

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'

t 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 Striaged 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 day, taking India's total tally of Covid-19 cases to 2,46,84,077. A total of 2,95,041 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.



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 ₹92.58 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



DIESEL ₹90.72 (+0.29)

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.

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

COUID

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

lust because govt is not doing it you dare to save people's lives? Are you trying to malign the govt's image?

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 Sahoo said, "For immediate help, people may rush to our hospital before voman, a suspected Covid patient



AGENCIES

Tauktae has intensified into a very severe cyclonic storm Sunday, the patients approaching them, Dr 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 Guiarat 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.

New Delhi, May 16: Cyclone

very severe cyclonic storm

CYCLONE TAUKTAE

Western states brace for

Toddler sold for ₹50K

BHUBANESWAR: The Commissionerate Police Sunday arrested a man from Navagarh 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 Navapalli police station in Bhubaneswar. Police arrested Srinibas Jena from Nayagarh for buying the child. P4

WEAT	IER			
	BHUB	СТК		
	37.4℃	36.2°	Ċ	
[₽] MIN	27.4°C	26.5°	Forecast	
Humidity	62%	67%	Light rain	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	likely	

who was allegedly turned away by the hospital on the pretext of lack of beds, has raised many evebrows. 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

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 hos-

pital 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 ad-

mission 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.

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



High sea waves due to cyclone Tauktae hit Bhagavathi Prem Sinken Dredger at Surathkal Beach near Mangalore, Sunday PTI PHOTO

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 fully damaged and many trees were uprooted. Power lines were found snapped in various parts. Relief camps were set up across the state. In Karnataka, four people were killed and 73 villages in six districts - three coastal and three in hilly regions of the Western Ghats - were destroyed due to Cyclone Tauktae. Chief Minister BS Yedivurappa stated the situation is being closely monitored and rescue

and relief operations are ensured.

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.



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"

COVID STRIKES BACK

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 healthcare, 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 ex-

pected 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 longerterm growth dynamics. It cut its GDP forecast to 9.3% from 13.7%. While the government main-

tains it is too early to revise its own numbers, officials privately con-

cede growth will be much more muted that 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 low-

ering 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

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

that servitors will perform the rit-

uals 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.

Binayak Das Mahapatra.









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





one 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, Ganesha gives you the thumbs-up.

TAURUS

A good day for money and love (you need more?). A quality, profes-

sional 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 fill 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 Ganesha.



work, your convictions will get the better of other people's vindictiveness, and vour colleagues will come around to your viewpoints. But don't take any criti cal decision without prior approval.



You will indulge in some important discussions with your family mem bers and clarify some

matters. You need to approach issues without prejudices. Do not judge with out 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. Ganesha advises you to take good care of your health.

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

ap-

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

proached me for this specific cam-

paign #IndiaForMothers to sup-

port widows and transgenders in

- many are currently jobless and in desperate need of support," added the Taare Zameen Par actress. The actress had IANS

community is also in need started an initiative last vear called At Tisca's Table, which she reinvented to help people during these troubled times.

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 Cape Town, where she is shooting

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 wellchiseled abs as she poses for the camera.

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

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 Vaidva 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 Bajrangi', is working to procure and supply life-saving equipment like oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders and oximeters to COVID-19 patients. He said 'Project Bajrangi' comes from a space of his personal

Hall Shapen a

"We had a civil work contractor by the name of Bajrangi Maurya. A wonderful man, full of in tegrity, hon-

estv. disci

polite to the

core. He was

and

FUN

pline

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 oxvgen levels were dropping," Mohit said As they started looking for a hos

full

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 ar

rived that Bajrangi 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 Bajrangi gone we were left shocked and defeated. Already through our friends we were trying to help people get access to medical care," narrated Mohit. AGENCIES









will trouble you through the day. To gain mental peace it is advised that you spend time mediating or doing voga. 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. Businessmer are likely to earn good profits, foresees Ganesha. 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 responsible 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 your, today. Luck is favouring you and it will show in every project or assignment you undertake, predicts Ganesha.

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





I TRIED TO

SELL THOSE

TICKETS!



CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY

WE'RE IN THE MARKET FOR A HEADSTONE FOR MY HUSBAND ... AND I WANT IT TO FEATURE GARISH LIGHTING A DIGITAL READOUT WITH THE NEWS HEADLINES AND GPS BUILT IN TO TELL PEOPLE HOW TO FIND IT ...

YOU'RE LUCKY SO TRY TO TO CHECK IT EVERY DO AN EXTRA TIGERS ARE TO MAKE SO SMART GOOD JOB SURE IT'S DONE NOW, OK? RIGHT! CAN YOU 13 BELIEVE IT ?

SHAKEY'S GRAVE STONES MARTHA! THAT'S PREPOSTEROUS! YOU'LL HAVE ALL THAT ONLY OVER MY DEAD BODY!



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

pital,

they fig-

ured every

hospital was

"Panic struck

too. We asked

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.

	9	7		6		2	3	
3	4							
2		6						5
	_		5	S	7			
	7			4	6			8
				8		3	Ĩ	
			8	2		6		1
1					4		2	
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downtown



SUMMER RITUAL

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



COME AFTER

H...G...IG WEEKS

COVID-19 TRACKER

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

VACCINE

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 devel-

oped 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

Puri-Okha Special

POST NEWS NETWORK

cancelled for cyclone

Bhubaneswar, May 16: In view of

Cyclone Tauktae along coastal

Gujarat, Puri-Okha-Puri Special

from Puri May 16 and from Okha

Earlier, in view of poor patron-

isation 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

The trains are: Bhubaneswar-

Bolangir-Bhubaneswar Special,

Visakhapatnam Special, Puri-LTT-

Puri Weekly Special Express,

Bhubaneswar-LTT-Bhubaneswar

Visakhapatnam-Kacheguda-

Visakhapatnam-Cuddapah-

Express Special.

from both the directions.

May 19 will remain cancelled.

Detected New Infections (7 Day Average) 840 672 504 Mar '21 15 Ma Actual Data AModel Computed Data

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

POST NEWS NETWORK

(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

Virus claims UTP of Jharpada jail

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

he 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

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.

POST NEWS NETWORK Bhubaneswar: May 16: In view of the rising cases of Covid-19, the state government has suspended

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

"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

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-



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

The office of the

an order Sundav

Special Relief

rently on. The government's deci-

sion will go a long way in con-

taining the spread of the virus

Odisha, however, is not the first

tainment industry observed.

POLITICKLE BY MANJUL

shooting of films and television

OMAN

since the number of cases started increasing.

Commissioner issued stopping both indoor and outdoor shooting of films and TV serials

as clause 6 (xii).

among the artistes and technicians, people close to the enter-



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

> 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.

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) Subhakanta 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

bi-weekly Special Express, back, Mishra said. Later, Mohanty was shifted to Visakhapatnam daily Express AIIMS after his health condition de-Special and Visakhapatnamteriorated. Though Mohanty was Lingampalli-Visakhapatnam daily found negative in three rapid antigen tests at AIIMS, his RT-PCR

CHARIOT WORK IN FULL SWING



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 infrastruc-

ture 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.





Oppn slams govt over 'lack' of beds

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress Sunday came down heavilv 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."



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

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-thecounter 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.



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

Deople 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 ther-apy are more prone to the disease, said the experts.

OrissaPOST MONDAY | MAY 17 | 2021 | BHUBANESWAR

downtown

NHRC seeks ATR on anti-liquor activist's 'murder' in Jajpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Jajpur Superintendent of Police to submit an action-taken report (ATR) in connection with the alleged murder of a woman who opposed illegal sale of liquor at Barei village under Mangalpur police limits in the district

The rights panel, while hearing a petition lodged by a rights activist, directed the SP to submit the ATR within six weeks. The commission also asked the SP to enquire into the alleged police inaction in the matter that led to the fatal attack on the lady.



The Jajpur Collector has also been asked to submit a separate report with the details regarding the monetary compensation awarded to the next kin of the deceased lady under various government schemes as well as Section 357 of the CrPC within six weeks. Notably, Bijay Jena of Barei vil-

lage was selling liquor illegally. But Lakshmi had been opposing liquor sale in the village. She had even asked Bijay to refrain from the illegal trade. Later, she had lodged a complaint at the local police station seeking action against the bootlegger.

Acting on her complaint, police asked Bijay to stop the illegal business and warned him of action if he continues with the business.

Bijay had since been harbouring a grudge against Lakshmi. He attacked her with stones and sticks May 3. A critically injured Lakshmi was rescued by the villagers and rushed to the Jajpur district headquarters hospital. Later, she was shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack after her condition deteriorated. However, she succumbed to her injuries May 3.

VETS CALL OFF STIR AMID COVID SURGE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar; May 16: The Odisha Veterinary Service Association, which has been spearheading the protest of veterinary doctors demanding sanction of long pending rights of the healthcare workers, has called off the protests

OVER 1.08 CRORE SAMPLES HAVE BEEN TESTED IN THE STATE SO FAR, INCLUDING 56,442 SATURDAY

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 16: Odisha's Covid-19 caseload Sunday surged to 6,12,224 after 11,732 more people tested positive for the infection, while 19 fresh fatalities pushed the state's toll to 2,313, a Health department official said.

Of the 11,732 new cases, 6,569 were detected in various quarantine centres and the remaining during contact tracing, the official said. Khurda district, of which state

capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of new cases at 1,710, followed by Cuttack at 810 and Angul 700.

Of the 30 districts, only Gajapati and Kandhamal registered less than 100 new cases each.

Khurda accounted for four deaths, Angul and Rayagada three each, and Nuapada and Sundargarh two each. One patient each succumbed to the infection in Gajapati, Kendrapara, Nabarangpur,

Nayagarh and Puri districts. This apart, 53 Covid-19 patients in the state have died due to comorbidities. At least 10,781 patients recuperated in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries to 5,02,455. Odisha's positivity rate stands at 5.63 per cent. Over 1.08 crore sample tests have

been conducted in the coastal state so far, including 56,442 Saturday. Meanwhile, keeping in view the relentless surge in Covid-19 cases, the state government Sunday modified its earlier order and cancelled



CMC Commissioner Ananya Das interacts with a patient at Sadguru Covid Hospital Covid hosps told to open helpline

Bhubaneswar: In the wake of several patients lodging complaints against Covid hospitals alleging lack of information about the health status of their kin, the state government Sunday directed all Covid hospitals and Covid care centres to set up 24X7 help desks mandatorily. The state said each help desk must have a dedicated telephone preferably a toll-free number. The toll-free numbers of all Covid-19 facilities shall be widely notified to the public. The help desk shall be manned with sufficient human resource personnel so as to attend to all calls round the clock, the government added.

permission for shooting of films and TV serials

An analysis of Covid infections in May revealed that 1,57,617 cases have been detected during the last fortnight from May 1 to May 15 and 1,16,705 patients recovered during the period. The Coronavirus has claimed 259 lives during the last 15 days in the state.

What has worried the administration is that despite imposition of lockdown since May 5 and weekend shutdown in the state, the Covid cases continued to remain over 10,000 cases every day since May 5 last except May 10 when it dipped to 9,793.

The Capital city reported 1,353 L Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, according to data shared by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Sunday.

Of the total cases, 1,135 were local contact and 218 were quarantine cases, the civic body said, adding that the Temple City has so far reported 61,634 Covid cases.

The data further stated as many as 938 Covid patients recuperated from the disease in last 24 hours. The recovered cases in the city stood at 49,224.

RAJMAHAL TO AG SQUARE IN CAPITAL CITY



Cuttack: Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Commissioner Ananya Das Sunday made a surprise visit to a Covid hospital here and enquired about the facilities and treatment for the people infected with the novel oronavirus

Das, who was in PPE kit, inspected Sadguru Covid Hospital at Jagatpur and interacted with the patients.

She advised the patients to contact the CMC if they face any kind of inconvenience at the hospital.

"Das enquired about the facilities and treatment being provided by the hospital to the Covid patients," CMC sources said.

The CMC Commissioner also held discussions with the doctors and health staffers at the hospital.

"I will make surprise visits to other Covid hospitals in the city to enquire about the situation, Das said.

City reports 1,353 cases in 24 hours



As many as 293 persons in the City died due to Covid. As per the latest data available, the number of active cases in the City stood at 12,906.

CP rescues baby sold for ₹50K; 1 arrested 11,732 new nCoV cases, 19 deaths in 1 day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: Commissionerate Police Sunday rescued a child allegedly sold by his father for Rs 50,000 following the intervention of Childline officials of Bhubaneswar. Police also arrested the person accused of buying the baby from the father in April last year. The accused was identified as Srinivas Jena of Chandapur in Nayagarh district.

