

SPECIAL EFFORT
Actor Tisca Chopra has been doing her bit to help transgenders and widows during this pandemic **LEISURE P2**

UK GOVT CRITICIZED
The UK govt came under strong criticism Sunday for not adding India to the "red list" travel ban **INTERNATIONAL P10**

AIMING HIGH
Star shuttler PV Sindhu is preparing in earnest for the Tokyo Olympics with match-like situations **SPORTS P12**

Centre had forgotten rural India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: All the while the focus of Covid management was on the urban centres of the country, but Sunday the Centre seemed to have awakened from its deep slumber and announced an SOP for the peri-urban and rural India where the disease is spreading like wildfire.

Having realised its blunder, the Centre Sunday issued fresh guidelines for containment of the coronavirus, advising that peri-urban and rural areas plan a minimum 30-bed Covid Care Centre for asymptomatic cases with comorbidities or mild cases where home isolation is not feasible.

The guidelines said that provision of Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits should be made at all public health facilities including sub-centres or health and wellness centres and Primary Health Centres.

Noting for the first time that besides urban areas reporting a large number of cases, a gradual ingress is now being seen in peri-urban, rural and tribal areas as well, the Union Health Ministry released the 'SOP on Covid-19 Containment and Management in Peri-urban, Rural & Tribal areas' to enable communities strengthen primary level healthcare infrastructure at all levels to intensify Covid-19 response.

The Centre, which has been oblivious of the plights of the rural populace confronting Covid-19, released the 'SOP on Covid-19 Containment and Management in Peri-urban, Rural & Tribal areas'.

It said Covid Care Centres can admit a suspect or confirmed case but should have separate areas for suspected and confirmed cases with preferably separate entry and exit for each.

Symptomatic cases can be triaged at village level by tele-consultation with Community Health Officer, and cases with comorbidity or low oxygen saturation should be sent to higher centres.

It said Covid Care Centres (CCC) can admit a suspect or confirmed case but should have separate areas for suspected and confirmed cases with preferably separate entry and exit for each.

"Suspect and confirmed cases should not be allowed to mix under any circumstances," the SOP said.

According to the SOP, in every village, active surveillance should be done for influenza-like illness/ severe acute respiratory infections (ILI/SARI) periodically by ASHA



with help of Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC). Symptomatic cases can be triaged at village level by tele-consultation with Community Health Officer (CHO), and cases with comorbidity or low oxygen saturation should be sent to higher centres.

Identified suspected Covid cases should link for testing to health facilities either through Covid-19 rapid antigen testing or by referral of samples to nearest Covid-19 testing laboratory, in accordance with ICMR guidelines.

CHOs and ANMs should be trained in performing Rapid Antigen Testing. Provision of RAT kits should be made at all public health facilities including Sub-centres, Health and Wellness Centres and Primary Health Centres, the document said.

Depending upon the intensity of surge and number of cases, as far as feasible, contact tracing should be done as per Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme's (IDSP's) guidelines, it stated.

3.11L fresh Covid cases, 4,077 deaths

NEW DELHI: With 3.11 lakh fresh coronavirus infections, India saw the lowest rise in daily Covid-19 cases after a gap of 25 days, while the death toll rose to 2,70,284 with 4,077 new fatalities, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Sunday. A total of 3,11,170 new cases were reported in a span of 24 hours April 21. The active cases have reduced to 36,18,458 comprising 14.66 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 84.25 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

"Nearly 80-85 per cent Covid-19 cases are asymptomatic/ mildly symptomatic. These patients do not require hospitalisation and may be managed at home or in Covid care isolation facilities," the SOP stated.

As monitoring of oxygen saturation is important for monitoring of Covid patients, it is desirable for each village to have adequate number of pulse oximeters and thermometers.

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Fuel prices soar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: Petrol price Sunday was increased by 24 paise per litre and diesel by 27 paise, pushing rates across the country to record highs and that of petrol in Mumbai to near ₹99 a litre.

The increase led to rates in Delhi climbing to ₹92.53 per litre and diesel to ₹83.22, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. Rates had already crossed ₹100-mark in several cities in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra and with the latest increase, price in Mumbai too was inching towards that level. A litre of petrol in Mumbai now comes for ₹98.88 and diesel is priced at ₹90.40 per litre. Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added tax (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

This is the ninth increase in prices since May 4 when the state-owned oil firms ended an 18-hiatus in rate revision they observed during Assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

CITY FUEL PRICES

	₹	Change
PETROL	₹93.34	(+0.24)
DIESEL	₹90.72	(+0.29)



Capital Hospital yet to support Covid patients

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: The much sought after government hospital in Bhubaneswar – the Capital Hospital is yet to offer broad facilities to Covid patients who reach out to the healthcare centre for treatment.

The recent death of a newly-wed woman, a suspected Covid patient who was allegedly turned away by the hospital on the pretext of lack of beds, has raised many eyebrows. A visit to the biggest state-run hospital revealed that the facility has failed in meeting the needs of patients flocking there during the pandemic.

The hospital currently has only eight beds dedicated to Covid patients and mainly refers the patients to other Covid hospitals.

The hospital administration, however, asserted that it would initiate strong actions against the staff if it was found that they turned away any patient. Dr Laxmidhar Sahoo, Director of Capital Hospital, told Orissa POST, "I am not aware of any patient being turned away. Any such complaint will be dealt with strongly."

When asked about the facilities offered by the hospital to the Covid



patients approaching them, Dr Sahoo said, "For immediate help, people may rush to our hospital before being referred to any Covid-19 hospital. We can provide a few hours of emergency resuscitation. Capital Hospital is not a Covid hospital."

According to sources, all the temporary eight isolation beds in the hospital are equipped with bedside oxygen supply to revive patients in emergency situations but they are referred to other hospitals for better treatment. The latest incidence has, however, raised serious questions about the apathy of the hospital towards considering treatment and admission of Covid patients.

Several patients who have approached the state-run hospital have cited gross apathy on part of the hospital and accused the administration of referring Covid patients to SCB Medical College and other government-run hospitals for treatment.

CYCLONE TAUKTAE Western states brace for very severe cyclonic storm

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 16: Cyclone Tauktae has intensified into a very severe cyclonic storm Sunday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The weather office also warned that Tauktae is "very likely to intensify further" during the next 12 hours and may cross Gujarat coast between Porbandar and Mahuva in Bhavnagar district Tuesday morning.

Though the cyclonic storm is heading towards the coast of Gujarat, it is causing continuous downpour and gusty winds in Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra.

An orange alert has been sounded in three districts of Kerala – Malappuram, Ernakulam and Idukki and a yellow alert in all other districts. IMD has said that the state will receive isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall even as Tauktae moves further north in the Arabian Sea. It has also warned of rough seas and thunderstorms in the state in coming hours and urged the public to exercise caution. The Kerala State Disaster



Management Authority has instructed fisherfolk not to venture into sea till further notice. IMD has also informed that the effects of Tauktae will be felt in Kerala for next 24 hours.

Torrential rains along with fierce winds and high tidal waves wreaked havoc in the state for the past few days. All districts experienced very heavy rainfall. Many low-lying areas and roads were inundated. Several houses were partially or

Srimandir to remain shut for devotees till June 15

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, May 16: Srimandir, the abode of Lord Jagannath, would remain out of bounds for devotees till June 15, temple sources said Sunday.

The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) and the Puri district administration have decided to shut the 12th century shrine for devotees till June 15 by taking into account the Covid-19 pandemic situation in the Holy City.

Earlier, the temple authorities had suspended public darshan till May 15 in view of the second wave of Covid-19.

"The SJTA has decided to extend the temple closure by a month after holding a review meeting today. SJTA chief administrator Krishan Kumar, Puri Collector Samarth Verma and other senior officials were present in the review meeting," Srimandir sources said.



The SJTA chief, meanwhile, said that servitors will perform the rituals as per schedule. "There will be no disruption in the performance of any routine or special ritual at Srimandir. The Chandan Yatra and the chariot construction work will go on as per plan," he added.

Many servitors have welcomed the SJTA's decision to extend the temple closure by a month. "The Covid-19 situation is worsening in Puri district. We welcome the SJTA's decision to suspend the public darshan till June 15. The safety of servitors is vital for timely performance of rituals at Srimandir," said senior Daitapati servitor Binayak Das Mahapatra.

Toddler sold for ₹50K

BHUBANESWAR: The Commissionerate Police Sunday arrested a man from Nayagarh district for allegedly adopting a one-year-old boy illegally in exchange of money. Based on a complaint filed by the minor's mother at Nayapalli police station in Bhubaneswar. Police arrested Srinibas Jena from Nayagarh for buying the child.

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	37.4°C	36.2°C
TEMP. MIN	27.4°C	26.5°C
Humidity	62%	67%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Light rain likely

COVID STRIKES BACK

India's 'once-in-a-century' Budget runs into trouble

FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN HAD SAID INDIA WOULD NOT SEE SUCH A BUDGET IN "100 YEARS"

REUTERS

New Delhi, May 16: India's annual Budget in February was lauded by many and raised hopes it would drive a sharp economic revival, but there are now fears that its promise may fall flat as it did not account for a crippling second wave of Covid-19 infections.

