



PARADIGM SHIFT

Actor Tamannaah Bhatia feels star culture is changing rapidly after the boom in digital space

LEISURE P2



HYBRID WAR

Belarusian Prez Alexander Lukashenko has accused the West of trying to wage a hybrid war against him to oust him from power

INTERNATIONAL P10



PHANGAL IN SEMIS

Amit Panghal (52kg) advances to semis assuring himself of a 2nd successive medal at Asian Boxing Championships

SPORTS P12

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Yaasassassination minimised

ODISHA BREATHES A SIGH OF RELIEF AS DAMAGE TO TELECOM SECTOR AVERTED, 2 DEATHS REPORTED



FURY OF NATURE: Huge trees uprooted on the Akhandalamani-Bhadrak road after 'Yaas' struck the district Wednesday

OP PHOTOS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: Very severe cyclonic storm 'Yaas' weakened Wednesday evening after causing havoc in the coastal districts of north Odisha. Heavy rainfall coupled with wind speeds of 130-145kmph lashed several districts as 'Yaas' made its landfall between Dhamra and Balasore. Only two persons lost their lives (for reasons other than 'Yaas'), even though infrastructure suffered damages due to the fury of the storm. However, even then it can be stated that 'Yaas' did not cause the amount of destruction and damage that was expected.

'Yaas' hit the coast north of Dhamra in Bhadrak district and 50km south of Balasore, close to Bahanaga block, around 9.00am Wednesday morning. The landfall process was over around 1.30pm, IMD DG, Mrutyunjay Mohapatra informed. After causing damages in the two coastal districts, the cyclone has entered Mayurbhanj and will weaken into a deep depression before moving into Jharkhand, he added.

The maximum sustained wind speed associated with the cyclone during the landfall was 130-140kmph and at times it went up to 150kmph, Mohapatra informed.

Trees, branches, thatched and tin roofs were seen flying while tidal waves surged at a height of two to four metres. As a result, seawater entered several villages in Bahanaga and Remuna blocks of Balasore district, and Dhamra



People take shelter at the Khaira health centre in Balasore district amid the cyclone

NAVEEN ANNOUNCES RELIEF MEASURES

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced Wednesday seven days of relief for all the families of the 128 marooned villages of the cyclone-affected districts. Reviewing the situation after severe cyclonic storm 'Yaas' had ravaged some of the coastal districts of north Odisha, Patnaik also said that all major roads in the state will be opened for traffic within the next 24 hours. He also informed that there will be 80 per cent restoration of power in the affected districts within the same time frame. The CM congratulated all the panchayat representatives, officials of the district administration and police personnel for their tireless endeavour in minimising the damage caused by the storm. He also lauded the doctors and health workers for their efforts in these difficult times.

and Basudevpur in Bhadrak district, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena informed. The administration with the help of the locals is taking measures to drain out the saline water from the villages, he said.

Jena informed that the telecommunication sector did not suffer any major damage. However, at a number of places electric poles were uprooted leading to power disruption. Work is on to re-

store power at the earliest, Jena said. He informed that forests in both Balasore and Bhadrak districts have been hit hard as a large number of trees were uprooted due to the cyclone's ferocity. "The total losses suffered can be assessed only after the weather conditions improve," said Jena.

Personnel from the Army, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the Odisha Disaster Rapid

- Wind speed during landfall of cyclone Yaas was between 130-145kmph at most places
- SRC informed that power supply in most places of Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur and Jajpur districts will be restored by Thursday
- No major damage to telecom sector, debris in major roads being cleared at rapid pace
- Yaas to weaken into deep depression before entering Jharkhand

Action Force (ODRAF) and state police and civil defence volunteers were working round-the-clock for restoration of normalcy in the districts.

Restoration of power lines have started in some places in Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Jajpur districts, Jena stated. He assured that power supply in these districts will be restored by Thursday. Power in Bhadrak town will be restored Wednesday itself. Out of the 305 major roads, 295 have been opened for traffic. Undisrupted water supply has been ensured in all the affected areas, the SRC said.

The two deaths were reported from Keonjhar and Balasore districts. Purna Chandra Nayak of Panchupalli village in Anadapur block of Keonjhar district died after a tree fell on him. The death in Balasore district occurred when a man left the cyclone shelter and tried to reach his home on a bike. En route a tree fell on him that led to his death.

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Nine blocks receive over 200m rainfall

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: Out of the 314 blocks in Odisha, 36 received rainfall between 110mm and 304mm, while 37 others recorded 50-100mm rainfall due to the effect of cyclone 'Yaas'. Giving this information here Wednesday the regional meteorological office said Chandbali block in Bhadrak district recorded rainfall of 288.3mm over the past 24 hours, the highest in the state. It was followed by the Rajkanika block (251mm) in Kendrapara district.

Other blocks that received over 200mm rainfall in Kendrapara district are Garadpur (245mm) and Marshaghai (229mm). Kujang in Jagatsinghpur district recorded rainfall of 226mm followed by Nawana (210.4mm) in Mayurbhanj district. Tirtol in Jagatsinghpur district recorded 207mm rainfall while Paradip in

the same district had 200.3mm of rainfall. Also Binjharpur block in Jajpur district reported 206mm of rainfall.

The IMD has issued a red warning for nine districts that are expected to receive heavy downpours in the next 24 hours.

The districts of Dhenkanal, Angul, Deogarh and Sundargarh received moderate rain, while the average precipitation in Keonjhar district was 44.7mm, the Met department said. Similarly, during the same period, the state capital and Cuttack received 40.3mm and 41.8mm rainfall respectively, it added.

Cyclone 'Yaas' wreaked havoc in the coastal towns of north Odisha and neighbouring West Bengal, as it hit the coast around 9.00am with wind speeds of 130-145kmph, inundating low-lying areas amid a storm surge, officials said.

DISASTER AVERTED AS NDRF SAVES 10 IN JAGATSINGHPUR

JAGATSINGHPUR: The NDRF, together with the district administration of Jagatsinghpur, has rescued 10 people from a river after their boat capsized, amid rough weather conditions under the influence of cyclone 'Yaas'. In a video tweeted by Jagatsinghpur District Collector Sangram K Mohapatra, rescue personnel Tuesday night can be seen holding on to an inflatable boat as people disembark. "Fantastic work by NDRF and BDO, Erasama during #CycloneYaas rescuing 10 people in the late night from a river after their boat capsized (sic)," Mohapatra tweeted Wednesday. He further said that the arduous operation was carried out in the midst of a light drizzle and 45-kmph wind speed. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also lauded the rescue efforts. "Appreciate the quick response from the team of @NDRFHQ and Erasama BDO to rescue 10 people from a capsized boat in the river, during a courageous night time rescue operation," Patnaik tweeted. "Such bravery is indeed praiseworthy," he added. It was indeed a very risky operation for the NDRF considering the bad weather. To make matters worse, there was consistent rainfall during the rescue operations and the river was rough. However, the NDRF personnel overcame all obstacles to rescue the people from the capsized boat and bring them safely back ashore.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We're debating. Once we decide whether allopathy is better or Ayurveda, we'll open a healthcare centre here!

CHOKSI ARRESTED BY DOMINICA COPS

ANTIGUA: Fugitive jeweller Mehul Choksi, who had gone missing May 23 from Antigua, has been captured in Dominica, media reports claimed Wednesday. The 'Antigua News Room' said Choksi is currently in the custody of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Dominica. Choksi, who has taken citizenship of Antigua and Barbuda, was last seen driving around the island May 23. Later, his vehicle was found, but he was reported missing. He was arrested after an Interpol Yellow Notice was issued against him.

SURGE IN COVID-19 DEATHS CONTINUES

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha reported Wednesday a record spike of 35 fresh fatalities due to Covid-19 taking the toll in the state to 2,584, informed a health official. Odisha also reported 11,623 new Covid-19 cases taking the total number of infected persons past the seven lakh-mark to 7,26,003. Out of the new cases, 6,509 were from quarantine centres while 5,114 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing. Khurda and Angul reported five deaths each.

DEFAMATION NOTICE FILED AGAINST RAMDEV

DEHRADUN: The IMA slapped Wednesday a ₹1000 crore defamation notice on yoga guru Ramdev for his alleged disparaging remarks against allopathy and allopathic doctors. The IMA has also demanded an unconditional apology from Ramdev within 15 days. The six-page notice was served on behalf of IMA (Uttarakhand) secretary Ajay Khanna by his lawyer Neeraj Pandey.

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	51017.52	↑ 379.99
NIFTY	15301.50	↑ 93.00
DOLLAR	72.82	↓ ₹0.15
EURO	89.68	↑ ₹0.14
GOLD	₹49,007	↑ ₹140
SILVER	₹71,794	↓ ₹346

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	27.4°C	27.0°C
MIN	22.7°C	22.4°C
Humidity	92%	92%
Rainfall	3.5mm	7.0mm
		Light rain very likely

COMPLETION OF 6 MONTHS OF STIR AGAINST AGRI LAWS Farmers observe 'Black Day'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 26: Farmers agitating at three Delhi border points raised black flags, shouted anti-government slogans, burnt effigies and took out protest marches Wednesday as they observed 'Black Day' to mark the completion of six months of their stir against the three Central agri laws. The demonstrations were carried out at the three borders in Ghazipur, Singhu and Tikri. Effigies of all top central ministers were burnt during the protests.

Delhi Police urged people not to hold gatherings due to the Covid-19 situation and the ongoing lockdown. The police however, said that protests by and large were peaceful at the three borders.

Senior farmer leader Avtar Singh Mehma said that black flags have been hoisted not only at the protest sites but also in villages of Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. He added that villagers have put up black flags atop their houses as well as on their vehicles. "Effigies of government leaders were burnt. This day is to reiterate the fact that it has been six months since we have been protesting, but the government, which also completes seven years in office today (Wednesday), is not listening to us,"



Protesting farmers burn an effigy of Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar while observing 'Black Day' near the Singhu border Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

said Mehma. All those in solidarity of their movement also donned black turbans and dupattas.

At the Singhu border, protesters gathered in front of a reputed company, held meetings, and took out a march. Farmer leader Kulwant Singh said, "The protesters took out a procession carrying black flags. They

burnt Prime Minister Narendra Modi's effigy while raising slogans against the three farm laws."

At Ghazipur on the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border, hundreds of farmers, led by Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait, converged into groups as they burnt an effigy of the Centre in protest.

WhatsApp moves Delhi HC challenging new govt rules

SOCIAL MEDIA GIANT STILL INTERESTED IN HOLDING DISCUSSIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: WhatsApp has filed a lawsuit in the Delhi High Court challenging the government's new digital rules. The social media giant said the requirement for the company to provide access to encrypted messages will break privacy protections. The petition was filed Tuesday evening. It seeks declaring the rule requiring the message service provider to identify the first originator of any message flagged as a violation of privacy rights provided by the constitution.

A company spokesperson confirmed filing the petition. "Requiring messages to trace chats is the equivalent of asking us to keep a fingerprint of every single message sent on WhatsApp which would break end-to-end encryption and fundamentally undermines people's right to privacy," the spokesperson said in a statement Wednesday.



Requiring messages to trace chats is the equivalent of asking us to keep a fingerprint of every single message sent. That is impossible

WHATSAPP SPOKESPERSON

"We have consistently joined civil society and experts around the world in opposing requirements that would violate the privacy of our users," the spokesperson added.

The petition came just as the new digital rules kicked in. Non-compliance with the rules could take away legal protection social media companies such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp enjoy. The new rules were an-

nounced February 25. Those require large social media platforms to follow additional due diligence, including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer. They previously enjoyed immunity for content posted by any third party user.

The government meanwhile staunchly defended its new digital rules, saying the requirement of messaging platforms such as WhatsApp to disclose origin of flagged messages does not violate privacy, and went on to seek a compliance report from social media firms. IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the new norms will not impact normal functioning of the popular free-messaging platform.

India is a large market for these digital platforms. As per data cited by the government, India has 53 crore WhatsApp users, 41 crore Facebook subscribers and 21 crore people who use Instagram.

leisure



Theron plans movie on gender equality

Actress Charlize Theron and filmmaker Niki Caro have joined hands for a film on gender equality. Theron will produce the film, while Caro will direct. The film will stream on a digital platform.

Kim Kardashian denies violating labour laws

American reality TV star Kim Kardashian has denied violating California labour laws, in the wake of a legal suit filed by her former staff. They had accused Kim of holding back taxes from their wages but not handing over the amounts to the government.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Ganesha advises you to look before you leap. One hasty decision may undo a lot of hard work accomplished over a long period of time. After a tense morning, you may simply want an evening with kids, helping them grow the Dahlias.

TAURUS
This day you are going to be particularly conscious of your beliefs and principles. You will be very proud and sensitive, and are not likely to brook any adverse comment or criticism. Anyone who dares to question or deride them will get a fitting response from you. Ganesha, however warns you to be more tolerant of others' views and beliefs. Intolerance, particularly in the form of sharp and acidic retorts, could alienate some important persons.

GEMINI
You have been aching to arrange a family reunion or get-together at your house. Well, today is the perfect day to do it. And why just family? You are also likely to invite some of your close friends and important business associates over to your place. Your spouse will enjoy the company of your loved ones.

CANCER
Your way of talk today will be such that it can cause misunderstanding. In a fit of emotion, you will regret the same in future, but you will also get a chance to rectify the same. So, says Ganesha, do not take a any ad hoc or temporary decision but a firm decision.

LEO
You will try to finish your tasks as per schedule and will also be able to earn well. You will benefit from the influence of high ranking officials. They will appreciate your dedication. A promotion may come your way. You will reap the rewards of your hard work, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Ganesha advises you to keep your distance from partnership ventures. You are much better off all alone and have the ability to quell the stampede. Left to yourself, you are the best manager of your sphere of work. Ganesha says today you will garner the support of people by uniting them under you for achieving greater success.

LIBRA
Today is the day when you seem to agree with everything that people say, without striking even a note of criticism. It's just one of those days when you are amazed by all things around you. Such an elastic approach will enable you to be reasonable in your views and sensible in your ways. Ganesha wishes you the very best.

SCORPIO
It may have been on the cards for long and finally, you may end up buying a state-of-the-art motor vehicle or a palatial house of your dreams today. In addition, your generous mood may also egg you on to buy an expensive gift for your life partner. If you do not let the generosity burn a hole through your pocket, you may have an overall satisfying day, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Round and round they tumble, the wheels of life, smoothly gliding into a routine. You may spend your day in discontent due to the rut of regular activities. Sadly, there is little hope or adventure Ganesha foresees that might make this day worthwhile for you. There will be glimpses of excitement in the evening but on the whole, it will be nothing to write home about.

CAPRICORN
The day calls for making amends and undoing the damage done to relationships, so you will most likely focus on improving rapport with relatives and peers, says Ganesha. But despite your affable approach, family feud may occur. Keeping obnoxious neighbours at bay will save you some trouble.

AQUARIUS
You may fall in love today! If single, romance colours your day with a rainbow. If married, you may enjoy a quiet but romantic evening with your spouse. Ganesha says that if nothing else, it's a good time to pour over your photo albums and float in nostalgia.

PISCES
To get away from your daily tasks you will concentrate on entertainment, fun and rest today. You will feel like a free bird today. In all this also some important task will need your attention today. Ganesha says you feel nice as things around you change.

'IDEA OF A STAR IS CHANGING RAPIDLY'

NEW DELHI: Actress Tamannaah Bhatia feels the star culture is changing rapidly after the boom in the digital space.

Tamannaah, after tasting success on the big screen, has now forayed into the digital space. This year, she was seen in the web series The 11th Hour and, more recently, November Story.

She doesn't feel the need to choose between the two mediums, of course. "There is nothing to choose from because at least in my case I get to have both. I just feel that the fan following one could have amassed, say, 10 years ago will be tricky for the generation today, because with the situation we are in, owing to the pandemic, emotions around films are different. The way cinema is viewed is going to be different," says the *Bahubali*

actress. "So, the whole idea of a star itself is changing very rapidly, and people are watching content and liking content for the content and not just for an individual actor or individual talent," adds Tamannaah.



