



## TARA'S FEAT

Actor Tara Sutaria thanks her "beloved Insta family" after garnering six million followers on Instagram

LEISURE P2



## CHINA WANTS TO ASSIST INDIA

China says it firmly supports Indian government and the people in their fight against the coronavirus

INTERNATIONAL P10



## KNIGHTS FACE ROYALS

Kolkata Knight Riders look to revive their campaign in IPL 2021 when they meet struggling Rajasthan Royals

SPORTS P12

# COLOSSAL COLLAPSE

## Nation struggles with a health system overwhelmed by patients & plagued by accidents as virus surges

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 23:** India reported the world's highest daily tally of coronavirus infections for a second day Friday, surpassing 330,000 new cases, as it struggles with a health system overwhelmed by patients and plagued by accidents.

Deaths in the past 24 hours also jumped to a record 2,263, the health ministry said, while officials across northern and western India, including New Delhi, warned most hospitals were full and running out of oxygen.

The surge in cases came as a fire in

a hospital in a suburb of Mumbai treating COVID-19 patients killed 13 people, the latest accident to hit a facility crowded with virus sufferers.

India, a major vaccine producer, has begun a vaccination campaign but only a tiny fraction of its population of 1.39 billion has received a dose, with experts saying supplies are scarce.

India's second wave has hit with such ferocity that hospitals are running out of oxygen, beds and anti-viral drugs. Many patients have been turned away because there was no space for them, doctors in Delhi said.

Ambulance sirens sounded through-

out the day in the deserted streets of the capital, one of India's worst hit cities, where a lockdown is in place to try and stem the transmission of the virus.

Mass cremations have been taking place as the crematoriums have run out of space and families have had to wait for two days to cremate the dead.

Health experts say India became complacent in the winter, when new cases were running at about 10,000 a day and seemed to be under control, and lifted restrictions to allow big gatherings. PM Narendra Modi himself has faced rare criticism for allowing political rallies and Kumbh Mela, in which millions take a ritual bath in the Ganga river, to go ahead. He addressed many of the rallies with packed crowds and few people wearing masks.

## 13 perish in ICU blaze



Health workers shift patients from Vijay Vallabh hospital in Virar West. PTI PHOTO

**VIRAR:** Thirteen COVID-19 patients died in a blaze at the intensive care unit (ICU) of a private hospital in Palghar district of Maharashtra Friday, police said.

There were 90 patients in the hospital, 18 of them in the ICU, when the fire broke out after a blast in the AC unit, an official said. The dead include five women and eight men.

TV visuals showed the smoke-filled ICU in a disarray after the blaze, with the ceiling falling off in some places, beds and other furniture strewn around and kin of the deceased wailing outside the hospital.

The fire broke out in the ICU on the second floor of the four-storeyed Vijay Vallabh Hospital at Virar shortly after 3 am, an official said. Firefighters extinguished the blaze at 5.20 am, he added.

There were 18 patients in the ICU when the fire broke out, the official

said. Five patients were rescued and shifted to other hospitals in the area, he added. The other patients in the hospital were not affected as the damage was confined to the ICU, he added.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has ordered a probe into the tragedy, Health Minister Rajesh Tope said.

The tragedy comes two days after 22 COVID-19 patients who were either on ventilator or oxygen support, suffocated to death when their oxygen supply stopped suddenly due to a malfunction in the main storage at a civic hospital in Nashik.

A fire broke out in Mumbai's Dreams Mall, which housed a Covid-designated hospital on its third floor, in the intervening night of March 25-26. The fire, which raged for over 40 hours, claimed nine lives, including those of patients on ventilator support.

## Weekend shutdown in all towns today

One hour relaxation for fitness activities

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 23:** As per the state government's order, weekend shutdown has been imposed in all urban areas of the state from Saturday. The shutdown will be in effect along with the night curfew already in force from 9 pm.

SRC PK Jena said the weekend shutdown will be relaxed from 5 am to 6 am so that people can go for morning walks, cycling and other kinds of fitness activities.

During the shutdown all activities excluding emergency and some essential services will be shut. Medical services, medicine stores, telecom services, petrol pumps, LPG distribution, industrial activities, construction activities, agriculture and allied activities will continue during the shutdown.

Similarly, movement of district and municipal officials, media persons, police, fire services, central & state government officials on emergency duty, water supply, sanitation & sewerage workers and goods carriers, rail, air transport, road transport on highways has been permitted.

Movement of public

transport, private vehicles and taxis (including cabs by aggregators like Ola, Uber) to and from airports, railway stations and bus terminals for facilitating movement of passengers has also been allowed.

The government has allowed service sector industries including IT/ITES, hotel and hospitality, home delivery of groceries, vegetables and essential items and food aggregators like Swiggy and Zomato to operate during the shutdown.

The government has also allowed marriages and funerals with prior permission of the local authorities. However, the organisers of such events will have to submit the list of participants to the authorities at least 24 hours in advance. The list will be fixed at prominent locations of the venue which can be easily read by people from a distance of 10 feet. If persons other than those mentioned in the list are found present in the venue, it will be considered a violation.

Criminal action as deemed proper under the law will be initiated against the owner of the venue as well as the host.

## 25 die awaiting O<sub>2</sub>

**NEW DELHI:** Twenty-five of Sir Ganga Ram Hospital's 'sickest' COVID-19 patients died in 24 hours and the lives of 60 more hung in precarious balance, officials said Friday as the scramble for oxygen got more increasingly frantic in hospitals across the national capital.

Sources said "low pressure oxygen" could be the likely cause of the deaths in Ganga Ram, one of the city's biggest and most high-profile hospitals, where healthcare staff was reduced to manually ventilating patients in its ICU and emergency department. The hospital announced the deaths shortly after 8 am.

After the unprecedented crisis of

the morning, an oxygen tanker did reach Ganga Ram in central Delhi at 9.20 am but it was enough to last up to about five hours depending on consumption, an official at Ganga Ram said.

"It is wrong to say the deaths occurred due to oxygen shortage. We provided oxygen to patients manually when the pressure dipped in the ICU," SGRH Chairman Dr DS Rana said.

Ganga Ram Chairman Rana verbalised the demand of all hospitals, struggling to replenish their oxygen stocks for the last four days in the face of the explosion in the number of COVID-19 cases. "All we need is uninterrupted and timely supply of



oxygen," he said.

More than 500 coronavirus patients, including around 150 on high flow oxygen support, are admitted in his hospital.

"Ventilators and BiPAP machines are not working effectively. Lives of another 60 'sickest' patients at risk. Major crisis likely," a senior official at the hospital said.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He trusts his balmistras only. Hope he won't insist on meeting CMs' kids to contain the situation!

## Covid reaches Everest

**KATHMANDU:** The coronavirus has conquered the world's highest mountain. Norwegian climber Erlend Ness told The Associated Press that he became the first to be tested for COVID-19 in Mount Everest base camp April 15 and was flown by helicopter to Kathmandu, where he was hospitalised.

# 'Triple mutant variant can increase infection rate'

MANISH KUMAR, OP

**Bhubaneswar, April 23:** The penetration of the triple mutant variant of the coronavirus could increase the infection rate in the state, medical experts opined Friday.

Dr Swayam Pragnan Parida, Associate Professor (Community Medicine) from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar, said the triple mutant variant can have a cascading effect on the overall infection rate. "The triple mutant variant tends to be more infectious. It can aggravate the infection rate which happens in mutation cases. However, its impact on severity of the infections on humans is yet to be studied," she told **Orissa POST**.

