitizers and masks to the persons from the lower strata of society.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice GS Kulkarni said homeless people, beggars and those living on roads are usually seen without masks and may not be in a position to purchase them regularly.

The high court was informed by the government that the fines collected from the people for not wearing masks was used by the disaster management department towards COVID-19 related resources.

'You (government and other civic bodies) may also utilize this fine amount collected to provide masks to the homeless people and beggars or to those persons who are living under the poverty line so that they need not purchase," the bench said.

"Masks and sanitizers should be given to the unattended segment of the society," Justice Kulkarni said.

The high court added that authorities should carry out a drive to ensure that every person wears



a mask."I have seen people in Malabar Hill (south Mumbai) going for jogging or early morning walks without masks. A few weeks back we learnt from news reports that there is a high number of COVID-19 cases in Malabar Hill high rises. These people do not care about their own lives and put others also at risk." Chief Justice Datta said.

The HC also said that the police or civic body marshals should step up their drive against this.

It also said that the govern should also look into how vaccination can be provided to those people who do not have any electronic devices to register themselves. The high court was hearing a public interest litigation seeking a uniform policy for collection of fines throughout the state for not wearing masks and also suggested the use of special masks for persons with speech and hearing disabili-

The bench has posted the matter for further hearing May 6.

# FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC WITH APPS & OXYGEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Mumbai, May 4: Her exam revision done, schoolgirl Swadha Prasad gets on with her real work: Finding life-saving oxygen, drugs and hospital beds for COVID-19 patients as India reels from a brutal second wave of infections.

As their government struggles to tackle the pandemic, young Indians have stepped into the breach, setting up apps to crowdsource aid, delivering key supplies and using social media to direct resources to people in need.

Prasad works with dozens of volunteers - all aged between 14 and 19 - as part of the youth-led organisation UNCUT, building online databases packed with information about medical resources available across the country.

It is a 24/7 operation, with the teenagers constantly on their phones as they verify the availability of supplies, update information in real-time and field calls from frantic relatives.

"Some of us do midnight to morning shifts, because the calls don't stop at 3am," said Prasad, 17, who works a 14-hour stretch from before midday until one in the morning.

It is a long and often tiring affair, the Mumbai-based student said, but added: "If I can help save a life, there is no part of me that is going to say no." And lives have been saved, she said, pointing to a case where the team was able to source



Shanawaz Shaikh (right) checks the pressure of a cylinder at an oxygen distribution centre in a slum in Mumbai.

oxygen for a young COVID-19 patient in the middle of the night after an agonising two-hour wait.

"It's not only about providing resources ... sometimes people just need to know they are not alone", she said. With two-thirds of its 1.3billion people under the age of 35 India is an overwhelmingly young country, but its youth have never been called on to shoulder such

huge responsibilities As India's pandemic has grown ever more dystopian - with crematoriums running out of space and patients, including a former ambassador, dying in hospital parking lots - many have volunteered in droves. In the slums of Mumbai, Shanawaz Shaikh has provided

free oxygen to thousands of people. Known popularly as the "oxygen man", the 32-year-old sold his cherished SUV last June to fund the initiative after his friend's pregnant cousin died in a rickshaw while trying to get admitted to a hospital. "She died because she couldn't get oxygen in time," he told AFP.

so many requests nearly a year "We used to get around 40 calls

He never expected to be fielding

a day last year, now it's more like 500," he said.

Shaikh's team of 20 volunteers are also battling a massive shortage, made worse by profiteers.

"It's a test of one's faith," he said, describing how he sometimes travels dozens of kilometres to source

oxygen for desperate patients. "But when I am able to help someone, I feel like crying.'

# Now, GPS keeps an eye on oxygen tankers in Maha MOBO which has the technical

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 4: The Maharashtra Transport Department in collaboration with the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA) state unit has fitted GPS devices to monitor the movement of oxygen tankers in the state, an official said here Tuesday.

From Monday, 250 oxygen tankers fitted with the GPS devices have enabled the Transport Department to keep 24X7 tabs on the vehicles on a single dashboard set up in the Transport Commissioner's office.

The development came after FADA State Chairperson Amar Jatin Sheth met Transport Commissioner Avinash Dhakane and discussed the issues recently.

Following Dhakane's recommendation, the FADA decided to arrange the GPS devices, roped in

knowhow and expertise and spent ₹10 lakh for the venture. FADA president Vinkesh Gulati

said the move would strengthen the hands of the state government at the height of the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. It will also help save precious

lives of patients by providing them with the lifesaving oxygen on time, and help the efficient management of tankers' movements, said Sheth. Dhakane appreciated the con-

tribution of FADA and said the GPS fitted tankers would be able to do a quick turnaround and help save more peoples' lives.

Maharashtra currently is the worst-hit by the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of infections and deaths, though the situation is\_ gradually improving, and there is a huge demand for oxygen among the patients.



# Special cell for kids orphaned by pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 4: The Maharashtra government announced a special cell to protect children orphaned due to the COVID-19 pandemic or any other reason, an official said Tuesday. A statement from the state

Women and Child Development department said there were reports of anti-social elements trying to take advantage of children whose parents had died from the coronavirus infection. It said there were reports of

such children being illegally adopted for trafficking purposes and asked people to call on special helpline 1098 or the State Adoption Resource Agency to alert authorities in case they came across such incidents.

As of Monday, the overall COVID-19 caseload in Maharashtra stood at 47,71,022 while the death toll reached 70,851, the state health department had said.

Given the huge rise in cases, Maharashtra has been battling the shortage of medical oxygen in many hospitals.

# Rickshaw 'ambulance' offers free O2, transport

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Bhopal, May 4: When auto-rickshaw driver Mohammad Javed Khan saw people carrying their coronavirus-stricken parents to hospitals on their backs as they were too poor to afford an ambulance, he knew he had to help.

Khan, a 34-year-old driver in the central Indian city of Bhopal, sold his wife's jewellery and converted his three-wheeled vehicle into a small ambulance, fitting it out with an oxygen cylinder, an oximeter to measure oxygen levels in the blood, and other medical supplies.

critically ill patient cannot be brought to the hospital without oxygen support. So, I thought, why not turn my three-wheeler into an ambulance. It's not as spacious as an ambulance, but it can surely save lives MOHAMMAD JAVED KHAN

As India grap-

ples with a harrowing Covid-19 crisis that has seen infections skyrocket and the healthcare system stretched to breaking point, indi-



viduals like Khan have stepped forward to try and help their local communities

"A critically ill patient cannot be brought to the hospital without oxygen support. So, I thought, why not turn my threewheeler into an ambulance. It's not as spacious as an ambulance, but it can surely save lives," Khan told AFP.

"I see young people struggling without oxygen. Even when they call ambulances, the ambulances are charging 5,000-10,000 rupees. How will a poor person be able to afford it? Especially during this pandemic when most people don't have an in-

A donor provided him with a cylinder and another with the

oximeter. A doctor taught Khan how to use the cylinder and oximeter to safely supply the lifesaving gas to patients as he drove them to a hospital. "Many people have come forward to help me with donations and have requested me to continue driving around until the pandemic is over." he said.

"It is thanks to the help of so

Khan briefly ran into trouble with the authorities when police charged him for operating his rickshaw without an emergency permit. But after an outcry on social media, police withdrew the charges

many people, I am able to do this. I couldn't have done this on my own.

Khan briefly ran into trouble with the authorities when police charged him for operating his autorickshaw without an emergency permit during Madhya Pradesh state's virus lockdown, India Today reported. But after an outcry on social media, police withdrew the charges and issued him with a special pass, the broadcaster added.

Madhya Pradesh, like many other states, has witnessed a spike in cases in recent weeks that had led to shortages of oxygen and other critical medical supplies. Crematoriums and burial grounds have also struggled to cope with the influx of bodies.

# 'missing' health min

**Congress announces** 

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

reward to trace

Bhopal, May 4: The Madhya Pradesh Congress Tuesday claimed state Health Minister Dr Prabhuram Choudhary is 'missing' at a time when people are facing various problems due to the spike in COVID-19 cases, and offered a reward of ₹11,000 to trace Addressing a press conference

working president Jitu Patwari said nobody knows where is the state's health minister. "If someone can trace him, the Congress will give a reward of

via video-conference, MP Congress

₹11,000. What is his contribution to the state's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic? Zero," the MLA claimed.

However, BJP state secretary Rajneesh Agrawal termed it as a "political gimmick" of the

"The minister and the entire 🗦 health department are working in this time of crisis. If Patwari want to meet the minister, he can directly call him," Agrawal

Choudhary was recently seen campaigning for the Damoh Assembly bypoll in MP.

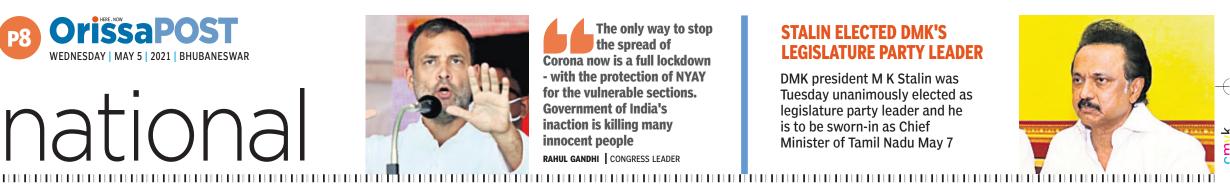
# national



The only way to stop the spread of Corona now is a full lockdown - with the protection of NYAY for the vulnerable sections. **Government of India's** inaction is killing many innocent people RAHUL GANDHI CONGRESS LEADER

#### STALIN ELECTED DMK'S **LEGISLATURE PARTY LEADER**

DMK president M K Stalin was Tuesday unanimously elected as legislature party leader and he is to be sworn-in as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu May 7



measures we are (already) taking to check the spread of virus successful without people's cooperation

ANIL VIJ HARYANA HOME MINISTER

We are fighting and will continue to do so in future. Bengal will witness change at the hands



DILIP GHOSH BJP'S WEST BENGAL PRESIDENT

Murder case should be initiated against Arvind Kejriwal and his giving Delhi a robust health care system and even did not complete those hospitals which were initiated by the previous

SANDEEP DIKSHIT FORMER CONGRESS MP

#### SHORT TAKES

#### Two militants killed in J&K

Srinagar: Two militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district Tuesday, police said. The security forces had launched a cordon-andsearch operation at Nathipora in the Bomai area of Baramulla after receiving information about the presence of some militants there, a police official said. As the forces were conducting the searches, the militants fired upon them. The forces retaliated, and in the ensuing encounter, two militants were killed, the official said.