Paree Hoon Main was not about child abuse: Suneeta

NEW DELHI: Singer Suneeta Rao, who became an overnight star in the nineties singing the pop track *Paree Hoon Main*, dispels notions that the song is about child abuse.

"Thank you for asking me this question, because I want to make it very clear that *Paree Hoon Main* did not come with any message of child abuse. It was a simple song about the beauty and ethereal qualities of a woman and the innocence that remains through her life," said Suneeta.

She added that the song was just about a high school crush over a professor.

"The video had a small hint at a story of a little girl who has a crush on her professor - like all little girls do! That's all. If it was meant to carry that message, an artiste like me who works for Laadli, a Girl Child Initiative, would have said so loud and clear in every interaction with people and the press, which I did not," she added.

IAN S

Rakul's mantra to overcome anxiety, stress

MUMBAI: Rakul Preet Singh Wednesday shared a tip to overcome anxiety and stress in the time of Covid.

The actress shared a photograph on Instagram, where she can be seen resting on the ground in a gym with her eyes closed and hands stretched.

"No! I am not sleeping off. This is how I relax post workout, with a session of Yog Nidra, as suggested by my wellness expert. If the pandemic anxiety is making you sleepless, stressed or if you are recovering post COVID, she suggests giving Yog nidra a shot. And I cannot agree more! #everydaypostworkout," she wrote alongside the image.

On the work front, Rakul's latest release is the digital film *Sardar Ka Grandson* co-starring Arjun Kapoor and Neena Gupta. The Kaashvie Nair directorial also features Kumud Mishra and Soni Razdan.

IAN S



Indian film on LGBTQ+ theme to be screened at BAFTA qualifying fest

SHEER QORMA HAS A TENDER STORY THAT SAYS LOVE SHOULDN'T BE JUDGED, LOVE SHOULDN'T BE RESTRICTIVE AND LOVE SHOULDN'T BE CONFINED: SHABANA AZMI

MUMBAI: The short film *Sheer Qorma*, starring Swara Bhasker, Divya Dutta and Shabana Azmi, will have its world premiere at the BAFTA Qualifying Frameline: San Francisco International LGBTQ+ Film Festival. The festival, regarded as the largest queer film exhibition event in the world, is scheduled from June 10 to 27.

The film is based on an LGBTQ+ theme and it narrates a story of love and acceptance, revolving around its leads Swara, Divya and Shabana Azmi.

"Love shouldn't be judged, love shouldn't be restrictive, love shouldn't be confined. *Sheer Qorma* is one such tender story that the freedom to choose who you love," says Shabana.

Swara goes on to add: "(I am) Super excited for the fact that the



world premiere of *Sheer Qorma* is going to be at the BAFTA Qualifying Frameline. It's a story that needs to be platformed well, a story that needs to be presented well, a story that needs to reach out to as many people as possible within India, outside of India because again it's such a universal tale of our time."

Divya says: "I think it's a huge deal to qualify for Frameline at the BAFTA. BAFTA itself is the most prestigious festival we have and it's not easy to qualify at Frameline. So, I think to get out there and be the first to be there - that is the biggest platform for us."

Produced by Marijke Desouza, the film has been directed by Faraz Arif Ansari.

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

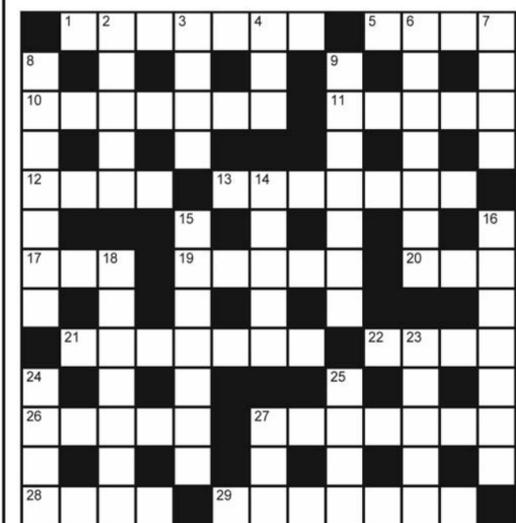


BREVITY



FUN post

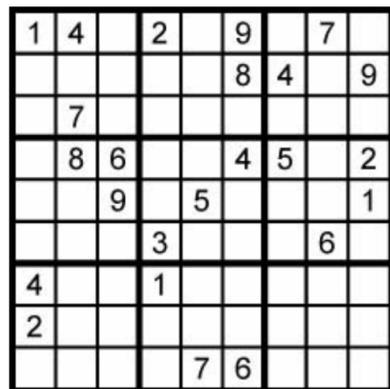
CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2021 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Red Italian table wine
 - 5 Kon-Tiki Museum site
 - 10 Join together
 - 11 Perfect
 - 12 Undertaking
 - 13 Pay close attention
 - 17 Wayside stop
 - 19 Stableboy
 - 20 Small pouch
 - 21 Earthquake follower, at times
 - 22 Plummet
 - 26 They hold water
 - 27 Kind of history
 - 28 Roman wrap
 - 29 Leafy vegetables
 - 6 Zigs and zags
 - 7 Birds of prey
 - 8 Terrier type
 - 9 Catch-22
 - 14 Witch's ride
 - 15 Suffer anguish
 - 16 Spotted wildcats
 - 18 Retirement fund (4,3)
 - 23 Proficient
 - 24 Money owed
 - 25 Sound rebound
 - 27 Egyptian cobra
- Down**
- 2 Sharpens
 - 3 Mideast port
 - 4 Preschooler

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



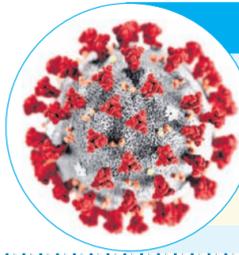
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



SAFETY FIRST

The Covid testing centre at Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar remained shut in the wake of cyclone Yaas, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	16,85,97,400	15,01,54,170	35,01,701
India	2,71,57,795	2,43,50,816	3,11,388
Odisha	7,26,003	6,23,628	2,584

On-site vax registration norms out

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: The state Health department Wednesday issued norms for providing on-site registration of persons in 18-44 years age group for Covid-19 vaccination. The department, however, has requested officials to plan vaccination sessions judiciously.

Vaccination for 18-44 age group is now confined to five Municipal Corporations and municipalities of Khurda, Puri, Bargarh, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur and Koraput due to limited supply of Covid-19 jabs while its extension is also expected.

"In case of sessions exclusively organised with online slots, towards the end of the day, some doses may still be left unutilised in case the online appointee beneficiaries do not turn up on day of vaccination. In such cases, on-site registration of a few beneficiaries



Jabs at workplaces

The Health department Wednesday said that the family members of the employees of private firms can be vaccinated if a workplace vaccination drive is arranged by the employer. However, the onus of procuring the doses lies with the employer and the private hospitals with whom the enterprises plan to tie up. If the vaccination centres are set up in government departments, the vaccine doses for people above 45 years could be taken from the Central government quota while the doses for 18-44 years could be taken from the state.

may be necessary to minimise the vaccine wastage," the norms said.

It also added, "Even though CoWIN provides for features such as registration of up to 4 beneficiaries with a mobile number, facilitated registration and appointments through applications (such as Arogya Setu and Umang and through the Common Service Centres etc), people requiring fa-

cilitated cohorts facility and those without access to internet or smart phones or mobile phones, may still have limited access to vaccination."

Hence, the notification said, the feature for on-site registration has been enabled for 18-44 age group on CoWIN. However, this facility is available for government vaccination centres and not for private vaccine centres. "Districts and med-

ical colleges must decide on opening of on-site registrations/facilitated cohorts registration and appointments for 18-44 years age group based on the local context, just as an additional measure to minimise vaccine wastage," it said.

The department has asked Collectors and officers concerned to issue instructions to the District Immunisation Officers on the issue. "It is advised that sessions with a mix of online and on-site slots may be avoided as far as possible. Some of the vaccination centres may exclusively be designated for organizing fully reserved sessions. Alternatively, fully reserved and fully online sessions may be organised on different days," the norms said. Only a small proportion of the slots published for online appointments may be kept as reserved slots for on-site registration/appointment for minimising wastage of shots.

10 moved to safety as boat capsizes in Jagatsinghpur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jagatsinghpur, May 26: The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) along with the Jagatsinghpur district administration has rescued 10 people from a river after their boat capsized amid rough weather conditions under the influence of Cyclone Yaas.

In a video tweeted by Jagatsinghpur district Collector, rescue personnel Tuesday night can be seen holding on to an inflatable boat as people disembarked. "Fantastic work by NDRF and BDO, Erasama during #CycloneYaas rescuing 10 people in the late night from a river after their boat capsized," Jagatsinghpur Collector Sangram K Mohapatra tweeted Wednesday.

He further said that the arduous operation was carried out amidst drizzle and 45-kmph wind speed. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has also lauded the rescue effort.

"Appreciate the quick response from the team of @NDRFHQ and Erasama BDO to rescue 10 people from a capsized boat in the river, during a courageous night time rescue operation," Patnaik tweeted.

IIM-Sbp achieves 100% placement for sixth batch

PNN/AGENCIES

Sambalpur, May 26: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Sambalpur Wednesday said it achieved 100 per cent placement for students of the sixth batch of its flagship MBA programme with a multi-fold increase in the number of recruiters across sectors, despite the prevailing Covid-19 situation.

More than 110 companies participated in the on-campus summer internship placement process for 157 students

More than 110 companies participated in the on-campus summer internship placement process for 157 students, according to a statement issued by the IIM.

"IIM Sambalpur is proud to announce the successful completion of 100 per cent summer placements for the sixth batch (2020-22) of its flagship MBA programme," it said.

This year also saw a sharp increase in the number of companies in the automobile, e-commerce, and pharmaceutical sectors, which visited the campus, it said.

"IIM Sambalpur has yet again bettered its previous records and will continuously strive to exceed expectations of all its stakeholders," institute director Mahadeo Jaiswal said.

"Despite the current market dynamics, our students have secured offers from various companies with their hard work and dedication," he added.

State gets 50 more vials of Amphotericin-B

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, May 26: Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers DV Sadananda Gowda Wednesday allotted 50 more vials of Amphotericin-B used in treatment of mucormycosis to Odisha.

According to the ministry, there are around 15 black fungus patients who are under treatment till May 25 evening in the state. The Centre had sent 50 vials of injection Tuesday to treat the mucormycosis patients in the state.

The Union minister announced that additional 29,250 vials of Amphotericin-B drug have been allocated to all states and Union Territories. He said that the allocation has been made based on the number of patients under treatment which is 11,717 across the country.



Significantly, the Odisha government has also floated tenders to directly procure the drug from the manufacturers. However, several manufacturers claimed that they are unlikely to deal with states regarding the supply of scarce drug as the Union government has control over its supply.

The Union government supplies the drug to state governments on the basis of caseload.

Healthcare aid for 11 western dists

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: The Odisha State Medical Corporation (OSMC) will provide necessary healthcare facilities such as doctors and medical equipment for the Covid patients in 11 districts of western Odisha.

The Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) informed about this stating that the Health and

Family Welfare (H&FW) department instructed the corporation to provide all necessary help to these 11 districts. The districts are: Bargarh, Bolangir, Boudh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Sambalpur, Subarnapur, Sundargarh and Athamallick Sub-division of Angul district.

The respective district Collectors have been notified to get necessary

facility from the corporation.

Earlier, the WODC had declared ₹25 crore relief package for Covid related help and infrastructure development in western districts of the state. For this, the Collectors of these districts were asked to send proposals for necessary requirements to the council who after consultation with H&FW department will grant the necessary facility.



After a day's halt, carpenters resume chariot construction at Rath Yard in Puri, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

Despite storm, Odisha continues O2 supply to needy states

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 26: Despite being hit by cyclone Yaas, the state government has ensured uninterrupted supply of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) to several states facing acute shortage of the life-saving gas in treating Covid-19 patients, thanks to the proper planning by the government, an official said Wednesday.

According to a senior state government official, the transportation of LMO continued even amidst cyclone Yaas.

"Four oxygen tankers are on their way from Angul to Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam, while two LMO tankers are going from Jajpur to Berhampur and Bhubaneswar under close supervision and es-



FILE PHOTO

cort of the Odisha Police," said the official.

ADG (Law and Order) YK Jethwa said, "Advanced planning was done and standard operating procedure was prepared for ensuring unhindered oxygen movement, while

ensuring the safety of oxygen production centres, tankers, drivers and other staff."

He added that each tanker was moved under close supervision and escort of Odisha Police. In a bid to facilitate smooth



RAIN PAIN

Incessant rain triggered by cyclone Yaas inconveniences deer at the Tulsipur park in Cuttack, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

Govt issues advisories for post-vax blood clotting

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: The state Health department Wednesday issued advisories to those who have taken Covid-19 vaccines and health service providers on early detection of thrombosis (blood clot) events in patients already vaccinated.

In a letter to Collectors and other officials concerned, the department admitted that Covishield has shown cases of thrombosis in some patients, days after they were vaccinated.

The department has shared the advisories for the vaccine takers and healthcare providers as shared by the Health Ministry. The department in its letter to Collectors said, "As per in-depth analysis of Adverse Effect Following Immunisation (AEFI) cases by the National AEFI Committee for Thrombosis and Thrombocytopenic Syndrome (TTS) following COVID-19 vaccination, there is a miniscule but definite risk

ADVERSE EFFECTS

IN A LETTER TO COLLECTORS AND OTHER OFFICIALS CONCERNED, THE DEPARTMENT ADMITTED THAT COVISHIELD HAS SHOWN CASES OF THROMBOSIS IN SOME PATIENTS, DAYS AFTER THEY WERE VACCINATED



SOME OF THE COMMON SYMPTOMS CITED BY THE DEPARTMENT ARE SHORTNESS OF BREATH, PAIN IN LIMBS AND CHEST, MULTIPLE PIN-SIZED RED SPOTS, PERSISTENT ABDOMINAL PAIN, HEADACHE, WEAKNESS AND OTHERS

THE REPORTING RATE OF SUCH EVENT IN INDIA IS AROUND 0.61/MILLION DOSES AND THERE WERE NO POTENTIAL THROMBOEMBOLIC EVENTS REPORTED FOLLOWING COVAXIN

of thromboembolic events following the administration of Covishield vaccine. The reporting rate of such event in India is around 0.61/million doses and there were no potential thromboembolic events reported following Covaxin."

The department said that though such cases are less, timely report-

ing and early management are needed. The department also informed the vaccine beneficiaries to remain alert for a few weeks post administration of the vaccines.

The department has listed some of the common symptoms in case a person develops the adverse effects of thrombosis post vacci-

nation. Some of the common symptoms cited by the department are shortness of breath, pain in limbs and chest, multiple pin-sized red spots, persistent abdominal pain, headache, weakness and others.

The department said that if a person develops such symptoms 20 days after receiving the vaccine, he/she should consult the healthcare service providers soon.

The department also issued advisories for the management of such cases. The norms suggested some diagnostic means like MRI scan, D-Dimer and other tests to analyse the disease and present conditions besides talking about the line of treatment.

Injection of immunoglobulin, administration of anticoagulant and other means were suggested for the treatment of possible thrombosis in patients after receiving the vaccine.

BPIA resumes operations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: The Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here which had earlier shut down its operations until May 27, resumed operations, Wednesday, after the cyclone crossed the state.

"Bhubaneswar Airport is operational from 19:00 hrs on 26/05/2021 for flight operations," the Twitter handle of the BPIA read. Sources said that all flights will resume operations which will also include domestic carriers involved in transportation of Oxygen cylinders, to

and from the state.

Vaccination, testing to begin as per schedule

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Wednesday, stated that it will resume the vaccination and testing programme, Wednesday, after cyclone Yaas reportedly subsided.

The BMC, Tuesday, had clarified that no vaccination would be conducted May 26 owing to the cyclone. Those who had their slots book for May 26 will be given dose, May 29.

