



FAST FORWARD

Kubbra Sait, who left a corporate career for acting, reveals her idea of perfect old age

LEISURE P2



PAK KEEN TO EXIT FATF GREY LIST

Pakistan set to introduce new rules relating to anti-money laundering cases to meet remaining tough conditions of FATF

INTERNATIONAL P10



FRANCO NO MORE

Fortunato Franco, one of the pillars of India's last Asian Games gold-winning football team in 1962, passes away

SPORTS P12

Global tender for vax

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: In a move to ensure uninterrupted vaccination, the state cabinet Monday decided to float a global tender for procurement of Covid-19 vaccines.

The state cabinet headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik took the decision and allowed the health department to take necessary steps for procurement of vaccines so that all the people of the state are vaccinated.

The cabinet's move came in the wake of poor supply of vaccines to the state by the Centre and two Indian manufacturers—Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India (SII). Despite repeated attempts, neither the Union government nor the private manufacturers are able to supply sufficient amounts of vaccines to Odisha. As a result, the vaccination programme was hit hard in the state.

"The state cabinet has approved to issue a global tender for procurement of Covid vaccines from different major companies in order to expedite the vaccination programme in the state," Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra said after

CABINET DECISION



the meeting. He said the cabinet has appreciated the sincerity and dedication of Covid warriors in fighting against Covid-19. The panel further expressed its gratitude to the people of the state for their cooperation in execution of various measures such as testing, tracing, vaccination and lockdown.

Vaccination is the most important step to protect people from Covid infections and save precious lives, he said, adding, "Countries like Israel, which have already vaccinated a large part of its popula-

tion, are now returning to normalcy."

Moreover, vaccination has been shown to be very effective in reducing the complications of the disease and reducing the life risk of patients. Though people who have been vaccinated have been infected with the virus, they got very mild symptoms, Mahapatra said.

Therefore, he said, the state government is committed to make every effort to ensure vaccination of the people of Odisha, smooth supply of vaccines, safety of people of the state and restore normalcy in

PVT HOSPS TO WAIT LONGER FOR SHOTS

BHUBANESWAR: Those wishing to get vaccinated at private healthcare centres may have to wait longer as the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Monday clarified that the city was facing a shortage of vaccines. Even though the state government had earlier permitted people to take vaccines at private healthcare centres by paying just ₹100 as administration fees, BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary stated that private hospitals have not been provided vaccines due to undersupply of doses.

the state as soon as possible.

To this end, steps will be taken to procure vaccines from various major vaccination firms in the world so that people of Odisha can be vaccinated and precious lives will be saved, he pointed out.

Early vaccination will not only save the lives but also will help in restoration of people's livelihoods. A technical committee will be set up to look into the matter, the Chief Secretary stated.

Forest and env dept to be rechristened

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: The state cabinet has approved 10 other proposals including renaming of the forest and environment department. As per the cabinet decision, the department will be named as forest environment and climate change department.

The cabinet has also approved a proposal on rules to regulate the method of recruitment and service conditions of the persons appointed in Odisha nursing college education service. The proposal for irrigation at command areas utilizing ground water resources through deep bore wells with solar pump system in remote areas of the state under the Biju Krishak Bikash Yojana Deep Borewell Secha Yojana also received the cabinet nod.

The tender for construction of sports infrastructure facilities in Kalinga Stadium Bhubaneswar and construction of a new international hockey stadium at Rourkela for Hockey World Cup were also approved. The panel further okayed amendment to the Odisha Transport- Traffic and Enforcement Rules, 2013 for manufacturing and refilling of medical oxygen.

Amendment of the Odisha ex-servicemen (recruitment to state civil services and posts) rules, annual report on activities of Odisha Public Service Commission for the year 2017-18 and framing of the rules for accommodation and other services in Odisha Bhawans owned and maintained by the home department outside the state-2021 was also approved by the cabinet.

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Petrol, diesel at record high

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 10: Petrol and diesel prices Monday hit record highs across the country after rates were increased for the fifth time in a week, following which Maharashtra joined Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in the league of states where petrol rates breached the ₹100-a-litre mark.

Petrol price was hiked by 26 paise a litre and diesel by 33 paise per litre, according to a price notification by state-owned fuel retailers. This was the fifth increase in prices since May 4, when the state-owned oil

firms ended an 18-hiatus in rate revision during assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

The increase took petrol and diesel prices to their

CITY FUEL PRICES	
PETROL:	₹92.28 (+0.26)
DIESEL:	₹89.45 (+0.36)

highest-ever level. In Delhi, petrol now comes for ₹91.53 per litre and diesel is priced at ₹82.06 per litre.

While petrol prices had crossed the ₹100-mark in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh a few days back, Maharashtra's Parbhani joined the league Monday.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Procurement norms eased

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 10: With the world's worst outbreak of COVID-19 severely straining the health system in the country, the government has made sweeping changes in the way departments procure medical supplies, including allowing procurement of the same item at different rates.

Relaxing tendering norms, the department of expenditure has allowed global tenders to be floated for less than ₹200 crore as well.

The department of expenditure, under the ministry of finance, April 24 issued special instructions relating to relief operations for COVID-19 pandemic and said that the prevailing health emergency on account of the unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases across the country requires immediate procurement of certain items in quantities which may not be available with a single supplier and/ or within the time frame in which they are needed.

"The instruction in this department's OM (office memorandum)... dated May 15, 2020... Specifying that no global tender enquiries shall be invited for tenders up to ₹200 crore shall stand relaxed and hence it shall be permissible to invite GTE wherever necessary," said the instructions, which have been put up on the ministry's website Monday. As part of its Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the government had notified amendments to General Financial Rules to ensure that goods and services valued less than ₹200 crore will be procured from domestic firms.



Dark clouds hovering over Bhubaneswar's skyline, Monday

ANTICIPATING RAIN

Sonia to form panel to dissect poll rout

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 10: Interim Congress President Sonia Gandhi has decided to form a fact finding committee to find reasons for the party's defeat in the four states which went to the polls recently.

After the Congress Working Committee meeting Monday, party General Secretary KC Venugopal said, "The committee will be constituted within 48 hours." "I intend to set up a small panel to look at every aspect that caused such reverses (in the elections) and report back very quickly. We need to candidly understand why we failed to

dislodge the incumbent governments in Kerala and Assam, and we drew a complete blank in West Bengal," Sonia Gandhi said in the CWC meeting, in which Rahul Gandhi was not present as he is still recovering from Covid-19.

"This CWC meeting has been convened to discuss the results of the recently-held Assembly polls. We have to take note of our serious setbacks. To say that we are deeply disappointed is to make an understatement," she said. "These will yield uncomfortable lessons, but if we do not face up to the reality, if we do not look the facts in the face, we will not draw the right



Lessons," she added.

During the meeting, all the state in-charges presented their views on the recent poll debacle, with the party's West Bengal in-charge Jitin Prasad saying the alliance with the Indian Secular Front (ISF), formed

by preacher-turned-politician Pirzada Abbas Siddiqui, ruined Congress' prospects in the state, sources said

Congress leader Digvijay Singh asserted that the alliance with the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) in Assam was wrong, while Ghulam Nabi Azad said that the party should have committee at the AICC level to deal with the alliances, sources said.

The party's in-charge for Kerala, Tariq Anwar, told the CWC that Congress became overconfident which led to its defeat in the state, and by the time it realised the same, it was too late, sources said.

10 billion Amazon listings blocked in counterfeit crackdown

AGENCIES

New York, May 10: Amazon, which has been under pressure from shoppers, brands and lawmakers to crack down on counterfeits on its site, said Monday that it blocked more than 10 billion suspected phony listings last year before any of their offerings could be sold.

The numbers were released in Amazon's first report on its anti-counterfeiting efforts since it announced new tools and technologies in 2019. The number of blocked phony listings last year was up about 67 per cent from the year before. The Seattle-based e-commerce behemoth said the number of counterfeiters attempting to sell on the site rose as scammers tried to take advantage of shoppers who were buying more online during the pandemic.



Amazon has been wrestling with counterfeits for years. But since 2019, it has warned investors in government filings that the sale of phony goods poses a risk to the company and its image. Brands may not want to sell their items on the site if they know there are fake versions being offered. And knock-offs could cause shoppers to lose their trust in Amazon.

Counterfeiters try to get their products on Amazon through its third-party marketplace, where sellers can list their items directly on the site. The company destroyed 2 million counterfeit products sent to its warehouses last year before they could be sold. And it said fewer than 0.01 per cent of all items bought on the site received counterfeit complaints from shoppers.

Amazon said it can stop counterfeiters before they can sell anything thanks to machine-learning technology, which automatically scans listings to remove suspected counterfeiters. The company also gives brands a way to remove fake items from the site themselves, rather than reporting them to Amazon and waiting for it to do something. The company's efforts come as lawmakers are looking at ways to reduce counterfeits online.

COVID TOLL UP BY 17 IN STATE

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha's COVID-19 caseload Monday rose to 5,44,873 after 10,031 more people tested positive for the infection, while 17 fresh fatalities pushed the toll to 2,197. Monday was the fifth consecutive day when the state registered more than 10,000 new cases. Of the 10,031 new cases, 6,623 were reported from various quarantine centres, and the rest detected during contact tracing. Khurda district, of which the state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, recorded the maximum number of new cases at 1,329, followed by Sundargarh at 824, Cuttack at 720 and Cuttack at 708. Barring Gajapati, Kandhamal and Malkangiri, all 27 other districts registered more than 100 cases. Three deaths each were recorded in Khurda, Kalahandi, Rayagada and Sundergarh districts, two in Puri. P3

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	49502.41	▲ 295.94
NIFTY	14942.40	▲ 119.20
DOLLAR	73.91	▼ ₹0.10
EURO	89.49	▲ ₹0.50
GOLD	₹48,007	▲ ₹256
SILVER	₹71,721	▲ ₹2227

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	37.0°C	35.8°C
MIN	22.1°C	25.1°C
Humidity	83%	82%
Rainfall	Nil	8.2mm
Forecast	Light rain very likely	

Centre wants SC to keep off on vax policy

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 10: The Centre has justified in the Supreme Court the COVID-19 vaccination policy, saying its response and strategy is completely driven by expert medical and scientific opinion which leaves little room for judicial interference and stressed that citizens of all age groups will get free vaccination throughout the country.

In view of the unprecedented and peculiar circumstances under which vaccination drive is devised as an executive policy, the "wisdom of the executive should be trusted", it said. In a global pandemic, where the response and



strategy of the nation is completely driven by expert medical and scientific opinion, "any overzealous, though well-meaning judicial intervention, may lead to unforeseen and unintended consequences",

the government said.

In 218-page affidavit filed late Sunday night in the SC's suo motu case on COVID-19 management, the Centre said, this policy "conforms to mandate of Article 14 and Article 21 of the constitution and is made after several rounds of consultation and discussion with experts, state government and vaccine manufacturers requiring no interference by this Court as while dealing with a pandemic of this magnitude, the executive does have a room for free play in the joints, in larger public interest".

The government further said, "It is also submitted that citizens of 18 to 44 years are getting vacci-

nation free of cost as all state governments have announced free vaccination for this population group of 18-44 years. Thus, all citizens of all age groups will get free vaccination throughout the country."

States have also been provided the information of the total number of doses of both vaccines available to them and the UTs from "Government of India channel" for the identified priority groups (health care workers, frontline workers and population above 45 years of age) free of cost from May 1 to May 15 and this data would be released every fortnight, it said.

"It is most respectfully submitted that in the times of such grave and

unprecedented crisis which the nation is fighting the disaster of an unprecedented magnitude, the executive functioning of the government needs discretion to formulate policy in larger interest. It is submitted that in view of the unprecedented circumstances under which vaccination drive is devised as an executive policy, the wisdom of the executive should be trusted," the affidavit said.

The government said that in a plethora of judgements, the top court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness.

leisure



ROGEN WON'T WORK WITH FRANCO OVER SEX SLUR

Actor-comedian Seth Rogen says he doesn't intend to work with his long-term friend actor James Franco again after allegations of sexually inappropriate behaviour cropped up against the latter. Rogen's assertion came in an interview he gave to *The Sunday Times*, London.

WRATH OF MAN COLLECTS \$8.1MN IN FIRST 3 DAYS

Jason Statham's latest action starrer *Wrath Of Man*, has opened to \$8.1 million collections since its US release Friday. It would be still a while before the film hits screens in India, given the grim Covid pandemic situation here.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will exhibit your worth in ample measure today. You will probably chalk out great plans and ideas at work, and this will be very beneficial. But despite this, Ganesh says, if you don't get the deserved recognition, don't lose heart. Learn to take setbacks without getting disappointed.

TAURUS
You may face conflicts on the personal front and find your thoughts leaning towards aggression today, says Ganesh. There is a possibility of suffering losses due to loved ones. Exercise restraint in arguments with relatives and siblings, advises Ganesh.

GEMINI
It will not be hard for you to complete your tasks successfully and without any delays or obstacles in your path, only if you first seek to fully understand and acquire the learning required to perform it. The fruits of your labour will keep you happy and satisfied, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Today looks set to be a day full of extremes, especially when it comes to your shifty moods. However, you will need to keep reminding yourself of not getting overly emotional or impractical. Otherwise you may end up being in complicated situations, warns Ganesh.

LEO
Today there is a chance that you will meet that special someone that you have been waiting for all your life. You may possibly give your partner a beautiful gift. You will be more inclined towards the arts and will be able to exhibit this new-found appreciation to the max, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
All the work done in the past will reap rich rewards today, says Ganesh. You'll direct things your own way, and in no way would you take orders from anyone. But don't go overboard with all the authority and keep a cool, calm head.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will be more conscious about your beauty and outward appearance and try to enhance it by going to a beauty parlor or by purchasing expensive cosmetics. To enhance your appearance and personality you may also go on a shopping spree for clothes.

SCORPIO
The day does not begin on a very good note as you seem to be in a belligerent mood. Be calm and patient as your hot temper may spoil a good deal. Limit your conversations and discussions with colleagues and friends, advises Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
No pains, no gains. So, when you go through a lot of turmoil and toil hard for your work, the rewards are definitely going to be fruitful, says Ganesh. Time for get together and soiree with family and friends! In a nutshell, a day with lot of fun activities.

CAPRICORN
Your hands are full with plenty of projects and assignments. Finish them off as soon as you can and spend rest of the day refreshing your mind. Communicating with people of all walks of life will make you enhance your horizon of knowledge, feels Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
It's an uphill struggle today! But the heavens are on your side, and you will be saved from being swindled. Otherwise, it's an eventful day at work. You may initiate big business deals and new projects as well. It will take all your energy, and Ganesh suggests you hit the deck early.

PISCES
Ganesh warns that your expenses could be twice as much as your income or profit. You need to be more careful in money matters. It is not an auspicious day for any new work, new deal or any new beginnings. Ganesh indicates that things will look up after two days or so.

'Strengthen yourself and come back stronger'

Mumbai: Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra Monday shared a piece of advice for netizens saying should somebody feel overwhelmed by all that is happening around us, they ought to take time off for themselves, as the battle is not easy.

Shilpa took to Instagram to share a photograph of herself that shows a smile on her face and her hands folded in a namaste.

"If you're feeling overwhelmed by whatever is happening around us, it's okay to take a break from social media. For everyone who is dealing with someone battling Covid-19, I understand that this battle is not easy for any of us. You need to mentally be in a place. Do whatever allows you to strengthen yourself and come back stronger to do what you can," Shilpa shared in the Instagram post.

Shilpa's advice comes at a time when her husband Raj Kundra, children Samisha and Viaan, and her mother Sunanda Shetty, as well as in-laws are battling Covid-19. The actress, however, has tested negative.

Vijay Varma shares a glimpse of his 'new wife'

Mumbai: Actor Vijay Varma, who rose to fame playing Moeen in *Gully Boy*, has shared the look of his 'new wife' and it's not what you imagine!

Vijay posted an Instagram picture Monday seated on a chair, dressed in a white T-shirt and holding a PS5, a visual gaming console.

The actor is seen holding on to the controller and posing for the camera as he flashes a big smile.

"Hi guys, Bye guys. Meet my new wife PS5," he wrote as the caption.

Vijay was recently seen in the sci-fi comedy web series *Ok Computer*, co-starring Jackie Shroff and Radhika Apte. The actor will be seen in multiple projects over the next months, including *Darlings* with Alia Bhatt and *Fallen* with Sonakshi Sinha.



Kubbra's idea of perfect old age

New Delhi: *Sacred Games* actor Kubbra Sait says that in her sixties or seventies, she would like a tiny home with a little garden probably growing cabbages. "Oh yeah, if it faces the beach, then that will be amazing," quips Kubbra.

The performer, who left behind a successful corporate career for a career in acting, recently featured on the *My 3 Secrets To Success* audio series on Audible Suno.

Answering a question on what her 60s or 70s should look like, she adds: "So, some clean air to breathe, a book to read and probably my fingers entwined with someone I love. I think that would be an ideal 60s-70s to me. We're not chasing every day."

On the work front, Kubbra shared her excitement about working in *Foundation*, an American TV series that's about to release this year.

"It's I think one sole project that I have put in about a year and a half of mine, and that feels extremely valuable," said the actress. IANS

Keeping immune system in its prime

As the second wave of Covid-19 is more devastating than the previous one, many are turning to strengthening their immune system using home-grown plants and nutrient-rich diet

AGENCIES

At the personal level, the fight against the Covid-19 virus begins with strong immunity. As the second wave seems to be more alarming and devastating than the previous one, many are turning to strengthening their immune system using home-grown plants and nutrient-rich diet. The world is waking up again to the importance of a balanced diet and it is needless to say that it is necessary to follow a diet that includes foods rich in iron, protein and vitamins C, B12 and A.

While patients must strictly follow their doctor's advice, experts believe one can opt for the age-old ayurvedic immunity drinks and kitchen ingredients in Indian households that have the necessary nutrients to cure a lot of ailments like cold, flu and fever.

They suggest a few options that can boost the immunity so that the body builds up the strength to put up a fight against foreign pathogens.

Giloy and Tulsi: Studies have proved that Giloy possesses immune-o-simulator properties. It



helps to flush out the toxins from the body. Giloy also contains Antipyretic (fever controlling) properties. Tulsi is known as the 'queen of herbs'. Tulsi is said to prevent disease, promote general health, well-being and longevity and assist in dealing with the stresses of daily life.

Panch Tulsi with ginger drops: It is one of the best examples of ayurveda's holistic lifestyle approach to health. Considered as a potent adaptogen, Panch Tulsi and ginger have a unique combination of pharmacological actions that promote well-being and resilience. This combination increases anti-oxidant molecules and mops up damaging free radicals in the body.

Immune drops: Immune drop is a mixture of rama tulsi, kala tulsi, vishnu priya tulsi, sweet lemon tulsi, bisva tulsi, curcumin. It is an instant immunity booster, gives you good health, protects you from diseases and helps you to live a good healthy life. Experts also suggest taking in dissolvable Vitamin C tablets in water also strengthens body's immune response. Besides, one can take multivitamin capsules to re-vitalise the body as modern day food habits don't provide proper nutrition.

