

Boost to state's Covid infra ODISHA TO SET UP RT-PCR TESTING LABS IN 16 DISTRICT HEADOUARTERS HOSPITALS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 11: A day after deciding to open a global tender to procure vaccines from open markets to ensure mass inoculations in the state, the state government Tuesday decided to set up RT-PCR testing laboratories in 16 district headquarters hospitals.

Health and family welfare department issued a notification to this effect. The testing labs will be set up at the district headquarters of Bhadrak, Boudh, Bargarh, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Kandhamal, Kendrapara, Khurda, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Sonepur and Sundargarh. Another district is Rayagada for which a machine has been ordered by the Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd (OSMCL).

The approximate cost of the each laboratory will be around ₹1.20 crore. The government has approved recruitment of staff including one microbiologist and three lab technicians for each shift (eight hours) duty. The move will not only enhance the daily testing rate but also reduce the time period now required for testing, official sources said. Due to lack of sufficient number of RTPCR testing labs, samples collected from various parts of the state are being transported to nearest lab each



day. And it is delaying the time for getting results, the source said.

At present, the state has 20 RTPCR laboratories of which 13 are government-run and seven are run by private organizations. All seven state-run medical colleges at Cuttack, Berhampur, Burla, Koraput, Baripada, Balasore and

Bolangir have the facility. Similarly, RTPCR labs are functioning at AIIMS Bhubaneswar, Ispat General Hospital-Rourkela, Institute of Life Sciences-Bhubaneswar, International Centre for Foot and Mouth Disease-Khurda and Indian Institute of Science Education & Research (IISER)—Berhampur. Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC). the purpose, an official said.



meet the rising demand, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) will set up seven medical oxygen plants in Odisha.

The DRDO is setting up 500 oxygen plants in the country within three months with the help of its indigenous developed technology. Of which, seven will be es-tablished in Odisha, CGM of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Odisha, Ram Prasad Panda, said.

The plants will come up in Boudh, Cuttack, Bhadrak, Gajapati, Jharsuguda, Nayagarh and Koraput. The NHAI has been asked to carry out the civil and electrical work of the plants while DRDO will look after technical part, he said.

Panda said land has been acquired for the plants while the NHAI has already commenced the civil construction work at two places- Boudh and Cuttack. The oxygen plant is designed for a capacity of 1,000 litres per minute (LPM). The system can cater for 190 patients at a flow of 5 LPM and will charge 195 cylinders per day.



Once the plants become functional, hospitals can generate oxygen from the onsite plant instead of depending on other sources. It would also be cost-effective for the health centres. The plants would be useful for patients, especially those who are



STATE FARES MISERABLY ON COVID-19

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, May 11: Amidst the rapid surge in COVID-19 cases in the state and the government's efforts to curb its footprints, the Covid positivity rate of Odisha stood at 24.4 per cent, more than the national positivity rate of 21 per cent.

At a presser on the status of the pandemic, joint secretary, Union health ministry, Lav Agarwal, said 26 states have a case positivity rate of more than 15 per cent. The health ministry also said that Odisha is among top five states that have been witnessing increasing trend of new cases with 5,908 cases reported April 27 to over 10,000 new cases May 10.

The Union health ministry also said that 533 districts across the country, including 27 from Odisha, have a case positivity rate of more than 10 per cent.

Two Odisha districts with 49.6 per cent of posi--Kalahandi and Sambalpur tivity followed by have the highest positivity Pondicherry, West Bengal, rate of 46.7 and 46.6 per cent Harvana and Karnataka, respectively. Similarly four Odisha stood at the 11th podistricts in the state have a positivity rate between 30 and 40 per cent -Sundargarh 34.2 pc, Angul 34 per cent, Khurda 33.3 pc

suffering from Covid-19. FUEL RATES UP AGAIN

DIESEL

RREGULAR by MANJUL





throughput laboratory.

Private-run labs are there in

Apollo Hospitals, SUM Hospital,

InDNA Life Sciences Pvt Ltd, GenX

Diagnostics, AMRI Hospitals,

Kalinga Institute of Medical Science

(KIMS) and Kalinga Hospital Ltd.

in 32 healthcare facilities across

the state while only KIMS has a

CB NAAT testing lab. The state

had tested 46,241 samples for Covid

May 10, out of which RTPCR tests

accounted for 16,717. Though the gov-

ernment has aimed to increase the

daily testing rate to 50,000, it is yet

to achieve it. Chief Minister Naveen

Patnaik has sanctioned ₹20 crore for

TrueNAT testing facility is there

CM BLAMES DEARTH OF OXYGEN TRUCK DRIVERS

New Delhi, May 11: Petrol and diesel prices Tuesday were hiked for the sixth time this month, propelling prices to cross the ₹100-a-litre-mark in places from Nanded in Maharashtra to Rewa in Madhya Pradesh to Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.

Petrol price was hiked by 27 paise

CITY FUEL PRICES ₹92.81 (+0.59) PETROL

Fuel prices differ from state to state de-

pending on the incidence of local taxes such

as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan

levies the highest value-added tax (VAT)

₹90.03 (+0.64)

3 LeT militants killed

SRINAGAR: Three Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir Tuesday, police said. Security forces launched a search operation at Vailoo in Komernag area following information about presence of militants there. "During the search operation, as the presence of terrorists got ascertained they were given an opportunity to surrender. However, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated leading to an encounter," a police official said. He said the security forces also rescued all the civilians trapped in the gunfire and halted the operation for the time to ensure safe evacuation of people.

N	MARKET WATCH						
IN	DEX	١	/ARI	ATION			
BOURSES	SENSEX	49161.81	₽	340.60			
	NIFTY	14850.80	₽	91.60			
CURRENCY	DOLLAR	73.91		₹0.01			
CURR	EURO	89.51		₹0.02			
NOI	GOLD	₹47,560	₽	₹391			
BULLION	SILVER	₹71,568	1	₹24			

	WEAT			
Γ		BHUB	CTK	
		36.1℃	34.2°	\overline{C}
	MIN	27.4°C	24.8°	C Forecast
H	umidity	93%	88%	Light rain
Rä	ainfall	16.9mm	24mm	very likely

Panaji, May 11: Lack of expert drivers manning trucks ferrying oxygen has led to the oxygen shortage crisis in Goa's top hospital, Goa Medical College, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said Tuesday, even as Health Minister Vishwaiit Rane claimed that 26 persons died within four hours due to shortage of oxy-

gen at the apex health facility.

Rane, who has been at logger heads with Sawant over control of the state's Covid management apparatus, has now urged the Bombay High Court to probe the oxygen shortage issue at the Goa Medical College and take over the Covid management system at the health facility. Rane Tuesday said that 26

patients admitted to a Covid ward at the hospital, had died between 2 am and 6 am Tuesday morning. "I request the High Court to check if there is mismanagement

or shortage and bring out a white paper using experts... High Court should take over Covid management of GMC," Rane said, adding that the key issue was not mismanagement, but shortage of oxygen which led to the deaths. "We need 1,200 (jumbo) cylinders, but

AGENCIES



Rane has urged Bombay HC to probe the oxygen shortage issue at Goa Medical College

The cause of deaths was because oxygen tanks could not reach the patients in time

The patients admitted to the Covid ward died between 2 am and 6 am Tuesday morning

yesterday we got only 400," Rane also said. Sawant Tuesday morning visited the Covid ward, which witnessed over two dozen fatalities, insisted that it was not oxygen shortage which led to the deaths. The cause of deaths was because oxygen tanks could not reach the patients in time, he said. Sawant also met patients and kin of patients at the Covid ward, who complained about regular drop in oxygen supply.

litre and diesel by 30 paise per litre, according to a price notification by stateowned fuel retailers. The rise took petrol and diesel prices to their highest-ever level across the country. In Delhi, petrol now comes for ₹91.80 per litre and diesel is priced at ₹82.36. This was the sixth increase in prices since May 4, when the stateowned oil firms ended an 18-day hiatus in rate revision they observed during assembly elections in states like West Bengal. The price increase led to petrol rates crossing the ₹100-mark in more places of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Dantewada, May 11: Police

Tuesday said that at least ten nax-

als have reportedly died of COVID-

19 or food poisoning in the Bastar

region of Chhattisgarh and even

some senior rebel leaders are suf-

naxals burnt the bodies of at least

ten colleagues in the forest along

"According to local villagers,

fering from the viral infection.

AGENCIES

on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh. Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan had the costliest petrol and diesel in the country at ₹102.70 per litre and ₹95.06 a litre respectively. Also in Rajasthan, petrol crossed the ₹100-mark in Jaisalmer (₹100.71) and Bikaner (₹100.70) while it neared that mark in Barmer (₹99.82).

Petrol in several districts of Madhva Pradesh, including Shahdol (₹102.06), Rewa (₹102.04), Chhindwara (₹101.67) and Balaghat (₹101.98) crossed the physiological mark. It neared that mark in Indore (₹99.90 a litre) and Bhopal (₹99.83). If rates continue to raise. Bhopal will be the first state capital to see petrol at ₹100.

and Bargarh 32.6 per cent. As many as 11 districts, including Cuttack and Puri, have a positivity rate between 20 and 30 per cent and 10 districts including Dhenkanal, Kendrapara and Kandhamal have positivity rate between 10 and 20 per cent.

sition with 24.4 per cent positivity rate. The state has been witnessing a surge in new cases with 5,908 cases reported

April 27 that went up to

9,793 cases May 11. It said

Bangalore urban, Chennai,

Ernakulam, Malappuram

and Khurda among others

are showing a rise in the

number of cases. Khurda

district has been showing an

upward trend in Covid in-

fections for three weeks.

Odisha Covid

toll up by 18

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha's

COVID-19 caseload Tuesday

rose to 5,54,666 after 9,793

more people tested positive

for the disease, while 18

fresh fatalities pushed the

state's death toll to 2,215, a

health department official

said. Accordingly, the num-

ber of active cases climbed

9,793 new cases, 5,534 were

reported from various quar-

antine centres while the rest

to 94,829, he said. Of the

detected during contact

tracing. Khurda district

reported the maximum

number of new cases at

Sundargarh at 1,018 and

Cuttack at 641. The health

department said, "Regret to

inform about the demise of

18 Covid positive patients

while under treatment in

While Goa tops the chart

1511, followed by

hospitals."

Russian school shooting kills 7 pupils, 2 others

AGENCIES mation that around 500 naxals had

Moscow, May 11: A gunman attacked a school Tuesday morning in the Russian city of Kazan, killing nine people - seven eighth-grade students, a teacher and a staffer and leaving 21 others hospitalised with wounds. Russian officials said.

Russian media said some students were able to escape the building during the attack, while others were trapped inside. Dozens of ambulances lined up at the entrance to the school after the attack, with access to the building fenced off by police. Rustam Minnikhanov, governor of the Tatarstan republic where Kazan is the capital, said four boys and three girls, all eighthgrade students, died in the shooting. Minnikhanov's press service later said a teacher was also killed.

"The terrorist has been arrested, (he is) 19 years old. A firearm is registered in his name. Other accomplices haven't been established, an investigation is underway," Minnikhanov said after visiting the school, adding that security had been restored. Authorities said additional securitymeasures were immediately put into place in all schools in Kazan.

New vax blocks Covid-19 and all its variants CALLED PAN-CORONAVIRUS VACCINE. IT WAS FOUND EFFECTIVE IN PROTECTING MONKEYS AND MICE

that allows it to bind to the body's cell receptors and is formulated New York, May 11: US researchers with a chemical booster called an have developed a potential new vaccine, which has proven effective against the original SARS-CoV-1, SARS-CoV-2 as well as its UK, South Africa and Brazil variants and related bat coronaviruses that could potentially cause the next pandemic. The new vaccine, called pancoronavirus vaccine, was found effective in protecting monkeys and mice. Pan-coronavirus vaccine trigtralising levels in the animals than current vaccine platforms or natgers neutralising antibodies via a nanoparticle. The nanoparticle is

adjuvant. Success in primates is highly relevant to humans, said researchers from the Duke University in North Carolina, US. The findings, published in the iournal Nature, showed that the nanoparticle vaccine, in monkeys, blocked Covid-19 infection by 100 per cent. The new vaccine also elicited significantly higher neu-

ural infection in humans. 'We began this work last spring



with the understanding that, like all viruses, mutations would occur in the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes Covid-19." said senior author Barton F Haynes, director of the Duke Human Vaccine Institute.

"The mRNA vaccines were already under development, so we were looking for ways to sustain their efficacy once those variants appeared.

Covid hits Naxals, many ailing

the border of Bijapur and Sukma

districts Monday night," said

Dantewada Superintendent of

"The deaths were caused by

Police Abhishek Pallava.

'This approach not only provided protection against SARS-CoV-2, but the antibodies induced by the vaccine also neutralised variants of concern that originated in the UK, South Africa and Brazil. And the induced antibodies reacted with quite a large panel of coronaviruses," Haynes said.

The team built on earlier studies involving SARS, the respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-1. They found a person who had been infected with SARS developed antibodies capable of neutralising multiple coronaviruses, suggesting that a pan-coronavirus might be possible. They identified one particular receptor-binding domain site that is present on SARS-CoV-2, its circulating variants and SARS-related bat viruses that makes them highly vulnerable to cross-neutralising antibodies. The team then designed a nanoparticle displaying this vulnerable spot. The nanoparticle is combined with a small molecule adjuvant, which

COVID-19 or food poisoning. But we

are trying to get more details," he

said. Police had confirmed infor-

gathered near Pidia village two

weeks ago and some of them con-

sumed medicines and packaged

foods whose expiry date had ex-

pired, the SP said. Following the

meeting, several cadres complained

of food poisoning or developed

cough, cold and fever. Pallava said.







boosts the body's immune response.

composed of the Coronavirus part



DREW BARRYMORE SUPPORTS PRIYANKA'S COVID RELIEF FUND

Hollywood star Drew Barrymore has urged everyone to contribute towards Priyanka Chopra and her husband Nick Jonas' Covid-19 relief fund for India. The actress, on her programme The Drew Barrymore Show, said she is with India, which has been hit by the devastating second wave of pandemic. the devastating second wave of pandemic.

CRUISE RETURNS GOLDEN GLOBES TO JOIN PROTEST AGAINST HFPA

I AM FLOWING

WITH TIDE:

JACKIE SHROFF

Mumbai: Actor Jackie Shroff

has been working in Hindi film

industry for around four

decades. The actor, who will

soon be seen in the Salman

Khan-starrer Radhe, is

more than happy with

the kind of roles he is get-

ting now as he says mak-

ers are willing to experi-

ment while casting him.

experimenting with me.

Someone is doing OK

Computer, Phone Bhoot,

Hello Charlie, Criminal

Justice, Sooryavanshi.

I am just flowing with

"Then, I am lucky to

"I am just keeping my

work in a film like Radhe.

It is a lot of fun," he added.

health, my disciples, keep-

ing the respect for people.

Trying to spread good

knowledge as much

as I can about

plants." said the

veteran artiste.

the tide," he said.

"I love it. They are all

Superstar Tom Cruise returned his three Golden Globes to join the protest against the Hollywood Free Press Association (HFPA), the organisers behind the awards. Cruise's action comes at a time when HFPA has continued facing allegations of corruption and



FORTUNE FORECAST



ARIES

Ganesha is very impressed with you today for the way you handle your relationships. You will indulge in some furtive activity today Ganesha warns you to be cautious about getting caught up in a fix where vou have to shell out money.

TAURUS



and capabilities. Ganesha, nevertheless, assures that you will succeed in attaining your objectives through sheer force of you self confidence and self conviction.

GEMINI

You need to be cautious and yet at the same time committed in any work that you do today. You believe in doing everything at a steady pace. Hence, make sure that every work that you take up is nerformed in a scheduled manner. You need to pay special attention to your health today, says Ganesha.



is to face boldly. Ganesha suggests you choose the second option. The evening promises a joyful mood. You will enter tain guests at home.

LEO



today, says Ganesha. The later half of the day will be spent enjoying with your family and friends. An extremely progressive day awaits

You are a master craftsman when it hoils down to interpersonal relationships In the afternoon, you may feel very secretive about some things. An insipid evening may make vou miss the enjoyment you might otherwise have had. Nevertheless, Ganesha says it will be a happy and bright day



Aahana Kumra backs 'Find A Bed' drive for Covid-hit

Mumbai: Actress Aahana Kumra has extended support for an initiative that aims at providing a one-stop solution to locate a bed at a Covid centre. The movement, named 'Find A Bed', has been initiated by over 20,000 students across 160 cities and Aahana is its cause ambassador.

est times, Find A Bed is an initiative for anyone who has mild symptoms of Covid-19 but cannot quarantine at home, may not need to be hospitalised but have to find a bed at a Covid centre,'

young students of IIMUN (India's International Movement to Unite Nations) is not only going to save lives but will also help thousands of people in distress. On the work front,

Aahana will be seen in Madhur Bhandarkar's film India

the remake of the French television drama Call My Agent!.



"As India grapples with the tough-

said Aahana. Aahana hoped that the "initiative by the

Lockdown and in

Karishma excited about shooting in London

Mumbai: Actress Karishma Kotak recently shot for a song with singer Yasser Desai on the streets of London

"It's an out and out romantic track. We had a great time shooting for the song in the lanes of London. It's my home and I could show the crew around as well. I have al-

"I couldn't ask for more. It would be out soon. My prayers are with Indians during this difficult time. Let's all stay strong and this too shall pass, added the England-based

RETURN GIFT Ruskin Bond's delectable collection in the offing

The compilation brings together some of the evocative episodes from Bond's life that are sure to become firm favourites with readers

head of his 87th birthday May 19, Ruskin Bond, one A May 19, Russin 2007 of India's most-loved writers of children's stories, has carefully curated a mixed bag of 25 of his most cherished stories in a new book, All Time Favourites for Children. The collection brings together

some of the evocative episodes from Bond's life that are sure to become firm favourites with readers. Heartwarming, funny and spirited, this is a must-have on every bookshelf! The book, in fact, is the perfect complement to A Song of India released last July to mark the beginning of Bond's 70-year writing ca-

reer, in which he takes the reader back to 1951, his last year in Dehradun before he set sail for England and which later became the

basis for his first novel, The Room on the Roof.

"A Song of India marks 70 years of my long writing career which began when I was sixteen. In these seven decades, I have written hundreds of stories for children and just as many for adults too, and I am still continuing to do so. I am very fortunate to have lived in a beautiful part of the country, in the mountains. I am blessed to have received inspiration from the natural world around me, from children and animals, and all of this is reflected in my works," Bond said.

Born in Kasauli (now in Himachal Pradesh) in 1934, Bond grew up in Jamnagar (Gujarat), Dehradun, New Delhi and Simla (now Shimla)

The Room on the Roof, written when he was 17, received the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize in 1957. Since then he has written over 500 short stories, essays and novellas including Vagrants in the Valley and A Flight of Pigeons and more than 40 books for children.

He received the Sahitya Akademi Award for English writing in India in 1993, the Padma Shri in 1999, and the Delhi government's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012. AGENCIE



time with them. This is a good day for you in money matters as you may get a salary rise or even gain an inheritance from relatives. Your interests in the finer arts will be appreciated.

SCORPIO

You are as inquisitive as a child today. There are a lot of queries in your mind that need to be solved. At work you have umpteen challenges. But, this does not stop you from fulfilling your responsibili ties towards your family. Love and affection rule in the family, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Stars are aligned in a way that they shower both. luck & money on you today. Profits and

achievements galore at business front. save Ganesha. You may go on a shopping spree with your partner and splurge on the exclusive jewellery. Tighten your purse strings.