According to sources, in 2018, the mother of the baby, Arati Naik, came in contact with one Tapan Palei, an employee of a private company and staying near her colony in Bangalore of Karnataka. Subsequently, they developed relationship and tied the nuptial knot at a temple in Bangalore.

The couple came back to Odisha and started living at Salia Sahi after they lost their jobs in 2020. Arati later gave birth to a baby boy at a private hospital in Nayapalli in March 2020. Meanwhile, Tapan started torturing Arati, who reportedly belongs to a lower caste. Subsequently, Tapan, having an ulterior motive, took Arati and her child to Khurda on the pretext of administering polio drops to the 12day-old infant at a hospital there. On his return, Tapan informed

Arati about selling the baby and threatened her of dire consequences if she informed the police. The woman lodged a complaint

with Nayapalli police against Tapan alleging domestic violence after returning to Bhubaneswar. She also accused Tapan of kidnapping her 12-day-old baby

However, police did not take any action to recover the child and find out the accused buyer. Later, Arati lodged a petition

with the Childline in this connecstitution (CCI).

NUABAZAR AREA IN CUTTACK









ACCOUNT OF THE SUPPLY OF THE ESSENTIAL DRUG

According to the minister, the

TAPAN, THE FATHER OF THE BABY TOOK THE CHILD TO KHURDA ON THE PRETEXT OF ADMINISTERING POLIO DROPS TO THE INFANT AT A HOSPITAL THERE

ON HIS RETURN, TAPAN INFORMED ARATI ABOUT SELLING THE BABY AND THREATENED HER OF DIRE CONSEQUENCES IF SHE INFORMED THE POLICE

THE WOMAN LODGED A COMPLAINT WITH NAYAPALLI POLICE AGAINST TAPAN ALLEGING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AFTER RETURNING TO BHUBANESWAR

SHE ALSO ACCUSED TAPAN OF KIDNAPPING HER 12-DAY-OLD BABY

ARATI LODGED A PETITION WITH THE CHILDLINE WHICH IMMEDIATELY URGED THE DCP, CWC AND DCPO TO LOOK INTO THE ISSUE

tion. The Childline officials immediately urged the DCP, CWC and DCPO to look into the alleged police inaction.

Following Childline's intervention, police swung into action and arrested the accused from Navagarh Sunday. The baby was handed over to Childline after being produced before the CWC. The child is now at Ama Ghara, a local child care in-



temporarily.

The association Sunday said in the light of Covid-19 pandemic and government assurances of accepting the demands of veterinary doctors, it has been decided to call off the protests. The members of the association had earlier announced pen down agitation, shunning digital works and were working wearing black badges to mark their protest.

This comes after the government requested the veterinarians to consider calling off their protests amidst the pandemic

"It is unanimously decided to offer the government a timeline upto August 1 to support it at this critical juncture in the interest of the public. However, it has urged the state government to consider the decision made by the association by initiating appropriate steps to correct the historical prejudice to the veterinary fraternity of the state, failing which the agitation will commence rather in an intensive manner with effect from August 21," the association said.

The association had been demanding equality and recognition for entry level Group A category in government service. The agitation pitching for their rights was started by veterinarians April 25. The association claimed that it has been fighting for more than 15 years to seek the entry level Group A (junior) status in parity with central government and most state-run vet hospitals.

Bhubaneswar, May 16: The Union government Sunday said that it has allocated 1,40,000 doses of

Remdesivir injections to Odisha in the ongoing fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers DV Sadananda Gowda Sunday presented a detailed account of the supply of the essential drug. He said that the allocation of the drug was made upto May 23.

He said that there has been a major boost in the overall production and allocation of Remdesivir in the country. The allocations were done for a period from April 21 to May 23.

states have been asked to monitor the proper distribution of the drug in government and private hospitals to ensure its rational use in the treatment of the viral disease.

"State governments/UTs have been advised to place adequate purchase orders with the marketing companies immediately, if they have not already done so, for the quantity that they want to purchase out of allocation for the state/UT as per supply chain in close coordination with liaison officers of the companies. The coordination with private distribution channel in the state could also be made," a statement from the chemical and fertiliser ministry said.



Residents of the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack kept themselves confined to their homes as the weekend shutdown was in force at all urban areas of the state to check the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. Roads, traffic junctions and marketplaces wore a deserted look while the government deployed adequate police personnel to enforce the restrictions OP PHOTOS

MADHUPATNA AREA IN SILVER CITY

Free ambulance service for patients in Capital city

Humanity dies as kitten thrown before dogs Bhubaneswar: Some people often stoop

The availability of a fully-equipped ambulance in the state capital is a big support to the BMC's efforts to tackle the crisis

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: Extending a helping hand in these trying times, a voluntary outfit has launched free ambulance service for Covid-19 patients in Khurda district

According to sources, SOS Children's Villages of India, the childcare NGO dedicated to the welfare of the children who have lost or at the risk of losing parental care, has launched the free 24x7



ambulance service in the city reas a boon for the Covid patients cently for Covid-19 patients. in the City and elsewhere in Khurda The ambulance service has come district as the caseload continues

to increase. The availability of a fully-equipped ambulance in the state capital is also a big support to the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), which finds it tough to shift Covid patients who develop severe complications to hospitals on time.

People in need can dial 9938354306 or 9937287160 for the emergency service. On launch of free ambulance service, the outfit's secretary general, Sumanta Kar, said, "The healthcare sector

across the country is facing huge challenges in dealing with the second wave of the pandemic. The rise in Covid-19 cases is overwhelming the healthcare infrastructure. The situation in Bhubaneswar is no different.' Kar added, "We are running the

free ambulance service here to support the efforts being taken by the state government and the municipal corporation in containing the pandemic and saving lives of the Covid patients.'

so low that their deeds embarrass the whole humanity. In such an inhuman incident, a man threw a kitten before the stray dogs that killed the innocent animal in Prasanti Vihar area here. The incident came to the fore after the CCTV footage went viral. The incident took place May 13 morning. Infocity police registered a case in this regard on the basis of a complaint lodged by an animal activist Sunday. As per the video footage, the person threw the kitten before the stray dogs and also watched the dogs mauling the animal to death. Meanwhile, the mother cat fought an unsuccessful battle against the dogs to save her child.

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OrissaPOST MONDAY MAY 17 2021 BHUBANESWAR

state

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 (MPFs).

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.

Tribal people belonging to 26 Gram Sabhas have sent their complaints to the additional secretary of the Forest and Environment department.

According to reports, traditional forest dwellers are entitled to collect and sell MFPs under the Forest Rights Act-2006 and revised laws of 2012. Gram Sabhas in the scheduled areas are empowered to issue transit permits for sales of MFPs. But there is an exception in Kalahandi district, tribals alleged.

They pointed out that the FRA-2006 recognises the rights of the tribal communities and other tra-



Tribals alleged Villagers pointed out that Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition that March 18, of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, recognises the rights Bhawanipatna of the tribal communities and other traditional dwellers to forest resources DFO(Kendu Leaf)

has issued a notice to 26 Gram Secretary of the ST/SC welfare dept, Ranjana Chopra has, meanwhile written a letter to the Sabhas, imposing additional secretary of the Forest and Environment restrictions on department, Kalahandi Collector and the southern sales of kendu range RDC to take necessary action in this direction leaf and bamboo

ditional dwellers to forest reother socio-cultural needs. As per the FRA-2006, the Gram Sabha is sources. "We depend on forest resources for a variety of needs, ina highly empowered body to enable cluding livelihood, habitation and the tribal population to have a decisive 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 murram 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.

It is said that murram is being looted in Danagadi area for a long time at the instruction of an influential person who is a trader.

According to reports, a construction agency engaged in the expansion work of an NH in the area has been permitted to lift 70,000 cubic metre of murram from a hill in Baghuapal. The murram will be used in road construction.

However, it was alleged that the agency apart from using the murram for NH work, is also selling the mineral to others, which is illegal

Doorstep mobile services for Covid jabs 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 mak ing 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 Ganiam 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 mediapersons 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.

BJD leaders oppose ethanol refinery plant

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, May 16: A day after **Orissa POST** carried a report on the proposed ethanol bio refinery plant at Deogaon in Sambalpur, Redhakhole MLA and Deputy Chief Whip of the government Rohit Pujari and former district BJD president Pramod Rath opposed the move Sunday. The plant is being built by a Delhi-based company. They talked to Maneswar tehsildar over the phone and asked the latter to stall the process to allocate

land to the company "Locals will face a of problems. Pollution

lot

will increase in the area due to the plant. We will oppose the construction of the factory. The management of the company is trying to grab land of the poor people through some local middlemen. We will not allow that to happen,'

Pujari fumed. "Farmlands will not be spared for the factory. People here solely depend on farming. We are with the people. The state government is promoting agriculture and farmers through lift irrigation and



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

said that project director Anam Charan Patra was visiting the 10 test positive in Jharsuguda orphanage

other rural areas

JHARSUGUDA: A day after 68 inmates of Jhrasuguda sub-jail tested positive for Covid-19, another 10 positive cases were reported from

Thakkar Bapa Seva Sadan, Nirakar PCR reports are yet to come," in-Kishan said some inmates had formed district child protection complained of high temperatures officer Sunand Maharana. two days ago. "So 50 inmates and

Malkangiri/Khairput: A total of

12 persons belonging to the Bonda

tribe in this district have been in-

fected by coronavirus. Among them,

eight are undergoing treatment

while four have already recovered

from the disease. The district ad-

According to Debabrata Barik,

medical officer of Khairput Hospital,

the patients undergoing treatment

in home isolation have mild infec-

tions. A rapid response team is

closely monitoring their health

fled from a quarantine centre at

Ghasapada village under Adaba po-

lice limits. However, he surren-

dered before police two days later.

Nodal officer Davanidhi Navak

ministration is keeping a close transmission in the hilly regions. watch on the recovery of the inthe local administration has closed fected persons. This is because they the weekly markets. do not want the virus to spread in

conditions. They have been given

The first case of Covid-19 infec-

tion 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

the required medicines.

8 Covid-infected Bonda tribals recovering

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





mega irrigation projects,' Pujari added

Pujari warned that after the lockdown, people will stage protests in front of the district collector's office. The Collector will also be intimated about the issue. Pujari said.

It was learnt that a private company based in Delhi has identified 40 acres of land in Maneswar area to set up the plant which will manufacture bio fuel from paddy straw. The company has, meanwhile. applied at the tehsil for land measurement and acquisition. The process has slowed down due to the Covid-19 situation.

Local farmers accused the company of setting its eyes on agricultural land. They said the administration is helping the company set up the plant. However, when the locals will suffer due to pollution, there will be no one from the administration to help out.

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,

POST NEWS NETWORK

screws to stop it.

Khaira, May 16: Taking into ac-

nel will be employed to curb illegal

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-

trict 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

"As per the direction of the dis

Interestingly, Tata Hyvas transporting murram had 'NHAI stickers' pasted on the front just to give the impression that murram is used for NH work only.

"This is how the mineral mafia is hoodwinking the law. Some un-

Modi has started investigating the matter. She visited the plots where the murram has been dumped.

scrupulous staff of the tehsil, rev-

enue inspectors and police are pro-

tecting such illegal activities," lo-

cals alleged. An influential trader

of Danagadi area is behind such il-

legal murram plundering in the

It was learnt that this murram

is being used to level a plot of land

owned by this trader near the Biju

In fact, people have taken help of

the person on a number of occa-

sions to procure murram. The per-

son is operating without fear as

he has close connections with some

field staff of the construction com-

This illegal activity caught the

attention of the local people

Thursday when five Tata Hyvas, en-

gaged to carry murram from

Baliapal forest, got stuck on the

Danagadi tehsildar Namrata

locality, they said.

Pattnaik Marg.

way due to rains.

pany

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.

had also expressed concern as the

biodiversity of Sarisua hill was

being disturbed. The body said

that elephants and other wild an-

imals living in the area were fac-

ing dangers due to illegal mining.

idents of peripheral villages like

Guapala, Bageipur, Kadaligadia,

Sarata, Ramada and Baunsagadia

have been asking the district ad-

ministration to take steps to stop il-

legal mining for a very long time.

This is because onion is a tem-

perate crop and can be grown in

all types of climatic condition and

soils. Moreover, it needs light irri-

gation which makes it the preferred

The farmers had reaped a good

harvest this year and were ex-

pecting handsome returns from the

sale of onions. However, the un-

seasonal rainfall shattered all

their hopes as it has led to the rot-

choice of the farmers.