The Budget aimed to revive Asia's third-largest economy via investing in infrastructure and health-care, while relying on an aggressive privatisation strategy and robust tax collections - on the back of projected growth of 10.5% - to fund its spending in the fiscal year.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said India would not see such a Budget in "100 years". At the time, a massive Covid-19 vaccination drive and a rebound



in consumer demand and investments had put the economy on track to recover from its deepest recorded slump.

The South Asian country is battling the world's second highest coronavirus caseload after the United States, recording some 300,000 cases and about 4,000 deaths a day. With many parts of the country under varying degrees of lockdown, most of the growth projections that the Budget was built around are now mired in uncertainty. The extent of the crisis is even making investors question whether after years of debt accumulation, India once expected to become an economic superpower, still deserves to cling on to its 'investment grade' status.

Earlier this week, Moody's said India's severe second wave will slow the near-term economic re-

covery and it could weigh on longer-term growth dynamics. It cut its GDP forecast to 9.3% from 13.7%.

While the government maintains it is too early to revise its own numbers, officials privately concede growth will be much more muted than previously anticipated if social distancing measures continue. Besides providing ₹350 billion in the Budget for vaccination costs, the government did not specifically dedicate any funds toward contingencies arising from a second wave and now may have to cut back on some expenses, officials said.

DELAYS IN PRIVATISATION

The health crisis has also hit the Indian bureaucracy badly with many key officials infected by the coronavirus, slowing decisions on privatisations, among other proposed reforms.

Two senior officials said the privatisation of assets such as oil refiner Bharat Petroleum Corp and national carrier Air India, where processes are well advanced, may now be pushed into early 2022 -

some three months later than previously planned.

"The virtual data room for BPCL has been opened for initial bidders but given the lockdown, physical verification of assets is unlikely right now," one of the officials said.

The delays will affect a series of other privatisation plans including two banks, insurance and energy companies, that are at the centre of reforms proposed by the budget and that are key to achieving the roughly \$24 billion target from privatisations and asset sales, the officials said. The crisis is also likely to delay the listing of India's largest insurer Life Insurance Corp, which was expected to raise \$8-\$10 billion, they said.

Another official said the lockdowns will start affecting tax collections by June, potentially lowering revenues 15%-20% from what was estimated for the quarter.

With the projected fiscal deficit target pegged at 6.8% of GDP and a soaring borrowing programme, delays in the privatisation plan and the anticipated shortfalls in tax revenues are already prompting cuts to some of the government's previously earmarked expenses, two officials said.

"We are looking to press a pause button on some of our non-priority spending," one of the officials said.

The government is renewing its focus on relief measures and higher spending toward immediate health care needs like oxygen plants, and temporary COVID-19 centres, one of the officials said, adding that the government's plans to provide relief on fuel prices by cutting some taxes have also been deferred.

leisure



JANE SEYMOUR REVEALS HER UNUSUAL HOBBIES

Hollywood veteran Jane Seymour has shared her unusual hobbies, revealing she is a keen fly fisher. "I fly-fish enthusiastically, but not very well," Seymour said, adding that she also likes to watch fish in their natural habitat when she goes scuba diving.

ZACK SNYDER HOPES HE GETS TO MAKE MORE DC FILMS IN FUTURE

Filmmaker Zack Snyder says his fans want him to make more DC films, and he hopes the makers Warner Bros let him do so. Snyder has directed DC films such as *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, *Man Of Steel* and *Watchmen* in the past.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You are brimming with ideas and will be ready to share them with anyone who wants to benefit from them. You are in a loving and generous mood. If you are planning to convince your grandmother to go in for a makeover at a beauty parlour, Ganesh gives you the thumbs-up.

TAURUS
A good day for money and love (you need more?). A quality, professional approach will help you shine out in business today. Be it launching a product or marketing it, you will win yourself hearts, smiles and a bundle of green.

GEMINI
You will be filled with energy and enthusiasm in the morning. You will be able to productively utilise your energy in your work. You will be able to take up projects dear to your heart. You will spend the evenings in the company of your family and friends and will be able to relax and unwind in luxury, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Today you are likely to be full of enthusiasm, both at work and home, predicts Ganesh. At work, your convictions will get the better of other people's vindictiveness, and your colleagues will come around to your viewpoints. But don't take any critical decision without prior approval.

LEO
You will indulge in some important discussions with your family members and clarify some matters. You need to approach issues without prejudices. Do not judge without having all the facts at your disposal.

VIRGO
You are bursting at the seams with the creativity bubbling within you. However, you will find yourself struggling more than usual in dealing with the challenges at work. There are some monetary benefits on the cards. Ganesh advises you to take good care of your health.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that your mind will be full of small and large worries that will trouble you through the day. To gain mental peace it is advised that you spend time meditating or doing yoga. There may be chances of you going out for recreational purposes, which will change your mood.

SCORPIO
You feel like going back to childhood days when being disciplined was your forte. Businessmen are likely to earn good profits, foresees Ganesh. More profits may also lead to more product related expenditure. Set out on a long drive with your partner and kids to enjoy the small pleasures of life.

SAGITTARIUS
You act responsibly today, and plan a secured future for your kids. For that matter, you go for long-term investments. You will put in extra efforts at work and come out with flying colours. In the evening, you are in a mood to paint the town red.

CAPRICORN
There are a number of problems which make you think that the day will not be very fruitful. But, something different is in store for you, today. Luck is favouring you and it will show in every project or assignment you undertake, predicts Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
You need to understand the importance of time as soon as possible. If Plan A is not working, put Plan B into practice, advises Ganesh. You can also ask for help from somebody who is experienced and good at organising.

PISCES
You will begin your day thinking about household matters and problems. By afternoon it will appear as though you have found a solution. Take all important decisions in the afternoon. Ganesh says your day today will be positive and adventurous.

Tisca initiative for transgenders, widows

Mumbai: Actress Tisca Chopra is doing her bit to help transgenders and widows, who have been affected by the Covid pandemic.

The actress has started an initiative with chef Vikas Khanna called #IndiaForMothers, to help support these groups deal with the crises.

"When Vikas Khanna and his team approached me for this specific campaign #IndiaForMothers to support widows and transgenders in India who have lost their livelihood due to the pandemic, it was an instant yes from me. These mothers are not just nurturers, but also providers and many have been left jobless and even homeless during this pandemic," she said.

"Similarly, the transgender community is also in need - many are currently jobless and in desperate need of support," added the Taare Zameen Par actress.

The actress had started an initiative last year called At Tisca's Table, which she reinvented to help people during these troubled times.

"IANS



Shilpa's 'love in Corona times'

Mumbai: Actress Shilpa Shetty, who last week shared that her family tested positive for Covid-19, has showcased her 'love in the time of corona' on social media, Sunday.

Shilpa, who tested negative for the virus, posted a picture on Instagram. In the image, the actress is seen inside while her husband Raj is standing outside of the house, there is a glass window between the two as they look at each other.

"Love in the time of Corona! Corona pyar hai#Nearlydone! Thankyou all for your wishes, concern and prayers. #strong #positivevibes #gratitude#love #conquer #corona," she wrote as the caption.

Last week, Shilpa took to Instagram and shared that her husband Raj Kundra, children Samisha and Viaan, and her mother Sunanda, as well as in-laws, have tested Covid positive. The actress, who has tested negative, added everyone in the family is quarantined and is recovering.



Shweta levels hotness quotient in latest post

Mumbai: Television star Shweta Tiwari showcased her perfect abs in a new photograph she shared on social media Sunday.

She posted a picture on Instagram. The mother-of-two, is seen wearing a white and red crop top, and jeans. The 40-year-old actress is seen showcasing her well-chiseled abs as she poses for the camera.

"Bring it on," she wrote as the caption. Shweta is currently in

Cape Town, where she is shooting for the Season 11 of the stunt-based reality show, *Khatron Ke Khiladi*. She has shed oodles of weight and keeps sharing her hot pictures on social media leaving fans gasping for breath.

Others who will be seen in the show include Abhinav Shukla, Divyanka Tripathi, Nikki Tamboli, Anushka Sen, Rahul Vaidya and others will be seen competing with each other.