#### 5 die as tractor falls into pond

Nellore: Five agriculture workers lost their lives in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh Tuesday when the driver of their tractor lost control of the vehicle and it fell into a roadside pond. The mishap took place in Sajjapuram village in Nellore mandal. According to police, the victims were on their way to harvest watermelons. The victims include three women and two men, who were aged between 19 and 60 years. The bodies of the victims were taken to the local government hospital. Police have registered a case and are investigating the matter.

#### HP sees record **Covid-19 deaths**

Shimla: Himachal Pradesh Tuesday recorded its highest single-day spike of 3,824 COVID-19 cases and 48 deaths, a senior official said, citing data updated till 7 pm The death toll in the state due to COVID-19 now stands at 1,647 and thetally at 1,10,945. The number of active cases in the state has climbed to 23,572, the

#### 143 arrested for flouting nCoV norms

Srinagar: Police have arrested 143 people in the Kashmir valley in a span of 24 hours for violating lockdown guidelines issued by the administration to curb COVID-19, officials said Tuesday. They said vehicles were seized as well for flouting the norms in Budgam and Bandipora districts. "During last 24 hours, police have arrested 143 people, lodged 79 FIRs and also realised fines to the tune of Rs 84,930 from 620 people for violating the guidelines throughout Kashmir valley, an official said.

# Thousands dying while PM 'building new house': Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 4: Questioning the government's priorities during the COVID-19 crisis, the Congress today said it should deploy all resources in saving the lives of the people instead of building a new prime minister's residence.

The opposition party's criticism came following reports that the prime minister's residence would be completed by December 2022 as part of the central vista project.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that the prime minister's "ego is bigger than people's lives" and asked why RS 13,450 crore was being spent on the central vista project and not for fully vaccinating people or providing them oxygen or financial help during the pandemic.

"Rs 13,450 crores for Central Vista. Or, for fully vaccinating 45 crore Indians. Or, for 1 crore oxygen cylinders. Or, to give 2 crore families NYAY of RS 6000. But, PM's ego is bigger than people's lives," he said on Twitter. Congress spokesperson Shaktisinh Gohil said at a press conference that while the people are gasping for life, "the Sultan is busy building his castle".

'Such expenses send a message to the public that the government's priorities are elsewhere," the Congress general secretary said. He urged the government to reconsider the decision and spend the money on improving health infrastructure to save people's lives instead." "Today the priority should



be to help save people's lives, provide them with vaccine, oxygen, medicines and ICU beds," the Congress leader said.

"Thousands of people are falling prey to Corona every day and 'Fakir' is building a new house for himself?

What more will the dreamer show the country," Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said in a tweet in Hindi.

Gohil, who is an MP from Gujarat, alleged that "even as chief minister. his (Modi's) priority was to build a big palace for himself".

The Congress spokesperson said experts are now saying that only a lockdown can break this chain of the virus transmission and the government should follow their advice. But do provide for the poor by putting Rs 6000 in their accounts, he said.

Gohil said 14th century Delhi Sultan Mohammed bin Tughlaq had ruined the country's economy by changing its currency 'as Modi has done after demonetisation". The Congress leader said the entire country is looking up to the government and its leader for saving their lives. He said the Congress party's sympathies are with all those who have lost their loved ones.

# Himachal court stays tree felling permissions

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shimla, May 4: Hearing a petition on illegal felling of trees within the municipal jurisdictions of the state capital, the Himachal Pradesh High Court Tuesday stayed all permissions of felling or lopping of trees, except the permissions granted to the state Electricity Department.

A division bench of Chief Justice L. Narayana Swamy and Justice Anoop Chitkara passed the order on a petition treating it as public interest litigation.

The petitioner highlighted the issue of illegal felling of green trees by violating provisions of the Forest Conservation Act and the Himachal Pradesh Municipal Corporation Act and also violating directions passed by various courts.

The petitioner prayed to quash and set aside the permissions granted by the Tree Authority Committee for felling of trees and also to set aside notification regarding constitution of the Cabinet sub-committee to decide and dispose of all matter of felling of trees. The petitioner also prayed to hold an impartial and independent inquiry as to whether convincing and cogent reasons were recorded, photography and videography was conducted while processing the applications and environment clearance was obtained.

# **Covid tally in India** crosses 2 crore mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi. May 4: India's total tally of COVID-19 cases crossed the 2crore mark with over 50 lakh infections being added in just 15 days.

The total tally of coronavirus cases in the country mounted to 2,02,82,833 with 3,57,229 new infections being reported in a day while the death toll increased to 2,22,408 with 3,449 new fatalities, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday. India's total COVID-19 infections

had surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19 after which it took 107 days to reach 1.25 crore on April 5. However, it only took 15 days for the cases to cross the 1.50 mark. Registering a steady increase, the active cases have increased to 34,47,133 comprising 17 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 81.91 per cent, the data updated at 8 am

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,66,13,292, while the case fatal-

ity rate was recorded at 1.10 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark August 7, 30 lakh August 23, 40 lakh September 5 and 50 lakh September 16.It went past 60 lakh September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh October 29, 90 lakh November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of 1.50 crore on

April 19. According to the ICMR, 29,33,10,779 samples have been tested up to May 3 with 16,63,742 samples being tested Monday.

The 3,449 new fatalities include 567 from Maharashtra, 448 from Delhi, 285 from Uttar Pradesh, 266 from Chhattisgarh, 239 from Karnataka, 155 from Punjab, 154 from Rajasthan, 140 each from Gujarat and Haryana, 129 from Jharkhand, 128 from Uttarakhand and 122 from Tamil Nadu. A total of 2,22,408 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 70,851 from Maharashtra, 17,414 from Delhi, 16,250 from Karnataka, 14,468 from Tamil Nadu, 13,447 from Uttar Pradesh, 11,637 from West Bengal, 9,472 from Punjab and 9,275 from Chhattisgarh.

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." the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and

# SC strikes down WB Housing Regulation Act

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 4: The Supreme Court Tuesday quashed the West Bengal Housing Industry Regulation Act (WB-HIRA), 2017, holding it "unconstitutional" and "repugnant" to the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 passed by the Parliament.

A bench comprising Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and M.R Shah said: "Repugnancy in the constitutional sense is implicated not because there is a conflict between the provisions enacted by the state legislature with those of the law enacted by Parliament but because once Parliament has enacted a law. it is not open to the state legislature to legislate on the same subject matter and, as in this case, by enacting provisions which are bodily lifted from and verbatim the same as the statutory provisions enacted by Parliament." The bench added that the overlap between the provisions of WB-HIRA and the RERA is so significant as to leave no manner of doubt that the test of repugnancy based on an identity of subject matter is clearly established. "The state legislature has encroached upon the legislative authority of Parliament which has supremacy



falling within the Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule. The exercise conducted by the state legislature of doing so, is plainly unconstitutional," said the bench, in its 190-page judgment. The top court noted that the West Bengal law was in direct conflict with the central legislation by lacking necessary safeguards to protect consumers, and creating a parallel regime. Additionally, the top court added that it is clear that WB-HIRA did not have presidential assent and was repugnant to the RERA under Article 254. Striking down the state law, the top court said: "Hence, in exercise of the jurisdiction under Article 142, we direct that the striking down of WB-HIRA will not affect the registrations, sanctions and permissions previously granted under the legislation prior to the date of this judgment.

# **SOME DELHI HOSPS** STILL STRUGGLING FOR OXYGEN SUPPLY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 4: Some hospitals in the national capital appealed to authorities Tuesday to replenish their oxygen stocks, saying their patients' lives were at stake owing to erratic supplies.

For the past several days, hospitals across the national capital and its suburbs have been sending out SOS messages on social media about a shortage of oxygen.

Triton Hospital, where more than 10 babies are in the neonatal intensive care unit, had sent an SOS around 9:30 am.

"We have got 3 D-type ders, it will keep us afloat for 3-4 hours. We need around 25 cylinders a day. Our vehicle is waiting at the suppliers' plant. The vendor hasn't given us anything so far," said Dr Deepali Gupta from

the hospital. In a tweet, AAP MLA Raghav Chadha assured that they would help the hospital re-establish their oxygen supply chain. Around 4 pm, Sama Hospital near Siri Fort had reported an oxygen crisis. The hospital has 30 critical patients and few admitted few are on ventilator.

Chadha said in another tweet, 'Already taken care of, my friend. 4 D-type oxygen cylinders were allotted to Sama Hospital from our SOS reserves maintained at Rajghat Response Point.'

port had said it is left with another 25 metric tonnes of the life-saving gas and sought help

Around 1 am, the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, Vasant Kunj, which has 160 Covid-19 patients on 24-hour oxygen sup-

# Govt was aware about new Covid variants: Scientists

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 4:The scientific community has stated that they had hinted to the Central government about the new variants of Covid-19 virus and also an increase in the cases in May this year. The community, however, did not make any prediction due to lack of data analysis.

Dr M Vidyasagar, who is a professor at IIT (Hyderabad), stated that by March 13 this year Covid cases were showing an upward trend but as they did not have requisite data available so they did not make any prediction.