Dr Parida said further analysis through genome sequencing can reveal more details on this. The genome sequencing by established labs in the country takes random samples from COVID positive patients and studies the virus in detail.

The Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) here is conducting the genome sequencing of 5 per cent samples of COVID infected persons from Odisha and nearby states. Ajay Parida, Director of ILS said, "Third mutation is just a name given to the virus detected in a few samples in West Bengal. We still do not have ample evidence based information on behaviour of the virus. It could be known through genome sequencing and subsequent epidemiological study." He said if the

strain comes up in their samples, the ILS could know more about it.

Dr Ashok Mohapatra, former director of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, however suggested people to take proper preventive measures to check the spread of the virus and not to focus more on the mutation theories.

"There were more than 1300 mutations in coronavirus in the last one year. The best way to defeat it is by taking adequate preventions that we normally take against COVID-19. People should not worry on these things. In mutations, part of their genetic makeup undergoes changes. If you abide by protocols, you can keep the threat at bay," he said.

He also said in Odisha, there are chances of the cases reaching upto 15000 per day during the peak.

## ALARMING SITUATION



Mass cremation of COVID-19 victims at Old Seemapuri Crematorium as coronavirus cases surge in New Delhi, Friday. PTI PHOTO

## Did my best, don't know how it came across: Outgoing CJJ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 23:** "I did my best, I don't know how it came across," outgoing Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad Arvind Bobde said in his farewell address as he retired Friday.

Justice Bobde was administered oath as 47th CJI in November 2019 and had a tenure of over 17 months.

Senior-most Supreme Court judge Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana has been appointed as the next Chief Justice of India.

Justice Bobde dealt with several key matters during his tenure including the historic Ayodhya verdict, Right to Privacy, petitions challenging Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), Tata-Mistry case, protection of Great Indian Bustard, Mahabaleshwar temple issue, appointment of ad-hoc judges in High Courts and ban on firecrackers.



A staunch supporter of use of Artificial Intelligence in delivery of justice, Justice Bobde introduced Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Courts Efficiency for assisting judges with legal research.

Justice Bobde as head of judiciary also stayed the implementation of the controversial new farm laws till further orders and decided to set up a four-member committee to resolve the impasse over them between the Centre and the farmers' unions protesting at the Delhi borders.

# Americans first: US on India's vax raw material plea

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New York, April 23:** It is in the world's interest that Americans are vaccinated and the US has to first take care of the requirements of its own people, State Department Spokesperson Ned Price has said about Washington's restrictions on exporting raw materials for making Covid-19 vaccines.

Asked at his briefing Thursday if President Joe Biden's administration had made a decision on the requests made from India to lift the ban on the export of vaccine raw materials to India, Price said bluntly, "We have a special responsibility to the American people."

"It's, of course, not only in our interest to see Americans vaccinated,



it's in the interests of the rest of the world to see Americans vaccinated," he added.

As for the rest of the world, "We will, of course, always do as much as we can, consistent with our first obligation," he declared.

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar discussed Covid-19 and health cooperation last week and it had opened the possibility of Washington allowing vaccine raw materials to be exported.

Earlier this month, Serum Institute of India (SII) CEO Adar Poonawala appealed to Biden to allow the exports of vaccine raw materials. "If we are to truly unite in beating this virus, on behalf of the vaccine industry outside the US, I humbly request you to lift the embargo of raw material exports out of the US so that vaccine production can ramp up," he tweeted.

Price first tried to sidetrack the issue of restrictions on vaccine raw materials exports by claiming that the reporter had asked about intellectual property rights for vaccines and that it was a matter for the US Trade Representative (USTR).

But the reporter from a Western news service had in fact asked only about the raw materials.

The question clearly was, "We reported that they (India) have asked the US to lift a ban on the export of vaccine raw materials, which basically threatens to slow the country's vaccination drive. When will the administration decide on that?" Price said. "You asked about intellectual property and certain controls. That was -- is within the purview of USTR."

The export controls do not, in fact, come under the jurisdiction of the USTR which deals only with the matters of intellectual property rights.

The Defence Production Act that has been invoked to boost vaccine production in the US is reported to curtail the export of raw materials needed elsewhere.

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	48080.67	↑ 374.87
NIFTY	14406.20	↑ 109.80
DOLLAR	75.64	↓ ₹0.05
EURO	90.46	↑ ₹0.04
GOLD	₹47,511	↓ ₹261
SILVER	₹68,610	↓ ₹608

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	38.3°C	35.2°C
MIN	26.1°C	25.0°C
Humidity	74%	79%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky	



**VANESSA HUDGENS WANTS TO SING FOR ASHLEY TISDALE'S DAUGHTER**

Actress Vanessa Hudgens cannot wait to meet her former co-star Ashley Tisdale's four-week-old daughter Jupiter. "We're going to wait until I have time and make sure that I'm not traveling anywhere, and just block out a window to meet Jupiter... (Ashley's) like, 'You have to come over and sing for her, 'cause she loves singing...' " Vanessa said in an interview.

**ELIZABETH DOES NOT WANT TO BE LINKED TO MARY-KATE, ASHLEY OLSEN**

Actress Elizabeth Olsen, who is part of the show *WandaVision*, said that she wanted to change her surname initially, so people didn't associate her with her sisters Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen. She said that she felt this pressure of not being recognised for her talent even when she was 10 years old.



**FORTUNE FORECAST**

GaneshaSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181

**ARIES**  
You are bursting with enthusiasm about your career and relationships. At work, you will easily persuade people to jump onto your bandwagon. But look before you leap. If things take a downturn, says Ganesha, the onus will be on you.

**TAURUS**  
You will find yourself viewing your love life with renewed vigour and understanding. A tendency to think pessimistically may make things murky. You love to play mother goose to those in trouble, but won't be quite as efficient dealing with problems of your own, says Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
You will begin a long-lasting romantic relationship today. Also, you will stay ecstatic and highly motivated throughout the day. In the afternoon, you will successfully avoid any confrontation with those who irk you to no end. That, says Ganesha, is the right way to cultivate patience.

**CANCER**  
Give priority to your life and prestige in stead of meddling in others' matters, says Ganesha. Your enterprising nature will give you prestige and respect. Ganesha suggests that you take time off from your chores and indulge in entertainment or travel.

**LEO**  
Your efforts to conceal your basic nature will not escape the attention of others. So do not indulge in deception and remain true to your basic nature. You will need to become more serious about the tasks you are handling, and will need to take on more responsibility.

**VIRGO**  
A vital turning point is about to take place in your relationships and will dictate how they will progress. Today you will be preoccupied with the organisational details for a social gathering with friends and near and dear ones. Later in the evening, a member of the opposite sex will make the big difference between hope and despair.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says you will be able to get good news from abroad, which will prove beneficial to you after a long time. If you are a businessman do not be in any hurry to fill any tenders or sign any agreements. Ganesha says always remember - Prevention is better than Cure.

**SCORPIO**  
Ganesha will shower his blessings upon you today. Burst that grey cloud of worries and live in present. Your heart is overflowing with love and affection, and guess who's the lucky one to receive it? All your near and dear ones!

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Suddenly, your wisdom is at work today. You see things in a different light and in a practical way. You are spiritually inclined today and take up meditation. Professionally, planning to take a jump? Go ahead, as the day is favourable for interviews, says Ganesha.

**CAPRICORN**  
Relationships will amuse you, today. Your strong communication skills will help you solve problems and misunderstandings which could otherwise have damaged precious relationships. The first relationship that gets the benefit of this power will be your romantic relationship.