It should be stated here that res-

mining in the above mentioned locality. Despite imposition of Section 144 in and around the 97 mines at

count, the illegal mining activithe Sarisua hill, illegal mining has ties going on at Sarisua hill under Khaira tehsil limits in Balasore, been going on rampantly. The unnewly-joined tehsildar Mahendra holv nexus prevalent between some Prasad Behera is tightening the of the temporary staff of Khaira tehsil and lease holders of mines Behera has started taking proacis responsible for the ongoing illegal tive measures and he said Sunday activities, the tehsildar said. that one platoon of police person-

"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 subcollector 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

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 produces, 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



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

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 Bemal, a farmer of Thuitibara 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 willbe paid compensation after funds are available, informed Patel.





power post

FOCUS PANDEMIC RESPONSE

To hope for a true change of human life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition. SRI AUROBINDO



Poster Boys

The reaction of the Delhi Police, which is under the direct control and supervision of the Union government, to a dozen or so young men sticking posters on some walls in the national capital can only be termed as hilariously idiotic. The posters being stuck on some walls questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi, among other things, as to why he sent vaccines abroad that the children of this nation could have had now.

Undoubtedly, this is a sensitive issue for which Modi has no answers. It also demonstrated the depth to which people's emotions have been disturbed by recent happenings. News and photographs of cremation grounds piled up with bodies aflame, hundreds queuing up in front of hospitals for beds and oxygen have become daily fare. So have desperate calls for help from large number of people on social media for oxygen and medicines. The biggest shocker has come with the discovery of thousands of unidentified, unclaimed dead bodies. First, hundreds of bodies were noticed floating ashore in different parts of Bihar and later thousands of bodies were spoted buried in shallow sands on the banks of the river Ganga, which were exposed after rains in Uttar Pradesh. These extremely disturbing and shocking images have shaken the faith of people not only on Modi but also the government of India. What is astonishing is the underplaying or complete blackout of such news by most national media as also TV channels and newspapers of Orissa.

Calculating everything politically may eventually harm greater national interest. While friendly media is trying to cover up these gory events, the government's reprisals in the form of arrests by the police make the events widely noticeable. Take for instance the poster boys. They might have put up some posters at a few places and gone home. Delhi being an RSS stronghold, some Hindootva supporters could have easily re-



moved the posters and ended the story. Also noticeable is the arrests of very many people appealing for medical help on social media. Using government machinery as an instrument of political oppression indicates a government which is willing to go to any lengths to silence people from pointing out its weaknesses. It can also signify an unwillingness of party workers to expose themselves to public wrath. Therefore, the dependence on the police and other government agencies.

The anger of the people emanates from unavailability of medicines, oxygen and vaccines to name a few. The Prime Minister is putting up a desperate effort at diverting the issue by asking for an audit of oxygen availability in different states. This attitude might prove even more damaging for Modi. It is not as if hospitals had access to oxygen but connived to deprive and kill patients. The natural poser to Modi could be whether he wants to show the audit report to the dead or to their kin. This is not the appropriate time to keep people busy carrying out oxygen audits in all states, so also this is a wrong time to be arresting poster boys for petty political gains. In other words, with the Prime Minister himself getting defocused, the Union government has lost track and seems to have abdicated its responsibilities. A leadership is recognized for its worth during times of crisis. Instead of blaming all else for the present plight of citizens, the Centre should have been more proactive and focused on national health and crisis management. Unfortunately, it has failed to do so. By trying to divert attention of people by using the police and other wings of the government, Modi has damaged himself more than any opposition forces could have achieved.

WISDOM CORNER

- Silence is the sleep that nourishes wisdom.
- FRANCIS BACON Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live.
- JIM ROHN Love is an energy which exists of itself. It is its own value. THORNTON WILDER

BUILDING VACCINE TRUST

ugging your parents. Meeting your grandchild for the first time. La ughing with friends – in person! COVID-19 vaccines promise to bring us closer to our loved ones and enjoy the sort of moments we have missed over the past 14 months. The delight of those already immunised is clear: on social media, people are selfdocumenting and sharing their vaccination moment with the message "I'm protected!"

We cannot afford to lose that enthusiasm, even in the face of recently reported rare instances of blood clotting following some COVID-19 vaccinations.

Heidi J. Larson

ALTHOUGH

HIGHLY

SAVE 2-3

NOT NEW

VACCINES ARE

EFFECTIVE AND

MILLION LIVES

GLOBALLY EACH

YEAR. ANXIETY

ABOUT THEM IS

How those risks are managed, communicated, and - most important-perceived will be crucial to sustaining public confidence in COVID-19 immunisation drives. And in this context, people's trust in policymakers, experts, and institutions will be as important as trust in the vaccines themselves. Our leaders need to be transparent in their actions and recognise that every day of delay and indecision regarding vaccine communication provides fertile ground for anxiety and misinformation much of it online.

To reassure the public, we need to change our approach and talk about risk management as an ongoing process, which is the approach scientists and regulatory authorities follow when they evaluate vaccines. Governments create vaccine safety monitoring systems to observe signs of any possible risks and ensure that guidance is based on the latest data. This is an iterative process and finding a rare side effect means that the system is working. Scientists and regulators use the

Scientists and regulators use the same process for any medication, from over-the-counter painkillers to chemotherapy drugs, but it is often invisible to the public. By contrast, COVID-19 vaccines have been designed, approved, and administered under a global spotlight, with every step in the de-



How risks associated with some Covid vaccines are managed, communicated, and – most important – perceived will be crucial to sustaining public confidence in immunisation drives. People's trust in policymakers, experts, and institutions will be as important as trust in the vaccines themselves

velopment process and every report of a potential risk magnified and shared around the world. As a result, rare side effects seem more common than they actually are, making it more difficult for the public to evaluate the risk.

The public is capable of managing risk: we do it individually and collectively every time we leave the house, drive a car, or take medication, for example. But people need clear information. In the case of the reported blood clots, this means ensuring that they understand not only the possible risks related to getting a COVID-19 vaccine, but also the risk of choosing not to receive one. Health-care providers and vaccinators must also clearly communicate the possible signs and symptoms of a serious vaccine reaction and help people understand when they should seek immediate treatment.

This is true of all vaccines. Although vaccines are highly effective and save 2-3 million lives to s and globally each year, anxiety about them is not new. The first anti-vaccine league emerged in Britain in the nineteenth century, after the government made smallpox vaccination compulsory. Some thought that vaccination – then natural and 'against God's plan.' But while vaccination was far riskier than it is today, many thought the risk well worth taking in the face of a devastating epi-

demic. Today, we face COVID-19 - another lethal pathogen that has affected everyone in some way. At the Vaccine Confidence Project. we are monitoring social media globally to understand people's questions and concerns regarding COVID-19 vaccines, as well as trust-building successes. The most frequent theme we see - in over 200 languages – is an impatient call to put the pandemic behind us. And vaccines are central to achieving this. But, for some, eagerness alone will not be enough to motivate them to get vaccinated. They will first need to feel more confident.

At an individual level, therefore, people need to be able to ask questions about COVID-19 vaccines without being treated dismissively and get the information and support they need to make educated decisions. Doctors and nurses are some of the most trusted members of society so it is important that they make time to listen to their patients' concerns in an empathetic manner. But they also need to have the latest information and guidance to communicate to patients and to reinforce their own confidence in COVID-19 vaccination.

At the policy level, governments need to invest in short- and long-term communication and public engagement to support vaccine delivery. And policymakers and scientific institutions must become more agile and learn to speak to the public directly and transparently about important findings.

The key is not only to get vaccine information right, but also to make it relevant to people's questions, and to build trust by responding in ways that make sense in the context of their daily lives. When the next crisis hits, with different risks, the public will remember how their concerns were addressed during this one.

It is perfectly normal to have questions about vaccines. How we answer them will make all the difference. If we respond well now, and bolster public confidence, we have the chance to establish a relationship of trust that will serve as a solid foundation to meet whatever health crisis comes next.

The writer, Founding Director of the Vaccine Confidence Project, is a Professor of Anthropology and Risk at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

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SPECTRUM CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Sustainability reporting & India Inc.

S ustainability reporting is gaining momentum worldwide as a significant communication tool for corporate entities to disclose their sustainability plans, concerns and performance egy and its commitment to a sustainable global economy.'

SEBI has taken many steps for sustainability reporting by the corporate world. SEBI mandated transparent disclosing and rein enhanced corporate reputation, strengthening stakeholder's confidence, and better risk management.

How a company manages its them waste, controls pollution, ways of formation

clusion of ESG considerations in the corporate reporting to create desired awareness among investors for sustainable investing. It will help them in providing required information so as to enable the in-

WORDS**WORTH**

Myrmidon

t is not good to be called a myrmidon. It is not a term of respect. Officious and aggressive police officers sometimes have it thrown at them by more literate commentators, as do holders of public office who are carrying out unpopular policies: Their concern is that an unprecedented spending spree by our 535 noble members of Congress, supported by the myrmidons at the Fed, will force interest rates higher and bond values to fall (The Herald News (Joliet, Illinois). 13 May 2011). It is less effective than it might be as a term of abuse because it requires the addressee to have at least a smattering of classical knowledge. According to the Greek storyteller Homer in the Iliad, the Myrmidons were a warlike people of Thessaly; they were renowned for their mindless loyalty to Achilles, their king, who led them in the Trojan War. Greek legends about where they came from played on a fanciful link of their name with Greek myrmekes, ants. One suggested that Zeus created them from a nest of ants. The word has existed in English since medieval times but over time has become progressively less reputable. For Shakespeare, myrmidons were faithful followers, the members of a bodyguard or retinue. A century later they had become hired ruffians or mercenaries. By the nineteenth century they had sunk somewhat lower to be opportunistic supporters of some person or organisation. Today a myrmidon is often an unscrupulous subordinate: But not even the police will forever be able to ignore the question of whether or not Rupert Murdoch, always a keen reader of his own newspapers, knew from the first day they did it that his myrmidons were lifting illicit stuff for their piddling stories (Daily Telegraph, 16 July 2011).

Nail

The text, in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge, has become known as the Corpus Glossary. It's a list of Latin words with their Old English equivalents. Nail is included twice in its Old English form naegl, once to translate a variant of the classical Latin unguis for a finger or toe nail, the other the words paxillum and palum for a wooden pin or peg. The experts say that naegl derives from a prehistoric Indo-European root that became not only unguis but also Greek onux and other words of the same meaning in most of the languages of Europe. The original senses of the Latin and Greek words could be a finger or toe nail, but both were also used for the horny endings of the toes of cattle, horses, birds and other beasts, for which we now have the separate words hoof, claw and talon. A link in shape between claws and pointed fasteners of wood or metal seems to have been established in prehistory, centuries before it was written down in the Corpus Glossary.

LOL

Chief is at a wedding

A police officer in a small town stopped a motorist who was speeding down Main Street. "But officer," the man began, "I can explain."

"Just be quiet," snapped the officer. "I'm going to let you cool your heels in jail until the chief gets back."



just wanted to say." "And I said to keep quiet! You're going to jail!" A few hours later the officer looked in on his prisoner and said, "Lucky for you that the chief is at his daughter's wedding. He'll be in a good mood when he gets back." "Don't count on it," answered the fellow in the cell. "I'm the groom."



Bhaskar Nath Biswal

APART FROM PROVIDING GOOD RETURNS TO THE SHAREHOLDERS, THE ORGANISATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO BE RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY

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TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST

(200 words), articles and

words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full

columns (between 750-1250

to achieve confidence of stakeholders. Although Indian regulatory authorities issued guidelines from time to time, the norms are still not clear as to what to report and how to report.

In its circular issued on May 10, SEBI notified the format of Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR) which will be applicable to the top 1000 listed corporate entities by market capitalisation. However, the reporting of BRSR shall be voluntary for FY 2021-22 and mandatory from FY 2022-23. It is a right move taken by the regulator which is expected to bring in greater transparency in the reporting of business entities which enables stakeholders to assess the sustainability related information for identifying risks and opportunities. Global Reporting Initiative de-

fines a sustainable report as 'a report published by a company or organisation about the economic, environmental and social impacts caused by its everyday activities. A sustainability report also presents the organisation's values and governance model, and demonstrates the link between its strat-

porting norms for top 100 listed companies by market capitalisation to submit Business Responsibility Reports (BRR) in 2012 as per the disclosure requirement recommended by the National Voluntary Guidelines (NVGs) on Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business. Indian companies gradually paid attention to sustainability and started to establish a clear relation between sustainability and risk management. It has been observed that the triple bottom line elements planet, people and profits become a part of their internal audit so that the issues are better discussed at the board level. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs revised the NVGs in 2019 and formulated the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC). SEBI extended the BRR requirement to the top 1000 listed entities by market capitalisation, from the financial year 2019-20. By replacing BRR with BRSR the regulator emphasised on quantifiable metrics facilitating measurement and intercompany comparisons. The disclosures of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals and a company's

progress towards them will result

energy use, greenhouse emissions, bio-diversity responsibility of conservation of natural resources, come under the environmental criteria. Social criteria aim at examining the organisation's relationship with employees, suppliers, creditors, customers, value chain and communities where it operates and how far it fulfilled its aims and objectives. Companies have to disclose gender and social diversity of employees, welfare measures for general and differently-abled employees and occupational safety initiatives. Social Impact Assessment is to be made on the community front. Governance deals with the company's accounting policy, leadership, management, internal control and opportunities given to the shareholders. The philosophy of responsible

The philosophy of responsible business is to take the above decisions to fulfil the objectives as per the expectations of the society. Apart from providing good returns to the shareholders, the organisations are expected to be responsible and sustainable towards the environment and society. The COVID-19 nandemic has

The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the need for in-

vestor to make a rational and prudent judgement while choosing his investment. Global organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Institute of International Finance (IIF), the International Finance Reporting Standards (IFRS) Foundation, the International Organisation of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) are advocating better ESG disclosures by the corporate entities with stress on a common global framework.