CAPRICORN

You follow your gut feeling when it comes to making decisions. But, today is a different day.

You examine nuts and bolts of every situ ation and make iudgements accordingly You will pay attention to your love life during the second half of the day.

Do you feel slightly awkward in social gatherings? Do you wonder hoy to break the ice and strike a conversation? Don't be conscious, in fact, be yourself to feel comfortable. feels Ganesha. You may find it difficult to get rid of some petty issues today. Listen to music, sing or play an instrument; it will relax your mind.

PISCES

With the blessings of Ganesha you will face fewer obstacles than you normally do. You will enjoy your favourite foods today. You will experi ence less mental stress today and you will be full hopes and dreams. It will appear as though life is moving in the right direction. You will feel happy and satisfied today



and, being on home turf in the UK Capital city, she says she could show around the crew, too.

I DONT

WANT TO GO! PUT ME DOWN!

Ø

Q

ways loved a New York, London kind of set-up for songs and here I am shooting for one." Karishma said.

FUN

model and actress who presented a televised show called Extraaa Innings T20 during IPL 2013







CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY





CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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.

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

SOLUTIONS AXESGENUINE VWF SAW CROSSWORD USH KABOB





SUDOKU



IBRE



downtown



HIT BY STORM

The Patitapabana flag atop Srimandir has been tilted under the impact of Nor'wester that hit Puri, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
orld	16,00,47,652	13,77,68,772	33,24,242
dia	2,29,92,517	1,90,27,304	2,49,992
disha	5,54,666	4,65,133	2,215

SC asks Bolangir man to move HC over khap order

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, May 11: The Supreme Court Tuesday asked a petitioner from Bolangir district to approach the Orissa High Court against the decision of a khap panchayat that ordered a 10-year boycott of the petitioner's family.

A two-judge bench of Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Vineet Saran observed that since the matter pertains to only one state and the petitioner has sought relief for himself, it would not entertain the petition. The court dismissed the petition with liberty to the petitioner to approach the Orissa High Court in the matter.

A petition was filed in the in isolation without any coopera-Supreme Court by Satyabadi Nayak tion from the community. of Bolangir district contending that a khap panchayat in Odisha had to direct the state government to



in September 2018 ordered social

boycott of the petitioner and his

family for 10 years for alleged vi-

olation of norms of the panchayat.

The petitioner was ordered to live

Nayak had prayed the apex court

Akhap panchayat in September 2018 had ordered social boycott of the petitioner and his family for 10 years for alleged violation of norms of the panchayat

he petitioner was punished for alleged violation of khap panchayat laws during the marriage of his son

The petitioner alleged that his daughter-in-law suffered miscarriage due to the trauma caused by the decision of the khap panchayat

constitute a special cell in each district and launch prosecutions against such unlawful acts by khap panchayats through kangaroo courts. He contended that the constitution and by-laws of khap panchavat are in violation of the

Fundamental Rights. The petitioner submitted that the khap panchayat, 84 Ghar Agharia Samaaj, was established in 1937 in Western Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh with an objective to uplift the Agharia Samaaj.

The khap panchayat has its own constitution and laws. The people of Agharia caste are being punished for violation of these laws framed by it.

The petitioner was punished for alleged violation of khap panchayat laws during the marriage of his son. He also alleged that his daughterin-law suffered the miscarriage due to the trauma caused by the decision of the khap panchayat and no one from the village came to the rescue of his daughter-in-law.



against nCoV hosps fleecing patients

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 11: Expressing concern over the reported exploitation of patients at some private Covid hospitals, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday asked senior officers to keep close watch on such hospitals.

"They must charge within the ceiling fixed by the government. In case of any lapses, strict action should be taken against the hospital management," Naveen said in a virtual meeting with all senior government officers, district Collectors and superintendent of police (SPs).

He asked the officers to strengthen the helpline numbers in Covid hospitals and inform the patients' status to their families regularly. "Use Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to help people in distress during this difficult time," he said.

Many districts in Odisha have wit nessed a huge surge in the Covid-19 cases in the last one month. However, with the hard work of all Covid warriors and the cooperation of people, the state has been able to manage the situation. Patnaik

TACKLING EXPLOITATION

The officials have been told to continue taking feedback from patients under Mo Sarkar initiative. They have been instructed to take direct feedback from doctors who are manning the ICUs & HDUs, and act on their suggestions

he Health dept and Puri district officials have been told to complete vaccination of all servitors and their family members before Rath Yatra



medicines free of cost to the people, Patnaik asked the officers to ensure quality services. The officials have been

Naveen for action Nor'wester leaves 540 slum dwellers homeless



Damaged sheds at the rehabilitation centre at Nuapara Balisahi in Cuttack, Tuesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, May 11: At least 540 members of 134 slum dwellers' families were rendered homeless when several sheds at a temporary rehabilitation centre at Nuapara Balisahi here were damaged by the Nor'wester, Tuesday. At least four persons including

two children sustained injuries in the incident. One of the injured has been admitted to SCB Medical College and Hospital, sources said.

The administration had earlier

evicted these slum dwellers from Pilgrim Road, Chhatra Bazar and Ranihaat areas of the city to facilitate the expansion of SCB and widening of Taladanda canal road, sources added.

Venting their anger on the administration, the homeless slum dwellers entered into a heated exchange with the police personnel who reached the spot for rescue work

The slum dwellers hurled stones at the police personnel and vandalised two police vehicles.

"The slum dwellers are adamant to return to their old places. A few security personnel were injured as the slum dwellers hurled stones at the police party," said a police officer. On being informed, senior officials including Cuttack Sub-Collector Pratap Chandra Beura, Cuttack deputy commissioner Abinash Rout and local tehsildar Sambit Gadnayak reached the spot and tried to pacify the angry slum dwellers.

"The officials proposed to reloate the homeless to a few schools

HE ADMINISTRATION HAD EARLIER EVICTED THE SLUM DWELLERS FROM PILGRIM ROAD, CHHATRA BAZAR AND RANIHAAT AREAS OF THE CITY TO FACILITATE THE EXPANSION OF SCB AND WIDENING OF

VENTING THEIR ANGER ON THE ADMINISTRATION, THE HOMELESS SLUM DWELLERS ENTERED INTO A HEATED **EXCHANGE WITH THE POLICE** PERSONNEL WHO REACHED THE SPOT FOR RESCUE WORK

TALADANDA CANAL ROAD

for the time being. However, the slum dwellers rejected the pro posal." said a source in the CMC Choudwar-Cuttack MLA Souvic Biswal and former legislator Pravat Biswal too held discussions with the

slum dwellers and tried to bring a solution to the impasse.

"We are ready to shift the homeless people to the schools which have been shut due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the slum dwellers are not cooperating with us." said an official of the district administration.

A vandalised police van



A face-off between the slum dwellers

said, adding, "Still the challenge is huge and the battle is long."

To slowdown the infection rate, the government has imposed lockdown for two weeks. So far, the lockdown enforcement has been going on well. However, there is still scope for improvement in some places. the Chief Minister pointed out.

"Our successful model of disaster management is based on community involvement and that is the sustainable way to face a pandemic as well. Involve local communities and various associations in urban areas, and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in rural areas to effectively reach out to people," he said.

He further advised the officials to take necessary countermeasures for a possible third wave of Covid-19. The Health department and Puri district officials were told to complete vaccination of all servitors and their family members before Rath Yatra.

Stating that the state government is providing testing, treatment, food, accommodation, and tinue taking feedback of patients under Mo Sarkar initiative. They have been instructed to take direct feedback from doctors who are manning the ICUs & HDUs,

and act on their suggestions. On supply of medical oxygen to other states, the CM directed the Collectors and SPs to give top priority to the mission and monitor it round the clock. Patnaik further told the officials to prioritise vaccination programme and make fool-proof arrangements for it.

"Vaccination will be our main strategy to control the pandemic in future and bring back normalcy in the state. Till then we have to be extremely cautious. Take care of elderly, women and other vulnerable sections in the vaccination drive. We are trying our best to mobilise adequate vaccines at the earliest possible time," he said.

The CM again appealed to people to wear masks, wash hands regularly, maintain social distancing and stay at home unless it is absolutely necessary to go out.

Capital records 16.9mm rainfall BHUBANESWAR: Thunderstorm with lightning accompanied by strong wind lashed several parts of the state includ-

ing Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. Waterlogging was witnessed at several lowlying areas in the twin city while trees were uprooted under the impact of gusty surface wind along the Ring Road in Cuttack. According to India Meteorological Department, highest 39 mm recorded at Balasore, followed by 37 mm at Sonepur and 30.2 mm at Bolangir Tuesday. Similarly, Puri recorded a rainfall of 29 mm, whereas it was 24 mm at Cuttack, 16.9 mm at Bhubaneswar, 26 mm at Talcher, 24.6 mm at Phulbani, 23.4 mm at Titlagarh and 22 mm at Boudh. Many others places including Paralakhemundi, Chhatrapur, Nayagarh, Sambalpur, Hirakud, Angul, Jharsuguda, Baripada, Gopalpur and Paradip have also received showers.



Capital city witnesses showers due to the impact of a Nor'wester, Tuesday evening

CM enquires about LoP's health

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 11: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday discussed with doctors about the health condition of Leader of **Opposition Pradipta Kumar Naik** who is being treated at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar after he contracted the novel coronavirus.

The doctors at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar briefed the CM that Naik is currently Covid negative

Naik is under treatment at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar for the last 16 days

The Chief Minister interacted with the doctors at AIIMS and SCB who are taking care of Naik. The doctors briefed Patnaik that Naik is currently Covid negative. However, there is widespread inflammation and lungs infection because of which he is on ventilator support and his condition continues to be serious.

They are making best possible efforts for his early recovery, sources at the CMO said.

The AIIMS Director Geetanjali Batmanabane thanked the state government for its support to the treatment of the Leader of Opposition, especially timely support of critical medicines.

Patnaik appreciated the efforts of the doctors and requested them to provide the best health care to Naik and assured all support from the state government. The CM wished speedy recovery of Naik.

Earlier, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan discussed with the doctors of AIIMS-Bhubaneswar & New Delhi and SCB Medical College.

MCL comes forward to set up vaccination centres



A youth takes the Covid jab in Cuttack, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 11: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) has offered the state government to establish Covid-19 vaccination centres at five healthcare facilities in Angul, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and Sundargarh districts.

In his letter to the state government, MCL director (Personnel) Keshav Rao has offered to establish Covid-19 vaccination centres while seeking its help for the noble initiative.

MCL, a Miniratna Subsidiary Company of Coal India Limited, will establish the vaccination centres for inoculating company employees, contractors' workers, their family members and peripheral population, a company release said.

NOBLE **INITIATIVE**

MCL has supported the Odisha government and district authorities to set up and run Covid-19 hospitals with 1.405 beds

n the first quarter of current fiscal, MCL has taken a series of measures at an estimated cost of over ₹32 crore to strengthen the fight against Covid-19

he company had spent ₹135 crore in different Covid-19 mitigating activities in Odisha during last fiscal

In the first quarter of current financial year, MCL has taken a series of measures involving over ₹32 crore to strengthen the fight against Covid-19, besides ensuring increased quantity of coal to power plants.

It spent ₹135 crore in different Covid-19 mitigating activities in Odisha during last financial year, and has further extended its support to state government in establishing Covid-19 hospitals and providing other infrastructure support.

The company is procuring 200 oxygen cylinders and concentrators to help Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh and Angul districts to combat Covid-19 pandemic.

Anticipating a rise in power demand in the country, the company ensured adequate daily supply of coal from its mines during the cur-

rent fiscal, which was 15 per cent higher than the dispatch of dry fuel during the same period of last financial year 2020-21.

MCL CMD PK Sinha has stressed on regular health monitoring of coalfield workers, who are under treatment at various hospitals as well as at their residences.

MCL has lost 18 employees to Covid-19 pandemic, while 420 officers and staffers are still under treatment for the infection.

MCL, which contributes about 20 per cent to the country's total coal production, has supported the state government and district authorities to set up and run Covid-19 hospitals with 1,405 beds, including 189 ICU ones. The company is also conducting sanitisation drives in peripheral localities, using fog cannons.







OrissaPOST WEDNESDAY | MAY 12 | 2021 | BHUBANESWAR

downtown

State logs 9,793 fresh nCoV cases



A woman takes a jab at a drive-in vaccination camp at a shopping mall in Kalpana area of Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

form about the demise of eight-

Four fatalities were recorded in

under treatment in hospitals."

Gajapati, Malkangiri and Puri.

the highly infectious disease.

This apart, 53 other Covid-19 pa-

Odisha's positivity rate currently

stands at 5.23 per cent. Over 1.06 crore samples have been tested in

the state thus far, including 46,241

Meanwhile, vaccination for peo-

ple in the 18-44 years age bracket

began in four municipal corporation

areas of Odisha -- Cuttack, Rourkela,

Sambalpur and Berhampur. The

Monday, the official said.

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 11: Odisha's Covid-19 caseload Tuesday rose to 5,54,666 after 9,793 more people tested positive for the disease, while 18 fresh fatalities pushed the state's death toll to 2,215, a Health department official said.

Of the 9,793 new cases, 5,534 were reported from various quarantine centres and the remaining detected during contact tracing, the official said.

Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of new cases at 1,511, followed by Sundargarh at 1,018 and Cuttack at 641.

Barring Malkangiri, Dhenkanal and Bhadrak, all 27 other districts reported over 100 new cases.

Taking to Twitter, the Health department said, "Regret to in-

TEACHERS DEMAND COVID WARRIOR TAG

Bhubaneswar: The All Odisha Lower Secondary Teachers' Association (AOLSTA) urged the state government to declare teachers on duty as Covid warriors. Tuesday.

In a letter to the state government, the association said that the pandemic is on the rise in Odisha. At this juncture, the state government is engaging teachers in Covid duty, but it is yet to declare them as Covid warriors unlike healthcare workers and journalists.

AOLSTA secretary Sukanta Kumar Behera said that the government has been putting teachers in Covid-related duties such as awareness drives, listing of people een Covid positive patients while coming from outside, distribution of masks, ration and books to children since February last year. The second wave of Covid-19 is taking Angul, three in Khurda, two each in Kalahandi, Rayagada and a dangerous turn and the government is putting more and more Sundargarh. One each succumbed to the infection in Boudh, Deogarh, teachers in this task which is jeopardising the safety of their families. They should be given all necestients in the state have died due to sary facilities like masks, sanitiscomorbidities. As many as 4,57,569 ers, PPE kits, drinking water and patients have so far recovered from vaccines as soon as possible. "Some teachers are not even get-

ting masks, sanitisers or PPE

inoculation drive for the younger population is already underway in areas managed by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), the official added. There has been a steady rise in

the recovery cases in the state since



Some teachers are not even getting masks, sanitisers or PPE kits. We are getting reports of several teachers' deaths from different districts. We demand the government to immediately declare onduty teachers as Covid warriors

SUKANTA KUMAR BEHERA I AOLSTA SECRETARY

kits. We are getting reports of sev-

eral teachers' deaths from different districts. We demand the gov-

ernment to immediately declare

on-duty teachers as Covid war-

Nityananda Gond and Paralakhe-

mundi Legislator K Naravana Rao

had written to the state asking it to

declare teachers on pandemic duty

as Covid warriors as they are work-

ing in public area and having high

chance of contracting the virus.

May 1 with 5,634 recoveries May 1

to 9,706 May 10. Sources said dur-

ing May, while over a lakh posi-

tive cases have so far been reported

in the state, 71,819 have been re-

covered. The Covid-19 has claimed

161 lives during the last 10 days.

Earlier, Umerkote MLA

riors," he said.

Chandan Yatra to be held with 50 to 65 servitors

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, May 11: The 21-day-long Chandan Yatra (water sport) of the Srimandir deities will be observed in a traditional manner at Narendra pond with participation of only 50 to 65 servitors beginning Akshaya Tritiya, May 15, an official said Tuesday.

According to a standard operating procedure released by Chhatisha Niyog after a virtual meeting with all the stakeholders, around 10 platoons of force will be deployed along the Grand Road to Narendra pond. Section 144 under CrPC would be promulgated around the Narendra pond to restrict possible presence and congregation of devotees.

The servitors, including palanquin bearers and boat operators, participating in the 21-day fete would have to undergo RT-PCR test and only those having negative reports would be allowed

According to district Collector Samarth Verma, devotees can watch live telecast of the rituals. The district administration will make the necessary arrangements for the purpose. The district Collector has visited the Rath Yard earlier in the day so as to ensure arrangements for seamless construction of the three mega chariots for the upcoming Rath Yatra.

Servitor Santosh Kumar Panda expressed satisfaction over the decision to observe the fest with min-

FOR A PRIZE CATCH

imum participation of the servitors and without the devotees during the pandemic. Sources said that the Chhatisha Niyog also agreed to start the construction of three chariots for the annual car festival.

During the 21-day summer festival, Madan Mohan, Ramakrushna, Bhudevi and Sreedevi from Srimandir would come to the Narendra tank in their respective palanquins, covering about 1.5 km along the Grand Road for boating (Chapa khela) and return late in the evening to the temple.

Huge sun shades have been raised along the route while twin boats 'Nanda' and 'Bhadra' have been repaired as well as coloured for the purpose.



A fisherman casts his net in the river Daya on Bhubaneswar's outskirts with the help of an inflated tube in an overcast Tuesday afternoon

Vax for 18+ begins in 4 more towns

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 11: The state government Tuesday started the vaccination drive for 18-44 age group in four other corporation towns—Cuttack, Berhampur, Sambalpur and Rourkela.

The state government had decided to launch the vaccination drive only in five municipal corporation areas owing to shortage of vaccines. While Covaxin is being administrated in Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) area. Civishield is being given in four other towns.

As many as 18,236 persons of the 18-44 years group received the first dose Tuesday. Of them, 7,352 got Covaxin jabs in Bhubaneswar Berhampur, 1,929 from Cuttack,

while 3,919 persons from 1,228 from Sambalpur and 3,808 from Rourkela received the first dose of Covishield. The Health department has planned 495 vaccination sessions Wednesday

NHRC ultimatum to Mayurbhanj admin over rape of minor girl

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 11: National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a reminder to the District Magistrate of Mavurbhani as well as the Superintend of Police to submit particulars of compensation awarded to a minor girl who was sexually abused.

The commission also expressed its annovance over the non-compliance of its order seeking details from the Mayurbhanj district administration regarding the payment of compensation to the rape victim under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The district authorities were earlier directed by the apex rights



gave a final opportunity to the authorities to submit the compensation details keeping in view the Covid-19 pandemic.

"In normal circumstances, such non-responsive attitude towards

The district authorities were earlier directed by the apex rights body to submit the payment details within four weeks

owever, despite repeated reminders, the district administration did not submit the details

he commission mentioned in its order that it should have taken coercive action against the authorities for such noncompliance during normal times

sion of requisite report within six weeks," the order mentioned.

The rights panel warned the district administration of personal

Procurement of pulses, oilseeds from May 13

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 11: The state government has decided to commence procurement of oil seeds and pulses under Price Support Scheme (PSS) from May 13.