**AQUARIUS**  
Today is your day, says Ganesha. You will impress one and all with your wit and humour. Icing on the cake will be your dedication for your job and responsibilities. You will feel very energetic and won't mind working on the behalf of others. In spite of the extra load, you will not feel tired or bored throughout the day.

**PISCES**  
You will try to change your present today. Ganesha knows you have been troubled since the past few days but now you will feel as though all your obstacles are slowly being removed and it will be true. Have faith in this and concentrate on your office and family.

**WORLD BOOK DAY**

**What reading means to Kajol**

**Mumbai:** Actress Kajol spoke of why it is important to keep reading, on the occasion of World Book Day on Friday.

"Reading provides you knowledge as well as nurtures your language skills. My love for reading is eternal. It is a process that keeps your mind busy and also helps in stress reduction. Knowledge gives you wisdom and no wisdom is a waste. I have always championed that we should push our kids to embrace the habit of reading; it helps throughout life," the actress, who often posts about her love for books on social media, tells IANS.

The actress reveals American author Sarah Maas is her all-time favourite.

"Sarah J. Maas has always been close to my heart. She is brilliant and whatever she writes truly connects with you. I have read almost all of her work but if you ask the most favourite, then it is *Crescent City* and *The Throne Of Glass*. These two books are just amazing," says the actress.



IANS

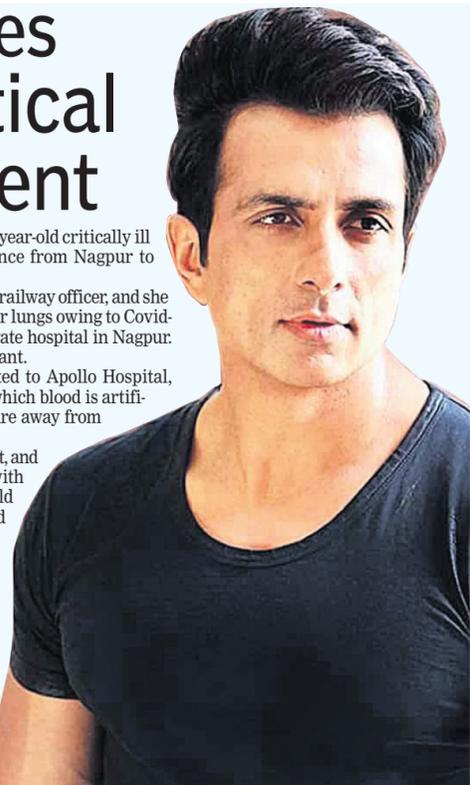
**Sonu arranges airlift for critical Covid patient**

**Mumbai:** Actor Sonu Sood has arranged for a 25-year-old critically ill Covid patient to be airlifted in an air-ambulance from Nagpur to Hyderabad for treatment.

The patient Bharti is the daughter of a retired railway officer, and she has reportedly lost almost 85 to 90 per cent of her lungs owing to Covid-19. Sonu initially helped in shifting her to a private hospital in Nagpur. Doctors then suggested she needed a lung transplant. The actor arranged for the patient to be airlifted to Apollo Hospital, Hyderabad, for a treatment called ECMO, in which blood is artificially pumped into the body to take pressure away from the lungs.

"Doctors said the chances are 20 per cent, and asked me if I still wanted to go ahead with it. I said 'of course'. She is a 25-year-old young girl and will fight the battle hard and come out of it stronger. That's why we took this chance and decided to get an air ambulance. The treatment is going well in and we hope for the best," said Sonu.

Meanwhile, the actor took to Instagram Friday afternoon to inform that he has tested negative for Covid-19. The actor had informed about testing positive for the virus on Saturday.



IANS

**Tara garners six mn Insta followers**

**Mumbai:** Bollywood actress Tara Sutaria Friday garnered six million followers on Instagram. She thanked her 'beloved Insta family' and asked them to be safe, well and happy.

Tara posted a picture on Instagram stories sitting on her bed holding two balloons, one with the numeric six and the

other with the alphabet M written on it. "Thank you for everything, my beloved insta family... 6 million kisses and hugs to all!! Be safe, be well and be happy. We will get through this time together," Tara wrote in the story.

The actress made her Bollywood debut with *Student Of The Year 2*, co-starring Tiger Shroff and Ananya Panday. She was also seen in the action film *Marjaavaan*. She now has two films coming up — *Tadap* and *Ek Villain 2*.

*Tadap* is Milan Luthria's remake of the Telugu hit *RX 100*. She is paired opposite Suniel Shetty's son Ahan, who makes his Bollywood debut in the film. Mohit Suti's *Ek Villain 2* also stars John Abraham, Disha Patani and Aditya Roy Kapoor.

She has also been roped in for the second installment of *Heropanti*, starring Tiger Shroff. Choreographer-director Ahmed Khan will helm the film.

IANS

**Bandish Bandits actor Amit Mistry passes away**

**Mumbai:** Actor Amit Mistry died Friday due to a cardiac arrest in a hospital in the city. He was in his mid-forties.

Mistry is known for his work in films such as *Shor In The City*, *Yamla Pagla Deewana*, *99*, *Ek Chalis Ki Last Local*, *Kya Kehna!* and in last year's OTT show *Bandish Bandits*.

The actor recently shot for the upcoming film *Bhoot Police*. The film's producer

Ramesh Taurani, confirming Mistry's demise, say she was well at the time.

"We were shooting with him in November last year as well as in January and February this year for *Bhoot Police*. He was quite well. We have worked with him in *Kya Kehna!* also. He was a very nice human being, too, besides being a superb actor. It's very sad to hear about his demise," says Taurani.

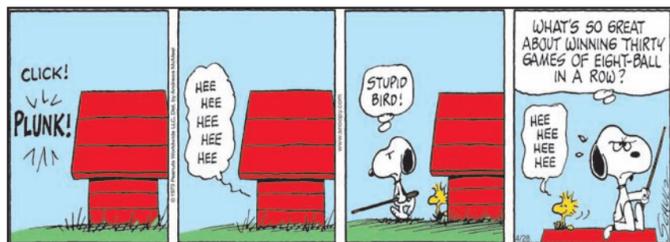
Mistry's colleagues took to social media to share their condolences. Actress Kubbra Sait tweeted a picture and wrote, "You'll be missed on earth @Actoramitmistry Condolences to the family," while actress Tisca Chopra wrote: "Shit. Such a lovely guy, totally chill.. deepest condolences to the family .. RIP #AmitMistry."

Singer Swanand Kirkire posted: "Amit Mistry? No... this is unbelievable. He was an amazing Actor and a real happy soul."

Mistry was also part of television shows such as *Tenali Rama* and *Maddam Sir*.