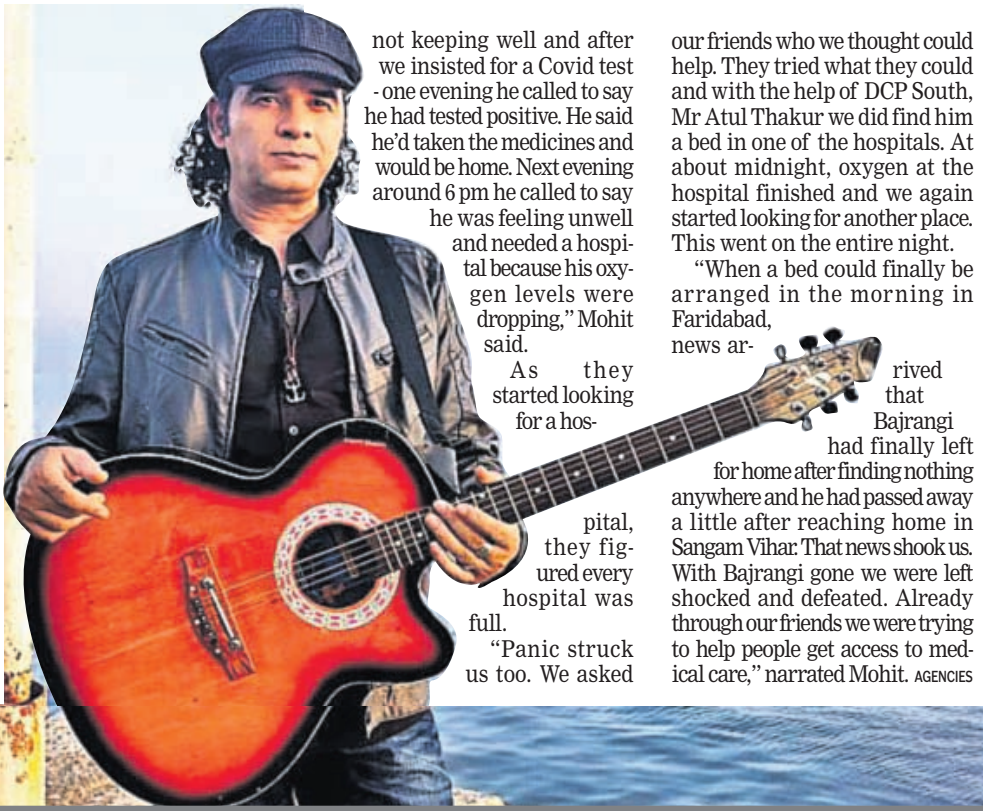


PERSONAL LOSS PROMPTS MOHIT TO FUNDRAISE FOR COVID EQUIPMENT

New Delhi: Singer Mohit Chauhan, through his NGO 'Nivesh' and its initiative 'Project Bajrang', is working to procure and supply life-saving equipment like oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders and oximeters to COVID-19 patients.

He said 'Project Bajrang' comes from a space of his personal loss.

"We had a civil work contractor by the name of Bajrang Maurya. A wonderful man, full of integrity, honesty, discipline and polite to the core. He was



not keeping well and after we insisted for a Covid test - one evening he called to say he had tested positive. He said he'd taken the medicines and would be home. Next evening around 6 pm he called to say he was feeling unwell and needed a hospital because his oxygen levels were dropping," Mohit said.

As they started looking for a hospital, they figured every hospital was full. "Panic struck us too. We asked

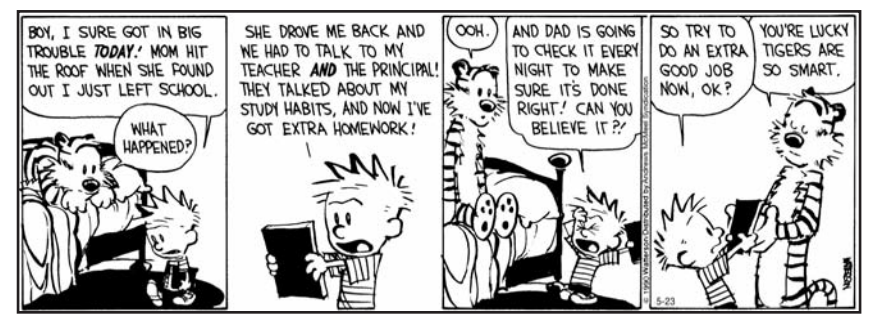
our friends who we thought could help. They tried what they could and with the help of DCP South, Mr Atul Thakur we did find him a bed in one of the hospitals. At about midnight, oxygen at the hospital finished and we again started looking for another place. This went on the entire night.

"When a bed could finally be arranged in the morning in Faridabad, news arrived that Bajrang had finally left for home after finding nothing anywhere and he had passed away a little after reaching home in Sangam Vihar. That news shook us. With Bajrang gone we were left shocked and defeated. Already through our friends we were trying to help people get access to medical care," narrated Mohit.

PEANUTS



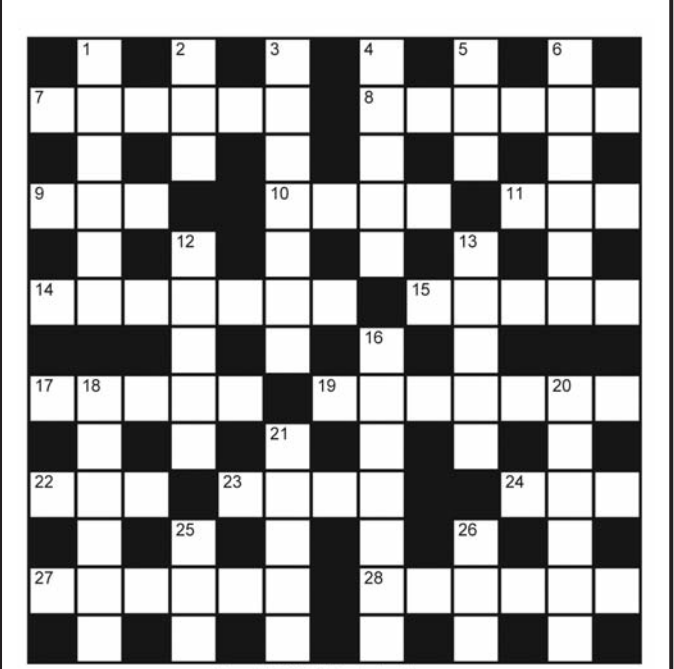
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



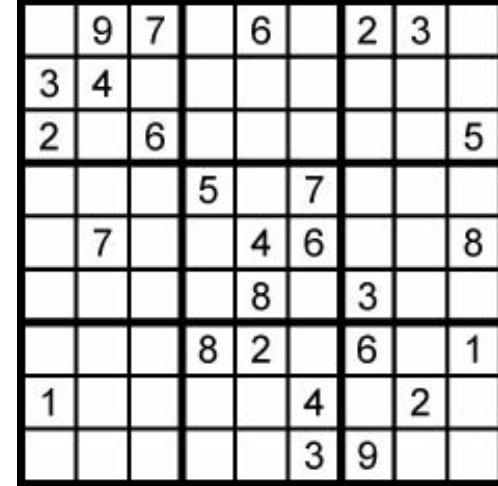
FUN post CROSSWORD



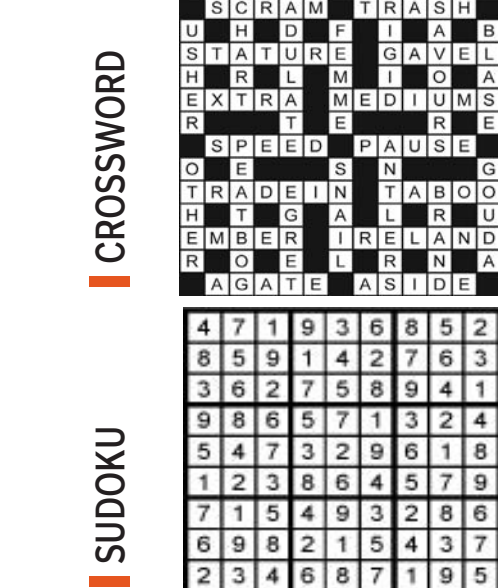
- Across**
- 7 Split, as the proceeds
 - 8 Pergola
 - 9 Family room
 - 10 Surf sound
 - 11 Took the bait
 - 14 Enmity
 - 15 Things that might have been?
 - 17 Like Argus
 - 19 Horseshoer
 - 22 Nile viper
 - 23 Blubbers
 - 24 Pirate's professed drink
 - 27 Desert sight
 - 28 Fancy vessels
 - Down**
 - 1 Movie house
 - 2 Flipper
 - 3 Forceful embrace (4,3)
 - 4 Ear part
 - 5 Flow's partner
 - 6 Swiss city
 - 12 Earthy colour
 - 13 Greek monster with nine heads
 - 16 Colourful marble (4,3)
 - 18 Hollywood canine
 - 20 Fairness
 - 21 Playing card
 - 25 Cave dweller
 - 26 Frigid

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



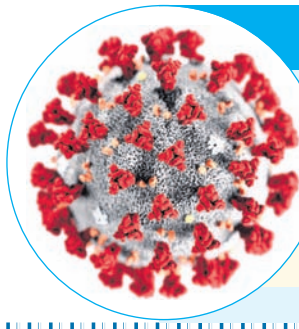
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



SUMMER RITUAL

Representative idols of the presiding deities of Srimandir being taken to Narendrapond in Puri for Chandan Yatra, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	16,32,61,106	14,16,04,443	33,85,567
India	2,46,84,077	2,07,95,335	2,70,284
Odisha	6,12,224	5,14,532	2,313