No Covid vaccination in 7 dists

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: The Health department Wednesday said that there will not be any Covid vaccination drive in seven districts of Odisha which were affected by cyclone Yaas, Thursday.

The districts are Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Khurda and Sundargarh. The Health department has, meanwhile, planned 586 sessions of vaccination in the state Thursday. The department said that it was able to inoculate a total

of 49,208 persons as the drive was suspended in 11 districts and Bhubaneswar city Wednesday. A total of 300 active sites were planned for the ongoing Covid vaccination drive Wednesday.

According to government officials, till now the state has been able to inoculate a total of 72,78,660 persons. The government is currently not facing the shortage of vaccine doses. While the government is left with 2,61,120 doses of Covishield from the central quota, it has 2,46,460 Covishield doses that was procured by the state from the manufacturer directly.

ECoR distributes food to needy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: In a noble gesture, the East Coast Railway (ECoR), in coordination with a few non-profit organisations, has distributed food and water among those stranded as well as taking shelter at several railway stations under its jurisdiction in the wake of cyclone Yaas.



According to ECoR sources, the national transporter has distributed dry as well as cooked food among the needy at Bhubaneswar, Bhadrak and Jajpur-Keonjhar Road railway stations.

"Marwadi Yuva Manch, a non-profit organisation in the Capital city, helped ECoR distribute packets containing rice, dalma, pickle and water bottles to those waiting or stranded at Bhubaneswar railway station. Likewise, Byasa Sena, a local youth group of Jajpur, also helped the national transporter in distributing cooked food to the stranded passengers as well as the needy in and around Jajpur-Keonjhar Road Station," said an ECoR official.

According to the official, ECoR was well prepared to meet the challenges posed by cyclonic storm Yaas that made its landfall near Dhamra port Wednesday morning.

"In order to tackle any eventuality round-the-clock disaster management cell has been operationalised at ECoR headquarters at Rail Sadan in the City as well as at the divisional headquarters at Visakhapatnam, Khurda Road and Sambalpur. In a bid to ensure rail traffic throughout its jurisdiction is not interrupted by the storm, ECoR has deployed special teams for early restoration of tracks, signalling system and electrification," the official pointed out.

What the soul sees and has experienced, that it knows; the rest is appearance, prejudice and opinion.



SRI AUROBINDO

Path to Net Zero

Unlike the United States, Europe, and other early industrialisers whose carbon dioxide emissions have largely already peaked, most other countries were not concerned about climate change until recently. But over the past year, there has been a surge of governments announcing target dates for achieving net-zero emissions and committing to more ambitious decarbonisation pathways.

Part of the reason for the change is that the COVID-19 pandemic has served as a wake-up call regarding the potential risks we face. Political, business, and civil-society leaders are now taking seriously the threat of a future "green swan" event that could trigger another systemic or global crisis.

Moreover, a growing number of governments have come to realise that pursuing carbon-neutral goals will drive economic growth and deliver a higher quality of life for their citizens. Whereas simply restricting emissions through regulation once would have created a strong economic headwind, the global shift toward carbon neutrality has changed the economic calculus. New consumption and production patterns are creating new markets with far-reaching growth potential.

The more a country does to replace fossil fuels with hydrogen and other forms of renewable energy, the more economically competitive it will become. Decarbonisation, after all, requires the widespread adoption of new technologies and large investments in infrastructure, all of which creates jobs and sets the stage for more new markets to emerge.

Having said that, every country needs its own strategy to account for its inherent strengths, deficiencies, and needs. In South Korea's case, achieving carbon neutrality will be especially challenging, owing to our geography, which is not favourable for wind or solar power. And, given our heavy dependence on manufacturing, the path to net zero by 2050 will entail job losses, stranded assets, and other serious social and economic risks. Managing these risks will require us to design our policies carefully.

To that end, in 2020, South Korea launched two major climate-policy initiatives: the Korean New Deal and the 2050 Carbon Neutral Strategy of the Republic of Korea. Our aim is to promote the development of energy-efficient technologies and create incentives for businesses to adopt them and embrace other eco-friendly practices.

Fortunately, South Korea's information technology and energy storage system sectors are already helping to accelerate the deployment of smart grids; and many businesses are moving into promising new areas of innovation, from clean cars to white biotechnology (which uses living cells to produce synthetic materials for textiles, biodegradable plastics, and many other products). Our strategy is also focused heavily on developing a circular hydrogen economy. With a high recycling rate of 86 per cent, the country is already well positioned as a global leader in this critical sector.

In terms of investment, the government will focus on creating a self-sufficient environment with abundant financing for green-tech startups. There will be an open and effective emissions-trading regime, as well as measures to ensure reliable corporate disclosures, following the release of a new green taxonomy this year. South Korea's carbon market already covers over 70 per cent of the country's total emissions and is quickly evolving to guarantee rewards for businesses that pursue meaningful emissions reductions.

The key to any net-zero strategy is to achieve a smooth restructuring of industry. For example, we will support the shift from internal combustion engines to clean vehicles by providing retraining for current employees and introducing new programmes to develop high-demand skills in the next generation of workers. The central government will work closely with local governments to devise programmes that are properly tailored to the needs of local economies.

Finally, we are creating plans for climate-response funds and other forms of financial support. To demonstrate our commitment to international efforts to combat climate change under the 2015 Paris climate agreement, we will submit a new nationally determined contribution this year, and we will announce an end to overseas funding of coal-fired power plants. However, for the new NDC to be more than merely aspirational, we will still need to forge a stronger domestic consensus. That means taking different interests into account and offering a clear, comprehensive roadmap for implementing net-zero strategies.

We hope that all other countries will make similarly ambitious revisions to their NDCs. Climate change is not a problem that can be solved by any one country acting alone. By developing our own net-zero strategy and sharing it widely, we hope to encourage broader participation. After all, a country's climate policy will only be as effective as its cooperation with others, especially its neighbours, particularly when it comes to setting regulations and trade policies.

We also must support developing countries that have yet to reach their emissions peaks. As a new member of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, South Korea will keep its promise to donate \$300 million to the Green Climate Fund, and will increase the green share of its official development assistance from 6 per cent to over 20 per cent.

With this month's P4G Seoul Summit coming on the heels of US President Joe Biden's climate summit last month, and as a prelude to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November, I am hopeful that 2021 will be remembered as the year when the international community got back on the Paris track. Now that the race to carbon neutrality has begun, I am confident that South Korea's carbon-neutrality strategy, like our economic-development experience more broadly, can serve as a model for others.

The writer is South Korea's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Hong Nam-ki

Climate change is not a problem that can be solved by any one country acting alone



Slawomir Sierakowski

IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT RUSSIA AND BELARUS WILL TARGET THOSE WHOM THEY CONSIDER TRAITORS, EVEN WHEN THEY ARE ABROAD. NOW IT IS WELL KNOWN HOW FAR THEY WILL GO FOR THAT PURPOSE

FOCUS BELARUS

HIJACKING COMPLACENCY



By hijacking a commercial flight in order to arrest a dissident journalist, Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko would appear to have crossed a new red line vis-à-vis the West. And yet, Western governments for years have shown that they are perfectly willing to tolerate KGB-style abuses right under their noses

Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko has once again demonstrated the lengths to which he will go to crack down on his opponents. On May 23, he deployed a MiG-29 fighter jet to force down a commercial flight, which was travelling from Athens to Vilnius, shortly before it left Belarusian airspace. The purpose was to apprehend Roman Protasevich, the former editor-in-chief of the Belarusian opposition publication and social-media channel Nexta, who was arrested after the plane landed in Minsk.

Why a regime that is already under US and EU sanctions would go so far as to hijack a plane travelling from one EU member state to another is not hard to fathom. Nexta is Lukashenko's public enemy number one. More than just a news portal with millions of followers across multiple social-media platforms (especially Telegram), Nexta has been the single most important conduit for information in Belarus since the country's fraudulent presidential election last August.

In addition to reporting on Belarusian security forces' violent crackdown against peaceful demonstrators, Nexta had provided daily instructions on when, where, and how Belarusians should mobilise during last fall's country-wide mass protests against Lukashenko's bogus election victory. Its Sunday calls for a National March for Freedom brought as many as 200,000 people into the streets of Minsk. And all of these demonstrators knew precisely what to do, because they were following the playbook published by Protasevich and his colleague, Nexta founder Stepan Putilo.

Following this unprecedented uprising, Lukashenko's regime panicked, and for good reason. Nexta was collecting and sharing information and photos from all over Belarus. Every message, photo, and call to action that it published went viral, reaching people across the country and around the world.

The key to Nexta's power was that it based itself outside of

Belarus, in Warsaw. The Lukashenko regime could neither turn off its internet connection nor imprison or shoot it, as it was doing with opposition outlets and protesters still in Belarus.

Lukashenko was doubtless infuriated by the fact that the protests were being guided not so much by Svetlana Tikhonovskaya, the likely winner of the August election, but by an elusive new-media operator beyond Belarus' borders.

Since the release in March of a Nexta documentary film exposing Lukashenko's ill-gotten riches (similar to a recent viral film about Russian President Vladimir Putin published by the now-imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny), Lukashenko has been prepared to move heaven and earth to take down his twenty-something bêtes noires. In his mind, Nexta is the keystone buttressing all of the various fronts of the resistance.

Because the Ryanair flight was much closer to Vilnius than to Minsk, the Lukashenko regime's claim that a bomb threat necessitated an emergency landing in the Belarusian capital is not credible. Once it was on the ground in Minsk, they made a fleeting show

of searching passengers and their luggage before quickly apprehending the young dissident and his girlfriend.

The detention of Protasevich's girlfriend is a classic method of the KGB (as the Belarusian security service is still called), particularly when the intent is to extract confessions. Protasevich is an extremely valuable catch for Lukashenko, because (the dictator assumes) he has the contacts of virtually all of Belarus' activists. The day after seizing Protasevich, the regime released a video of him admitting to his past participation in the protest.

The same tactic has also been used on Tikhonovskaya, whose husband was already in prison. When she was abducted after the first August protests in Minsk, she was forced to record a speech calling for an end to the uprising, most likely after having seen her husband being threatened with torture. She has since been expelled from the country, and because everyone in Belarus is familiar with these methods, no one blames her for remaining largely on the sidelines.

The hijacking is meant to send

a message. To the opposition, Lukashenko wants to say "Your days are numbered. You are traitors, and we kill traitors." And to the European Union, he has issued a direct challenge: "We can make fools of you whenever it suits us, and you will not hurt us, because you are weak."

Such conclusions are not unwarranted. After all, the Kremlin, whose domestic supporters gloated about the hijacking and Protasevich's arrest, poisoned Navalny with a nerve agent and paid almost no price for it. The United States, Britain, and the EU expressed concern and imposed symbolic sanctions, and Russia responded by putting Navalny in a labour camp.

When the Czech Republic revealed last month that Russia had been behind explosions at a weapons depot that killed two Czechs in 2014, the reaction was much the same. In fact, President Joe Biden's administration has just waived sanctions against a company building the Nord Stream 2 pipeline between Russia and Germany. Clearly it is money, not principles, that matters.

Lukashenko is following Russia's example. The Kremlin has long gloried in embarrassing foreign security services that try to protect opposition figures, usually by attacking exiled dissidents right under their noses, as with the March 2018 attempted assassination of Sergei Skripal in Salisbury, England.

Given that Nexta is based in Poland, it is worth asking if the Polish authorities did everything they could – or anything at all – to protect and warn him and his colleagues against the dangers they faced. It should have been clear that Protasevich and Putilo were in danger. It is well known that Russia and Belarus will target those whom they consider traitors, even when they are abroad. Now it is well known how far they will go for that purpose.

The writer is Director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Warsaw and Senior Fellow at the German Council on Foreign Relations.

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SPECTRUM CBI

Selective swoop of the caged parrot



SN Misra

IT'S HIGH TIME THERE IS A POLITICAL CONSENSUS NOT TO USE THE CBI FOR SUB-SERVING POLITICAL ENDS

The drubbing of BJP in West Bengal Assembly elections, the selective arrest of three politicians from TMC involved in the Narada scam, and dharna of CM Mamata Banerjee in front of CBI office display political pugilism at its worst. The scenario is rather surreal as erstwhile TMC politicians Mukul Roy and Suwendu Adhikari (both now in BJP), who were caught red-handed by Mathew Samuel accepting bribes in his sting operation have been left out and the Governor has authorised the arrest without the Speaker's approval. The CBI was called caged parrot in May 2013 by Chief Justice Lodha in the coal block allocation case as he believed that they were "speaking in the master's voice."

The role of CBI as an independent crusader against corruption was questioned in the famous Vineet Narain case (1997) wherein it was alleged high-ranking politicians were not being probed properly by CBI despite clear evidence in the Jain diaries that they had benefited from Hawala transactions. The court had suggested that there is a need for insulation of CBI from extraneous influence to ensure continuance of their good work. This landmark judgement also suggested that the Central Vigilance Commissioner

should have statutory status. CVC was mandated to oversee CBI's functioning, with the CBI director having a two-year tenure. In 2014, the Supreme Court in a major judgement struck-down the government instruction that approval of government is required for pursuing investigation of officers from joint secretary rank and above as it violates Right to Equality. The court also suggested appointment of amicus curiae to provide assistance to the court on legal issues and exercise supervision over major corruption cases. This has led to a number of scams being investigated by CBI under the watch of the SC.

In the Narada scam, several TMC leaders were purportedly seen accepting cash on camera. The Calcutta High Court had ordered a CBI probe into the sting operation for which FIR was filed against 12 TMC leaders including Mukul Roy and Suwendu Adhikari and an IPS officer. The case has been dragging on since then. It would be interesting to note that Mathew Samuel also caught Bangaru Laxman, then BJP general secretary, accepting bribe in 2001.

In the instant case, the validity of the Governor's authorisation to CBI to arrest TMC MLAs without the consent of the state is being

questioned. In this connection it may be mentioned that Justice AM Khanwilkar and BR Gavai have decreed in 2020 that under Section 6 of DSPE Act 1946, consent of the state is mandatory before the CBI can go ahead with the prosecution. Incidentally states like Punjab, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand have withdrawn their general consent given earlier to CBI to proceed with inquiry. The Speaker of West Bengal Assembly has said on record that he was not asked to give his consent before CBI officials went to the Governor. On the face of it, the approval given by the Governor appears to be ultra vires and at the behest of the Centre. The other issue that is being questioned is selective arrest and letting off two erstwhile TMC leaders who have now switched over to the BJP. Quite clearly the CBI has been acting in a partisan manner.

Fareed Rafiq Zakaria in his book "The Future of Freedom" has observed that unelected independent institutions have contributed more to the promotion of democracy than democratically elected representatives. He has referred to the pioneering role being played by judiciary and election commissioners in several democratic countries. In India also the SC has been

playing an effective check and balance after supersession of judges in 1973. The CAG passed serious audit strictures on arbitrary coal block allocation. The Chief Election Commission under TN Seshan has also shown how free and fair elections can be conducted without muscle and money power hijacking the fate of the elections. On the contrary, institutions like CBI do not have an edifying record in terms of checkmating corruption in high places. Though its conviction rate is around 67 per cent, its reputation is sullied by its complicity with the party in power. Justice Lodha, in a recent interview, has said that "CBI continues to be caged parrot. There is no independence for CBI. That problem continues."

The political executive interference is there every time." It's indeed sad that during the worst crisis of pandemic that the country is passing through the Centre is using the Governor to play a political game just because it got a drubbing in the elections. It's high time there is a political consensus not to use the CBI for sub-serving political ends. The caged parrot should be an apolitical roving vulture and crusader against corruption.

The writer teaches Constitutional Law.