Welfare (FS&CW) Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain Tuesday directed the officials to collect the pulses and oilseeds from farmers as per Covid guidelines and provide profit to farmers as per PSS norms

The Centre has fixed the MSP of moong (green gram) at ₹7,196 per quintal, biri (black gram) at ₹6,000 per quintal, groundnut at ₹5,275 per quintal and sunflower seed at ₹5,885 per quintal. The procurement process will continue till



The Centre has fixed the MSP of moong (green gram) at Rs 7,196 per quintal

State agencies - Odisha State

Covid claims Vig court judge

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 11: A judge at the Vigilance court in Cuttack Tuesday succumbed to Covid-19 while he was undergoing treatment at a private hospital here. The deceased identified as Rajkishore Nayak is a resident of Champatipur village in Nayagarh district. He was 56.

Nayak was recently admitted to the private hospital after being diagnosed with Covid positive. He had joined the Vigilance court at Cuttack April 30.

Earlier, he was posted as a judge at the Family Court of Bargarh.

CP ISSUES NEW HELPLINE FOR

Food Supplies and Consumer

August 10.

New nCoV hosp in Jharsuguda soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 11: Following the demand from public representatives, the state government has decided to set up a Covid hospital at Bandhabahal in Jharsuguda district, Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) Minister Naba Kishore Das said here Tuesday

It would be a 100-bed hospital with 20 ICU beds that would be managed by SUM Hospital, Bhubaneswar, Das said. At present, Jharsuguda has one Covid hospital with a capacity of 220 beds including 20 in ICU. At least 160 beds are being filled up as oxygen pipeline work is going on in some unoccupied portions of the hospital.

As the situation is turns alarming day by day, the requirement will surpass the capacity of the hospital at Jharsuguda. Therefore, the new hospital is being set up, sources said.

Similarly, the government has decided to enhance the number of beds in Jagatsinghpur district headquarters hospital to 300 from existing 126.

body to submit the payment details within four weeks. However, despite repeated reminders, the district administration is yet to submit the details

The commission mentioned in its order that it should have taken coercive action against the authorities for such non-compliance during normal times. However, it Mayurbhanj, Odisha for submis-

direction of the Commission would have invited issuance of summons U/S13 of the PHR Act, 1993 calling for their personal appearance before the Commission, but in view of the pandemic situation in the country, last opportunity is being given to the District Magistrate as well as the Superintendent of Police, District

appearance if it failed to send the compensation report within the specified time.

Notably, the father of the victim had lodged a complaint with Mayurbhanj Sadar police in 2017 alleging that a miscreant had sexually abused her daughter and later made viral her objectionable videos on social media.

The state government aims to collect 13.250 metric tonne moong. 700 metric tonne biri, 7,775 metric tonne groundnut and 675 metric tonne sunflower in the 2020-21 rabi season

The process will be undertaken by National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (Nafed) through two

ECoR carries 1,134 tonne LMO

Cooperative Marketing Federation (Markfed) and Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation of Odisha Limited (TDCCL).

The State agencies will procure oilseeds and pulses from farmers through primary agriculture cooperative societies and large area multi-purpose cooperative societies under PSS.

Kalinga Nagar has been carried to

Delhi in seven cryogenic tankers

in a train. Similarly, 104.43 tonne

of the life saving gas was loaded

from Rashtriya Ispat Nigam

Limited in Visakhapatnam for

Nagpur and Nasik Road in last

ECoR General Manager Vidya

Bhushan had earlier instructed

officials to take the supply of oxy-

gen during crisis as a challenge.

week of April, 2021, it added.

SENIOR CITIZENS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 11: The Commissionerate Police has issued a dedicated helpline number to address the grievances of senior citizens during the Covid-induced lockdown and weekend shutdown period.

In a video message, the Commissioner of Police Saumendra Privadarshi said. "the Commissionerate Police of the twin city has started a helpline number to assist the senior citizens during the period of lockdown. The helpline number is 8093028100.

He further revealed that as many as 25,000 elderly citizens have been registered with the twin city police. 'The helpdesk is trying to contact around 70 to 80 senior citizens every day to find out their wellbeing during this period," the Commissioner added.

Sources claimed that the desk has managed to contact around 250 elderly persons in the twin city till now. Meanwhile, Priyadarshi informed about the further intensification of checking and patrolling in twin city during lockdown and shutdown period. He warned of strict action against the flouters. He revealed that several shops have been sealed and fined for violating the Covid guidelines. He again urged the citizens of the twin city to follow Covid appropriate behaviour.

Mental harassment of minor alleged; pvt school in soup

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 11: Father of a minor student lodged a complaint at Khandagiri police station seeking action against the principal of a private high school for allegedly torturing his daughter. Khandagiri police have started investigation into the matter after registering a case in this regard According to the complaint, the

daughter of Bhumohan Bebarta is a Class IX student of a private English medium school at Khandagiri. Bebarta had reportserved notice to the student in class edly deposited a cheque in the school's drop-box to pay his daughter's tution fee 30 July, 2019. However, sources claimed that the principal had returned the cheque to his daughter before her batch mates in 2 August, 2019. The complainant accused that the school authorities never contacted and consulted him

on any matter before or after returning the cheque, flouting the CBSE guidelines. He also mentioned the notification issued by the NCPCR that advises the school officials to discuss the fee related issues with parents or guardians of the children. Bebarta alleged that his daughter started complaining about headache and mental complications follow-

ing the incident in her school. Bebarta, then, informed the principal about the girl's health status. Meanwhile, the principal, allegedly through the class teacher,

that her name would be struck off the school register 30 August 2019. The complainant accused the school authorities of deliberately humiliating his daughter before her friends despite knowing her mental health status. His daughter is now under medication for mental and neurological complications.

Bhubaneswar, May 11: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has carried over 1,134 tonne of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) from different steel plants under its jurisdiction towards states like Maharashtra, Telangana, Haryana and Delhi, an official said Tuesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Around 895.86 tonne of LMO has been carried to different states through RORO services from Angul

According to an ECoR statement, around 895.86 tonne of LMO has been carried to different states through RORO (Roll On/Roll Off) services from Angul, 133.2 tonne from Jajpur and 104.43 tonne from Visakhapatnam.



From Angul, three trains have carried around 188.07 tonne of LMO in 14 tankers towards Telangana, four trains have carried around 243.88 tonne of the life saving gas in 16 tankers towards Nagpur and 10 trains have carried around 463.91 tonne of LMO stored in 28 tankers towards Delhi and Haryana in the last 10 days.

This apart, around 133.2 tonne of LMO from Tata Steel Plant in

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







Unfair toll fee collection on NHs pinches commuters Woman booked for thrashing goat DESPITE ORDERS, THE NHAI IS YET TO SHIFT PANIKOILI AND SRIRAMPUR TOLL PLAZAS 60 KM APART

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, May 11: Patkura police in Kendrapara district Tuesday registered a case against a woman for beating a goat.

The case was registered on the basis of a complaint lodged by another woman. The two women happen to be sisters.

Rupa Mallick and Henna Mallick reside in Madana village under Patkura police limits. The two families had a long-standing dispute over property.

Rupa's goat Tuesday entered Heena's house to drink water. Heena, who had been looking for an opportunity to settle a score, attacked the animal.

Hearing the cries of the animal, Rupa came out of her house and on realising that Heena had beaten her goat, she took the matter to the police station and lodged a complaint.

According to Rupa, Heena had an enmity with her, not with the hapless animal. IIC Sujit Pradhan is now investigating the case.

Following a heavy uproar, the state government and the NHAI Jajpur, May 11: Unfair toll colhad decided to shift the toll plazas lection has allegedly crossed all at a distance of 60 km from limits at the three toll plazas on each other.

Accordingly, the toll plaza on NH-National Highways Nos. 16 and 53 16 at Manguli in Cuttack district was Such irregularities have been rerecently shifted to Bandalo in Jajpur ported from the three toll plazas of district. However, the Panikoili toll the National Highways Authorities plaza on NH-16 in the district has not of India (NHAI) functioning in the been shifted to Dahala in Bhadrak district. It has been five years since district, which is 60 km from the state government decided to Bandalo.

shift the toll plazas on the highways Similarly, the toll plaza at and establish them at a distance of Srirampur on NH-53 has also not been shifted to Marshaghai in However, except for shifting the Kendrapara district. Questions Manuguli toll plaza to Bandalo, the have been doing the rounds as to why two other toll plazas at Panikoili the toll plazas at Panikoili and on NH-16 and at Srirampur on NH-Srirampur are not being shifted to the designated sites even after shift-According to NHAI guidelines, ing of the Manguli toll plaza to

the distance between one toll plaza and Bandalo. another should be a minimum of 60 Reports said that the state km. But commuters have to unnec-Transport Department directed the regional transport officers (RTOs) essarily pay twice or thrice the amount of the prescribed toll fee while comof Jajpur, Chandikhole, Balasore and Bhadrak to identify sites for shift-



ing of the toll plazas on NH-16 and 53, August 11, 2016.

The additional secretary, Transport (Technical), in his letter (12448, dated-11.08.2016) issued orders to the RTOs of Jajpur, Chandikhole, Balasore and Bhadrak districts in this regard.

In the order, the additional secretary directed the RTOs to select sites for the toll plazas which will be at a minimum distance of 60 km from one another and at 10 km from the localities and market areas. The

RTOs were asked to consult the respective executive engineers and chief engineer of the NHAI in their areas while identifying the sites.

The Transport Department decided to shift the toll plazas July 19, 2016 and apprised the engineerin-chief and the Works Secretary about the development.

However, the distance between the toll plaza at Bandalo and the one in Panikoili is only 47 km. Similarly, the distance between the Panikoili toll plaza and the Srirampur toll

The State Transport **Department directed the** regional transport officers (RTOs) of Jajpur, Chandikhole, Balasore and Bhadrak to identify the sites for shifting of the toll plazas on NH-16 and 53, August 11, 2016

plaza on NH-53 near Chandikhole is only 47 km instead of 60 km. Moreover, the toll plazas at Panikoili and Hasanpur on NH-200 in Keonjhar district are within only 35 km.

A case in point is that a person from Bhubaneswar wishing to visit the Maa Tarini temple at Ghatagaon in Keonjhar district has to pay toll fee thrice - once each at the Bandalo, Panikoili and Hasanpur toll plazas. Similarly, a person travelling to Bhubaneswar or Paradip via Jajpur Road has to pay toll fee twice on the route.

The anomalies in toll fee collection have sparked resentment among the people and commuters on the highway. It is alleged that the agency managing the Panikoili toll plaza fears that the shifting of toll plaza might result in heavy revenue loss. As a result, they are opposing the decision. They have allegedly managed to put off the decision with the help of an influential political person.

A goods truck owner, Smruti Ranjan Ghadei alleged that a mineral-laden truck has pay toll fee twice at two toll plazas located within 50 km between Joda and Paradip. Moreover, the Fasttag facility is not being implemented properly at the Panikoili toll plaza for which commuters often have to pay toll fee twice.

Meanwhile, another vehicle owner, Subhas Dhal warned of an agitation if the Panikoili toll plaza is not shifted to Dahala in Bhadrak district soon.

Angul admin accused of fudging Covid deaths

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, May 11: It has been more than a year since the first case of Covid-19 was registered in Angul district, May 10 last year. In 2020, the total number of cases reported from the district has been a little over 20.000, while more than 100 have died due to the virus. However, sources alleged Tuesday that the figures regarding fatality have been fudged by the district administration.

A number of residents alleged that Covid-19 patients are dying every day and their bodies are being cremated at Karadagadia cremation ground. "Last year 51 bodies were cremated and one was buried. However, the government figure showed only 37 deaths. So there is discrepancy," they pointed out.



10 forest personnel at Satkosia test positive

POST NEWS NETWORK

60 km from each other.

53 are vet to be shifted.

muting on a highway.

in Jajpur district, a report said.

ANGUL: At least 10 personnel of the Forest department working in the Satkosia wildlife sanctuary have tested positive for Covid-19, assistant conservator of forests (ACF) Subhendu Behera informed Tuesday.

Behera said that among the 10 infected persons, one is a forester and the other nine are guards. He said that some of the infected are being treated at the Angul district headquarters hospital (DHH) while the others are in home isolation.

It may be mentioned here that the Satkosia sanctuary has been closed for visitors since April 2 in the wake of Covid-19.

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) had ordered the closure of all national parks, sanctuaries and national zoological parks May 4 till further notice. The order came after eight Asiatic lions at Hyderabad zoo tested positive for Covid-19.

only one per cent of those as Covid-19 deaths

"Families of the deceased have the right to know the reason of death of their loved ones," he said.

Additional district medical officer (PH)-cum-Covid manager Dr Dhananiava Behera said the bodies of the Covid-19 patients are being taken to the old mortuary. They



A man carrying his ailing daughter on his shoulder to a hospital during lockdown in Sambalpur, Tuesday OP PHOTO

Collector stalls teachers' transfer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, May 11: A large number of teachers have been engaged in Covid-19 management in Nabarangpur district, which is witnessing a surge in the infectious dis-



fer of some teachers was done after paying graft/commission at various levels. MLAs and MPs had allegedly recommended the transfer 32 teachers. It was stated that the transfer was done on the basis of a circular issued by the School and Mass Education

for marriages, functions POST NEWS NETWORK Chhatrapur: May 11: Family func-

Ganjam: Fresh protocols

tions and marriage ceremonies can be conducted in Ganjam district only after providing Covid negative RT-PCR reports of those participating in the events. Family members of the bridegroom as well as the bride attending marriage functions will have to undergo Covid-19 tests. This decision was taken at a meeting chaired by the District Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange here Monday. further said that those who are in

The state government had already announced the protocols for marriage ceremonies and small public gatherings. However, the Ganiam district administration has issued fresh guidelines keeping in mind the rising number of Covid cases in the district.

Kulange said permission for marriage ceremonies will be denied if any of the family members of the bride or bridegroom tests Covid positive

Kulange also asked officials, doctors and healthcare workers involved in the fight against Covid-19 to attend all distress calls in a proper manner. He said that it is the duty of the administration to save the lives of the people at any cost. He

home isolation must also be attended to and taken care of. Keeping the surge in the number of cases in view, Kulange asked the officials to keep additional 100 beds ready in Berhampur and Chhatrapur temporary health centres.

Expressing concern over journalists succumbing to the disease, he requested them, mostly those who work in block levels, to take precautionary measures while collecting news

D	<u>Government of Odisha "e" procurement Notice</u> OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER DHENKANAL (R&B) DIVISION, DHENKANAL No. B-78 Bid Identification No 04 of 2021-2022						
1.	Name of the work: Estimate cost:	Building Works - 3 Nos. Rs.17,95,761.00 to	$\left + \right $				
2	Devied of completions	Rs.47,28,446.00					
	Period of completion: Date & time of availability of the Bid	04 (Four Calendar Months) 10.00 AM of 17.05.2021 to 5.00 PM of 31.05.2021					

pandemic, patients are dying on a daily basis. The way the bodies of the deceased pile up at the cremation spot is ample proof of the high number of fatalities. So far 52 bodies have been cremated at the Karadagadia crematorium. However, the government says that only 47 Covid-19 patients have died." they added.

Noted advocate Bhupesh Chandra Pradhan expressed his concern over the fudging of data regarding fatalities. He alleged that hundreds of Covid-19 patients have died. However, the government has listed

are sent to the Karadagadia cremation ground only after receiving the nod from the district Collector.

When contacted, District Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain had an explanation to offer. He said the district Health department is providing the list of Covid-19 deaths to the state government after con-

ducting an audit. The district Tuesday reported 526 new cases and four more fatalities. With this, the district's Covid tally and death toll have gone up to 19,625 and 47 respectively.

ease. Keeping the roles of teachers in view during this pandemic, the Collector has stalled the transfer of 158 teachers in the district, a report said.

According to the report, many of the teachers have tested Covid positive and are currently under treatment.

Besides, the teachers are engaged in multiple works such as uniform distribution among students, midday meal rice distribution and roster duty for students' admission.

The office of the district education officer had published the list of teach-

ers transferred to various places April 29. However, the administration had received complaints about the possible outcome of teachers' transfer during the pandemic.

Besides, it was alleged that trans-

Department in 2018.

Taking note of the complaints, Collector Ajit Kumar Mishra had issued a show-cause notice to the district education officer on why the teachers would not be transferred on the basis of a new circular issued in 2021.

"Teachers can apply online for their transfer. Why there would be no transparency in showing reasons and motives behind the transfers," the Collector sought to know from the DEO.

Consequently, the transfers were cancelled Tuesday

	description in the nexted	
	documents in the portal	
5.	Last date/Time of receipt	31.05.2021 upto 5.00 PM
	of the bid in Portal.	
	Date of Opening	01.06.2021 at 9.00 A.M.
7.	Name and Address of	Office of the Executive Engineer,
	the Office.	Dhenkanal (R&B) Division,
		Dhenkanal
Fι	irther details can be	seen from the e-procurement
P	ortal "https://tenderso	rissa.gov.in"
5	a./- Executive Engine	er, Dhenkanal (R&B) Division
		OIPR-34016/11/0003/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. A-115 OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER NIMAPARA IRRIGATION DIVISION, NIMAPARA NOTICE INVITATION OF TENDERS e-Procurement Notice No.-01/2021-22 on Dated: 06.05.2021 E-mail Id: eenidnimapara@gmail.com Type of Works Restoration of Embankment Canal & Building Total No. of Works 45 (Forty Five) Nos

 Estimated Cost Period of Comp 	ŀ	: Varies from Rs.1.52 to 44.15 lakhs : 60 to 120 Days			
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount in Lakh Rs.	Availability & Submission of Bids Online		
Executive Engineer, Nimapara Irrigation Division, Nimapara	NID-1/ 2021-22 to NID-45/ 2021-22	Rs.1.52 to Rs.44.15	From 13.05.2021 10.00 A.M. to 25.05.2021 5.30 P.M.		

Date of Opening of the Bid : 26.05.2021 at 10.00 A.M Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www. tendersodisha.gov.in

nd the second tender also net with a similar fate.			Sd./- Executive Engineer Nimapara Irrigation Division, Nimapa OIPR-32097/11/0002/21				
OFFICE OF 1	THE EXE			OF ODISHA	S DIVISION, N	No. O-164	
Letter No. 1941				.com, Phone No.: 22		Date: 10.05.21	
		e-P	rocurem	ent Notice			
Name of the Work	:	Road &	Building Works				
Total No. of Works	:	10 (Ten) Nos.				
Approx. Estimated Cost	:	Rs.3.39	lakhs to Rs.47.7	74 lakhs			
Class of Contractor	:	"A", "B"	"C" & "D" Class	of Contractor			
Period of Completion	:	01 (One	e) Month to 02 (T	wo) Months			
Procurement Officer	Rid Identifi	ination No.	No. of Works	Availability of Tender	Online for Bidding	Date & Time of	
Procurement Officer Bid Identification		cation NO.	IND. OF WORKS	From	То	Opening of Tender	

Rural Works Division-I EERWNGP 18.05.202 28.05.2021 10 (Ten) Nos Online-01/2021-22 Nabarangpur at 10.00 A.M upto 03.00 P.M. For details can be seen from the Government website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd./- Executive Engin **Rural Works Division**, Nabarar OIPR-25092/11/0001/2122

31.05.2021

at 11.00 A.M

Revolving car unveiled at Berhampur IT

POST NEW NETWORK

Berhampur, May 11: A revolving car developed by the Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in Berhampur was unveiled Tuesday on the occasion of National Technology Day.