 $Vidy a sagar \, further \, stated \, that \,$ after they hinted, the government said the authorities made longand medium-term plans to shortterm plans. Based on the events of the past few weeks, however, those plans seem to have been inadequate, said Vidyasagar citing the

current crisis of oxygen supply across the country. The IIT Kanpur study in April also stated that the daily cases in the second wave will increase by May 8. The Kanpur study also predicted a peak of 38 to 44 lakh active cases between May 14 and May 18. The scientists also stated in March that they had alerted the government about the new and more contagious variant of the coronavirus -- SARS-CoV-2 Genetics Consortium, or INSACOG The institution was set up by the government in December last year, specifically to detect genomic variants of the coronavirus. The institution examined 10 national laboratories across the country studying virus variants. Ajay Parida, director of the state-run Institute of Life Sciences and a member of INSACOG, reportedly stated that they first detected B.1.617 in February and alerted

### **MOCKERY OF COVID NORMS**



A crowded market after the Bihar government announced complete lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic in

# WOMEN LAWMAKERS DECLINING IN ASSAM ASSEMBLY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, May 4: The number of women legislators in the 126member Assam Assembly has been declining from a high of 14 in 2011, eight in 2016 and only six this time.

In all 74 women candidates (7.8 per cent) among the total of 946 aspirants contested the recently held threephase Assam Assembly elections and only six of them entered into the Assembly -- three are of the ruling BJP, one of Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and two of opposition

In the previous Assam Assembly elections in 2016, 91 women candidates were in the fray with eight of them elected to the 126-member House while in 2011, 85 women had tried their electoral fate and 14,



highest so far in the House, secured

According to the Election Commission's data, 7.82 per cent women candidates of the total 946 candidates fought the electoral bat-

tle but 4.76 per cent female lawmakers would represent the state in the 126-member House.

Four-time MLA and former Congress minister Ajanta Neog, 57, who weeks before the election joined the BJP, retained her Golaghat seat defeating her nearest opponent Bitupan Saikia of Congress by a margin of 9,325 votes.

Neog is the widow of former Congress leader Nagen Neog who was killed along with eight others by the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom in 1996.

BJP candidate Suman Haripriya, 52, daughter of former Union Minister and BJP MP Bijaya Chakraborty, re-elected from Hajo beating Dulu Ahmed of Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) by a margin of 14,368 votes

Another BJP nominee Nandita Garlosa, 43, in her maiden electoral fight won from Haflong (ST) defeating Congress candidate Nirmal Langthasa by a margin of 18,598 votes.

Congress candidates Nandita Das, 51, elected to the assembly from Boko (SC) seat while her party colleague and newcomer Sibamoni Bora, 60, daughter of former legislator Kiran Bora and daughter-inlaw of former Chief Minister Golap Borbora, won the prestigious Batadroba seat

Das trounced AGP candidate Jyoti Prasad Das while Bora defeated actor-turned-politician Angoorlata Deka by a margin of 52, 466 votes and 32,820 votes respectively.

In a major setback, Assam's longest-serving woman legislator Pramila Rani Brahma of the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) lost the Kokrajhar East seat by 20.095 votes.

The 71-year-old, tribal woman

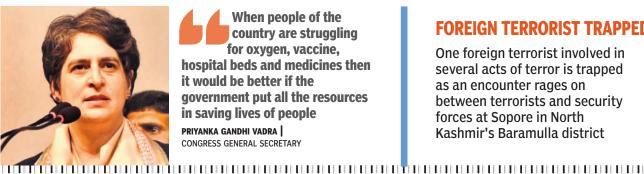
leader was defeated by BJP's new ally United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) candidate Lawrence Islary, 44. Brahma, who was minister both in BJP government headed by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Congress Government led by former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, had first won the Kokrajhar East seat in Western Assam in 1991.

The Opposition Congress, which had formed a 10-party 'Mahajot' (Grand Alliance) to fight the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led alliance, had put up nine women candidates in the polls.

The ruling BJP has nominated seven women candidates, one more than that during the 2016 polls, while its alliance partner AGP likethat of previous elections has put

up two female nominees.

# national



When people of the country are struggling for oxygen, vaccine, hospital beds and medicines then it would be better if the government put all the resources in saving lives of people PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

#### **FOREIGN TERRORIST TRAPPE**

One foreign terrorist involved in several acts of terror is trapped as an encounter rages on between terrorists and security forces at Sopore in North Kashmir's Baramulla district





became the first priority of the people in the UP panchayat polls. The victory of party candidates in large

numbers shows that there is an acceptance of the party among farmers, the youth and villagers too

AKHILESH YADAV SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

When the first wave of coronavirus arrived, oxygen beds, ICU and ventilators were this second wave is extremely dangerous as most people are in

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER We are

committed to democratically fight this ideological battle and the activities of the TMC, which is full of intolerance

J P NADDA BJP PRESIDENT



need of oxygen, ICU and ventilators

#### SHORT TAKES

#### TMC worker stabbed to death

Kolkata: A 54-year-old TMC worker was stabbed to death in West Bengal's Purba Bardhaman district, police said Tuesday. Srinivas Ghosh (54), a TMC panchavat member of Ketugram's Agardhanga area. was stabbed alleged by members of the BJP Monday night when he was returning home, they said. Ghosh was declared brought dead when taken to a nearby hospital. they added. Three people were also injured in the incident and are undergoing treatment, a police officer said, BJP denied the charges and said their members were in no way connected to the incident.

#### RLD's comeback in western UP

Lucknow: The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) is making a spectacular comeback in Uttar Pradesh politics with the panchayat elections. The RLD which had drifted into oblivion after the Muzaffarnagar riots in 2013, is gaining ground with its proactive role in the farmers' agitation. As per the results announced till now, the RLD has bagged eight seats in the zila panchayat in Meerut while the Samajwadi Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party have got six each.

# **Strict Covid curbs**

Kolkata: With the spike in COVID-19 cases, museums, planetarium, zoos, national narks have been closed in West Bengal to avert contamination. The Alipore Zoological Gardens in the city had recorded 400 visitors on an average in April and only 150 people April 30 hefore closing down indefinitely from May 1,

### Godown gutted

Director Asis Samanta said.

Thane: A fire destroyed a furniture godown in Bhiwandi in Thane district Tuesday, though there were no reports of anyone getting injured, an official said. The blaze started at 11:30am and was put out at around 3:40pm by fire-tending vehicles and personnel from Kalyan-Dombivali and Bhiwandi Nizampura civic bodies, Thane Municipal Corporation Regional Disaste Management Cell chief Santosh Kadam said.

### **Woman hangs self**

Ballia: A 23-year-old woman allegedly ended her life by hanging, following a dispute with her mother-in-law. The woman, Rani, was found hanging from a hook in the ceiling of her house in Sonvani village of Uttar Pradesh Tuesday. The police spokesman said that the body has been sent for post mortem.

# **EC** asks Bengal govt to provide security to Nandigram RO



AGENCIES

Kolkata, May 4: Making it clear that the Returning Officer's (RO) decision regarding recounting of votes is final, the Election Commission of India has asked the West Bengal government to provide adequate security to the RO of Nandigarm, where BJPs Suvendu Adhikari pulled off a thrilling win over Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee by a slim margin of 1,956

The state government, on its part, has informed the poll panel that it has complied with the latter's

The Nandigram controversy came to the fore after Banerjee claimed Monday that the RO of the Assembly constituency in East Medinipur district had turned down Trinamool's demand for recounting of votes after Adhikari was declared the winner because his life was 'under threat'

Nandigram witnessed a cliffhanger between Banerjee and her one-time aide Adhikari before the latter was declared winner by a slender margin of 1,956 votes following several twists and turns.

The Commission in its note said, "The Returning Officer (RO) of an Assembly constituency performs statutory functions under the RP Act, 1951, in quasi-judicial capacity independently. As far as the media reports on 'recount' concerning Nandigram is concerned, on such an application being made, the RO shall decide the matter and may allow

#### **PLEA IN SC SEEKS PREZ RULE IN WB**

NEW DELHI: A petition was filed in the Supreme Court Tuesday alleging "widespread violence" in the aftermath of assembly polls in West Bengal and sought imposition of President's rule, deployment of central forces and a probe by a retired apex court judge into the "targeted pogrom". Earlier in the day, senior advocate and BJP's national spokesperson Gauray Bhatia also moved the top court seeking CBI probe into violent incidents in the state during and after the poll process. The new plea has been filed by Tamil Nadu-based 'Indic Collective Trust' through lawyer Suvidutt M S. At least six people were killed in post poll violence in different parts of the state including one in Kolkata, police said.

the application in whole or in part or may reject it in toto if it appears to him to be frivolous or unrea-

The poll panel also made it clear that there no anomaly has been found in the counting process. "No doubts were raised on the results of round-wise counting. This enabled the RO to proceed uninterruptedly with the counting of votes."

The Commission added that the only remedy is to move the High Court. On the basis of media reports on undue pressure on the RO of Nandigram, the Commission directed the Chief Secretary West Bengal to provide adequate security to him, which the state government has now provided.

# India receives more medical supplies

New Delhi, May 4: India Tuesday received essential medical supplies from several countries, including the US, Ireland, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, as hospitals in several states and union territories continued to reel under an exponential growth in COVID-19 cases.

Seven tankers each carrying 20 metric tonnes of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) arrive at Mundra Port in Gujarat in the first such shipment of LMO to India.

'Further consolidating our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. 7 ISO tankers with 20 MT Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) each arrive at Mundra Port (Ìndia). First such shipment of LMO to India. Deeply value the support from UAE. Will help augment oxygen availability," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said on Twitter.