FUN post

PEANUTS



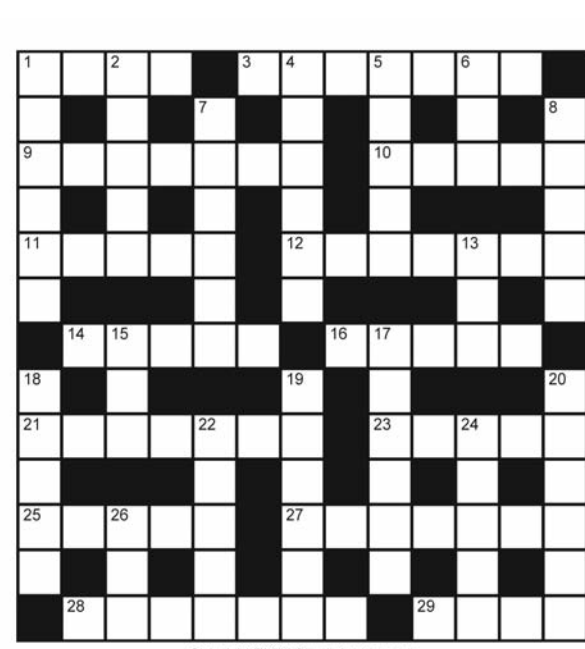
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



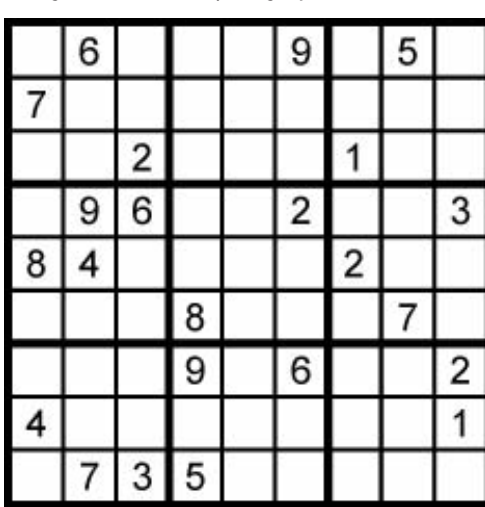
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Lumberjacks' tools
 - 3 Not counterfeit
 - 9 Playground items
 - 10 Roughage
 - 11 Raw fish dish
 - 12 Ill-fated ship
 - 14 Worth
 - 16 Slender woodwind
 - 21 Taxi driver's question (5,2)
 - 23 Refinement
 - 25 Shish _____
 - 27 Wedding member (4,3)
 - 28 Torment, like a cat with a mouse (3,4)
 - 29 Money owed
- Down**
- 1 Help out
 - 2 Balances inferior
 - 4 Artificial and inferior
 - 5 Ill-suited
 - 6 Apprehend
 - 7 American elk
 - 8 Summer holiday spot
 - 13 Safety device
 - 15 Before, in poetry
 - 17 Most recent
 - 18 Came to
 - 19 Cold dessert
 - 20 Oil source
 - 22 Pasta shape
 - 24 English Channel feeder
 - 26 Life story, in brief

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



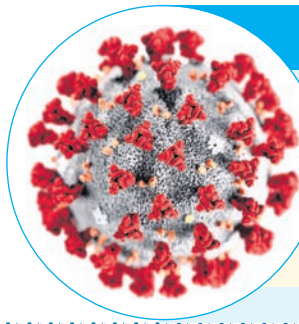
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



KEEPING VIRUS AT BAY

Sachivalaya Marg in Bhubaneswar being sanitised, Monday, as Covid-19 cases in the state hover over 10,000



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	15,90,54,521	13,66,21,848	33,08,604
India	2,26,62,575	1,86,71,222	2,46,116
Odisha	5,44,873	4,57,569	2,197

Take care of orphaned, distressed kids, DMs told


POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: In a bid to ensure proper care of children during the Covid-19 pandemic, the state government has directed the district Collectors to take care of the children who are either orphaned after losing their parents to the virus or whose parents are lodged at Covid care centres (CCCs).

Women and Child Development and Mission Shakti department has asked the Collectors to identify at least one child care institution in their respective districts to take care of the distressed children during this pandemic.

In a letter to the Collectors, director of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Social Welfare, Aravind Agrawal said, "I am directed to intimate that immediate measures be taken for rehabilitation of the children

PANGS OF PANDEMIC



W&CD dept has asked the Collectors to identify at least one CCI in their respective districts to take care of the distressed children during this pandemic

At the identified CCI, proper care will be provided to the children for the interim period, when their parents are either isolated or admitted due to Covid

THE COLLECTORS WERE ALSO DIRECTED TO INTIMATE ALL THE HOSPITALS AND COVID CARE FACILITIES IN THE DISTRICTS REGARDING THE ARRANGEMENT FOR THESE CHILDREN

orphaned due to Covid-19 and children whose parents are affected with Covid and hospitalised and are unable to take care of them temporarily."

At the identified child care in-

stitution, proper care will be provided to the children for the interim period, when their parents are either isolated or admitted due to Covid.

The Collectors were also directed

to intimate all the hospitals and Covid care facilities in the districts regarding the arrangement for these children.

The contact details of the Child Welfare Committee members and designated child care institution and Childline number (1098) will be prominently displayed at the reception of the hospital or Covid care centre.

The reception of the Covid care facility will guide the patients regarding this arrangement.

Similarly, the district child protection officers (DCPOs) have been asked to make provision of oximeters, mobile phones and thermal scanners for the child care institution on priority basis.

The Childline coordinators and volunteers have been directed to be on alert and rescue all types of vulnerable children at any time.

SHOPPING AFTER SHUTDOWN



People buy vegetables from a temporary market set up at Jharpada in Bhubaneswar, Monday, after a two-day weekend shutdown

Servitor attacked inside Srimandir



AGENCIES

Puri, May 10: A servitor of Srimandir was injured when another servitor attacked him inside the temple complex, Puri superintendent of police K Vishal Singh said here, Monday. Singh said that police registered a criminal case against Bulu Panda, the accused, and conducted raids to arrest him.

According to a complaint filed with Singhadwar police by the injured servitor Rana Simhari, Bulu Panda attacked him while he was standing at Ananda Bazar and that left him with bleeding injury.

This is the second such instance since the closure of temple for devotees. Earlier, two Jagannath Temple Police personnel had engaged in a fight.

10K+ CASES FOR 5TH DAY IN A ROW

ODISHA'S CORONAVIRUS TOLL SHOOTS TO 2,197 WITH 17 FRESH FATALITIES

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 10: Odisha's Covid-19 caseload Monday rose to 5,44,873 after 10,031 more people tested positive for the infection, while 17 fresh fatalities pushed the toll to 2,197, a senior Health department official said.

Monday was the fifth consecutive day when the state registered more than 10,000 new cases.

Of the 10,031 fresh cases, 6,623 were reported from various quarantine centres, and the rest detected during contact tracing, the official said.

Khurda district, of which the state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, recorded the maximum number of new cases at 1,329, followed by Sundargarh at 824, Cuttack at 720, Puri at 708, Angul at 456, Bargarh at 450, Kalahandi at 433 and Jharsuguda at 418.

Barrng Gajapati, Kandhamal and Malkangiri, all 27 other districts registered more than 100 cases.

Three deaths each were recorded in Khurda, Kalahandi, Rayagada and Sundargarh districts, two in Puri, and one each in Angul, Bolangir and Dhenkanal. Meanwhile, 9,706 persons recovered from the disease, taking the total recoveries in the coastal state to 4,57,569.

The coastal state's positivity rate stands at 5.16 per cent, the official said.



Over 1.05 crore samples have been tested thus far, including

48,377 Sunday, he added. The state government, on the

Vaccination of people in 18-44 age group started in five municipal corporations—Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Sambalpur, Rourkela and Berhampur—where the positive rate is very high.

State Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Pradeeptra Mohapatra said the vaccination for the age group of 18-44 years would be conducted in other districts after the vaccine stocks improve.

other hand, has started vaccination for the age group of 18-44 years in five municipal corporations—Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Sambalpur, Rourkela and Berhampur—where the positive rate is very high.

The Health Ministry in its list stated that 533 districts of India have recorded a positivity rate above 10 per cent during the week. Out of which, 27 districts are from Odisha.

State reports first black fungus case; patient 'stable'

The Health department team advised the private hospital to follow necessary Covid-19 protocol



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: Even as the Covid-19 pandemic is not showing any sign of calming down, the detection of first-ever black fungus (mucormycosis) infection in the state has added to the worries of all concerned.

According to sources, the mucormycosis case was detected in a 71-year-old male Covid patient from Jajpur district. The patient is now stable and no similar cases were reported anywhere.

Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) and Director of Public Health Monday visited the patient, who was under treatment at a private hospital in Bhubaneswar.

As per their visiting note, the patient from Jajpur district is having uncontrolled diabetic. His throat swab was taken April 18 as one of his family members tested positive for the novel coronavirus. He was put in home isolation. He complained of swelling in eyes and blackish discharge from nose May 8, 2021.

The two directors, who are also senior doctors, said, "Since literature suggests increased incidence of mucormycosis in Covid patients because of increased steroid use, in absence of such history di-

THE MUCORMYCOSIS CASE WAS DETECTED IN A 71-YEAR-OLD MALE COVID PATIENT FROM JAJPUR DISTRICT

DMET AND DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH MONDAY VISITED THE PATIENT, WHO WAS UNDER TREATMENT AT A PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN BHUBANESWAR

rect link cannot be established between Covid infection and mucormycosis in instant case."

But on the other hand the patient is a diabetic, which is a known risk factor for mucormycosis, they said.

The occurrence of mucormycosis in the elderly man may be an isolated case who has contracted the virus during his home isolation by using old air cooler (not used for quite some time & water not changed), they said.

The Health department team advised the hospital authorities to follow necessary protocol in order to prevent contamination of hospital equipment and transmission to other patients. The hospital authorities were directed to report to the Director Public Health if any such case is detected further.

3 more drive-in vax centres in Capital city

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: Following the popularity of the first drive-in vaccination centre at Esplanade One here, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has set up three more such vaccination centres at different places in the state capital.

Sources at the BMC said that the civic authority has set up the drive-in vaccination centres at Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) in Patia, D N Regalia Mall at Patrapada and Utkal Kanika Galleria Mall at Gautam Nagar in the city.



FILE PHOTO

The move by the civic body will further accelerate the pace of vaccination in the state capital. Sources at the BMC said that the drive-in facilities will cater to vaccination of about 2,000 people per day.

"We are in talks with the authorities concerned and will soon begin the new drive-ins in the city. Booking for the slot will open May 11 and continue till May 15. About 300-500 slots will be allotted on a daily basis. We are aiming to open drive-in vaccination centres in all parts of the city to avoid excessive and unnecessarily movement during lockdown," a BMC official said.

Protect nesting sites of Olive Ridleys: Naveen

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday urged everyone to protect the nesting habits of the endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles. Taking to Twitter, the Chief Minister said, "Glad to share that more than 1.48 crore baby turtles of the endangered Olive Ridley species have emerged from egg shells at #Odisha's Gahirmatha beach this year." "Urge everyone to work towards protecting nesting habits of the endangered marines species," Patnaik said. Hatchlings of Olive Ridley sea turtles have emerged from the egg shells from May 3 at the Nasi-2 Island under the Gahirmatha marine sanctuary.

GOING ECO-FRIENDLY



An elderly man buys bamboo-made items from a roadside stall at Unit-1 in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

Pvt hosps 'fleecing' patients; action sought

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: Some private hospitals in the Capital city are reportedly fleecing people by admitting non-Covid patients in intensive care units (ICUs) even when they are not infected with the novel coronavirus.

Nayagarh's Santosh Mishra, 60, is a case in point. Family members of Santosh got him admitted to a private hospital in Nayapalli area here May 5. He had developed lungs-related problems.

As per rule, he was admitted after his Covid-19 test was conducted at the hospital. Authorities informed the family members that his RT-PCR test report had turned out positive and that he had to undergo treatment in the ICU only. The family members deposited over ₹1 lakh for his treatment.

However, Santosh passed away Sunday morning. When the family members wanted to take the body for compensation from the gov-



ernment, they were asked to deposit ₹60,000 more. They were also informed that the patient had tested negative for the virus.

This piece of information irked Santosh's family members. They demanded an explanation from the hospital authorities as to why Santosh was put in the ICU if he was not suffering from Covid-19. They alleged that the government assistance they would have received in case of treatment for Covid-19

would now be denied to them. After getting information, Nayapalli police station IIC Sharat Sahu reached the hospital and tried to pacify the angry relatives.

According to the IIC, the deceased's sample was sent to a hospital for testing. However, the report was unavailable as the Aadhaar number had not been attached to the sample. Meanwhile, a hospital staff, by mistake, told the family members that Santosh's report

The hospital authorities informed the family members of Santosh that his RT-PCR test report had turned out positive and that he had to undergo treatment in the ICU only

The family members deposited over ₹1 lakh for his treatment. However, Santosh passed away Sunday morning

When the family members wanted to take the body for compensation from the government, they were asked to deposit ₹60,000 more

was positive. However, later it turned out to be negative.

A similar incident was also reported from a private hospital in Laxmisagar area.

Locals are now demanding that a system be put in place which will prevent hospitals from 'fleecing' distressed people.

Mutilated body near Uttara raises murder whiff

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: The mutilated body of a man was recovered from a secluded place near the Works department office in Uttara locality under Dhauli police limits here, Monday.

The deceased was identified as Jagannath Moharana, 31, of Kodala in Ganjam district. Moharana who worked as a carpenter was staying in the city for the past few years.

Sources said that the locals spotted the body early in the morning and informed the police who rushed to the spot. The police seized a scooter bearing registration number OD-13 C-1481 found a few metres away from the body. Police also recovered Moharana's slippers near the vehicle.

The body was later sent to Capital hospital for post-mortem to ascertain the actual cause of the death. The family members of the



deceased who were residing in the village received the body after autopsy Monday afternoon.

Demanding a proper investigation into the incident, the family members of the victim alleged that Moharana was murdered by some miscreants. However, they failed to name any person having professional or individual rivalry or animosity with Moharana.

Police sources informed

Orissa POST that the body has stabbing marks indicating possible murder of the man. Moharana Saturday evening received a call from some unknown persons who called him to Dhauli on the pretext of some carpentry work.

Later, he left home on a scooter

The deceased was identified as Jagannath Moharana, 31, of Kodala in Ganjam district

Moharana who worked as a carpenter was staying in the city for the past few years

Moharana Saturday evening received a call from some unknown persons who called him to Dhauli on the pretext of some carpentry work

Demanding a proper investigation into the incident, the family members of the victim alleged that Moharana was murdered by some miscreants

owned by a resident of Badagada area where the deceased was working for the last 20 days.

Dhaulti police registered a case in this regard and started an investigation.

FOR BETTER CROWD MANAGEMENT



As the CMC turns the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack into a vaccination centre, people wait for their turns to get inoculated (top), while DCP Prateek Singh requests those standing in a serpentine queue outside the stadium to maintain social distance, Monday

THUNDERSTORM WARNING FOR ANOTHER 3 DAYS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Monday issued thunderstorm warning for several districts of the state for next three days.

In its evening bulletin, the IMD said thunderstorm with lightning and gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 kmph would occur at one or two places of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Deogarh, Dhenkanal, Angul, Boudh, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Nawarangpur, Koraput and Malkangiri, Tuesday.

The weatherman has also predicted heavy rainfall at one or two places over the districts of Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur and Gajapati, Tuesday.

Few places of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Kandhamal, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Malkangiri and Koraput districts to witness thunderstorm Wednesday.

1.32L inoculated Monday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: As many as 1,32,429 persons were administered Covid-19 vaccines at 695 centres Monday.

Out of them, 1,15,264 belonging to above 45 years age group got the second dose while another 1,314 are frontline workers & healthcare professionals. So far, 62,84,644 persons in the state have received the jabs. The state is having 2.57 lakh doses of Covishield and 4.31 lakh doses of Covaxin in stock. The government has planned 549 sessions Tuesday.

Odisha sends 9,465MT O2 to 11 states

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, May 10: Odisha has so far sent as many as 516 tankers with 9,465.596 MT of medical oxygen from Rourkela, Jajpur, Dhenkanal and Angul to 11 states requiring the life-saving gas, an official said, Monday.

At least 51 tankers were dispatched from Angul with 852.642MT, 132 from Dhenkanal with 2,091.5 MT, 123 from Jajpur with 2,543.192 MT and 210 from Rourkela with 3,978.262 MT. A total of 156 tankers with 3,106.784 MT of oxygen have been sent so far to Andhra Pradesh, and 133 tankers with 2,268.209 MT of oxygen to



Telangana. Similarly, Tamil Nadu has received 10 tankers filled with 202.04 MT of medical oxygen.

Haryana, on the other hand, has received 76 tankers filled with 1,385.422 MT of oxygen. While 22 tankers with 388.68 MT of oxygen have been sent to Maharashtra, 305.541 MT of oxygen filled in 20 tankers have been dispatched to Chhattisgarh.

As many as 37 tankers have car-

ried around 696.3 MT of oxygen to Uttar Pradesh and 45 tankers with 785.87 MT of oxygen have been sent to Madhya Pradesh, said a release by the state police.

So far, 13 tankers with 237.24 MT of oxygen have been sent to Delhi, two tankers with 58.22 MT sent to Punjab and two tankers with 31.29 MT sent to Bihar in last 18 days.

Based on the directive of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, a special cell was formed under ADG (L&O) YK Jethwa for coordinated action for loading and transportation of medical oxygen by Odisha to states facing deficit. A dedicated corridor has been set up with round-the-clock monitoring,

Raghunath cremated with full state honours

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, May 10: The last rites of legendary sculptor, MP and Padma Vibhushan awardee Raghunath Mohapatra were performed with full state honours at a special crematorium at Girala village in Puri district late Sunday night. All the Covid-19 protocols were strictly followed at the crematorium, it was learnt.

The sculptor's mortal remains were brought straight from AIIMS, Bhubaneswar to the village in an ambulance Sunday night.

Puri Sub-Collector Bhabataran Sahoo, ASP Purna Chandra Pradhan and some other officials received the body at the crematorium. They paid their last respect to Mohapatra before the rituals were carried out.

The funeral pyre was lit by Mohapatra's grandson. He performed the rituals wearing PPE kit. Some family members were also present during the cremation.

Notably, Mohapatra was admitted to AIIMS April 22, after he



The sculptor's mortal remains were brought straight from AIIMS, Bhubaneswar to the village in an ambulance Sunday night

tested positive for Covid-19. However, he lost his battle against the virus and succumbed at 3:49pm Sunday.

The sculptor, whose lifelong ambition had been to create a second structure on the lines of the Konark Sun Temple, was conferred with Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan in 1975, 2001 and 2013 respectively.