IANS

**PEANUTS**



**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



**BREVITY**



**FUN post CROSSWORD**

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10		
11	12	13	
	14		
15	16	17	18
19			
20	21		22
23		24	

Copyright ©2021 PuzzleJunction.com

**Across**

5 Porcupine's defense	17 Vacant	4 Links rental (4,4)
7 Spotted wildcat	20 Become unhinged	6 Oversight
9 Precious transparent stone	21 Acknowledge applause (4,1,3)	8 Ant, in dialect
10 Tick off	23 Fearsome fly	12 Reprimand
11 They're found in books	24 Buy the farm (4,2)	14 Shell wearers
13 Summer cooler (3,3)		16 Station
15 Spiritualist		18 Castle protectors
	<b>Down</b>	19 Relative of a giraffe
	1 Emanation	22 Double-reed instrument
	2 Jellied garnish	
	3 Strength	

**SUDOKU**

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

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

**SOLUTIONS**

**CROSSWORD**

F	L	A	N	N	E	L	A	I	S	L	E	
O	R	G	A	T	T	A	O	P	I	U	M	
U	O	T	T	F	T	A						
M	I	N	E	R	H	U	T	A	D	S		
A	C	U	M	E	N	R	E	C	E	D	E	
R	T											
T	U	T	L	E	A	I	S	L	E	T		
I	E	A	N	S	A	A						
S	T	R	U	T		T	R	O	U	P	E	
T	E	T	I	D	E							
S	E	D	G	E		S	T	E	L	L	A	R

**SUDOKU**

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

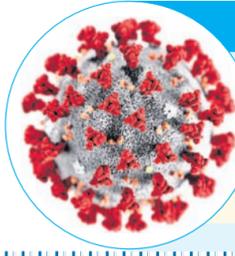
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## NORMS FLOUTED

People flout Covid-19 norms at the radiation oncology department of Acharya Harihar Regional Cancer Centre in Cuttack, Friday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	14,58,19,264	12,37,15,226	30,91,324
India	1,62,63,695	1,36,48,159	1,86,920
Odisha	3,94,694	3,56,003	1,973

# Cases surge despite fewer tests

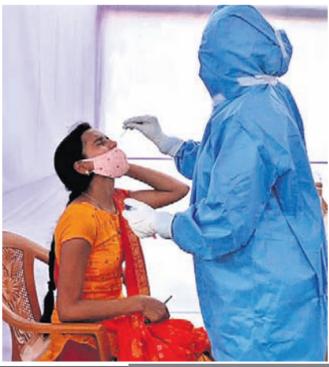
ODISHA RECORDS 6,215 NEW COVID-19 CASES AND 8 FRESH FATALITIES IN 24 HOURS

PNN/AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 23:** Odisha's Covid-19 tally mounted to 3,94,694 Friday as the state reported its highest-ever single-day spike of 6,215 new cases, while eight fresh fatalities pushed the coronavirus death toll to 1,973, a Health department official said. The cases surged even though less number of tests were conducted Thursday as compared to the previous day.

Of the fresh cases, 3,604 were reported from quarantine centres while 2,611 were detected during contact tracing.

The new cases were registered in all the 30 districts of the state, he said. Khurda district, which comprises the state capital Bhubaneswar, recorded the maximum number of new cases at 950, followed by Sundargarh (684), Kalahandi (682), Nuapada (446), Cuttack (383), Puri (306), Bargarh (268), Sambalpur (263), Jharsuguda (261), Nabarangpur (257) and Bolangir (211).



Taking to Twitter, the Health and Family Welfare (H & FW) department said, "Regret to inform the demise of eight COVID positive patients while under treatment in hospitals."

Two patients each died in Ganjam and Kalahandi, while four others from Balasore, Bolangir, Kandhamal and Khurda succumbed to the disease, the official said.

■ The state now has 39,117 active cases, while 2,165 patients were cured of the disease in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries to 3,53,551

■ Two patients each died in Ganjam and Kalahandi, while four others from Balasore, Bolangir, Kandhamal and Khurda succumbed to the disease

and Khurda succumbed to the disease, the official said.

Fifty-three other Covid-19 patients have also died due to comorbidities, he said.

Odisha now has 39,117 active cases, while 2,165 patients were cured of the disease in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries to 3,53,551.

The state government has so far conducted over 97.93 lakh sample tests, including 41,538 Thursday, and the positivity rate now stands at 4.03 per cent.

It's worth mentioning here that testing has been reduced by 3,445 in 24 hours as the government conducted 44,983 tests Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the opposition BJP and Congress demanded that the government should arrange for

## Where's the health min: BJP

**BHUBANESWAR:** The state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Friday questioned the absence of Health Minister Naba Kishore Das at the time of rising cases of Covid-19. BJP leader Tankadhar Tripathy held a press conference here and attacked the minister on the issue. He said, "The situation of Covid-19 in the state is severe and people are suffering in silence. But the state hardly feels the presence of the state health minister. The minister, who belongs to western Odisha and at a time when the cases of the pandemic are reaching new heights in his region, is nowhere to be seen. We need a telescope to find him."

free vaccination for all the citizens of the state.

Ruling BJD leader Debi Prasad Mishra said the state government will take a decision in this regard at an appropriate time.

The state government may have to bear an additional cost of ₹1,600 crore if "free vaccination for all" is announced, sources said.

Meanwhile, at least 11,000 vials of Remdesivir injection required for critical Covid-19 patients were allocated to Odisha till April 30, the official said.

## DISTANCING GOES FOR A TOSS

# Denizens crowd markets ahead of shutdown



Huge rush at a vegetable market at Rasulgarh in Bhubaneswar ahead of the shutdown, Friday

OP PHOTOS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 23:** Despite repeated instructions and requests by authorities against panic buying ahead of the weekend shutdown, denizens of the Capital City Friday thronged the shops and malls to buy essentials and other commodities throwing social distancing norms to the winds.

The weekend shutdown for the city began Friday in a bid to contain the virus spread. With the city already witnessing night curfews, denizens rushed to the markets during the evening which saw large footfall of customers at vegetable, fruit, fish and grocery shops.

## Many fish and meat shops saw heavy turnout of people during Friday evening

"I could not do my daily shopping before night curfew owing to my office hours between 10am and 7pm. Since weekend shutdowns are to be in place, I decided to do bulk buying later in the evening. I am aware of the sudden surge in Covid cases but I am left with no option," said Chandan Swain, a resident of Satya Nagar.

Large queues were also observed outside several liquor shops in the city. With the state government and Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) offering no clarity on availability of liquor or

home delivery services, tippers gathered in numbers to stock up their quotas for the weekend. Sources said that a few shops reported unruly behaviour from the crowd after they ran out of stocks.

Similarly, many fish and meat shops also saw heavy turnout of people during the evening. While the BMC had shifted many markets to open places, social distancing norms went for a toss as people continued panic buying.

"I consume meat during weekends and it is absolutely essential for me. Thus, I have brought two kilos of chicken for me and my family," said Satish Mohanty, a resident at Bomikhal.

Meanwhile, BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary said that essential services such as milk booths, home delivery, and

## Mo Bus services suspended

The Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT), Friday, announced suspension of its regular Mo Bus services during the shutdown. However, the transport authority will run buses from railway station to Cuttack and Khurda to facilitate movement of incoming passengers. Meanwhile, shuttle service will also be available from Airport to Railway Station.

transport services between railway station and airport will continue during shutdown.

"We will address every issue during shutdown. However, for any Covid-related assistance people can call 1929 helpline number," he said.

## Govt to ramp up testing

The state government has planned to scale up the testing facilities for Covid-19. Public Health Director Niranjan Mishra said, "We are taking adequate steps to contain the spread of the virus. We have planned to scale up testing, contact tracing and treatment capacity. Currently, we are testing around 43,000 samples per day but will increase it further." He also said that there is no dearth of hospital beds in the state as of now. "We have around 11,000 hospital beds and only 2,700 are filled now. There is no dearth of hospital beds in the state as of now. We are in a comfortable position. We are also planning to increase the beds. We have asked the private hospitals to keep 50 per cent of their beds for Covid patients."

## Convert NSCH into Covid hosp, Pradhan tells coal minister

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 23:** Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has urged Union Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi to grant permission to convert Nehru Satabdi Central Hospital (NSCH) at Talcher in Angul district into a Covid hospital.