A special flight from the US brought to Delhi the country's fifth consignment of medical aid com-



prising 545 oxygen concentrators. The second shipment of medical supplies from Ireland, included

two oxygen generators, 548 oxygen concentrators, 365 ventilators and other medical equipment. "Deeply grateful to our EU part-

ner Ireland for the support which will help add to our oxygen capacities." Bagchi said. He said an Indian Air Force aircraft carrying 450 oxygen cylinders arrived in

Chennai from the United Kingdom. India also received a shipment of 282 oxygen cylinders, 60 oxygen concentrators, ventilators and other medical supplies from Kuwait.

At least 40 countries have announced medical aid to India so far. The European Union Monday announced additional emergency medical support by its member countries including Denmark, Spain and Netherlands to India to help IAF brings oxygen cylinders from UK

CHENNAI: Nearly 35 tonnes of equipment, including 450 empty oxygen cylinders donated by the UK and airlifted by the Indian Air Force (IAF) from Britain arrived here early Tuesday. According to the Indian Red Cross Society, UK donated 5,000 cylinders to India through it to meet the emergency requirement for empty oxygen cylinders during the second wave of coronavirus in the country. Of these, 900 cylinders were meant for Tamil Nadu.

it deal with the severe wave of infections. Under the additional package. Denmark is sending to India 53 ventilators while Spain is supplying 119 oxygen concentrators and 145 ventilators. The EU said the medical supplies from the Netherlands included 100 oxygen concentrators, 30,000 vials of antiviral drugs Remdesivir and 449

# **BIHAR IMPOSES** LOCKDOWN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, May 4: Lockdown was imposed in Bihar till May 15 amid a surge in COVID-19 cases with the state facing a positivity rate of around 10 per cent, officials said Tuesday.

The decision for the lockdown, which will come into effect Wednesday, was taken at the meeting of the Crisis Management Group presided over by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, they said.

Soon after the meeting, the chief minister announced the decision. following which Chief Secretary Tripurari Sharan along with senior police and administration officers held a press conference to announce the modalities. The chief secretary said that all government and private offices will remain closed during the period.

However, essential services such as civil defence, electricity supply, water supply, fire services, veterinary work, postal and telecommunication will continue to operate. Hospitals, medical laboratories, ambulance services and other healthrelated outlets have been kept out of the ambit of the lockdown. Principal Secretary of Health, Pratyaya Amrit, clarified that the vaccination drive will continue during the lockdown.

# Lions in Hyd zoo test Covid +ve

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, May 4: In perhaps the first such reported incident, eight Asiatic lions in the zoo here have tested positive for COVID-19 after their saliva samples were thoroughly examined by CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Rakesh Mishra, advisor of the premier research institute said Tuesday. The Union Environment

Ministry said the infection was not caused by any variant of concern, adding all the eight lions, since isolated, have responded well to the treatment and were recovering. Further, there was no factual evidence that animals can transmit the disease to humans any further, it said.

"The saliva samples of the Asiatic lions were thoroughly tested and they turned out to be positive. As they were living closely it must have been spread among them," Mishra said in a statement. "Now we are developing a method to test the samples of their faeces. This method would be useful in future as every time it is not possible to collect saliva samples from wild animals," he



added. He further said the virus which is present in the lions at the Nehru Zoological Park here is not any new variant.

"They have mild symptoms and they are eating well and they are fine," he said. Replying to a query, he said there is every possibility of animals contracting the virus as they are also mammals like human beings.

Mishra further said these animals must have got infected through zoo-keeping staff. A senior official of the zoo said they keep sending the samples of the ani-

Over 15.89cr Covid jabs

administered in India

mals to CCMB from time to time for analysis.

As the lions started showing symptoms such as fever, the zoo officials collected the samples and sent them to CCMB. The official further said the samples from the wild animals will be collected either by 'Squeeze cage' method or by tranquilising them. Accordingly, the zoo here, Kakatiya Zoological Park, Warangal, Kawal and Amrabad Tiger Reserves, all National Parks and wildlife sanctuaries in Telangana were closed from May 2.

# LIFE ON WHEELS



A Covid patient on oxygen support waits to be admitted in a hospital in Kanpur

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 4: The cumulative number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 15.89 crore Tuesday with more than four lakh people aged between 18 to 44 years vaccinated in the Phase-3 drive.

A total of 4,06,339 beneficiaries of the age group between 18 and 44 years received their first dose of Covid vaccine across 12 states and Union Territories.

These are Chhattisgarh (1,025), Delhi (40,028), Gujarat (1,08,191), Haryana (55,565), Jammu and Kashmir (5,587), Karnataka (2,353), Maharashtra (73,714), Odisha (6,802), Punjab (635), Rajasthan (76,151), Tamil Nadu (2,744) and Uttar

Pradesh (33,544). Cumulatively, 15.89.32.921 vaccine doses have been administered through 23,35,822 sessions so far, as per the provisional report till 7 a.m. Tuesday, said Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHF).

Of the total vaccination, 94,48,289 Healthcare Workers (HCWs) have been administered first dose and 62,97,900 got second dose.

A total of 1,35,05,877 Frontline Workers (FLWs) have received first dose and 72,66,380 got second dose.

While 4,06,339 beneficiaries aged between 18-44 years have received first dose.

Those aged over 45 years old to 60 years account for 5,30,50,669 who were administered first dose while 41,42,786 injected second dose

# treatment of other ailments'

'Covid delayed



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 4: High concern for patients with Covid-19 infections resulted in delay in treatment of people with non-Covid ailments, finds a survey by NATHEALTH, a healthcare industry body.

The survey "Impact of Covid-19 on patient behaviour towards accessing healthcare facilities," involved 2,134 patients from across India, between January and February 2021.

The results showed that 57 per cent patients cancelled/postponed/rescheduled their treatment plan during the period of March-December 2020. About 34 per cent of OPD patients cancelled or rescheduled their visits to the hospitals, while 100 per cent of the elective surgery patients cancelled/postponed/rescheduled their surgeries. Among patients who cancelled/postponed their treatment, 62 per cent believe that their health condition has been negatively impacted, and 82 per cent patients wished to reschedule/return to their treatment plan by June 2021. "In the last few weeks, continued focus on Covid tests and treatments have reduced attention on noncommunicable diseases, non-Covid surgeries," said — Harsh Mahajan, President, NATHEALTH.

**HUMANITY ABOVE ALI** 

# Pandit-Muslim duo saves lives across NCR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 4: A well-known Kashmiri Pandit chef and an aspiring Kashmiri Muslim journalist are saving thousands of lives by arranging plasma for Covid affected patients across the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR).

Days after the country was hit by a severe second wave of the coronavirus, a social service initiative, "Plasma NCR", was started to help people get plasma for their near and dear ones. The initiative is spearheaded by Sanjay Raina, a Kashmiri Pandit Chef from Srinagar who is based in Delhi, and Adnan Shah, a Kashmiri Muslim who hails from Kupwara and studies

journalism in Delhi. Managing the whole show on

Twitter (@PlasmaNCR), the duo said that one of the reasons to start the initiative was that "when the second wave hit the country and people came out to seek help, it was more about Oxygen, beds and ventilators, and less about Plasma. Although people needed plasma but it wasn't quite visible on social media, so we started this helpline to facilitate Plasma requests".

Ever since it came into being, Plasma NCR has clocked more than 1,500 cases, receiving at least 150 requests for plasma in a single day. Raina said: "We have closed nearly 1,600 cases so far, however, 500-600 of our donors didn't have enough antibodies to actually donate the plasma. Otherwise, we could have closed nearly 2,100 cases."



"Mv parents were expecting me to be home on Eid and had booked my air tickets, but when they came to know about what we were doing, they told me not to come, and serve and help as many people as I can,' Adnan said in a statement. Both Saniav and Adnan are man-

aging nearly 150 donors a day and not a single request goes unattended. The duo provide plasma directly to the families of Covid-affected patients and not to hospital officials.

In a message to the people of the country, the duo said: "This is the time to come forward and help as many people as you can. If you can, tell us and donate plasma, we will arrange the transport for you, which we are currently doing for so many of our generous and kind donors.'

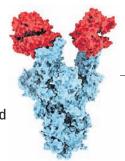
# international



India is one of Israel's closest and most important friends. We stand with India, particularly during these difficult times India is experiencing, and are sending life-saving equipment to our **Indian brothers and sisters** GABI ASHKENAZI | FOREIGN MINISTER, ISRAEL

#### **1ST MOLECULAR IMAGES OF B.1.1.7 COVID-19 MUTATION RELEASED**

Canada's University of British Columbia researchers are the first to publish structural images of N501Y mutation on SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, a change believed to be partly responsible for the infectious nature and spread of variant B.1.1.7





the name of committed against

Mayan people throughout our history and for the discrimination which even now you are victims of

OLGA SÁNCHEZ CORDERO INTERIOR SECRETARY, MEXICO



URSULA VON DER LEYEN PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

good health situation

Given the fact that India is under such terrible stress right now with the extent of the outbreak, the rest of the world

should pitch in to help, similar to what the United States is doing

DR. FAUCI DIRECTOR, NIAID

#### SHORT TAKES

#### Medical supplies for India delayed

Washington: US Air Force flights that were scheduled to leave for India with essential life-saving supplies have been delayed till Wednesday due to maintenance issues, said the Pentagon. We just received word from USTRANSCOM that the flights for India are "delayed until at least Wednesday due to maintenance issues", a Pentagon spokesperson said. So far, only two US Air Force flights have landed in India.

#### New govt wins confidence vote

Bratislava (Slovakia): The new Slovakian government formed after a secret deal to buy Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine triggered a political crisis won a mandatory confidence vote in Parliament Tuesday. Lawmakers voted 89-55 to endorse the four-party coalition government led by Prime Minister Eduard Heger. President Zuzana Caputova appointed the new Cabinet on April 1 after the government of populist Prime Minister Igor Matovic resigned, becoming the first European government to collapse due to its handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

#### Heavy flooding kills at least 37

Kabul: Heavy rains brought severe flooding to nine provinces around Afghanistan in recent days, killing at least 37 people, some of them children, officials said Tuesday. Heavy flooding compounded by mudslides often threatens remote areas of Afghanistan, where infrastructure is poor. Governor Abdul Tahir Faizzada of Western Ghor province said 10 people, including six children, were killed by floodwaters that flowed from area mountains.