SEBI's BRSR format is a right start for the India Inc. to initiate ESG based disclosure with materiality indicators and measurements. It is a significant step towards bringing the sustainable reporting at par with the financial reporting which enables investors to have access to standardised disclosures on ESG parameters. Finally, the standard ESG disclosures will help in more transparency for the organisations and attract more investment of capital.

> The writer is Head, Department of Commerce, Nowrangpur College, Nabarangpur.

Stricter curbs needed

Sir, Two-week lockdown in Odisha is on upto Wednesday. Well calculated measures were taken to curb the rapid spread of coronavirus. But, it seems people continue violating the guidelines despite humble appeals from the administration and from our Chief Minister resulting in upward spike in positive cases. Almost all the districts in the state show a very high number of cases, which is a matter of grave concern. The six-hour relaxation on five days of the week has been taken by the undisciplined lot as a sort of license to defy the dos and don'ts. It must be put to a halt immediately. Shops for purchase of essential items must follow the guidelines to check the spread of the virus. Alternatively, the authorities must take measures to sell daily required provisions of the people by special transport system such as mobile provision vehicles in selected places of the towns under their supervision. This would not only ensure checking unnecessary crowding of market places, but also the undisciplined lot will come to senses when they will be properly guided by the law enforcing personnel. It is said that the position of Odisha is in no way better than other states. There may be a modified lockdown timing that can help reduce crowding of market places. Sanjib Kumar Das, CUTTACK

Shortage of beds

Sir, In the present situation, Covid patients are sleeping in the medical corridors because there are no beds in hospitals. In our state thousands of college and high school buildings are lying vacant now. These buildings can be used as Covid hospitals. The nursing students, pharmacy and medical students can work there to treat patients. Also, it has been found that Covid patients in home isolation are playing a role in the spread of the disease by not remaining in isolation. Covid affected people should be fined heavily if they are found moving outside during the isolation period. Dillip Kumar Mishra,

ACK BHUBANESWAR

Some hope

Sir, The second wave of Covid-19 showing signs of weakening must bring cheer. Recoveries surpassed the fresh cases, and the overall test positivity rate headed south to 19.8 per cent from 21.9 per cent last week. On Saturday, the active Covid cases dropped by 31,091 compared to Friday. This is the fifth day in succession that active infections have plateaued. The government also said that the current decline rate is faster than was the case in the first wave, which augurs well.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE





Black fungus treatment at Bowring Hosp from today

A patient would require seven weeks of continued treatment to be cured and the treatment may cost ₹2-3 lakh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, May 16: Karnataka Health Minister K Sudhakar Sunday said that it has been decided to start treatment for 'black fungus' at Bowring Hospital here on a pilot basis, and later extend the treatment to medical colleges and district hospitals.

Noting that the treatment for black fungus infection is a bit costly, the Minister said he would discuss with the Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa regarding free treatment as he has also said a committee of experts would be set up to prepare a roadmap for treatment of those infected and how to curb the infection.

"Mucormycosis or black fungus is commonly seen among those who have less immunity or because of use of steroids. Those who have diabetes and are infected by Covid 10-15 days after they take steroids, the infection begins through the nose and spreads to the eyes and its parts like optic nerves and optic

chiasm," Sudhakar said. Speaking to reporters here, he said there is



danger of losing vision because of this and if timely treatment is not taken there are chances of death. "After the infection was noticed in Maharashtra, we held discussions with eye specialists and experts (ophthalmologists) and from Monday at Bowring hospital, we are starting treatment for it." he said adding. "We are starting on a pilot basis, and will later continue in all medical colleges and some district hospitals."

Noting that Amphotericin B, the drug for black fungus infection is a bit costly, the Minister said a patient would require seven weeks of continued treatment to be cured and treatment may cost ₹ 2-3 lakh per person. "I will discuss with the Chief Minister and will suggest free treatment. Ultimately. he will decide," the Minister said adding those with black fungus issues should immediately consult doctors.

"The Centre is rationing the Amphotericin B drug and would be distributed to the State also.³ Sudhakar said adding that it was decided at the Covid task force meeting Saturday to request the Centre

to provide 20,000 vials of the drug. He said he was in constant touch with Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilisers, D V Sadanada Gowda and his Ministry in this regard and would also talk to the Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan.

"There is no need for people to worry, but those with diabetes or other secondary infections, those who are immuno-compromised with TB, HIV, cancer, with kidney or any other organ transplant, I advise all of them to exercise caution and not to use steroids without the doctor's consent." he said. Also, the Minister cautioned the people about dengue caused due to mosquito bite, especially during day time. About 15,000-20,000 people get infected with dengue every year in the State, he said while asking people to take preventive measures like cleanliness particularly with the onset of monsoon in days.

Stricter lockdown in Jharkhand, flouters cough up ₹35 lakh



Police personnel seal a vegetable market (mandi) for violating Covid-19 norms amid alarming surge in the coronavirus cases in Ranchi, Sunday PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

tablishments.

Ranchi, May 16: Putting a brave face amid the Covid pandemic, the Jharkhand Police is all geared up to enforce stricter lockdown provisions and has collected over ₹35 lakh as fine from people for not wearing masks in public places. About 12 per cent of the force is afflicted with the virus and separate isolation centres have been created in all police lines and other es-

"Enforcing provisions for the

safety of masses during the ongo-

ing restrictions, the state police

have collected ₹35.68 lakh as fine

from masses violating norms of

wearing masks till May 11," Director

General of Police Neeraj Sinha

told media. Sinha said action was

taken against 42,714 people for not

wearing masks during the period

Fighting a massive second wave

order. As many as 7,343 policemen

out of about 60,000-strong police

force have been afflicted with the

virus in the line of duty and 30 of

been created in all police lines and

other establishments for asymp-

"Separate isolation centres have

them lost their lives.

Separate isolation centres have been created in all police lines and other establishments for asymptomatic positives and separate units for those police personnel who are returning from leave

NEERAJ SINHA DGP, JHARKHAND

of Covid appropriate behaviour have been made, he added.

Of the total ₹35.68 lakh fine was collected for violating mask norms. A maximum of over ₹5.92 lakh was collected from offenders in Jamshedpur, followed by over ₹5.79 lakh from people in Chaibasa and over ₹5.24 lakh from people in Dhanbad. Ranchi, Saraikela and Palamu and Bokaro districts saw collection between ₹1.75 lakh and ₹3.08 lakh as fine from people not wearing masks, which has been made mandatory at public places. Likewise, of the 42,714 people, against whom action was taken for violating mask norms, a maximum of 27,711 hailed from Bokaro followed by 8.344 from Palamu and

1,762 from Dumka. The state government has extended the lockdown-like restrictions with stricter provisions, including seven days mandatory quarantine for people visiting the state, till May 27. The state has suspended the operation of intra and inter-city bus services and also capped people attending weddings at 11 persons, lowering it from 50 persons with a provision that marriages can be conducted either at homes or at courts. The decision to impose lockdown-like restrictions with stricter provisions was taken at a meeting of the State Disaster Management Authority, chaired by Chief Minister Hemant Soren. Private vehicles will have to obtain e- passes for plying. Organising any ceremony during weddings will also be prohibited in the state. Under the stricter provisions. social distancing norms will be implemented strictly. The state has already prohibited all indoor and outdoor congregations of more than five persons.

CCL loses 47 staff to K'taka to spend ₹15 crore Covid-19 pandemic on disaster management



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, May 16: Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL), known for supplying dry-fuel to the nation's power plants and other projects even during the pandemic, has lost 47 of its personnel to Covid-19, an official said Many others and their family members are battling for life, the Jharkhand arm of the Coal India Limited (CIL) said.

"Mining activities of Central Coalfields Ltd, a Jharkhand based subsidiary of Coal India, are going on round the clock but around 47 employees of CCL have lost their lives while serving the nation during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic,' a CCL official said. This Maharatna coal miner claims to have set up around 2,000 beds which include ICU, isolation and Covid care beds with oxygen support. While the number of oxygen supported beds is over 750, only 70 ICU beds are there. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted lives in the county as well as world for more than one year. "Despite following the protocol of Covid-19 issued by the government from time to time, many executives as well as non-executives have been affected from the infection. Altogether, about 47 employees

have lost their lives due to the deadly virus and many are undergoing treatment. It is not only the employees of CCL are affected but there are cases in which many family members too became affected and few of them died due to

the virus," the official said. CCL which has been allowed mining activities, has recorded a 112 per cent increase in production at 4.84 million tonne (MT) in April 2021 as against 2.28 MT coal output in April 2020. The surge in infections has led to the re-imposition of severe lockdown in Jharkhand till the morning of May 27 which has imposed many re-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, May 16: The Karnataka government has decided to strengthen disaster management for which, ₹15 crore will be given, said Home Minister of the state Basavaraj Bommai Sunday. The sum would be used to get the required equipment and to raise two more companies of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), he told reporters here.

"Our government is doing everything possible to strengthen the SDRF, to increase the number of men. Last time, we recruited over 100 ex-military personnel. This year, we will recruit 100 more," the Minister said.

Already, 434 people are working in four companies of SDRF stationed in Bangalore. Mangaluru. Kalaburagi and Mysuru, and it has been decided to set up a company at Davangere, also one between Hubli-Dharwad and Belagavi region because Belagavi faces floods repeatedly, he added.

HOPE INJECTED

"The government has decided to strengthen disaster management and this year ₹15 crore will be given for procuring equipment such as four earthmovers and about 14 ambulances, and to raise two more companies of SDRF, among others," he said.

The Minister's statement came even as the state witnessed cyclone Tauktae's wrath in the coastal and surrounding Malnad districts which have also been suffering from large-scale destruction of life and property due to torrential rains, floods and landslides over the last three years. Noting that the state government had released ₹15 crore last year for the equipment, Bommai said that the crucial items that were not with the SDRF like hydraulic, electric and batteryoperated equipment, speed-boats, stretchers, electric wood and concrete-cutters, special lights and underwater equipment have been procured. He said one batch of equipment has already gone to

cyclone Tauktae-hit Udupi. Also, vehicles like bus, trucks were being sent to the affected coastal areas of Mangaluru and Karwar including Udupi, SDRF men have been sent to these cyclone-hit coastal areas from Mangaluru and Bangalore. Depending on the situation and needs, men would be sent from Kalaburagi too, he said. Around 1,000 trained personnel from fire force, police, coastal police, home guards, civil defence and SDRF have been deployed.

about 34 houses have been damand people have been rescued, also those living in low-lying areas have been shifted. He further said have been recovered, and rescue the help of the SDRF," he added.

The Home Minister, also incharge of Udupi district, said

aged in the district due to cyclone eight people were missing as a boat capsized near the coast of Padubidri and Surathkal. "We have rescued two; some bodies

and 71 cases of violation were registered against them and the police force is all geared up to enforce stricter provisions under lockdown restrictions till May 27. in Covid cases in the tribal state. men in khaki in Jharkhand are playing the role of Covid-19 warrior right from lending help to citizens to get oxygen and beds to enforcing restrictions to contain the deadly surge and maintaining law and

operations are on by NDRF with

strictions to flatten the virus curve. The guidelines allow mining ac-

tivities in Jharkhand so that raw coal is supplied to the power plants situated in the state and other parts of the country. CCL CMD PM Prasad said that under the prevailing circumstances he has asked officials to work closely with the state government and district administration to fight the pandemic. CCL has mining operations in

Chatra, Latehar, Ramgarh, Hazaribag, Bokaro, Ranchi, Giridih and Palamu districts of Jharkhand. It has 62 operative mines including 40 opencast. It has a workforce of about 37.000



Citizens patiently wait in observation after being vaccinated at an inoculation centre in Bangalore, Sunday PTI PHOTO

tomatic positives and separate units for those police personnel who are returning from leave," the DGP said. All those personnel returning from leave are being isolated, tested and if found negative, then only are they allowed to join the units, he said, adding that similar standard operating procedures are being followed in training centres.