Pradhan has recently written a letter to Joshi on this issue. He requested the Coal Minister to grant necessary approval to use the NSCH operated by Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) as Covid hospital and ensure availability of 100 ventilators.

"To bolster and support the decisive steps taken by the Prime Minister, the nation must simultaneously and rapidly ramp up all available health infrastructure for treating the mounting cases of Covid-19," Pradhan wrote.

The NSCH under MCL was functioning as a Covid hospital during the first wave of the pandemic with 144 general beds and six ICU units, Pradhan said, adding, it should be reactivated again as cases are on the rise in the region.

"Keeping in mind the exponential rise in number of Covid-19 cases in Angul and limited number of treatment facilities in the region, it is essential to operationalise and supplement critical medical infrastructure in the region," Pradhan said.

Notably, Angul Friday reported 173 fresh cases of Covid-19, pushing the district's tally to 12,762. Currently, there are 740 active cases in the district.

## Marine PSes to thwart migrants' entry through sea

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 23:** The Odisha police have alerted all marine police stations in the coastal districts in order to check illegal entry of migrants from neighbouring West Bengal. The state government has recently sealed the border with the West Bengal following the spike in Covid-19 cases in the state.

Speaking to media, Pranabindu Acharya, ADGP (Coastal Security) revealed that the staffs from all 18 marine police stations have been instructed to keep strict vigil on the boats coming from other states. Home guards have been deployed at various fish landing centers to keep an eye on the fishing boats of other states. The cops of marine po-



## RELOCATING MARKET

With the rise in Covid cases in Bhubaneswar, the civic authorities taking steps to shift the Unit-I vegetable market to a nearby school ground, Friday

OP PHOTO

## CP seeks cooperation of citizens for shutdown

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 23:** The Commissioner of police, Saumendra Priyadarshi Friday urged the residents of twin city to cooperate with police and other government agencies for successful enforcement of weekend shutdown in the commissionerate. Priyadarshi, while addressing the media said that the commissionerate police have made adequate arrangements for the implementation of Covid-19 induced shutdown Saturday and Sunday.

The commissionerate police have

set up 25 check points in Cuttack and 43 spots in Bhubaneswar. The police officials have been instructed to check the movement of the people. They will enquire from the commuters about their reason of plying on road during the shutdown period. As many as 12 platoons of police and 100 officers in Cuttack and 20 platoons of police under the supervision of 150 officers in Bhubaneswar will be deployed. Stringent action will be taken if the officers find commuter not belonging to the exempted category as per the guidelines issued by the state government.

# Green corridor created for trucks carrying oxygen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 23:** With Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and some others raising the issue of oxygen cylinder laden trucks being detained in some states, Odisha police has created a green corridor for such vehicles in the state, an official said Friday.

The Odisha police Thursday escorted two tankers carrying oxygen from Angul and Jajpur in the state to Visakhapatnam and Pune respectively, the official said.

The tankers were loaded in the presence of the local police in Angul and were escorted to their destination, he said.

The Odisha police in a statement said that based on the directive of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, a special cell has been formed under Additional Director General, Law and Order, Y K Jethwa as the nodal officer for coordinated action for loading and transportation of medical oxygen by Odisha to states facing acute deficit.

"A dedicated green corridor for oxygen carrying vehicles is set up, wherever necessary, along with police escort for interstate coordination and smooth movement. SPs/DCPs and range DIGs/IGs/CP shall supervise the movement personally within their jurisdictions," a release issued by the state police said.

The Odisha police had created a green corridor under police escort to transport two tankers carrying emergency medical oxygen to



Police escorting a tanker carrying oxygen from Angul to Visakhapatnam, Thursday

Visakhapatnam and Pune from Jaipur.

Meanwhile, the East Coast Railway (ECOR) said that Railways will run Oxygen Express trains from steel plants to different parts of the country to meet the demand for LMO due to the spike in COVID-19 cases. The ECOR said the first loaded Oxygen Express has left for Maharashtra from Visakhapatnam. Each tanker is loaded with 15 tons of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) which will help patients in hospitals in the western region, it said.

Seven empty tankers from Kalamboli goods shed in Maharashtra reached RINL in Visakhapatnam Thursday. LMO was filled in the tankers and the train left for Maharashtra in the evening, it said.

## A special cell has been formed under ADG, Law and Order, Y K Jethwa as the nodal officer for the purpose

At least 15 tankers carrying around 250 tonnes of oxygen have been sent from Odisha to cities like Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad, Indore, Pune, Mumbai and Nagpur within last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Railway Board Chairman Suneet Sharma Friday said, "We have received a request from Delhi just now, and we are still planning its movement. We are likely get the oxygen from Rourkela."

## Collectors to ensure O2 at Covid centres

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 23:** The state government Friday asked all district Collectors to ensure operationalisation of Covid Care Centres in their districts with oxygen facility.

Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra gave this direction to the Collectors while reviewing the Covid situation in different districts through videoconferencing.

The focus of the discussion was requirement of the districts and pertinent issues which were resolved on priority basis.

The Chief Secretary advised the Collectors to keep their Covid call centres fully active and responsive on 24x7 basis.

They were asked to reach the patients within least possible time and monitor the home isolation cases closely.

Serious patients should be brought to hospitals as and when family members or the patients need it, he said, instructing the officials to have a system for informing about the health condition of serious patients to their family members so that they do not rush to the hospitals.

Mahapatra further directed the SPs and collectors to deploy fire fighting teams in all Covid hospitals for any exigency. "They should be ready for promptly responding to check any fire and protect the patients, healthcare personnel and property," he said.

Ex-jailor in soup for duping prisoners' diet money

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: The Prisons Directorate has sought permission from the state Home department to take disciplinary action against former jailor-cum-superintendent of Patnagarh sub-jail, reportedly for misappropriation of funds earmarked for diet of inmates.

The Directorate has approached the Home department after it found the charges against the ex-jailor Samir Ranjan Sahoo true during a departmental enquiry.

According to sources, the ex-jailor currently works as assistant director-cum-registrar at the Mahatma Gandhi Academy of Prisons and Correctional Services (MGAP&CS), Bhubaneswar. The former jailor during his incumbency had allegedly spent more on various grocery items than approved by the government, causing loss to the tune of over ₹3 lakh to the public exchequer between 2012

HOME DEPT NOD SOUGHT

THE EX-JAILOR DURING HIS INCUMBENCY HAD ALLEGEDLY SPENT MORE ON VARIOUS GROCERY ITEMS THAN APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT, IN TURN CAUSING LOSS WORTH OVER ₹3 LAKH TO THE PUBLIC EXCHEQUER BETWEEN 2012 AND 2014



HE ALSO BOUGHT FIREWOOD OF AROUND ₹45,000 DESPITE THE AVAILABILITY OF LPG CONNECTION TO THE JAIL SINCE 2009. HE HAD NOT SOUGHT PERMISSION FROM THE SENIOR OFFICERS FOR ANY ADDITIONAL PURCHASE

and 2014. He had not sought prior permission from the higher authorities before making huge purchases of several other articles as well. The sources also claimed that the ex-jailor carried out the above transactions deliberately with some ulterior motive.

The enquiry also confirmed that he reportedly purchased huge amount of items for the jail from vendors without having any valid registrations in contravention of the

guidelines issued by the state finance department.

The ex-jailor also bought firewood of around ₹45,000 despite the availability of LPG connection to the jail since 2009. He had not sought permission from the senior officers for any additional purchase.