### Talks resumed on maritime border

Naqoura (Lebanon): After a nearly six-month pause, Lebanon and Israel Tuesday resumed indirect talks with US mediation over their disputed maritime border. The resumption comes after a new US administration took over. Lebanon has sunk deeper into it economic and financial crisis that started in late 2019 - a culmination of decades of corruption and mismanagement by the political class. The small Mediterranean country is eager to resolve the border dispute with Israel, paving the way for potential lucrative oil and gas deals.

# **G7 mulls a message to China, Russia**

**CHINA IS THE FOCUS OF DISCUSSIONS TUESDAY MORNING WHILE AFTERNOON TALKS WILL TURN TO RUSSIA, INCLUDING HOW TO RESPOND TO A TROOP MANOEUVRES ON** THE BORDER WITH **UKRAINE AND THE IMPRISONMENT OF KREMLIN CRITIC ALEXEI NAVALNY** 

London, May 4: The Group of Seven rich democracies will discuss ways of countering challenges from China and Russia without trying to contain Beijing or escalate tension with the Kremlin, two of its top diplomats said Tuesday.

Founded in 1975 as a forum for the West's richest nations to discuss crises such as the OPEC oil embargo, the G7 is debating responses to the two vast and increasingly assertive countries as well as the



COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

"It is not our purpose to try to contain China or to hold China down,' US President Joe Biden's secretary of state, Antony Blinken told reporters Monday ahead of the first in-person G7 foreign ministers meeting since 2019.

He said the West would defend 'the international rules based order" from subversive attempts by any country, including China.

China is the focus of discussions Tuesday morning while afternoon talks will turn to Russia, including how to respond to a troop manoeuvres on the border with Ukraine and the imprisonment of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

China's spectacular economic and military rise over the past 40 years is seen by diplomats and investors as the most significant geopolitical events of recent times, alongside the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union which ended the Cold War.

The G7 combined is still packs a powerful punch: it has about \$40 trillion in economic clout and three of the world's five official nuclear

Russia was included in what became the G8 in 1997 but was suspended in 2014 after annexing Crimea from Ukraine. China, now the world's second largest economy, has never been a member of the G7.

Britain will seek to agree decisive action from G7 partners to protect China's economic influence and Russian malign activity threaten to undermine them.

'The UK's presidency of the G7 is an opportunity to bring together open, democratic societies and demonstrate unity at a time when it is much needed to tackle shared challenges and rising threats, British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said.

Blinken said the United States would prefer more stable ties with Russia but that much depended on how Russian President Vladimir Putin decided to act, especially in theatres such as Ukraine which Blinken will visit later this week

"We have reaffirmed our unwa vering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine," Blinken said.

'We're not looking to escalate: we would prefer to have a more stable, more predictable relationship. And if Russia moves in that direction, so will we.

The ministers will lay the groundwork for Biden's first scheduled trip abroad since taking office: a G7 summit in Britain next month.

In addition to the G7 members Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, Britain has also invited ministers from Australia, India, South Africa and South Korea this week.

# UK, India to sign Migration and Mobility Partnership

The agreement will facilitate legal travel and encourage talent flows between India and the UK. It is one of the outcomes related to a Virtual Summit between Johnson and Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 4: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met British Home Secretary Priti Patel in London Tuesday to sign a new Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement, which he said would strengthen the "living bridge" between the two countries.

According to the senior Indian Cabinet minister, the agreement will facilitate legal travel and encourage talent flows between India and the UK It is one of the outcomes related to a Virtual Summit between Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Prime Minister Narendra Modi scheduled for Tuesday

"A fruitful meeting this morning with Home Secretary Priti Patel. Signed the Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement that would facilitate legal travel and encourage



talent flows," Jaishankar tweeted alongside images of his meeting with the British-Indian Cabinet minister.

The living bridge between India and UK will get stronger as a result,"

While details of the agreement have not yet been released, it is expected to enhance student numbers coming into the UK in return for illegal migrants being deported back to India.

The issue of illegal Indian migrants in the UK has long been on the agenda of bilateral negotiations, with both sides failing to agree on the numbers in question.

While the UK maintains around 100,000 Indians who are living illegally in the country, India has questioned the veracity of those numbers in the past because that figure is believed to also cover nationals from other parts of the Indian subcontinent. The two sides were close to signing an agreement on the issue in 2018 before it fell through over this ambiguity.

Netanyahu faces

midnight deadline

Jerusalem, May 4: Israeli Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

faced a midnight deadline Tuesday

to put together a new coalition

government or be looking at the

possibility of leading his Likud

party into the opposition for the

cure a parliamentary majority

since March 23 when elections

ended in deadlock for the fourth

consecutive time in the past two

vears. Despite repeated meetings

with many of his rivals and un-

precedented outreach to the leader

of a small Islamist Arab party,

Netanyahu has not been able to

close a deal during a four-week

midnight, at which point the mat-

ter returns to President Reuven

Rivlin in the absence of an agree-

A failure to reach a deal would

Rivlin could give him an addi-

tional two weeks to form a coali-

tion. He could give one of

Netanyahu's opponents an op-

portunity to form a government,

or in a final move of desperation,

send the matter straight to par-

not immediately push Netanyahu

That window was to expire at

Netanyahu has struggled to se-

to form coalition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

first time in 12 years.

# Metro overpass plunges into road

THE MEXICO CITY METRO COLLAPSED KILLING AT LEAST 23 AND INJURING ABOUT 70 PEOPLE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mexico City, May 4: An elevated section of the Mexico City metro collapsed and sent a subway car plunging toward a busy boulevard late Monday, killing at least 23 people and injuring about 70, city officials said. Rescuers initially searched a car left dangling from the overpass for anyone who might be trapped.

Those efforts were suspended early Tuesday, however, because of safety concerns for those working near the precariously dangling car. A crane was brought in to help shore it up. "We don't know if they are alive," Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum said of the people possibly trapped inside the car following one of the deadliest accidents for the city's subway system, which is among the busiest in the world.

Earlier Sheinbaum said someone had been pulled alive from a car that was trapped on the road below. She said 49 of the injured were hospitalized, and that seven were in serious condition and undergoing surgery. There are unfortunately children among the dead," Sheinbaum said, without specifying how many

The overpass was about 5 meters (16 feet) above the road in the borough of Tlahuac, but the train ran above a concrete median strip, which apparently lessened the casualties among motorists on the road below. "A support beam gave way" just as the train passed over it, Sheinbaum said.

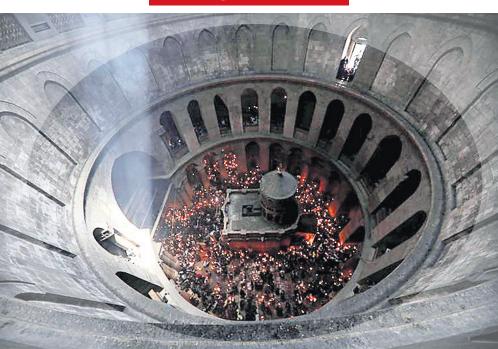
The collapse could represent a major blow for Mexican Foreign Relations Secretary Marcelo Ebrard, who was Mexico Citv's mayor from 2006 to 2012, when Line 12 was built, and who is considered a potential presidential candidate in 2024 elections. Allegations about poor design and construction on the subway line emerged soon after Ebrard left office as mayor. The line had to be partly closed in 2013 so tracks could be repaired.

Ebrard wrote on Twitter: "What happened today on the Metro is a terrible tragedy.'

'Of course, the causes should be investigated and those responsible should be identified," he wrote.



# HOLY FIRE



Jerusalem's Old City

# CHINA CALLS FOR 'BASIC ETIQUETTE' **AFTER PHILIPPINES MINISTER'S BLOW**

**Beijing, May 4:** China urged the Philippines Tuesday to observe 'basic etiquette" and eschew megaphone diplomacy after the southeast Asian nation's foreign minister used an expletive-laced Twitter message to demand that China's vessels leave disputed waters.

The comments by Teodoro Locsin. known for occasional blunt remarks, follow Manila's protests over what it calls the illegal presence of hundreds of Chinese boats inside the Philippines' 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

In a statement, China's foreign ministry urged the Philippines to re-



spect the nation's sovereignty and jurisdiction and stop taking actions that complicate the situation. "Facts have repeatedly proved that microphone diplomacy cannot change the facts, but can only undermine mutual trust," it said.

"It is hoped that relevant people in the Philippines will comply with basic etiquette and their position when making remarks.' The ministry cited comments by

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte that differences between the countries on individual issues should not affect friendship and cooperation "China has always worked, and

will continue to work with the Philippines, to properly resolve differences and advance cooperation through friendly consultations.'

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, through which about \$3 trillion of ship-borne trade passes each year. In 2016, an arbitration tribunal in The Hague ruled that its claim was inconsistent with

# MYANMAR COUP

#### **Junta announces** ban on satellite TV

REUTERS

liament.

Yangon, May 4: Myanmar's junta-controlled media announced a ban on satellite television receivers Tuesday, saying outside broadcasts threatened national security and threatening to jail anyone caught violating the measure.

With mobile internet access largely cut off in a bid to quell anti-junta protests since the Feb 1 coup, Myanmar has increasingly appeared headed back to the state of isolation that preceded a decade of democratic reforms.

"Satellite television is no longer legal. Whoever violates the television and video law, especially people using satellite dishes, shall be punished with one year imprisonment and a fine of 500,000 kyat (\$320)," MRTV state televi-

sion said. "Illegal media outlets are broadcasting news that undermines national security, the rule of law and public order, and encouraging those who commit treason.'