A roster system has been adopted in all the establishments for working staff so as to avoid crowding and also to ensure social distancing norms in workplaces. Sinha said. Accommodation facilities for all the forces engaged in law and order duty and in ensuring compliance

Hazaribagh Town becomes 6,000th Iharkhand sees declining trend in nCoV fatalities rly station with Wi-Fi connectivity The state government PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 16: Indian Railways has commissioned Wi-Fi at 6,000th railway station in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh district, the Ministry of Railways said Sunday

"With the commissioning of Wi-Fi at Hazaribagh Town falling under Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand in Dhanbad Division of East Central Railway as on May 15, Indian Railways commissioned Wi-Fi at 6,000 Railway stations," said the Ministry.

Indian Railways had started its journey by providing Wi-Fi facility at 1st Railway station Mumbai in January 2016. Thereafter, provided 5,000th Railway station, at Midanpore in West Bengal and reached 6.000th Railway station in Hazaribagh Saturday. "Also, on the same day Jarapada station in Angul District of state of Odisha was also provided with Wi-Fi.'

The Wi-Fi facility at Railway stations meets the objectives of the aspiring Digital India Program



of Government of India. This will bridge the digital divide between the rural and urban citizens thereby increasing the digital footprint in the rural villages and also enhance the user experience. Provision of Wi-Fi facilities at Railway stations is on self sus-

tainable basis with no cost to the Railways, said the Ministry. It also added that this facility was provided with the help of RailTel, a PSU under Ministry of Railways. This task was carried out in partnership with Google, DOT (under USOF), PGCIL and Tata Trust.

Ranchi, May 16: Jharkhand has started witnessing a declining trend in daily Covid-19 fatalities as the state Sunday recorded 65 deaths due to the infection, the lowest in May so far, a health department bulletin said.

This is the fourth time in the month when fresh Covid-19 deaths plunged below 100 in the state. The state had recorded 76 fatalities May 15 and 97 deaths each May 13 and May 10. It had recorded the highest number of 159 deaths this month May 2.

There has also been an improvement in the recovery rate of Covid-19 patients. The recovery rate among coronavirus patients in the state now stands at 85.37 per cent, better than the national average of 83.80 per cent, the bulletin said. With the 65 fresh fatalities, the death toll in the state is now 4,431.

State capital Ranchi recorded 19 deaths during the day as compared to 28 Saturday and 40 fatalities Friday. A look at the health bulletin of the state suggests that prominent cities of Jharkhand like Ranchi, East Singhbhum with headquarter at Jamshedpur,



Bokaro, Hazaribag, and Ramgarh are witnessing higher number of Covid-19 cases, while relatively backward districts including Dumka. Garhwa, Chatra, and Gumla are logging lesser number of infections

No deaths have been reported from seven of the 24 districts in the state during the last 24 hours. The seven districts are Chatra, Dumka, Gumla, Latehar, Pakur, Sahebgani and Saraikela

Battling a sharp surge in cases during the second wave, the state government has extended the lockdown till May 27. Restrictions with stricter provisions, including seven days mandatory quarantine for

people visiting the state, are now in place. The state has suspended the operation of intra-city and inter-city bus services and put a cap on people attending weddings at 11.

The coronavirus caseload has climbed to 3,13,181 with 3,157 new cases, the bulletin said. The mineral-rich state now has 41,386 active cases, while 2,67,364 patients have recovered from the infection, it said

East Singhbhum recorded 12 fatalities while six deaths each were recorded in Bokaro and Giridih. Three casualties each were reported from Garhwa, Lohardaga, and Ramgarh while two deaths each were recorded in Hazaribagh,

could not roll out the inoculation drive for people of 18 to 44 years of age from May 1 as it was facing a shortage of vaccines

Palamu, and West Singhbhum. Deoghar, Dhanbad, Godda, Jamtara, Khunti, Koderma, and Simdega recorded one death each.

Altogether, 76,92,798 samples have been tested in Jharkhand thus far, including 52,939 since Friday, it added. The mortality rate in the state remained higher at 1.41 per cent as against the nation's 1.10 per cent. In a bid to protect its citizens from the deadly disease, the Jharkhand government had Friday launched a free vaccination drive for people in the age group of 18 to 44 years. Over 1.57 crore people in the state are in the 18-44 years age bracket. The state government could not roll out the inoc-May 1 as it was facing a shortage of vaccines.







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



uote

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 BIP 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 Bvtco Hospital on Nashik Road late Saturday night, they said. Police have registered an offence against Rajendra Taine, who is the husband of BJP corporator Seema Tajne.

CYCLONE TAUKTAE Ensure proper running of Covid centres: NCMC

ISIS FB POST CASE NIA raids four places

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

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.



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, it was announced Sunday. All the 15 fish ermen on the boat are safe.

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, it said.

Reviewing the preparedness of the central and state agencies. Gauba stressed that all measures be taken to evacuate people in the areas affected by the cyclone so as to ensure zero loss of life and damage. All steps are to be taken to avoid disruption of functioning of hospitals and COVID-19 centres and maintenance of regular supply of oxygen to patients, the statement quoted him as saying.

Necessary arrangements have been made in this context, it added. India is witnessing the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic currently. The cabinet secretary directed the agencies concerned to work in close co-ordination and extend all requisite assistance to the affected states. Preparatory arrangements to restore power, telecom and other important services should be ensured, he said.

The statement said the chief sec-

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

Civic body shifts 580 Covid patients

MUMBAI: The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation shifted 580 patients from Covid care centres in the city as a precautionary measure after India Meteorological Department warned that Cyclone Tauktae is likely to pass close to the city, a **BMC** official said Sunday. Officials are also contemplating a possible shut down of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link as a precautionary measure because of IMD's announcement that the cyclone may pass close to

retaries of the states apprised the NCMC of the measures put in place to deal with the cyclonic storm.

the city Sunday.

Adequate stock of food grains. drinking water and other essential supplies have been arranged and preparations made to maintain essential services such as power, telecommunications etc, they said.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 16: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Sunday conducted searched at four locations in Tamil Nadu in connection with an incriminating Facebook post by accused Mohammed Igbal, an extremist advocating ideology of ISIS and Hizb-Ut-Tahrir, a fundamentalist organisation.

The anti-terror agency conducted searches in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu in connection with the case which was originally registered at Thideer police station in the same region relating to uploading of some incriminating posts on Facebook.

The searches were conducted at Kazimar Street, K Pudur, Pethaniyapuram and Mehaboob Palayam in Madurai.

During the search, sixteen digital devices including laptop, hard disks, mobile phones, memory cards, SIMs, Pen drive and many incriminating books and pamphlets and documents have been recovered.

NIA had re-registered the case April 15 this year and taken over the investigation which so far has revealed that the posts on the Facebook page Thoonga Vizhigal Rendu is in Kazimar Street was uploaded by accused Mohammed Iqbal for denigrating a particular community.

The posts were designed to incite communal disharmony amongst different religious groups, in a manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order, said the NIA.

Iqbal alias Senthil Kumar, a resident of Kazimar area in Madurai was arrested December 2 last year and is presently under judicial custody. Further investigation in the case continues.



try 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.

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 state-

ment issued by the government said.

preparedness of the central and

state agencies to deal with the cy-

clonic storm that is expected to

The NCMC met to review the

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

The government has maintained that appointment of judges in high

New Delhi, May 16: The Supreme 25 high courts of the Court has seven vacancies, two high courts are functioning withcountry have a out regular chief justices and two combined sanctioned

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 statewide lockdown kicked in, the Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRC) official said.

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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 of the apex court.

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

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.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

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.

Journalist bodies condemn airstrikes on media offices

ISRAEL- PALESTINE CONFLICT

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 UNmonitored 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 Dharm yatra, devotees will be able to visit all four dhams, including Badrinath and Kedarnath,

though virtually. Garhwal Commissioner and Chardham Uttarakhand 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 Chardham 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 vatra 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 vet.

The Devasthanam Board said that at present all events are being held in a symbolic way. Covid-19 protocols would 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.









national



People all over the world are protesting against the atrocities committed by Israel on Palestine. But in Kashmir it's a punishable offence where an artist is booked under PSA & a preacher is arrested simply for expressing solidarity with Palestinians MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

TIGRESS FOUND DEAD

A radio-collared tigress was found dead in Madhva Pradesh's Panna Tiger Reserve, a senior forest official said Sunday. This is the fourth tiger death reported from the state in 10 days



on CoWIN for

Online booking



Over 4.5 crore Covid tests have been conducted in the state so far. The state has 80,000 hospital beds in L2 and L3 category where coronavirus

positive patients can be treated YOGI ADITYANATH UP CHIEF MINISTER

The availability of Oxygen is sufficient and accordingly, after providing 80 per cent oxygen to hospitals, the remaining 20 per cent can be provided to small industries, so that such units can start their activities

BHUPESH BAGHEL CHHATTISGARH CHIEF MINISTER

The only reason and explanation is shortage of vaccines. Of course, the loyal and obedient Union Health Minister will flatly deny any shortage of vaccines!

P CHIDAMBARAM SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Protesting farmers face batons

Chandigarh: Farmers Sunday held a protest against Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar in Hisar, and were baton-charged by the police. The farmers were heading to a venue where the Chief Minister came to open a Covid 500-bed hospital. Heavy police security arrangements were made to prevent the entry of farmers towards the inauguration venue with barricades, said officials.

Suspected Pak drone spotted

Jammu: A suspected Pakistani drone was seen hovering along the International Border (IB) here, prompting security forces to launch a massive search operation to check if it had dropped anything inside the Indian territory, officials said Sunday. However, nothing suspicious was found during the search operation, they said. This comes two days after a Pakistani drone dropped an AK-47 rifle, a pistol and some ammunition along the IB in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Police use drones

for surveillance

Chennai: The Trichy district

police have deployed drones

for surveillance on whether

people are coming out of their

homes during the lockdown

period. The drones will be in

district including, Lalgudi,

and Thiruverumbur.

Delhi records

action in five divisions of Trichy

Jeeyapuram, Musiri, Mannaparai

'COVAXIN EFFECTIVE AGAINST INDIA, UK COVID-19 STRAINS'

New Delhi, May 16: Bharat Biotech

Sunday said its Covid-19 vaccine 'Covaxin' has been found to be effective against coronavirus strains found in India and the UK. Citing a study published in peerreviewed medical journal Clinical Infectious Diseases, the Hyderabad-

based vaccine major noted that vaccination with Covaxin produced neutralising titres against all key emerging variants tested, including B.1.617 and B.1.1.7, first identified in India and the UK, respectively. The study was conducted in col-

laboration with the National Institute of Virology and Indian Council of Medical Research, it added. "Covaxin gets international recog-

nition yet again, by scientific research data published demonstrating protection against the new variants. Yet another feather in its cap," Bharat Biotech co-founder and Joint Managing Director Suchitra Ella said in a tweet. She also tagged PMO India, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, among others, in the tweet.

The study found a modest reduction in neutralisation by a factor of 1.95 against B.1.617 variant compared to vaccine variant D614G, ministry said earlier this month Bharat Biotech noted.



Despite this reduction, neutralising titre levels with B.1.617

be protective, it added. India's Covid-19 active cases count has decreased to 36,18,458 with a net decline of 55,344 cases being recorded in the active caseload in a span of 24 hours, while the daily positivity rate dropped to 16.98 per cent, the Union health ministry said Sunday. Meanwhile, the first batch of anti-Covid-19 drug 2-DG, developed by the DRDO, will be released Monday by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, officials said. The Drugs Controller General of India (DGCI) has approved the oral drug for emergency use as an adjunct therapy in moderate to severe



remain above levels expected to

coronavirus patients, the defence

Second batch of **Sputnik V reaches Hyd**

HYDERABAD: As many as 60,000 doses of the second batch of Russia's COVID-19 vaccine Sputnik V Sunday landed at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here, Dr Reddy's Laboratories said Sunday. "Pleased to share that the consignment that arrived today in Hyderabad contains 60,000 doses of the second dose component of the #SputnikV vaccine. Samples from the consignment will be sent for release to the Central Drugs Laboratory," the drug maker tweeted. Dr Reddy's Laboratories May 14 soft launched imported COVID-19 vaccine Sputnik V vaccine which is priced at Rs 948, with five per cent GST per dose (retail price). "Given the recent launch of the Russian vaccine in the Indian vaccination campaign, this second delivery has become very timely. The efficacy of the #SputnikV is well-known in the world," Nikolay Kudashev Russian Ambassador to India tweeted.

Cong tweets posters criticising PM over vax 2nd vax dose not

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: Congress leaders Sunday slammed the police action against some people for allegedly putting up posters critical of the Prime Minister and dared the government to arrest them for raising questions on the export of Covid vaccines.

Led by Rahul Gandhi, Congress leaders changed their profile pictures on Twitter with the poster asking why Covid vaccines were sent abroad. The opposition party said tough questions will be asked from the prime minister if people don't get vaccines, medicines and oxygen.