The directorate ordered a probe into the matter after the departmental audit exposed the alleged irregularities during the period 2012 and 2014.

Assembly's old proceedings to be digitised

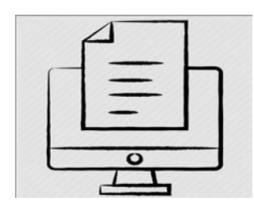
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: Moving a step forward in making the state Assembly paperless, the Assembly Secretariat is going to digitise important old proceedings of the House.

This decision was taken in a meeting held under the chairmanship of Speaker SN Patro here, Friday. Old House proceedings on important issues, which will be about 10,000 pages, are in a very deplorable state. So, it is necessary to protect the documents, the meeting decided.

Similarly, all the books of the Assembly library will be made available on electronic mode and the important files of the secretariat will also be digitised, as per the decision taken in the meeting.

TECH COMES TO THE RESCUE



OLD HOUSE PROCEEDINGS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES, WHICH ARE REQUIRED TO BE KEPT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE, ARE IN A VERY DEPLORABLE CONDITION

THE STATE HAS SUBMITTED A PROPOSAL TO THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS SEEKING ₹3.8 CRORE FOR THE MAMMOTH TASK

TWO IT COMPANIES HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SUBMIT A DETAILED PROPOSAL WHILE TENDER WILL BE ISSUED THROUGH STATE-RUN ODISHA COMPUTER APPLICATION CENTRE IN BHUBANESWAR FOR SCANNING OF THE FILES

For digitisation of the Assembly documents, the state has submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs seeking ₹3.8 crore. However, the ministry is

going to release ₹50 lakh for this purpose soon.

For digitisation of the files, two Pune and Hyderabad based IT firms have been asked to submit a de-

tailed proposal while tender will be issued through state-run Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) for scanning of the files.

The Assembly already has facilities of Wi-Fi, computers, laptops, iPads for its staffers as well as the legislators. All of them have also been imparted training on using digital technology for official works.

As per earlier practice, the MLAs were provided with documents like question list of Question Hour, Zero Hour, Business of the Day documents and all other papers related to reports of different committees and others. With the inclusion of the digital initiative, the functioning of all such manual works are likely to get hassle free and less involvement of printing and papers and its cumbersome distribution process.

No vax for Koraput, Jharsuguda Monday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: The state Health department Friday said that there would be no vaccination sessions for Koraput and Jharsuguda districts for Monday owing to shortage of shots.

The department said that only 512 sessions have been planned across the state for Monday against the 1,500 identified vaccination centres across the state.

The department said that a total of 55,50,380 persons have been inoculated at 769 active sites by Friday evening. The state is now left with only 1,05,360 doses of Covishield and 3,78,100 doses of Covaxin. Lack of Covishield supply to the state is likely to hamper the ongoing vaccination drive in the state unless fresh consignment of the doses reaches the state on time. The state Friday vaccinated a total of 1,08,902 persons against the pandemic.

State appoints 94 executive engineers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: Works, Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallick Friday gave appointment letter to 94 executive engineers at Lok Seva Bhawan.

The Minister said that in this era, technological advancement is very important for the development and everybody including engineers must understand it. He also instructed them to apply Chief Minister's 57 rules in their work.

Plea for aid to kin of immolation victim

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: A rights activist Friday moved the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) seeking a direction to the state government to pay ₹30 lakh compensation and permanent government job to the family members of Dinabandhu Mishra, who died recently following self-immolation at Sambalpur University.

The activist, Himanshu Sekhar Nayak, also urged the commission to direct the principal secretary of state Higher Education department to submit an action-taken report in connection with the regularisation of other staffers working on contractual basis at the university. He demanded stringent action against the officials responsible for alleged misbehaviour with the deceased.

Notably, Mishra who attempted self-immolation over job regularisation and alleged misbehaviour by the Vice-Chancellor of the university sustained around 90 per cent burns. He succumbed midway while being shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

SC stays HC order on Panigrahi graft case



A special leave petition was filed by Odisha Lokayukta through advocate Arjun Garg challenging the orders of the Orissa HC which ruled that the Lokayukta cannot order the Vigilance department of the state for a preliminary enquiry against Panigrahi as the department is the complainant in the matter

The Lokayukta in December last year had directed the Vigilance to investigate into the corruption charges made against arrested Gopalpur MLA

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 23: The Supreme Court Friday stayed the order of the Orissa High Court which restrained the Odisha Lokayukta from directing the state Vigilance to conduct enquiry against arrested MLA Pradeep Panigrahi in a corruption case.

A two-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices Navin Sinha and Ajay Rastogi issued notices to the Odisha government and Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Kumar Panigrahi in a petition filed by the Odisha Lokayukta.

A special leave petition was filed by Odisha Lokayukta through advocate Arjun Garg challenging the orders of the Orissa High Court which ruled that the Lokayukta cannot order the Vigilance department of the state for a preliminary enquiry against Panigrahi as the department is the complainant in the matter.

During the hearing, senior advocate Ravindra Shrivastava, ap-

pearing for Odisha Lokayukta, submitted to the apex court that the High Court's order is contrary to the Constitution bench judgement of the Supreme Court. Shrivastava also argued that under Section 20 of the Lokayukta Act, the Lokayukta can order enquiry by any agency. He submitted that the High Court should not interfere with the order of Lokayukta.

It is to be mentioned here that the Lokayukta in December last year had directed the Vigilance to investigate into the corruption charges made against arrested Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Kumar Panigrahi. The Lokayukta had also asked Vigilance Directorate to conduct a preliminary enquiry against Panigrahi and submit a report within two months.

The anti-corruption ombudsman issued the direction after accepting the recommendation of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik who had referred the case of corruption charges levelled against the lawmaker December 7 last year.

Bishwokeshan Pipli candidate for Cong

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: The All India Congress Committee (AICC) Friday approved the candidature of Congress leader Bishwokeshan Harichandan Mohapatra as the new candidate for the Pipli Assembly byelection.

The AICC said that party president Sonia Gandhi approved the candidature of Mohapatra. AICC leader Mukul Washnik informed the decision of the party high command in a media statement.

The candidature of Mohapatra came in the wake of death of party candidate Ajit Managaraj and later with the reluctance of the family members of Managaraj to contest the polls. Mohapatra is said to be a resident of Delang block and working with the Puri District Committee of the party. His father is also said to be a member of the Odisha Congress.

State govt plans expansion of Karlapat, Sunabeda sanctuaries

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: The state government has planned to enhance the areas of Karlapat and Sunabeda wildlife sanctuaries in Kalahandi and Nuapada districts, respectively.

The standing committee of State Board for Wildlife headed by Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha Friday approved a proposal in this regard.

The committee after detailed discussion and examination approved seven proposals and recommended the State Board for Wildlife for transmitting the same to Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.

The limit of Karlapat wildlife sanctuary will be enhanced to 194 sq km from existing 184 sq km. Similarly, 10,965 hectares of populated area will be removed from

CB to probe snake venom smugglers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: The Forest department has reportedly requested the Crime Branch (CB) to investigate the illegal network behind the gang involved in illegal trade of snake venom busted last month. Sources in the Forest department revealed that the gang has links with wildlife criminals outside the state so the department has requested the CB which has adequate expertise in the field.

However, the Crime Branch is yet to conform receiving any request from the forest department in connection with the matter. Notably, the Forest officials had busted the gang and arrested seven persons including a lady in this regard from different spots in the capital city March 27. The officials had also seized 1.5 liter snake venom from the possession of the wild life criminals.