In the face of widespread opposition, the junta has struggled to impose order since overthrowing elected leader Aung San Suu-Kyi and ending an unsteady transition to democracy.

# Wine that went to space for sale with \$1 million price tag

The Petrus 2000 is one of 12 bottles sent into space in November 2019 by researchers exploring the potential

ing a bottle of French wine that spent more than a year in orbit aboard the International Space Station. The auction house thinks



The Petrus 2000 is one of 12 bottles sent into space in November 2019 by researchers exploring the potential for extraterrestrial agriculture. It returned 14 months later subtly altered, according to wine experts who sampled it at a tasting in France.

Tim Tiptree, international director of Christie's wine and spirits department, said the space-aged wine was "matured in a unique environment" of near zero gravity aboard the space station. The trip turned a \$10,000-a-bottle

wine known for its complexity, silky, ripe tannins and flavours of black cherry, cigar box and leather into a scientific novelty — and still a fine bottle of wine, Tiptree said.

"It's iust a verv harmonious wine that has the ability to age superbly, which is why it was chosen for this experiment," he said. "It's very encouraging that it was delicious on return to Earth." At a taste test in March at the Institute for Wine and Vine Research in Bordeaux, France, a dozen wine connoisseurs compared one of the space-travelled wines to a bottle from the same vintage that had staved in a cellar.

They noted a difference that was hard to describe. Jane Anson, a writer with the wine publication Decanter, said the wine that remained on Earth tasted a bit younger, the space version slightly softer and more aromatic.

Proceeds from the sale will fund future research by Space Cargo Unlimited. Several other bottles from the dozen that went to space remain unopened, but Christie's says there are no plans to sell any of them.

Tiptree says the price estimate, "in the region of \$1 million", reflects the sale's likely appeal to a mix of wine connoisseurs, space buffs and the kind of wealthy people who collect "ultimate experiences"

"I would hope that they will decide to drink it, but maybe not immediately," Tiptree said. "It's at its peak drinking time, but this wine will last at least another two or three decades.



# business



India's overwhelming surge of coronavirus infections has revealed complacency after last year's first wave, as well as a "lack of foresight, a lack of leadership

RAGHURAM RAJAN | FORMER RBI GOVERNOR

#### **NOTED DESIGNER WAYNE BURGESS TO WORK WITH OLA**

Ola Electric on Tuesday announced the appointment of Wayne Burgess as Head of Vehicle Design for its entire product range including scooters, bikes, cars and more







currently discussing with Indian expedited approval

our Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine available for use in the country ALBERT BOURLA PFIZER CEC

We got a chance to buy it (Apple shares) and I sold

some stock last year. That was probably a mistake WARREN BUFFETT | BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY

CHAIRMAN AND CEO





UNMESH KULKARNI JULIUS BAER INDIA MANAGING DIRECTOR

#### SHORT TAKES

#### **Apple hires ex-Google** Al scientist

California: Apple Inc said Monday it has hired former distinguished Google scientist Samy Bengio, who left the search giant amid turmoil in its artificial intelligence research department. Bengio is expected to lead a new AI research unit at Apple under John Giannandrea, senior vice president of machine learning and AI strategy, two people familiar with the matter said. Giannandrea joined Apple in 2018 after spending about eight years at Google. Apple declined to comment on Bengio's role.

### **PowerGrid InvIT** IPO over subscribed

New Delhi: Powergrid InvIT's ₹7,735-crore initial public offering (IPO) was subscribed 4.83 times at closing. The first share sale by a state-run company was subscribed 4.63 times in the qualified institutional buyers (QIB) segment and 4.92 times investor (NII) category. The IPO consisted of a fresh issue of ₹4,994 crore and an offer for sale of ₹2,741.50 crore. It received bids for shares worth ₹37,360 crore as against an offer of shares amounting to ₹7,735 crore. The shares were sold in the price band of ₹99-100 a share.

#### Infosys to hire 1.000 workers in UK

New Delhi: IT firm Infosvs Tuesday said it plans to hire 1.000 workers in the UK over the next three years as part of efforts to support the country's economic recovery and growth. The new hires will work in the digital space, including cloud computing, data and analytics, artificial intelligence, open source technologies and enterprise services, to support some of the world's largest organisations navigate their digital journeys, a statement said. The company will provide critical training and mentoring opportunities for the fresh hires, it added.

#### **Maruti cuts** production

Mumbai: Maruti Suzuki India Ltd may halve its production capacity as an overwhelming surge of coronavirus infections shutters some of its sales outlets in the South Asian nation. The problem is on the "sales side because in several states there is a partial lockdown and there's a curfew in some states and the dealers who sell the cars have to close down," Maruti Chairman RC Bhargava said in an interview Tuesday. "Half the sales outlets are closed at the moment.



THE ENHANCED TRADE PARTNERSHIP WILL SET THE AMBITION TO DOUBLE THE VALUE OF UK-INDIA TRADE BY 2030

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 4: The British government has finalised GBP 1 billion worth of trade and investment with India, creating over 6.500 jobs in Britain, ahead of the virtual summit between UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi Tuesday.

The investments confirmed by Downing Street Monday evening form part of an Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP), which the two leaders will formally sign off during their talks.

The ETP will set the ambition to double the value of UK-India trade by 2030 and declare a shared intent to begin work towards a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

"Like every aspect of the UK-India relationship, the economic links between our countries make our people stronger and safer," said Johnson.

"Each and every one of the more than 6,500 jobs we have announced today will help families and communities build back from coronavirus and boost the British and Indian economies. In the decade ahead, with the help of (the) new partnership signed today and a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. we will double the value of our trading partnership with India and take



the relationship between our two countries to new highs," he said.

The trade and investment package unveiled by the British government contains over GBP 533 million of new Indian investment into the UK, covering areas such as healthcare and technology.

This includes a GBP 240 million investment by the Serum Institute of India (SII) in the UK into its vaccine business and a new sales office in the country, expected to generate new business worth over \$1 billion.

Serum Institute's investment will support clinical trials, research and development and "possibly" manufacturing of vaccines, to help the UK and the world defeat the coronavirus pandemic and other deadly diseases, Downing Street said. New export deals

cured new export deals with India worth more than GBP 446 million, which is expected to create more than 400 British jobs

This includes CMR Surgical exporting its next-generation "Versius" surgical robotic system, which helps surgeons perform minimal access surgery being rolled out to hospitals in India. This export deal is worth GBP 200 million and will create 100 new jobs in the UK.

"With almost 1.4 billion people, India's population is bigger than the EU and US combined and by far the largest market the UK has committed to negotiating a trade deal with to date," Downing Street said.

The ETP agreed between India and the UK is said to create immediate opportunities for British businesses in India across industries, including food and drink, life sciences and the service sector.

Non-tariff barriers on fruit and medical devices will be lowered, allowing British businesses to export more of their products to India and boosting UK growth and jobs.

It also commits both sides to address immediate market access barriers and seek further opportunities on the road to an FTA.

"A future UK-India trade deal will support hundreds of thousands of jobs and boost the economies of both the UK and India by potentially lowering or removing current tariffs such as those of up to 150 per cent on whisky and up to 125 per cent on automotives as well as on other British products. It would also create huge benefits for British services - four out five of India's fastest-growing imports are for services like IP and telecommunications," Downing Street said.

The trade barriers addressed by the ETP include lifting restrictions to enable fruit producers across the UK to export British apples, pears and quince to India for the first time and improved access for medical devices through the acceptance of UK Certificates of Free Sale in India, removing the requirement for additional accreditation of UK medical devices when exporting to the Indian market before they can be sold

# Wipro to invest £16 mn in London

BANGALORE: Wipro Limited, a

leading Information technology, consulting and business process services company, Tuesday announced the setting up of an Innovation Centre in Holborn. London. The Bangaloreheadquartered company said it will invest GBP 16 million over the next four years in the 20,000 sq ft Innovation Centre which will serve as Wipro's flagship centre in the United Kingdom and offer technology expertise to companies in the UK and globally. "It will be integral to providing advanced digital, cyber security and cloud expertise to both established and upcoming enterprises, taking the lead on digital transformation in one of Europes biggest technology markets," Wipro said. This year marks Wipro's 75th global anniversary, and 25 years in the UK, where it employs over 4,000 technology, digital consulting and business management professionals. The IT services provider said it has hired over 500 new employees in the UK in the past 12 months.

# **SAIL enters 100** most-valued Indian firms' club

Mumbai, April 4: Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) Tuesday regained market capitalisation (mcap) of ₹50,000 crore, after its stock climbed over 80 per cent in the past one and half month, on expectations of strong earnings in March quarter (Q4FY21) and a healthy outlook going forward.



The state-owned steel major also entered into the league of top 100 most valued companies in terms of market capitalisation. At 10:19 am, SAIL stood at 78th position in the overall m-cap ranking with a market cap of ₹55,529 crore, BSE data shows. In the intra-day Tuesday, the

stock hit an over nine-year high of ₹135.60, up 6 per cent, on the BSE. In the past six weeks, it has zoomed 85 per cent, as compared to a 2.6 per cent decline in the S&P BSE Sensex. It was trading at its highest level since July 2011.

SAIL is one of the leading steel producers in India, which has five large integrated steel plants (Bhillai steel plant, Rourkela steel plant, Durgapur steel plant, Bokaro steel plant and IISCO) spread across four states in eastern India.

# Goldman Sachs cuts India's GDP growth estimate for FY22 to 11.1%



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 4: Wall Street brokerage Goldman Sachs has lowered its estimate for India's economic growth to 11.1 per cent in fiscal year to March 31, 2022, as a number of cities and states announced lockdowns of varying intensities to check spread of coronavirus infections.

India is suffering the world's worst outbreak of Covid-19 cases, with deaths crossing 2.22 lakh and new cases above 3.5 lakh daily. This has led to demand for imposition of nationwide strict lockdowns to stem the spread of the virus – a move that the Modi government has so far avoided after the economic devastation last year from a similar strategy.