WORDSWORTH

Neurobics

Alzheimer's disease, with its attendant confusion and memory loss, is rapidly replacing the Big C as the condition people fear most. Though pharmaceutical companies are pouring money into finding new drugs to treat it, success is as yet elusive. Some researchers say that vitamin B12 and regular exercise help to slow the progress of the disease. Others advocate a "use it or lose it" view, arguing that keeping the brain active into middle and old age helps to stave off symptoms. Neurobics was coined in imitation of aerobics (it seems by Dr Lawrence C Katz and Manning Rubin in their 1999 book Keep Your Brain Alive) to cover mental exercises invented to help do that. Remaining mentally active, it's argued, keeps the links between brain cells alive and busy. An example might be brushing your teeth with the other hand, or moving items around so you don't get in a mental rut, or doing things with your eyes closed. Such claims are viewed with scepticism by the medical profession, but everyone agrees that at least they can do no harm. Unlike so many briefly fashionable terms that explode into the night sky of the popular press but soon fade, this one shows slight signs of continued life. Others insist that you cannot separate the mind's software from its hardware and that the true aim of neurobics ought to be to keep the connections between brain cells flexible and strong, perhaps even growing new connections and new brain cells (New Scientist, Nov. 2001). He [Lawrence C Katz] and co-author Manning Rubin developed a series of mental exercises they say increases the range of mental motion by activating different parts of the brain. Called "neurobics," they "enhance the brain's natural drive to form associations between different types of information," Katz says (Washington Post, Feb. 2002).

Nepal crisis

Sir, Failure of both Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and the Opposition leader to form a government has worsened the crisis in Nepal. This brings into sharp focus the disorderly and uncertain polity in the country. President Bidya Devi Bhandari decided to dissolve the Parliament on the recommendations of the cabinet headed by Oli. It reminds us of the dissolution of the House in December after a similar recommendation. The President has denied the claims of both the ruling and Opposition parties to form the government. The people, who have been deprived of governance for about six months, will have to vote again for the restoration of a government. The President declared fresh dates for the mid-term elections in November at a time of surging second wave of the pandemic. The move came when the deadline set by the President to demonstrate a majority to form the government expired. It is feared that the new political developments may lead to a prolonged crisis. India's Himalayan neighbour is likely to be plunged into uncertainty at a time when the pandemic is raging. This uncertainty and chaos may embolden China to increase its influence in Nepal. China has wielded considerable influence in Nepal under Oli than it did earlier. It must be understood that the military situation in eastern Ladakh has not yet been resolved despite the disengagement in the Pangong Lake area. Nepal government had recently created a land boundary dispute with India involving Tibet, Nepal and India. Considering that China has considerable influence in Nepal, it occupies an important role in solving the dispute. The constitutionality of dissolution of the Parliament and announcement of dates for election will be tested in the Supreme Court. It is a fact that the Opposition was not given a fair chance to form a government. It is likely to lead to protests on the streets.

Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

Declining caseload

Sir, One is glad that the daily Covid cases have begun their southern journey in the last few days, falling to their lowest level in 41 days on Tuesday. The daily test positivity rate coming down to under 10 per cent is another positive. In six states, including Delhi, the caseload has come down by half since mid-May, bringing cheer. Fresh fatalities numbered 3,511, which is the lowest in 21 days. But the low testing rates and cases shooting up in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and northeastern states continue to be a concern.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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After Covid, Delhi braces for vector-borne diseases

DOOR-TO-DOOR VISITS TO CHECK MOSQUITO LARVAE BREEDING MAY NOT BE EASY FOR CIVIC EMPLOYEES AT THIS TIME WHEN THE PEOPLE ARE SCARED DUE TO THE PANDEMIC AND ARE NOT ALLOWING THE ENTRY OF OUTSIDERS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 26: While the capital is already battling the deadly second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, delay in action against vector-borne diseases by the civic authorities could prove another challenge for the people of Delhi.

According to the Delhi Municipal Corporations (MCD), so far 25 dengue cases have been reported in the city, of which 2 cases of dengue were reported in February, 5 in March, 10 in April and as many as 8 cases have been registered till May 22. This is the highest number of dengue cases in the capital in the January-May period, since 2013. However, no death has been reported in the city due to dengue so far this year, civic authorities claimed.

Apart from dengue, as many as 8 cases of malaria and 4 of chikungunya have also been registered during the same period. Cases of vector-borne diseases are usually reported in Delhi between July and November. The period may stretch till mid-December.

According to the data released by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), between January to May a total of 10 dengue



cases were recorded in 2016, 19 cases were reported in 2017, 15 in 2018, 11 in 2019 and 18 in 2020.

With the vector-borne diseases having emerged, Delhi's civic authorities - North, East and South - said they have geared up for the battle against the spread of dengue and other such diseases.

Jay Prakash, Mayor of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation, said

a campaign for the prevention of vector-borne diseases will be launched from May 30. "We are going to start a campaign to prevent vector-borne diseases in the jurisdiction. North DMC's employees will go door to door to check the larvae of dengue, malaria and chikungunya as well as to make the citizens aware."

He said that in the second phase,

the work of releasing Gambusia fish in the reservoirs will be done so that the mosquitoes larvae can be eliminated in the biological form. In the third phase, fogging and spraying of anti-mosquito medicine in large drains will be done.

However, door-to-door visits to check mosquito breeding may not be easy for civic employees at this time when the people are

scared due to the Covid-19 pandemic and are not allowing the entry of outsiders.

Dr Lallan Verma, a senior Medical Health Officer in the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, said it is proving to be a very challenging task for civic employees to check for mosquito larvae in homes as the situation is very different from last year.

"Despite various challenges, SDMC's workers are making all possible efforts to make the people aware. But the civic authorities cannot do everything alone to prevent vector-borne diseases and people's participation is very crucial. People have to ensure no water storage inside their homes."

He said that 25 cases of dengue is not a big issue, but people need to be more alert and they must follow the civic authorities' advisory to protect themselves from vector-borne diseases.

A senior official in the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) said, "Health workers have been spreading anti-mosquito chemicals in residential colonies and drains. There is also a shortage of health workers as the same workers are deployed for vaccination and other health management tasks."

Covishield + Covaxin: Villagers get mixed shots in UP hospital



AGENCIES

Siddharthnagar (UP), May 26: In a major goof-up, health workers in Uttar Pradesh's Siddharthnagar district administered Covaxin to 20 villagers who had been given Covishield in the first dose.

The incident has been reported from the primary health centre in Barhni where people from Audahi Kala and another village received Covaxin shots May 14.

Chief Medical Officer Sandip Chaudhary Wednesday said he has ordered an inquiry into the matter and assured stern action against those found responsible for this negligence.

He said that no one has yet reported any health complaints and a health department team has already met them.

The incident came to light when one of the villagers, Ram Surat, brought to the notice of the health workers that he received different vaccines in the first and the second dose.

Accepting the shortcoming on the part of the health workers, the CMO said 20 people have been administered a mix-up of vaccines and

Chief Medical Officer Sandip Chaudhary has ordered an inquiry into the matter and assured stern action against those found responsible

the medical teams are keeping a close watch on them.

The people who got different vaccines are under stress but no problem has been reported with any one of them so far, health officials said.

Uttar Pradesh's pace of vaccination is among the lowest in the country, especially counting only big states. For example, only 1.4 per cent of the total population has been fully vaccinated compared to more than double that all India and six per cent in places like Gujarat and Kerala. While the state has administered 1.75 crore vaccine doses in three months, the number of fully-vaccinated people in the state is just 33 lakhs, 1.8 per cent of UP's massive 23 crore-plus population.

Cops accused of hammering nails into man's foot in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bareilly (UP), May 26: A man in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly Wednesday accused police of hammering nails into his hand and foot for allegedly violating the Covid curfew, a claim denied by a senior official who said the injuries were self-inflicted.

Ranjit, along with his mother, reached Baradari police station with nails drilled in his hand and foot, and blamed the police.

However, Bareilly SSP Rohit Singh Sajwan refuted the allegations and termed them baseless.

The SSP said the injuries were self-inflicted to evade arrest in a case registered against Ranjit at Baradari police station.

"He did all this drama to save himself from the police. The charges levelled by him were not found to be true in the probe," Sajwan said.

The SSP said an FIR was registered against Ranjit, a resident of Jogi Navada, on May 24 for mis-

behaving with a police constable who had asked him not to wander without a mask in public.

The FIR was registered under IPC sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 504 (intentional insult with intention to provoke breach of peace), 506 (criminal intimidation), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 188 (disobedience to order duty promulgated by public servant) and 270 (malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life).

"The accused was absconding after the incident and police were searching for him," the SSP said.

The police went to Ranjit's house Tuesday night, but he was not there, Sajwan said.

In 2019, Ranjit was arrested by the police for entering a temple in an inebriated state and damaging the idols there.



Delhi's caseload, positivity rate fall due to lockdown

While 1,491 new cases were reported, the positivity rate dipped to nearly two-month low of 1.93 per cent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: The fall in count of daily COVID-19 cases and the shrinking positivity rate in Delhi can be attributed to the implementation of lockdown in the national capital to combat the pandemic, Health Minister Satyendar Jain said Wednesday.

Interacting with reporters, he also said about 600 cases of black fungus or mucormycosis have been reported here till date, with over 200 being recorded May 23.

Delhi recorded 130 COVID-19-related fatalities Wednesday, the lowest since April 15, while 1,491 new cases were reported as the positivity rate dipped to nearly two-month low of 1.93 per cent, according to the daily health bulletin.

"This seems like a straight result of the lockdown," Jain said. The minister said the number of beds available is also in large number now and about one-third of the ICU beds are also vacant.



The lockdown in Delhi amid the ongoing second wave of the coronavirus pandemic was imposed on April 19, which the government has successively extended and recently it was done till May 31.

Medical experts recently had attributed the lockdown as the main factor when the first dip in daily cases had been recorded in mid-May amid the second wave of the pandemic, while cautioning that "severity of cases was still the same as before". Jain, when asked about the death of a large number of doctors in the second wave, including in Delhi, said any death is unfortunate and added that about 10,000 lives have been lost due to Covid during the second wave here.

On black fungus cases, he said, on May 23 over 200 cases of mucormycosis were reported in a day

and then about 100 cases were recorded per day. About 600 cases have been recorded in total till date, he added. "Both private and government facilities are treating black fungus cases. But issue is of injections needed for the patients. Each patient needs about six in a day. We had received 370 of these yesterday and then about 400. We appeal to the Centre again to augment its supply," he said.

On workers at crematoria and graveyard seeking frontline workers status, Jain said, "We will consider it." Asked about reported closure of many mohalla clinics during the second wave of the pandemic, he said, "Barring 10-15 clinics, which were closed temporarily due to emergency reasons like duty doctors having got infected with Covid, all other facilities are working."

Vax hesitancy, rumours push UP villagers into river

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Barabanki (UP), May 26: Despite a sustained campaign and wide-spread publicity, vaccine hesitancy continues to prevail in the hinterlands of Uttar Pradesh where the pandemic is spreading its tentacles.

In Sisoda village in Barabanki -- where a group of residents jumped into the Saryu river to evade vaccination Sunday -- the residents remain firm in their decision of not getting the jab.

Shishupal, a local farmer, said, "People have died even after getting vaccinated. I know of those who have had to be hospitalised after the jab. Jab marna hi hai to vaccine kyon?"

Shishupal, who is a matriculate, is convinced that the Covid vaccine is 'harmful' and spreads this 'information' among others.

"I have got this information from several of my friends who work in big cities. I am convinced as the local officials have not answered my queries. My own uncle, who worked in Delhi, died a month after having both vaccine shots. What more proof do I need," he asked.

Mohd Ahsan, another resident, was also unwilling to take the jab. "Is there a guarantee that we will not get infected after the vaccine? There are many in adjoining village who rushed to take the vaccine and then got infected. Why is the government pushing for vaccination they should give it to those who want it," he stated.

Besides this, rumours abound in the village that the vaccine causes 'impotence' and this is mainly responsible for driving the men away.

Sunday evening, a group of peo-



ple in Sisoda village in Barabanki district had jumped into the Saryu river after seeing a team of health officials. The health team had gone to the village to give Covid vaccination to the local residents.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate of

Shukla said he made the villagers understand the importance and benefits of vaccination, and tried to dispel the myths, following which only 18 people in the village got the jabs.

The villagers said they jumped into the river because some people had told them that this was not a vaccine, but a poisonous injection. It took a great deal of convincing to get people come out of the river. Sisoda is a village with a population of 1,500 people located in the Terai, 70 km from the district headquarters of Barabanki. Nodal Officer Rahul Tripathi said that they were continuing efforts to convince the local people about the benefits of vaccination and also dispel misconceptions.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced reward for Covid-free villages with 'Mera Gaon-Corona Mukht Gaon' campaign.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
"e" - PROCUREMENT NOTICE
OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, BALLIGUDA
Tender Call Notice
No. 1097 Date 24.05.2021
E-mail: eonacballiguda@yahoo.in
Bid Identification No. EO_BLG.N_03_2021-22
No. C-304:- The Executive Officer, NAC, Balliguda, Dist. - Kandhamal
 inviting percentage rate bid in **online mode** for the works from eligible contractors for civil work as detailed in the table below:

- Name of Work : As per DTCN
- No. of work : 2
- Tender Cost : Rs.15.00 Lakh to Rs.16.39 Lakh
- Class of Contractor : D & C or equivalent
- Period & time of completion : As per D T C N
- Available of Bid Document : From Dt.24.05.2021, 11.00 AM to in the Website Dt.31.05.2021 up to 12.30 PM
- Date of opening of Bid : Dt.31.05.2021 at 1.00 PM
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Any Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

OIPR-13097/11/0005/2122 Sd./- Executive Officer, NAC, Balliguda

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, BOUDH (R&B) DIVISION, BOUDH
E-mail - eeboudhrb@gmail.com
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
"e" procurement Notice
Letter No. 1804 Dated 21.05.2021
Bid Identification No. EE (R&B)-BDH 03/2021-22
No.B-102-

- Name of the work : 01 (One) No. EI work (Single cover)
- Estimated Cost : 10.58 lakhs
- Period of Completion : 15 (Fifteen) Days
- Date & Time of availability of : From 27.05.2021, 10.00 AM to Bid documents in the portal 02.06.2021, 5.00 PM
- Last date/time for seeking of : 02.06.2021 up to 1.00 PM Tender Clarification
- Last date / time for receipt of : Up to 5.00 P.M. of dated bids in the portal 02.06.2021
- Date & time of opening of : 03.06.2021 at 11.30 A.M tender /Bid
- Name and address of the : Executive Engineer, Boudh (R&B) O.I.T. Division. Further details corrigendum (s) if any issued can be seen from the website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>

Sd./- Executive Engineer, Boudh (R&B) Division, Boudh OIPR-34134/11/0003/2122

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YAAAS BATTERS NORTH ODISHA

Severe cyclonic storm Yaas left a trail of devastation along the north Odisha coast after making landfall between Dhamra and Bahanaga around 9am Wednesday. The tropical storm that pounded the beach towns with a wind speed of 130-145 kmph left many tin roofs, kutcha houses and utility poles damaged, and big trees uprooted even as NDRF and ODRAF teams were quick to launch the restoration works. Storm surge triggered by Yaas also inundated many low-lying areas of Bahanaga and Remuna blocks in Balasore district, and Dhamra and Basudevpur in Bhadrak district. The summer storm was crossing Mayurbhanj district when the last report came in.