Khurda crossed Covid peak: IIT study

THE MODEL DEVELOPED BY THE RESEARCHERS EXPLICITLY TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE SPATIAL SPREAD OF A PANDEMIC OVER TIME, THROUGH A PARAMETER CALLED 'REACH'

POST NEWS NETWORK

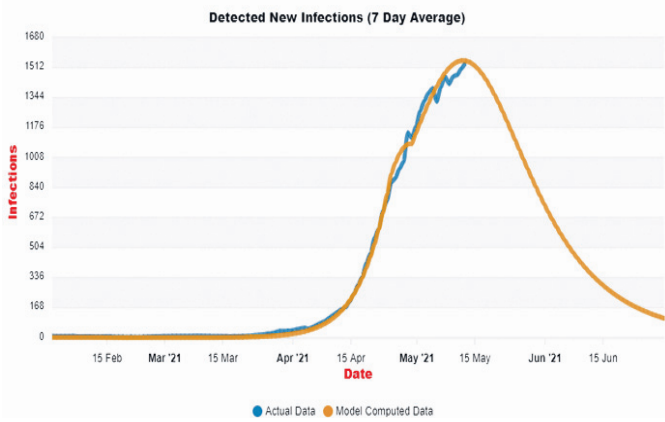
Bhubaneswar, May 16: A simulation study conducted by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur and IIT Hyderabad claimed that Khurda district has crossed the peak of the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic and the caseloads are likely to dip in the coming days.

The study was based on a mathematical model of the pandemic authored by researchers of the premier educational institutions.

According to the model developed by the researchers which analysed the data of several districts of India, the caseload in Khurda district is likely to come down in the days to come.

According to the study, the peak of the second wave of the pandemic was expected by May 12 and after that the cases are likely to come down with the actual infections falling to double digits anytime after June 29.

The model said that Covid-19 cases in the state started rising from March 28 this year and touched



SUTRA APPROACH

According to the study, the peak of the second wave of the pandemic was expected by May 12 and after that the cases are likely to come down with the actual infections falling to double digits anytime after June 29

The model said that Covid-19 cases in the state started rising from March 28 this year and touched the peak around May 12. The authors claimed that the lockdown helped in delaying the peak a bit

the peak around May 12. The authors claimed that the lockdown helped in delaying the peak a bit.

The study model claimed that the total cases in the state could be around 747 by May 31 and the number will continue to go down in the month of June.

The estimation of the peak level in the district was done through the Susceptible, Undetected, Tested (positive) and Removed Approach

(SUTRA), sources said.

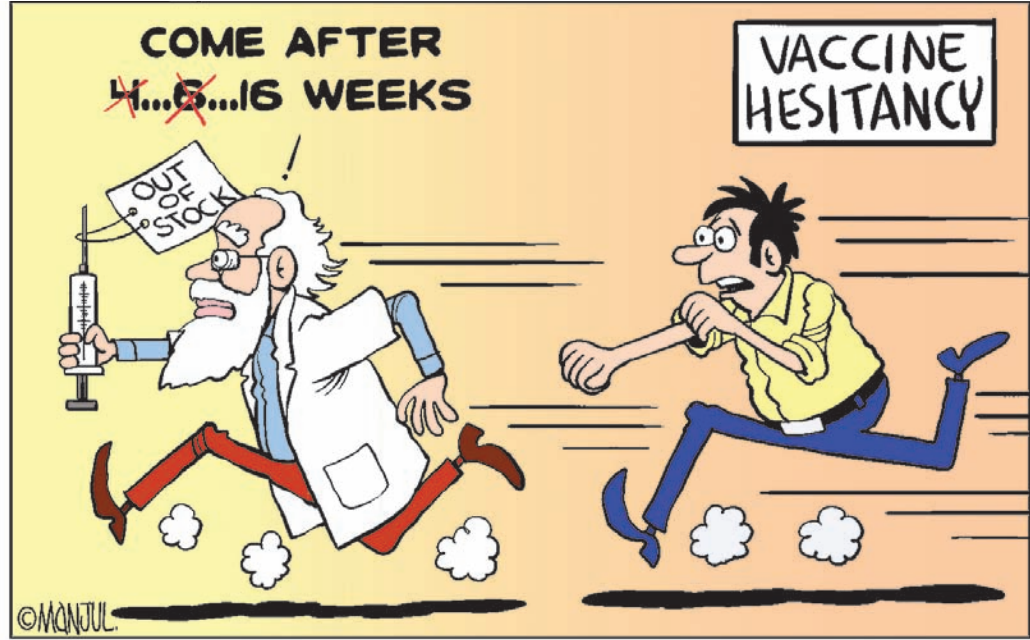
"There are several novel features in this model. First, whereas previous papers have divided the patient population into asymptomatic and infected, SUTRA takes into account the fact that there would be large number of undetected asymptomatic patients," the authors said in the report.

"Second, the model explicitly takes into account the spatial

spread of a pandemic over time, through a parameter called 'reach'. Third, the model uses numerically stable methods for estimating the values of all the parameters using the daily new infections data."

The study was conducted by M Agrawal of IIT Kanpur, M Kanitkar (Integrated Defence Staff) and M Vidyasagar of IIT Hyderabad, sources said.

POLITICKLE BY MANJUL



As nCoV rages, govt suspends shooting of films, TV serials

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: In view of the rising cases of Covid-19, the state government has suspended shooting of films and television serials.

The office of the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) issued an order Sunday stopping both indoor and outdoor shooting of films and TV serials. Cinema halls in the state have remained closed since the number of cases started increasing.

"In partial modification of the Government of Odisha in Revenue & DM (Disaster Management) Department Order No.2328/R&DM(DM) dated 01.05.2021, the state government do hereby make the following amendment to the said order," the order read.

After clause 6(xi) in the order; the recent stipulation has been added as clause 6 (xii).

Like any other sector, the film and television industry have been badly hit by the pandemic. However, indoor shooting of some television serials and programmes were cur-



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

The office of the Special Relief Commissioner issued an order Sunday stopping both indoor and outdoor shooting of films and TV serials

Like any other sector, the film and television industry have been badly hit by the pandemic

Maharashtra and West Bengal governments have also suspended shooting of movies and serials due to the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic which is sweeping across India

rently on. The government's decision will go a long way in containing the spread of the virus among the artistes and technicians, people close to the entertainment industry observed. Odisha, however, is not the first

state to suspend shooting of films and television serials.

The Maharashtra and West Bengal governments have also suspended shooting due to the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic which is sweeping across India.

Puri-Okha Special cancelled for cyclone

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: In view of Cyclone Tauktae along coastal Gujarat, Puri-Okha-Puri Special from Puri May 16 and from Okha May 19 will remain cancelled.

Earlier, in view of poor patronisation in above trains and keeping in view the surge of Covid-19 cases, it has been decided to cancel six pairs of Express Special trains from both the directions.

The trains are: Bhubaneswar-Bolangir-Bhubaneswar Special, Visakhapatnam-Kacheguda-Visakhapatnam Special, Puri-LTT-Puri Weekly Special Express, Bhubaneswar-LTT-Bhubaneswar bi-weekly Special Express, Visakhapatnam-Cuddapah-Visakhapatnam daily Express Special and Visakhapatnam-Lingampalli-Visakhapatnam daily Express Special.

Virus claims UTP of Jharpada jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: An under-trial prisoner (UTP) of Jharpada Special Jail died of Covid-19 Sunday morning while undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

Three prisoners including Tripati Mohanty of Jharpada jail have succumbed to the virus in the state so far, said sources.

Speaking to media persons, DIG (Jail) Subhankanta Mishra revealed that Mohanty was jailed in a drug peddling case. He was also suffering from various other illnesses like diabetes and hypertension. He was reportedly admitted to Capital Hospital a couple of days back, Mishra said.

Later, Mohanty was shifted to AIIMS after his health condition deteriorated. Though Mohanty was found negative in three rapid antigen tests at AIIMS, his RT-PCR



test at SCB showed positive for the virus. He was then shifted to the dedicated Covid hospital in Cuttack.

He died Sunday morning while undergoing treatment and his last rites were performed in adherence to all Covid protocols, sources said.

Citing poor health infrastructure inside the jails across the state, experts opined that more such deaths would also occur in future. Many prisons in the state lack

CITING POOR HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE INSIDE THE JAILS ACROSS THE STATE, EXPERTS OPINED THAT MORE SUCH DEATHS WOULD OCCUR IN FUTURE

fulltime doctors which is a major cause of concern amidst the spike in Covid-19 cases among the prisoners and jail staff during the last couple of days. Almost all the jails, barring a very few, don't have dedicated ambulances.

Similarly, the decision to transfer of 85 prisoners from Jharpada jail to Banapur sub jail to decongest the prison is still not executed due to various reasons.