Instead, it has left it to the states to impose restrictions to manage the virus. Several states and cities have imposed lockdowns of varying degrees.

'The intensity of the lockdown remains lower than last year," Goldman Sachs said in a report. "Still, the impact of tighter containment policy is clearly visible in higher frequency mobility data across key Indian cities.

As containment policy has tightened, high frequency data - particularly on the services side – has taken a hit. The manufacturing side - as indicated by high frequency data on electricity consumption, and the stable April

As containment policy has tightened, high frequency data particularly on the services side - has taken a hit

manufacturing PMI – has been more resilient.

Labour market indicators suggest that the daily unemployment rate has ticked up moderately in recent weeks, but the employment impact so far is much more contained than in April-June last year.

"Overall, most indicators still suggest that the impact has been less severe than it was in Q2 (April-June) last year," Goldman Sachs

While the lockdown impact is much less severe than last year, the recent declines in services indicators including e-way bills, mobility, rail freight and cargo traffic has led to trimming GDP estimates.

"While activity is likely to rebound back quite sharply from Q3 (July-September) onwards -- assuming restrictions can ease somewhat over that timeframe - the net result is to lower our FY22 real GDP growth forecast to 11.1 per cent (from 11.7 per cent previously), and our 2021 calendar year growth forecast to 9.7 per cent (from 10.5 per cent)," it said.

# 14-day lockdown will deal a heavy blow to state's MSMEs fered business loss of over ₹21.000

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 4: It's a great relief for the medium, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as the state government has allowed these units to operate during the lockdown period, which will be in effect from May 5 to May 19.

In a letter, Special Relief Commissioner said, "A few activities are allowed in the interest of economic growth and livelihood of people. Some activities that are allowed even during the weekend shutdown are industries in both rural and urban areas, all agricultural-related activities including production, transportation, marketing and trading of agriculture products."

The trading of agriculture tools and machineries, construction activities in both government and private sectors are also allowed to

# **COVID IMPACT**

function during the lockdown and weekend shutdown. Though, MSMEs leaders appre-

ciated the state government for allowing them to remain operational, they expressed their concern over the poor sales during the lockdown. Odisha Assembly of Small and

Medium Enterprises (OASME) said that the demand will be low for which they may face a crisis like what they endured during the previous lockdown.

OASME Secretary-General Satwik Swain said, "Obviously, sales will be down as the market will remain closed for 14 days. Also, we may face difficulties in managing to fix expenses during the lockdown. So, it will be a difficult time." Earlier, MSMEs units sufcrore due the shutdown of these units for 21 days during the previ-The Utkal Chamber of Commerce

& Industry (UCCI) also stated that small entrepreneurs will be negatively affected by the 14-day lockdown. "Most businesses, such as restaurants, are operational after 12 pm. Since market will be closed after 12pm, such businesses will suffer greatly. So, small businesses will suffer losses during the lockdown," said Ashok Sharda, VP of UCCI (Commerce).

'We welcome the state government's decision as they do not have multiple options to curb the pandemic. It is also possible that government may extend the lockdown if the situation doesn't come under control within the next 14 days,'

#### TOP LOSERS 48,253.51 5067.30 Dr Reddys Labs -2.26% 1916.55 Reliance 645.70 Sun Pharma -1.99% 1388.55 HDFC Bank 2377.25 HDFC -1.73% 1329.55 Infosys -1.65% 741.00 M&M -1.61% 550.85 **Bharti Airtel** 1403.80 Titan -1.39% 6508.10 Maruti Suzuki POINTS

# Covid 2nd wave leaves another 7mn people jobless

Unemployment increased to 7.97% from 6.5% in March, with more than seven million jobs lost last month

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 4: India's unemployment rate rose to a four-month high of nearly 8% in April, and the outlook remains weak with state administrations extending lockdowns to curb a record surge in virus cases.

Unemployment increased to 7.97% from 6.5% in March, with more than seven million jobs lost last month, according to data from Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy Pvt, a private research firm.

'There is a fall in the jobs available. This could be due to the lockdowns," CMIE Managing Director Mahesh Vyas said by telephone. "Since the virus is still quite intense and we are stressed on the medical health-services front, it's likely that the situation will remain tense



in May as well.

Daily Covid-19 deaths in India hit a record 3,689 Sunday. The number of new cases slowed slightly Monday after India on Saturday became the first country to register more than 400,000 daily cases.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who announced a strict lockdown in March 2020 that resulted in millions of lost jobs and a record contraction in economic output, now is urging states to use such measures only as a last resort. Local administrations have been forced to extend curbs as the nation's creaky health infrastructure can't cope with the flood of virus cases, jeopardizing a nascent economic recovery.

The weak employment outlook is a risk for India's chances of reaching double-digit economic growth this year. Many economists already have lowered their projections, while several are warning of possible reductions if provincial curbs are extended further.

Barclays Bank Plc Monday lowered its forecast by one percentage point to 10%, as "there is growing uncertainty around the number of cases and fatalities," economist Rahul Bajoria wrote in a research note. "Slowing vaccinations are also

hurting India's recovery prospects." **Double Whammy** 

The rise in unemployment comes amid a backlash against government handling of the world's worst Covid-19 outbreak. Modi's party lost an election in a key state, while foreign envoys are joining Indians on social media clamoring for help

with few medical supplies available. A separate survey Monday by IHS Markit showed the manufacturing sector was still losing jobs in April, though the rate of contraction was the weakest in the current 13month sequence of job shedding. The CMIE data-which economists track closely in the absence of real-time employment data from the government-show joblessness is more acute in urban areas as laborers return to their villages.

# Domestic air travel recovery delayed by 3 months: Ind-Ra

RECOVERY IN DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL HAS BEEN DELAYED BY THREE AND SIX MONTHS, RESPECTIVELY, DUE TO COVID RESURGENCE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 4: Recovery in domestic and international travel has been delayed by three and six months, respectively, due to Covid resurgence, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

The first two months of 2021 witnessed a solid improvement in air travel, after a steep decline in EBIT-DAR losses in 3QFY21 as airline

operations normalised, it said. However, late March and April have seen a sharp rise in active Covid cases all across India which has significantly impacted air travel

and dented confidence in aviation

Besides, 2021 has brought three new challenges such as higher fuel expenses as crude prices recover amid a soaring global demand, rising competition intensity amid the possible re-start of operations by Jet Airways, and likely pressure on airline yields as the scramble for market share realignment to pre-

Covid period begins. 'Ind-Ra believes the domestic air travel recovery should resume in three months, if the fresh Covid wave subsides.

"However, a meaningful inter-



six months away and contingent

national travel recovery is around on the achievement of vaccination coverage for a significant proportion

of the population," the ratings agency said.

Furthermore, Ind-Ra expects reg-

Covid levels.

ulator DGCA to continue to keep price controls in place till demand normalises and reaches closer to pre-

'However, the overall yields for two leading carriers remain at a weak level and largely in line with median yield level witnessed in the last five years.

In addition, Ind-Ra's baseline expectations for a partial but meaningful recovery in international travel have been pushed ahead by up to six months post the fresh wave of restrictions and will continue to significantly depend on a huge decline in active cases, coupled with achievement of mass vaccination coverage.

"Even when international travel resumes in 2HFY22, significant tourism and corporate demand may not recover immediately, given restrictions requiring travellers to quarantine for up to 10 days.'

"International Air Transport Association in a recent update on the global aviation recovery has highlighted that 89 per cent of airline travel remains down with cargo

being the only bright spot."















# BCCI VOWS 'SAFE' RETURN OF FOREIGNERS

Australians may fly off to Maldives to return home

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 4: IPL governing council (IPL GC) chairman Brijesh Patel said Tuesday the BCCI will 'find a way' to send the league's foreign recruits back to their respective countries. His comments came after the event was suspended indefinitely due to a COVID-19 outbreak among the players.

The suspension of the tournament was announced after SunRisers Hyderabad's (SRH) wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha tested positive for COVID-19 along with Delhi Capitals' veteran spinner Amit Mishra.

"We need to send them (foreign players) home and we will find a way to do that," Brijesh said but did not elaborate beyond that.

The foreigners involved in the lucrative league are concerned about returning to their respective countries due to travel re-

strictions imposed. The BCCI had assured foreign players of a safe return earlier as well.

The IPI had 14 Australian play.

The IPL had 14 Australian players left, after three pullouts a few days ago. There were 10 from New Zealand and 11 Englishmen. South Africa had 11 players in the league, which also featured nine West Indians, three Afghans and two from Bangladesh.

It is the Australian government which is causing maximum headache for the BCCI bosses. It has said that no one will be allowed to enter the country from India till May 15. This decision has left cricketers like Steve Smith, David Warner, Pat Cummins, Riley Meredith and coaches like David Hussey and Tom Moody in a quandary. Amid this CSK batting coach Mike Hussey tested positive Tuesday.

Sources said that the Australians may fly off to Maldives in an at-

tempt to return hom.

"Cricket Australia (CA) is in direct contact with the BCCI as they work through plans to ensure the safe accommodation and repatriation of Australian players, coaches, match officials and commentators back home to Australia," Australia's cricket body said in a release.

"CA and the ACA respect the decision of the Australian Government to pause travel from India until at least May 15 and will not seek exemptions," the statement also said.

Cricket South Africa (CSA) on the other hand, said it is in contact with its players who will need to home quarantine on arrival from India as per the WHO recommendations. CSA also said it supported the BCCI's decision to suspend the league.

New Zealand Cricket expressed faith in BCCI's ability to handle the situation. "The players are in a relatively safe environment and those in affected teams are in isolation," read an NZC statement posted by 'ESPNcricinfo'. Earlier the Indian and New Zealand players were supposed to travel together in a chartered flight to the UK in the

first week of June where they will clash in the World Test Championships final in June. However now, the situation has changed.