Mobiles seized from Jharpada jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: The authorities of Prisons Directorate have seized five mobile phones during a surprise raid at the Jharpada special jail here. The Directorate under 'Operation Clean up' has been carrying out raids at various jails across the state to check any ongoing illegal activities inside.

Sources claimed that the authorities have seized mobile sets from the rooms where some hardcore prisoners have been lodged. Speaking to Orissa POST, Prisons DG Santosh Upadhyay said that the phones and other incriminating materials, seized during the raid Sunday, have been submitted at the Laxmisagar police station. Separate complaints have been lodged with the police against two dreaded criminals serving their jail terms in Jharpada jail.

Upadhyay also revealed that, to thwart development of nexus between the dreaded criminals, other inmates and the jail staff, many more hardcore criminals will be shifted to other jails.

Recently, the infamous gangster Tito and another murder accused



were shifted from Jharpada special jail to jails in other districts.

A special squad under the direct supervision of IG prisons has conducted surprise raids at 6 jails till now. The honest staff and warders are being rewarded and felicitated for recovery of contrabands from the jails.

Meanwhile, in another major development, the prisons directorate has released 450 prisoners lodged in different jails of the state on parole for 90 days, keeping in view the rising cases of Covid-19 infections among inmates. The Supreme Court of India had instructed the high-powered com-

mittees established in all the states to initiate release of prisoners on parole or furlough in view of the Covid-19 second wave.

As per sources, 21 under trial prisoners (UTPs) at Udala Sub-jail in Mayurbhanj district were found positive for the virus Monday. Recently, the Prisons Directorate, in a letter addressed to the Registrar General of Orissa High Court, informed about the lodging of 1,163 UTPs in jails in connection with offences with maximum punishment upto seven years.

Such UTPs can be released on bail too to decongest the prisons in the state.

Mother's Day at SAI International School in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: SAI International School celebrated Mother's Day on virtual mode Sunday.

During the celebration it was revealed that mothers are superwomen and the biggest supporters who are always there to love and care for all of us.

This day is celebrated globally to honour all mothers and express gratitude to all the hardships they bear in bringing up a child.

School fraternity led by students of SAI Angan, SAI International School and SAI Residential School in the exhilarating company of parents and well-wishers sang the glory of mothers on the occasion of Mother's Day.

Songs in sync with mellifluous melody was in the air, leaving an enthused community spellbound. Many from the mother's community had their gratitude for the school fraternity for patronizing a day worth of priceless memoirs.

Covid-19 awareness drive in City slums

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: A Covid awareness drive was organised by ActionAid in association with Centre for Child and Women Development Monday in different slum pockets under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC).

The drive, through wall hanging banners, aimed to provide information regarding helpline numbers, hand washing practices, social distancing and usage of mask.

The slum dwellers were informed about helpline numbers of different hospitals and places where they can go for antigen and RT-PCR tests. Earlier, fearing possible spread of virus in slums during the second wave, the BMC had deployed 405 frontline healthcare workers in around 500 slums to carry out daily surveillance. The frontline workers included ASHA, anganwadi and mahila arogya samiti (MAS) members.



A crater could be seen right in the middle of a road at Unit-I market in Bhubaneswar, thanks to the poor upkeep of the road

ADMIN APATHY

10 platoons of police for Chandan Yatra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, May 10: About 10 platoons of police would be deployed along the 1.5 km road from Lion's Gate of Srimandir leading to Narendrapond where the deities would enjoy the 21-day-long Chandan Yatra (water sport) which is scheduled to begin May 15 on the Akshaya Tritiya day.

Police personnel would be posted along the Grand Road and around the Narendrapond till deities return to the temple. Kanwar Vishal Singh, the Superintendent of Police (SP), Puri, said that section 144 of CrPC would be promulgated around the Narendrapond to prevent possible presence and congregation of devotees. "A standard operating procedure (SOP) incorporating the Covid-19 norms would be released soon after a consultation with district Collector Samarth Verma and CDMO Dr Sujata Mishra," Singh added.

It is worth mentioning here that



FILE PHOTO

Puri district remains in the red zone with 3,653 active Covid cases and the numbers are on the rise, with over 700 fresh cases recorded Monday.

In Chandan Yatra festival, deities Madanmohan and Ramakrushna, accompanied by Panch Mahadevas,

visit the Narendrapond daily in their respective palanquins, participate in the water sport, and return to Temple.

The sport goes on for 21 days and the festival concludes with Bhaunri, the 21st day of the festival.

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Potato mission fails in Jajpur district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rasulpur, May 10: The state government had launched a potato mission in 2015 with the aim to increase production of tuber in the state and overcome the shortage of potato, but the programme has gone haywire in Jajpur district due to lack of effective implementation.

According to reports, the potato mission was launched with multiple aims - to augment tuber production, ensure proper marketing facilities, enhance the capacity of cold storages, production of quality potato seeds, credit linkage facilities for cultivation and storage and formation of potato farmers' association.

This year, the farmers reportedly produced a surplus harvest and were expecting to earn a few bucks more, but everything went wrong due to lack of foresight and shoddy implementation of the programme by the district Horticulture Department. The local intelligentsia and senior citizens claimed that the subsidy given to farmers could have been invested in buying the harvested tuber from the farmers and selling them to people at fair price.

The farmers' plight is attributed to lack of adequate cold storages in the region to store the surplus



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This year, the farmers reportedly produced a surplus harvest and were expecting to earn a few bucks more but everything went wrong due to lack of foresight and shoddy implementation of the programme by the district Horticulture Department

The farmers' plight is attributed to lack of adequate cold storages in the region to store the surplus harvest for sale in the next year as well as absence of government support

plus harvest for sale in the next year as well as absence of government support. Till a month back, farmers were selling the crop at throwaway prices due to lack of storage facilities, but now they do not have any tuber to sell in the market at a time when the prices have gone up. A month back, a kg of potato was selling at anything between ₹5 and ₹10 but its price has now gone up to ₹30 per kg.

Lack of storage facilities has deprived them of earning some

extra money on their produce. This has been happening every year and farmers are facing losses.

Reports said that over 150 farmers in Rasulpur and Dharmasala blocks in Jajpur district were supplied with 150 quintals of 'Pokhran' variety of seeds in the 2020-21 agricultural year for cultivation on 10 hectares (25 acres) in both the blocks. The farmers were used to cultivating 'Jyoti' variety of seeds but instead were given 'Pokhran' variety of seeds last year. However, see-

ing the surging prices of tuber in the market, farmers were prompted to use the 'Pokhran' seeds.

Accordingly, the cultivation was to be done on five acres in Rasulpur block and 20 acres in Dharmasala block. The land for tuber cultivation was identified at Marjitapur, Jenapur, Kabatabandha, Choramuhan villages under Dharmasala block and in Rahamba, Bhotka, Rasulpur villages under Rasulpur block. The farmers were also given ₹5.80 lakh as incentive on

the basis of harvest from per hectare in two phases. The Horticulture Department claimed that the harvest was as per expectation. Subhashree Priyadarshini, the assistant horticulture officer in Dharmasala block, said that the harvest was 200 quintals per hectare.

She, however, failed to specify the exact quantity of harvest. Similarly, Jaydev Sit, the assistant horticulture officer in Rasulpur block also failed to ascertain the exact quantity of harvest of tuber in the block. The farmlands in Rasulpur block are well suited for tuber cultivation. However, farmers were allegedly given less quantity of seeds.

Explosives seized from house in Nuapada dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khariar, May 10: Acting on a tip-off, Khariar police seized a huge cache of explosives during a raid at a house at Tukla village in Nuapada district and arrested one person in this connection.

The accused has been identified as Preamsagar Meher (41), the husband of the Khariar block chairperson in Tukla village under Khariar police limits.

The articles seized during the raid include - 15 sealed cardboard cartons, 2,925 gelatin sticks, 29 sealed plastic bags each containing ammonium nitrates weighing 50 kg, one sealed carton containing 34 bundles of detonators totaling 844 pieces, ₹32,900 in cash, Aadhaar card of the accused, two tractors with trolley, two tractors fitted with compressor machines, four iron crowbars and one mobile phone.

This was stated by SP Rahul Kumar Jain at a presser held at the Khariar police station here, Monday.

The SP said that a police team led by Khariar SDPO Santak Jena along with Khariar additional tehsildar Tapan Kumar Nayak raided the



Police found illegal stocks of explosives and vehicles meant for transporting them to various locations

house of Preamsagar Meher at Tukla village on the intervening night of May 9 and 10.

The police found illegal stocks of explosives and vehicles meant for transporting them. The accused failed to produce any license for keeping explosives in huge quantity the SP said.

A case has been registered under Sections 120(B) IPC R.W Sections 4/5/6 of Explosive Substance Act, Monday. Khariar IIC Kailash Chandra Seth was also present at the press meet.

DDUGJY fails to illuminate houses

POST NEWS NETWORK

Binika, May 10: The government provides subsidised electricity under Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) to poor people, but scores of families have been deprived of electricity at Bhangakuda village under Bheden block of Bargarh district, a report said.

Reeling under darkness over years, the villagers are upset over the administration's apathy and have warned of agitation.

According to reports, Bhangakuda is one of the oldest revenue villages in Bheden block. The village is split into three wards and has a population of over 1000.

In 2018-19, there was a plan to provide electricity under the DDUGJY to 88 BPL families in the village. NTPC was assigned to elec-



trify the village. The NTPC was supposed to fix electric boards and meters in 88 households. However, it equipped only 59 households with electric boards and meters. Later, it installed a 63KW transformer near the village primary school

and another 25KW transformer on the outskirts of the village.

It is learnt that the government has allocated ₹1.67 crore for this rural electrification work to be completed latest by April 5, 2020. However, a year has passed since the deadline, but NTPC has failed to complete the work, villagers alleged.

Some beneficiaries, including Hrusikesh Dharua, had taken up the issue with the officials of the local electricity division office. But no step was taken to carry forward the stalled work, they lamented.

Many villagers - Jainaseni, Puspa, Upasi, Gita, Debaraj, Chandrasekhar and Sadananda - warned that they would be compelled launch an agitation in the days to come if the administration fails to take immediate step to electrify the households.

FARM WORK



A farmer ploughing his land after it rained at a village under Chandahandi block in Nabarangpur district

PEO ARRESTED FOR RAPING WOMAN IN KALAHANDI DISTRICT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaipatna, May 10: A panchayat executive officer (PEO) in Jaipatna area of Kalahandi district was Sunday arrested on charges of raping a woman. The accused, identified as Nirakar Nayak, was produced in a local court and remanded to police custody after his bail appeal was turned down.

According to a source, Nayak was posted as PEO at Badkarlakot GP. He was staying at Sector 2 in Irrigation Colony at Mukhiguda locality. The woman complainant was also living in the same area.

Taking advantage of her being alone at home April 28 this year, Nayak entered her house and raped her. The victim later lodged a report against Nayak at Jaipatna police station. On the basis of her report, Jaipatna police conducted an investigation.

Jaipatna IIC Rashmita Pradhan informed that after receiving the report from the victim the police found substantial evidence against Nayak. He was subsequently arrested.

Man for all seasons for the bereaved

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaleswar, May 10: He is a man for all seasons, lending a helping hand to family members of the deceased. Irrespective of caste, creed and religion, he makes it a point to be present at everyone's funeral procession.

Meet 49-year-old Jayanarayan Kundu, a resident of Dharastrok Mouza of Jaleswar Municipality's Ward No-12 in Balasore district. Kundu is known by his nickname 'Mania'. When ever there is any death, people inevitably look for Mania. He is also familiar with the rituals of every religion.

Mania himself does not remember the number of funeral processions he has attended. He, however, remembers the first time he took part in a funeral procession. He was just 25 then. "It was the first occasion when I saw fire engulfing the body. And that day itself I decided to voluntarily participate in the last journey of people," informed Mania.

When Mania receives information of any death, he leaves everything behind and goes to the deceased's house to be in



this town or the villages situated on the outskirts. And without waiting for anyone, he starts preparing the bier, collecting necessary ritual items like earthen pots, black basil leaves etc. Mania said he gets 'immense mental satisfaction' by helping people.

Over the years, he has earned the title of 'Mashani Manisha' (Man of cremation ground), 'Saba bahaka' (Pall bearer) and 'Saba Sathi' (Dead body's friend). Mania has been felicitated at several functions and events. Recently, he was honoured at an event at Jaleswar Nuabazaar.

Senior citizens stage sit-in at Nilagiri CHC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, May 10: The vaccination centre at Nilagiri community health centre (CHC) in Balasore district has remained shut for the last few days prompting some senior citizens to stage a protest in front of the centre, Monday.

According to sources, some senior citizens in the locality are waiting for their second vaccine doses. However, the time within which they were scheduled to get the second dose has elapsed. So they decided to stage a protest. Other sources, however, disclosed the maximum permissible time frame between the first and second dose is three months. So those who haven't got the second dose should not feel perturbed.

Some senior citizens Monday visited the Nilagiri CHC to get the second jab. However, they were asked to go back as the centre had run out of vaccines.

Infuriated over the apathy of the authorities, they staged a sit-in in front of the CHC. Later they called off their strike after CHC officials assured them that they would get their final jabs soon.

One of the agitators claimed

VACCINE SHORTAGE

that 42 days have already elapsed since he received his first jab. "I had visited the centre after completion of 28 days of receiving my first shot. I had to return empty-handed as inoculation was suspended due to unavailability of the vaccines. Today (Monday) is the 42nd day since I took the first injection and again I have been asked to go back. This is causing me severe mental strain," he said.

Lack of testing kits blamed for Covid surge in Angul

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boinda, May 10: The number of Covid-19 patients in Kishorenagar block of Angul district is increasing alarmingly. As a result, residents of this block are living in fear and apprehension. They now hold the local administration responsible for the surge in Covid-19 caseload in the area.

The block reported 557 Covid-19 positive cases during the last one month. Local residents alleged that despite the rise in Covid-19 caseload, the block administration officials are hardly taking any steps to stop the virus from spreading. They further alleged that Covid testing is not being carried out in a proper manner.

Locals pointed out that testing of family members and friends of Covid-19 positive patients is not being done on a priority basis. They said that when such people visit the hospital for tests, they are made to wait endlessly and at times even asked to come on another day.

Scarcity of testing kits is leading to delay in identifying positive patients, they informed. Hence, these people contribute to the increasing cases of Covid-19 patients.

Eight panchayats in Kishorenagar block have reported 369 positive cases and four deaths in the last one month and all of them were under treatment at the Boinda government hospital. Similarly, 188 positive cases and one death were reported last month from 15 panchayats from where most are undergoing treatment at the Kishorenagar government hospital.

According to local residents, infected persons from nearby villages are coming to Boinda on a daily basis for buying essential commodities. "They are spreading the virus. The police have failed to identify such persons and have failed to stop their entry into Boinda," locals alleged. "Even those who have been caught, get away by paying a nominal fine," they added.

Since the number of Covid-19 pa-



tients in eight panchayats in Zone No-13 is increasing rapidly, the villagers have demanded that a temporary testing facility be set up there. However, their demand has not been fulfilled so far.

Residents of Urukula village also had similar grievances. They in-

formed that a number of villagers are down with fever. A medical team should visit the village and collect samples for testing. But nothing has been done so far.

Social activist, Ranjit Patnaik alleged the administration has completely failed in protecting the peo-

ple from coronavirus.

When contacted, Dr Saroj Kumar Nanda of Boinda government hospital said the administration has taken steps to save people from contracting the disease. He however, alleged that people are not following the Covid-19 guidelines in a proper manner.

Many of them are not wearing masks and not implementing social distancing," Dr Nanda said. "We have been telling people to visit hospitals for testing only if they have Covid-19 symptoms. Children, pregnant women and elderly persons have been advised not to leave their homes. If they come out in case of emergency, they should wear masks properly and maintain social distancing," he added.

When contacted, Angul chief district medical officer Dr Abhay Kumar Das admitted that the district is facing an acute shortage of test kits. "However, this problem will be solved soon," he added.

21 test Covid +ve at Udala Sub-Jail

Baripada: Twentyone undertrial prisoners have tested positive for Covid-19 virus at Udala sub-jail in Mayurbhanj district Monday, informed an official. They have been kept in isolation, while the prison premises has been sanitised thoroughly, he informed. The infections were detected when the swab samples of 76 inmates were sent for testing two days back. When the reports arrived, 21 of them turned out to be positive, executive officer of Udala NAC Bidyadhar Dandapat said. A rapid response team (RRT) has immediately started treatment of the infected inmates.

EAST COAST RAILWAY	
Tender Notice No. e-tender / MW/Linen/01/2021	
Description of work: MECHANISED WASHING OF LINENS OF DIVISIONAL RAILWAY HOSPITAL, EAST COAST RAILWAY, KHURDA ROAD THROUGH PRIVATE AGENCY FOR 04 (FOUR) YEARS FROM THE DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF WORK.	
Advised value of the work: ₹5,01,417.00	
Tender Document Cost: ₹2360, Period of Contract: 04 (Four) Years.	
Tender Closing Date & Time: 1500 hrs of 27.05.2021.	
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.	
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website http://www.ireps.gov.in	
Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website (10) ten days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigenda issued for this tender.	
Add: Chief Medical Superintendent (H&FW) PR-83/MI/21-22 Khurda Road	

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, DASPALLA	
At/P.O. - Daspalla, Dist. - Nayagarh	
Ph.: 06757220005, e-Mail: nacdaspalla@gmail.com	
No. 1065	Date: 10.05.2021
1st CORRIGENDUM	
Bid Identification No. NAC-Daspalla/01/2021-22	
Tender ID: 2021_ORULB_68093_1 and 2021_ORULB_68093_2	
With reference to the tender ID No. 2021_ORULB_68093_1 and 2021_ORULB_68093_2, the last date of Bid submission has been extended to 26th May 2021 and opening date extended to 27th May 2021 due to lockdown of State for COVID-19. All other contents will remain unchanged.	
Sd./ Executive Officer N.A.C., Daspalla	

PANCHAYAT SAMITI OFFICE, KAPTIPADA	
E-Mail ID - ori-kaptipada@nic.in	
TENDER CALL NOTICE	
TCN No.-01/2021-2022	Dt. 06.05.2021
No. i-39:- Sealed tenders (Percentage Rate) in conformity with the DTCN are invited from the "D" & "C" Class contractors registered with the State Govt. for execution of different works under Panchayat Samiti, Kaptipada as per Annexure-I of DTCN. The tender document can be obtained from O/o the Block Development Officer, Kaptipada from Dt.-12.05.2021 to 27.05.2021 till 1.00 P.M. The tender document duly signed by the Contractors should be accompanied with the self-attested photocopy of valid GST Clearance Certificate, PAN card, Registration Certificate and requisite EMD in shape of Demand Draft drawn in favour of BDO, Kaptipada payable at "KAPTIPADA" from any Nationalized Bank and NSC/ KVP/ Time Deposit duly pledged. The tender document should be accompanied with requisite tender paper cost in shape of Demand Draft drawn in favour of BDO, Kaptipada payable at "KAPTIPADA" from any Nationalized Bank. The tenders will be received upto Dt.-28.05.2021 till 1.00 PM and addressed to O/o the Block Development Officer, Kaptipada, Mayurbhanj, 757048 through Registered/ Speed Post/ Hand Dropping. The tender is scheduled to be opened on Dt 31.05.2021 at 11.00 A.M. at Block Conference Hall, O/o Block Development Officer, Kaptipada, Mayurbhanj, 757040 in presence of the tenderers or their authorized representatives. All bidders shall have to submit an affidavit in support of authenticity of documents/ credentials. The detail terms and conditions, list of works can be seen at NIC Website (www.mayurbhanj.nic.in). The name of the work should be written on the top of the envelope. The undersigned reserves the right to cancel the tender without assigning any reason thereof.	
Sale of Tender Document from - Dt. 12.05.2021 to 27.05.2021 till 1.00 P.M. Last date of submission of Tender Document - Dt. 28.05.2021 till 1.00 P.M. Date of opening of Tender Document - Dt. 31.05.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	
The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without assigning any reason thereof.	
Sd./- Block Development Officer, Kaptipada OIPR-19032/11/0001/2122	

“ The cup has to be left clean and empty for the divine liquor to be poured into it.