"Arrest me too," said Gandhi in a tweet while sharing a picture of the poster "Modi ji, why did you send our children's vaccines abroad". The challenge was posed after a few people were arrested by Delhi police for putting up posters in the national capital on the vaccine issue. The Delhi Police also registered a number of FIRs and arrested people for pasting posters critical of the Prime Minister. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh dared the Prime Minister and home minister to arrest him, saying he was putting up such posters on his compound wall. "Putting up critical posters against PM is now a crime? Is India run by the Modi Penal Code now? Is the Delhi Police हमारे बच्चों की वैक्सीन विदेश क्यों भेज दिया?

so jobless in the middle of a raging pandemic," he asked.

"I am putting up posters on my compound wall tomorrow. Come get me," Ramesh dared. Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said at a press conference that questions will be asked from the prime minister if people don't get vaccines, medicines and oxygen they desperately need to fight Covid.

"I dare you to arrest me. Where is my vaccine, where is my oxygen? We will continue to ask you questions," he said while alleging that people are being "arrested for asking questions". Khera said most of the deaths could have been avoided and people are dying not because of Covid, but due to the mismanagement in handling the pandemic. He alleged that the government had created man-made shortages and there was chaos all around. "The Government of India did not manage the crisis well," he said.

before 12 weeks INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE New Delhi, May 16: Requisite

changes have now been made on the CoWIN digital portal, making online or on-site appointments for Covishield vaccine not possible if the period after first dose for a beneficiary is less than 84 days, it was announced Sunday.

The Union Health Ministry said: "CoWIN digital portal has been reconfigured to reflect change in dose interval of Covishield vaccine to 12-16 weeks.

However, already booked online appointments for second dose of Covishield will remain valid and are not being cancelled by CoWIN, but the beneficiaries are advised to reschedule their appointments for a later date beyond the 84th day from the date of first dose of vaccination.

The Central government has reiterated to the states and UTs that the online appointments booked for second dose of Covishield prior to this change of the interval between the two doses, must be honoured, and field staff instructed that, if such beneficiaries do come for vaccination, the second Covishield dose must be administered and the beneficiaries must not be turned away.

Congress MP Rajeev Satav dies after recovering from Covid-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, May 16: Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Rajeev Satav died Sunday, days after recovering from the coronavirus infection, hospital sources said.

Satav (46) was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Pune after testing coronavirus positive last month and was on ventilator support.

After recovering from Covid-19, he was diagnosed with Cytomegalovirus infection and his condition became critical.

"He had recovered from Covid-19. He was taking some immunosuppressant drugs as he

was suffering from spondylitis

and as his immunity was low, he

contracted Covid-19. He later de-

veloped a bacterial infection due

to which he had fibrosis in the

lungs. Despite best efforts by doc-

Lockdown extended in Delhi, Haryana, Pb

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: Lockdown was extended Sunday in the national capital and adjoining Haryana till May 24 as strict restrictions remained in force in large parts of the country with several states reporting signs of improvement in the Covid situation.

The Punjab government also decided to continue with all existing Covid restrictions in the state till May 31, amid a high positivity and fatality rate due to the disease.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Keiriwal announced the extension of the lockdown imposed April 19 for the fourth time. It was scheduled to end at 5 am May 17. "We do not want the gains made in the past few days to be lost all of a sudden. So, the lockdown is being extended for another week till 5 am May 24," he said. Besides Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Haryana were among the states

that have reported some improvement in terms of daily Covid cases, though the death toll remains a cause of concern.

With 3.11 lakh fresh coronavirus infections, it was the lowest rise in daily cases in India in 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 morning.

The active cases have reduced to 36,18,458 comprising 14.66 percent of the total infections, while the national Covid -19 recovery rate has improved to 84.25 percent.

Taking to Twitter. Harvana's Home and Health Minister Anil Vij said, "Mahamari Alert / Surkshit Harvana extended from 17 May to 24 May. Stringent measures will be taken to implement the alert. In West Bengal, streets were largely deserted in capital Kolkata and elsewhere as the 15-day Covid 19induced lockdown came into effect, with just a few vehicles ferrying essential items during the day.





Passengers look for a transport to their native place at Howrah station

'Prevent dumping of dead bodies in Ganga'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: The Centre directed Uttar Pradesh and Bihar Sunday to prevent dumping of dead bodies in the Ganga and its tributaries, and focus on their safe disposal and a dignified cremation after corpses were seen floating in these rivers following a spurt in the number of coronavirus cases

At a review meeting conducted May 15-16, the Centre said dumping of dead bodies and partially burnt or decomposed corpses in the Ganga and its tributaries has recently been reported, which is "most undesirable and alarming". "Namami Gange directs states to prevent dumping of



dead bodies in the Ganga and focus on their safe disposal and providing support for ensuring dignified cremation," the Jal Shakti Ministry said. The state pollution control boards were directed to monitor the water quality more frequently in

partments.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) was assigned the task of overall monitoring, providing guidance to the state pollution control boards and taking up advanced analysis in the matter. Support for cremation needs to be given top priority. Effective implementation of the government orders needs to be ensured. No loss of time should take place in implementation, the ministry said.

An advisory was issued by Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga, to the district magistrates, who are also the chairpersons of the district Ganga committees, May 11.

consultations with the health de-

leader Rahul Gandhi condoled his demise and said it is a big loss to him.



max temperature New Delhi: The national capital Sunday recorded a

maximum temperature of 39.6 degrees Celsius, one notch below the season's average, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The minimum temperature was recorded 21.7 degrees Celsius, five notches below the season's average, it said.

Azam Khan's condition better

Lucknow: Senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan's condition is "better and satisfactory" but he remains in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), the hospital treating him said in a statement here Sunday. Khan and his son Abdullah were were shifted from the Sitapur jail to Medanta Hospital here May 9 for coronavirus treatment.

Kolkata, May 16: West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar has warned the state's newly-elected Trinamool Congress government to "not force me to use my constitutional powers", sparking a

AGENCIES

fresh artillery exchange with the ruling party. "He forgot his constitutional position by calling for a change in the state. His appeal was rejected, so old man is now obviously frustrated," said Trinamool spokesperson Kunal Ghosh, while reacting

to the Governor's warning. Governor Dhankhar has been touring what he describes as 'violence-hit areas' since the Trinamool returned to power with a landslide.

His visit to Sitalkuchi in Northern Bengal provoked angry response from chief minister Mamata Banerjee, who reminded Dhankhar of his constitutional obligations of working on the 'aid and advice' of the elected government.

The trip to Sitalkuchi, hit by poll-time violence where some voters were killed in firing by central forces, was followed by Dhankhar's visit to makeshift camps in Assam where 'victims of political violence' in West Bengal were sheltered

His comment that this was a 'blot on governance' in West Bengal provoked accusations that Dhankhar was 'less a Governor and more a BJP functionary.' While some TMC leaders see in



Dhankhar-TMC confrontation peaks in Bengal

Dhankhar has been touring what he describes as 'violence-hit areas' since the Trinamool returned to power with a landslide

Dhankhar's tour to reinforce the BJP narrative of 'Bengal's law and order being worse than Kashmir' to keep up pressure on the Mamata government, others saw a more sinister design - building a case for President's rule.

"He is doing now what Dharma Vira did as Governor to bring down Bengal's first non-Congress government in the late 1960s," said analyst Sukhoranjan Dasgupta, author of books on West Bengal.

Dasgupta said the BJP is unable to accept the resounding defeat, evident from former Union minister Babul Supriyo's comment that "Bengal has missed a huge chance by keeping BJP out of power."

Supriyo resigned as Union Minister to contest the state polls from Tollygunge but lost to Trinamool minister Aroop Biswas miserably. Many of the districts which saw pitched political battles with leaders extensively touring them such as Hooghly, Purba Bardhaman, Paschim and Purba Medinipur, Nadia, Darjeeling and-Murshidabad reported near 100fold rise in cases during the period.









PTI PHOTO

tors, he succumbed to the infection." said Maharashtra health minister Rajesh Tope. Satav April 22 said he had tested Covid-19 positive and was hospitalised the next day. Congress



international

The targeting of news organizations is completely unacceptable, even during an armed conflict. It represents a gross violation of human rights and internationally agreed norms BARBARA TRIONFI | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL PRESS INSTITUTE

WONDER OF NATURE

Pandemic or no pandemic, the world will never stand still. That's perhaps no clearer than in Iceland, where a volcano named Fagradalsfjall has awoken from a slumber that has lasted 6,000 years



uote

Islamic nations hold emergency summit US nurses decry CDC's The Arab League and organisations like the Saudi-based OIC have maintained their view

The Secretary General reminds all sides that any indiscriminate targeting of civilian and media structures

violates international law and must be avoided at all costs STEPHANE DUJARRIC SPOKESPERSON, WHO

I have seen the suggestions from others who seem to think that we can put people who have

tested Covid-positive on planes and bring them into Australia. That just doesn't make any sense

SCOTT MORRISON PRIME MINISTER AUSTRALIA

This is a very important moment for the whole country because it supports our prospects for ending the crisis which is regressing everywhere in

France. The next target is 30 million first doses. It is within our reach

JEAN CASTEX PRIME MINISTER, FRANCE

SHORT TAKES

Fuel shortages continue in US

Washington: There are still widespread fuel shortages in the southeastern parts of the US, even after the major gas supplier Colonial Pipeline Co. announced a return of its entire system to normal operations after a ransomware attack forced the company to shut its network for almost a week. In Washington DC, 80 per cent of gas stations were without fuel as of Saturday, according to the latest data from GasBuddy, an app that tracks fuel prices and demand. In North Carolina 63 per cent of stations are in shortage, in Georgia and South Carolina more than 40 per cent, and in Virginia 38 per cent.

IS behind Kabul mosque attack Kabul: The Islamic State terro group has claimed responsibility for a blast at a mosque in Kabul that killed at least 12 people, including the imam. In a statement released late Saturday, which publishes the terror group's official propaganda, accused the imam, identified as Mohammad Numan, of encouraging the fight against jihadis. "Soldiers of the caliphate" had planted an explosive device in the mosque, said the statement.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, May 16: The 57-nation Organisation of Islamic Cooperation opened an emergency meeting Sunday over the heavy fighting between Israel and the Gaza Strip's militant Hamas rulers, the first major move among Mideast nations still grappling with how to

address the conflict That, as well as the concerns of some nations over Hamas, has seen a somewhat-muted response to the attacks as opposed to the fullthroated response of decades past. The plight of the Palestinian people is the bleeding wound of the Islamic world today," Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad

Haneef Atmar said Palestinian Foreign Minister

NETANYAHU VOWS TO PURSUE HAMAS Hamas continued to attack Israel with rockets Sunday and the Israeli army struck back with force as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

vowed to pursue the Palestinian militant group for as long as necessary. "Fire will be met with fire," Netanyahu said in a video address late Saturday night. "This (military) operation will continue as long as it takes until we achieve our goals and bring peace and security to all Israeli citizens," the Jerusalem Post quoted the Prime Minister as saying.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu took a similarly hard line. "Israel alone is responsible for the recent escalation in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza," Cavusoglu said. "Our warnings to Israel last week went unheeded.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif accused Israel of "genocide and crimes against humanity." "Make no mistake: Israel only understand the language of resistance and the people of Palestine are fully entitled to their right to defend themselves," Zarif said.

Across the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf states, reactions to the fighting has been mixed. In Qatar, home to the Al-Jazeera satellite network, hundreds turned out late Saturday night to listen to a speech by Hamas' top leader Ismail Haniyeh. He now splits his

time between Turkey and Qatar, both of which back Hamas, as does Iran.

"The resistance will not give in," Haniyeh vowed as bodyguards stood behind him. He added that "resistance is the shortest road to Jerusalem" and that Palestinians will not accept anything less than a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

In the UAE, where political parties and protests are illegal, Palestinians in the workforces of Abu Dhabi and Dubai have expressed their anger quietly, worried about losing their residency permit.

"The region's only democracy," tweeted the Emirati writer and political analyst Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi in writing about Israel's strike on a Gaza building that housed the offices of The Associated Press and Al-Jazeera

advice to go maskless



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, May 16: The US' union of registered nurses condemned the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for lifting mask recommendations for vaccinated people in the country, stating that it would jeopardise the health of frontline workers, the media reported.

The CDC recommendation "is not based on science" and it would jeopardise the health of frontline workers and the general public, Bonnie Castillo, a registered nurse and executive director of the union, National Nurses United, was quoted as saying.

"This is a huge blow to our efforts at confronting this virus and the pandemic," said Castillo, adding that there still remain people who have not yet been vaccinated. "The mask is another lifesaving layer of protection for workers.