Rescue personnel cutting an uprooted tree in Chandbali area of Bhadrak district



Cops rescuing an elderly woman in Morada area of Mayurbhanj just before the storm hit the district



Police personnel removing an uprooted tree from a shop at Rasgobindpur Bazaar in Mayurbhanj



Fire personnel clearing a road in Kendrapara district



Tidal waves lashing Chandipur beach in Balasore



A man wades through waist-deep water on a road as vehicles lie partially submerged near Bhograi



A woman stands outside her house damaged by an uprooted tree in Baisinga of Mayurbhanj



A large tree lies uprooted on a shop under Korei block in Jajpur



Compound wall of Basta Community Health Centre in Balasore damaged by uprooted trees



A cyclone-affected family of Mahakalapara block in Kendrapara district



Torrential rain inundates houses in Basudevpur area of Bhadrak district



Rainwater inundates a Covid care centre running from AB High School in Basudevpur



A damaged fishing boat near Bahabalapur fishing jetty in Balasore



Uprooting of large trees led to snapping of power supply in Balasore



Gusty winds leave a power transmission tower twisted at Khuladi on National Highway-60 in Balasore



A marooned house in Balasore



If laws can be made amid the Covid pandemic, why cannot they be repealed
RAKESH TIKAIT | FARMER LEADER

NEW SPECIES OF AFRICAN PLANT FOUND

A group of botanists from the Bhopal-based Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) have recently discovered a new species of plant belonging to the African Violets family from Mizoram and adjacent areas in Myanmar



of the day quote

The economic impact left by Covid-19 is huge and our planet will not be the same after the pandemic
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Lack of vision & misplaced priorities like Central Vanity project & deliberately stoking social disharmony by dismembering Lakshwadeep is exactly why we are in the worst health crisis where thousands of dead bodies lie abandoned across India
MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

The new rules are aimed at terrorising the social media and strangulating free thought and expression in the arena which the BJP and the Modi government now see as a threat to them
ABHISHEK SINGHVI | CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON



A flock of seagull perched on a floating metal drum during strong winds in the sea, at Vizhinjam coast in Thiruvananthapuram

TEJPAL ACQUITTAL

Victim's normalcy inexplicable: Court

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, May 26: The "normalcy" of the victim's behaviour following the alleged sexual assault as well as alleged untruths regarding the reasons for her staying back in Goa after the Tehelka Thinkfest in November 2013, may have impaired the prosecution's case in the rape trial against former editor Tarun Tejpal, according to the judgement.

The judgement by Additional District and Sessions Judge North Goa Kshama Joshi has also underlined the "glaring contradictions" in the statements by the victim, her mother and brother and stated that "it would be extremely risky to base the conviction of the accused on the sole testimony of the prosecutrix when it does not inspire confidence."

Tejpal was accused by a junior colleague of assaulting her twice in November 2013. Tejpal was acquitted of all charges May 21, even as the Goa government has appealed against the acquittal in the Bombay High Court.

"The prosecutrix has stated about her actions and emotions on the night of November 7, 2013 and November 8, 2013, as also of the next two days at Think (the event where the said rape allegedly occurred), where she claimed to be distraught, in shock and trauma, in fear and anxiety, crying herself to sleep and shattered," the judgement states.

It further states that even if one allows for the fact that the victim sought out three male colleagues "who were not intimate friends" to share details about the alleged incident, while making no mention of it to her roommate Sunaina and her closest friend at Tehelka, Samia Singh or even her mother, "nothing can explain the absolute normalcy of her behaviour and state of mind inside the privacy of her own room given her own avowed state of mind - such that the colleague sharing this small hotel room with her discovers two weeks later that the prosecutrix claims to have been sexually assaulted on those very nights!"

In her statement, the victim had said that she had mentioned about the alleged sexual assault to three male colleagues, who were also assisting with the festival after the incident.

India reports 11,717 mucormycosis cases

Mucormycosis is one of the rapidly spreading infections observed in patients recovering from Covid-19



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 26: The Centre has allocated to states and Union Territories (UTs) 29,250 additional vials of Amphotericin-B, a key drug to treat raging mucormycosis cases in India for the 11,717 patients currently being treated at different hospitals across the country.

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers D.V Sadananda Gowda announced that the additional 29,250 vials of Amphotericin-B were allocated to all states and the UTs and central institutions Wednesday.

Besides this, 19,420 vials of Amphotericin-B were allocated on May 24, and 23,680 vials of the drug on May 21, Gowda informed through his tweet. As per Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, the allocation of the drug has been made based on total number of patients. Gujarat (7,210) and Maharashtra (6,980) have been allocated the maximum number of

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: Scientists have developed two new drugs to both prevent the Covid-19 infection, and also treat people who have been exposed to the novel coronavirus so that they do not develop severe disease.

The peptide-based drugs developed by researchers at QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Australia are being tested in hamsters at France's pre-clinical and clinical research facility, IDMIT. Early promising results, published in the journal

Nature Cell Discovery, show the drugs are not toxic, and have few side effects. The drugs are also stable and can be stored at room temperature, which would make them easy to distribute, the researchers said. They target how human cells respond to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, instead of the virus itself. The first peptide-based drug would be given before exposure to the virus and help boost the efficacy of vaccines, while the second drug would stop the spread of the virus in already infected cells. The discovery of the peptide-based drugs was made pos-

CYCLONE 'YAAS'

1cr people affected in Bengal

AGENCIES

Kolkata, May 26: At least one crore people were affected and three lakh houses damaged in West Bengal due to the rough weather conditions arising out of cyclone 'Yaas', Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said Wednesday.

One person died "accidentally" when he had gone out fishing, she said. Cautioning people that high tide in seas, caused by the storm surge, would persist, Banerjee claimed that Bengal happens to be the "most-affected state".

The Chief Minister further said that as many as 15,04,506 people have been evacuated from the vulnerable areas in the state and moved to safer places.

"I will soon be undertaking an aerial survey of the affected areas in Purba Medinipur, South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas districts," Banerjee said.

As of now, the government has a preliminary idea of the damage caused, from the reports provided by the district magistrates and other senior officials, the CM said. "We will be conducting field surveys to get a final estimate... It will take us at least 72 hours to get a clearer idea," she added.

The Bengal chief minister has claimed that her state is the "worst-affected", pointing out that three lakh houses and 134 embankments have been damaged due to the cyclone. She also said that one person, who was initially rescued, died "accidentally" later.

Banerjee further stated that relief materials worth Rs 10 crore



Rescue operation by Indian Army being underway in East Midnapore

have been to the affected areas. The scenic town of Digha in East Midnapore, which shares border with Balasore district of Odisha, lay swamped, with the Army being called in for rescue operations, a defence official said.

Parts of the nearby tourist towns of Mandarmani, Tajpur and Shankarpur were also inundated, with seawaters entering the hotels and residential areas, besides causing damage to kutcha shops and houses.

In certain areas, the waves were seen surging as high as the coconut trees that line the popular beaches. A school, situated along the coast in Shankarpur, was washed away by the high and mighty sea waves.

The Army has deployed 17 columns in West Bengal to assist the administration, the defence official said.

Rescue operation by the Army

was also underway at Orphuli in the Howrah district, he said. In South 24 Parganas, hundreds of villagers were displaced in Kakdwip, Fraserganj, Gosaba and the Sunderbans region, as multiple homes were extensively damaged in the surging water and gale winds, officials said.

Several rivers were in spate owing to the phenomenal rise in water level - caused by the dual effect of storm surge and the astronomical tide due to the full moon. Flooding was also reported from Sagar island at the confluence of Hooghly and Bay of Bengal.

The compound of much-revered Kapil Muni Temple in Sagar Islands lay submerged, as tidal waves, as tall as five feet, crashed over the boardwalks.

Some fishing boats and equipment were destroyed at harbours in Kakdwip, leaving the fishermen devoid of their livelihood.

MERCHANT VESSEL FIRE

Lanka seeks India's help

As per the directives of the government of India in response to the request of Sri Lankan authorities, Indian Coast Guard swiftly deployed its assets to provide immediate assistance

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 26: Sri Lanka has sought help from India to contain the major fire onboard container vessel MV X-Press Pearl off Colombo.

As per the directives of the government of India in response to the request of Sri Lankan authorities, Indian Coast Guard swiftly deployed its assets to provide immediate assistance. While Indian Coast Guard ship Vaibhav on maritime patrol was diverted immediately to reach the scene of the incident, ICG ship Vajra was despatched

from Tuticorin and arrived at the scene in the wee hours of Wednesday. Presently, both the ships are fighting the intense fire onboard the container vessel using external fire fighting system, braving the odds of rough weather.

ICG ship Samudra Prahar, a specialised Pollution Response (PR) vessel, has also been despatched in PR configuration to augment the firefighting efforts and respond to oil spill, if occurs.

"ICG Dornier aircraft has undertaken air reconnaissance of the area," Indian Coast Guard said. Nil oil spill has been reported so far

The distressed vessel MV X-Press Pearl was carrying 1,486 containers with nitric acid and other hazardous IMDG code chemicals. The extreme fire, damage to the containers and prevailing inclement weather has caused the vessel to tilt to starboard, resulting in falling of containers overboard.

Concerted joint efforts are in progress by two ICG ships and four tugs of Sri Lankan authorities to douse the fire. In addition, ICG formations at Kochi, Chennai and Tuticorin are on standby for immediate assistance towards Pollution Response.

SHORT TAKES

Tamil Nadu farmers observe black day

Chennai: Farmers in Central Tamil Nadu districts including Trichy held protests, raising black flags atop their homes in solidarity with the protesting farmers of North India who are demanding the repeal of the controversial farm laws. The protest was staged in response to a call by the Samyuktha Kisan Morcha to observe May 26 as black day. Cadres of the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) and leaders and cadres of various other organisations like the Tamil Maanila Vivasaya Thozhilalar Sangam hoisted black flags on top of their homes in Thanjavur, Trichy and other districts in the central region of the state.

AMU to hold online exams

Aligarh (UP): The Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) will hold examinations in online mode only from June 22. According to an official release, the examination of all first-semester undergraduate and postgraduate students admitted in session 2020-21 at the Aligarh Muslim University will be held next month while for the students of final/intermediate semester will commence from June 1.

Mumbai airport cancels 6 flights

Mumbai: The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) has cancelled a total of six flights to eastern India following the threats from Cyclone Yaas which is made landfall in Odisha at 9.15 a.m., an official said here Wednesday. These include cancellations of three incoming and three outgoing flights between Mumbai and Bhubaneswar and Kolkata.

Shortage of black fungus drugs

Indore: Amid the rising number of cases of mucormycosis or 'black fungus', Indore is grappling with a shortage of key Amphotericin-B injection used in its treatment. The situation can be gauged from the fact that only 100 doses of this anti-fungal drug were distributed among 218 patients admitted to 23 private hospitals in the city while the need was much higher, an official of the Government Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College told PTI. On Tuesday, 23 private hospitals could get only 50 doses of Amphotericin-B for 221 patients admitted there.

Indian Navy's warlike mission in stormy seas

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 26: The deadly Cyclone Tauktae had made landfall in Gujarat May 17. This cyclone has been recorded as the fifth strongest ever to emanate from the Arabian Sea in recent years.

State and local authorities were pressed into action to rehabilitate the affected people, and they are continuing with the process tirelessly.

Last Monday onwards, the Indian Navy was called upon to deploy its ships, aircraft and personnel to alleviate the seemingly grim situation.

Over the previous week, it deployed eight of its frontline ships, in addition to numerous aircraft and ashore support staff. These

brought with them specialised competencies, making a remarkable difference to the situation as the story unfolded.

While a lot has been reported about the sequence of events that unfolded following the cyclone, ranging from the capsizing of Barge P-305 and Tug Varaprada and urgent assistance provided to Barge GAL Constructor, Barge Support Station 3, Great Ship Aditi, and Drill Ship Sagar Bhushan, the actual difficulty surrounding the entire operation, and the professionalism that went into making a success of it, can only be grasped when one hears the Navy's side of the story.

Some phases of the rescue operation witnessed wind speeds of 70-120 kmph, waves as high as 6-8 metres, and very low visibility. All



these factors hampered the operation of critical equipment such as radars and helicopters and posed a significant threat to the safety of the ships and the crew onboard. Anyone who has been on a ship in the high seas will be aware of the rolling and pitching that a ship

experiences during storms. Amid these conditions, the Navy crew carried out all their primary and extraneous duties: Lowering rescue boats, maintaining anti-collision look-outs, tending to survivors, ensuring the optimum performance of ships machinery, and much more.

Adding to this, the prospect of searching for and rescuing survivors amid open seas, at times at night, indicates the tip of the iceberg of challenges.

In one of the operations, a Naval Seaking helicopter rescued 35 crew members from the Barge GAL Constructor in the Arabian Sea. "Conducting evacuation operations in such weather is fraught with danger. One has to maintain the stability of a rock while hovering in torrential winds. But we

were prepared," said one of the Naval pilots who commandeered these helicopters.

Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Director General of Naval Operations, said, "Undertaking search and rescue efforts in such cyclonic weather conditions, characterised by high wind speed, tall waves and low visibility, is a challenging task that requires experienced and well-trained crew, platforms that are capable of operating in heavy seas, and surgical coordination between all stakeholders."

Fortunately, the Naval personnel and platforms ticked all these check boxes. It is learned that the entire operation was a comprehensive, coordinated effort between the ships, helicopters, maritime reconnaissance aircraft, and shore authorities.

national

of the day quote

Today, we are at war against Covid-19, wherein the Centre and states have their share of responsibilities. The Centre cannot shirk its responsibility and ask states to fend for themselves. It is wrong

The medicines I distributed were the need of that hour. Not one even if thousands of PILs are filed against me, I will continue to serve the people and try to save their lives

These platforms have now become public utilities as crores of people use them. Our data is not safe. They are subject to US law and their security agencies have full access to our data. So where is the privacy?

SHORT TAKES

Night curfew relaxed in Guj

Ahmedabad: Considering a significant drop in the new coronavirus cases in Gujarat, the state government Wednesday decided to relax the night curfew timings by an hour in 36 cities, while the day time restrictions will remain in place. Chief Minister Vijay Rupani made the announcement regarding the revised curfew timings after a cabinet meeting in Gandhinagar.

Man killed in tiger attack

Nagpur: A 42-year-old man was mauled to death by a tiger at a forest in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district Wednesday, a forest official said. The incident took place around 8 am when the man went to collect tendu leaves in the Vandra beat of Brahmपुरi forest range, he said. The Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve is located in Chandrapur district. There have been several incidents of human-animal conflict in the region in the recent past. A 68-year-old man was killed in a tiger attack at the Marodi beat of Mul forest range in Chandrapur May 23.

Pro-Israel man attacked, 5 held

Mangaluru: Five people have been arrested on the charges of vandalising a bakery and assaulting its owner for posting a comment in favour of Israel on Facebook, police sources said. The man, who runs a bakery at Karnad in Mulky near here, had recently posted a comment supporting Israel's action against the terrorist groups in Palestine. Angry over the post, a few local youths barged into the bakery and destroyed the items kept there, besides beating up the owner and posing death threats to him, the police sources said. He was also forced to tender an apology which the attackers recorded on video, they said.

Village heads take oath inside prison

Muzaffarnagar: Two newly elected village heads, who were recently jailed for violating prohibitory orders, have taken oath inside Muzaffarnagar district jail here, officials said Wednesday. They took the oath through CCTV camera Tuesday in the presence of prison officials and panchayat members. Jailor Kamlesh Singh told PTI. Meanwhile, Mandwada village head Faiz Mohammad was arrested for violating prohibitory orders and creating violence when he and his supporters took out a procession in the village Tuesday, police said.



Vaccines in India became a tool for the prime minister's personal publicity rather than a tool to save the lives of the common people

PRİYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONG LEADER

TAIWAN VARSITY DONATES O₂ CONCENTRATORS TO HOSPITAL

Taiwan's National Tsing Hua University (NTHU) has donated 10 oxygen concentrators to the SRM Medical College Hospital in Chennai. NTHU said that the gesture is part of the "Love from NTHU Taiwan" campaign



'Centralise vax procurement'

IN AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, THE LANCET PANEL PUT FORWARD 8 URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CENTRE AND STATE GOVERNMENTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: A Lancet panel of experts on India Wednesday proposed central systems for the procurement and distribution of free Covid vaccines, part of an eight-point charter of recommendations to "curtail the loss of life and suffering" caused by the coronavirus resurgence in the country.

The Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System, which comprises 21 experts including virologist Gagandeep Kang and Narayana Hrudalaya chairperson Devi Shetty, was launched in December last year.

In an article published in the British medical journal, the commission put forward eight urgent recommendations for the Centre and state governments. These include a transparent pricing policy and cash transfers by the state to workers in the informal sector.