FOR THE LORD

An artiste performs traditional dance as part of Sahjita at Jagannath Ballav Mutt in Puri, Friday

OP PHOTO

NRRI observes platinum jubilee in Cuttack

Cuttack: The National Rice Research Institute (NRRI) at Bidyadharpur here Friday celebrated its platinum jubilee foundation day through virtual mode. Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Kailash Choudhary, was the chief guest of the occasion. Choudhary inaugurated Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati Platinum Jubilee Auditorium and a national seminar on rice research to mark the occasion, NRRI sources said.

Choudhary urged the scientists to implement new technology to sustain productivity and profitability in paddy cultivation in the context of climate change. A special postage stamp and an envelope were released on the occasion. A total of 32 farmers from Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh were felicitated for their remarkable achievements in farm sector.

BJP youth wing opposes deer park relocation plan

Cuttack: The youth wing of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has opposed a plan to relocate a deer park from Tulasipur in the city here to Chandaka forests. Activists of BJP youth wing Friday submitted a memorandum in this regard to the Revenue Divisional Commissioner (Central) Anil Kumar Samal and Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) commissioner Ananya Das. In their memorandum, the BJP youth wing activists have said that the Tulasipur deer park had been established in 1981. The park has remained as a point of attraction for the residents of the Silver City. Recently, the administration has decided to relocate the park to somewhere near Chandaka forests

to facilitate road expansion and other developmental projects, they said. "Tulasipur deer park is a popular place of recreation for the people of Cuttack. The deer park has special attraction for children. The administration should refrain from relocating the park to Chandaka. The authorities can relocate the park to some other place in the city or on its outskirts," said the BJP youth wing.

Dolphin carcass found in Puri

Puri: The carcass of a three-foot-long Irrawaddy dolphin was washed ashore at the beach here, Friday. According to sources, a few lifeguards spotted the carcass and informed the Forest officials who reached the spot and recovered the lifeless mammal.

2 gunrunners held

Bhubaneswar: The QAT of Commissionerate Police arrested two gunrunners from the outskirts of the city under Baliaanta police limits here during the wee hours Friday. The accused persons were identified as Bikram Kumar Patra alias Vicky of Bhangpur in Cuttack and Chittaranjan Behera alias Kalia of Balipatna here.

POST NEWS NETWORK

"Initially, we couldn't figure out whether it was an Irrawaddy or a bottlenose dolphin. The Forest officials, however, confirmed it as an Irrawaddy one. They [Irrawaddy dolphins] were usually found in Chilika lake. We suspect it died in Chilika area after being hit by any illegal fishing trawler and washed ashore at the beach here," said one of the lifeguards who alerted the Forest officials.

World Book Day 2021

Bhubaneswar, April 23: Governor Ganeshi Lal Friday encouraged people to read books and ignite their imaginations on the occasion of World Book Day. "Books have the power to transform our thinking and change the course of our life. Books are our best friends, guides and philosophers. They nourish our mind, heart & soul. This #WorldBookDay2021, let's continue enjoying reading & igniting our imaginations," said the Governor on social media.

Talking about books, the Governor said that four types of books are prevailing across the globe - management, relationship, quality leadership and self-transformation. Fascinatingly, all these four categories of books available in India are the best in the world. Describing

WORLD BOOK DAY 2021

READ BOOKS TO IGNITE IMAGINATIONS, SAYS GUV

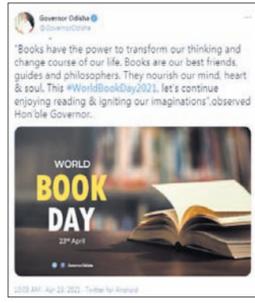
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: Governor Ganeshi Lal Friday encouraged people to read books and ignite their imaginations on the occasion of World Book Day.

"Books have the power to transform our thinking and change the course of our life. Books are our best friends, guides and philosophers. They nourish our mind, heart & soul. This #WorldBookDay2021, let's continue enjoying reading & igniting our imaginations," said the Governor on social media.

Talking about books, the Governor said that four types of books are prevailing across the globe - management, relationship, quality leadership and self-transformation.

Fascinatingly, all these four categories of books available in India are the best in the world. Describing



the classification of books, the Governor said that the Mahabharat is the best book speaking about governance while Ramayan talks about the relationship to be maintained among human beings. Chanakya is accorded as a quality leader of India and anyone can get knowledge of self-transfor-

World Book Day is celebrated April 23 every year to promote reading, publishing and copyright

mation from Rushi Vasistha who mentored Lord Ram. World Book Day is celebrated April 23 every year to promote reading, publishing and copyright. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik wishing on world book day said, "Books shape our thinking, stimulate our mind and broaden our horizon. On #WorldBookDay let's celebrate the power of reading and enjoy this portable magic to limit our time outside homes as the world continues to battle #COVID19 pandemic."

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

# NINL O<sub>2</sub> PLANT SHUT AS COUNTRY GASPING UNDER OXYGEN CRUNCH

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, April 23:** At a time when the whole country is grappling with shortage of oxygen for Covid patients, the Nilachal Oxygen plant at the Nilachal Ispat Nigam Ltd (NINL) at Kalinganagar has remained non-operational for a year.

The death of 24 Covid patients at a Nashik-based hospital due to oxygen shortage and cases of dozens of deaths in Delhi are cases in this point. Reports said many of the hospitals in the country treating Covid patients will go out of their oxygen stocks due to short supply.

NINL is one of the many steel plants that have come up in the state. In these plants, oxygen has a major role to play in steel production for which every steel plant establishes its own oxygen plant in its premises.

In this context, three steel plants including state-owned NINL, Tata Steel and Jindal Stainless Steel have established their own oxygen plants on their premises. However, NINL has stopped producing oxygen from its plant as the main plant is lying closed for a year.

NINL had established an oxygen plant on its premises which became operational in 2012 at an expenditure of ₹300 crore. The 418



In steel plants, oxygen has a major role to play in steel production for which every steel plant establishes its own oxygen plant on its premises.

NINL is one of the many steel plants having established an oxygen plant on their premises. It made operational in 2012 at an expenditure of ₹300 crore. The 418 tonne oxygen plant had made an agreement to provide 5 per cent of oxygen to hospitals

Two other plants like Tata Steel and Jindal Stainless Steel have established their own oxygen plants on their premises in Kalinganagar. But NINL has stopped producing oxygen from its plant as the main plant is lying closed for a year

tonne oxygen plant of NINL had made an agreement to provide 5 per cent of oxygen produced in its plant to hospitals and use the surplus in steel manufacturing.

However, NINL has stopped supplying oxygen to the hospitals after closure of the main plant.

The oxygen plant became defunct after the main plant was shut down March 30, 2020. Meanwhile, employees and workers of the plant have been staging agitations at different points of time demanding revival of the plant.

Observers have claimed that if NINL is made operational by the government, it would go a long way in fulfilling the oxygen requirement for Covid and critical patients.

Meanwhile, residents of Jajpur district have demanded revival of the closed oxygen-producing plants. They said they want to ensure that there is no disruption of oxygen supply in future.

## Prime accused in bomb attack on RTI activist held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, April 23:** Police arrested Rabinranath Das, the prime accused in the crude bomb attack on RTI activist Sarbeswar Behura, Friday. Another accused was also arrested.

The arrested are Rabinranath Das (40) and Somyaranjn Prusty of Dankari village. The two were produced at Chandikhole JMFC court. Their bail pleas were rejected and they were sent to judicial custody.