The innovative car revolves at 1480 RPM and is driven by a two HP and 3 phase squirrel cage induction electric motor, said ITI principal Rajat Kumar Panigrahi



The car revolves at a height of 10.6 feet and its speed can be reduced to one RPM in five stages by using a V pulley, helical gears and bevel gears. Most of the parts used to make the car are scrap materials. while the other parts have been designed and developed in the CNC tool room and turner workshop of the institute with the active participation of students and teachers.

This is the second revolving car of the country, he added.

Advanced healthcare projects a non-starter

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, May 11: Advanced healthcare is still a dream for people in industrial district of Jajpur, as several healthcare projects like an ESI hospital, a trauma care centre and a super specialty hospital by Jindal and an urban CHC are vet to take off.

According to reports, the state government had proposed to the Centre to establish a hospital under the **Employees' State Insurance** Corporation (ESIC) at Duburi in Kalinganagar area. The ESI hospital holds much importance for the people engaged in various industrial units in the district.

However, the project has failed to make headway during the last seven years.

Similarly, a trauma care centre was proposed at Panikoili. Sadly, the tender for construction of its building has been cancelled for the second time.

Moreover, there has been no progress on the proposed 100-bed Jindal Super Specialty Hospital and an Urban CHC at Jajpur Road.



As far as the 100-bed ESI ESIC to visit the earmarked hospital is concerned, the land and submit a report by May 14, 2020. Though almost district administration has not gone beyond identifying a year has passed since then. the land at Duburi. Three work on the project has repatches of land, each commained a non-starter. There are three ESI disprising five acres, have been identified at three places

under Sukinda and Danagadi

A joint verification team

tasked to identify land for

the ESI hospital has sub-

ESIC director had instructed

tehsils

pensaries at Ferrochrome, Pankapal and Dhanmandal. but workers say they fail to avail of proper healthcare facilities at these dispensaries for shortage of doctors.

mitted its report February 4, However, the state gov-2020 to the government. The ernment has approved setting up a medical college in the the regional director of the district and currently work

it is alleged that DMF fund on its infrastructure is in full swing. But the trauma is not being spent for the development of the mining care centre at Panikoili is still at the tender process. hub at Jajpur Road. There are proposals for The Works Department had floated a tender for the an Urban CHC and a 200-bed trauma care centre hospital at Jajpur Road. November 23, 2020 but it was Jindal Super Specialty Hospital has been proposed

learnt that no bidder took part in the tender before its deadline expired. The department floated another tender December 30, 2020. This time, only one agency took part in the bidding, but

guidelines On the other hand, ₹60 crore has been allocated for

care centre at Panikoili. The trauma care centre hold much significance for the district as accident cases an on the rise on the three NH passing through the Jajpun

the agitation with the prom-

close to Kalinganagar. But

at Chhotraypur, but the land for the project has not yet been identified. Executive engineer of the Works Department, Arun Kumar Patnaik said that the it failed to qualify as per the first tender for the trauma care centre was cancelled

building the proposed trauma

Various outfits had de manded establishment of government medical colleg at Panikoili, but the admin istration allegedly suppressed

ise of a trauma care centre. Jajpur Road with a population of nearly 1.5 lakhs is



power post

up in northern India's Kashmir Valley, my physician

father would often accompany me

when I received my annual vac-

cinations. I used to ask him how

vaccines worked and where they

were developed. After explaining the basic biology of the human

immune system, my father would

highlight how vaccines were the

FOCUS INDIA COVID CRISIS

GLOBAL CONCERN



Virus Sans Frontier

t a time when India is fast turning into a crematorium due to the fury of the second wave of COVID-19, a ruthless and cynical private business has started within the country and outside over the production and supply of vaccines to tackle the pandemic. The government and the Prime Minister Narendra Modi seem to have lost their voice and are watching the agony and helplessness of millions of people like mute spectators. The letter written by the BJP president JP Nadda to Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi for her trenchant criticism of the government's handling of the pandemic is even worse. He accuses the Congress of "weakening the fight against COVID-19" and makes the ludicrous claim that India's fight against the pandemic, led by Modi, is "driven by unwavering belief in principles of science, support to innovation, trust in our Covid warriors and cooperative federalism." The BJP is still continuing with its bombast.

In fact, the government's policy of liberalising the two vaccines - Covishield and Covaxin - looks like a ploy to wash its hands off the botched up delivery system and tailor-made for the private operators to make windfall profit cashing in on the people's fear for their life. In the first place, all over the country, it has led to wide differences in the prices that private hospitals are charging for the shots. In metros, this is not just inter-city, but also intra-city. One report reveals as per the Co-WIN portal at the beginning of this week the H N Reliance Hospital in Mumbai is charging ₹700 per dose for Covishield – ₹100 more than the price at which the Serum Institute of India (SII) sold the vaccine to private hospitals. The Nanavati Hospital in the city has set a price of ₹900 for one shot. Other hospitals like Dr BL Kapur Hospital in Delhi and Max Healthcare in North India which, like Nanavati, are also charging this rate as per Co-WIN data.

Similarly, the current rate specified by Apollo Hospitals and Fortis Healthcare for a dose of Covaxin across the country is ₹1,250 on Co-WIN which is ₹50 more than the price set by Bharat Biotech for the private market. However, those seeking Covaxin at Kolkata's Woodlands Hospital would have to pay ₹1,500 per dose, going by Co-WIN. As of May 5, Bangalore's BGS Gleneagles Global Hospital was also charging ₹1,500 per jab for Covaxin. It, however, clarified that its ₹1,500 charge was set for walk-in patients "only for the first two days, before the pricing and delivery mechanisms were optimised." It currently administers Covaxin at ₹1,250 and charges ₹1,500 when it administers the vaccine in corporate offices or apartment buildings, as they involve additional travel and logistic costs.

According to some experts, the different rates are likely to cause disparity in access to vaccines. Most of the supply to private operators is now cornered by select private hospitals which are setting their own prices, while states are scrambling to access doses. The Orissa government has been forced to float a global tender for getting enough vaccines to inoculate the state's entire population as the Centre and the private hospitals have simply failed to supply adequate number of doses. There is complete lack of transparency in the system and it looks like the prices may stabilise if the supply picks up following the simple rule of demand and supply. In other words, even in such times of national calamity the government has left vaccination to the profit-making, blood-thirsty market forces leaving the common man to wolves.

On the other hand, in the US, the Biden administration's laudable announcement last week that it would support waiving patent protections for Covid-19 vaccines has remained only a statement of intent without tangible action till now. The gesture cannot be translated into reality as yet because of the vaccine manufacturers' strong lobby which is pleading that the step would reduce their profits. Experts in the USA point out these companies have already made phenomenal profits by supplying their vaccines to different countries. Leaders of some wealthy European nations, including France and Germany, have opposed the relaxation of patents and are closing ranks among the member nations of the World Trade Organisation on the same page with them. But, in their own selfish interest they should stop thinking of profiting from vaccine business as the current superspread of the virus in India or anywhere else would also affect their lives since the virus does not bow to geographical boundaries.

Merely waving patents is not enough. The need of the hour is to gear up manufacturing vaccines, Richard Besser, former acting director of the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention under President Barack Obama told the New York Times (NYT)- "It's going to take a concerted effort to transfer technology" to the rest of the world. What is of vital importance is ramping up indigenous production of vaccines with whatever technology is available. An international non-profit organisation, CARE, according to



Junaid Nabi

THE MORE THE CORONAVIRUS SPREADS AND REPLICATES IN INDIA, THE MORE IT WILL MUTATE. **UNCONTROLLED CIRCULATION OF THE VIRUS WILL**

LEAD TO THE **EMERGENCE OF NOVEL VARIANTS THAT CAN PROLONG**

THE PANDEMIC

result of global efforts, with scientists and firms around the world working meticulously to ensure that all who received them were protected. Today, only global action can address the ongoing COVID-19 crisis in India, where the number of daily cases recently exceeded 400,000 (a world record), and more than 245,000 people have died. Epidemiological models from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of

Washington project that infections in India will continue to grow exponentially, peaking in mid-May, and that the country's total COVID-19 death toll could eventually top one million. While the implications for India are dire, global policymakers would be reckless to think that the impact will be limited to one country.

That is because the more the coronavirus spreads and replicates in India, the more it will mutate. Uncontrolled circulation of the virus will lead to the emergence of novel variants that can prolong the pandemic. The B.1.617 variant responsible for the carnage in India has already been observed in 19 other countries, including the United States. Recent reports also suggest that this variant can potentially evade the immune response, which would further exacerbate the strain on health systems. In addition, we do not vet know how much protection currently approved COVID-19 vaccines can provide against B.1.617, which could threaten the effectiveness of global vaccination campaigns.

Worryingly, the emergence of this variant also threatens vulnerable health systems in other lowresource countries, including India's neighbours, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which have high population densities, insufficient intensive-care capacity and ventilators, and current COVID-19 vaccination rates below 5 per cent. Healthcare capacity is also se-



The international community must join forces and develop a collective approach to support India in this crisis, not only as a moral imperative, but also because the health of other countries' populations and economies are at stake... no country is safe until every country is safe

verely limited in poorer countries in Africa and in South America, which is still recovering from the unchecked spread of the Brazil variant. If B.1.617 can cause so much damage in India – a country with moderate health-system capacity - its spread could devastate less well-equipped countries. India's travails represent a sudden and sharp reversal. The country supplies more than 60 per cent of vaccines globally, and it was supposed to lead efforts to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines for numerous countries. But with the new variant crushing India's health system, it is unclear how long it will take to increase production capacity. India is currently running out of COVID-19 vaccines, and the Serum Institute of India – the world's largest vaccine manufacturer - is unable to boost production for the time being. Economists were already projecting that lowresource countries may not achieve widespread COVID-19 vaccine coverage until 2023. The current crisis will further impede global postpandemic recovery.

The international community must now join forces and develop a collective approach to support India in this crucial phase, not only as a moral imperative, but also because the health of other countries' populations and economies are at stake. Governments can take several

steps to mitigate the impact. First, the US, which has lost almost 600,000 citizens to COVID-19 (more than any other country), should play a leading role. Although President Joe Biden's administration has promised to donate 60 million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, recent reports suggest that it could take up to two months to deliver them. This process needs to be expedited. The US should also lead efforts to share the raw materials required to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines to help increase production capacity in India. Second, the international com-

munity should join the US in supporting a worldwide waiver of intellectual property (IP) related to COVID-19 supplies, including vaccines – a move that India and South Africa have long advocated at the World Trade Organisation. With less than 2 per cent of Indians fully vaccinated, the urgency of the waiver cannot be overstated. And as Jeffrey D. Sachs recently explained, there are mechanisms for maintaining pharmaceutical innovation while promoting vaccination efforts in India and elsewhere, including compensating IP holders and limiting the scope

and duration of any waiver. Countries should also coordinate with the World Health Organisation to increase India's health-system capacity. China,

which built a hospital in five days when infections surged in the country earlier this year, can advise on how to scale up capacity. Nigeria and the US can provide technical assistance in converting large sports facilities into COVID-19 patient-isolation units in order to reduce the burden on hospitals.

Countries that have partly recovered from the pandemic should also share oxygen concentrators and ventilators. And international professional medical organisations can combine their resources and develop protocols to deliver essential supplies, including oxygen, personal protective equipment, and medications.

As some countries finally start to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, policymakers should not forget the pandemic's most important lesson: no country is safe until every country is safe. While India's crisis has highlighted the global nature of public health, it has also presented an opportunity to demonstrate once again the benefits of international collaboration.

The writer, a senior fellow at the Aspen Institute, is a member of the Working Group on Regulatory Considerations for Digital Health and Innovation at the World Health Organisation. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

IN JEST THIS

a NYT report, has pointed out equal emphasis has to be given on effective distribution of vaccine doses. It has estimated that effectively distributing a vaccine dose costs, on an average, five times as much as producing them. Even in countries where a large number of vaccine doses are available, many are going unused for lack of distribution infrastructure, including scarce medical staff to administer the doses. India is a victim of such a situation and paying for it with uncounted precious lives.

WISDOM CORNER

- Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in THOMAS A. EDISON overalls and looks like work.
- Nothing ever comes to one, that is worth having, except as a result of hard work. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
- A smile is the light in your window that tells others that there is a DENIS WAITLEY caring, sharing person inside.

WORDS**WORTH**

Mumchance

his is a rare recent appearance: His attendance was perfect. He attended every possible meeting. And he sat mumchance throughout every meeting. I suppose it's how you define work. You can sit like a lump throughout hundreds of meetings. Or you can engage your brain to question and to challenge (Selkirk Weekend Advertiser, 11 March 2010). You may deduce that to remain mumchance is to stay silent, with a hint that to do so may be a sign of inferior intellect. In fact, in some English dialects its main sense has been remaining stupidly or solidly silent. However, its first meaning was of a game of dice: But, leaving cardes, lets go to dice a while, To passage, treitrippe, hazarde, or mumchance. Machivell's Dog, an anonymous satire of 1617. The second of these games is frequently spelled trey-trip, because success in playing it depended on the casting of a trey, a three. Nobody now seems to know the exact rules, though as it was often mentioned in the same breath as the dice game hazard, ancestor of craps, it's assumed that it was similar. The form and meaning of mumchance suggest it ought to be a close relative of mum in phrases like keep mum, stay silent. There is indeed a close connection, though the words have different origins. Mum is an imitative term known from the fourteenth century, while mumchance is sixteenth century, from Middle Dutch mommecanse, which has cousins in other Germanic languages and in French. Paradoxically, the link between the dice game and silence is the notoriously noisy carnival, since it was traditionally played in the Netherlands during such festivities, in particular by mummers, masked actors in dumb-show. Mumchance was always played in silence, hence the sense. The game of hazard, by the way, is the source of our word meaning a risk or danger. Mumchance seems to have been similarly perilous, as it evolved to mean a high-risk venture and continued in use in that sense after the dice game had been forgotten. The same name was also given to a card game, whose rules are as poorly recorded as those of the dice game, but which was also played in silence.



IT'S BETTER TO BE UNHAPPY WITH A LITTLE **COMPANY THAN TO BE UNHAPPY ALL ALONE**

lll and Melinda Gates announced recently that they are getting divorced after 27 vears of marriage. The Microsoft co-founder and his wife are worth a combined \$124 billion and have given away a portion of their wealth through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

"After a great deal of thought and a lot of work on our relationship, we have made the decision to end our marriage," the couple said in a statement.

Their words indicate that they did not take divorce lightly. That's probably why their marriage lasted 27 years. Most celebrity couples have trouble getting their marriages to last 27 months.

Actor Nicolas Cage, for example, was married to Lisa Marie Presley for only 108 days. But you have to give the couple some credit. At least their marriage lasted 27 times longer than Cage's marriage to Erika Koike, which lasted four days.

While most western countries have divorce rates above 40 per

cent, India's divorce rate is estimated to be around 1 per cent, among the lowest in the world. Does that mean that 99 per cent of married people in India are happy in their marriages? No, it means that 99 per cent of married people in India are unable to find anyone better.

Consider all factors before getting a divorce

The truth is more complicated than that, of course. Divorce is a messy process and most people just don't want to go through with it, even if it means staying in a marriage that brings them as much happiness as a genital wart.

But as divorce becomes more acceptable in India, the divorce rate is bound to increase. If you're in an unhappy marriage and contemplating divorce, I have just one word of advice for you: Don't.

Well, perhaps that's a little too strong. Divorce may indeed be the right move for you, depending on your circumstances. But before you go through with it, here are some points to ponder:

1. It's not all about you. Personal

happiness should not be your only consideration. Think of the kids. How is it going to affect them? If you don't have kids, think of your parents and your in-laws? How is it going to affect them? Okay, perhaps you may not really care how your divorce might affect your inlaws, but don't be surprised if your mother-in-law cries for weeks or your father-in-law calls you names he normally reserves for other motorists on the highway.

2. Don't use another couple's marriage as a model. They may look really happy, especially in those romantic photos they share on social media, but do you really know what's going on in their marriage? Perhaps he's smiling in the photo because he just received a text from the woman he's having a torrid affair with, and perhaps she's smiling because she just wrote a love letter to a man she met online, a soonto-be-single billionaire named Bill.

3. Divorce won't necessarily make you happier. A study conducted in America found that among couples in unhappy marriages, those who get divorced are just as unhappy five years later as those who stay married. It's better to be unhappy with a little company than to be unhappy all alone.

4. Things could get better. Don't assume that a bad marriage will always be a bad marriage. In ten years, it might become an "okay marriage." And ten years after that, it might become an "almostgood marriage." You might find yourself saying, "I'll get a divorce only if a divorce lawyer sends me a discount coupon."

5. Think of all the shared assets you have. Do you really want to split them? It's not just the kids vou'll be fighting over -- it's also the pets, the furniture, the yellowing copies of Reader's Digest that you just can't part with.

There are many good reasons to consider divorce, of course. It's up to you to decide whether to keep the marriage going or, like Bill and Melinda Gates, split your wealth with a divorce lawyer.

etters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are 101 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

rissapost B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Ensure vaccine equity

Sir, The article "Patent Waiver Necessary" by Ajit Ranade rightly points out the bottlenecks associated with the production and distribution of the vaccine. Governments across the globe are intensifying their combat against Covid-19 and mass vaccination drives have been their top most priority in this direction. But the mass vaccination drive is being adversely affected because of low scale production vaccine and unequal distribution of it among all the countries. To increase production there has been demand for waiver of Trade Related aspects of the Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). A few big pharmaceutical companies have been able to produce the vaccine and these are reluctant to share the techniques and process of production. The monopoly of these companies needs to be addressed and other companies with requisite parameters must be allowed to manufacture the vaccines. The US plays a crucial role in this regard too, which holds the larger share of production of the vaccine. The US must be humanitarian in its approach for the greater production and distribution of vaccines. Along with it the equal distribution of vaccines among all countries is also a prime concern. The developed countries with a lesser demographic concentration are ahead where as the developing and underdeveloped countries with a higher density of population are lagging behind the vaccination drive. As the inoculation process is heavily relying on the internet for its mass distribution through online registration, the people with greater accessibility to information technology in the urban areas have an edge over those who do not have access to it living in rural areas. To ensure global peace and prosperity all the countries must work in tandem and the policy of equity must be followed to put a check on the casualty caused by the pandemic. Sanjib Kumar Sahu, BHAWANIPATNA

Dignity to deceased

Sir, Bodies of suspected COVID-19 victims floating at Mahadeo Ghat of the Ganga at Chausa village in Bihar have sent alarm bells ringing. Villagers stumbled upon the decomposed and bloated bodies numbering about a dozen on Monday. The sight of stray dogs near the bodies has raised concerns that the virus could spread. Reports suggest that the skyrocketing cost of cremation could have forced the poor to dump the bodies in the river. The authorities would do well to slash firewood prices so that families could give the deceased a dignified farewell.

NJ Ravi Chander. BANGALORE





Gujarat govt faces HC fire over Covid hospital blaze

A BENCH OF JUSTICES BELA TRIVEDI AND BHARGAV D KARIA SAYS, "SOMEBODY **HAS TO BE MADE ACCOUNTABLE" FOR** THE DEADLY FIRE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, May 11: The Gujarat High Court Tuesday criticised the state government over the recent fire at a COVID-19 hospital in Bharuch, saying it was contemptuous on its part to not remain vigilant and avoid such incidents, and cited many orders passed in this regard in the past.