Since Covid vaccine distribution began in the US December 14, 2020, more than 268 million doses have been administered. Over 120 million people have been fully vaccinated.

Now is not the time to relax protective measures, and we are outraged that the CDC has done just that while we are still in the midst of the deadliest pandemic in a century

BONNIE CASTILLO NATIONAL NURSES UNITED

The CDC, while introducing the new recommendations, also cited two recent scientific findings: few vaccinated people become infected with the virus, and transmission seems rarer still; and the vaccines appear to be effective against all known variants of the coronavirus. However, the union noted that more than 35,000 new cases of coronavirus are being reported and over 600 people are dying each day, the report said.

Some of the nation's largest retailers said they have no immediate plans to change their policies and would like if both customers and workers could wear masks on the premises, according to local media reports.

FB extends ban on anti-coup groups

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Nay Pyi Taw, May 16: Facebook has reportedly upheld a ban on many organisations in Myanmar that have joined forces to resist the military coup that took place Februarv 1.

The bans were put in place back in 2019, when groups like the Arakan Army, and many of its allies, were classified as terrorist organisations by the then democratically-elected government. After the military coup and government takeover by the military or Tatmadaw, carried

elections in it claimed were fraudulent, the political situation has become extremely complex.

There is however, one thing that is seemingly clear, the Arakan Army is no longer classified as a terrorist organisation, either by the current military-led government or by the elected government currently in exile.

Yet, according to Rest of World, the Arakan Army is still not allowed on Facebook.

The Arakan Army isn't the only group that's found itself unable to communicate through Facebook, the report said



An Indonesian Muslim wears a face mask, designed in the likeness of the Palestinian flag as she prays at the Great Mosque of Al Azhar

4 dead, over 42K affected by heavy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Colombo, May 16: At least four people have died and over 42,000 others affected by heavy rains and subsequent floods in Sri Lanka due to the formation of a super cyclone in the Bay of Bengal, the country's Disaster Management Centre (DMC) said

the DMC said the deaths had been a result of severe flooding, reports Xinhua news agency.

rains, floods in SL

In a statement issued Saturday,

Over 200 houses had been fully or partially damaged, while 175 people were housed in temporary shelters.

The National Building Research Organisation (NBRO) also issued a landslide warning for several districts in the country including the capital Colombo and the south.



DEATH TOLL At least 188 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, including 55 children and 33 women, with 1,230 people wounded. Eight people in Israel have been killed, including a 5-year-old boy and a soldier.

Riad Malki of the Palestinian Authority, which administers autonomous enclaves in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, decried what he called Israel's "cowardly attacks" at the start of the meeting. "We need to tell Allah that we will resist to the last day," he said. "We are facing a long-term occupation. That's the base of the problem. Crimes are committed against the Palestinians without consequences.'

Missing tiger found safe

Houston: A tiger that frightened residents after it was last seen briefly wandering around a Houston neighbourhood has been found after a nearly week-long search and appears to be unharmed, police announced Saturday evening. Authorities had been searching for the tiger, a 9-month-old male named India, since it was spotted May 9 in a west Houston neighbourhood. At the time, it was nearly shot by an off-duty deputy before being whisked away in a car by Victor Hugo Cuevas, who police allege is the owner.

China slams 'hasty' exit; UK defends delay in adding India to travel ban urges UN to intervene PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

US-AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, May 16: China has said that the "hasty" withdrawal of the US troops from war-torn Afghanistan has severely affected the peace process and the regional stability as it called on the UN to play its "due role" and urged the SCO to pay more attention to the

situation. The issue of US withdrawal from Afghanistan figured in the telephonic conversation between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Pakistan counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi Saturday. Wang also said that the eight-

member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), of which India and Pakistan are members, should

that take them great distances

across the world's oceans, scientists

Researchers said their marine

laboratory experiments with a

small species of shark confirm

long-held speculation that sharks

use magnetic fields as aids to nav-

igation — behavior observed in

other marine animals such as

in the journal Current Biology,

also sheds light on why sharks are

Their study, published this month

pay more attention to the situation and Afghanistan's neighbours to strengthen communication, speak in one voice and take coordinated actions.

China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan are the SCO members. Observers say that the US' plan to speed up its troop withdrawal from Afghanistan may have troubling consequences for China.

China, whose volatile Xinjiang province borders Afghanistan, has been expressing its concern over the US move despite tensions with Washington on a host of issues, including America's allegation of a genocide against Muslim Uygurs by the Chinese government in Xinjiang. It denies the allegations of running mass detention camps and violating human rights of Uygurs.

London. May 16: The UK government came under strong criticism Sunday for not adding India to the "red list" travel ban at the same time as Pakistan and Bangladesh in early April, which is feared as a

in cases of Covid-19's B1.617.2 variant first identified in India. Downing Street said it had taken a "precautionary action" to ban travel from India April 23, six days before the B1.617.2 variant was put under investigation and two weeks before its highly transmissible subtype, B1.617.2, was labelled a Variant of Concern (VOC).

"Prior to India being placed on the red list in April, anyone coming to the UK had to test negative and quarantine for 10 days," a UK government spokesperson said.

However, the Opposition Labour Party attacked the government for

major factor behind a rapid spike

a delay in acting when the variant first emerged at the end of March.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's planned visit to Delhi at the end of April, which was cancelled as the second wave of the pandemic surged in the country, is being cited by many as among the reasons for the delay in adding India on the "red list" despite higher infection rates per million than its neighbouring countries.

Around 20,000 people travelled between India and the UK before the red list ban and around 122 of them arriving from Delhi and Mumbai between late March and April 26 were detected with the VOC

It comes as PHE revealed that cases of the B1.617.2 variant being tracked and traced in the community had more than doubled in a week to hit 1,313 cases this week.

The British Medical Association (BMA) has expressed serious concerns about the decision to continue with the easing of lockdown restrictions as the B1.617.2 VOC could target the younger unvaccinated group much faster.

Sharks use Earth's magnetic field as a GPS: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Lockdown extends

Dhaka: Bangladesh Sunday extended ongoing nationwide lockdown till May 23 to contain the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Bangladesh clamped a weeklong nationwide lockdown on April 5, suspending public transport and shutting markets to combat the surge in coronavirus cases in the country. "Lockdown restrictions are extended from May 16 in light of the current state of the pandemic," the Cabinet Division said.

Portland, May 16: Sharks use the Earth's magnetic field as a sort of natural GPS to navigate journeys

have found.

sea turtles.

able to traverse seas and find their way back to feed, breed and give birth, said marine policy specialist Bryan Keller, one of the study authors

'We know that sharks can respond to magnetic fields," Keller said. "We didn't know that they detected it to use as an aid in navigation ... You have sharks that can travel 20.000 kilometers and end up in the same spot."

The question of how sharks perform long-distance migrations has intrigued researchers for years. The sharks undertake their journeys in the open ocean where they encounter few physical features such as corals that could serve as

landmarks. Looking for answers, scientists based at Florida State University decided to study bonnethead sharks — a kind of hammerhead that lives on both American coasts and returns to the same estuaries every year. Researchers exposed 20 bonnet heads to magnetic conditions that simulated locations hundreds of

The study also sheds light on why sharks are able to transverse seas and find their way back to feed, breed and give birth

kilometers away from where they were caught off Florida. The scientists found that the sharks began to swim north when the magnetic cues made them think they were south of where they should be.

Keller said further study is needed to find how the sharks use the magnetic fields to determine

their location and whether larger, long-distance migrating sharks use a similar system to find their way. Keller said the study could help inform management of shark species, which are in decline. A study this year found that worldwide abundance of oceanic sharks and rays dropped more than 70% between 1970 and 2018.

Researchers say the bonnethead's reliance on Earth's magnetic field probably is shared by other species of sharks, such as great whites, that make cross-ocean journeys. Keller said it's very unlikely bonnetheads evolved witha magnetic sensitivity and other traveling sharks did not.











out after the November 2020 general



We believe that the healthcare sector presents opportunities for y-o-y double-digit growth for the foreseeable future. India's need to bolster and expand its healthcare infrastructure is urgent and compelling

NYRIKA HOLKAR | GODREJ & BOYCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GOLD IMPORT JUMPS TO USD 6.3BN IN APRIL

Gold import, which has a bearing on the country's current account deficit, zoomed to USD 6.3 billion for the month of April due to a surge in domestic demand, according to the Commerce Ministry data. Silver imports during the month, however, dipped by 88.53 per cent to about USD 11.9 million.



medical oxygen to meet the de-

The recent report from health

secretary, Odisha, claimed that

the state has five big manufac-

turers, which produce around 375

tonne LMO daily, and 22 filling

agencies. The cylinders have a ca-

pacity of carrying 130 tonne of

Manufacturers (AIIGMA) stated

that the present operative capacity

and the production of medical oxy-

gen is around 4200 MT and it is ad-

equate. Recently, the state govern-

ment amended Odisha Industrial

Policy Resolution-2015 (IPR-2015)

and included Odisha's oxygen man-

ufacturing units under priority list

to encourage these units. The IPR-

2015 was approved for amendment

by the State Cabinet presided by

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik

said that manufacturers of medical

oxygen, oxygen cylinders and re-

lated equipment like valve and reg-

ulator and oxygen refilling units are

brought under priority list and

they can avail all benefits from the

centives like land at concessional rate.

stamp duty exemption on land and

other transactions, SGST reim-

bursement up to 200% on capital

investment and electricity duty ex-

emption for a certain period," an in-

dustry department official said.

"Now these units can avail in-

government.

Industry department officials

The All India Industrial Gas

medical oxygen.

mand for LMO in the state.

uote

OrissaPOS

MONDAY MAY 17 2021 BHUBANESWAR

In the last few weeks, we have seen up to a 70x increase in search volume for oxygen

concentrators and we are collaborating with our sellers to ramp up inventory of critical medical equipment including oxygen concentrators for our customers

MANISH TIWARY AMAZON INDIA VICE PRESIDENT

Considering the requirement of Remdesivir in various states & UTs and to ensure its adequate availability substantial increase has been made

in overall production and allocation SADANANDA GOWDA UNION CHEMICALS & FERTILISERS MINISTER

More than ever, we now recognise the value of bolstering health care systems, not only to save lives during the current

health emergency but also to help hospitals to be better prepared to face such emergencies in future SN SUBRAHMANYAN L&T CEO AND MD

SHORT TAKES

Airtel's offer to low income customers

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel Sunday announced offering a recharge pack of ₹49 for free to as many as 5.5 crore low income customers to help them stay connected during the pandemic. Additionally, customers buying the ₹79 recharge coupon will now get double the benefits, the company said. It said the scheme is worth ₹270 crore, covering credit of ₹49 mobile plan for 5.5 crore low income group customers.

Supriya Lifescience files IPO papers

New Delhi: Supriya Lifescience Ltd has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise ₹1,200 crore through an initial public

Cairn begins process to seize \$70bn Indian assets overseas

The UK-based company has started moving courts to get a declaration that state-owned entities are alter egos of India and they should be held liable for discharge of the arbitration award in

absence of the government making payments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: UK's Cairn Energy has identified USD 70 billion of Indian assets overseas for potential seizure to collect USD 1.72 billion due from the government -- a move if successful will put India in league with Pakistan and Venezuela which faced similar enforcement action over failure to pay arbitration awards.

The assets identified range from Air India's planes to vessels belonging to the Shipping Corporation of India, and properties owned by state-owned banks to oil and gas cargoes of PSUs, three people familiar with the matter said.

These assets are across several jurisdictions, they said without giving further details.

Cairn plans to move courts in the US to Singapore for seizure of the assets in absence of Indian government's refusal to honour an international arbitration award.

"The Indian government naturally will challenge such seizure but to save the assets it may have to pawn money equivalent to the value of assets in some financial security such as bank guarantee. The court will return such a guarantee to India if it does not find merit in Cairn's case. But the surety will

'Hotel industry takes over

₹1.30 lakh cr revenue hit'



be passed on to Cairn if the court finds that India had failed to hon-

our its obligation." a source said Cairn has got an international arbitration award -- which overturned levy of retrospective taxes and ordered New Delhi to return the value of shares it had sold, dividends seized and tax refunds withheld to recover such taxes -- registered in the US, UK, France, the Netherlands, Singapore, Mauritius, Canada's Quebec province, Japan

and UAE. Now it has started moving courts to get a declaration that state-owned entities are alter egos of India and they should be held liable for discharge of the arbitration award in absence of the government making payments.

Cairn May 14 filed a lawsuit in a New York court to get Air India recognised as the alter ego of India and that "it should be held jointly and severally responsible for India's debts, including from any judgment resulting from recognition of

the award". Once a court recognises Air India as the alter ego of the Indian government, Cairn can seek attachment or seizure of its assets in the US such as airplanes, immovable assets and bank accounts to recover the amount it was awarded by the arbitration tribunal.