CHARIOT WORK IN FULL SWING



Carpenters busy constructing chariots for the upcoming Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath and his siblings in Puri, Sunday

Oppn slams govt over 'lack' of beds

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress Sunday came down heavily on the state government over the alleged lack of adequate hospital beds and quarantine centres in the coastal state to fight the pandemic.

BJP state president Samir Mohanty said, "In the current scenario, there is an urgent need to revive as well as set up quarantine centres in the state. This would help us curb the spread of the Covid-19."

Mohanty also demanded intensifying Covid testing in the state. "If the Covid testing at community as well as primary health centres is not intensified, the state will certainly fail in achieving the desired goal—

If the Covid testing at community as well as primary health centres is not intensified, the state will certainly fail in achieving the desired goal—fighting the pandemic

SAMIR MOHANTY | BJP STATE PRESIDENT



At this hour of crisis, we have to work together. Whatever health facilities the government is providing at the time of a pandemic is a welcome step

ANANTA NARAYAN JENA | BJD LEADER

fighting the pandemic," he said, demanding an intensified testing across the state. Congress leader Suresh Routray, on the other hand, lashed out at the state government alleging lack of hospital beds for

treating Covid patients. "I want to appeal to the Chief Minister not to rely on the bureaucrats on Covid management. There has been a massive shortage of hospital beds in the state owing

to which Covid patients are suffering a lot. We need more ICU beds," Routray said, alleging that the state government of concealing the actual Covid deaths which, according to him, are much higher.

BJD leader Ananta Narayan Jena, however, said that the state government is working at a 'good pace' ensuring healthcare facilities, including Covid vaccination.

Jena said, "The vaccination programme is on at good pace. Whatever amount of vaccine doses we are getting from the Centre, we are giving it to the people. At this hour of crisis, we have to work together. Whatever health facilities the government is providing at the time of a pandemic is a welcome step."

Steroid sans doc's advice can do more harm

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: With the emergence of black fungus infection in Covid-19 patients in the state, concerns are now being raised over prolonged use of steroids without consulting the doctors.

Experts from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar said that severe damage caused due to the fungal infection in Covid-19 patients are irreversible and thus prevention could be the only way to tackle the emerging threat.

Dr Swayam Pragyan Parida, Associate Professor at the Community Medicine Department of Bhubaneswar AIIMS, said that citizens should avoid over-the-counter purchase and use of steroids for Covid treatment.

"Indiscriminate and prolonged use of steroids have the potential to reduce immunity level in patients. Steroids are not given to patients with mild symptoms or during initial days of Covid infection.



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

If a person continues steroid use for prolonged period, it can make them prone to infections like black fungus," Parida said.

She also said that the best way to prevent the black fungus infection is to take steroids only when the doctors advise for it. The doctors can decide the type of drugs, its timing and quantity. She added that the steroids are usually given to moderate and severe patients when their symptoms do not subside after use of normal drugs for

one week or more.

The state government through its notification on forming a special panel to tackle black fungus infection also said that prolonged steroid use and hospitalisation seem to be acting as precursors to the fungal infection in a few cases.

Parida also talked about the irreversible damage the fungal infection can do to humans. "Patients could get some relief if the infection is detected at an early stage. However, in cases of delayed di-

BLACK FUNGUS SCARE

People with uncontrolled diabetes, Covid patients treated with steroids or immune modulators and those on mechanical ventilators or on prolonged oxygen therapy are more prone to the disease

Steroids are not given to patients with mild symptoms or during initial days of Covid infection. If a person continues steroid use for prolonged period, it can make them prone to infections like black fungus

agnosis, some irreversible damage to the eyes and brain tissues are noticed where only surgeries would work to some extent," she said.

People with uncontrolled diabetes, Covid patients treated with steroids or immune modulators and those on mechanical ventilators or on prolonged oxygen therapy are more prone to the disease, said the experts.

TRIBALS SUFFER AS DFO RESTRICTS MFP SALES

26 Gram Sabhas in Kalahandi have intimated Forest department about the issue

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, May 16: Thousands of tribal families living in the villages under Bhawanipatna Forest Division (Kendu Leaf) in Kalahandi district alleged that they are facing difficulties in leading their lives as they are barred from selling minor forest produces (MFPs). They accused Bhawanipatna DFO (Kendu Leaf) of violating the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, and imposing restrictions on sales of MFPs like bamboo and kendu leaf.



Tribals alleged that March 18, the Bhawanipatna DFO (Kendu Leaf) has issued a notice to 26 Gram Sabhas, imposing restrictions on sales of kendu leaf and bamboo. Villagers pointed out that Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, recognises the rights of the tribal communities and other traditional dwellers to forest resources. Secretary of the ST/SC welfare dept, Ranjana Chopra has, meanwhile written a letter to the additional secretary of the Forest and Environment department, Kalahandi Collector and the southern range RDC to take necessary action in this direction.

ditional dwellers to forest resources. "We depend on forest resources for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation and

other socio-cultural needs. As per the FRA-2006, the Gram Sabha is a highly empowered body to enable the tribal population to have a de-

cisive say in the determination of local policies and schemes impacting them," they cited.

In the complaint, the Gram Sabhas said that the Act also empowers the forest dwellers to access and use resources in the manner that they were traditionally accustomed to protect, conserve, manage forests and protect them from unlawful evictions.

They alleged that March 18, the DFO issued a notice to 26 Gram Sabhas, imposing restrictions on sales of kendu leaf and bamboo.

Following allegation from the Gram Sabhas, the ST and SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare department has come forward to look into the issue. Secretary of the department, Ranjana Chopra has, meanwhile, written a letter to the additional secretary of the Forest and Environment department, Kalahandi Collector and the southern range RDC to take necessary action in this direction.

During the pandemic, the poor tribals have lost their livelihood as they are unable to sell the MFPs due to lack of transit permits. They alleged that the forest department is creating a major hurdle in their efforts to earn a livelihood.

WATER WOES



Women of Dantapalli village in Boudh district trek for over one km on a daily basis to fetch drinking water for their homes

No let-up in loot of minor minerals from forest land

ILLEGAL MURRAM MINING RAMPANT IN JAJPUR DIST



POST NEWS NETWORK

Kalinganagar, May 16: A huge amount of murrum has been lifted illegally from Baliapal forest land under Danagadi tehsil in Jajpur district due to alleged apathy of the Revenue and Forest departments. This has caused a huge loss of revenue to the government coffers, a report said.

scrupulous staff of the tehsil, revenue inspectors and police are protecting such illegal activities," locals alleged. An influential trader of Danagadi area is behind such illegal murrum plundering in the locality, they said.

It was learnt that this murrum is being used to level a plot of land owned by this trader near the Biju Pattnaik Marg.

In fact, people have taken help of the person on a number of occasions to procure murrum. The person is operating without fear as he has close connections with some field staff of the construction company.

This illegal activity caught the attention of the local people Thursday when five Tata Hyvas, engaged to carry murrum from Baliapal forest, got stuck on the way due to rains.

Danagadi tehsildar Namrata Modi has started investigating the matter. She visited the plots where the murrum has been dumped.

A local RI has been asked to report about the owners of the plots and categories of the land. The land owners will be notified soon, it was learnt.

Doorstep mobile services for Covid jobs from today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, May 16: A mobile van will be launched from Monday to administer Covid-19 vaccines to senior citizens in Silk City at their doorsteps, the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) said in a notice issued, Sunday.

"Senior citizens above 70 years of age or those who are bed ridden can register themselves for the vaccine at their doorsteps by dialing the 7328099324, the BeMC said in the notice. The civic body aims to administer the jab to a minimum of 100 persons per day through this mobile service.

Senior citizens will have to submit their addresses and necessary details for vaccination while making the call in between 8.00am and 12 noon. A day after registration, healthcare officials traveling in the vehicle will visit the house of those who have registered and give them the jabs, the release said.

Currently a single van will be put into use for the vaccination drive on an experimental basis. More vehicles will be added on the basis of response received from the senior citizens. The civic body has opened 13 vaccination centres in the city.

-Ve reports mandatory for Ganjam weddings

POST NEWS NETWORK

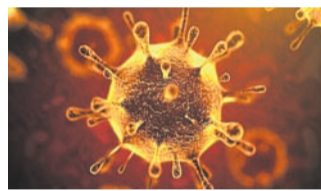
Berhampur, May 16 : The Ganjam district administration announced Sunday that negative reports of rapid antigen test are mandatory for the bride, groom, their family members and all other participants at weddings. The announcement was made by District Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange here.

Everyone will have to undergo tests and present negative reports before seeking the necessary permission from the district administration for wedding functions. This restriction has been imposed to prevent any probable spread of the deadly virus at wedding functions, the collector said.

"Permission for wedding functions will not be granted by the district administration, if any family member or bride/groom tests positive for Covid-19," Collector Kulange said while briefing media persons.

Kulange has also directed block development officers, and tehsildars of the district to strictly implement the new norm. Stringent legal actions will be taken against the wrongdoers, he warned.