SRI AUROBINDO



Hey Ram!

The Centre seems to have lost its direction and priorities in battling the COVID-19 pandemic forcing millions to run helplessly from pillar to post to get oxygen, vaccines, immunity boosting drugs and beds in hospitals. In the process thousands are dying daily and lakhs are in excruciating pain and mental trauma after contracting the virus. The Indian Medical Association has questioned the lack of transparency even in reporting deaths due to the pandemic and sought to shake the government from its 'slumber'. It is of crucial importance to ascertain the mortality rate with accuracy so as to try and devise a strategy to insulate the population against the calamity. The government, however, claims before the Supreme Court its vaccination policy is "just, equitable, non-discriminatory and based upon an intelligible differentiating factor between the two age groups (45 plus and those below)". The ground reality, however, clearly shows the hollowness of the claim couched in legal language and pompous phraseology.

The insensitivity of the government is further revealed in its resolve to accord priority to the completion of its grandiose and questionable ₹20,000 crore worth Central Vista project to construct a new parliament complex and Prime Minister's residence by making it an 'essential service'. Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has rightly condemned it pointing out that saving the lives of millions of people through free vaccination costs ₹30,000 crore, a price that is 'nothing for the Centre' to pay. In fact, it is a mystery what has prevented the Centre from making vaccination against COVID-19 free when the government had allocated ₹35,000 crore in the last Budget for tackling the pandemic. The Budgeted amount is enough to produce 200 crore doses of Covid vaccine needed for the whole country.

When the government is making hollow claims on its handling of the public health catastrophe, the IMA's diagnosis of the situation should act as an eye-opener and propel it to act fast and effectively. There has been colossal failure by the government in ensuring there is no shortage of drugs, vaccinations and manpower.

Since production has not been raised to the desired levels because of the Centre's failure to foresee the ferocity of the pandemic in its second or third waves, black marketing and hoarding have become rampant. If the Uttarakhand Chief Minister's decision to allow "holy dip" by over four million people during the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar last month has turned the country into hell through super spread of the virus, the revelation of the young son of the BJP MLA of Haridwar getting the job before the government rolled out vaccination for the age group from 18 to 45 years shows the ruling BJP leadership has no conscience left.

There has been a clamour for price capping and systematic tracking with surveillance for such drugs, but the government seems highly disinterested in such measures nor has it removed the Goods and Services Tax on masks, PPE kits and lifesaving drugs. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman ruled out the waiver and explained in a string of 16 tweets on May 9 that if full exemption from GST were given, the domestic producers of these items would be unable to offset taxes paid on their inputs and input services and would pass these on to the end consumers by increasing their price. Alas, this minister is too experienced to be told that in such a national catastrophe the rules can be easily bent to save the lives of the people and also that GST or import duty could be removed on inputs to enable producers retain today's cost. It is the government's job and not the people's, who voted the BJP to power, to find the ways and means to alleviate their suffering.

It was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who had assured the country that the vaccination drive for those above 18 years of age would begin from May 1, but the health ministry is yet to make the required roadmap and ensure vaccine stock. In its absence the people of this age group are helplessly waiting for their turn to get vaccinated. There are reports of the vaccination drive being stalled in many places. The government seems to have abdicated its responsibility to the people. In between, the Tika Utsav of two days left the people wondering about their fate.

On the other hand the Delhi High Court on May 10 agreed to hear on May 11 a petition seeking an interim stay on the construction of Central Vista during the peak phase of the pandemic. The court had earlier listed the case for hearing on May 17, but the Supreme Court told the petitioners to request the High Court for an urgent hearing.

The petitioners are concerned over the threat of super spreading of the virus which was posed by the continuing construction at the massive project site and the plight of the workers who are being exposed to the infection daily. They are also questioning why or how the project constitutes an 'essential service' merely because some executive mandated contractual deadline has to be met. Clearly, the government, by not immediately stopping the construction, is strengthening the suspicion that it is hell bent on implementing the individual desire of PM Modi to rewrite history his way, even at the cost of thousands of lives of people working at the site.

Uttering a 'Hey Ram' might be very appropriate in this situation!

PATENT WAIVER NECESSARY

FOCUS COVID VACCINES

Last October, India and South Africa proposed in the World Trade Organization that intellectual property rights of Covid-related drugs and vaccines be suspended. This proposal was supported by 60 countries. However, the US, still under the Trump administration and the EU were opposed to the proposal. Then presidential candidate Joe Biden in early July itself had said that he supported such a proposal. So, there was expectation, but pressure from the pharma lobby was intense too. Besides, abruptly curtailing patent rights is against the basic sanctity of contracts. You can't renege on a sovereign promise, which is what patent rights are. Then in April last month more than 100 Nobel Prize winners, and several prominent world leaders, including former heads of State, urged the US to support a waiver of the TRIPS (Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) clause in the WTO. Such a waiver they said, would vastly increase inoculation rates, and would legally allow developing countries to make their own vaccines, which were currently developed and produced by global pharma companies.

The signed letter also said that vaccine knowhow and technology should be shared openly, and industry monopolies should not be allowed to create artificial supply shortages. This is seen as essential to winning the war against the pandemic. Winning over US support for a patent waiver is crucial because it entails taking on the might of major pharma companies like Pfizer, Moderna, Novavax, Johnson and Johnson and AstraZeneca.

Of course, there is the argument, which has been examined by India as well, that the current TRIPS regime of the WTO has an escape clause in case of emergencies. This is called compulsory licensing wherein a company can be forced to disclose and license its patents to others, for the sake of national emergencies. But developing countries have been reluctant to use this clause for fear of displeasing the US, which



The issue of TRIPS waiver for vaccines is right time to examine excessive patent protection, and exorbitant monopoly drug prices

could counter the move with some other diplomatic or economic punitive measures. It must be remembered that during the anthrax scare of 2001, the Canadian government had threatened to break the patent protection of Bayer, and use compulsory licensing to produce ciprofloxacin on a mass scale through a small company. Bayer however settled the matter with the Canadian government by donating large amounts of ciprofloxacin and offering more in case of an emergency. This led the Canadian government to agree to acquire ciprofloxacin exclusively from Bayer for the duration of the patent agreement. So, there is a precedent, but many developing countries of Africa have been reluctant to use this route, even for genuine national emergencies like AIDS. An interesting success story without breaking any patent rules was that of CIPLA, an Indian pharma company which in 1993 developed and sold a drug at one tenth the then prevailing price. By 2001, CIPLA had developed an anti-AIDS drug cocktail and sold it at a very low cost, upending the hitherto monopolies, and vastly contributed to the effort to combat and control AIDS.

So, in the present context of Covid, the compulsory licensing avenue is only of academic interest. Besides the US has been increasingly under diplomatic pressure to relax the restrictions on export of vaccines which lie

unutilised. Last week President Biden announced that he would support a TRIPS waiver at the WTO. This is a historic decision. It comes after surmounting the challenges and pressures mounted by the pharma lobby, including the scare that the Russians and Chinese would get the American pharma technology, and that if there was an indiscriminately large production of vaccines all around the world, it would create a big stress on supply chains. As of this writing 120 out of 164 member countries in the WTO are supporting the TRIPS waiver for vaccine patents. Added to this is the statistical evidence that 60 per cent of the world's supplies have been cornered by the rich countries, or only about 16 per cent of the world's population. There is excess stock sitting around in the US which will remain unutilised.

Sure enough the US decision was opposed by many pharma companies and leaders like German Chancellor Angela Merkel. She said that patents were not the limiting factor responsible for the vaccine shortage. It was production capacities and high quality standards. But she surely misses the point, that patent waiver allows production to happen on a massive scale, so that the current capacities are no longer the bottleneck, since newer capacities will come up, without fear of infringing on patents. A German company BioNTech also echoed similar sentiments, saying that replicating the manufacturing

process and mastering that technology can take years. It also added that it was committed to selling the mRNA vaccine to developing countries on a no-profit basis. But that no-profit price surely has the value of the patent, which itself makes it prohibitive. Strangely even Brazil has opposed the patent waiver proposed by Biden, and so has Bill Gates. Of course, if Covid vaccine patents are going to be breached now, the world has to find a way to compensate the pharma companies for the breach of contract. How this waiver proposal will travel through the WTO's voting process remains to be seen. Crucial time may be lost, so India cannot count on this proposal to help its cause. It needs to rapidly ramp up vaccine production and imports, and immediately go for universal and free vaccinations. It should not only depend on "app" based booking, because given the great digital divide, it puts the poor and underprivileged at a great disadvantage. Imagine the areas where telecom connectivity is poor; digital literacy is low (can you do a captcha in 20 seconds), and when the CoWin website open slot is as elusive as a passing comet in the sky.

The issue of the TRIPS waiver for Covid vaccines is also the right time to examine excessive patent protection, and overall exorbitant monopoly drug prices. There is now abundant research which shows that the maxim "no patents, no drugs" is false. And the billions in dollars needed to develop a new drug is mostly due to costs incurred on stage 2 and stage 3 clinical trials, which are actually in the nature of "public goods". That's because once the safety and reliability of the new drug is established in those trials, it deserves to be public knowledge. Hence that cost should simply be reimbursed, and patent-induced monopoly rights should be drastically reduced. This is a longer-term plan. Right now the Covid vaccines are on the agenda.

The writer is an economist and Senior Fellow, Takshashila Institution.

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Ajit Ranade

THE US HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY UNDER DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE TO RELAX THE RESTRICTIONS ON EXPORT OF VACCINES WHICH LIE UNUTILISED

SPECTRUM ELECTORAL BONDS

Ensure transparency in political financing

Speaking at the inaugural Smadhu Babu Memorial Lecture, organised by the Odisha Dialogue, Justice Madan Lokur raised concerns over the non-transparent method of raising money using electoral bonds and its use in state elections at a time when the country is short on resources to fight the pandemic. Justice Lokur's statement is also relevant for us, the people of Odisha, as more than 5 per cent of the total value of bonds was raised from Odisha and Odisha is the 5th largest contributor to electoral bonds. Who bought such bonds in Odisha? Which party received such money? Many such questions remain unanswered.

Electoral bonds came to limelight once again when the Supreme Court refused to put a hold on it despite the allegations of misuse by the Association of Democratic Reforms in March, 2021. After the SC's decision, the Government of India made fresh issue of electoral bonds during April 1-10, 2021 when the country was witnessing the severe second wave of COVID.

Electoral bonds were introduced through the Finance Act, 2017, to increase transparency in political financing. The bonds can be purchased only from the State Bank of India. Anyone can donate the bonds to any party of their choice within

15 days of purchase without disclosing their identity. Both the donor and the political party get tax advantage for the same.

Prima facie, there is no problem with the electoral bonds but the process in which the scheme was designed and implemented raised several questions about the intention of creating this financial instrument. Often well intended products fail in achieving their objectives because of ill-designed processes.

In the case of electoral bonds the ill-designed process seems to be well-planned, which is more worrisome. In a rush to introduce electoral bonds, the government amended five major acts: The Reserve Bank of India Act (1934), the Companies Act (2013), the Income Tax Act (1961), the Representation of People's Act (1951), and the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) through the Finance Act of 2017. Amendment in statutes is an important feature of democracy but such amendments should always be preceded by open discussion and public participation. We did not see much debate on these amendments.

Through an amendment to the Finance Act 2017, the government allowed non-disclosure of details of contribution received by the political parties through electoral bonds

in their reports filed with the Election Commission every year. Will this not reduce transparency in the electoral funding? The amendment of the Companies Act eliminated the cap of 75 per cent of a company's earnings on donations and requirement of three years balance sheet. Now any company including a loss-making one and even a shell company can fund political campaigns without any upper limit. An icing on the cake was provided for the companies by removing the need for disclosure of such funding in the annual financial statements. Will this not further aggravate the agency problem which has been haunting shareholders for ages?

The Foreign Contribution Act too was amended with retrospective effect to define Indian arms of foreign firms as not being a "foreign source" of funding. This opened the flood gates for political parties to receive contributions from foreign companies. Will this not lead to an increase in foreign capital's control on political campaigns?

The government introduced electoral bonds with an objective of increasing transparency in electoral financing, but it seems the bonds have become an epitome of financial opacity. No wonder that electoral bonds emerged as the most popular route of political do-

nation. Is the financial opacity not the reason for the popularity of electoral bonds? Therefore, the search for better financing solutions should continue. Countries like the UK, Australia and the US tried to ensure transparency in electoral donations. Others like Croatia, Sweden, Germany, Israel and Russia used different models of public funding. It is time for us to learn from our own experience and from global experiments too.

Election and campaigning are important for democracy to sustain. However, to maintain independence and neutrality in election there is a need for a robust and transparent method of financing. Electoral bonds seem to have miserably failed the nation in that respect. So how about setting a special fund for the purpose and call it India Democracy Fund (IDF). The fund to be managed under the supervision of the Election Commission and all political donations is diverted to the IDF. The fund could be distributed among political parties using some transparent rules. Creating such transparent means of financing political parties and elections may help in improving our position in Democracy Index's global ranking.

The writer is a Professor, XIMB. Views are personal.

WISDOM CORNER

Let us not pray to be sheltered from dangers but to be fearless when facing them. **RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom. **ISAAC ASIMOV**

Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere. **CARL SAGAN**

WORDSWORTH

Muliebrious

This rare word — meaning effeminate — was found in SM Stirling's book The Sky People, though he spells it slightly differently: "The muliebrious features could have been man or woman or creature from the stories his grandmother had told." His spelling has been used by others but mine is that in the Oxford English Dictionary, which has just one example, from 1652. It's not quite that rare, though one has to search around for instances. It appeared in an article, The Industrial Value of Woman (a title that would today raise eyebrows) in The North American Review in 1882, in which the author wrote of a muliebrious or over-feminine woman. Its companion adjective is muliebral, characteristic of women or womanhood, which lacks the other's negative implications and which featured in the magazine The World & I in 1995: "Muller and Gillis represent the vibrant and irresistible muliebral force that has been weaving its way through the dance world for the last twenty years." Both derive from the classical Latin muliebris, womanly, which is from mulier, a woman. The latter is also the source of the even rarer and long obsolete legal term mulier that describes a child born in wedlock and so legitimate, and of the rather more common muliebriety, womanhood or femininity.

LOL

Run over the rooster

A man was driving down a quiet country lane when out into the road strayed a rooster. Whack! The rooster disappeared under the car. A cloud of feathers. Shaken, the man pulled over at the farmhouse, rang the door bell. A

farmer appeared. The man, somewhat nervously said, "I think I killed your rooster, please allow me to replace him." "Suit yourself," the farmer replied, "you can go join the other chickens that are around the back."



DV Ramana

INTRODUCED WITH AN OBJECTIVE OF INCREASING TRANSPARENCY IN ELECTORAL FINANCING, ELECTORAL BONDS HAVE BECOME AN EPITOME OF FINANCIAL OPACITY

Lockdown gains

Sir, Apropos "26 states/UTs under lockdown", **Orissa POST**, May 10, all those States/UTs have done the inevitable, going into a strict lockdown for a fortnight to arrest India's calamitous descent into COVID-19 hell since mid-March. The horror of sweeping infections, severe disease and staggering death rates has made a lockdown a popular measure. What people now look forward to are measures that draw insights not from crude policing, but public health research and insistence on wearing good masks, social distancing and a prohibition on risky gatherings. For an exhausted medical community amid a severe shortage of medical oxygen and drugs, the pause in activity comes as a life saver. The lockdown window can help it manage existing patients while governments augment critical supplies; a slowing infection curve will give everyone breathing space in coming weeks, although the heart-rending death rate may take time to decline due to the lag effect. It is incumbent upon the Centre to arrange for vaccine imports or augment domestic production to scale up vaccination. Testing access must also be dramatically increased by May-end to assess the true scale of the pandemic. Without such progress, the lockdowns may yield only small gains.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Opportunity in difficulty

Sir, COVID-19 is an opportunity in difficulty for black-marketers, hoarders, looters and fraudsters. After exposure by Bangalore South MP Tejaswi Surya of BBMP authorities making fast bucks in the ICU beds, oxygen and bed scam, Rajasthan has joined the list. A male nurse deputed at Metro Mass Hospital is reported to have been arrested in Jaipur by Anti-Corruption Bureau after he was caught red-handed taking a bribe of ₹23,000 from the family of a Covid patient. He had reportedly colluded with two doctors at RUHS Hospital. The accused Ashok Kumar Gurjar had demanded ₹2 lakh for an ICU bed but the deal was settled for ₹1.3 lakh. It has been alleged the accused had already taken ₹95,000/- from the family of the Covid patient. Recovery of almost 100 oxygen concentrators from an eatery in Delhi's upscale Khan Market points to the artificial scarcity being created by the money minters. The concentrators imported from China for ₹20,000-25,000 were being sold for ₹70,000. The government is under obligation to evince as much attention to send the culprits behind bars as expeditiously as possible, as to come to the rescue of patients in dire need of oxygen and beds.

KV Seetharamaiah, HASSAN

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Augment supply of O₂, vax to TN, HC tells Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, May 10: The Madras High Court Monday said it was necessary for the Centre to take urgent measures to augment the supply of oxygen to Tamil Nadu, which foresees a sharp rise in demand for the life-saving gas in the coming days in the wake of surging COVID-19 cases.

Besides oxygen, supply of vaccines and drugs needs to be augmented for the State and neighbouring Union Territory of Puducherry, the First Bench of Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy said.

The court was hearing a case taken up on its own on issues, including shortage of beds and ventilators, besides diversion of oxygen. Regarding oxygen supply, the Bench noted that while the demand in the State a week back was 475 MT on a daily basis, the allocation of May 8, 2021 provides for 419 MT, including a daily 40 MT supply from Palakkad in Kerala, till May 12, 2021.