A division bench expressed surprise over Advocate General Kamal Trivedi's submission that the COVID-19 facility at the trust-run Bharuch Welfare Hospital, where the fire May 1 killed 18 people, was set up "surreptitiously, without intimating the authorities".

Sixteen COVID-19 patients and two nurses were killed in the blaze. The bench of Justices Bela

Trivedi and Bhargav D Karia said that "somebody has to be made accountable" for the deadly fire. The bench was hearing a petition filed by advocate Amit Panchal seek



ing a direction to hold government officials accountable and punish them for failing to comply with the court's previous directions related to fire incidents in COVID-19 hospitals.

"The anxiety of the court is what are you supposed to do to prevent such incidents in the coming days ... Ultimately, what are the measures that you are going to take?" the court asked.

The judges said the government suant to previous orders passed failed to take action on the court's by the court previous orders pertaining to all 19 facility in Bharuch town was hospitals in the state so that fire incidents do not occur again at these set up "surreptitiously, without inmedical facilities. timating the authorities," and

"It amounts to the contempt of

after two weeks.

courts of all the orders passed by

the courts in the past. Ultimately,

not being vigilant so that such in-

cidents are not repeated again and

The court said the government's

affidavit, filed in the matter, only

talks about letters issued by top

authorities but was silent on actions

taken by lower-level officials pur-

Trivedi said the fire-hit COVID-

hence no-objection certificate (NOC)

again." the bench said.

TWOSTATES

On the petitioner's plea to make public, the DA Mehta Commission of Inquiry report on fire incidents at two Gujarat hospitals, the government told the HC the report was submitted late in the evening March 31 this year and could not be tabled in the Assembly as its it amounts to the contemptuous session got over April 1. action on the part of the state for

The Mehta commission had probed the fire incidents at two hospitals - one in Rajkot (November 11. 2020) and the other in Ahmedabad (August 2020) - in which altogether 13 COVID-19 patients were killed.

"As per the provisions of the Commission of Inquiry, the report is required to be studied, prepared, and thereafter tabled before the Assembly. There is no question of keeping the report under carpet or else we should not have appointed a commission," Trivedi told the court.

Mumbai hospital moves SC seeking O₂

on fire safety could not be issued

by local authorities to the new unit. Rajesh Tope said. Amid a shortage of COVID-19 The court expressed surprise vaccine does, the Maharashtra govover Trivedi's submission and said if the state was not intimated ernment Tuesday decided to diabout a COVID-19 facility, how vert three lakh vials of Covaxin was it possible for it to compile data meant for the 18-44 age group for on coronavirus patients who are the use of the people aged 45 years hospitalised. The bench also isand above. sued notices to the Bharuch mu-Speaking to reporters, state nicipality, the trust which runs Health Minister Rajesh Tope the hospital, its nodal officer for also said more than five lakh fire safety and the government, people above 45 years are awaitand kept the matter for hearing ing the second dose for the want

of the vaccine. "Efficacy of the vaccine is largely affected if the second dose is not administered in a stipulated time. To avoid such health crisis, the state government has decided to divert three lakh vials (of Covaxin) purchased for the 18-44 age category for the people

AGENCIES

Mumbai, May 11: Maharashtra Tuesday said it is 'slowing down' the Covid vaccination process for those in the 18-44 age group to focus on those over 45 due to a shortage of doses in the state. There will, however, be no stopping the vaccination

process, state Health Minister

above 45 years," Tope said. He said only 35,000 vials of Covaxin are currently available with the state government for administering the second dose to the people above 45 years.

According to the Liberalised Pricing and Accelerated National COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy, COVID-19 vaccination is free at government vaccination centres that receive doses from the Centre for eligible population groups comprising healthcare workers, frontline workers and people above the 45 years of age.

However, states and private hos-



OrissaPOS

WEDNESDAY | MAY 12 | 2021 | BHUBANESWAR

Central Railway staff members wait to receive COVID-19 vaccine doses at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in Mumbai, Tuesday. PTI PHOTO

Efficacy of the vaccine is largely affected if the second dose is not dministered in a stipulated time. To avoid such health crisis, the state government has decided to divert three lakh vials (of Covaxin) purchased for the 18-44 age category for the people above 45 years RAJESH TOPE | HEALTH MINISTER

Only 45+ in Maha to get vax for now

pitals have to procure 50 per cent of the vaccines in order to immunise persons in the age group of 18 to 44 years. Maharashtra reported 40,956

new COVID-19 cases Tuesday, a sharp rise from 37,236 logged a day ago, taking the tally to 51,79,929, while 793 more patients succumbed

to the infection, said the state health department. Monday, the number of daily coronavirus cases (37,236) in the state had dropped below 40,000 for the first time since March 31. A day later, the state recorded a jump of 3,720 cases to again breach the 40,000-mark. With 40,956 COVID-19 infections, the state's caseload increased to 51,79,929, while 793 deaths upped the fatality count to 77,191, said the health department.

Maharashtra, the worst COVID-19-hit state in the country, had reported 39,544 cases March 31. The state had registered 54.022 cases May 7, 53,605 May 8 and 48,401 May 9. Of the 793 fatalities, 403 had occurred in the past 48 hours, while 170 took place last week and 220 people died before the last week, but were added to the toll Tuesday, the department said.

ED case against Anil Deshmukh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 11: Maha Vikas Aghadi allies NCP and Congress Tuesdav termed the Enforcement

Minister and NCP's national spokesperson Nawab Malik Tuesdav said Deshmukh, a senior NCP leader, will cooperate in the probe.

The Congress, which is one of the constituents of the Shiv Senaled Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government besides the NCP dubbed the ED's move as an attempt to cover up the Modi government's "failure" to manage the pandemic by diverting the public attention

"Right from Singh's allegations to the filing of the case by the ED, it is all politically motivated and



MVA delegation meets Guvover Maratha quota issue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 11: Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray Tuesday met Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari and requested him to take up the issue of Maratha quota with President Ram Nath Kovind and the Union government. A delegation of the ruling coali-

tion leaders led by Thackeray met the governor days after the Supreme Court struck down the quota in education and government jobs for Marathas in Maharashtra.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government will also approach Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue. Thackeray told reporters later. The MVA -- which has often been at loggerheads with the BJP-led Union government - hoped for a decision on the issue soon as the law granting quota to the community had been backed by all parties including the BJP, he said. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit

Pawar and ministers Ashok Chavan, Jayant Patil, Balasaheb Thorat, Eknath Shinde, Dilip Walse Patil and state Congress chief Nana Patole were part of the delegation.

The Supreme Court May 5 held the Maharashtra law granting quota to Marathas as unconstitutional. The majority ruling also said that states cannot decide the list of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) and only the President has the power to notify it.

"The verdict says the power to grant reservation is with the President, Centre and not states, So we met the governor, requesting him to convey our sentiments to the President and Centre. He (Koshvari)

Directorate's move to file a criminal case against former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh as the politics of revenge and said the action was aimed at diverting the people's attention from 'failure' of the Modi government in tackling the pandemic.

The NCP accused the BJP of trying to defame the state government as well as the Sharad Pawar-led party. The ED filed the case under the anti-money laundering law in an alleged "bribery" case after studying a CBI FIR that was filed against Deshmukh late last month.

The Bombay High Court had earlier directed the CBI to conduct a Preliminary Enquiry (PE) against Deshmukh after former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh raised allegations of corruption against the senior NCP leader.

Maharashtra Minority Affairs

aimed at defaming him (Deshmukh) by misusing power. It is clear that the BJP is playing politics using the CBI, ED and other Central agencies," Malik said in a statement.

The ED filed the case with a "political motive" to defame the state government and the NCP. he said."Whatever the legal aspects, Deshmukh ji will cooperate in the probe," he added. In a series of tweets, Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant alleged the ED case reflects the "dangerous politics" being pursued by the Modi government which is "detrimental" to democracy. "...It's an attempt to cover up Modi govt's failure to handle Corona crisis & divert public's attention, as well as political revenge," Sawant tweeted. Sawant said the action has been taken based



A patient, having breathing issues, carries an oxygen cylinder on her lap while being taken home after her discharge from a hospital, at Dharavi in Mumbai.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 11: A Mumbaibased private hospital has moved the Supreme Court seeking direction to the Centre and the Maharashtra government to take urgent steps to ensure sufficient supply of Oxygen to it for saving lives of COVID-19 patients. The plea said it is a COVID hospital

with 90 beds of which 13 are hi-tech ICU facilities and the hospitals which are requisitioned by BMC can retain 20 per cent of the beds for non-COVID patients. It said that from April 12, 2021, oxygen was denied by a private medical gas provider to it and the hospital had to shift the patients to other hospitals.

"At a time when there is great shortage of beds and ICU facilities for the treatment of COVID patients, the petitioner Hospital, one well equipped with all modern, hybrid facilities for COOVID treatment, is forced to remain handicapped, practically closed," the plea said. The hospital claimed it was even willing to pay five times the approved rates for oxygen but the private medical gas provider demanded a minimum of 10 times the official rate. The petitioner hospital said that they had complained to BMC, police authorities and even made representations to various other authorities but it had not received any help of any kind. "The said representations to the various authorities unfortunately fell only on deaf ears at a time when the state continues to face an extreme emergency where death stares in large numbers of COVID patients, who are struggling to breathe and require immediate supply of oxygen", it said. The hospital also alleged black marketing of medical grade oxygen in the state and sought action by authorities against the medical gas providers. The top court is currently seized of a suo motu case on ensuring supplies of essential commodities and services for man-

agement of COVID-19.

"We have also decided to meet the honourable prime minister as soon as possible," he added.

said he will convey our sentiments,

Thackeray said.

He has also written a letter to the prime minister on the issue, Thackerav informed



Curbs extended in 36 Guj cities Docs warn against cow dung 'therapy' to boost immunity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, May 11: The Gujarat government Tuesday extended night curfew and other restrictions in 36 cities in the state for another week in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

The curfew between 8 pm to 6 am in 36 cities including Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot and Vadodara, imposed May 6, will be in force till May 18, said a government release. Originally it was to last till May 12. The decision was taken by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani after a meeting of the government's core group on the pandemic.

During the day, the shops selling essential things including medicines, milk and vegetables will be allowed to remain open in these 36 cities. Vegetable and fruit markets, grocery shops, tiffin services, bakeries, takeaway counters at ho tels and restaurants, petrol and CNG pumps can also remain open. Newspaper distribution, telecom services, security services,



on the "lies" of Singh.

postal services, transport and ecommerce services are allowed. Factories can continue to run and construction activities can go on. Educational institutions, auditoriums, theatres, malls, community halls, water parks, commercial complexes, spas, gyms, gardens, swimming pools, beauty parlours

will remain closed. As in the previous week, there will be a total ban on all kinds of religious, political or social gatherings across the state.

While religious places will remain shut for the public between May 12 and 18, sports complexes and stadiums can remain open without spectators, said the release.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, May 11: Doctors in Gujarat have warned against a socalled 'cow-dung therapy', saying smearing of cow dung on the body does not give protection against coronavirus but may cause other infections including mucormycosis.

A small group of people has been visiting a cow shelter run by Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Vishwavidya Prathisthanam (SGVP) here to take the therapy, believing that it increases immunity against COVID-19.

The shelter houses over 200 cows. For the last one month, around 15 persons visit it every Sunday to apply cow dung and cow urine on the body. It is then washed off with cow milk, said an SGVP official. Those taking the therapy in-

clude some frontline workers and people working at medical stores, he said.

Doctors, however, do not vouch for its efficacy. "I don't know if this



therapy would really help people. I have never come across any re-

search which suggested that application of cow dung on the body would increase immunity against coronavirus," said Dr Dileep Mavlankar, Director of the Indian Institute of Public Health, Gandhinagar.

Dr Mona Desai, a senior doctor from the city, termed the therapy as "humbug and inauthentic".

"Cow dung is nothing but body waste. Applying cow dung and urine can never boost immunity or protect you from coronavirus. People should consult doctors and stay away from such therapies,' said Dr Desai, chairperson of the women's wing of the Indian Medical Association (IMA).

"Instead of proving helpful, cow dung would give you other infections, including mucormycosis," she said.

Mucormycosis, also called black fungus infection, has been observed among some COVID-19 survivors and can be fatal.

'Since cow dung also carries several fungi, they may enter into the body and infect you. I urge peo-ple to be little aware and not put their lives in danger," said Desai.









PM HAILS SCIENTISTS, INNOVATORS ON NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY DAY

PM Narendra Modi Tuesday said that in any challenging situation, the country's scientists and innovators have always risen to the occasion and over the last year have worked industriously to fight COVID-19. The National Technology Day marks the anniversary of the underground nuclear tests conducted in Rajasthan's Pokhran in 1998



WHO warns against ivermectin use to treat Covid

government spending a small amount of Rs 20,000 crore for the Central Vista including a modest new house for the PM. Criticism unjustified

BJP

P CHIDAMBARAM SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

Now, there is a new trend in the Congress party to put all the blame on the Central Vista project. I would like to remind you that the need for a new Parliament was raised as early

as the UPA times JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA BJP PRESIDENT



ventilator beds from London in the next 2-3 days GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT UNION

MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

TMC leader shot at in Hooghly dist

Chinsurah (WB): A TMC leader was shot at by indentified miscreants in West Bengal's Hooghly district Tuesday when he was buying vegetables at a local market, a police officer said. Aditya Niyogi, former vice chairman of Bansberia Municipalty, was taken to a nearby hospital in a critical condition, but the doctors there referred him to a clinical establishment in Kolkata, he said. BJP sources claimed the incident was a fallout of factional feud within the ruling party.

Train knocks tiger cub dead Betul (MP): A tiger cub was

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 11: A day after Goa's Health Minister Vishwajit Rane recommended ivermectin to all above 18 to combat Covid in the state, the World Health Organisation Tuesday has warned against its use.

Safety and efficacy are important when using any drug for a new indication. @WHO recommends against the use of ivermectin for #COVID19 except within clinical trials, Soumya Swaminathan, the global health body's chief scientist, said in a tweet.

The Goa state government

Monday cleared a new Covid treatment protocol which recommends all residents above the age of 18 to take five tablets of the ivermectin drug, in order to prevent the steep and sometimes fatal viral fever, which accompanies a Covid-19 infection.

Rane, while speaking to reporters, said that the ivermectin drug would be made available at all health centres in the state and should be taken by all residents, irrespective of whether they have Covid-19 symptoms or otherwise. Last week, a peer-reviewed re-

search had claimed that global ivermectin use can end Covid-19 pan-



demic, as the medicine significantly reduces the risk of contracting the deadly respiratory disease when used regularly

The peer review, which included

three US government senior scientists and was published in the American Journal of Therapeutics,

touted the common anti-parasitic ivermectin as a miracle cure for

Covid-19 by doctors and campaigners the world over.

In her tweet, Swaminathan also attached a warning issued by the German health care and life sciences giant Merck. Scientists continue to carefully

examine the findings of all available and emerging studies of ivermectin for the treatment of Covid-19, read the statement from Merck.

The WHO had, in March, issued a similar warning against the use of ivermectin in treating Covid patients. The global health agency said that there was a very low certainty of evidence on ivermectin's effects on mortality, hospital ad-

mission and getting rid of the virus from the body.

Rane also stated that expert panels from the UK, Italy, Spain and Japan, found a large, statistically significant reduction in mortality, time to recovery and viral clearance in Covid-19 patients treated with ivermectin. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had also, in April last year, recommended against the use of ivermectin in treating Covid patients. Besides, the Union ministry of health and family welfare had also reportedly opted out from including Ivermectin in its official Clinical Management

Protocol for Covid-19 last year.

Recoveries outnumber new cases after 61 days

In the last 24 hours, India reported 3,29,942 fresh cases, while as many as 3,56,082 people recovered from the disease. India's cumulative recoveries stood at 1,90,27,304 Tuesday, with a national recovery rate of 82.75 per cent



AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 11: For the first time in 61 days, recoveries outnumbered new Covid cases in the last 24 hours, providing some relief to the country which is reeling under the raging second wave of the pandemic for some time now.

In the last 24 hours, India reported 3,29,942 fresh cases, while as many as 3,56,082 people recovered from the disease during the same time period. India's cumulative recoveries stood at 1,90,27,304 Tuesday, with a national recovery rate is 82.75 per cent.

An early trend of decline in daily new COVID-19 cases and deaths has been noted in the country, the government said Tuesday According to the government,

Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana were among 18 states and union territories showing con-

tinued plateauing or decrease in daily new COVID-19 cases. Addressing a press conference, Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry Lav Agarwal, however, said Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Punjab, Assam, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura were among 16 states and union territories showing continued increasing trend in daily new COVID-19 cases.

The number of districts with a week-on-week increase in weekly tests and decline in positivity rate has increased from 73 (April 15-21) to 182 (April 29-May 5).

Prioritise beneficiaries for 2nd dose: Centre

New Delhi: The Centre appealed to states Tuesday to prioritise vaccinating those due for second dose of COVID-19 vaccine and reserve at least 70 per cent of the shots supplied from the central pool for the purpose. States have also been urged to minimise wastage of vaccine doses, the health ministry said in a statement. All wastage more than the national average hereafter, is to be adjusted from the subsequent allocations to that state or union territory. The urgent need to address a large number of benefit

Districts which are showing continued decline in cases since last two weeks include Pune, Nagpur, Palghar and Nashik districts of Maharashtra; Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur Nagar (Uttar Pradesh); Bhopal, Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh); Surat (Gujarat); Patna (Bihar); Ranchi (Jharkhand); Raipur, Durg (Chhattisgarh); and Kota (Rajasthan).

Districts showing continued increase in cases since last two weeks are Bengaluru Urban and Muysuru Chennai. in Karnataka: Chengalpattu and Thiruvallur in Tamil Nadu; Ernakulam and Malappuram in Kerala; 24 Paraganas North and Kolkata in West Bengal; Jaipur in Rajasthan; Dehradun in Uttarakhand: East Godavari and Visakhapatanam in Andhra Pradesh; Satara in Maharashtra;

ciaries waiting for second dose of vaccine was stressed in a meeting held by Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan and Dr R S Sharma, the Chairman of Empowered Group on Technology and Data Management to Combat COVID-19, with state officials to review the status of COVID-19 vaccination Tuesday. This however is indicative. States have the liberty to enhance this to as much as 100 per cent. State-wise numbers on CoWIN have been shared with states for their planning purposes.

1 lakh active COVID-19 cases each and 26 states have a positivity rate of over 15 per cent, the government said. Citing the case of Pune, he said night curfew alone with no restriction on gatherings has shown less significance in terms of controlling the growth trajectory of daily new cases

India has been reeling under a calamitous second wave of the coronavirus infection. However, the daily numbers of deaths and infections have started to go down.

Plea against Central Vista sheer abuse of law: Centre



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 11: The Centre told the Delhi High Court that the petition filed before it against the work on both sides of Rajpath under the Central Vista Redevelopment project was an attempt to stall the project under the garb of public interest.

In an affidavit, Executive Engineer, Central Vista Project Division-III, CPWD, Rajiv Sharma said the petition before the High Court is a sheer abuse of the process of law and one more attempt to stall the project against the backdrop of the ongoing Covid-19 situation.