Among the key points is the establishment of central systems to procure and distribute Covid-19 vaccines free of cost, a departure from the current policy of decentralised procurement through state



governments. "Such an approach would optimise prices and minimise cross-state inequities that may result from differential fiscal and capacity contexts," the 21 authors wrote in the article. "These recommendations are focused on the immediate steps central and state governments must take to help curtail the loss of life and suffering caused by Covid-19 amid the recent surge in cases," the Commission said. The Commission also recommended that district-level working groups should have the au-

Among the key points is the establishment of central systems to procure and distribute Covid-19 vaccines free of cost, a departure from the current policy of decentralised procurement through state governments

tonomy to respond to rapidly changing local situations and must be empowered to receive funds and resources to coordinate efforts across all sectors of the health system, from front-

JEE ADVANCED EXAM DEFERRED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 26: The prestigious Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Advanced 2021 test has been postponed in view of the coronavirus situation in the country.

Since the JEE Mains examination could not be held at the scheduled time (May 24-28), so the JEE Advanced examination, which was going to be held July 3, has also been postponed, the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur announced.

The Union Education Ministry had decided to conduct the JEE Mains examination four times in the current year. Candidates can appear in all four examinations of which their best test scores will be considered for appearing for the JEE Advanced exam. However, only two of the four sessions of JEE Mains examination have been conducted till now.

ASI, IIT to preserve 1,300-yr-old temple

AGENCIES

Chennai, May 26: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is planning to rope in experts from Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, for preserving the 1,300-year-old Kailasnathar temple, Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu.

The temple is also in the tentative list of UNESCO's world heritage sites. According to ASI officials, a detailed survey was conducted that found that the temple which was believed to be constructed in late 7th-early 8th century AD, its murals have been fading away and chemical conservation has not been arresting the deterioration of the temple.

The temple for Lord Shiva which was built on the banks of Vedavathi River by the Pallava king Rajasimha, who is also known as Narasimhavarman II, is in the



Dravidian style of architecture. The temple is carved mainly out of sandstone and was built, according to the experts, between 685 and 705 AD.

Mylvahanan, 61, a businessman at Kancheepuram and a person researching on temple architecture told IANS, "This temple is one of the oldest creations in Dravida ar-

chitecture in Tamil Nadu and this has inspired the building several such huge temples across the Pallava and Chola kingdoms."

According to studies this temple built by Pallava King Rajasimha also called Narasimhavarman II inspired the great Raja Raja Chola to build the Brihadeeswar temple in Thanjavur.

WRESTLER MURDER CASE

4 associates of Sushil Kumar arrested

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 26: In a major breakthrough in the murder of Sagar Dhankar, Delhi Police have arrested four associates of two time olympic medallist Sushil Kumar. All the arrested are members of Kala Asauda and Neeraj Bawana gang. A senior police official said that on a tip off, a team of Special Staff of Rohini under Inspector Ishwar Singh and overall supervision of Brahmjeet Singh, ACP of Operation Cell, Rohini District Delhi, has apprehended four active members of Kala Asauda - Neeraj Bawana gang from Kanjhawala area on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday.

The official said that all were found to be the associates of Sushil Kumar in Dhankar murder case at Chhatrasal stadium.



The arrested accused have been identified as Bhupender aka Bhupi, Mohit aka Bholi, Gulab aka Pahalwan and Manjeet aka Chunnil. Residents of Haryana's Jhajjar and Rohtak. They revealed the entire conspiracy and sequence of events of the murder of Sagar. He said that non bailable warrants (NBWs) were pending against them. Giving the details of their arrest, the official said that in the

intervening night of May 4 and 5, information was received at Model Town police station regarding firing inside Chhatrasal Stadium.

The official said that the police at Chhatrasal Stadium found five cars including a Maruti Alto, Honda city, Toyota Fortuner, Mahindra Scorpio and Maruti Brezza.

The police also recovered one loaded double barrel gun and three rounds were found inside Scorpio Car and two sticks in parking area.

"During spot enquiry it was found that Sushil Kumar and his associates had beaten the injured persons. A case was registered under several sections of the IPC and Arms Act. The investigation of the case was later transferred to the Crime Branch. Sushil Kumar and his aide Ajay were arrested on Sunday morning and they are on police remand with Crime Branch.

Book Ramdev under sedition charges, says IMA in letter to PM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding that yoga guru Ramdev be booked immediately under sedition charges for alleged misinformation campaign on vaccination and challenging government protocols for treatment of Covid-19.

The apex medical body of modern doctors has also served a defamation notice on Ramdev for his alleged disparaging remarks against allopathy and allopathic practitioners, demanding an apology from him within 15 days, failing which it said it will demand a compensation of ₹1,000 crore from the yoga guru.

In its letter to Modi, the IMA said it was gratifying to note that only 0.06 per cent of people who received both the doses of vaccine got minimal infection by coronavirus, and very rarely vaccinated people had a severe lung infection.

It is well proved that by vaccination we save our people and country from catastrophic cascades of severe infection. At this juncture, painfully we bring to your kind notice, the video claiming 10,000 doctors have died in spite of taking both the doses of vaccine and lakhs of people have died due to allopathic medicine are circulating virally in the social media, as said by Mr Ramdev, owner of Patanjali products, the body said in its letter.

We the members of the modern medicine professionals submit; we follow the guidelines and protocols issued by the ministry of health through ICMR or the National Task Force in our treatment offered to



The apex body of doctors has also served a defamation notice on Ramdev for his alleged disparaging remarks against allopathy and allopathic practitioners

millions of people coming to our hospitals. If someone is claiming the allopathic medicine has killed people, it is an attempt to challenge the ministry which has issued the protocol for treatment to us, it stated.

The IMA pointed out that as on date and according to its registry, 753 doctors died in the first wave and 513 lost their lives in the second wave due to Covid-19. None in the first wave could receive the vaccine and the majority who had died in the second wave also couldn't take their vaccine for various reasons.

Now deceitfully attributing 10,000 people have died in spite of two doses of vaccination, is a deliberate move to stall the efforts of vaccination to reach our masses and it needs to be curtailed immediately, the IMA said.

It said that IMA, the professional organisation of modern medical doctors respects, acknowledges and compliments all systems of medicine, especially Indian system of Ayurvedic medicine.

We are pained to witness the great services rendered by nearly 10 lakhs of modern medical doctors in the forefront to work...are ridiculed and called as a stupid system. This in our opinion is a clear-cut case of a sedition, the body said.

BIRTH OF BUDDHA



A monk offers prayer to Lord Buddha on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, in Agartala, Wednesday

'Indian vax preferred, buying Chinese for immediate need'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, May 26: Bangladesh has decided to buy 15 million doses of China's Sinopharm anti-Covid vaccines in sheer desperation to continue its immunisation programme, but a top official of the country's health ministry said India-made AstraZeneca vaccines is their preferred choice.

We had to look for Chinese and Russian alternatives only after we failed to get the vaccines from Pune's Serum Institute. We realise the grim situation in India and Serum's current inability to deliver on its promised supplies, said the top health ministry official, but on the condition of anonymity because he was not officially authorised to brief the media.

He told IANS that Bangladesh government was only too eager to offer joint production facilities to Serum Institute in partnership with 'whichever Bangladesh company it chose to produce the vaccine with.'

My Minister is prepared to directly negotiate this deal with Serum bosses like Poonawalla. We would love to have Serum set up production in Bangladesh, we are totally flexible on terms and we are sure a good bit of these vaccines can be exported after our huge demand is met because prices will be competitive than those made in India, said the top health ministry official.

He said India and Bangladesh together can make South Asia the pharmacy of the world. India has gifted Bangladesh three



million SII manufactured vaccines free and supplied another 7 million on payment before being trimmed by the massive Covid surge at home.

China stepped in immediately to provide free supplies after fuming

over rejection of its vaccines last year.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen Tuesday said that Bangladesh will buy 15 million doses of Sinopharm vaccines from China and the first consignment

may arrive in June.

He said that there have been positive discussions between the two countries and a deal is almost final. The total consignment will arrive in three phases-five millions in each month of June, July and August.

Delhi is trying to get the US supply at least 3 million doses of vaccine to Bangladesh and 7 million doses to India to tide over the immediate crisis on both countries.

When asked why his ministry was sitting on a Bharat Biotech proposal to co-produce anti-Covid vaccines, the Bangladesh health ministry official said, "We are waiting for WHO to recognise their vaccine."

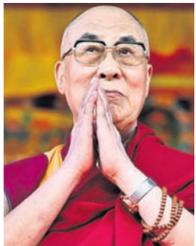
Bharat Biotech has said it expects WHO recognition by July.

The official said his ministry has only authorised three non-disclosure agreements with Incepta Pharma, Popular Pharma and One Pharma of Bangladesh to co-produce Russian and Chinese vaccines. But no co-production deals have been inked, he said, adding we keenly expect Serum Institute to co-produce in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh watcher Sukhoranjan Dasgupta told IANS Serum should seize the Bangladesh offer because it will win win for both countries.

With a production base in Bangladesh and later West Bengal, SII can service not only the whole of Eastern South Asia but also export to East and Southeast Asia. Poonawalla should read the geo-economic call in the Bangladesh offer.

international



Although our world has changed substantially since the time of the Buddha, the essence of his teaching remains as relevant today as it was 2,600 years ago
DALAI LAMA | SPIRITUAL LEADER, TIBET

LOUVRE MUSEUM GETS ITS FIRST WOMAN BOSS

France Wednesday appointed Laurence des Cars, known for promoting social issues through art, as the new head of the Louvre -- the first time a woman will be in charge of the world's biggest museum



of the day quote

I'm here to underscore the commitment of the United States to rebuilding the relationship with the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people, a relationship built on mutual respect
ANTONY BLINKEN | SECRETARY OF STATE, US

Millions of people in wealthier nations have been vaccinated, while billions of people in poorer countries still wait and are still vulnerable to infection, disease and death. We all need to work together to correct this
CYRIL RAMAPHOSA | PRESIDENT, SOUTH AFRICA

We need to improve transparency, immediately share critical information about outbreaks with pandemic potential, and strengthen health systems to withstand shocks
XAVIER BECERRA | HEALTH SECRETARY, US

Pak rejects US claim of access to airbases

Since 2001, Pakistan and the US have had a framework of cooperation for Air Lines of Communication and Ground Lines of Communication, but 'no new agreement has been made in this regard'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, May 26: After the Pentagon official claimed that Pakistan has allowed the US to use its airspace and ground routes as part of its Afghanistan campaign, a debate is underway in Islamabad regarding giving such an access to the US.

Pakistan officials have also categorically denied the claim made by Pentagon, pushing US to rethink its Afghan approach as its troops prepare to leave the country by September 11, this year.

In Pakistan, allowing access to airspace and ground routes to the US would be a costly mistake as it would have serious repercussions on Pakistan's national security.

Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, Pakistan foreign office spokesperson, said in a statement: "There was no US military or air base in Pakistan, nor was any such proposal envisaged," adding that any speculation on the topic was "baseless, irresponsible and should be avoided".

The pentagon claim was also



echoed in the Upper House, the Senate of Pakistan, where a member submitted a call for attention notice, calling on the house to discuss the Pentagon claim.

"This would be a grave and serious violation of the Parliament of Pakistan's unanimously adopted terms of engagement for American/foreign forces adopted April 12, 2021," read the notice submitted by Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed.

Syed contested that the decision to give US forces airspace and access to airbases and ground routes would be contrary to the national security interests of Pakistan as he said "Pakistani people experienced the worst blowback from our previous entanglement after 9/11, and people of Pakistan would resolutely resist the encroachment of their sovereignty under any pretext".

Experts say that Pakistan cannot afford to become party with the US again as it would increase hostility against Pakistan in

Taliban warns US against new bases

The Taliban Wednesday warned the departing US military against setting up bases in the region, and Pakistan vowed no American bases will be allowed on its territory. Pakistan also said drone strikes from Pakistani territory were also a non-starter. The statements come amid speculation the United States, as it withdraws the last of its 2,500-3,500 soldiers from Afghanistan, will want a nearby locale from which to launch strikes against militant targets. The warning also comes during stepped-up efforts to jump-start stalled peace talks between the government and the Taliban, possibly in Turkey. Both Pakistan and the Middle Eastern State of Qatar have been pressing the Taliban to attend talks in Turkey. UN-sponsored talks were to have been held last month in Turkey but the Taliban refused to take part.

Afghanistan and would have major negative impact on Pakistan's relations with the Taliban.

COVID ORIGIN PROBE

China shut on charges into Wuhan bio lab leak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, May 26: China Wednesday parried a question on whether it would allow an independent probe into allegations that the Covid-19 virus may have been leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, while its researchers claimed that the coronavirus might have been transmitted to humans from pangolins.

Calls for an independent investigation into the origin of the coronavirus, which devastated the world after emerging from Wuhan have become louder especially in the US following new reports that some of the researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) fell sick well before China officially announced the Covid-19 outbreak December 30, 2019.

Answering questions on calls for investigations, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian referred to the study of the origin of the coronavirus led by WHO experts group which visited Wuhan and WIV from January 14 to



February 10, but parried a question whether Beijing would agree for an independent probe to investigate the allegations that Covid-19 may have been leaked from the WIV.

Experts of the WHO mission during their visit to Wuhan had field visits, went through many data, and released a joint study report with many conclusions, Zhao said.

On Tuesday, media reports from Washington quoted the White House coronavirus adviser Andy Slavitt as saying that "we need to get to the bottom" of the origins of the pandemic pathogen and the World Health Organization (WHO) and China need to do more to provide definitive answers for the global community.

EU seeks huge fine in Astra court case



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brussels, May 26: The European Union took on vaccine producer AstraZeneca in a Brussels court Wednesday and accused the drug-maker of acting in bad faith to provide shots to other nations when it had promised them for delivery among the 27 member states.

AstraZeneca's contract signed with the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, on behalf of member states foresaw an initial 300 million doses for distribution among all 27 countries, with an option for a further 100 million. The doses were expected to be delivered throughout 2021. But only 30 million were sent during the first quarter.

Deliveries have increased slightly since then but, according to the European Commission, the company is set to provide only 70 million doses in the second quarter. It had promised 180 million.

EU lawyer Rafael Jafferli told the court that the company now expects to deliver the total number of doses by the end of December, but he added that "with a six-month delay, it's obviously a failure."

He asked the court to impose a fine of 10 million euros per infraction to the company, and to force AstraZeneca to pay 10 euros per dose for each day of delay as

compensation for breaching the EU contract.

His main argument is that AstraZeneca should have used production sites in the bloc and the UK for EU supplies as part of a "best reasonable effort" clause in the contract, adding that the European Commission had agreed to pay 870 million euros for the shots. He said that 50 million doses that should have been delivered to the EU went to third countries instead, "in violation" of their contract.

Charles-Edouard Lambert, another lawyer on the EU team, said AstraZeneca decided to reserve production at its Oxford site for Britain.

"This is utterly serious. AstraZeneca did not use all the means at its disposal. There is a double standard in the way it treats the UK and member states," he said.

The EU also accused the company of misleading the European Commission by providing data lacking clarity on the delivery delays.

"The information provided by AstraZeneca did not allow us to fully understand the situation before mid-June. A judgment is to be delivered at a later date. In addition to the emergency action, the European Commission has launched a claim on the merits of the case for damages for which a hearing hasn't yet been set by the court.

COUP TACTICS

Junta using bodies to terrorise people

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, May 26: An analysis by AP and the Human Rights Center Investigations Lab at the University of California, Berkeley, looked at cases where bodies of those targeted indiscriminately by police and the military are being used as tools of terror.

The findings are based on more than 2,000 tweets and online images, in addition to interviews with family members, witness accounts, and local media reports.

The AP and HRC Lab identified more than 130 instances where security forces appeared to be using corpses and the bodies of the wounded to create anxiety, uncertainty, and strike fear in the civilian population.

FLOATING INFERNO



Smoke rises from a fire onboard the MV X-Press Pearl container ship off the Colombo Harbour, in Sri Lanka

Prez blames West of waging 'hybrid war'

AGENCIES

Minsk, May 26: Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko Wednesday accused the West of trying to use the diversion of a Ryanair plane at the weekend to wage hybrid war against him and said it had falsely portrayed his handling of the incident.