"The State now perceives that, with the rising (COVID) numbers, the demand for oxygen will hit 800



Ambulances lined up at COVID care centre of Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital in Chennai, Monday. PTI PHOTO

MT within the next few days and seeks augmented supply of oxygen," it said.

It has also been reported in a se-

tion of the media that local residents have stopped vehicles carrying oxygen from Palakkad to Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu and the

neighbouring areas in view of the perceived shortage of oxygen supply in Kerala, the Bench said. The State and the Centre should

find ways of effective supply to the south-western region since supply from Sriperumbudur near here or elsewhere in north or central Tamil Nadu may be logistically difficult to reach there and, at any rate, less efficient than ensuring supply from neighbouring Palakkad which is about 40 km away.

The State has also submitted that the Sterlite facility in Tuticorin may begin production this week with an anticipated 40 MT per day initial supply.

"In the light of the present allocation of medical oxygen and the rising need of the State, it is necessary to think of a plan B. Oxygen generators have apparently been set up by the Defence Research and Development Organisation at short notice at some places. This avenue must be explored, as also indicated in the previous order," they said.

"If, as the experts suggest, a third wave may be in the offing, it is necessary to be over-prepared....," the Bench added.

The reports filed on behalf of the State indicate augmentation of beds, particularly oxygenated beds, it said.

Vaccine shortage hits inoculation drive in Andhra



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, May 10: A hero's struggle to get the second dose of a particular brand of vaccine for the heroine is the movie's storyline, a writer tells the producer during a story discussion.

That's a cartoon that has gone viral in social media in the two Telugu states in recent days.

"The villagers extend a grand welcome to 'Singannapalem simham' (lion), who is coming after getting the second dose of coronavirus vaccine," says another meme, displayed on a huge hoarding with an onlooker taking a bewildered glance at it.

These jokes, rib-ticking they sure are, hold a mirror to the current scarcity of the coronavirus vaccine, particularly Covaxin, in Andhra Pradesh.

At least 17,93,555 people in the 45-plus age group, and some healthcare workers and frontline workers, in the state are due for the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine but the government hardly has any stock left in hand.

So much so that it has now stopped giving the first dose of the vaccine to anyone.

The Government of India allocates 10 lakh doses to the state per fortnight and so far this fortnight only 8.5 lakh doses were delivered.

The state directly purchased five lakh doses from the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech and is now awaiting the delivery of the second tranche of 12 lakh doses.

"In the first fortnight (of May) we have so far vaccinated 5,96,789 people (with the second dose) and another 6,96,941 are due. Another 10,96,614 will be due for the second dose in the second fortnight," Principal Secretary (Health) Anil Kumar Singhal told PTI.

The state stopped giving the Covid-19 vaccine first dose to the citizens this month as the backlog of the second dose has to be cleared.

In all, the state received 73,49,960 doses of vaccine (60,60,400 doses of Covishield and 12,89,560 of Covaxin) from the Centre.

So far, a total of 73,00,460 doses (first and second) were administered to healthcare workers, frontline workers and those above 45 year of age in the state.

Vaccination for persons in the 18-44 age group has not started as scheduled from May 1 due to shortage of vaccines.

"We have to get 9.91 lakh doses of Covishield as per normal allocation. Of the 3.43 lakh Covaxin doses allotted, 1,43,930 were delivered to us now. We got an additional 3.50 lakh doses of Covishield yesterday," Singhal said.

Accordingly, the government is now planning to complete the second dose vaccination this month so that the first dose could be started from next month.

Sources in the Health Department said technical issues also hampered the vaccination programme.

The Union Ministry of Health April 30 rejected the state government's request for a modification in the Cowin App to enable vaccination of the 45-plus aged persons from the vaccines it directly purchased.

After several rounds of correspondence, the Centre finally accepted the state's proposal to make necessary changes in the Cowin App.

"Now that we started purchasing vaccines directly, the modifications in the App will enable us to go ahead with the vaccination of those above 45 years. Our priority now is to complete the second dose for all those who are due," a senior health official said.

Palaniswami elected Leader of Opposition

AGENCIES

Chennai, May 10: Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K. Palaniswami will be the next Opposition leader of the state.

A three hour-long meeting of legislators and senior leaders held at the party headquarters here Monday decided on the former Chief Minister as the legislature party leader of the AIADMK.

The legislature party leader of the opposition party will automatically become the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly.

Party leaders handed over a letter proposing the name of Palaniswami as the legislature party leader of the AIADMK to Assembly Secretary K. Srinivas after the meeting of the party legislators and office-bearers.

This is the first time that the AIADMK legislature party leader was announced after much opposition within the party.

The party is yet to announce the name of its Chief Whip and Deputy Leader in the Assembly.

There were hectic parleys in the AIADMK and former Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam had proposed the name of former Speaker P. Dhanapal as the party



K. Palaniswami

legislature party leader which was voiced down by the MLAs in support of Palaniswami.

The newly-elected legislators will take the oath of office on May 11, Tuesday and the Speaker will be elected on May 12.

The Speaker has to be escorted to the chair by the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition and hence the selection of the Leader of Opposition had to take place before May 12.

Lockdown kicks in, Stalin launches cash relief scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, May 10: The two-week complete lockdown to help prevent the continuing spike in COVID-19 cases kicked in Monday in Tamil Nadu while Chief Minister M K Stalin launched the Rs 4,000 assistance scheme by handing over the first instalment of Rs 2,000 to beneficiaries.

With tightening of restrictions, there was a big drop in movement of vehicles as most people stayed indoors and operation of public transport including buses and cabs was suspended. Government offices, barring the Secretariat and other essential departments including health/medical, were closed. Shopping complexes, malls, cinemas, state-run liquor stores, bars, salons, private establishments, information technology and IT enabled services firms were all closed. Restaurants and eateries continued with takeaway services as before.

Places of worship that have already been out of bounds for devotees saw priests conducting regular prayers/poojas without people's participation. Police placed barricades preventing access to important flyovers and key intersections across the state. Police personnel advised



People head to their native places from Chennai after a two-week long lockdown announced by the Tamil Nadu government, Monday. PTI PHOTO

people who ventured out without any valid reasons to avoid repeating it. Suburban 'workmen special' trains were operated by Southern Railways for travel by people connected to essential services and permitted activities. Metro rail services were however suspended.

Retail stores selling groceries, vegetable and fruit shops however functioned as usual from morning and closed at noon.

The complete lockdown starting 4 am May 10 and till 4 am May 24 was being enforced in view of the continuing spike in COVID-19 cases in Tamil Nadu. Monday, the state witnessed 28,978 fresh virus cases

and everyday the new infections see a new high. As on May 10, the total active cases are 1,52,389 and 14,09,237 people have tested positive. Monday, 232 people died of the infection and in total 15,880 in the state.

The Chief Minister, marking the launch of the COVID-19 relief scheme for rice category ration card holders, gave away the first instalment of Rs 2,000 cash assistance to seven card holders.

The cash assistance would be provided to beneficiaries at Public Distribution System outlets in their respective neighbourhood beginning May 15 from 8 am and till noon, an official release said.

TN politics to revolve around ideologies

NONE OF THE EXISTING LEADERS -- STALIN, PALANISWAMI AND PANNEERSELVAM -- ARE TOWERING PERSONALITIES LIKE MGR, JAYALALITHAA OR KARUNANIDHI

Chennai, May 10: Politics in Tamil Nadu is going to revolve around three different ideologies and not mainly around personalities that is what has become clear following the humiliating defeat of actors like Kamal Haasan, Vijayakant and R. Sarathkumar floated parties, as well as that of politician TTV Dhinakaran's AMMK party, said political strategists and analysts.

"The major outcome of 2021 Tamil Nadu assembly poll is the settlement of the leadership issue in the state with DMK under its president MK Stalin winning it. The other outcome is that the re-emergence of three different ideologies -- Dravidianism by DMK (social justice, state autonomy, self-respect, rationalism), Tamil nationalism (Liberation of Language pride and Land) by Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) and nationalism/Hindutva by the BJP -- around which the state politics will revolve," Jhon Arokiasamy, political strategist told IANS.

"Stalin proclaiming himself 'Belongs to the Dravidian stock' on his Twitter handle shows that the ruling party will go full steam on Dravidianism against NTK's Tamil Nationalism," an analyst not wanting to be quoted told IANS.

Political analysts said the AIADMK has the word Dravida in its name but it does not profess it like that of DMK.

For a long time Tamil Nadu politics was dominated by personalities like actor-turned-politician and AIADMK founder MG



Ramachandran (MGR) and successor J. Jayalalitha and DMK's M Karunanidhi. Now none of the three are alive. On the other hand, the existing leaders like Stalin, former CMs of AIADMK K Palaniswami and O Panneerselvam are not towering personalities like that of MGR, Jayalalitha or Karunanidhi.

"Stalin has established himself as the leader winning the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and the recently concluded assembly polls. Leaders emerge winning polls which Stalin has done twice," Arokiasamy reiterated.

Analysts said the Tamil Nadu assembly poll results are not based on personalities but on issues or anti-incumbency factors against the AIADMK party that was in power for 10 years.

Superstar Rajinikanth after an-

nouncing his entry into Tamil Nadu politics with his 'spiritual politics' ideology later backed out citing coronavirus spread.

"The problem with Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) ideology 'Centrism' is very confusing and nobody understands that," political analyst Kolahala Srinivas told IANS.

"Kamal Haasan failed in the three Ps formula for a third alternative - Purpose, Position and Performance. He didn't have a clue as to how to position himself as an alternative. His ideology or Purpose was not clear and Performance was also bad. His party was not at all visible. It will be difficult for him from now as the novelty factor has vanished," said an analyst.

Kamal Haasan, touted as the Chief Ministerial candidate, was defeated by BJP candidate Vanathi

Srinivasan in Coimbatore (South) constituency.

The MNM party secured about two per cent vote share down from about four per cent secured in the 2019 Lok Sabha poll.

Similar was the case with DMDK floated by another actor-turned-politician Vijayakant. While Vijayakant was not able to contest due to his health condition, his wife and party Treasurer Premalatha lost badly in Virudhachalam seat. The party got a mere 0.43 per cent vote share with all its candidates losing miserably.

Riding solo during the past three elections NTK notched up about seven per cent vote share or about 30 lakh votes and became the third largest party after DMK and AIADMK with MNM, AMMK and DMDK trailing far behind. Seeman, NTK's founder is the sole and star campaigner for the party. However, his party is known for espousing Tamil Nationalism ideology than him being a former movie director and an actor: "Seeman can target the population segment that are not beneficiaries (mostly forward castes) of the government schemes," Raveendhran Dhuraiswamy told IANS.

Citing the four seats won by BJP in the assembly polls an analyst said Hindu vote consolidation has happened. "If in 2024 Lok Sabha polls BJP does not win then its nationalistic plank will not be able to overtake the Tamil Nationalism ideology of NTK," an analyst said.

Tablighis perform last rites of 560 Covid victims in Tirupati

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Tirupati, May 10: When 26-year-old K Ddamodar Reddy lost his battle to Covid-19 at SVIMS Hospital in this temple town, his blood relatives did not come forward to perform his funeral, but a group of Muslims ensured his last rites as per Hindu traditions.

When a church pastor Vetti Dasu died of Covid at Ruia Hospital, nobody from his relatives came to receive the body and again the Muslim group rushed to the hospital, received the body and arranged for his last rites as per Christian customs.

Unfazed by the hateful propaganda carried out against Tablighi Jamaat last year, blaming it for spreading Covid-19, members of this Muslim religious organisation in this Andhra Pradesh town are conducting last rites of Covid victims, irrespective of their religion.

Active under the banner of Covid-19 Joint Action Committee (JAC), 60 volunteers belonging to Tablighi Jamaat have cremated bodies of 560 Covid victims since the outbreak of the pandemic last year.

They are performing the last rites of not only the unclaimed bodies but also of those whose families abandoned them for fear of contracting the infection.

JAC president Shaik Imam Saheb told IANS that they perform the last rites of the bodies according to the religious beliefs of the deceased. "If the deceased is a Hindu or a



Christian, we use services of their priests to conduct the last rites," he said.

Imam believes it is an opportunity to respond to those who maligned Jamaat out of their hatred. "We are responding to their hate with our love, compassion and humanitarian service. We believe that Almighty Allah has given us this opportunity," said Imam, a practicing advocate at Andhra Pradesh High Court.

He recalled how 'false propaganda' was carried out against Tablighi Jamaat last year after the congregation in Delhi. "They even dubbed Jamaat members as terrorists. Today, the same Jamaat members are conducting the last rites of Covid victims by risking their lives. There couldn't have been a better answer to them," he said.

A group of Muslims had formed

Tirupati United Muslim Association in 2014 to undertake relief works during natural calamities. Last year after the pandemic broke out, it formed the JAC and requested the local authorities to allow them to perform the last rites of the victims according to the religious beliefs of the deceased.

JAC works under the guidance of ulema or Muslim religious leaders of the town. Moulana Ibrahim Hashmi, Hafiz Ishaq Mohammed and Moulana Jaber are the key leaders of the group.

"JAC received Rs 20 lakh as public donations. We bought a new ambulance. We now have two ambulances offering free service," said Imam.

He thanked Tirupati MLA Karunakar Reddy for extended all help to the JAC. The legislator belonging to the state's ruling YSR Congress Party also provided some monetary support.

Despite testing Covid positive twice, the MLA personally participated in the last rites of some deceased along with JAC members. He also praised the services being rendered by the JAC. The JAC now plans to expand its activities by arranging free oxygen cylinders to Covid patients.

Its activities have come in for praise from various sections of the society and authorities, who were worried over piling up of bodies in various hospitals.

Tirupati has four major hospitals and it gets patients from the entire Rayalaseema region and also Nellore district.

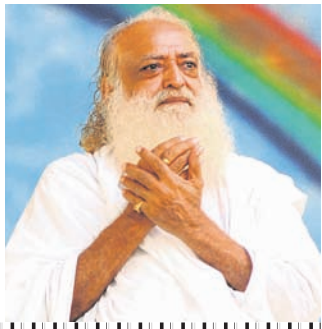
national



Naya Bharat - Where we make a virtue out of the sympathy earned by our failures and deny or gloss over the governmental apathy that led to us needing it
SHASHI THAROOR | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

ASARAM SEEKS BAIL FOR 'AYURVEDIC TREATMENT'

Self-styled godman Asaram Babu, who is serving life term at a jail here for raping a teenage girl, has sought bail from the Rajasthan High Court for "ayurvedic treatment" in Haridwar after testing COVID-19 positive. Last Wednesday, he tested positive for the infection



of the day quote

Scientific advice has been willfully ignored and the country is paying a horrendous price for the Modi government's neglect of the pandemic, indeed its willful patronage of super-spreader events that were allowed for partisan gains

SONIA GANDHI | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Kejriwal kept advertising, claiming there will not be any lockdown, no shortage of oxygen and that people will be delivered oxygen at home. When you saw that you cannot control the situation, then you pointed fingers at the Centre and washed your hands of your responsibility

SAMBIT PATRA | BJP SPOKESPERSON

If very negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

SHORT TAKES

Fake call centre busted; 3 held

Ahmedabad: Police have busted a fake call centre being operated from Ahmedabad and targeting US citizens on the pretext of providing them quick loans, and arrested three persons in this connection, officials said Monday. Based on a specific tip-off, a cyber crime team raided the call centre located in Jagatpur area on Sunday and nabbed the trio, identified as Bharatsinh Mandola (35), Akhlesh Nair (23) and Ajay Sonavane (28), all residents of Ahmedabad.

Gurugram fixes cremation charges

Gurugram: Following a series of complaints of overcharging at different cremation grounds in the district, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) Monday fixed Rs 5,500 as cremation charge. This includes the cost of wood, priest's fees and cleaning fees, said a statement released by the MCG. In this regard, instructions have been issued by the Commissioner of MCG to the in-charges of the cremation grounds located within the corporation limits.

49 oxygen cylinders seized from godown

Jalna: As many as 49 oxygen cylinders have been recovered from a godown in Jalna town of central Maharashtra, an official said Monday. The seizure was made after a joint team of the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the local police and district officials raided the godown located in the Garibshah Bazaar area Sunday night, he said. Medical oxygen is used in treating COVID-19 patients and its demand has shot up manifold during the second wave of the pandemic.

Man posts video, jumps into river

Thane: A 20-year-old man from Thane district of Maharashtra jumped into a river Monday after posting the "last" video of his life on his mobile phone user status, police said. Mayur Jadhav, who jumped into the Gandhari river on Kalyan-Padgha road, is yet to be traced. In the video, Jadhav purportedly said he was an alcoholic and took the decision to end his life as the future looks bleak for him, an official said. In the clip, he purportedly asked people to be happy whenever they remember his suicide, the official said.

After beds and oxygen, Delhi reels under vax crunch

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 10: After battling for hospital beds and oxygen for nearly a month amid the raging second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the national capital is now struggling to get adequate supply of vaccines.

The Aam Aadmi Part (AAP) led Delhi government said Monday that the city is not getting adequate supply of vaccines and the stocks of Covaxin in Delhi would run out in the next 24 hours, while the stocks of Covishield are likely to get exhausted in the next three to four days. Delhi has stocks for just one day for one, and for three or four days for the other vaccine. Covaxin stock will last a day and



Covishield for three or four days, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said Monday.

Meanwhile, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said that

the Centre has replied that the national capital will get only 3.5 lakh doses of vaccine in May against its demand for around 3 crore vaccines in the next three months.

Indian Navy brings huge medical aid from abroad

SAMUDRA SETU II



INS Airawat carrying a shipment of 8 Cryogenic Oxygen tanks and other critical COVID medical stores including 3898 Oxygen Cylinders from Singapore as part of Samudra Setu II, arrives in Visakhapatnam, Monday

PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: Three Indian Navy warships are bringing to India Monday 80 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 20 cryogenic oxygen tanks, 3,150 cylinders and a large amount of other medical supplies from abroad as the country reels under a severe second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

The medical supplies being brought by the ships included 900 oxygen-filled cylinders and 10,000 rapid antigen COVID-19 test kits, 54 oxygen concentrators, 450 PPE (personal protective equipment) kits, Indian Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said.

Indian Navy ship Airawat is reaching Visakhapatnam from Singapore carrying eight cryogenic oxygen tanks each having a capacity of 20 metric tonnes of oxygen and other supplies. Another warship, INS Kolkata, is arriving at New Mangalore port carrying 40 metric tonnes of liquid oxygen, 400 Oxygen cylinders and 47 oxygen concentrators from Qatar and Kuwait, Commander Madhwal said.

INS Trikand is reaching Mumbai

with 40 tonnes of oxygen from Qatar, he said.

Last week, the Indian Navy deployed nine warships to bring liquid medical oxygen and other supplies from several countries in Persian Gulf and south-east Asia.