4 Telangana returnees flee TMC



POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi/R Udayagiri, May 16: Amid the Covid-19 second wave sweeping across Odisha, four returnees from Telangana fled Saturday a temporary medical centre (TMC) in Luhagudi panchayat under Mohana block of Gajapati district.

The returnees scaled the wall of the quarantine centre functioning at the Adivasi High School and ran away. Notably, they were lodged at the isolation centre after they came back from the neighbouring state a few days ago. The four have tested positive for Covid-19.

The incident has triggered panic among people. It may be noted that May 11, an Andhra returnee had

8 Covid-infected Bonda tribals recovering

Malkangiri/Khairput: A total of 12 persons belonging to the Bonda tribe in this district have been infected by coronavirus. Among them, eight are undergoing treatment while four have already recovered from the disease. The district administration is keeping a close watch on the recovery of the infected persons. This is because they do not want the virus to spread in other rural areas.

According to Debabrata Barik, medical officer of Khairput Hospital, the patients undergoing treatment in home isolation have mild infections. A rapid response team is closely monitoring their health

fled from a quarantine centre at Ghasapada village under Adaba police limits. However, he surrendered before police two days later. Nodal officer Dayanidhi Nayak said that project director Anam Charan Patra was visiting the

conditions. They have been given the required medicines.

The first case of Covid-19 infection was reported from Bonda ghat, the home to the primitive tribals April 26, it was learnt. As a part of its exercise to break the chain of transmission in the hilly regions, the local administration has closed the weekly markets.

It is pertinent to mention here that Bondas, one of the 13 recognised Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), had been able to keep the disease away from their territories till April by dint of their unique lifestyle based on strict principles.

TMC when the four escaped. A complaint has been lodged against the four returnees at Mohana police station. Police have registered a missing complaint and started an investigation into the matter.

10 test positive in Jharsuguda orphanage

JHARSUGUDA: A day after 68 inmates of Jharsuguda sub-jail tested positive for Covid-19, another 10 positive cases were reported from Thakkar Bapa Seva Sadan at Garakhai under Belpahar police limits Sunday. The facility is an orphanage. Among the 10 infected, six are inmates and the rest are staff. When contacted, secretary,

Thakkar Bapa Seva Sadan, Nirakar Kishan said some inmates had complained of high temperatures two days ago. "So 50 inmates and staff were immediately subjected to Covid-19 tests. Forty two underwent antigen test and the rest took the RT-PCR test," he said. "Among the 42 antigen tests, 10 turned out to be positive. The RT-

PCR reports are yet to come," informed district child protection officer Sunand Maharana.

"As per the direction of the district collector, the infected inmates and staff of the facility will be kept in isolation at Belpahar Covid Care Centre and they will receive treatment there," Maharana informed.

Special force to stop illegal mining in Sarisua hill

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khaira, May 16: Taking into account, the illegal mining activities going on at Sarisua hill under Khaira tehsil limits in Balasore, newly-joined tehsildar Mahendra Prasad Behera is tightening the screws to stop it.

Behera has started taking proactive measures and he said Sunday that one platoon of police personnel will be employed to curb illegal

mining in the above mentioned locality.

Despite imposition of Section 144 in and around the 97 mines at the Sarisua hill, illegal mining has been going on rampantly. The unholy nexus prevalent between some of the temporary staff of Khaira tehsil and lease holders of mines is responsible for the ongoing illegal activities, the tehsildar said.

"I had written a letter (No.-1265) April 29 to my departmental higher-



ups requesting to provide a platoon of police force for the purpose. Based on my letter, Nilgiri sub-collector has asked vide his office letter (No.-82, Dtd-May 7) to the Balasore Superintendent of Police Sudhansu Sekhar Mishra for the force," Behera said.

Notably, in 2019, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had ordered the Odisha government to take immediate action to prevent illegal mining in Sarisua hill. The NGT

had also expressed concern as the biodiversity of Sarisua hill was being disturbed. The body said that elephants and other wild animals living in the area were facing dangers due to illegal mining.

It should be stated here that residents of peripheral villages like Guapala, Bageipur, Kadaligadia, Sarata, Ramada and Baunsagadia have been asking the district administration to take steps to stop illegal mining for a very long time.

VIRUS SCARE



Residents of Bonda hill wear masks during a Covid-19 awareness drive in their village in Malkangiri district, Sunday

Farmers resort to onion distress sale

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, May 16: Incessant rainfall in Komna block of this district following a thunderstorm has wreaked havoc on the farmers and their produce, a report said Sunday.

A thunderstorm occurred in Komna block Tuesday following which the area has been witnessing incessant rainfalls. It has led to farmlands getting flooded. Cash crops like groundnuts and onions grown by the farmers have been extensively damaged due to the rains.

The damage has pushed the farmers into distress as they stare at a bleak future lying ahead. The farmers had borrowed money from various sources to raise their crops. However, now with produces not expected to be high, they are pondering how to repay the loans.

As a result, farmers in the area have resorted to distress sale of

RAIN PLAYS SPOILSPORT



their crops due to the absence of marketing facilities and cold storages.

Reports said that majority of the farmers in Kandetara, Nuagaon, Tuklapada, Lohondopalli, Thutibara, Kendubhata, Kalimati, Danojhala, Mahulabhata, Mushapali, Suklimundi, Kasipala, Bagmunda and Belardana under Komna block had cultivated onions on their farmlands.

This is because onion is a temperate crop and can be grown in all types of climatic condition and soils. Moreover, it needs light irrigation which makes it the preferred choice of the farmers.

The farmers had reaped a good harvest this year and were expecting handsome returns from the sale of onions. However, the unseasonal rainfall shattered all their hopes as it has led to the rot-

ting of the onions.

Reports said that farmers are selling a kilogram of onion between ₹10-12 which is then sold by traders in the market at ₹25 to 30 per kg. The farmers despite labouring hard to raise their crops are resorting to distress sale in the absence of any alternative.

Jagabandhu Bema, a farmer of Thutibara village said that the district administration should have a proper marketing facility in place so that they can get good prices. He said cold storage facilities should also be developed.

When contacted, Purnananda Patel, tehsildar Komna block said that teams from the Horticulture and Agriculture department will assess the extent of crop loss and submit a report which in turn will be sent to the higher authorities for their approval. The farmers will be paid compensation after funds are available, informed Patel.



Statehood Day greetings to the people of Sikkim. This state is blessed with rich natural beauty and is home to warm-hearted people. Sikkim has made great strides in areas like organic farming. Praying for the state's continuous growth and for the good health of its citizens
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

YOGI ANNOUNCES FREE POST-COVID TREATMENT

UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath has announced that the treatment of post-Covid patients will be free in the state. Last week, the chief minister had directed the health department to start and operate a post-Covid facility in each of the 75 districts of the state



of the day quote

The Government of India did not manage the crisis as well. When it came to negotiation with vaccine manufacturers, when it came to putting in place a vaccine policy, everything was centralised. Actually, it was not even centralised, it was individualised, because someone wanted to be a 'Vaccine Guru'



PAWAN KHERA | CONGRESS LEADER

Guru Sahib preached the concept of 'Sarbat Da Bhala' to create a harmonious society, where people, regardless of colour, caste, creed, race and religion, can live together in peace and harmony



AMARINDER SINGH | PUNJAB CM

Under the leadership of CM KCR, the government is working with complete coordination with the medical institutions. The public representatives and officials are on the ground to take stock of the situation and are acting swiftly during an emergency



K T RAMA RAO | TELANGANA INDUSTRY MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Militants trigger IED explosion

Srinagar: Militants Sunday triggered a low intensity blast in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district although no damage was caused by the explosion, officials said. Police said militants triggered a low intensity blast near an army vehicle in Turkawangam village of Shopian district. "No damage was caused by the explosion. The area has been cordoned off for searches", police said.

Ruckus at hospital; BJP leader booked

Nashik: Police have registered a case against a local BJP leader in Nashik for allegedly damaging property of a civic hospital here by ramming his car into its glass entrance and trying to attack its staff, police said Sunday. The incident occurred at Bytco Hospital on Nashik Road late Saturday night, they said. Police have registered an offence against Rajendra Tajne, who is the husband of BJP corporator Seema Tajne.

Cop murders wife, jumps before train

Ghazipur (UP): A 43-year-old Uttar Pradesh Police head constable allegedly killed his wife and critically injured children before ending his life by jumping in front of a train here, police said Sunday. The head constable has been identified as Munshi Singh Yadav, they said. Superintendent of Police Omprakash Singh said that Yadav was sleeping on the roof of his house and his neighbours heard the cries of his children early Saturday morning. As they rushed there, they saw Yadav's wife Nisha Devi lying in a pool of blood and his sons Krishna and Shyam and daughter Sudha critically injured, police said.

Metro tunneling work complete

Kolkata: Tunneling work for the 16.6 km-long East-West Metro corridor, which hit several hurdles over the last two years, has finally been completed, an official said here Sunday. As one of the two tunnel-boring machines (TBMs) was damaged beyond repair in an accident, work for the rapid transit system was finished just in time with the other one, hours before another COVID-induced state-wide lockdown kicked in, the Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRC) official said.