The affidavit said the tender for the work, meant for providing public amenities, and pedestrian underpass etc, was awarded to Shapoorji Pallonji and Company, in January 2021. The work was supposed to be completed within 10 months by November 2021. The affidavit said it may not be out of place to mention that the said project was not inaugurated by the Prime Minister, contrary to what has been stated in para 13 of the writ petition filed before the High Court.

Sharma, in the affidavit. contended that the scope of work for the project in question is not what is colloquially referred to as the Central Vista Project (which includes Parliament, refurbishment of North Block, South Block, construction of new offices for central government ie Common Central Secretariat, Central conference facilities, etc).

The scope of work which is a subject matter of the present petition is limited to the redevelop ment of Central Vista Avenue (ie both side of the Rajpath) where Republic Day Celebrations are held annually. This is very important public space and most widely visited by common public and tourists in Delhi, he said in the affidavit.

and Khordha in Odisha.

Thirteen states have more than

He said stricter measures such as restrictions on mass gatherings and shutting of non-essential ac tivities for a period of 15 days have helped reduce the rate of infection growth and the cases started plateau-

mowed down Tuesday by a speeding train in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district, a forest official said. The loco pilot of Kerala Express informed the railway officials about the carcass of a tiger cub lying near the tracks close to Bhaura River between Polapatthar and Dhodhra Mohar railway stations, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mohan Meena said. He said the male cub aged less than a year.

Oxygen tanker leak injures 1

Panaji: One person received minor injuries due to leakage of an oxygen tanker at a South Goa hospital Tuesday, an official said. The leakage was brought under control by fire personnel who rushed to the spot, an official spokesperson said. "Two fire engines reached here and after nearly 30 to 40 minutes, we stopped the leakage. There was no fire, only one person was injured due to cold burns," an official said.

3 die in firecracker factory blast

Harda (MP): At least three people were killed while two others were reportedly injured following an explosion in an alleged fire cracker factory operating from a house in Madhva Pradesh's Harda district. The deceased victims include three women belonging to one family. As per information received, a sudden explosion occurred Monday morning in one Lokesh Beldar's house located in front of the government Industrial Training Institute near Bairagarh area under Civil Line police station area

Cong forms panel to probe poll debacle

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 11: Interim **Congress President Sonia Gandhi** Tuesday constituted a committee to investigate the reasons for the party's losses in the recently concluded assembly polls.

The Committee will be headed by Maharashtra Public Works Department Minister Ashok Chavan while former ministers Salman Khurshid, Manish Tewari and Vincent Pala are among its members. The other member is Tamil Nadu MP Jothi Mani. The committee will give its report in two weeks. The significant inclusion is

Tewari who was part of the group which wrote the letter to Sonia Gandhi for organisational elec-



tions. Earlier, Gandhi had said in the CWC meet 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,

This CWC meeting was convened to discuss the results of the recentlyheld Assembly polls. She had said that party has to take note of the 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 Prasada saying the alliance with the Indian Secular Front (ISF), formed by preacher-turned-politician Pirzada Abbas Siddiqui, ruined the Congress' prospects in the state.



Three wheeler auto union starts the Auto Ambulance service for COVID-19 patients in Lucknow, Tuesday PTI PHOTO

Japan, UNDP join hands to boost O2 supply in northeast India

TO ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED OXYGEN SUPPLY. THE SUPPORT FROM THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN HAS ENABLED UNDP IN PROCURING AND INSTALLING EIGHT OXYGEN GENERATION PLANTS IN THE NORTHEASTERN STATES OF MEGHALAYA. NAGALAND AND TRIPURA

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 11: As the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to spread virulently in India, the government of Japan and the **UN Development Programme** (UNDP) have partnered to provide oxygen generation plants to northeastern states.

A statement issued by the UNDP India said that since June 2020, the Japanese government and the agency have been jointly supporting the Centre's battle against the pandemic by strengthening health and social protection systems and reviving livelihoods of the most

vulnerable population. In the ongoing pandemic, which is overwhelming health systems across the country, one of the key

challenges has been acute shortage of medical oxygen.

To ensure uninterrupted oxygen supply, the support from the people of Japan has enabled UNDP in procuring and installing eight Pressure Swing Absorption (PSA) oxygen generation plants in the northeastern states of Meghalaya Nagaland and Tripura.

The hospitals, with a capacity of approximately 1,300 beds, have been identified in the region for the oxygen generation plants. Excess oxygen will be distrib-

uted among other health facilities in the hospitals' vicinity. The installation sites are being

prepared so that the oxygen production can start at the earliest possible, the UNDP India said. In addition, the UNDP has also



been supporting the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with digitisation of supply chain of vaccines and tracking beneficiaries across states to ensure better access and coverage

It has also helped build capacities of 820,500 frontline workers across



the country to support the 'world's largest vaccination drive', the statement said.

The government of Japan has also committed a sizable commitment of providing critical items to India, including ventilators and oxygen concentrators.

provide vital oxygen generation plants for the people of India's northeast. The northeast occupies a special place for Japan-India relations and I sincerely hope that the oxygen generation plants will help those people in need.

Shoko Noda, Resident Representative, UNDP India, thanked the people of Japan for this critical support that will allow the agency to ensure uninterrupted flow of oxygen in hospitals and health centres in the region, especially those in hard-to-reach areas.

The situation in India is devastating and the pandemic continues to threaten millions of lives. The UNDP urgently needs additional support to ensure that we reach the last mile to leave no one behind. she said.







In a statement, Satoshi Suzuki,

Ambassador Extraordinary and

Plenipotentiary of Japan to India,

said Japan stands with India, our

friend and partner, in her efforts to

fight against Covid-19 pandemic in

this critical time. I am pleased that

Japan is working with the UNDP to





national



The government is unable to provide treatment, vaccines and even honorable last rites to the deceased

AJAY MAKEN | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

ASSAM GETS FIRST WOMAN FINANCE MINISTER

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Tuesday allocated the finance portfolio to Ajanta Neog, making her the first woman Finance Minister of the northeastern state



of the uote

I have given directions to the police not to use force but we need people's cooperation for at least 14 days to make lockdown successful

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accepted this pandemic as a challenge and the government is doing everything possible to tackle this challenge

RAJNATH SINGH

The Delhi government will float a global tender for procuring

procuring coronavirus vaccines MANISH SISODIA

DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Elected legislators take oath in TN

Chennai: The newly elected legislators of the Tamil Nadu assembly started taking oath Tuesday with Chief Minister and DMK leader MK Stalin was the first among them. Pro-term Speaker K. Pitchandi administered the oath to Stalin. The oath taking ceremony of all the 234 legislators will be completed on Tuesday itself as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be elected Wednesday, May 12. The DMK won 133 seats including 8 of its coalition partners (MDMK, MMK, TVK and MNMK) who won in the "Rising Sun" symbol of the party. The Congress, its alliance partner won 18 seats while VCK, CPM and CPI won 4 seats each.

1971 war veteran passes away

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Mumbai: Squadron Leader Anil Bhalla (Retd), who as a young Flying Officer flew MiG-21 sorties during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, has died after battling coronavirus, his family sources said Tuesday. The 74-year-old flying ace, a native of Mumbai, died Monday night at Hyderabad where he had settled after retirement from the Air Force in 1984, the sources said.

MORE BODIES FISHED OUT FROM GANGA



Dead bodies float on the banks of Ganga river in Bihar's Chausa town

QUARTER OF A MILLION DEAD

The seven-day average of daily infections hit a record 3,90,995 Tuesday, with 3,876 deaths, according to the health ministry. Official COVID-19 deaths, which experts say are almost certainly under-reported, stand at just under a quarter of a million. The World Health Organization said on Monday that it regarded the coronavirus variant

first identified in India last year as a variant of global concern, with some preliminary studies showing that it spreads more easily. "He has always been particular about the purity and uninterrupted

about the purity and uninterrupted flow of the river and has asked the administration to intensify patrolling to ensure this is not repeated. "Lastrites of 71 bodies performed as per protocols. A net has been placed in the Ganges in Ranighat, bordering UP and Bihar. We have advised the UP adminis

tration to be vigilant. Our administration is keeping vigil, too. Advise all to give respect to the dead and

PHOTO: TWITTEI

also to Maa Ganga," Jha added. Around two dozen bodies were found on the banks of the Ganga at adjoining Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh, an official said Tuesday. AK Pandey, the SHO of Gahmar police station in Ghazipur, said that the bodies were found in a decomposed stage on the bank of the Ganga river.

Meanwhile, the Centre Tuesday asked states along the Ganga to ensure strict vigilance and check future incidences of people dumping bodies in the river and its tributaries. In a letter to District Ganga Committees which are chaired by district magistrates or collectors, the National Mission for Clean Ganga – the apex body that monitors rejuvenation of the river and its tributaries – also asked the authorities to dispose unidentified bodies of suspected Covid-19 victims in accordance with safety protocols.

EXPLOSIVES CASE Vaze dismissed from service

Constitution of India by

Commissioner of Police, Greater

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 11: Suspended Assistant Police inspector Sachin Vaze, arrested by the NIA in the case of an explosives-laden SUV found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's house and the murder of businessman Mansukh Hiran, was Tuesday dismissed from police service, an official said.

The order terminating Vaze's service was issued by Mumbai Police Commissioner Hemant

Eight killed as heavy rain lashes south Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, May 11: Eight people were killed in different parts of West Bengal as thunderstorms and heavy rains battered the southern districts of the state Tuesday afternoon, officials said.

Lightning and gusty winds with speed reaching up to 54 km per hour lashed Kolkata, Howrah, North 24 Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad, Bankura, Purba Bardhaman, Paschim Medinipur, Birbhum and Purulia districts, a Met Department official said. In Alipore, 102 mm rainfall was recorded.

The rainfall led to waterlogging in several areas across Kolkata, including the arterial Central Avenue, slowing down traffic during the evening rush hours. A man was electrocuted to death while returning home from office through the flooded street outside the North Gate of the Raj Bhavan in central Kolkata, police said.

Firefighters and police rescued the body and sent it for post-mortem. "We are trying to ascertain the person's identity," an officer said.

Nagrale, said a spokesperson of the city police. A 1990-batch officer of the Maharashtra cadre, Vaze, also known as an "encounter cop", was earlier suspended after his arrest by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in the SUV-cummurder case March 13. Mumbai," a top official said. Vaze was reinstated in the Mumbai police in June 2020 after being suspended for 16 years in a case related to alleged custodial death of a bomb blast accused. Post-reinstatement, he was heading the Crime Intelligence Unit

rest by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in the SUV-cummurder case March 13. "API Sachin Hindurao Vaze has been dismissed from police service. Order has been issued today under Provision of 311(2)(B) of a bomb blast accused. Post-reinstatement, he was heading the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the crime branch and handling high profile cases, including the fake TRP case, fake social media followers case, the DC

security scare case.

car finance scam and the Ambani

Farmers returning to protest sites: SKM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Apr 11: The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of over 40 farmer unions, Tuesday said that farmers were returning to Singhu and Tikri border protest sites after finishing harvesting their crops.

In a statement, the SKM said that large convoys of farmers arrived at the two border points Monday and this will now continue. "Yesterday, large convoys of farmers arrived on the Singhu border and Tikri border. Farmers were welcomed at many places on their way to these sites from Punjab. These farmers, who have travelled in tractors, cars and other vehicles, have made arrangements to live in tents and trolleys as they were living before harvesting," it said. "The farmers' strike is getting stronger and the protest sites are also becoming larger. Farmers' tents, trolleys and other vehicles have been permanently there for the last five months in long queues. The pattern of farmers coming back after the harvesting season will now continue," it added.

The farmers' outfit said that the government was "promoting privatisation" even at a time when "thousands of people have lost their lives due to the mismanagement of the public health system".

US looking at joint production of J&J vax in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 11: The US is looking at joint production of Johnson and Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine in India and ways to help manufacturers like the Serum Institute of India (SII) to boost production, Daniel B Smith, the Charge D'Affaires of the US embassy, said Tuesday. Smith also said that the efficacy of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine manufactured at a production facility in Baltimore is not vet clear and the Food and Drug Administration has not yet certified that the doses are available for anyone's use or for export. Last month. the White House said that the US plans to share 60 million doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine globally as soon as they become available, and India expected a significant chunk of the total stockpile. At



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AGENCIES

Pradesh.

Patna, May 11: The Bihar gov-

ernment Tuesday said altogether

71 bodies have been fished out from

the Ganga in Buxar district, where

these were found floating in the

river, triggering suspicion that the

abandoned corpses could be those

Sanjay Kumar, a key aide of Chief

Minister Nitish Kumar, came out

with a series of tweets, asserting

that the bodies had flown down-

stream from neighbouring Uttar

of the matter of unfortunate case

of floating mortal remains in river

Ganga. The bodies have floated

into Bihar from UP," said Jha,

adding, doctors have confirmed

upon post-mortem that the deaths

had taken place "four-five days"

ago. He said the Chief Minister

was pained at both the tragedy as

well as the "harm" to river Ganga.

"The Bihar government is seized

State Water Resources Minister

of Covid-19 patients.

Chief Minister and state Covid task force head C N Ashwath

Chausa town ER OF A tration to be vigila istration is keeping

Cloudburst hits Devprayag

New Tehri (U'khand): A

cloudburst hits Devprayag in Tehri district of Uttarakhand Tuesday, razing two municipal buildings to the ground and damaging several shops. It also damaged pedestrian bridges, water pipelines and electricity supply lines, an official said. The cloudburst occurred over the Shanta river, causing inundation of areas along its banks with a huge amount of slush containing boulders, SHO of the Devprayag police station Mahipal Singh Rawat said. A number of shops in the Dashrath Danda Parvat area of Devprayag were also damaged in the cloudburst, the SHO said.

New Delhi/Bangalore, May 11: The governments of Delhi, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Tuesday joined several other states which have decided to issue global tenders for procurement of Covid vaccines as the domestic supply fails to keep up with the rising demand amid the fierce second wave of the pandemic.

The Centre said it has so far provided more than 18 crore vaccine doses to states and UTs free of cost, but many of them have complained of an acute shortage of the jabs and are now prioritising people who need to be given their second dose within a prescribed period.

Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha have also taken the global tender route for procuring vaccines swiftly. Two crore Covid vaccine doses will be procured through global tender to meet the increased demand and to facilitate vaccination of the age group of 18-44 years, Karnataka Deputy

11: Narayan said.

"Till now, we had depended only on vaccines supplied by the central government and it was not procured from the open market by floating tender. Now, it has been instructed to float the tender and to complete the process within seven days," Narayan said. Delhi government too said it will float a global tender for procuring coronavirus vaccines.

Addressing a press conference, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia alleged that the BJP-ruled Centre was "forcing" state governments to invite global tenders for vaccine procurement. The Telangana cabinet also decided to invite global tenders for procurement of Covid-19 vaccine, an official statement said. Officials said the Andhra Pradesh government will float a global tender in a day or two for the procurement of Covid-19 vaccines from foreign manufacturers to complete the vaccination process as quickly as possible.



A man rides a bicycle holding an umbrella during rain in Srinagar

Youth getting more affected in Covid 2nd wave: ICMR

ants also prevalent in the nation

which may be affecting them as

well," he said. India has been reel-

AGENCIES

PM Modi speaks to Bhutan PM New Delhi: Prime Minister

Narendra Modi held a telephonic conversation with his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering Tuesday as the two leaders noted that the coronavirus crisis has further highlighted the special friendship between the two countries. The Bhutanese prime minister expressed solidarity with the government and the people of India in their efforts against the recent wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

New Delhi, May 11: The second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic is impacting slightly more number of younger people as they might have begun going out and also because of some variants of SARs-COV-2 prevalent in the country, the ICMR chief said Tuesday.

In response to a question on whether younger population were getting more affected, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Dr Balram Bhargava said the comparison of data during the first and the second wave of Covid-19 has shown that there is not much age difference. People above the age of 40 are more vulnerable for adverse outcomes.

"We have found that younger



people are getting slightly more involved because suddenly they have gone out and there are variing under a calamitous second wave of the coronavirus infection.

An early trend of decline in daily new Covid-19 cases and deaths has been noted in the country even as Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, and Punjab are among the 16 states still showing continued increase in daily cases, the government said Tuesday. According to the government, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana were among the 18 states and union territories showing continued plateauing or decrease in daily new Covid-19 cases. Addressing a press conference, Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry Lav Agarwal, however, said Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Punjab, Assam, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura were among the 16 states and union territories showing continued increasing trend in daily new COVID-19 cases. In the current wave, it is not clear whether the age composition of cases and deaths has changed since the central government has not released nationwide data. Data for states is also not publicly available. But a cursory glance at data reported by the media shows no major change in the demographic profile of coronavirus patients.

A government official in Chhattisgarh said not only were more younger patients infected, they were more severely infected than last year.



a media briefing, Smith said the US was concerned over the current course of the pandemic in India, not simply because of the humanitarian catastrophe but also due to the fact that it has global implications, noting that the Biden administration was standing with New Delhi to help deal with the crisis.

"I know that there are a number of doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine (with the US). They were manufactured in the US. They were manufactured at a plant outside of Baltimore but there were problems with this plant. So far the Food and Drug Administration of the US has not certified that these vaccines are available for anyone's use; for export or not," he said. "So I cannot say when that will happen or what will be done exactly as we go forward on this," Smith said when asked whether the US was going to make available the AstraZeneca vaccine doses to India on an urgent basis. He said the US was eager to supply the vaccine doses to the world but not before it is sure that they are safe and effective.



international

My government's priority is to deliver a national recovery from the pandemic that makes the United **Kingdom stronger**, healthier and more prosperous than before ELIZABETH II QUEEN OF UK

ILLEGAL FOR HIGH-RISK PEOPLE TO OWN ARMS

The NZ government will make it illegal for high-risk people to own firearms by introducing Firearms Prohibition Orders that will strengthen action already taken to combat the influence of gangs and organised crimes



uote



access to vaccines remains one of the biggest risks to ending the

pandemic. We cannot defeat this pandemic through competition, we can't. If you compete for resources, or if you compete for geopolitical advantages, then the virus gets advantage

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO



and it's contrary to everything that has made us successful and proud to be Singaporean K SHANMUGAM LAW AND HOME AFFAIRS

MINISTER, SINGAPORE



transformative way; which to be very candid, we did not have previously. Putting mobility at the heart of this relationship is a real change, a real pivot

PRITI PATEL HOME SECRETARY, UK

SHORT TAKES

Prez calls parties to form coalition

Kathmandu: Hours after Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli lost a vote of confidence, President Bidhya Devi Bhandari has called on political parties to form a coalition government within Thursday. "President Bidya Devi Bhandari has called the parties represented in the House of Representatives to present their claim for the purpose of appointing a member of the House of Representatives commanding majority in Parliament as Prime Minister as per Article 76(2) by 9 pm, Thursday," a statement from her office said.

'Give India resources to make vax'

FAUCI SAID THAT THE 'ENDGAME' IN FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC IS VACCINATING EVERYONE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID THAT ALL OF INDIA SHOULD 'SHUT DOWN', AS SOME STATES HAVE DONE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, May 11: Anthony Fauci, the top US expert on Covid-19, has called on countries to provide India with resources to make its own vaccines or donate vaccines.

"India is the largest vaccineproducing country in the world. They've got to get their resources • not only from within but also from without and that's the reason why other countries need to chip in to be able to get either supplies for the Indians to make their own vaccines or to get vaccines donated," he told in a TV interview.