The Navy said it has stepped up its efforts as ships from all three naval commands in Mumbai, Visakhapatnam and Kochi were deployed to bring oxygen and other medical equipment under operation 'Samudra Setu II'. Last year, Indian Navy had launched Operation Samudra Setu as part of the Vande Bharat evacuation mission under which it brought back to India around 4,000 stranded Indians from Maldives, Sri Lanka and Iran.

As India battles a devastating second wave of coronavirus pandemic, countries around the world have sent medical supplies including oxygen-related equipment to help it tide over the situation.

The leading countries that have supplied assistance to India included the US, Russia, France, Germany, Australia, Ireland, Belgium, Romania, Luxembourg, Singapore, Portugal, Sweden, New Zealand, Kuwait and Mauritius.

45 decaying bodies found in Ganga

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, May 10: Amid the Covid surge that is wreaking havoc across India, the administration in Bihar's Buxar district Monday found at least 45 dead bodies, most in a decomposed stage, in the Ganga, and claimed they had been thrown into the river in upstream Uttar Pradesh.

Ashok Kumar, the Block Development Officer of Chausa in the district, said that the administration has spotted 45 dead bodies at Mahadev Ghat.

Chausa is located on the Bihar-Uttar Pradesh border. These dead bodies are definitely thrown in districts in Uttar Pradesh. We have deployed guards at Mahadev Ghat

BIHAR SCARE



and cremations of dead bodies are underway, he said.

Buxar SDO K K Upadhyay said, "During preliminary investigation, it has appeared that the dead bodies are in decomposed state and more than 5 to 6 days old. We are interacting with our counterparts in Varanasi and Allahabad (Prayagraj) to investigate the incident and intensify vigil in the areas located on the banks of the

The Delhi government had Sunday informed the Centre that it would need 60 lakh doses of vaccine per month to vaccinate around 93 lakh people in the 18-45 age group between May and July.

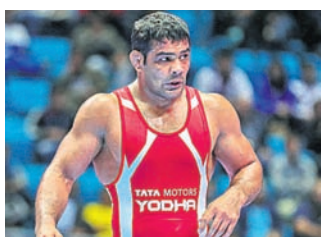
Sisodia also slammed the BJP for making a 'false claim' that Delhi government did not order for adequate doses of vaccine in advance.

After the Centre had made it clear that the state governments could directly approach the companies for placing vaccine orders, the Delhi government had in April ordered 1.34 crore vaccines, Sisodia said.

A large number of youth in the country have died during the second wave of the pandemic, Sisodia said, adding that their lives could have been saved had vaccines were

CHHATRASAL BRAWL

Manhunt on against wrestler Sushil Kumar



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: The Delhi Police has issued a lookout notice against two-time Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar in connection with the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl that led to the death of a wrestler here, officials said Monday.

A senior police officer said the notice was issued late Sunday evening. Police have already recorded the statements of the victims of the brawl. The clash took place over vacating a flat in the Model Town area, he said.

Kumar, who has been named in the FIR in this case, is on the run, and efforts are on to trace him, a senior officer had said earlier, adding that raids were being conducted in the Delhi-NCR and neighbouring states to nab him.

The victims alleged that Kumar was present at the spot when the clash took place, he said.

The wrestler who died was 23 years old. He and two of his friends were brutally assaulted allegedly by other wrestlers inside the Chhatrasal Stadium in the northern part of the city last Tuesday night. According to the police, the brawl involved Kumar, Ajay, Prince Dalal, Sonu, Sagar, Amit and others. A case was registered under sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Arms Act at the Model Town Police Station.

Dalal (24), a resident of Jhajjar in Haryana, has been apprehended.

1,952 employees dead: Railways

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: As many as 1,952 employees of the Indian Railways have succumbed to coronavirus so far and around 1,000 are getting infected on a daily basis, a senior official said Monday.

The Railways is one of the largest employers in not just the country but the world with around 13 lakh employees.

"Railways is not different from any other state or territory and we are also getting COVID cases. We are in the business of transport and have to move freight and people. Around 1,000 (COVID) cases are reported daily," Railway Board Chairman Suneet Sharma said.

"We have our hospitals... We have augmented the number of beds, we have built oxygen plants in rail hospitals. We take care of our staff. As of now, we have 4,000 beds occupied by staff and their families. Our effort is to see that they recover quickly. As of yesterday, 1,952 rail employees have died due to COVID-19 since March last year," he added.

A couple of days ago, the All India Railwaymen's Federation, a rail union, had written to Railway Minister Piyush Goyal demanding compensation at par with frontline workers for railwaymen who lost their lives while working during the coronavirus crisis.

In the letter, they said the men deserved Rs 50 lakh as compensation, same as that announced for frontline workers and not Rs 25 lakh which is paid to them.



Metro trains parked at Timarpur Yard during COVID-induced lockdown, in New Delhi, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Central security for all 77 BJP MLAs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: All the newly elected 77 BJP MLAs in West Bengal are being provided security cover by central paramilitary forces in view of potential threats to them, official sources said Monday.

They said the Members of the Legislative Assembly will be secured by armed commandos of the CISF and the CRPF.

The Union Home Ministry has approved the cover after taking into cognisance a report prepared by central security agencies and the inputs of a high-level fact finding team of officers that was sent to the state by the ministry in the wake

WB POST-POLL VIOLENCE

of post-poll violence in the state, including that against the workers of the BJP, they said.

Sixty-one MLAs out of the 77 will be covered under the lowest 'X' category and the commandos will be drawn from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), as per fresh orders of the MHA, they said.

The rest are either enjoying the central security cover or will be covered under the next higher category of 'Y'.

Fifty-year-old Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari is already a 'Z' category protectee of the Central Reserve

Police Force (CRPF), they said.

These persons face potential threat in the wake of post polls scenario in the state and hence they need to be secured, a senior officer said. A number of other candidates, including some turncoats, who contested the assembly polls from the BJP ticket will also continue to have the central security cover for some more time, they said.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has emerged as the main opposition party in the state, winning 77 seats in the 294-member house in the recently concluded polls where the TMC led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee formed the government.

Delhi court denies interim relief to Kalra

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 10: A Delhi court Monday refused to grant any stay on coercive action against businessman Navneet Kalra in connection with hoarding of oxygen concentrators after seizure by Delhi Police from his restaurant Khan Chacha.

Kalra had moved the Saket court seeking anticipatory bail in the case. Delhi Police Crime Branch had launched a manhunt against him.

A special judge has directed the investigating officer (IO) to file the reply on Kalra's application by Tuesday. Kalra moved the court seeking interim relief of no coercive action by Delhi Police and



also denied the allegations of hoarding of oxygen concentrators.

The Delhi Police had registered a case under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code and also Essential Commodities Act for recovery of over 500 oxygen concentrators from some restaurants in the national capital last week. The case was transferred to the Crime Branch.

The counsel for the accused submitted before the court that his client is being hounded.

Malicious vax SMS that compromises phones spreading: CERT-In

THE AGENCY IS THE FEDERAL TECHNOLOGY ARM TO COMBAT CYBER ATTACKS AND GUARD THE INDIAN CYBER SPACE AGAINST PHISHING AND HACKING ASSAULTS AND SIMILAR ONLINE ATTACKS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: A fake COVID-

19 vaccine registration SMS that maliciously gains entry into a user's Android phone leading to com-

promise of individual contact list is in circulation, the federal cyber security agency has alerted.

The harmful SMS has been identified by at least five variants.

It has been reported that a fake SMS message is in circulation that falsely claims to offer an app to let users register for COVID-19 vaccine in India. The SMS carries a link that installs the malicious app on Android-based devices, which essentially spreads itself via SMS to victims' contacts, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team or CERT-In said in a public advisory issued Saturday.

The agency is the federal technology arm to combat cyber at-

tacks and guarding the Indian cyber space against phishing and hacking assaults and similar online attacks.

It added that the app also gains unnecessary permissions that attackers could leverage to acquire user data such as contact list.

Some of its identified variants are Covid19.Apk; Vaci_Regis.Apk; MyVaccin_v2.Apk; Cov-Regis.Apk and Vccin-Apply.Apk.

The advisory said that the only official online link to register for coronavirus vaccination in the country is the portal—<https://www.cowin.gov.in>.

It asked users to be alert against all attempts of phishing through

fake domains, emails and text messages that promise registration for a job against the pandemic.

As part of measures to check such malicious attempts of data breach, it advised users to tune their phone setting in a manner that disables installation of apps through untrusted sources and that sides should undertake safe browsing and use trusted anti-virus and internet firewall tools.

India at present is administering two COVID-19 vaccines – Covishield and Covaxin – to its citizens and according to official data, the central government has so far provided nearly 18 crore vaccine doses to states and union territories.

national

of the day quote

We should certainly prepare for the Covid-19 third wave, for which we will have to further expand our infrastructure

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

A total lockdown will hamper the livelihood of people, especially those of daily wage earners

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

All the six accused named in an FIR for allegedly sexually assaulting a 25-year-old woman from West Bengal who was associated with the farmers' agitation at the Tikri border would be brought to justice

ANIL VUJI | HARYANA HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Man kills wife, kid and self

Pune: Unemployed during the lockdown, a Maharashtra man committed suicide after killing his wife and a 14-month-old son in Kadamwak area on the outskirts of Pune, police said Monday. The incident happened Sunday when the bodies of the deceased - Hanumantha Daryappa Shinde, 38, his wife Pragna, 28, and their infant son Shivtej - were recovered from their home. Shinde's father, Daryappa A. Shinde lodged a complaint with Loni Kalbhore Police Station, said Investigating Officer Bhagwat Shendge.

MP gears up for 3rd Covid wave

Bhopal: The Madhya Pradesh government will set up 360 ICU beds for children in hospitals across the state as part of its preparations for the third wave of COVID-19, minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang said Monday. Health experts recently warned of a third wave of the coronavirus infection in the country, which could also affect children. On Sunday, state medical education minister Sarang held a meeting via video conference with deans and hospital superintendents of various government medical colleges and other senior officials to review the preparations to be made to tackle the third wave.

Pondicherry CM hospitalised

Chennai: Pondicherry Chief Minister N Rangasamy tested Covid positive and has been admitted to a private hospital in Chennai according to Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Dr Tamilsai Soundararajan's office. Rangasamy, who was sworn in as Chief minister of Puducherry on May 7 tested positive on Sunday evening after a test at the Indira Gandhi Government Medical College hospital, Pondicherry.

'Black fungus' complication adds to India's Covid woes

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 10: The Indian government has told doctors to look out for signs of mucormycosis or "black fungus" in COVID-19 patients as hospitals report a rise in cases of the rare but potentially fatal infection.

The state-run Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said at the weekend that doctors treating COVID-19 patients, diabetics and those with compromised immune systems should watch for early symptoms including sinus pain or nasal blockage on one side of the face, one-sided headache, swelling or numbness, toothache and loosening of teeth.

The disease, which can lead to blackening or discoloration over the nose, blurred or double vision, chest pain, breathing difficulties and coughing blood, is strongly linked to diabetes. And diabetes can in



SILENT KILLER

turn be exacerbated by steroids such as dexamethasone, used to treat severe COVID-19.

"There have been cases reported in several other countries - including the UK, U.S., France, Austria, Brazil and Mexico, but

the volume is much bigger in India," said David Denning, a professor at Britain's Manchester University and an expert at the Global Action Fund for Fungal Infections (GAFFI) charity.

"And one of the reasons is lots and lots of diabetes, and lots of

poorly controlled diabetes." India has not published national data on mucormycosis but has said there is no major outbreak. Media reports have pointed to cases in Maharashtra and its capital Mumbai, and Gujarat.

Aparna Mukherjee, a scientist at ICMR, said: "It's not something to panic about, but you have to be aware of when to seek consultation."

But it is a complication that India's overwhelmed hospitals, desperately short of beds as well as the oxygen needed for severely ill COVID-19 patients, could do without. Meanwhile, doctors at a leading healthcare facility in Hyderabad have come across Covid-19 positive patients who are suffering from mucormycosis, a deadly fungal infection, and a silent killer.

In the past 3-4 weeks, a total of five patients have been reported with this infection at Continental Hospitals, indicating rise in the condition among the Covid-hit, the hospital said on Monday.



A message for App-dependent Modi government: Unfortunately coronavirus is also affecting those who do not have internet facility -- that is more than half of the country's population

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

NEW MODE OF GOLD SMUGGLING BUSTED

Chennai Air Customs Monday said it had busted a new modus operandi of smuggling in gold. Officials found gold granules mixed in an instant drink mix that had arrived in a postal parcel, Commissioner of Customs said



43 TMC legislators sworn in as ministers



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, May 10: Amid a raging Covid-19 pandemic, 43 Trinamool Congress ministers comprising 24 cabinet ministers, 10 Ministers of State with Independent charge and nine MoS took oath at an austere ceremony held in the Raj Bhawan Monday.

While three ministers Amit Mitra, Bratya Basu and Rathin Ghosh took their oath virtually. The rest - 40 ministers were divided into three groups - Cabinet, MOS (Independent Charge) and MoS and they took their oath together to cut short the program.

Mitra has not been well for a long time and the other two ministers have Covid. Later Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee allocated the departments to the ministers. Banerjee kept with herself important departments like Home and Hill Affairs, Health and Family Welfare, Information and Cultural Affairs, Land and Land Reforms and Refugee Rehabilitation. The chief minister will also take care of North Bengal. As expected, Amit Mitra was given the responsibility of Finance but his other department Commerce and Industries was given to former Education Minister Partha Chatterjee. Chatterjee will also hold the portfolio of IT and Parliamentary Affairs.

On the other hand, Bratya Basu who was handling IT is now given the responsibility of the School and Higher Education Department. Mitra is physically not well and didn't contest the election but he was brought back by the chief minister so that he could continue to handle finance.

Though most of the former ministers retain their department but former Urban Development minister and former Mayor Firhad Hakim will be holding the portfolio of Transport and Housing. Earlier the state Transport Department was with Suwendu Adhikari who left TMC and joined BJP before the election.

Interestingly enough three most powerful ministers in the last cabinet Arrop Biswas, Jyotipriya Mullik and Sovondeb Chattopadhyay have been given relatively insignificant portfolios.

Similarly, Mamata's close aide and loyal for long time Sovondeb Chattopadhyay has been transferred from Power to Agriculture and Aroop Biswas, who is one of the most trusted of the chief minister has been given the portfolio of Power. Biswas was the PWD minister that has not been allotted yet. Apart from Roy, the new faces in the cabinet include Manas Ranjan Bhuniya and Bankim Chandra Hazra. When Bhuniya has been given the responsibility of Water Resource Investigation and Development, Hazra has been given the responsibility of Sunderban Affairs.

Chandrima Bhattacharya - one of the most trusted of the chief minister has been made MoS with independent charge but she has been given the responsibility of several departments like Urban Development and Municipal Affairs and will be working as MoS in several departments that are held by Mamata Banerjee like Health and Family Welfare, Land and Land Reforms and Refugee Rehabilitation. It is likely that she will become one of the key ministers in this ministry.

MOCKERY OF COVID NORMS



Heavy rush at a wholesale market, after relaxation from 6AM to 10AM, during COVID-19 curfew in Jammu

Himanta Biswa Sarma sworn in as Assam CM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, May 10: Himanta Biswa Sarma was Monday sworn in as the 15th Chief Minister of Assam, a day after he was named as the leader of the newly-elected BJP legislators in the state.

Sarma was administered the oath of office by Governor Jagdish Mukhi at the famous Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra in Guwahati. Besides the Chief Minister, 13 newly-elected MLAs of the BJP and its allies, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and United People Party Liberal (UPPL), were also sworn in.

The 13 Ministers comprised Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Atul Bora, UG Brahma, Parimal Suklabaidya, Chandra Mohan Patowary, Keshb Mahanta, Ranoj Pegu, Sanjay

'Clamp down on black marketing of drugs'

ALL STATES MUST ENSURE SPECIAL TEAMS TO "MERCILESSLY CLAMP DOWN" ON HOARDING AND BLACK MARKETING OF DRUGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, CENTRE TOLD SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: All states must ensure special teams at different levels to "mercilessly clamp down" on hoarding and black marketing of drugs during the COVID-19 pandemic and send a clear message that "trading in human miseries" shall not be tolerated, the Centre has told the Supreme Court.

In an affidavit filed in the apex court, the Centre has said the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had communicated to all state drug controllers (SDCs) that there should be zero tolerance to any kind of hoarding or black marketing of drugs and also to instruct their enforcement staff to keep strict vigil and take stringent action.

It said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has requested the state governments to take all necessary measures to stop black marketing or hoarding of drugs under the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, The Essential Commodities Act and other applicable rules and regulations.

"The question of black-marketing is essentially dealt with sternly by use of police administration and local state administration. Law and order being a state subject all state governments must ensure special teams at state, district and taluka levels to mercilessly clamp down on any illegal hoarding or black marketing and send a clear message that trading in human miseries shall not be



tolerated under any circumstances," the Centre has said in its affidavit.

It said that enforcement actions have been taken in 157 cases across the country, which include lodging of FIRs and arresting those involved in such activities.

A bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud, which is hearing a suo motu case for ensuring distribution of essential supplies and services during the pandemic, had April 30 flagged the issue of black marketing of drugs.

Survey in Maha favours curfew extension

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 10: After a majority of respondents in a survey carried out by LocalCircles in Maharashtra favoured curfew beyond May 14, the online social media platform Monday urged Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to extend the restrictions till May 31.

Earlier, 84 per cent of Maharashtra residents supported continuation of lockdown restrictions till May 31, in a survey conducted by LocalCircles in the state. But, at the same time, around 43 per cent of the respondents also suggested allowing home deliveries of all goods to minimise business disruption and for consumer inconvenience.

In a letter to the chief minister, LocalCircles founder and Chairman Sachin Taparia said, "With the current restrictions in Maharashtra in place till May 14, residents and small businesses from the state have been discussing the way forward on LocalCircles."

He added that based on hundreds of comments that were received, LocalCircles conducted a public survey on the way forward regarding extension of restrictions.

"Over 18,000 responses were received in this exercise with people from 30 districts of the state," Taparia said in the letter that the platform has been quite active in tracking COVID-19 situation on the ground and sensitising the central and state governments on issues faced by people.

"With timely decisions taken by you (Thackeray) in regard to imposing restrictions, Maharashtra has been able to flatten the COVID-19 curve with Mumbai now becoming a case study for many metros on how to implement COVID-19 lockdowns successfully," he said in the letter.

India, other tea producing nations face climate impacts

WITH ITS CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE GLOBAL MARKET, THE FATE OF THE INDIAN TEA SECTOR HAS A MAJOR EFFECT ON TEA DRINKERS AROUND THE WORLD

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 10: A new report from the charity Christian Aid Monday showed that India along with other tea producing nations, are facing a host of climate related impacts such as rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, droughts and new insect infestations.