CYCLONE TAUKTAE

Ensure proper running of Covid centres: NCMC

The NCMC met to review the preparedness of the central and state agencies to deal with the cyclonic storm that is expected to reach the Gujarat coast in the morning of May 18 with wind speeds ranging from 150-160 km per hour, accompanied by heavy rainfall and storm surge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: The National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) headed by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba met Sunday, where the top bureaucrat of the country directed agencies to ensure uninterrupted functioning of the COVID hospitals in the states affected by the impending Cyclone Tauktae and secure zero loss of lives. Officers from various central agencies, the chief secretaries of



Missing Kerala boat located, crew safe

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A fishing boat, with 15 aboard, which had sailed from Beypore in Kerala's Kozhikode from May 5 and was declared missing as there was no contact with it for the past couple of days, has been located off the Mangaluru coast. All the 15 fishermen on the boat are safe.

Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and the administrators of the Union territories of Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu took part in the meeting, a statement issued by the government said. The NCMC met to review the preparedness of the central and state agencies to deal with the cyclonic storm that is expected to

1.5L people being shifted in Gujarat

AHMEDABAD: An estimated 1.5 lakh people are being shifted from low-lying coastal areas in Gujarat while 54 teams of the NDRF and SDRF remained deployed Sunday in view of the IMD's warning that the very severe cyclonic storm Tauktae will reach the state coast Monday evening and cross it early Tuesday morning.

Vacancies in SC, HCs; govt awaits recommendations



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: The Supreme Court has seven vacancies, two high courts are functioning without regular chief justices and two high court chief justices are set to retire in the next one and a half months, a government functionary said.

He said the government is awaiting recommendations from the apex court collegium to fill up the slots.

The first vacancy in the Supreme Court arose following the retirement of Justice Ranjan Gogoi in November 2019 as the Chief Justice of India (CJI).

Subsequently, a few more vacancies arose in the top court following the retirements of justices Deepak Gupta, R Bhanumathi, Arun Mishra, Indu Malhotra, and S A Bobde, who demitted office as the CJI last month. Justice Mohan M Shantanagoudar passed away in April.

With a sanctioned strength of 34, the apex court is functioning with 27 judges at present.

The high courts of Allahabad and Calcutta are being run by acting chief justices.

The chief justice of the Chhattisgarh High Court will retire later this month, while the

chief justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court will retire in June, the functionary pointed out.

The 25 high courts of the country have a combined sanctioned strength of 1,080 judges, but are functioning with 660, a shortfall of 420 judges, according to May 1 figures available on the website of the Department of Justice.

Vacancies keep arising in courts due to retirement, resignation or elevation of judges.

The government has maintained that appointment of judges in high

25 high courts of the country have a combined sanctioned strength of 1,080 judges, but are functioning with 660, a shortfall of 420 judges

courts is a continuous collaborative process between the Executive and the Judiciary, as it requires consultation and approval from various constitutional authorities.

As per the procedure for the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and the 25 high courts, the apex court collegium recommends the names of candidates to the government which, in turn, either accepts the proposal or returns it for reconsideration.

The high court collegiums first send their recommendations to the Law Ministry which in turn processes the files by attaching Intelligence Bureau reports and forwards it to the SC collegium.

The SC collegium comprises the CJI and four senior-most judges of the apex court.

VAGABOND'S VALUABLES



A nomad woman walks with her horse along the deserted Dal Lake during strict lockdown imposed in Jammu and Kashmir by government administration to contain the surge in Covid-19 cases, in Srinagar, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

TN allows Chinese vax makers to bid

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 16: Tamil Nadu government's global tender for 3.5 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccine does not restrict Chinese vaccine makers from bidding, said an official.

We are allowing every product (vaccine) as long as it is approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and licensed by the Drugs Controller General of India (DGCI), a senior official told IANS.

According to the official, about six vaccines have been approved by WHO and three by DCGI.

On the other hand, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation in its one crore vaccine dose tender has disqualified companies located in countries sharing borders with India from participating in the bid, thus disqualifying Chinese vaccine manufacturers.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

Journalist bodies condemn airstrikes on media offices

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: Indian journalist bodies including the Editors Guild of India (EGI) Sunday strongly condemned the brazen Israeli airstrikes on a building in Gaza that housed the offices of the Associated Press, Al Jazeera and other news media outlets.

The EGI said in a statement that given the recent background of the escalating conflict in this region, it sees this airstrike as a de facto attack on the news media by the Israeli government that can disrupt the flow of news from this highly volatile region and have global security implications.

The Editors Guild of India strongly condemns the brazen



airstrikes on a building in Gaza that housed the editorial offices of Al Jazeera and the Associated Press, the EGI said.

It also demanded that the Israeli government give a detailed justification of the decision-making behind this attack along with evidentiary proof.

The Guild also calls for the Israeli government to facilitate an UN-monitored investigation into this bombing raid, it added.

Further, the Guild urges the Indian government to take up this issue with the Israeli government, demanding an independent inquiry and reiterating the need for ensuring the safety of journalists in any conflict situation, the statement said.

The EGI noted that the bombing raid May 15 demolished the 12-storey building, destroying much of the camera and editing equipment and severely affecting the news reporting and broadcasting capabilities of the two organisations.

Besides the loss of hardware and office space, the bombing destroyed what was described as 'home' by some of the journalists, it said.

No Char Dham, devotees allowed virtual access to shrines

Despite the suspension of Char Dham Yatra, priests at the pilgrimage sites will regularly offer prayers in temples but devotees are not allowed to enter temples

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 16: Amid the rising Covid cases, the famous Char Dham yatra has been suspended this time but the arrangement has been made for the devotees to have online 'darshan'. Millions of devotees from all across the country can 'visit' Badrinath,

Kedarnath, Yamunotri and Gangotri Dhams (shrines), though virtual means. Even the local residents of the district are not allowed to visit the temples.

The authorities of the Char Dham Devasthanam Board have made necessary preparations for the virtual 'visit'.

Uttarakhand Tourism Secretary Dilip Javalkar said that the outline is being fixed for the devotees of Char Dham for virtual darshan. Due to the suspension of Char Dham yatra, devotees will be able to visit all four dhams, including Badrinath and Kedarnath, though virtually.

Garhwal Commissioner and Uttarakhand Char Dham Devasthanam Board Chief Executive Officer, Ravinath Raman,



said a website and other mediums are being updated to allow the devotees to visit the temples through virtual means.

Despite the suspension of

Char Dham Yatra, priests at the pilgrimage sites will regularly offer prayers in temples but devotees are not allowed to enter temples. Giving official information, the

Uttarakhand government said to IANS that no one is allowed to visit the Char Dhams this year: Devotees of the four Dhams have been asked by the Char Dham Devasthanam Board for virtual 'darshan' (visit). Harish Goud of Char Dham Devasthanam Board said the yatra has been suspended but the doors of four Dhams will open on scheduled timings. The doors of Kedarnath Dham will open at 5 am Monday and those of Badrinath will open Tuesday at 4.15 am.

Similarly, the doors of Gangotri Dham will open at 7.31 am on the auspicious occasion of Baishakh Shukla Tritiya Saturday and the doors of Yamunotri Dham will open on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya Friday. The date of opening of the doors of Hemkund Sahib

and Laxman temple has not been decided yet.

The Devasthanam Board said that at present all events are being held in a symbolic way Covid-19 protocols will be followed at all events. Wearing masks, social distancing, sanitisation, thermal screening and Covid testing are being mandated as per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The administration has allowed only those people who are conducting daily prayers to visit the Dhams.

According to Harish Goud, the doors of Lord Madhmaheshwar is opening May 20, the doors of Lord Tungnath and the Lord Rudranath are opening Monday. Meanwhile, Lord Kedarnath's Panchmukhi Doli was also conducted in presence of a select people.

SHUTTLE TRAINING IN MATCH-LIKE SITUATIONS PREPARED BY HER KOREAN COACH

Sindhu all set for Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: The lack of competitions before the Olympics is a major concern for Indian shuttlers. However, it is not bothering medal aspirant PV Sindhu much. This is because she trusts her Korean coach Park Tae Sang to create match situations for her in training itself. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Badminton World Federation (BWF) has been forced to cancel the remaining three Olympic qualifiers in India, Malaysia and Singapore. These were to be the last set of events before the Tokyo Games in July-August.

Sindhu was asked if cancellations will affect her preparations. "Well, we were thinking that Singapore will be the last event before Olympics but now we don't have another option. I am playing matches against different players and my coach Park is trying to create match situations for me in training," Sindhu said Sunday. "Different players have different styles like Tai Tzu (Ying) or Ratchanok (Intanon) have different methods of play but Park is there to guide me, to prepare me for it. Obviously, we will be playing each other after a few months and there will be something new in our games, so I will have to prepare for that, for those unknown circumstances," Sindhu added. Sindhu is not training with the rest of the Indian Olympic-bound team. She has been training at the Gachibowli Indoor Stadium in Telangana and does her fitness training at the Suchitra Academy. The 25-year-old endorsed BWF's decision to cancel



the events. She said while it is sad that competitions cannot take place but life is more important than sports. "It is sad that the whole world has come to a standstill but before sportspersons, we are human beings and life comes first," Sindhu pointed out.