In his first comments after what some European politicians described as a "state-sponsored hijacking" Sunday, Lukashenko said he had acted legally and in accordance with all international norms, but that "ill-wishers" were trying to use the plane episode to try to undermine his rule.

Lukashenko, according to Russia's TASS news agency, said Protasevich had planned a "bloody rebellion" in Belarus. The Western response to the plane diversion was part of a "hybrid war" against his country and he would respond harshly to any sanctions or provocations, the



Belta news agency reported him as telling parliament. Exiled opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya said

As we predicted our ill-wishers from outside the country and from inside the country changed their methods of attack on the state. They have crossed many red lines and have abandoned common sense and human morals

ALEXANDER LUKASHENKO | PRESIDENT, BELARUS

Wednesday that the opposition was preparing to stage a new phase of active anti-government protests in Belarus.

FB, Insta will now let you hide 'like' counts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

San Francisco, May 26: Beginning Wednesday Facebook and Instagram users will be able to hide the numbers that show how many people liked their posts and photos.



Instagram began hiding likes in 2019 as part of an effort to make people's time on the app less stressful and depressing.

While many users welcomed the feature, others, including some influencers, worried it might take away from the social media experience. At the time, the platform didn't give users a choice to hide or unhide the like counts, which didn't sit well with some users.

UK study finds long-term lung damage post Covid

THE STUDY, CONDUCTED BY SHEFFIELD AND OXFORD RESEARCHERS USING A CUTTING-EDGE METHOD OF IMAGING, SAID THE DAMAGE WAS NOT DETECTED BY ROUTINE CT SCANS AND CLINICAL TESTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 26: Researchers in the UK have identified persistent damage to lungs in Covid-19 patients at least three months after they were discharged from hospital, and in some cases the duration is even longer.

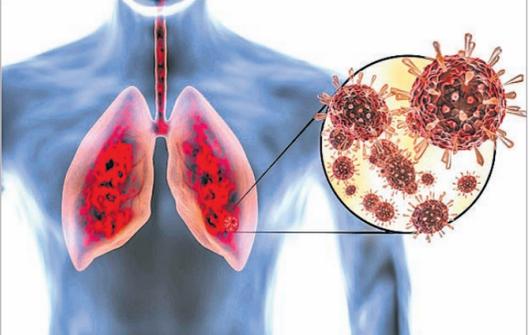
Early research by the team has shown that patients who have not been hospitalised with Covid-19 but who are experiencing long-term breathlessness may have similar damage in their lungs, and a larger study is needed to confirm this, a release by the Sheffield University said Wednesday.

In a paper published in Radiology, the world's leading radiology jour-

nal, the researchers from the University of Sheffield and the University of Oxford said that hyperpolarised xenon MRI (XeMRI) scans had found abnormalities in the lungs of some Covid-19 patients more than three months - and in some cases, nine months - after leaving hospital, when other clinical measurements were normal.

Lead author of the study, Professor Jim Wild, Head of Imaging and NIHR Research Professor of Magnetic Resonance at the University of Sheffield, said, "the findings of the study are very interesting."

The 129Xe MRI is pinpointing the parts of the lung where the physiology of oxygen uptake is im-



paired due to long standing effects of Covid-19 on the lungs, even

though they often look normal on CT scans.

"It is great to see the imaging technology we have developed rolled out in other clinical centres, working with our collaborators in Oxford on such a timely and clinically important study sets a real precedent for multi-centre research and NHS diagnostic scanning with 129Xe MRI in the UK," the release quoted him as saying.

The study, which is supported by the NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), has now begun testing patients who were not hospitalised with Covid-19 but who have been attending long Covid clinics.

"Although we are currently only talking about early findings, the XeMRI scans of non-hospitalised

patients who are breathless - and 70 per cent of our local patients with long Covid breathlessness - may have similar abnormalities in their lungs. We need a larger study to identify how common this is and how long it will take to get better," Prof Gleeson explained.

"We have some way to go before fully comprehending the nature of the lung impairment that follows a Covid-19 infection. But these findings, which are the product of a clinical-academic collaboration between Oxford and Sheffield, are an important step on the path to understanding the biological basis of long Covid and that in turn will help us to develop more effective therapies," Gleeson said.

business



The decision to relax partial lockdowns and restrictions imposed by various state governments to contain the second wave should be based on the advice of experts as the July-September period is going to be crucial for the nation

UDAY KOTAK | PRESIDENT, CII

GST COUNCIL MEETS MAY 28

The GST Council will meet for the first time this year May 28, through video conferencing. The meeting coming in the backdrop of fresh and a more deadly Covid wave sweeping the country, is expected to announce a few Covid relief measures particularly in relation to duty relief on essential Covid supplies and other compliance matters



of the day quote

I am thankful to Anil Agarwal and the Vedanta Group for swiftly setting up and operationalising this state-of-the-art field hospital in Raipur. This initiative reflects the Anil Agarwal Foundation's resolve to serve the community

BHUPESH BAGHEL | CM, CHHATTISGARH

Our aim is not just to provide the much-needed relief to our employees and their families in the current pandemic situation, which we pray gets over soon, but to continue delivering care and strength through our evolving measures even in the years to come

TA KRISHNAN | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, ECOM EXPRESS

As our country focuses on vaccinating the population, we are supporting this effort with innovative LDS syringes that will help reduce vaccine wastage and vaccinate more people with the same amount of vaccine

PARTHA GHOSH | VP AND HEAD OF CSR, SAMSUNG INDIA

'Home loan tenure of up to 10 yrs most preferred'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: Real estate portal Magicbricks Wednesday released its survey report on home loans, suggesting that a repayment period of up to 10 years is most preferred among consumers. The sample size of the survey is 500, it said.

"The period of up to 10 years is the most preferred duration of home buyers with 26 per cent of the respondents giving their nod. It was followed by 10-15 years (25 per cent) and 15-20 years (23 per cent) as the next most preferred tenures for home loans,"



Magicbricks said in a statement. About 16 per cent of respon-

dents said that they would like to take a loan for more than 25 years,

With average home loan interest rates hovering between 6.65-6.90%, borrowers now want to repay their mortgages as fast as possible

SUDHIR PAI | CEO, MAGICBRICKS

while only 10 per cent preferred repayment tenure of 20-25 years.

Last year, online property classifieds Magicbricks entered into home loan services and had tied up with leading banks, aiming to offer homebuyers a plethora of

integrated services from the discovery to the transaction phase.

"With average home loan interest rates hovering between 6.65-6.90 per cent, borrowers now want to repay their mortgages as fast as possible," Magicbricks CEO Sudhir Pai said on the survey report.

Magicbricks has monthly traffic exceeding 20 million visits and over 1.4 million property listings, the statement said.

Magicbricks.Com is owned by Magicbricks Realty Services, which is a subsidiary of Times Internet, the digital arm of the Times of India Group.

Google Cloud unveils 3 services to provide real-time insights

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 26: Google Cloud Wednesday unveiled three new services to empower customers with unified data cloud strategy that will provide organisations real-time insights powered by machine learning (ML).

The three services: Dataplex, Analytics Hub and Datastream, will help organisations break free from data silos to securely predict business outcomes, empower users, and make informed, real-time decisions, Google said during the inaugural virtual 'Data Cloud Summit'.

"Data must be thought of as an ability that integrates all aspects of working with it. Every industry is accelerating their shift of being digital-first as they recognise data is the essential ingredient for value creation and the key to advancing their digital transformation," said Gerrit Kazmaier, Vice President and General Manager, Databases, Data Analytics and Looker, Google Cloud.

"At Google Cloud, we're committed to helping customers build the most powerful data cloud solution to unlock value and actionable, real-time insights, needed to future-proof their business," Kazmaier added.

MGM Studios goes to Amazon for \$8.45bn

REUTERS

New York, May 26: Amazon said Wednesday it is buying MGM, the fabled US movie studio home to the James Bond franchise, for \$8.45 billion, giving it a huge library of films and TV shows and ramping up competition with streaming rivals led by Netflix and Disney+.

Privately-held MGM, or Metro Goldwyn Mayer, was founded in 1924, owns the Epix cable channel and makes popular TV shows including " Fargo", " Vikings" and " Shark Tank."

"The real financial value behind this deal is the treasure trove of IP in the deep catalog that we plan to reimagine and develop together with MGM's talented team. It's very exciting and provides so many opportunities for high-quality storytelling," said Mike Hopkins, senior vice president of Prime Video and Amazon Studios.

Amazon's Prime Video faces a long list of competitors including Netflix Inc, Walt Disney Co's Disney+, HBO Max and Apple Inc's Apple TV+.

RAMPING UP COMPETITION



Amazon's Prime Video faces a long list of competitors including Netflix, Disney+, HBO Max and Apple TV+.

Analysts have said this is a big motivation for another round of consolidation of media properties after a brief hiatus during the pandemic.

The deal can be viewed as a doubling down on business strategy that Jeff Bezos articulated at a conference in 2016

to binge-watching shows online.

The proliferating streaming services are also scrambling for brands that they can expand and libraries of older shows and movies. Analysts have said this is a big motivation for another round of consolidation of media properties after a brief hiatus during the pandemic.

Underscoring the trend, AT&T Inc announced a \$43-billion deal last week to spin out its WarnerMedia business and combine it with Discovery Inc, one of the most ambitious yet in the streaming era. The acquisition is Amazon's second-biggest after Whole Foods Market, which it bought for \$13.7 billion in 2017.

The price represents a lofty pre-

mium relative to other deals. The price is about 37 times MGM's 2021 estimated EBITDA, or almost triple the enterprise value-to-EBITDA multiple that Discovery's deal implied for AT&T's content assets - according to Reuters Breakingviews.

The deal can be viewed as a doubling down on business strategy that Jeff Bezos, Amazon's CEO, articulated at a conference in 2016: "When we win a Golden Globe, it helps us sell more shoes," he had said, referring to Amazon's diverse business divisions.

In April, Amazon posted its fourth consecutive record quarterly profit and boasted more than 200 million Prime loyalty subscribers.

Chinese economy to face serious problems despite recovery

AGENCIES

Kolkata, May 26: Despite a reasonable economic recovery, the giant Chinese economy will be bedevilled by serious problems, says a top corporate survey specialising on China.

This 2021 China Corporate Payment Survey, was conducted between February and April this year by COFACE which surveyed over 600 companies across 13 broad sectors located in mainland China.

The Chinese economy expanded by 2.3 per cent in 2020, being the only major economy to record growth, and Coface expects the GDP to accelerate to 7.5 per cent growth in 2021.

This would be the fastest pace since 2013, and comfortably above the minimum of 6 per cent set by the authorities.

In normal times, higher economic growth should translate into fewer incidents of payment delays, but the recovery has been uneven across sectors.

Thus, Coface's 2021 China Corporate Payment Survey shows that payment terms shortened by 11 days on average in 2020, falling



to 75 days, while the distribution of credit terms leaned towards a shorter rather than longer period.

Finally, firms also benefited from greater fiscal and monetary support measures last year, which are expected to be further tapered this year. Coface expects an increase in bond defaults and insolvencies in 2021, especially among sectors that accumulated higher cash-flow risks in 2020 amid a slowdown in credit growth.

Bernard Aw, Economist for Asia Pacific at Coface, said, "Coface's latest China Payment Survey showed Chinese companies taking the necessary step to strengthen credit management in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic."

Credit terms were shortened in many sectors, and more credit management tools were deployed, including the use of credit insurance.

SHORT TAKES

NHAI's new rules for toll plazas

New Delhi: Soon, yellow lines at toll plazas will ensure that the waiting queue of vehicles is not more than 100 metres at any given point of time and if the queue is beyond the stipulated distance, then vehicles at the front can pass without paying the toll. These guidelines have been issued by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) as it seeks to minimise waiting time at toll plazas and ensure service time of not more than 10 seconds per vehicle even during peak hours.

BPCL reports ₹12K cr Q4 profit

Mumbai: Privatisation-bound Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) Wednesday reported a net profit of ₹11,940.13 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2021, as against net loss of ₹1,361.01 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. The total income of the company during Q4 FY21 saw a robust jump to ₹1,00,419.63 crore from ₹82,452.99 crore seen in the same quarter of previous year.

Infy CEO's pay package rises

New Delhi: Infosys CEO Salil Parekh saw his annual pay package jump to ₹49.68 crore in 2020-21, with more than half of the total amount coming from exercise of stock options. Parekh's compensation was at ₹34.27 crore in 2019-20. The company's annual report for 2020-21 showed that his compensation included ₹6.07 crore in salary, ₹12.62 crore in bonus, incentives or variable pay, and ₹30.99 crore in perquisites on account of stock options exercised.

PMMY: Banks sanction ₹15L cr

New Delhi: The finance ministry Wednesday said banks and financial institutions have sanctioned about ₹15 lakh crore to over 28 crore beneficiaries under the Mudra scheme in the last six years. Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi April 8, 2015, to promote entrepreneurship. As of March 26, 2021, loans sanctioned by member lending institutions amounting to ₹15.10 lakh crore to 28.81 crore beneficiary, tweeted the Finance Ministry.

Retailers witness massive sales de-growth: Survey

AGENCIES

Mumbai, May 26: As India battles the severe second wave of Covid-19 and states undergo lockdowns, retailers across the country have witnessed a sales de-growth of 49 per cent in April compared to the same period of 2019, according to a survey by the Retailers Association of India. In March, the nationwide sales de-growth was recorded at 12 per cent, showed the survey.

Region-wise, western India was the most impacted in April with a contraction of 72 per cent, followed by 45 per cent in the north. South and eastern India witnessed a contraction of 40 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively, in retail sales last month.

Among the sectors, sales of sports goods and footwear contracted by 66 per cent and 61 per cent, respectively, followed by a 59 per cent de-growth in both jewellery and



beauty, wellness and personal care categories.

Other categories - food and grocery, apparel and clothing, quick service restaurant and consumer durables and electronics, witnessed a sales contraction of 49 per cent, 47 per cent, 45 per cent and 31 per cent, respectively.

Earlier this month, the industry body urged the government to take steps for capital infusion into the retail industry with ECLGS benefits and loan moratorium in the wake of the lockdowns, restrictions, and their impact on the retail sector.

BIZ BUZZ

Airtel gears up to tackle post-Yaas situation

Bhubaneswar: Airtel has set up dedicated war rooms to monitor its networks 24x7. Service recovery teams were formed and on standby for round the clock repairing and restoration work. As a pre-emptive measure all critical spares, fibre, batteries and diesel have been stocked at key locations for faster response and minimum downtime. Provisions were also made for quick deployment of temporary sites (cell on wheels) in case of damage to existing sites.



IMS and Sum hospital gets NABH certification

Bhubaneswar: Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital, faculty of medicine of Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA), received the prestigious accreditation from National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH). The accreditation, which came into force with effect from May 13, 2021, will continue for four years. NABH is a constituent board of the Quality Council of India. IMS and SUM Hospital has received the NABH accreditation for the second time.



Microsoft launches Surface Laptop 4

Bhubaneswar: Microsoft India announced the general availability of Surface Laptop 4 for commercial and education customers via authorized retailers and for consumers via Amazon.in. New laptop will feature the signature 3:2 pixel sense high-contrast touch screen display in both 13.5" and 15" models, and Dolby Atmos omnisonic speakers. This provides users with a cinematic experience for their favorite movies and shows from the comfort of anywhere. Surface Laptop 4 also features a built-in HD front-facing camera with incredible, low-light capability and a studio microphone array, to enable enhanced meeting experiences at work. In addition, its large track pad with gesture support allows users to easily adjust to their preferred workflow.



Electric 2W to account for 8-10% of sales by 2025: ICRA

AGENCIES

Mumbai, May 26: The electric two and three-wheelers volume are expected to account for 8-10 per cent and 30 per cent of new vehicle sales in the country by 2025, respectively, owing to low operating cost and attractive subsidy support, among others, ratings agency ICRA said Wednesday. The penetration levels in cars and trucks, however, are likely to remain low in the medium-term, it said.