# **Board decision lauded**

**NEW DELHI:** The 14th edition of the IPL was suspended Tuesday by the BCCI owing to the rise in COVID-19 cases among players and support staff of different franchises. The move sent Twitter into a frenzy with former players, commentators and even fans having something to say about the development. Here's what they had to say on the microblogging platform

MOHAMMED AZHARUDDIN: In view of the COVID crisis in India and with players testing positive, the postponement of IPL with immediate effect is the correct course of action taken by @BCCI and the IPL governing council. Hope to see IPL back soon in better & safe environment.





HARSHA BHOGLE: I guess it became inevitable in the last couple of days... Look forward to calling the action in happier times. The #IPL is a great event and I hope it returns stronger when the world is what we knew it to be.

ISA GUHA (former England player): Thinking of everyone in India. Heartbreaking to see the situation. Below is where I've donated if you can spare a penny - all money is going to support the oxygen crisis. #COVID19India.





KEVIN PIETERSEN: India – it's heartbreaking to see a country I love so much suffering! You WILL get through this! You WILL be stronger coming out of this Your kindness & generosity NEVER goes unnoticed even during this crisis!

**DALE STEYN:** Covid don't care. It has no favourites. Get well to those sick and hopefully everyone else will get home safe and in good health (**sic**).





azhar Mahmood (former Pakistani cricketer): We are in a worldwide pandemic faced with several challenges. It's sad to see another big tournament being affected however it's the right decision taken at this point. It's important to understand nothing can be water tight & working against a pandemic is challenging itself.



AUSTRALIA	SOUTH AFRICA	NEW ZEALAND	ENGLAND	
Steve Smith	Kagiso Rabada	Kane Williamson	Jos Buttler	
David Warner	Chris Morris	Trent Boult	Chris Jordan	
Pat Cummins	Faf du Plessis	Jimmy Neesham	Eoin Morgan	
*Many others like Chris Gayle, Andre Russell and Rashid Khan not named in list				

# PANDEMIC SITUATION FORCES BCCI TO RETHINK ABOUT MEGA EVENT WITH 16 TEAMS

# T20 World Cup may shift to UAE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 4: This year's T20 World Cup is set to be moved from India to the UAE with the BCCI acknowledging that none of the participating teams would be 'comfortable' coming here because 'a third wave' of COVID-19 cases is expected at the time of the event. The final decision on this matter will be taken in a month's time. Sources however, said that the BCCI is jittery in organising the 16-team tournament in October-November this year.

Sources also informed that BCCI officials held discussions with some of the top decision-makers in the central

government recently and a shift to the UAE has been more or less agreed upon. The dates of the marquee competition, which was planned across nine venues, have not yet been finalised.

"The suspension of IPL within four weeks is an indicator that it's not really safe to host a global event of that magnitude at a time when India is fighting its worst health crisis in last 70 years," a senior BCCI source privy to development told this agency Tuesday on conditions of anonymity.

"There is a chance of a third wave hitting the Indian shores in November. So while BCCI will remain the hosts, the tournament will probably shift to the



A third Covid-19 wave may hit India when the T20 World Cup will be played. So BCCI will remain the host, but

the event will be shifted to UAE

UAE," he added.

Health experts have warned of a third wave in India in September, a view that has been shared by Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope.

"You can be rest assured that most of the top nations wouldn't like to tour India in the next six months. The players and their families would be very wary to travel if they are in the middle of another surge. So expect BCCI to agree with shift of tournament to UAE," another source also chipped in.

"It (the IPL) was going well but the biobubble has now become porous. What's the guarantee it won't happen again in October-November. Nations like Australia, England and New Zealand are almost certain to have travel advisories in place," he argued.

One of the biggest reasons for conducting the tournament in the UAE is that it can be kept to three grounds – Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi – and there is no air travel, the source added.



BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah pose with the T20 World Cup trophy

# **NEWS IN BRIEF**

# New job for Jose

Rome: Jose Mourinho has been appointed as the new manager of Italian club Roma. The former Tottenham Hotspur manager will take charge for the 2021-22 season The club made the announcement through a social media post. "The club are delighted to announce an agreement has been reached with Jose Mourinho for him to become our new head coach ahead of the 2021-22 season," Roma said in a

### **Selby triumphs**

Sheffield (England): In front of a full house at the Crucible Theatre here, Mark Selby won the world snooker championship title for the fourth time beating Shaun Murphy 18-15 in the final. Only four players – Stephen Hendry (seven), Ronnie O'Sullivan, Ray Reardon and Steve Davis (all six each) – have won more world titles than Selby, who also captured the biggest prize in the sport in 2014, '16 and '17.

# Sad demise

New Delhi: Boxing Federation of India's (BFI) executive director RK Sacheti died Tuesday after battling COVID-19 for the past few days and was on ventilator support. He was 56. "With a deep sense of sorrow & grief, we inform you that Mr RK Sacheti, ED (BFI) left for heavenly abode today (Tuesday) morning, creating a huge void in the sports world," the BFI said in a statement. BFI president Ajay Singh said Sacheti was the 'life and soul' of the national body.

# Ronaldo strikes lift Juve



**ALL SET TO STRIKE:** Cristiano Ronaldo about to score from the penalty spot in the game against Udinese played Sunday

AGENCIES

Turin, May 4: Inter Milan may have sealed their spot at the top of Serie A, but that hasn't stopped Cristiano Ronaldo from continuing to deliver for Juventus. The Portuguese scored two late goals and helped Juventus win their game against Udinese 2-1 here Sunday. However, for the moment, Juve are third on the points table with three games still remaining. They are on 69 points and finishing within the top four will ensure a spot in the Champions League next season.

"We earned this win with effort and pride, and it's a very important one given the other results this (Sunday) afternoon. "We lost points against teams that we should have beaten, sometimes naively, we let Inter escape and now we are focused on reaching the Champions League," said Juve

coach Andrea Pirlo.

Juventus had trailed for most of the game after Nahuel Molina put Udinese ahead in the 10th minute, blasting in off a quickly taken Rodrigo De Paul free-kick while Juventus players were still protesting.

Weston McKennie missed a chance to level for Juventus before the half-hour mark when he sent a diving header wide.

The equaliser came with seven minutes to go after De Paul conceded a penalty for handball from a Ronaldo free-kick. The Portuguese forward made no mistake from the spot. Four minutes later he grabbed the winner when he headed home an Adrien Rabiot cross, with relieved coach Pirlo racing to join the celebrations.

Ronaldo's brace takes his Serie A-leading tally to 27 goals, six more than Inter Milan's Romelu Lukaku.

### **TEAM WORKING HARD TO SCORE MORE FIELD GOALS**

# TOKYO BEST CHANCE TO WIN MEDAL: LALIT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, May 4: Indian men's hockey team forward Lalit Upadhyay has said that the players need to work on converting field chances into goals ahead of the Tokyo Olympics scheduled to start July 23.

During the recent Argentina tour, the Indian team scored 12 goals in four practice matches and five goals in two FIH Pro League games against the Olympic champions. However, Lalit said there is still room for improvement as nine goals came via penalty corners. He also informed that the upcoming Tokyo Olympics is India's best chance to win a medal.

"The matches against Argentina were high-scoring games and it's never easy to score field goals against them," said Lalit, who scored in India's 3-0 win against the same side in the FIH Pro League tie.

"Over these last few months, we have really worked a lot on converting field chances as well as creating penalty corner opportunities. We have also focused on how we must work our way into the circle from the 25m mark," in-

formed the forward.

Lalit said the team can be a bit



sharper while taking chances inside the circle. "This is something we are focusing on during our ongoing camp," he said.

Lalit asserted that India can win a medal at the Tokyo Olympics despite facing several challenges in the lead up to the Games due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"All of us in the core group believe this (Tokyo Olympics) is our best shot at a medal. We continue to work towards that mission despite whatever challenges we may have to face in the lead up," Lalit signed off.

# TIES POSTPONED

LAUSANNE: India's upcoming FIH Hockey Pro League away fixtures against Spain and Germany later this month have been postponed due to the international travel restrictions imposed in the wake of surging Covid-19 cases, the world body (FIH) informed Tuesday. India were scheduled to play against Spain, May 15 and 16, followed by the two-leg tie in Germany, May 23 and 24. "FIH, Hockey India as well as the national associations of Germany, Spain and Great Britain are trying to reschedule the games," FIH said in a statement.

# Harmanpreet, 3 others to play in 'Hundred' tourney

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 4: The BCCI has granted no objection certificates (NOCs) to four Indian women cricketers, including T20 captain Harmanpreet Kaur, to play in the inaugural 'Hundred' tournament in the United Kingdom starting July 21. The others who have got NOCs are opener Smriti Mandhana and all-rounder Deepti Sharma. However, the name of the fourth player has not been disclosed by the BCCI. The 'Hundred' is a tournament where each side gets to bat for 100 deliveries.

"Harmanpreet, Mandhana, Deepti and another player have got the clearance as the BCCI has granted the NOC for them," a BCCI source said Tuesday.

It is learnt that these four Indian players will extend their stay in the UK following the completion of India's multi-format tour of England in June-July. The tour begins June 16 with a one-off Test at Bristol and concludes July 15 with the third and final T20I. A three-match

ODI series is slotted in between.
The Indian team for the tour is yet to be announced while a new head coach is expected to be named soon by the BCCI's cricket advisory committee (CAC).

The selected players will report May 27. However, it is not known how they will travel to the UK as flights from India have been suspended by the British government.

Printed and published by Tathagata Satpathy on behalf of Navajat Printers and Media Pvt. Ltd. and printed at Navajat Printers, B-15 Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar -751010, Odisha; Phone: 7894447142 (Marketing). Editor: Tathagata Satpathy, RNI No. ORIENG/2011/37159