“As a player I think I am improving. Definitely the situation is challenging, but I am looking forward to the Tokyo Olympics”

PV SINDHU

If tournaments happen, we don't know if we will be safe, we might think we will be but we can't be sure because we don't know from where this virus will come. For the moment, events are being cancelled and I know sportspersons are sad but I think it is good for the people," added the Rio Olympics silver medallist.

Sindhu, the reigning World Champion, said it will be a tough task for organisers and athletes to adhere to the Covid-19 protocols at the Olympics and everyone has to brace up for the challenge. "Even in Olympics, I have heard that every day they will be testing us. Before we take off, we have to clear an RT-PCR test and after getting down we do a test again, it is definitely a tough task," Sindhu informed.

"...It is the Olympics and there will be so many athletes from so many countries but they also have to be very careful. As an athlete we have to prepare and just hope that everything is fine in the next few months. Unless you take care of yourself, it (virus) can spread any time, anywhere. So it will be tough," the World No. 7 signed off.

Indian eves may tour Australia for white ball series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: The Indian women's cricket team is set to travel to Australia in September. The Indian eves have played only one series amid the Covid-19 pandemic. However, they will tour England next month to play their first Test in seven years besides three ODIs and as many T20s.

Australia pacer Megan Schutt dropped a hint that India will be visiting in September though Cricket Australia (CA) is yet to announce the schedule. The tour is expected to comprise ODIs and T20 Internationals. The number of games hasn't been decided yet.

"We have got a tour against India in mid-September," Schutt said on 'No Balls: The Cricket Podcast', hosted by Kate Cross and Alex Hartley. "So, there's going to be a couple of camps. I believe we are doing one in Darwin, which will be really cool. And then the tour against India. And then pretty much from there things get crazy with Big Bash, WNCL, Ashes, World Cup, and hopefully the Commonwealth Games," Schutt stated.

The BCCI, in its last Apex Council meeting, had also approved the tour of Australia ahead of the World Cup in New Zealand next year. A home series against the West Indies was also cleared. However, the BCCI is yet to draw up the four programme regarding these matches.

The tour of Australia was originally planned for January this year but was postponed after the World Cup was put off to 2022 amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sources said that some of the Indian cricketers including Mithali Raj and Harmanpreet Kaur have complained about the lack of international matches to the BCCI. They have also said that they are awfully short of match practice as the IPL for women also did not materialise this year.

Keeping this in mind, the BCCI now wants the eves to play as many games as they can before the World Cup in New Zealand.

Paine lauds Kohli's competitive attitude



AGENCIES

Finally, Hussey leaves for home

Chennai: Having recovered from COVID-19, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) batting coach Michael Hussey left Sunday for Australia via Doha, a top official of the IPL franchise said. The former Australian batsman also known as 'Mr Cricket' had tested negative Friday paving the way for his return. "Yes, Hussey has left for Australia via Doha by a commercial flight. He left in the early hours of Sunday," CSK CEO K S Viswanathan stated. He is expected to reach home Monday. The 14th edition of the IPL was suspended May 4 after four players tested positive for Covid-19 inside its bio-bubble.

Paine, after the stunning loss in 2018-19, endured another debacle earlier this year when an injury-ravaged Indian team, that did not have Kohli after the opening Test, upstaged the Aussies in the Tests for a second successive tour win. After that loss Paine's captaincy had come in for severe criticism from former Aussie cricketers.

Paine had recently said that the Indian team had distracted them with their on-field antics and that led to loss of the Test series earlier this year. However, that theory also did not go down well with many of his teammates also. They said India were the better team and won the series deservedly.

SHORT TAKES

Golden leap

New Delhi: Indian high jumper Tejaswin Shankar has claimed a gold medal at the Big 12 Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Manhattan, USA. Representing Kanasa State University, Tejaswin cleared 2.28 metres Saturday, making a facility record. It was also the season's finest performance for the Indian but a centimetre short of his personal best and the current national record of 2.29m which he created in 2018. University of Oklahoma's Vernon Turner (2.25m) and Texas Tech University's Jequan Hogan (2.11m) claimed the silver and bronze respectively.

Sad demise

Rajkot: Former Saurashtra pacer and BCCI match referee Rajendrasinh Jadeja has died due to Covid-19, the Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) said Sunday. He was 66. "Everyone at the SCA are deeply saddened on the untimely demise of Rajendrasinh Jadeja, one of the most remarkable yesteryear cricketers of Saurashtra. He left for heavenly abode today (Sunday) early morning fighting a hard battle against COVID-19," the SCA said in a statement. He played 50 first-class matches and 11 List A games, taking 134 and 14 wickets respectively. He served as BCCI's official referee in 53 first class matches, 18 List A games and 34 T20s.

Liverpool triumph

London: Liverpool kept their Champions League aspirations alive beating West Bromwich 2-1 Sunday. The winning goal for the Reds was scored by Alisson Becker in the sixth minute of added on time. The win took Liverpool to 63 points, one short of Chelsea who are in fourth place in the Premier League table. It was however, Bromwich who took the lead when Hal Robson-Kalu scored in the 15th minute. Liverpool restored parity with Mohamed Salah in the 33rd minute. It was Salah's 22nd goal of the season in the Premier League and spurred Liverpool on. AGENCIES

1ST DOUBLE BAGEL IN WTA FINAL IN 5 YEARS

Swiatek routs Pliskova

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rome, May 16: If Iga Swiatek continues playing like this she might have no problem defending her French Open title when the year's second Grand Slam starts in two weeks. The 19-year-old Pole routed Karolina Pliskova 6-0, 6-0 with what is known as a 'double bagel' score in the women's final of the Italian Open tennis tournament. The final lasted just 46 minutes Sunday.

Swiatek lost just 13 points in the match. "Definitely not the best day for me," an exasperated Pliskova said after her defeat. "Iga was playing great tennis today and I had no answer," she added.

It was the first double bagel in a WTA final in five years, since Simona Halep overwhelmed Anastasija Sevastova in Bucharest. "I think you have just days like this in tennis where things are not going your way," Pliskova stated. "I will just quickly forget about today," Pliskova added.

Blasting winners at will with both her forehand and backhand, Swiatek led 17-5 in

winner's and committed only five unforced errors to Pliskova's 23.

It wasn't always so easy this week for Swiatek, the surprise winner in Paris last year when she was ranked 54th. She had to save two match points in her third-round victory over Barbora Krejickova then had to win twice Saturday - beating both two-time Rome champion Elina Svitolina and 17-year-old Coco Gauff - after her quarterfinal was pushed back a day due to rain.

"It's been a tough week but I'm really happy that I got through everything," Swiatek said. "I was super focused today so I'm really proud of myself," she added.

Swiatek's third career title will move her into the top 10 of the rankings for the first time Monday - to No. 9.

Pliskova was playing in her third consecutive final at the Foro Italico, having won the title in 2019. The veteran Czech player slammed her racket to the clay in frustration early in the second set and received a code violation warning for unsporting behaviour.

LEICESTER WIN MAIDEN FA CUP BEATING CHELSEA

Foxes rule Wembley



MEMORABLE NIGHT: Leicester City players celebrate with the FA Cup at the Wembley Stadium in London, Saturday

AGENCIES

London, May 16: Leicester City won the FA Cup for the first time in the club's 137-year history here Saturday as Youri Tielemans's sensational strike beat Chelsea 1-0 in front of 22,000 fans at Wembley.

The largest crowd for a sports event in England since the coronavirus pandemic hit 14 months ago was treated to a goal worthy to win any trophy as the Belgian midfielder blasted into the top corner on 63 minutes. Kasper Schmeichel produced a stunning save to deny Mason Mount late on and Chelsea also had a goal ruled out by a VAR review for offside.

Five years after the Foxes stunned the Premier League's giants to become champions, Leicester have now claimed English football's other prestigious trophy at the fifth time of asking.

The sides meet again in three days' time at Stamford Bridge in a pivotal clash to decide who secures a top-four finish in the Premier League. Chelsea need a quick response after losing for just the fourth time in 27 games since Thomas Tuchel replaced the sacked Frank Lampard in January.

Chelsea's success under Tuchel has come thanks to an excellent defensive record, but their struggles at the other end were again exposed.

Tuchel's men dominated before half time but laboured to create clear-cut chances despite Leicester losing defensive lynchpin Jonny Evans to injury midway through the first half. Timo Werner's wayward finishing has characterised his first season in England and the German international had another day to forget in front of goal.

Tuchel turned away in disgust after Werner blazed high and wide from the edge of the box with the Leicester defence stretched midway through the first half.

Werner then came closest to breaking the deadlock before half time as his header drifted just wide and evaded Cesar Azpilicueta as the Chelsea captain launched himself in at the far post.

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