The report shows that Assam, the largest single tea growing region in the world, is particularly vulnerable with growers there already suffering from the impact of the climate crisis. In a survey of producers in Assam, 88 per cent of plantation managers and 97 per cent of smallholders stated that the challenging climate conditions were a threat to growing and pro-



duction of tea. The changes in average temperature and rainfall patterns could lead to some traditional tea-growing regions of Assam in India becoming obsolete for tea cultivation.

More extreme bouts of heavy rainfall in Darjeeling and rising temperatures have also led to new and increased pests and insects, yet another challenge that tea farmers need to respond to.

The dire situation facing tea farmers in Assam and elsewhere has not gone unnoticed by some of the world's biggest tea manufacturers. Tata, Unilever and Twinings as well as the Fairtrade Foundation all shared their concern about the impact climate change is having on their growers.

Sebastian Michaelis, Head of Tea International Tea Buying & Blending at Tata Tea, said the company had undergone research into the impact of climate change on Assam.

"Water is vital to sustain the future of the tea industry. Tea growing regions rely on the rainy seasons to keep their tea bushes healthy and productive, but it's evident that seasonal rains are becoming more unpredictable and the impact this has on crop growth is far reaching; not least in loss of income of those employed at a local level on the farms," he said.

Per capita the biggest consumers of black tea is the UK and Ireland and the British government has an opportunity to help tackle climate change this year as it is hosting a crucial UN climate summit.

Kat Kramer, Christian Aid's climate policy lead, said: "This year the UK government has a key role

in overseeing the global response to the climate emergency. As host of both the G7 in June and the COP26 climate summit in November, the UK can ensure that countries on the front line of this crisis can adapt and respond to the impacts of climate change.

These sentiments were echoed by Richard Koskei, 72, a tea farmer from Kericho in Kenya's western highlands.

African climate change expert Mohamed Adow, Director of Power Shift Africa, a Nairobi-based climate and energy think tank, said: "As a major historical polluter and the creator of the industrial revolution the UK has played a big part in the climate emergency which we Kenyans are suffering from."

international



Killing Osama and destroying terror groups were small objectives which never required launching such a costly and longest war in the US history
JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

US COVID DEATH TOLL UNDERCOUNTED: FAUCI

The US has undercounted the number of deaths caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, currently the highest in the world, Anthony Fauci, top country's top infectious disease expert, said



of the day quote

I will consider the remaining one year of my term to be the last opportunity to move from an incomplete peace with North Korea toward one that is irreversible



MOON JAE-IN | SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT

The pervasive threat of terrorist and hateful content online continues to contribute and fuel violent extremism and terrorist actions



EMMANUEL MACRON | FRENCH PRESIDENT

We gave them (Facebook) a certain amount of time to get... their house in order. They needed some time because their rules are shambles... They are unclear, they are internally inconsistent



MICHAEL MCCONNELL | FACEBOOK OVERSIGHT BODY CO-CHAIR

SHORT TAKES

Taliban declares ceasefire during Eid

Kabul: The Taliban militant outfit has announced a three-day ceasefire with the Afghan government during the upcoming Eid al-Fitr holiday, a spokesman said Monday. "To provide a peaceful and secure atmosphere for our compatriots to celebrate this joyous Eid al-Fitr with a greater peace of mind, all Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate (name of the ousted Taliban regime) are instructed to halt all offensive operations against the enemy countrywide from the first till the third day of Eid," Xinhua news agency quoted Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid as saying on Twitter.

6 killed in Mogadishu suicide bombing

Mogadishu (Somalia) Police in Somalia say at least six people were killed when a suicide bomber attacked a police station in the capital, Mogadishu. Spokesman Sadiq Ali Aden told reporters that another six people were wounded in Sunday night's attack on the Waberi district station. The al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab extremist group claimed responsibility. The group often targets security forces in Mogadishu.

Man stabs 5 at NZ supermarket

Wellington: A man began stabbing people at a New Zealand supermarket Monday, wounding five people, three of them critically, according to authorities. Police said a suspect had been arrested and taken into custody after the incident at a Countdown supermarket in the city of Dunedin. Two supermarket staff members were among those wounded. People in the store at the time told local media that it was a chaotic scene as people began screaming and running toward the exits. They said some brave shoppers had tried to stop the man and pin him down.

3 soldiers dead in Pak terror attacks

Islamabad: Three soldiers were killed and five others injured in two separate terrorist attacks in Pakistan's Balochistan province, an army statement said. One of the attacks took place on Sunday in the provincial capital of Quetta where militants attacked paramilitary troops Frontier Corps (FC) deployed on security duties, the military's media wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in the statement. The attack left three soldiers killed and one injured, Xinhua news agency quoted the statement as saying.

Hamas militants fire rockets at Jerusalem after clashes at mosque



A part of a wheat field goes up in flames after Palestinians in Gaza sent incendiary balloons over the border near Nir Am, southern Israel. REUTERS PHOTO

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, May 10: Hamas militants fired a large barrage of rockets into Israel Monday, including one that set off air raid sirens as far away as Jerusalem, after hundreds of Palestinians were hurt in clashes with Israeli police at a flashpoint religious site in the contested holy city.

The early evening attack drastically escalated what already are heightened tensions throughout the region following weeks of confrontations between Israeli police and Palestinian protesters in Jerusalem that have threatened to become a wider conflict.

Shortly after the sirens sounded, explosions could be heard in Jerusalem. One rocket fell on the western outskirts of Jerusalem, lightly damaging a home and causing a brushfire. The Israeli army said there was an initial burst of seven rockets, one was intercepted, and rocket fire was continuing in southern Israel.

Gaza health officials said nine peo-

ple, including three children, were killed in an explosion in the northern Gaza Strip. The cause of the blast was not immediately known.

Elsewhere in Gaza, an Israeli drone strike killed a Palestinian in the northern Gaza Strip, Hamas media reported. The Israeli army said an Israeli civilian in the country's south suffered mild injuries when a vehicle was struck by an anti-tank missile fired from Gaza.

ABOUT 300 WERE HOSPITALISED, THE PALESTINIAN RED CRESCENT SAID ABOUT THE LATEST UNREST SINCE VIOLENCE ESCALATED FOLLOWING THE LAST FRIDAY PRAYERS OF THE HOLY MUSLIM MONTH OF RAMADAN

THE CLASHES WERE THE LATEST IN DAYS OF THE WORST SUCH DISTURBANCES IN JERUSALEM SINCE 2017, FUELLED BY A YEARS-LONG BID BY JEWISH SETTLERS TO TAKE OVER NEARBY PALESTINIAN HOMES

Siberian doctor who treated Kremlin critic goes missing

REUTERS

Moscow, May 10: A Siberian doctor who treated Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny after he collapsed on a flight in Russia last year has gone missing, Russian police said Sunday.

Police in the Omsk region, about 2,200 km east of Moscow, said physician Alexander Murakhovsky had left a hunting base in a forest on an all-terrain vehicle on Friday and had not been seen since.

It said that emergency services, drones, a helicopter and volunteers on the ground had joined the search effort.

Murakhovsky was the head doctor at the hospital in the Siberian

city of Omsk that treated Navalny. President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critic. Murakhovsky was subsequently promoted to the post of regional health minister.

After tense negotiations with the authorities, Navalny was airlifted to Germany from Omsk for further treatment.

Laboratory tests in three European countries, confirmed by the global chemical weapons watchdog, established that Navalny had been poisoned with a Soviet-style Novichok nerve agent.

The Kremlin has repeatedly rejected any suggestion that Russian authorities tried to kill Navalny. He was jailed in February on what he said were trumped up charges.



Pak govt to set new rules to meet FATF demands

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 10: Pakistan, keen to exit from the grey list of the FATF, is set to introduce new rules relating to anti-money laundering cases and change the prosecution process to meet its remaining tough conditions, a media report said Monday.

Pakistan was put on the grey list by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global watchdog for money laundering and terror financing in June 2018 and the country has been struggling to come out of it.

The Dawn newspaper reported that the changes being made also include the transfer of investigations and prosecution of anti-money laundering (AML) cases from police, provincial anti-corruption establishments (ACEs) and other similar agencies to specialised agencies.

This is part of two sets of rules including the AML (Forfeited Properties Management) Rules 2021 and the AML (Referral) Rules 2021



under the National Policy Statement on Follow the Money approved by the federal Cabinet meeting a few days ago, the report said.

These rules and related notifications for certain changes in the existing schedule of Anti-Money Laundering Act 2010 (AMLA) would come into force immediately to be followed by the appointment of administrators and special public prosecutors for implementation.

Based on these measures, the FATF would conclude if Pakistan has complied with three outstanding benchmarks, out of 27, that blocked its exit from the grey list in February this year.

Several review meetings of the

Cyberattack on US pipeline is linked to criminal gang

ASSOCIATED PRESS



New York, May 10: The cyberextortion attempt that has forced the shutdown of a vital US pipeline was carried out by a criminal gang known as DarkSide that cultivates a Robin Hood image of stealing from corporations and giving a cut to charity, two people close to the investigation said Sunday.

The shutdown, meanwhile, stretched into its third day, with the Biden administration loosening regulations for the transport of petroleum products on highways as part of an "all-hands-on-deck" effort to avoid disruptions in the fuel supply.

Experts said that gasoline prices are unlikely to be affected if the pipeline is back to normal in the next few days but that the incident - the worst cyberattack to date on critical US infrastructure - should serve as a wake-up call to

companies about the vulnerabilities they face. The pipeline, operated by Georgia-based Colonial Pipeline, carries gasoline and other fuel from Texas to the Northeast. It delivers roughly 45% of fuel consumed on the East Coast, according to the company.

It was hit by what Colonial called a ransomware attack, in which hackers typically lock up computer systems by encrypting data, paralyzing networks, and then demands

a large ransom to unscramble it. On Sunday, Colonial Pipeline said it was actively in the process of restoring some of its IT systems. It says it remains in contact with law enforcement and other federal agencies, including the Department of Energy, which is leading the federal government response. The company has not said what was demanded or who made the demand.

However, two people close to the investigation, speaking on condition of anonymity, identified the culprit as DarkSide. It is among ransomware gangs that have "professionalised" a criminal industry that has cost Western nations tens of billions of dollars in losses in the past three years.

DarkSide claims that it does not attack hospitals and nursing homes, educational or government targets and that it donates a portion of its take to charity.

7 killed in US b'day party shooting

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, May 10: A gunman opened fire at a birthday party in Colorado, killing six people before taking his own life, US police said.

Colorado Springs police responded shortly after midnight to an emergency call at a mobile home park, where they found six adults shot dead and one adult male who was seriously injured.

He was transported to a local hospital, where he died from his injuries. Preliminary investigations revealed that families had gathered for a birthday party inside one of the trailers when the shooting occurred.

"The suspect, a boyfriend of one of the female victims, drove to the residence, walked inside and began shooting people at the party before taking his own life," the police said in a statement.

"We are still investigating to determine a motive."

None of the children at the party were injured in the attack, according to the police, and they were being cared for by family members.

China to draw 'separation line' on peak of Mt Everest

CHINA HAS BANNED FOREIGN NATIONALS FROM CLIMBING EVEREST SINCE LAST YEAR DUE TO THE VIRUS OUTBREAK

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Beijing, May 10: China will set up a "separation line" on the peak of Mount Everest to avoid possible Covid-19 infections by climbers from virus-hit Nepal, state media reported, after dozens were taken ill from the summit's base camp.

While the virus first emerged in China in late 2019, it has largely been brought under control in the country through a series of strict lockdowns and border closures.

Over 30 sick climbers were evacuated from base camp on the Nepalese side of the world's highest peak in recent weeks as Nepal faces a deadly second wave, rais-

ing fears that the virus might ruin a bumper climbing season.

Mount Everest straddles the China-Nepal border, with the North Slope belonging to China.

Tibetan authorities told reporters at a press conference they would take the "most stringent epidemic prevention measures" to avoid contact between climbers on the north and south slopes or at the top, reported the official Xinhua news agency Sunday.

Mountain guides will set up dividing lines on the summit of the mountain before allowing mountaineers to start the gruelling climb up; the head of the Tibet Mountaineering Association was

COVID SCARE



quoted as saying by Xinhua. The official did not provide de-

tails on what the dividing lines would be made of.

Twenty-one Chinese climbers have been approved to climb to the summit of Everest this year after having quarantined in Tibet since early April, the official added.

The Chinese side will also step up virus control measures at the Chinese base camp on the northern side of the mountain, with non-climber tourists in the Everest scenic area forbidden to enter.

China has banned foreign nationals from climbing Everest since last year due to the virus outbreak.

But this year Nepal has issued a record number of climbing permits to try and boost visitors after its tourism industry suffered a

devastating blow through 2020 from the pandemic.

An Everest permit alone from Nepal costs \$11,000 and climbers pay upward of \$40,000 for an expedition.

More than a thousand people are typically camped at the bustling tent city at the foot of Everest on the Nepalese side at any one time, including foreign climbers and the teams of Nepali guides that escort them to the peak.

In the last three weeks, Nepal's daily case trajectory has shot up with two out of five people tested now returning positive as infections spill over from neighbouring India's deadly second wave.

business

of the day quote

During these unprecedented times, it is our responsibility to support the nation's fight against the pandemic. Our small contribution is an effort to sustain sections of our society where help is needed the most

The effect of Covid on the retail sector has been well reported. The nearly six-month-long lockdown wreaked havoc on the retail segment. Fall in revenue for entire last financial year has been about 50% and with the second wave, it will again be the same

India's sugar exports are on a good course this year as traders have contracted over 50 lakh tonnes of the sweetener so far

SHORT TAKES

PESB names new BPCL chairman

New Delhi: Government-headhunter PESB on Monday selected the next chairman and managing director of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), in signs that the privatisation of the state-owned oil refining and marketing firm may be delayed. The government had kept the position of chairman and managing director vacant after D Rajkumar retired in August last year. It was thought that the government wants the new CMD to be named after the new management takes over following the privatisation of BPCL.

HUL's Sitapati to step down

New Delhi: FMCG major HUL Monday said its Executive Director (Foods and Refreshment) Sudhir Sitapati is leaving the organisation and will be replaced by Srinandan Sundaram as part of top level management changes. "Srinandan Sundaram replaces Sudhir Sitapati, who is leaving the organisation to pursue an external opportunity," HUL said.

TVS donates 500 O₂ concentrators

Chennai: TVS Motors and Sundaram Clayton Ltd Monday donated 500 oxygen concentrators to the Tamil Nadu government through their social arm, the Srinivasan Services Trust. Trust Chairman Swaran Singh and TVS Motors Vice President A Sethuraman handed over the materials to Chief Minister MK Stalin. A press release said that Srinivasan Services Trust will hand over an additional 1,100 oxygen concentrators to the state government in the next couple of weeks.

Blackstone buys Embassy Parks

New Delhi: Global investment firm Blackstone Monday announced the acquisition of Embassy Industrial Parks, a joint venture (JV) firm of Warburg Pincus and realty firm Embassy group. Embassy Group and Blackstone did not disclose the deal value. In 2015, the Bangalore-based Embassy group had formed a JV with private equity firm Warburg Pincus to build industrial parks. Warburg Pincus had a 70% stake while the Embassy group has a 30% shareholding in the JV firm: Embassy Industrial Parks.



The launching of chatbot will bridge the gap between India and Bharat. Urban India has been quick to learn and adapt to the digital world but it is yet to benefit Bharat. We are trying to bring about a change by empowering village level entrepreneurs to learn more banking services

SMITA BHAGAT | GROUP HEAD, GIB AND STARTUPS, HDFC BANK

GOOGLE RAISES ₹33CR

Google Monday said it has raised over ₹33cr under its internal donation campaign to raise funds for non-profit organisations (NPOs) in India which are helping the needy during the lethal second wave. The NPOs that are part of the campaign include GiveIndia and Charities Aid Foundation India



'G7 should invest \$10tn for sustainable Covid recovery'

REUTERS
London, May 10: G7 countries should invest \$10 trillion to stoke an investment-driven recovery that puts Covid-19 vaccines in arms and triggers a sweeping energy transformation to slow climate change, according to a report requested by Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

US President Joe Biden is expected to join other Group of Seven leaders at a G7 summit chaired by Britain's Johnson in Cornwall, southern England, June 11-13.

Founded in 1975 as a forum for the West's richest nations to discuss

crises such as the OPEC oil embargo, the G7 will discuss what it perceives as the biggest threats: China, Russia, climate change and the coronavirus pandemic.

Nicholas Stern, professor of economics at the London School of Economics, said in a report for Johnson that the G7 was a crucial opportunity for the West's richest economies to make a real change to the global economy.

"The transition to a zero-emissions and climate-resilient world provides the greatest economic, business and commercial opportunity of our time," Stern said in the report.

"At the heart of the proposed



transformation that can boost all forms of capital - physical, human, natural and social," Stern said. G7 countries, he said, should set

The transition to a zero-emissions and climate-resilient world provides the greatest economic, business and commercial opportunity of our time

NICHOLAS STERN | PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

a collective goal to raise annual investment by 2% of GDP above pre-pandemic levels for this decade and beyond and improve the quality of investment - equal to about \$1 trillion per year in additional investment over the next decade.

The G7 leaders should ensure a timely global roll-out of vaccines by immediately closing the \$20 billion funding cap of COVAX, a global programme to provide vaccines mainly for poor countries.

After Johnson called for countries to do more than produce "hot air" rhetoric on climate, the report said the G7 should come up with credible ways to meet Biden's climate goals. The G7 should commit to eliminating all fossil-fuel subsidies no later than 2025, lead a sweeping energy transition, end overseas support for fossil-fuel investments and consider a minimum corporate profit tax of 21%.

India remains vulnerable to further waves of Covid:Fitch

The global rating agency said there are growing indications that the latest wave of coronavirus infections will add to risks among financial institutions



AGENCIES
New Delhi, May 10: Fitch Ratings Monday warned that India's slow pace of vaccination could mean that the country remains vulnerable to further waves of the pandemic even once the current surge subsides. Just 9.4% of the population had received at least one vaccine dose as of May 5, according to figures from Our World in Data, the agency said.

"India's slow pace of vaccination means that the country could remain vulnerable to further waves of the pandemic even once the current surge subsides," Fitch added.

The Centre has already provided more than 17.56 crore vaccine doses to states/UTs free of cost. The cumulative number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country exceeded 16.94 crore May 9.

The global rating agency said there are growing indications that the latest wave of coronavirus in-

Ethereum breaks \$4,000 to hit record-high

AGENCIES
New York, May 10: Cryptocurrency ethereum broke \$4,000 for the first time Monday, climbing to a new peak for a third day in a row on bets it may find new uses, although some analysts said it was overvalued at current levels.

Ethereum, the second-largest coin by market capitalisation, jumped more than 6% to just below \$4,175, and was last up around 2%.

It has soared this year, fuelled by expectations of wider use, based in



part on its role in decentralised finance - "DeFi" - platforms that facilitate crypto-denominated lending outside traditional banking.

An upcoming technical change to its software seen as reducing its supply has also provided a boost, while new institutional investors in the crypto sector have warmed to it amid a tepid quarter so far for bitcoin.