'One of the ways to do that is to have the big companies that have the capability of making vaccines to really scale up in a great way to get literally hundreds of millions

of doses to be able to get to them," he said. He said that the "endgame" in fighting the pandemic is vacci-

nating everyone. At the same time, he said that all

of India should "shut down", as



some states have done.

Vaccines are one of the ways of "breaking the transmission", but others "like shutting down the government" should be undertaken, Fauci said. "I have advised them in the past that you really need to do that. You've got to shut down. I believe several of the Indian states have already done that but you need to break the chain of trans-

India should be to set up field hospitals like China had done.

"They have really got to get hospital beds and do really what the Chinese did way back a year or so ago, where you essentially build up with - the equivalent of field hospitals. You've got to get that. You can't have people out in the street not having a hospital bed," he said. In fact, during the Covid crisis last year, tents were also set up in

New York's Central Park to treat

those who could not find hospital beds and convention centres and sports venues were also made into emergency medical facilities Fauci called the oxygen shortages

in India "really tragic". President Joe Biden has ordered the supply of vaccine manufac-

turing equipment and ingredients to India along with oxygen and devices for making the gas and medications to treat Covid-19. The total Covid-19 aid package for India is expected to run to \$100 million. according to his Spokesperson Jen Psaki.

Biden's administration has also agreed to a request made by India and South Africa to the World Trade Organisation to waive the intellectual property rights. However, it faces opposition from other countries, including Germany and Switzerland, blocking WTO ap-

Fauci dismissed suggestions that dropping the patent rights to allow others to make the vaccines would hamper the manufacture by companies now making them.

We're an independent and sovereign state. We decide our foreign policy. But yes, any country can uphold its position

DR AK ABDUL MOMEN | FOREIGN MINISTER, BANGLADESH

policy. But yes, any country can uphold its position," he told reporters Tuesday

"Naturally, he (Chinese ambassador) represents a country. They can say what they want. Maybe they don't want it (Bangladesh joining the Quad)," Momen said, adding that no one from the Quad has approached Bangladesh yet.

The comment has been preemptive, the United News of Bangladesh (UNB) news agency reported, quoting said the foreign minister as saying.

Initiated in 2007, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Quad for short, is an informal grouping of India, the US, Australia and Japan. "Quad says it is only for economic purposes and security and so on. But that's not true. We know that Quad is aimed at China," the envoy was quoted as saying.

"Japan, together with the US, has stated it very clearly-they are participating in [Quad] because of China," Li said. Li described the Quad as a "narrow-purposed" geopolitical clique, and Bangladesh should not join it as the country will not derive any benefit from the initiative.

"History has proved again and again such partnership surely damages our neighbours' own social, economic development and people's well-being," said Li.

Attorneys urge FB to dron 'Insta for kids'



A woman lights a candle to commemorate all Czech victims of the coronavirus pandemic, at Prague Castle, in Prague, **Czech Republic** REUTERS

ISRAEL RETALIATES WITH RO

mission," he said. Fauci said that a priority for **US fires warning COMMEMORATING CASUALTIES**

shots at Iran boats PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, May 11: A US Coast Guard cutter fired two volleys of warning shots Monday as a group of 13 Iranian fast boats sped toward US Navy vessels in the Persian Gulf's Strait of Hormuz in what the Pentagon called "unsafe and unprofessional" maneuvers by the naval arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

It was the second time in two weeks that a US ship opened fire to warn off vessels of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. The encounters come as the United States and Iran are in indirect talks in Vienna aimed at reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which the United States left in 2018.

Asked whether it appeared the Revolutionary Guard are trying to pick a fight with the US Navy, Pentagon press secretary John Kirby declined to comment on the Iranians' intentions. "Sadly, harassment by the IRGC Navy is not a new phenomenon. It is something that all of our commanding

proval.

Obviously it will not be a good idea for Bangladesh to

China against B'desh joining US-led Quad



LI JIMING AMBASSADOR, CHINA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

bilateral relations.

Dhaka, May 11: China has

warned Bangladesh against join-

ing the US-led Quad alliance, say-

ing that Dhaka's participation in

the anti-Beijing "club" would re-

sult in "substantial damage" to

The unusual warning from

"Obviously it will not be a good

Reacting to the Chinese envoy's

according to those principles.

"We're an independent and sov-

ereign state. We decide our foreign

Pipeline hackers aim cash, not chaos

Washington: The

ransomware gang accused of crippling the leading US fuel pipeline operator said Monday that it never meant to create havoc, an unusual statement that experts saw as a sign the cybercriminals' scheme had gone awry. The FBI accused the group that calls itself DarkSide of a digital extortion attempt that prompted Colonial Pipeline to shut down its network, threatening extraordinary disruption as Colonial works to get America's biggest gasoline pipeline back online by the end of the week.

Slowest population growth in decades

Beijing: China's population has grown at its slowest pace in decades, reaching 1.41 billion, census results showed Tuesday. The growth of 5.4 percent since the last census in 2010 reflects fears of a looming demographic crisis amid an ageing society and slowing birthrates, with a sharp drop in the number of working-age citizens in the world's second biggest economy.

21.5mn jabbed against Covid

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin said that about 21.5 million people in the country have been vaccinated against the coronavirus. "The situation in the country, according to experts, is stable," Xinhua news agency quoted the President as saying in Sochi Monday. "We need to continue actively testing and getting vaccinated," said Putin

officers and the crews of our vessels are trained to for," Kirby said. "This activity is the kind of ac-

tivity that could lead to somebody getting hurt and could lead to a real miscalculation there in the region, and that doesn't serve anybody's interests." In the latest incident, Kirby said Iranian vessels maneuvered at high speed toward six Navy ships that were escorting the guided missile submarine USS Georgia through the Strait Monday. After the Coast Guard cutter Maui unleashed a second volley of warning shots, the Iranian boats backed off, Kirby said.

'They were acting very aggres-

sively," Kirby told reporters at the

Pentagon. He said they got within

150 yards of the US ships, which in-

cluded the guided missile cruiser

USS Monterey. A day earlier, the

Monterey had intercepted an arms

Since sundown Monday, 26 Palestinians including nine children and a woman were killed in Gaza, mostly by airstrikes, Gaza health officials said. The Israeli military said at least 16 of the dead were militants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gaza City, May 11: Israel unleashed new airstrikes on Gaza early Tuesday, hitting a pair of high-rise buildings believed to be housing militants, as Hamas and other armed groups bombarded southern Israel with hundreds of rockets. The conflict escalated relent-

shipment aboard a dhow in the lessly throughout the day, and Israel Arabian Sea apparently headed vowed that its strikes would only for Yemen, whose Houthi rebels increase. The latest exchange of

fire was sparked by weeks of tensions in contested Jerusalem.

Since sundown Monday, 26 Palestinians - including nine children and a woman-were killed in Gaza, mostly by airstrikes, Gaza health officials said. The Israeli military said at least 16 of the dead were militants.

During the same period, Gaza militants fired hundreds of rockets toward Israel, killing two Israeli civilians and wounding 10 others.



But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warning in the evening that more was coming. He said after meeting with senior defense officials that Israel would "increase even more the strength of the strikes and also the rate of the strikes" against Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants in the Gaza Strip.

"Hamas will receive blows now that it didn't expect," he said in a statement

Palestine ups contacts with int'l community

Palestine is intensifying its contacts with the international community in an effort to curb the ongoing violent clashes in East Jerusalem, President Mahmoud Abbas said. The aim of the contacts is to stop the dangerous escalation of violence against Muslim and Christian holy sites in East Jerusalem, Abbas told his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a phone conversation Tuesday. "During this hard time Palestine is passing through, we need to be united to face what is happening in East Jerusalem, end the internal division and form a unity government,' Xinhua news agency quoted the President as saying. For his part, Erdogan reaffirmed Turkey's support for the Palestinians' right to defend East Jerusalem and its holy places from the Israeli assaults.



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Francisco, May 11: A coalition of 44 US attorneys general signed a letter to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg urging Facebook not to launch "Instagram for Kids", citing mental health and privacy concerns.

The "Instagram for Kids" app will allow children under the age of 13 to begin using the popular photosharing app. However, the attorneys general urge Facebook to abandon its plans to launch this new platform.

The letter lists reasons and cites research to show that Facebook should not go forth with its plans to develop and market a kid-friendly version of the Instagram app, reports GSMArena.

Among the reasons listed in the letter are - Facebook's poor history of protecting children's privacy and data on the platform, research showing that social media can be harmful to children on physical and psychological levels, children do not have a fully-developed understanding of privacy and can easily be targeted by anonymous predators.

In the release published by the coalition head Attorney General Maura Healey, she cited Zuckerberg's dismissal of the idea that social media is harmful to children.

The release points out there is \rightarrow much strong evidence and research that contradicts Zuckerberg's denial. Currently, children under 13 are not allowed to have an Instagram account unless it is explicitly written in the profile description that the account is being managed by a parent or guardian.

NASA's 'Osiris-Rex' heads home with asteroid rubble

THE PROBE STILL HAS A VAST DISTANCE TO COVER BEFORE IT LANDS IN THE UTAH DESERT ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

AGENCE-FRANCE-PRESSE

are supported by Iran.

Washington, May 11: The US space probe Osiris-Rex Monday left the orbit of the asteroid Bennu, from which it collected dust samples last year, to begin its long journey back to Earth.

Osiris-Rex is "now moving away over 600 miles an hour from Bennu, on its way home," Dante Lauretta, head of the mission, said on NASA's video broadcast of the event.

The spacecraft's thrusters were engaged without incident for seven minutes to put the probe on the correct trajectory home, a journey of 1.4 billion miles (2.3 billion kiometers).

It is carrying more than 60 grams of dust and fragments from the asteroid, the largest sample col-



lected by NASA since the Moon rocks brought back by the Apollo missions To achieve this goal, the US space

agency launched a high-risk operation in October 2020: the probe came into contact with the asteroid for a few seconds, and a blast of compressed nitrogen was emitted to raise the dust sample which was then captured.

The surprise for NASA was the probe's arm sank several centimeters into the surface of the as-

It is carrying more than 60 grams of dust and fragments from the asteroid, the largest sample collected by NASA since the Moon rocks brought back by the Apollo missions

teroid, showing the scientists that 'the surfaces of these rubble pile asteroids are very loosely consolidated," said Lauretta.

The whole mission almost came to naught when NASA realized a few days later that the valve of the collection compartment was failing to close, letting fragments

escape into space.

But the precious cargo was finally secured after being transferred to a capsule fixed in the spacecraft's center. In two and a half years, that capsule will be released a few hours before entry into the Earth's atmosphere, and will be slowed down by a parachute system for its landing.

The samples will then be transported to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, but 75 percent will be kept intact to be studied by future generations, who will have advanced technologies that have not yet been created, the agency said. The analysis should help scien-

tists better understand the formation of the solar system and the development of Earth as a habitable planet.









business



India is both a business hub and a technology hub. From a people perspective, our India associates are a critical part of the company PAUL CORMIER RED HAT PRESIDENT AND CEO

TWITTER DONATES \$15 MILLION FOR COVID-19 RELIEF IN INDIA

Microblogging giant Twitter has donated \$15 million to help address the Covid-19 crisis in India which is battling the unprecedented second wave of the deadly pandemic



uote

Govt ready for another cut in import duty on steel India Inc's overseas

of chips will probably continue for a few years. Even if chip factories are built all over the world it takes time

The shortage

MICHAEL DELL DELL TECHNOLOGIES CEO

Very concerned about why vaccines are in such short supply. Can we please know where the 70 million doses are being deployed every month?

KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW BIOCON EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN

The economic consequences of local lockdowns may not be as destructive as those of a national lockdown. But in some respects, things are worse this time for the working class JEAN DREZE ECONOMIST

SHORT TAKES

SBI General Insurance fined ₹30L

Chennai: Cutting down the penalty recommended by its Adjudicative Officer by ₹70 lakh. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has penalised SBI General Insurance Company Ltd ₹30 lakh for repeatedly violating Insurance Act and the regulations. The charge against SBI General Insurance Company was that it had repeatedly failed to comply with Section 32D of the Insurance Act and the IRDAI Regulations, 2015 that mandates underwriting of minimum motor third party insurance business.

Flipkart to ramp grocery ops

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Bangalore: Domestic ecommerce marketplace Flipkart Tuesday announced strengthening of its grocery supply chain infrastructure to provide its customers safe and seamless access to ordering daily essentials through quick and contactless doorstep delivery. As part of the plan, Flipkart will add over 8 lakh square feet of space through five new fulfilment centers over the next three months. With this additional infrastructure, the marketplace will bring the ease of online grocery shopping to more users across Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Coimbatore, and Hyderabad.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 11: The government has proposed to slash import duties on steel items further bringing it to zero or near zero levels to provide relief to MSMEs, which have been hit hard by the high cost of raw materials amidst the raging pandemic.

Top government sources said that a decision had been taken to review duties on steel products and reduce it or withdraw it completely on few items to help the user industry hit hard by rising price of the metal in the domestic market.

Also, lower import duties would help maintain supply lines that have been affected with several domestic steel companies reducing steel production to divert medical grade oxygen for Covid-19 relief measures. In budget 2021-22, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had

revoked the anti-dumping duty (ADD) and countervailing duty (CVD) on certain steel products while reducing customs duty uniformly to 7.5 per cent on semis, flat, and long products of non-alloy, alloy, and stainless steels from 10-12.5 per cent levels earlier. She also brought down import duty to nil on steel scrap to support user industries hit hard by sharp rise in steel prices.

These duties may now be withdrawn or slashed further. "Steel prices continue to remain



firm and have also risen further in recent months. It is making operation of several user industries difficult especially in a market disrupted by the pandemic. Cut in import duty will help tame steel prices as the global prices of steel in certain markets are still lower than domestic prices. The measure will also help supply lines of steel if there is any shortage in domestic steel production due to use of another input oxygen by steel makers for Covid relief," said the official source quoted earlier.

It is expected that duty cuts in steel will be announced shortly by the DGFT after getting formal nod from the Finance Ministry. A call has to be taken whether to bring down duty levels largely at 7.5 per cent to 2.5 per cent or withdraw it completely for the time being.

Domestic hot-rolled coil (HRC) prices rallied to a multi-year high of ₹56,000 per tonne in February from ₹39.200 per tonne in March 2020 as demand improved amid ironore supply constraints and high global prices. This has further improved to over ₹58,000 in April, a jump of over 50 per cent in last 13 months.

With demand for steel remaining firm and China cutting export incentives to steel makers to support domestic needs, Indian steel prices are expected to move up further. The cut in duty is expected to tame prices in the domestic market while providing competition to domestic steelmakers from traders who secure cheaper metal from abroad.

Steel producers asking anonymity said that the move to cut

TAMING PRICES

decision had been taken to review Adduties on steel products and reduce it or withdraw it completely on few items to help the user industry hit hard by rising price of the metal in the domestic market

Iso, lower import duties would help Amaintain supply lines that have been affected with several domestic steel companies reducing steel production to divert medical grade oxygen for Covid-19 relief measures

import duty would be detrimental to the interest of domestic steelmakers as it could flood the market with cheap and substandard steel being dumped into the country. They said that the steel market is giving indications that domestic steel sector may turn profitable after a long interval. But duty cuts could change the cycle again.

In the current scenario of a moderation in demand in India due to the second wave of Covid-19 and consequent business lockdowns, Indian steel mills would be able to offload large steel volumes to export markets and still remain highly profitable, according to a recent report from ICRA.

But a cut in duty would squeeze margins and bring a lot of export destined products back into the domestic market.

borrowing now \$9.23bn

The sudden spike in March 2021 can largely be attributed to Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) which raised \$4.92 billion

Chennai, May 11: External com-

mercial borrowings (ECBs) of

Indian corporates have hit a two-

year high of \$9.23 billion in March

2021. Prior to this, the overseas

borrowing of India Inc touched a

monthly high of \$12.18 billion in

The spike in overseas borrowing

comes after months of lacklustre

demand for external debt due to sur-

plus liquidity in the domestic mar-

ket, muted credit demand and ab-

sence of major expansion plans

by Indian corporates since the

After hitting an historic high of

\$52 billion in FY20, overseas bor-

rowing of India Inc fell sharply

since the beginning of FY21.

Overseas debt of Indian compa-

nies fell to \$3.51 billion in the first

quarter of FY21 after recording a

high of \$19 billion in the previous

onset of the pandemic.

AGENCIES

March 2019.



quarter. However, with multiple phases of unlocking and rebound in economic activity, the external fund-raising picked up momentum to reach \$9 billion in the second quarter, \$7 billion in third and \$16 billion in the last quarter of the previous fiscal.

'The lower borrowings from the overseas markets in the current financial year can in large part be attributed to the pandemic-led economic and business disruptions that have made corporates reluctant to borrow and add to their liabilities amid uncertainties about the future business and economic conditions,' CARE Ratings said in its Debt Market Review for February 2021.

Sudden spike

The sudden spike in ECBs in March 2021 can largely be attributed to Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) which alone raised \$4.92 billion under RBI's approval route for the purpose of 'Infrastructure development'.

Inflow in equity mutual funds drop to ₹3,437cr in Apr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 11: Equity mutual funds witnessed a net inflow of ₹3,437 crore in April, making it the second consecutive monthly infusion.

However, this was much lower than an inflow of ₹9,115 crore seen in March, data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India showed Tuesday. Prior to this, equity schemes had consistently witnessed outflow for eight straight months from July 2020 to February 2021.

Apart from equities, investors infused over ₹1 lakh crore in debt mutual funds last month after withdrawing ₹52,528 crore in March.

Overall, the mutual fund industry witnessed an inflow of ₹92,906 crore across all segments during the period under review, compared to an outflow of ₹29.745

crore in March.

COVID EFFECT Indian oil refiners cut output, imports Indian Oil Corp has reduced runs to an average of

between 85% and 88% of processing capacity

REUTERS

Mumbai, May 11: India's top state oil refiners are reducing processing runs and crude imports as the surging Covid-19 pandemic has cut fuel consumption, leading to higher product stockpiles at the plants, company officials told Reuters Tuesday.

Indian Oil Corp, the country's biggest refiner, has reduced runs to an average of between 85% and 88% of processing capacity, a company official said, adding runs could be cut further as its plants at Guiarat, Mathura and Panipat are facing problems storing bitumen and sulphur. IOC's refineries were operating at about 95% of their capacity in late April. "We do not anticipate that our crude processing would be reduced to last year's level of 65%-70% as inter-state vehicle movement is still there ... (the) economy is functioning," he said. Several states across India are under lockdown as the coronavirus crisis showed scant sign of easing Tuesday, with a seven-day average of new cases at a record high, although the government of India, the world's third largest oil importer and consumer, has not implemented a full lockdown. State-run Bharat Petroleum Corp has cut its crude imports by 1 million barrels in May and will reduce purchases by 2 million barrels in June, a company official said.



MK Surana, chairman of Hindustan Petroleum Corp (HPCL.NS), expects India's fuel

Foxconn iPhone India output drops 50%

REUTERS

Taipei, May 11: Production of the Apple iPhone 12 at a Foxconn factory in India has slumped by more than 50% because workers infected with Covid-19 have had to leave their posts, two sources said. The Foxconn facility in the south-

ern state of Tamil Nadu produces iPhones specifically for India, the world's No.2 smartphone market.

Tamil Nadu is one of the worst hit states in the second coronavirus wave engulfing India. Officials imposed a full lockdown in the state from Monday, closing public transport and shuttering shops, to try slow surging infections.