Globally, EVs now account for 4.4 per cent of new car sales during CY2020 and their share is likely to cross 5 per cent level this calendar year, as per ICRA.

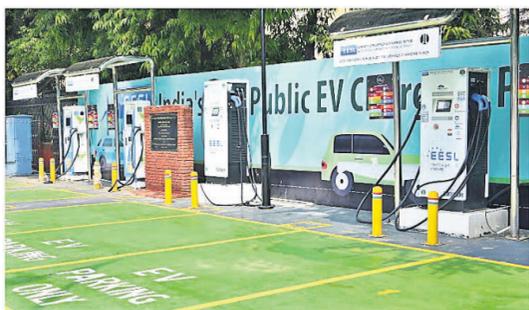
Electric two-wheeler (2W) and three-wheeler (3W) segments have relatively lower dependency on commercial charging infrastructure, owing to limited span of com-

mute and can also adopt battery swapping to allay charging related concern for commercial applications. Furthermore, operating cost metrics continue to favour electric 2W and 3W for commercial operations. In fact, e3W over life of the vehicle will be much more cost economical than its CNG counterparts, it said.

India can capitalise on its vast 2W and 3W segment, to emerge as leading manufacturer of e2W and e3W, globally. However, it will continue to lag in electric car segment, ICRA noted.

While global automotive demand declined during CY2020 due to COVID-19-related impact, EVs remained the bright spot with approximately 40 per cent growth over the previous years, it said.

ICRA said it believes that while the transition to EVs is inevitable,



the pace of penetration will be relatively gradual in India unlike global markets like China, Europe, and the US.

Shamsher Dewan, Vice President and Group Head (Corporate Sector Ratings), ICRA, said, "It is heartening to see positive and proac-

tive policy measures taken by the central government as well as various state governments to accelerate EV transition in India.

The absence of a local supplier ecosystem and high dependency on imports make things tougher. Nonetheless, segments like scoot-

India can capitalise on its vast 2W and 3W segment, to emerge as leading manufacturer of e2W and e3W, globally. However, it will continue to lag in electric car segment, noted the rating agency

ers, 3W and small commercial vehicles have already achieved total cost of operations (TCO) parity with conventional vehicles due to the low operating cost and attractive subsidy support, and are thereby expected to become early adopters of EVs in India, he said.

"We expect the share of EVs to reach about 8-10 per cent level in 2W,

and over 30 per cent in 3W by 2025. The penetration levels in cars and trucks are likely to remain low in the medium term," Dewan noted.

According to the ratings agency, the global automobile industry is witnessing major technological transitions, with a shift from conventional powertrains to the electric powertrain.

This transition will not only impact original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and their vendors within the auto industry but other stakeholders like oil producers, refineries, financiers, and others, it said.

Unlike other markets, especially China, which has taken a significant lead in public charging infrastructure, India may take several years to reach that level of charging infrastructure penetration, ICRA said.

FOCUS ON ASHWIN, JADEJA

Nicholls feels Indian pacers are on par with New Zealand bowlers but their focus will be on the Indian finger-spin duo at the World Test Championship final

CUMMINS ON WTC FINAL

'Condition should suit Kiwis more than India'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, May 26: Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins feels if the current wet weather conditions in England persist, New Zealand will enjoy an edge over India in the World Test Championships final, starting in Southampton June 18.

Cummins, who played for Kolkata Knight Riders in the suspended IPL, however, refused to predict the winner of the final.

"It is going to be a good match. I think there has been a lot of rain in England from what I have seen in the news. I think, in terms of conditions, it is probably close to New Zealand conditions," Cummins said in a question-and-answer session with fans on YouTube.

"We have seen both teams not having played Test matches for a couple of months. So, it is a one-off. Anything can happen. I will sit on the fence," said the 28-year-old who is quarantining here after arriving from Maldives following the IPL's suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "If I say anything, the conditions should probably suit New Zealand more than India," he added.

Cummins is the leading wicket-

taker in the WTC with 70 scalps from 14 Tests. He could be overtaken by India off-spinner R Ashwin in the final, who is three short of the mark with 67 wickets in 13 Tests.

Cummins said he loved the concept of the WTC and rued missing out on the final. "It is annoying Covid-19 made it a bit more difficult but it is great. I really enjoyed the whole aspect of it. Each series stands for something a little bit more than just the series itself and added a different dimension. I really liked the format.

"Unfortunately, we missed the series. So, we didn't have the six series leading to the final but I do enjoy the concept," added Cummins. Talking about India's Test win in Gabba earlier this year that gave the tourists a historic series triumph in Australia, he said, "Our record is very good at Gabba. I thought we had cracks in it and that it is going to be perfect for Day 5.

"Everything went to plan and then obviously India played beautifully and felt confident after SCG where they had hung in there. We needed 7-8 wickets. We knew it wasn't going to be easy, wish we took a few more wickets," he said.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: India's pace attack is on par with New Zealand's world class swing operators but the Black Caps batsman Henry Nicholls is more wary of the threat spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja may pose during the upcoming World Test Championship final.

India and New Zealand will fight it out for the inaugural title at Southampton's Ageas Bowl, one of those rare English tracks known to aid the slow bowlers for a considerable period in Test matches.

"India have a very good seam attack and also have the experienced spinners like Ashwin and Jadeja. They have been consistent in all parts of the world (of late) and bring quality (to attack)," Nicholls, who has been in good form of late in Test cricket, told this agency in an interview.

If there are no injury concerns, the Indian pace trio that is expected to be in the playing XI for the clash starting June 18 would be Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami.

"Mohammed Shami along with Jasprit Bumrah and Ishant Sharma have proven their quality over the years which is similar to our seamers (Trent Boult, Tim Southee and Neil Wagner) on whom we really pride ourselves on.

"So if you are facing that kind of a line-up, it's an exciting challenge and as a group we are expecting it to be tough but also looking forward to the challenge," the 29-year-old southpaw, who enjoys a 43 plus average over 37 Test matches, said.

His teammate Devon Conway's strategy of pouring dry kitty litter on the track in order to create rough was backed by Nicholls as

they are playing at a "neutral venue" which is known to assist the spinners.

"That was something that we experimented in the camp before we came over to UK. You managed to get some more turn and get some practice. So playing at a neutral venue, we need to check what the wickets will be like there. Also the guile of Ashwin and Jadeja is something that we need to be prepared for," Nicholls said.

Nicholls was a part of the New Zealand team that thrashed India inside three days in two home Tests in early 2020, something that will give them confidence going into

the final. "It's an exciting challenge as finally we will be playing a Test match at a neutral venue. So that for both sides kind of levels the playing field.

"We beat them 2-0 a season back (2019-20). But we know and accept that it's a different challenge but as a group we take a lot of confidence from that series win against India. Obviously, Number one and two playing the final is a challenge too," he said.

Nicholls' sequence of scores in the last three Tests is 174 (vs West Indies), 56, 11 and 157 (vs Pakistan). "It's nice to kick on and get a couple of big scores. A season before

this, I was playing well but not getting the results, so a lot of it was like keeping the things same as it had been.

"If I get in, I want to bat as long as I can. To be able to do that couple of times during the summer, it was good to contribute to couple of Test wins," said Nicholls.

He has recently had couple of big partnerships with skipper Kane Williamson, including a monumental 369 run stand against Pakistan in Christchurch.

Before the WTC final, New Zealand will play England at the Lord's in the first of the two Test matches. Black Caps' highest scorer

in that fateful 2019 World Cup final still at times finds it difficult to shrug off the disappointment.

"It's something that will be there forever," said Nicholls about the game that New Zealand lost on boundary count.

"It would have been an amazing game of cricket anywhere in the world but it happened to be the World Cup final at Lord's which made it special.

"It was disappointing as a group not to win that but we certainly held our heads high after such a performance. But again the way it finished was the way it finished. You can't do much about it," he concluded.

18,000 fans allowed on each day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, May 26: As many as 18,000 fans will be allowed on each day of the second Test between England and New Zealand at Edgbaston after it was selected as the first of the UK government's pilot events that will gauge the risk of COVID-19 transmission at events that attract mass gatherings.

The said number of fans means 70 per cent of the stadium's capacity. "Edgbaston's LV=Insurance Test match named as pilot event. We will be able to host around 18,000 spectators each day. Ticket holders will be contacted via email regarding the next steps," said Edgbaston cricket ground administration on its twitter handle Wednesday.

The project also seeks to analyse

ENGLAND vs NZ AT EDGBASTON

the testing protocols and social distancing and other COVID-related guidelines. As per the standard government protocols, to gain entry to the stadium all ticket holders will need to present a COVID-19 result from an NHS Rapid Lateral Flow Test, completed within 24 hours in advance.

All ticket holders should be aged 16 and over. "Edgbaston is unique as a cricket venue in having such a large stadium footprint, but we also have a vastly experienced operational delivery team, which has hosted many major events and a spectator pilot last summer," said Stuart Cain, Chief Executive at Edgbaston.

"We have always been hopeful of featuring in the pilot programme and are delighted for the thousands of ticket holders who will now be able to attend."

The first Test between England and New Zealand at Lord's, due to run from June 2 to 6, will be attended by 25 per cent crowd capacity.

"The UK Government's roadmap for easing of COVID-related restrictions in England means that the Test match between England v New Zealand June 2-6 will be limited to a reduced ground capacity of 25 per cent. If you have purchased a ticket to this match, you will automatically receive a refund," said a statement from Lord's cricket ground administration.

The Lord's Test is not part of the pilot programme.

Man United fans attacked in Gdansk



Manchester United fans in jolly mood ahead of their team's Europa League final encounter with Villarreal in Gdansk

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gdansk, May 26: Manchester United fans were attacked outside a bar in Gdansk on the eve of the Europa League final, the club said Wednesday. United play Villarreal Wednesday night in the Polish port city.

"Club staff were assisting a number of United fans in Gdansk last night and today, after an incident where some of our supporters were attacked outside a bar in the city," United said.

There were no immediate reports of any serious injuries. Up to 30 attackers may have been involved. Gdansk police spokesman Michal Sienkiewicz told Polish broadcaster TVN24 Wednesday. They left before po-

lice arrived, he said. "The whole thing took seconds rather than minutes and then the attackers dispersed," Sienkiewicz said.

"We will most probably be publishing the images of persons that were involved in the occurrence. Arrests are just a matter of time."

Gdansk Mayor Aleksandra Dulkiewicz said on Twitter there was "no room in our city for any form of violence! Dear fans and guests, you are always most welcome in our city."

United and Villarreal each have been allocated 2,000 tickets.

There is a maximum crowd of 9,500 allowed for the final, or just under 25 per cent of the capacity of the stadium.

KOHLI, ROHIT STATIC IN ODI BATTERS' LIST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, May 26: India skipper Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma held on to their second and third positions respectively in the batting chart, while pacer Jasprit Bumrah remained static at number five in the bowling list of the latest ICC ODI player rankings issued Wednesday.

Kohli and Sharma were sitting pretty with 857 and 825 points respectively in the batting list headed by Pakistan's Babar Azam with 865 points.

In bowling, Bumrah was at the 5th position with 690 points, while New Zealand's Trent Boult was atop with 737 points, followed by Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan (725), Afghanistan's Mujeeb Ur Rahman (708) and Kiwi pacer Matt Henry (691).

Bangladesh off-spinner Hasan became only the third bowler from his country to be ranked among the top two. He has advanced three places to reach the second position. All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan had grabbed the number one position in 2009 for the first time, while left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak is the other Bangladesh bowler to have been in the top two, reaching the second position in 2010.

Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rehman moved up the list as he jumped eight places to ninth.

Panghal, Vikas in semifinals



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, May 26: Defending champion Amit Panghal (52kg) and the redoubtable Vikas Krishan (69kg) were among three Indian boxers who advanced to the semifinals Wednesday as the country assured itself of an unparalleled medal haul of 15 in the Asian Boxing Championships here. Debutant Varinder Singh (60kg) was the other Indian to make the last four.

Panghal secured a second successive medal after overcoming a stiff challenge from Mongolia's Kharkhuu Enkhmandakh in the last-eight stage, while Varinder de-

feated Filipino Jere Samuel Dela Cruz 5-0.

Vikas then pulled off a hard-fought 4-1 triumph over Iran's Moslem Maghsoudi Mal Amir as India surpassed its previous best medal haul of 13 that was achieved in the 2019 edition.

The World Championship silver-winning Olympics-bound Panghal won 3-2 in a high-octane contest in which he overcame a sluggish start and used his combination punches to telling effect in the last two rounds.

Panghal will square off against Kazakhstan's Saken Bibossinov. He had beaten Bibossinov in the

Sheuli wins silver

TASHKENT: Indian lifter Achinta Sheuli produced his personal best in all three events to clinch an overall silver medal in the 73kg category at the Junior World Championship here Wednesday. The 19-year-old lifted 313kg - 141kg in snatch, followed by 172kg in clean and jerk - at the gold level Olympic qualifier event. The Commonwealth Championship gold medalist bettered both his earlier personal best in snatch and clean and jerk by two kilograms each. He had lifted 309kg (139kg+170kg) at the Asian Championships here last month. Indonesia's Juniansyah Rizki 349kg (155kg+194kg) put up a spectacular performance, breaking the junior world record in all three events to win the gold medal, while Russia's Serobian Gevorg 308kg (143kg+165kg) took home the bronze.

2019 World Championship finals. Vikas, also Tokyo-bound, has set up a mouth-watering semifinal clash with top seed and defending champion Bobo-Usson Baturov of Uzbekistan.

Late Tuesday night, Sanjeet (91kg), Sakshi (54kg), Jaismine (57kg) and the Olympic-bound Simranjit Kaur (60kg) joined Shiva Thapa (64kg) in the last four stage following wins in their quarter-final bouts.

They added to the seven medals, including that of six-time World Champion MC Mary Kom (51kg), that were assured on the day of draws.



GIRO D'ITALIA 2021

Martin triumphs Stage 17

AGENCIES

Rome, May 26: Dan Martin of Ireland won the 17th stage of the Giro D'Italia, Wednesday. The rider from Team Israel Start-Up Nation now has stage wins at all three grand tours - Giro d'Italia, Tour de France and Vuelta a Espana.

Martin won stage six of the 2018 Tour de France and stage three of the Vuelta last October, completing his hat-trick of Grand Tour stage victories with Wednesday's win.

The 193km stage from Canazei to Segai Ala took the peloton on a long descent and some flats before assaulting the cat 1 Passo San Valentino and then the steep cat 1 ascent to the finish.

Martin led for much of the stage and pulled away from the breakaway

group to take a commanding lead, and while Portugal's Joao Almeida and Britain's Simon Yates managed to close the gap, Martin was able to hold out to take the stage.

Martin finished the stage with a time of 4 hours 54 minutes and 38 seconds (4:54.38), with Almeida 13 seconds behind and Yates coming in third at 30 seconds.

Colombia's Egan Bernal retains the overall leader's pink jersey. The Ineos Grenadiers rider lost time in the closing three kilometers of the stage when he could not hold onto an attack initiated by Yates (Team BikeExchange).

The Colombian marked second place overall Damiano Caruso (Bahrain-Victorious) at 3km to go and had to dig deep to struggle to get to the finish.

ON THIS DAY THAT YEAR

1984: Bulgarian Manuela Maleeva won 3 singles tennis matches in one day beating Virginie Ruzici, Carling Bassett and Chris Evert in the final at Italian Open as she became only the 7th player to beat Evert on clay

2009: Barcelona became the first Spanish club to achieve a treble, including La Liga and Copa del Rey title, when they won the UEFA Champions League beating Manchester United 2-0 in the final in Rome

2017: Arsene Wenger became most successful manager in FA Cup history, winning his 7th title after Arsenal beat Chelsea 2-1 at Wembley Stadium in London

2018: Shane Watson's unbeaten 57-ball 117 helped Chennai Super Kings claim their third IPL title beating Sunrisers Hyderabad in the final at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai

BIRTHDAY



1962 RAVI SHASTRI (Indian men's cricket team head coach)