The move is similar to a court in the British Virgin Islands ordering in December last year that hotels in New York and Paris owned by Pakistan International Airlines would be used to settle a claim against Pakistan's government by a Canadian-Chilean copper company

While the finance ministry has so far not commented on the Cairn move, sources said India will take all necessary steps to defend against any such "illegal enforcement action". India, they said, will contest the move on grounds that the government has challenged the arbitration award in the appropriate court in The Hague and it is confident that the award will be set aside.

Sources said the government has also engaged a counsel team which is ready to defend against any enforcement action.

While they maintained that neither the government nor any PSU has received any such notice, people aware of the Cairn lawsuit said the case has been brought only Friday and notices in due course will come to the concerned authorities.

FPIs net sellers so far to the tune of ₹6,452 cr in May

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pulled out ₹6,452 crore so far in May from Indian markets amid tumbling in-

Hero MotoCorp all set to enter EV segment next year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: The country's leading two-wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp is looking to launch an electric model next year and mark its entry into the segment, according to a senior company official.

Bullish on the electric vehicle (EV) vertical, the company is utilising its Jaipur (Rajasthan) and Stephanskirchen (Germany) based R&D set-ups to develop its own products.

Besides, it has tied up with Taiwan-based Gogoro Inc to bring the latter's battery swapping platform to India.

The partners have also decided to collaborate on electric vehicle development to bring Hero-branded, powered by Gogoro network vehicles to market.



"We are trying to launch one of the EV products in fiscal year 2022. and you will see multiple actions, whether it is our own product or a swap product or with Gogoro. All of those actions you will see in the next calendar year," Hero MotoCorp CFO Niranjan Gupta said in an analyst call.

In order to tap the segment, the two-wheeler maker has already invested in Bangalore-based EV startup Ather Energy, which already has introduced models in the market.





POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: In view of the surge in Covid-19 cases in the city, the requirement of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) has increased. Considering the demand of LMO, city-based MSMEs (Bhubaneswar and Cuttack) have stepped forward to meet the demand.

Odisha Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises (OASME), an MSME body, stated that there are five MSMEs in twin cities producing LMO to make it available for Covid patients.

OASME Secretary General Satwik Swain said, "We have 2 MSMEs in Bhubaneswar and 3 in Cuttack dedicated to produce LMO. These units produce around 4000 cylinders (7 cubic meters) per month. Generally these cylinders are supplied to hospitals and industries but they have been working to supply the cylinders for Covid patients in hospitals."

According to Swain, these units generate revenue of over ₹20 crore every year. Similarly, there are over 30 MSMEs available in the state dedicated to manufacture medical oxygen, oxygen cylinders and equipment like valve and regulator. These units produce around 30 tonnes of LMO per day.

Vice President of the Utkal Chamber of Commerce & Industry (UCCI) AK Sharda said that there are many industries producing



New Delhi, May 16: Hester Biosciences Sunday said it has tied up with the Gujarat government to explore production of COVID-19 vaccine through technology transfer from Bharat Biotech.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: Eight of the

top-10 most valued companies wit



offering (IPO). The IPO comprises fresh issue of equity shares worth ₹200 crore and an offer for sale of up to ₹1,000 crore by its promoter Satish Waman Wagh according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

Tractor sales to be hit: Escorts

New Delhi: With the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic hitting rural areas, tractor sales will be impacted in the short term although in the second half of the fiscal it is likely to pick up to give the industry a mid-single digit growth, according to a senior official of farm equipment major Escorts Ltd. The company, which has a joint venture with Japan's Kubota, is looking at around 55 per cent growth in exports in 2021-22 with Europe serving as one of the main drivers while it plans to enter markets in South East Asia and Brazil through its partner.

for the fiscal year 2020-21 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) said Sunday.

New Delhi, May 16: The Indian

hotel industry has taken a hit of

over ₹1.30 lakh crore in revenue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The apex industry body said it has submitted representation to the Prime Minister and a few other union ministers urging immediate support from the government to save the hospitality sector from imminent collapse and has requested for several fiscal measures for this.

"The Indian hotel industry's total revenue in FY2019-20 stood at ₹1.82 lakh crore. As per our estimates, in FY2020-21, approximately 75 per cent of the industry's revenues got wiped off. That is more than ₹1.30 lakh crore revenue hit," the FHRAI said in a statement.

The businesses are steadily closing and non-performing assets

(NPAs) are rising, it added. Since March 2020, the industry has been struggling to manage its statutory and capital expenditure obligations. Repayment of loans with interest is not just difficult but impossible under a more severe economic environment due to the present surge, FHRAI Vice President Gurbaxish Singh Kohli said.

Without a moratorium on EMIs and interest payments, the sector will completely crumble, he added. 'We request the Government to

offer a sector-specific policy which can mitigate all adverse financial impact including debt obligations accrued or to be accrued towards banks, financial institutions or any other entities, in view of the current circumstances and its longterm repercussions," Kohli said.

vestor sentiment due to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As per depositories' data, the overseas investors pulled out ₹6,427 crore from equities and ₹25 crore from the debt segment during May 1-14. The net outflow during the period under review stood at ₹6,452 crore.

"The severe Covid second wave, increasing lockdowns and concerns regarding its impact on GDP growth and corporate earnings seem to be behind FPI outflows," said VK Vijayakumar, chief investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

In the preceding month, the total net outflow from the Indian capital markets (equities and debt) was ₹9.435 crore. The real impact on economy is unclear but investors are becoming nervous and cautious, said co-founder and COO at Groww Harsh Jain.

nessed a combined erosion of ₹1.13.074.57 crore in market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and HDFC Bank emerging as the worst hit.

Among the top-10 most valued companies, only Reliance Industries Limited and State Bank of India managed to book gains on a weekly basis.

During the holiday-truncated trading week, the BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 473.92 points or 0.96 per cent.

The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services tumbled ₹30,054.79 crore to ₹11,28,488.10 crore. Infosys witnessed an erosion of ₹15,168.41 crore, taking its market worth to ₹5.61.060.44 crore. The market capitalisation of HDFC Bank eroded by ₹15,139.12 crore to ₹7,65,035.49 crore and that of Kotak Mahindra Bank plummeted by

₹14,398.04 crore to ₹3,38,358.80 crore The valuation of HDFC dived ₹13,430.38 crore to ₹4,36,879.75 crore and that of Bajaj Finance tanked ₹9 844 62 crore to ₹3 21 592 05 crore The m-cap of Hindustan Unilever Limited diminished by ₹8,505.43 crore to stand at ₹5,58,445.28 crore and that of ICICI Bank dipped by ₹6,533.78 crore to ₹4,13,243.07 crore. In contrast, Reliance Industries

added ₹3.518.62 crore to take its valuation to ₹12,27,855.04 crore and State Bank of India added ₹2,052.66 crore to help its m-cap reach ₹3,21,732.25 crore.

The Ahmedabad-based firm said it has already initiated the discussions with Bharat Biotech in this regard. "A tripartite consortium has been formed with the Government of Guiarat as the lead partner, to explore the prospects of manufacturing the Covid vaccine through technology from Bharat Biotech, Hester Biosciences CEO and MD Rajiv Gandhi said in a statement.

The discussions are currently ongoing with Bharat Biotech towards reviewing the infrastructure at Hester, the technology adaption process and the regulatory compliances, he added.

Based on the outcome of the review, the next course of action will be determined, Gandhi noted.

Hester Biosciences is a leading player in the animal healthcare segment.

China enjoys sweet spot in global trade, calls US confused

CHINA'S TRADE WITH THE US WENT UP 61.3 PER CENT, WHILE WITH INDIA THE BILATERAL TRADE WENT UP 42.8 PER CENT IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THIS YEAR

Health insurance for tractor buyers

New Delhi: Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd Sunday announced an initiative to support its new tractor customers amid the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic with provisions for health insurance of ₹1 lakh and pre-approved emergency financial support to farmers. Under its 'M-Protect COVID' plan, the company said it aims to safeguard new Mahindra tractor customers and their families against eventuality of contracting COVID. M&M said the plan includes a health cover of ₹1 lakh through a unique COVID Mediclaim policy to cover the customer in case they contract COVID with home quarantine benefits.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 16: Despite the belligerent rhetoric against the Chinese Communist Party regime across the world, China is likely to enjoy its exorbitant value to the

legacy from the Trump era, China's

trade with the US went up 61.3 per

cent with \$165 billion in the first

quarter of this year. Among all of

China's trading partners, this is

the highest growth rate, as per

per cent. ASEAN-China trade in-

creased 26.1 per cent in the same

While EU-China trade rose 36.4

China's official data.

period.

US and the global economy. Consider this: Even as the war of words between the two countries continued under the newly elected Biden administration, as a

went up 42.8 per cent even as the two countries clashed with each other at the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh last year. The overall FDI into the country

in the first four months of this year has increased 38.6 per cent, year-on-year. Though last vear most of the world imposed lockdown due to the pandemic, resulting into disruption in the global economy but even in 2019, the FDI had gone up 30.1 per cent in the same period. In the last four months, China received foreign investments to the tune of 61.45 billion USD.

This year's growth in trade happened even as the advanced economies of the world persistently threatened to shift supply chains out of China following the coronavirus pandemic. Many an-

With India, the bilateral trade



alysts who were hoping that China's loss due to shift in supply chains could be India's gain. But on the ground, not only the EU, but the US remains heavily dependent on

China for its manufactured goods. The US is China's third largest trading partner behind the EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries.

Due to the Biden administration's huge fiscal stimulus plans, an increase in income and consumption has generated a demand in the US market.

Industry professionals attributed the sustained upward momentum in foreign investment to the country's solid economic base and consistent opening-up measures, showing foreign investors' confidence in China's economic development. They suggested China should open up further and stabilize foreign investment, given the changes in the external environment.

As a result, the US while playing the anti-China optics, has also been sending mellowed hints to the Xi Jinping regime. In his remarks at the UN Security Council's open virtual debate on multilateralism,

the US Secretary of State, Antony J. Blinken last week said that the US believes it is not only possible. it is imperative. "Multilateralism is still our best tool for tackling big global challenges," he said adding the US will work with any country "including those with whom we have serious differences." The stakes, he said, "are too high to let differences stand in the way of our cooperation.'

The Global Times wrote, the US is uncertain about how much help its allies will provide and how strong its own strength is as it has plunged into an unprecedented crisis with pressures of economic recovery and deepened social conflicts. The figures of the trade and foreign direct investments into-China seemed to validate Beijing's point of view.







sports

SHUTTLER 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 Sindu much. This is because she trusts her Korean coach Park Tae Sang to create match situations for her in training itself.

OrissaPOST

MONDAY | MAY 17 | 2021 | BHUBANESWAR

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 Olympicbound 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

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 Kanasas 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



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 vourself, it (virus) can spread anytime, 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 tour 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 befor the World Cup in New Zealand.

Paine lauds Kohli's competitive attitude



AGENCIES

Melbourne, May 16: Virat Kohli seems to have left an indelible mark on Australian Test captain Tim Paine. The latter has said he will 'always remember' the Indian skipper for being the world's best batsman, capable of also getting under the opposition's skin with his competitiveness.

Kohli and Paine have had a fiery rivalry which goes back to India's 2018-19 tour of Australia. Their on-field spats were an interesting sub-plot during the historic showdown in which India became the first Asian country to win a Test series Down Under.

"For Virat Kohli, I've said many times, he seems like the type of player you would love to have on your team. He is competitive. He is the best batsman in the world," the 36-year-old Paine said on the 'Gilly and Goss' podcast.

"He (Kohli) is challenging to play against and he can get under your skin because he is so good and he is so competitive. But yeah, for me from where I came from, sharing a feud with him four years ago, he is certainly someone I will always remember," added the Australian.

Interestingly, last year Paine had said that Kohli is 'just another player' in the Indian team who 'doesn't really bother me'. He had also stated that the Australian team 'love to hate' the superstar for his awe-inspiring abilities with the bat.

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.

1ST DOUBLE BAGEL IN WTA FINAL IN 5 YEARS Swiatek routs Pliskova Jald se jald apne PAN aur Aadhaar Card winners and committed only five unforced ko link karna zaroori hai. It wasn't always so easy this week for Swiatek, the surprise winner in Paris last Link karne ki aakhari taareekh hai, June 30, 2021. year when she was ranked 54th. She had to save two match points in her third-round victory over Barbora Krejcikova then had

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 Raiendrasinh Jadeia 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 firstclass 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 Italian Open tennis tournament, The final lasted just 46 minutes Sunday.

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 'dou-

ble bagel' score in the women's final of the

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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

time Rome champion Elina Svitolina and 17-year-old Coco Gauff — after her quarterfinal was pushed back a day due to rain.

to win twice Saturday – beating both two-

errors to Pliskova's 23.

"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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