More than 100 Foxconn employees in the state have tested positive for Covid-19 and the com-

TOP LOSERS

Production of the Apple iPhone 12 at a Foxconn factory in India has slumped because workers infected with Covid-19

pany has enforced a no-entry ban at its factory in the capital of Chennai until late May, one of the sources said. "Employees are only allowed to leave but not to enter the facility since yesterday," the person said. "Only a small part of output is being kept.

More than 50% of the plant's capacity had been cut, both sources said, declining to be named as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

They did not specify the plant's capacity and it was unclear how many workers were at the facility, which provides dormitory accommodation for employees.

Taipei-based Foxconn, the world's largest contract electronics maker and a major supplier to Apple, said a small number of employees at one of its facilities in India tested pos-

itive for Covid-19 and the company was providing them with support, including medical assistance. "Foxconn places the health and safety of our employees as our highest priority and that is why we have been working closely with local government and public health authorities in India to address the

challenges that we and all compa-

nies are facing in dealing with the

Covid-19 crisis," it said in a statement.

Bay Tree sells 2 pc stake in Yes Bank

New Delhi: Anchor investor Bay Tree India Holdings I LLC has sold over 2 per cent stake in Yes Bank through open market transactions. According to a regulatory filing, Bay Tree India Holdings I LLC, which held 7.48 per cent stake in Yes Bank earlier, sold 52.15 crore shares representing 2.08 per cent of equity stake in multiple tranches between January 6 and May 6, 2021. Post the sale, stake of Bay Tree India Holdings I LLC in Yes Bank stands at 5.40 per cent.

consumption in May to fall by 5% from April as the impact on driving and industrial production is not as severe as last year.

"This time it is not a full lockdown like last time," he said. "Sales in April were about 90% of March and we are expecting May could be about 5% lower than April."

HPCL has no immediate plan to cut crude runs, he said, although the company has shut some units at its 150,000 bpd Mumbai refinery for maintenance and upgrade. State-run Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd's is already operating its 300,000 bpd complex at lower rates because of maintenance at a 60,000 bpd crude unit and some secondary units, a

company official said. The crude and other units will start operations from the end of this month, we will decide on the future course after seeing local demand." he said.

MAY 49,161.81 1755.85 Kotak Mahi -3.00% 2463.05 -2.68% HDFC 976.25 Tech Mahi -1.53% 5426.55 Bajaj Finance -1.28% 1435.95 Titan -1.27% 11196.40 Bajaj Finserv -1.25%



MOODY'S SLASHES INDIA **GROWTH FORECAST TO 9.3%**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 11: Moody's Investors Service Tuesday slashed India's growth forecast for the current financial year to 9.3 per cent, from the 13.7 per cent projected earlier, on account of the negative impact of the second wave of Covid-19. India is experiencing a severe second wave of coronavirus infections which will slow the nearterm economic recovery and could weigh on longer-term growth dynamics, it said. "As of now, we expect the nega-

tive impact on economic output to be limited to the April-June quarter, followed by a strong rebound in the second half of the year."

"As a result of the negative impact of the second wave, we have

revised our real, inflation-adjusted GDP growth forecast down to 9.3 per cent from 13.7 per cent for fiscal 2021 and to 7.9 per cent from 6.2 per cent in fiscal 2022. Over the longer term, we expect growth of around 6 per cent thereafter," Moody's said. On the fiscal front, Moody's expects the renewed surge in the

virus to contribute to a marginal shortfall in revenue and a redirection of spending toward healthcare and virus response relative to what the government budgeted in February.

"As a result, we now expect a wider general government fiscal deficit of about 11.8 per cent of GDP in fiscal 2021, compared with our previous forecast of 10.8 per cent and an estimated 14 per cent in fiscal 2020," it added.

uity and equity-linked open ended schemes was at ₹3.437.37 crore in April. Barring multi cap, dividend yield, value fund and thematic fund categories, all the equity schemes have seen inflow last month.

As per the data, inflow from eq-

Overall, equity schemes had witnessed an outflow of ₹9,253 crore in January, ₹10,147 crore in December, ₹12,917 crore in November, ₹2,725 crore in October, ₹734 crore in September, ₹4,000 crore in August and ₹2.480 crore in July, which was their first withdrawal in over four years.

Prior to this, such schemes had attracted ₹240.55 crore in June.

Further: gold exchange traded funds (ETFs) witnessed net inflow of ₹680 crore last month, compared to ₹662 crore in March. The asset under management (AUM) of the mutual fund industry rose to ₹32.38 lakh crore in April-end from ₹31.43 lakh crore.

Law requires dumping e-bikes, IT equipment: UN-backed Report

THE REPORT FOLLOWS THE 2020 EU ACTION PLAN TO MAKE EUROPE LESS DEPENDENT ON THIRD COUNTRIES FOR CRMs

AGENCIES

FB begins testing **Clubhouse rival**

California: Facebook Inc is starting the first test of its Live Audio Rooms product with public figures and creators in Taiwan, part of an expansion of the company's audio services that will over time include podcast hosting and creation tools. The social media giant announced a sweeping set of updates to its audio services in April, with Live Audio Rooms being the Clubhouse-like centerpiece.

New Delhi, May 11: End-of-life circuit boards, certain magnets in disc drives and electric vehicles and other special battery types, also fluorescent lamps are among several electrical and electronic products containing critical raw materials (CRMs), the recycling of which should be made mandatory by law, says a new UN-backed re-

port funded by the EU. A mandatory, legal requirement to recycle and reuse CRMs in select e-waste categories is needed to safeguard from supply disruptions elements essential to manufacturers of important electrical and electronic and other products, says a European consortium behind

The CEWASTE consortium warns that access to the CRMs in these products is vulnerable to geo-political tides. Recycling and reusing them is "crucial" to secure ongoing supplies for regional manufacturing of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) essential for defence, renewable energy generation. LEDs and other green technologies, and to the competitiveness of European firms. Today, recycling most of the

products rich in CRMs is not commercially viable, with low and volatile CRM prices undermining efforts to improve European CRM recycling rates, which today are close to zero in most cases.

The report identifies gaps in standards and proposes an improved, fully tested certification scheme to collect, transport, process



and recycle this waste, including tools to audit compliance.

"A European Union legal framework and certification scheme, coupled with broad financial measures will foster the investments needed to make recycling critical raw materials more commercially viable and Europe less reliant on outside supply sources," says the consortium.

"Acceptance by the manufacturing and recycling industry is also needed, as the standards will

only work when there is widespread adoption.'

The report follows the 2020 EU action plan to make Europe less dependent on third countries for CRMs by, for example, diversifying supply from both primary and secondary sources while improving resource efficiency and circularity. The consortium adds: "By adopting this report's recommendations, the EU can be more selfsustaining, help drive the world's green agenda and create new business opportunities at home."

The project says the equipment categories that contain CRMs in concentrations high enough to facilitate recycling include printed circuit boards from IT equipment, hard disc drives and optical disc

drives Batteries from WEEE and end-

of-life vehicles, neodymium iron boron magnets from hard disc drives, and electrical engines of ebikes, fluorescent powders from cathode ray tubes (CRTs; in TVs and monitors) and fluorescent lamps and recovery technologies and processes are well established for some CRMs, such as palladium from printed circuit boards or cobalt from lithium-ion batteries.

For other CRMs, ongoing recycling technology development will soon make industrial scale operations possible but needs financial support and sufficient volumes to achieve cost-efficient operations.

Of 60 plus requirements in European e-waste-related legislation and standards, few address the collection of CRMs inthe key product categories, the consortium found.



the report, led by the Switzerland-

based World Resources Forum.

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sports

Arsenal test awaits Blues Indian shooting team leave for Croatia tour



Chelsea look to keep their momentum going when they host Arteta's men at Stamford Bridge

AGENCIES

London, May 11: Seeking to avenge their defeat to the Arsenal earlier this season in the Premier League, Chelsea will welcome the Gunners to Stamford Bridge for Wednesday's Premier League London derby.

Thomas Tuchel's hosts are all but assured of a top four place following a 2-1 victory over championselect Manchester City - the dress rehearsal of the Champions League final-last time out, while Arsenal kept their fleeting European hopes alive by beating West Bromwich Albion 3-1.

The Blues are third in the table before Wednesday's game - although they could drop to fourth before kickoff – while the midtable Gunners are languishing in ninth before the short trip across the capital.

In what may have been a sign of things to come in the highly-anticipated European showpiece event summit clash. Chelsea's astonishing away record saw them over the line against soon-to-be champions Man City, who are still being kept waiting for the Premier League crown.

The Champions League crown is of course the ultimate prize for Chelsea and the charismatic Tuchel, who also has an FA Cup final showdown with Leicester City May 15 to take into account, but the Blues' top four standing is all but wrapped up and a derby win would cement their position among the big boys.

Chelsea welcome Arsenal to Stamford Bridge on a seven-game unbeaten run across all competitions during which time they have shipped a mere two goals - and Tuchel's side have found the back of the net twice in successive triumphs over Fulham, Real Madrid and Man City over the past few weeks.

The unforeseen 5-2 thrashing at the hands of now-relegated West Bromwich Albion has been the only blot on Tuchel's Chelsea notebook so far, with the former PSG boss overseeing 10 wins and five draws from his other Premier

League matches in charge. Notwithstanding their humiliation at the hands of the Baggies, Tuchel's staunch defense have navigated 630 minutes of top-flight football at Stamford Bridge without conceding a goal, and they currently occupy third spot in the

Mikel Arteta, Arsenal manager

table before kickoff, but Leicester have the chance to temporarily leapfrog them when they face Man United Tuesday night. Furthermore, the Blues certainly

seem to have a penchant for success against their capital rivals, as they have claimed 22 points from 27 on

offer in London derbies this season, and the chances of them making it 25 from 30 seem pretty high against the Gunners and their wholly inconsistent nature.

Barring an end-of-season miracle, Arsenal's 25-year spell on the continental stage will come to a bitter end in the 2021-22 campaign, and it is not just the much-maligned owners KSE who are coming under increasing scrutiny in North London

Gunners fans once again protested against the Americanled regime before Sunday's Premier League battle with West Brom, but the pressure continues to pile on rookie coach Mikel Arteta, who is already planning for a major summer overhaul after a dismal season.

The Europa League represented the Gunners' best opportunity to keep their remarkable European run going, but Unai Emery returned to the Emirates to conquer the team who relieved him of his duties as Villarreal easily nullified Arsenal's toothless attack to dump them out 2-1 on aggregate.

A seventh-placed finish in the Premier League is surely out of Arsenal's reach too, but they at least head to Chelsea on the back of a much-needed Premier League win, as a 3-1 triumph over West Bromwich Albion handed Sam Allardyce his first-ever Premier

League relegation.

A spot in mid-table is unacceptable for a club of Arsenal's stature, though, with 13 Premier League defeats representing an alarming downturn since the glory days of Arsene Wenger, and they remain three points behind eighthplaced Everton having played a game more.

It is not entirely doom and gloom for Arsenal, though, as they travel to West London on a five-game unbeaten run in the Premier League away from home-scoring at least twice in four of those matches-and they now have a chance to win three in a row with three clean sheets on the road for the first time since May 2013.

The Gunners also have an unbeaten Stamford Bridge record to maintain, as they have managed to hold Chelsea to four consecutive draws in West London during midweek fixtures, and they are yet to lose to the Blues on a Tuesday or Wednesday night in the Premier League

While all the signs may point towards a Chelsea triumph in this game, Arteta's Arsenal have proven capable of springing a surprise against the Blues, who will have a chance to rectify their defeat to Arsenal in the FA Cup final last year both Wednesday and in this year's showpiece event against Leicester City a few days later

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 11: The Olympicbound Indian shooting team Tuesday left for Croatia for a two and a half months training-cumcompetition tour, its final tune-up to the upcoming Tokyo Games.

With coaches and support staff in tow, a 13-member Indian shooting team took off for Croatian capital Zagreb, where it will undergo a training camp before leaving for Osijek to take part in the European Championships (May 20 to June 6) followed by the combined ISSF World Cup (June 22 to July 3).

"Team India takes off in 20 mins. Bon Voyage, Get the nose to the ground and work hard for your inevitable success team," Raninder Singh, president of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) tweeted just before the team's departure.

The two Olympics bound skeet shooters Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Mairaj Ahmad Khan will be based in Italy. The Indians, including Gurjoat Singh Khangura, took part in the ongoing shotgun World Cup in Lonato, where they could not make the final of the men's skeet event Monday.

The team left in a chartered flight arranged by the NRAI. After the stint in Croatia, the team will directly leave for Tokyo to participate in the Olympics, beginning July 23.

The ISSF World Cup in Osijek is being organised in place of the one earlier scheduled in Baku.

Azerbaijan (from June 21 to July 2), which got cancelled due to a surge in COVID-19 cases in that

country. There will be nine coaches for the 13 rifle and pistol shooters but some coaches like Samaresh Jung, Jaspal Rana and Ronak Pandit could not travel with the team for various reasons.

Foreign rifle coach Oleg Mikhailov was also a part of the travelling contingent but longtime pistol coach Pavel Smirnov could not leave Tuesday as he did not get his visa. He is likely to join the team next week.

As per the standard COVID-19 protocols in Croatia, the Indian contingent will serve a mandatory quarantine before starting the training.

World Cup gold medallist Sanjeev Rajput and 10m air pistol shooter Elavenil Valarivan, also issued predeparture tweets from their respective handles, both hoping to lift the spirit of the coronavirus-ravaged nation with their achievements in the sporting arena.

"Long tour ahead, wish us luck. Hope we are able to win medals and raise spirits of the nation,' Elavenil wrote. Alongside a few pictures of the shooters, two-time Olympian Rajput tweeted, "Off to Croatia for our preparation leading up to Tokyo2020. Hopefully the next time we enter India is with a handful of Olympic Medals. Thank you for the support as always. Do keep blessing us with your wishes! Jai Hind."



Sanieev Raiput (L) and Elavenil Valarivan

for re-scheduled IPL: ECB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 11: England have a busy international schedule from June onwards and the players are unlikely to be available for the remainder of the suspended IPL if the T20 tournament is rescheduled this year, says ECB Director of Cricket Ashley Giles.

The IPL was suspended last week after multiple COVID-19 cases inside its bio-bubble. There are two windows for the T20 event to be resumed this year - one is in the second half of September and before the T20 World Cup (October-November) and the other is after mid-November.

But England's top players will be in action at both times. They have tours to Bangladesh and Pakistan in September and October, while they will compete with Australia

at the Ashes right after the T20 World Cup.

'We're planning on involvement of England players in England matches. We've got a full FTP schedule. So if those tours to Pakistan and Bangladesh are going ahead, I'd expect the players to be there," Giles said as quoted by

'ESPNcricinfo'. There were 11 Englishman in various franchises in the suspended IPL. "None of us knows what a rearranged IPL looks like at the moment, where it's going to be or when. But from when we start this summer against New Zealand, our programme is incredibly busy,"

Giles said. 'We've got a lot of important, high-profile cricket including the T20 World Cup and the Ashes. And we're going to have to look after our players.'

Bangalore, May 11: The Indian men's hockey team defender Amit Rohidas feels that the use of video analysis during preparations has played a big role in the side's recent success during tours of Europe and Argentina.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

He said video analysis has also been a useful tool to correct players' flaws in the national camp here, "Video analysis helped us on both the tours. We analysed our opponent's style of play, their movement in the attack as well as in defence, and we adapted to the situations accordingly," he said. "We didn't have much on-field ex-

perience, but I can say we did our homework pretty well through the video analysis and it benefited us," said Rohidas, who has played 97 matches for the national side. Rohidas is currently training with the men's senior core group



at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Centre here. "At the camp also, with the help of video analysis, we are working on the areas where our team need correcting or March. India had outclassed Germany 6-1 before playing out a 1-1 draw. In the two games against Great Britain, India were held to a 1-1 draw before they ended the tour with a 3-2 victory.

During the Argentina tour in April, India won two of the practice games and won both the FIH Pro League encounters against the reigning Olympic champions. "I feel we have gained good momentum and would like to continue what we have been doing at the camp."

Talking about the experience of playing international hockey after a one-year break, the Sundargarhborn player said, "I went with the mindset that I don't have to do anything extraordinary. I just have to repeat all the things which we have done during training sessions."

"As a team also, we took one game at a time, we were not bothered about win or lose. We took it as an opportunity to prepare for the Olympics."

past eight years," an official said.

As far as Hardik is concerned,

his reputation as a white-ball match-

winner can't be discounted either.

Pandya was included in the four-

Test series at home against England

so that his bowling workload is in-

creased keeping the England tour in

mind but it is learnt that the Baroda

man is unlikely to bowl more than

an odd over or two in the shortest

to cure stress fracture, is not the

same bowler anymore. He was a fast

medium bowler before injury but

to bowl at a brisk 135 kmph plus

pace consistently, it could impact

his back. So he is focussing more

on his match finishing skills," a per-

son in the know of things said.

"Hardik, after his back surgery

format or ODI in near future.

GET 1ST DOSE OF COVID VACCINE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 11: India's star pacer Jasprit Bumrah and women's national team opener Smriti Mandhana Tuesday said they received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Joining the duo was veteran wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Karthik. All three cricketers posted pictures of themselves on their respective social media accounts while urging everyone to get inoculated.

"Vaccinated. Please stay safe everyone," Bumrah tweeted. Mandhana, who last featured in the home series against South Africa in March, posted a picture on her Instagram captioning it: "Please stay safe and get yourself #Vaccinated."

Bumrah is expected to lead the Indian pace attack in the upcoming World Test Championship final against New Zealand and the subsequent away series in England.

Senior India opener Shikhar Dhawan had received his first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, May 6. Then several of his teammates, including skipper Virat Kohli, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma, had got their first jab in various vaccination centres across the country.

Head coach Ravi Shastri was the first from the Indian cricket team to receive the vaccine. He got his first jab in the first week of March, when vaccination was made open for all senior citizens.

In order to ramp up the coronavirus vaccination drive in the ২ country, the Centre had last month announced a 'liberalised and accelerated' Phase 3 strategy of COVID-19 vaccination from May 1.

As per the order, everyone above the age of 18 is eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Hardik, Dhawan vie for India captaincy



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 11: Veteran opener Shikhar Dhawan and flamboyant all-rounder-turned specialist batsman Hardik Pandya will be locked in a two-way fight for India captaincy if Shreyas Iyer doesn't get fit in time for the whiteball tour of Sri Lanka in July.

India's limited overs specialists will be playing three T20Is and as many ODIs in the island nation during the second half of July, when big guns like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will be in England for a marquee five-match Test series.

"It is still not clear if Shreyas will recover fully and will be match-fit in time for tour of Sri Lanka. Normally, a surgery of this scale

along with rest, extensive rehab and training to get back in shape takes around four months," a senior BCCI source privy to selection matters told this agency on conditions of anonymity. "In case Shreyas was available, he would have been the automatic choice for captaincy." It's only logical that the two con-

need to improve. So, yeah it's one

of the major assets for us to cover

The team had remained un-

beaten in the tour of Europe in

our bases for the Olympics.'

tenders for captaincy are 35-yearold Dhawan, who has had good 'one and half IPLs' in last two seasons and Pandya junior, who is one of the most accomplished match-winners.

"Shikhar has had two very good IPL including this curtailed one and being the senior most among those who are available for selection, he is a very strong contender. Also he has been a solid performer for India for

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