"(Crypto has) got a lot more institutional involvement than people who haven't followed the market believe," said Chris Weston, head of research at brokerage Pepperstone.

Eli Lilly signs pacts with Cipla, Lupin, Sun Pharma

AGENCIES
New Delhi, May 10: Eli Lilly announced that it has issued royalty-free, non-exclusive voluntary licenses to Indian pharmaceutical manufacturers of generic medicines, Cipla Ltd., Lupin Ltd. and Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., who are collaborating with Lilly to accelerate and expand the availability of baricitinib in India.



The voluntary licensing agreements will ensure high quality production and accessibility of baricitinib during the pandemic, improving the local treatment

Lilly is also in discussions with several other Indian manufacturers for the potential grant of additional voluntary licenses.

These voluntary licensing agreements will ensure high quality manufacturing and accessibility of baricitinib during the pandemic improving the local treatment options available to positively impact the lives of people who are currently battling Eli Lilly signs agreements with Cipla, Lupin and Sun Pharma -19 in India.

Lilly has recently received permission for restricted emergency use by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), Ministry of Health, for baricitinib to be used in combination with Remdesivir for the treatment of suspected or laboratory confirmed Eli Lilly signs agreements with Cipla, Lupin and Sun Pharma -19 in hospitalised adults requiring supplemental oxygen, invasive mechani-

cal ventilation, or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO).

Commenting on the development, Luca Visini, Managing Director, India Subcontinent, Lilly India, said, "Lilly is committed to supporting India in this healthcare challenge through our innovative and effective portfolio of breakthrough medicines. During the current surging Covid-19 pandemic, we have responded by issuing three voluntary licenses for baricitinib by pharmaceutical companies in India to accelerate its local manufacturing and distribution under best quality conditions.

Second wave threatens economic growth: Crisil

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
Mumbai, May 10: The second wave of novel coronavirus threatens the economic growth of India, said a Crisil report. It said that base GDP growth forecast for fiscal 2022 at 11%, with risk firmly tilted downwards.

As per the report, the GDP growth rate may drop to 9.8%, if the second wave peaks by May-end and if the peak is reached by June-end, the GDP growth rate is likely to fall to 8.2%.

It further said that India Inc's revenue growth is projected at 15% for fiscal 2022 on a low base of two years in base case and moderate sce-

nario and in alternate severe scenario; the growth is pegged at 10-12%. "Rising costs could pose headwinds to companies as they recover in specific sectors," it said.

Restrictions, in terms of number of days, are less compared with fiscal 2021 so far, though is still evolving. Lockdowns are less restrictive for economic activity and are concentrated in the most-hit states.

The Crisil report noted that the first half of fiscal year 2022 would be supported by a base effect but it would be clouded by the pandemic's spread. The recent surge in Covid-19 cases has led to high-frequency indicators showing some softening.

'Looking for potential opportunities'

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, May 10: Aavishkaar Group, an impact investment platform, is looking for the potential opportunities to invest in Odisha, said its founder Vineet Rai.

"As I have started my career in Odisha, I have personal affinity for the state. In 2009, we invested in Milk Mantra when it was a paper plan and have supported Srikumar Misra and Rashima Misra in their entrepreneurial journey creating one of the largest private dairy in Odisha. We continue to look at potential opportunities to invest in the state," Rai said.

He added, "Arohan, our micro-finance institution has made rapid strides in Odisha, providing mi-



crofinance services and supporting the entrepreneurial women to build new livelihoods."

Aavishkaar currently manages \$1.2 billion in assets and expect to scale this up to \$12 billion in next 10 years. The group's plan is to help many more startups bloom and provide jobs, livelihoods and solutions to people across the coun-

try. The group is planning to invest around \$100 million in startups in India during FY 2021-2022.

"Covid is once in a lifetime black swan event. Our belief is that if you do support your customers, they will find a way to repay you and that needs strong process, leadership and right product. It also means you have to build credibility with your lenders and seek their support," Rai said.

"The Centre and off late the states have been very supportive of startup. What you need is a nurturing environment for startups. If the government can reduce impediments in the life of an entrepreneur who is starting up that would be the biggest ask," the founder urged.

'Exports, overall biz environment to help cos tide over 2nd wave'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai, May 10: The partial-to-full lockdowns imposed by various states to contain the second wave of the pandemic are likely to have a muted impact on the overall business environment, given strong export demand and improved balance sheets in the past six months, according to a report.



Though supply chain disruptions could play out, overall impact on corporates is expected to be moderate to minimal. But, small businesses and retail borrowers are likely to see stresses, India Ratings said in a report Monday.

It added that retail borrowers and small business will see stress, leading to a build-up of potential asset quality issues in the unsecured lending books of lenders and an increase in softer delinquencies in the MFI segment.

The assessment will change if there were a stringent national lockdown or a protracted normalisation of activities due to the pandemic, the agency warned and cautioned that the economy in general will have a bumpy road to recovery.

The second wave of the pandemic infections will be less disruptive than the first wave for overall businesses, despite the daily caseload reaching more than four times of the peak level seen during the first wave. This is because the administrative response is likely to be confined to the regional/local lockdowns and containment zones.

Pandemic brings automation tech to forefront in India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, May 10: The Covid-19 pandemic has brought automation technologies to the forefront and the Intelligent Automation (IA) market in India is estimated to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 55%, with large enterprises expected to spend nearly \$340-\$350 million in IA capabilities in 2024, a new report said Monday.

The overall expenditure is expected to exceed this figure since the market now also includes startups and various SMEs. IA combines the capabilities of robotic process automation (RPA) with smart optical character recognition (OCR), conversational AI and cognitive intelligence.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented changes in how organisations function. It is the need of the hour for

PARADIGM SHIFT



organisations across the world to re-engineer the ways of doing business," according to the report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and PwC released at

- The IA market is estimated to grow at a CAGR of 55%, with large enterprises expected to spend nearly \$340-\$350 million in IA capabilities in 2024
- IA is helping businesses to deal with the crisis and find ways to move forward as more organisations shift towards digital
- In 2020, 94.7% of Indian organisations fast-tracked some level of digital transformation programmes
- Further, 92.3% are reinventing their business models

the 'Digital Transformation Summit'. "Organisations need to transform themselves into modern workplaces that enable the synergy between their human and

machine workforce, with the former assuming responsibilities for strategic and customer-centric initiatives and the latter executing repetitive activities," the findings showed.

IA is helping businesses to deal with the crisis and find ways to move forward as more organisations shift towards digital.

"Organisational priorities have shifted, and more organisations have started adopting digital tools and technologies. This initially helped support basic business operations and is now allowing them to emerge with more robust digitally empowered operating models," said the report.

In 2020, 94.7% of Indian organisations fast-tracked some level of digital transformation programmes. Further, 92.3% are reinventing their business models.

"AI is expected to increase economic growth exponentially over the next few decades. 64% of Indian organisations expect to increase demand for cloud computing as a result of Covid-19 alone," the report mentioned.

Los Blancos miss chance to take lead in La Liga

REAL HELD BY SEVILLA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, May 10: After seeing its chance to reach the top of the Spanish league slip away, defending champion Real Madrid turned its anger toward the officials.

Madrid blasted the referee and VAR after Sunday's 2-2 draw against Sevilla, which kept the club from taking the lead with three rounds to go. The result benefited first place Atletico Madrid, which drew 0-0 with Barcelona at the Camp Nou Stadium Saturday.

Chasing their first league title since 2014, Atletico stayed two points in front of both second-placed Real and Barcelona.

The complaints by Madrid came after video review turned a penalty kick for the hosts into one for Sevilla with the game at 1-1 in the second half.

The referee had called a penalty for a foul on Karim Benzema in the 74th minute, but VAR went back to find a controversial handball by Madrid defender Eder Militao a few seconds earlier in the other area. Madrid also had a first-half goal by Benzema overturned for offside by VAR.

Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane couldn't hold back against the officials. "I never speak about the referees, but today I'm angry," said Zidane, who entered the field to question the referee after the match. "I didn't understand anything, I'm not convinced by anything that he told me."

Madrid twice trailed against Sevilla, needing a late goal by Eden Hazard deep in stoppage time to earn the final equalizer at the Alfredo Di Stefano Stadium.

Fernando had put the visitors ahead in the 22nd before Marco Asensio evened the match in the



Real Madrid players regroup after finding the first equaliser against Sevilla, Sunday

67th. Ivan Rakitic converted the controversial penalty kick in the 78th to put Sevilla in front, and Hazard deflected a shot by Toni Kroos in the fourth minute of injury time to salvage a point for Madrid.

Sevilla was six points off the lead and kept a very slim chance of winning its first league title since 1946. Rakitic said it was a "clear" penalty after Militao's handball. "The ball hit his hand and changed direction, to me that's a penalty," he said.

Madrid hadn't conceded in four

consecutive league games and had won four in a row against Sevilla in the domestic competition. The late goal kept the defending champions unbeaten in 15 straight games in the league.

OTHER RESULTS

Valencia beat Valladolid 3-0 with two goals by Maxi Gomez and one from Thierry Correia, moving the team further away from the relegation zone. The home victory came a day after thousands of fans protested outside the team's stadium against the club's Singaporean owner Peter Lim.

Celta Vigo won 4-2 at Villarreal in a match with three penalty kicks, two of them for the visitors in the first half. Sixth-place Villarreal had two players on the bench shown the red card for complaining. Eighth-place Celta was reduced to 10 men late in the match.

FAN CONFRONTATION

Spanish media said at least one Numancia player got into a confrontation with fans after the team's relegation to the fourth division Sunday. Bats and a knife were reportedly carried by some involved in the altercation after the match.

Juve lose to AC Milan

RONALDO & CO'S LOSS AT HOME DROPS THEM TO FIFTH; CHANCES OF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUALIFICATION IN PERIL

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Milan, May 10: Juventus lost 0-3 at home to AC Milan and dropped to fifth to leave its chances of qualifying for the Champions League in peril, on the same weekend that Juventus insisted on forging ahead with a European Super League competition that would guarantee it a spot among elite clubs.

Juventus, which had its nine-year grip on the Serie A title ended by Inter Milan last weekend, slipped out of the Champions League qualifying positions. It is a point behind fourth-place Napoli, with three rounds remaining in the Italian league.

The Bianconeri, along with Barcelona and Real Madrid, stepped up criticism of UEFA Saturday, denouncing "threats" for their refusal to back down on the prospect of a breakaway competition.

The other nine clubs who formed the ill-fated Super League three weeks ago accepted a settlement Friday to be fined by UEFA and stay within the open Champions League structure.

Milan was one of those clubs and the win boosted its chances of getting back into the Champions League as the Rossoneri moved level on points with second-place Atalanta, which earlier won 5-2 at Parma.

The match in Turin was a direct fight for a top four finish, with both Milan and Juve locked on the same number of points. With Atalanta and Napoli already having won this weekend, the pressure was on the teams in what was being billed as a Champions League playoff.

And it was Milan which broke the deadlock in first-half stoppage time. Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech



Brahim Diaz reacts after scoring AC Milan's first goal against Juventus, Sunday

Szczesny failed to properly punch clear a free kick and Brahim Diaz was able to control and cut inside before curling the ball into the top right corner.

Milan could have doubled its lead 13 minutes into the second half when it was awarded a penalty for a handball by Giorgio Chiellini. But Szczesny made up for his earlier error by saving Franck Kessie's spot-kick.

Szczesny was left with no chance in the 78th minute when Ante Rebic unleashed a powerful 25-yard strike into the top right corner.

And Milan sealed the result four minutes later when Fikayo Tomori headed in a free kick for his first goal for Milan since joining on

loan from Chelsea in January. The defender's goal also means Milan has the better head-to-head record over Juventus — after losing the first match between the teams 3-1. That is the first tie-breaker if the teams are level on points at the end of the season.

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini's halftime changes had an immediate impact against already-relegated Parma.

Matteo Pessina doubled Atalanta's lead shortly after coming on and fellow substitute Luis Muriel scored twice. Another substitute, Aleksei Miranchuk, scored Atalanta's final goal. Ruslan Malinovskyi had opened the scoring in the 12th minute.

PSG's title defense hangs by a thread



Neymar celebrates his goal with his teammates, Sunday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, May 10: Paris Saint-Germain's title defense hangs by a thread after a 1-1 draw at Rennes left it three points behind leader Lille with only two games left.

PSG led through Neymar's penalty seconds before halftime. It was given after a long video review, even though it looked like Nayef Aguerd made a clean tackle in the area on left back Layvin Kurzawa.

After PSG goalkeeper Keylor Navas saved midfielder Flavian Tait's fine curler from 20 meters (yards) out midway through the second half, Rennes striker Serhou Guirassy superbly headed home winger Benjamin Bourigeaud's corner in the 70th.

PSG had center half Presnel Kimpembe recklessly sent off near

the end, and could have lost for the ninth time in the league this season. But the alert Navas saved again from Tait's drilled shot in the first minute of injury time.

Seventh-place Rennes was rewarded for a strong performance by slightly closing the gap to one point on Lens and fifth-place Marseille in the Europa League spot.

Lille looks odds-on for its first title since 2011 and has a better head-to-head record after drawing at home to PSG and winning away. With two remaining rounds, PSG is just two points ahead of third-place Monaco, which won 1-0 at Reims to stay in the Champions League spots.

Marseille dropped crucial points in the race for the Europa League after a 0-1 defeat at Saint-Etienne but is fifth on goal difference.

Zverev claims Madrid Open title

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, May 10: Alexander Zverev continued his impressive form going into the French Open by winning his second Madrid Open title.

After beating top-seeded Rafa Nadal in the quarterfinals and fourth-ranked Dominic Thiem in the semifinals, Zverev rallied to defeat Matteo Berrettini 6-7(8-10), 6-4, 6-3 for his second title this season.

The sixth-ranked German also won the Mexican Open in Acapulco in March. Zverev won his first Madrid title in 2018 in a final against Thiem. The win on Sunday gave him his fourth Masters 1000 title, and first in three years. Zverev will be trying to improve from his fourth-round exit last year at the French Open.

"To do well at the French Open, you need to be playing well during the clay court season," the 24-year-old Zverev said.

"That is in a way important for me, as well. At the end of the day I won a Masters. There's really very little in terms of bigger than this one right here. I'm happy with this achievement. Obviously, yeah, I look forward to the next few weeks. I look forward to what's ahead."

The 10th-ranked Berrettini won the title in Belgrade last week. The Italian has been gradually returning to form after struggling with an abdominal injury that kept him from playing his quarterfinal match against Stefanos Tsitsipas at the Australian Open. The injury kept Berrettini out until Monte Carlo, where he lost his opening match.

After exchanging a break each in the first set, Berrettini opened the tiebreaker with a 5-0 lead but



allowed Zverev to come back. The Italian closed it out on his fourth set point after Zverev also squandered a set point in the back-and-forth tiebreaker. It was the first set dropped by Zverev this week.

Zverev, who finished with seven double-faults, evened the match after breaking Berrettini at 4-4 and serving out to clinch the second set at the Magic Box center court,

which had its roof closed because of rain in Madrid.

Berrettini, who ended with 50 unforced errors, squandered a break point early in the third set, and Zverev broke him in the following game to take the lead. He earned another break at the end, converting on his second match point to clinch the victory.

In the men's doubles final, Marcel

Granollers of Spain and Horacio Zeballos of Argentina defeated Nikola Mektic and Mate Pavic of Croatia 1-6, 6-3, 10-8.

The Madrid Open was one of the first sporting events in Spain that allowed the presence of a limited number of fans. The tournament was among those cancelled last year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

West Bromwich relegated after losing to Arsenal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, May 10: West Bromwich Albion was relegated after one season back in the Premier League after losing 3-1 at Arsenal Sunday, ending Sam Allardyce's proud record of never having taken a side down from England's top division in 30 years as a manager.

A 19th defeat of the campaign left next-to-last West Brom 10 points from safety with just three games remaining and joining last-place Sheffield United in returning to the second-tier Championship. Fulham, which is in third-to-last place, will join them if it loses at home to Burnley Monday.

West Brom didn't manage to improve its position under Allardyce and has the worst defensive record in the league, with the Arsenal goals scored by Emile Smith Rowe, Nicolas Pepe and William taking that tally conceded to 68.

Rowe volleyed in from Bukayo Saka's left-wing cross in the 29th minute, before Pepe doubled the lead six minutes later by curling home a shot into the top corner from the right of the penalty area.

Matheus Pereira has been a rare bright spark in an otherwise dismal season for West Brom and the Brazilian playmaker showcased his ability to any potential suitors by scoring his 10th goal of the season — and it was perhaps his best.



Arsenal players celebrate, while West Brom players (bottom) look dejected



He ran at the heart of Arsenal's defense from near the halfway line, getting to just outside the area before shooting low into the corner. William ensured West Brom would not be grabbing a draw to stay alive for a few more days by curling home a free-kick in the 90th minute. Arsenal's win came three days after their exit from the Europa League at the semifinals and lifted Mikel Arteta's team to ninth place.

Former India footballer Fortunato Franco passes way

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: Fortunato Franco, one of the pillars of India's last Asian Games gold-winning football team in 1962, died in Goa Monday. He was 84. The AIFF confirmed the news of his death but did not specify the cause of his demise. Franco is survived by his wife, son and daughter.

One of India's finest mid-fielders (half-back as per 1960s parlance), Franco was a part of Indian football's golden era between 1960 and 1964.

He was a part of the 1960 Rome Olympics squad but didn't get a game. However, he was an inte-

gral part of the 1962 Asiad gold winning team in Jakarta.

He made 26 appearances for India, including the 1962 Asian Cup, where India finished runners-up, and silver and bronze medal winning sides of 1964 and 1965 Merdeka Cup.

But his best performance was in the 1962 Asian Games where Indian football witnessed its finest hour, beating South Korea 2-1 in the final in Jakarta in front of 100,000 people.

While the more illustrious quartet of PK Banerjee, Chuni Goswami, Tulsidas Balamram and Jarnail Singh hogged the limelight, Franco would forever be remembered for



providing the assist that enabled Jarnail to nod home the winner.

At the domestic level, Franco, a Goan, played his best years for the powerful Tata Football Club in Mumbai. In fact, he worked in the company's public relations department for four decades before retiring in 1999.

He was probably the tallest name in Maharashtra football having captained the state for eight successive years between 1959 and 1966 in the Santosh Trophy and was the architect of their title triumph in 1964.

During his last years in competitive football, he did play for Goan giants Salgaocar but a knee

injury ended his career even before he was 30 years old.

Had Franco not retired from international football in 1965, many old timers believe that he could have become India captain for the 1966 Asian Games in Bangkok.

"It is devastating to hear that Mr. Fortunato Franco is no more. He was a member of the Indian football's golden generation who played a stellar role in India helping India win the Gold Medal in 1962 Asian Games," AIFF president Patel was quoted as saying in a media release. "His contribution to Indian Football can never be forgotten. I share the grief," he added.