Dharmahala police in its investigation report said that the prime accused had made a plot to eliminate Sarbeswar.

Police had earlier arrested four accused - Shibani Behera (19), Shambhunath Nayak (32), Kalia Das (28) and Debendra Rout.

It may be noted here that on the evening of March 27, Behura was travelling in his car when some miscreants had hurled crude bombs at him near Immamganj under Jenapur police limits. Behura was critically injured in the attack.

Behera has been vocal against illegal stone quarrying at Dankari hill and other hills in Dharmasala tehsil. He had moved the NGT and the High Court over such illegal activities. The NGT has imposed huge penalty on stone miners.

# 44 more border points with Bengal sealed; vigil beefed up

POLICE DENY ENTRY OF TWO WEDDING PARTIES AT CHECK POSTS



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhograi, April 23:** As Covid epidemic is acquiring dangerous proportions in West Bengal, the Balasore district administration has tightened the checking and vigil on border points in Bhograi and Jaleswar block, Friday. It sealed 44 more entry points - 36 in Bhograi and eight in Jaleswar. Four platoons of police were deployed.

Collector K Sudarshan Chakraborty took stock of the situation on the border areas. Two people have died of Covid in Bhograi.

The administration has a quarantine provision at Sugo and Rajpur for migrants coming from Bengal.

Reports said, sealing of border points has led to tension and confrontations between locals and police at some places.

Police officials reportedly intercepted two wedding parties for hours on West Bengal-Odisha border Friday. The wedding parties had to return home.

Border check posts have become active and all entrants from West Bengal side were thoroughly checked for RTPCR negative report or vaccination certificates.

Two marriage parties from Dantun and Belda in West Medinipur district were asked to produce necessary documents. Both the parties were heading towards Balasore and Paradip. As they failed to furnish vaccination or RTPCR negative certificate, they were not allowed to enter Odisha.

## Fears of Covid infection writ large in Titlagarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Titlagarh, April 23:** Amid a rise in Covid-19 cases, the second wave has struck panic among people in Titlagarh in Bolangir. Market places were found shut while streets were deserted Friday.

It looked as if curfew has been imposed in the town. People remained indoors throughout the day, even though the administration has not imposed restrictions. Fears of Covid infection forced local traders and businessmen to shut the town to ward off infections Friday.

Reports said, everyday more new Covid cases are coming to Titlagarh hospital. A person was brought to the hospital Friday, but died before being admitted. Locals alleged that many people did not get themselves tested for Covid, but move about in the town. Serious patients are being sent to Bolangir hospital.

## ₹10K FINE ON BRIDE'S KIN FOR ARRANGING FEAST

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jharsuguda, April 23:** A bride's family had to cough up ₹10,000 as fine for arranging a feast, flouting Covid-19 norms at Itabhathi village under Sadar police limits in Jharsuguda district. The incident took place Thursday, but since then it has become a hot topic of discussion in the village.

In order to contain the spread of coronavirus, restrictions have been imposed on celebrations like marriages. The maximum permissible guest limit for marriage ceremonies according to the state government's latest directive is 50 persons.

However, rules are being rarely followed as the ceremony at Itabhathi village demonstrated. More than 50 guests were invited for the wedding and the feast. However, Sadar police got the information about flouting of rules.

A team from Sadar police station swooped on the venue. They found that the feast was organised without following Covid-19 protocols. The cops took immediate action against the bride's family. They asked the family members to stop the feast mid-way and also fined them ₹10,000. Notably, the district, tagged as Red Zone, reported 261 fresh Covid cases, Friday

# Brick kilns: Kuldiha ecology faces peril

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sajanagar, April 23:** Some brick kilns have been operating within the eco sensitive zone of the Kuldiha sanctuary under Nilagiri tehsil of Balasore. They are allegedly posing a threat to the ecology of the Kuldiha sanctuary.

Whenever the administration takes up steps to remove the brick kilns, it had to face opposition from local labourers and brick kiln owners, it is said. The administration had also tried to pull down brick making units Thursday, but had to return empty-handed due to local resistance.

In fact, these brick kilns have become a source of livelihood for scores of people in the area. These brick kilns and illegal stone mining have been posing threat to the ecology of this sanctuary.

The administration had tried to pull down the brick kilns Thursday, but failed in its effort. The administration has imposed prohibitory order under section 144 in the area.

There are about 14 brick kilns operating in the area. Burning of bricks allegedly push temperature in the area while fuel wood is col-

lected from forest.

Notably, the ministry of environment, forest and climate change had come out with a notification August 9, 2017, stressing protection of wildlife and the Kuladiha sanctuary.

Thereafter, the forest department demarcated an area of 219.18 square/km as Kuladiha eco-sensitive zone. At that time, the forest department identified 14 brick kilns coming under the eco-sensitive zone.

Expressing concern over the operation of the brick kilns in the zone, Nilagiri MLA Sukant Nayak had raised the issue in the Assembly. A few months ago, the Balasore DFO had apprised the Collector about the issue.

Collector K Sudarshana Chakraborty had ordered demolition of the brick kilns, but the officials had to face opposition of some locals, brick kiln owners and labourers. It may be noted here that the administration had earlier taken such a move to demolish brick kilns, but had failed.

The MLA has suggested to settle the issue by holding talks with locals and brick kiln owners.



## SELF-IMMOLATION OF SAMBALPUR VARSITY WORKER

# VC holds emergency meet; no decision on job regularisation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, April 23:** While authorities of the Sambalpur University are in dock over recent self-immolation of a contractual worker, Vice-Chancellor Sanjib Mittal held an emergency meeting of the syndicate Friday. But contractual employees' association questioned the legality of the syndicate meeting.

Notably, police have booked the VC and some others for alleged involvement in the case. The syndicate discussed the self-immolation of contractual worker Dinabandhu Mishra, his family's demands and various demands of the contractual workers of the university.

However, contractual workers' union has questioned on legality of the syndicate meeting presided over by the VC, an accused in the case. The university syndicate meeting was presided over by VC Sanjib Mittal while the director of higher education department Aswhini Kumar Mishra, CDC director Ajay Behera, Sambalpur zonal director Dr Prabhakar Gura, took part in the meeting on virtual mode.

It was decided that all cooperation will be provided to police who



are investigating the Dinabandhu Mishra's self-immolation.

The family of Mishra had demanded ₹15 lakh as ex-gratia from the university. The syndicate decided that ₹8 lakh will be provided to the bereaved family while ₹5.5 lakh has already been paid. Remining ₹2.50 lakh will be paid through a cheque.

The syndicate said, the family members must submit a written undertaking before taking the rest amount of ex-gratia that they will not indulge in anti-university activities. Besides, it was decided that the state government will be intimated once steps are taken to address the demand of a contractual job to any member of the deceased's

family. The university will consider the compensation demand of the family members of two contractual workers who had earlier committed suicide.

More importantly, the syndicate decided that it will hold talks with various employees' associations on the demand of regularizing the jobs of contractual workers.

Secretary of contractual employees association, Satyanaryan Kar raised the question of legality of the meeting, saying that as the VC is an accused in the Dinabandhu self-immolation case, he has no right to chair the meeting.

He added that the contractual employees' association will soon decide on the next course of action.

## Migrants returning in hordes

**MALKANGIRI:** Like previous years, migrants from other states have started arriving in Malkangiri in hordes due to lockdown and closure of factories, amid rising cases of Covid-19. In last ten days, over 4000 migrant workers have returned. Till date, 25 people have died of Covid-19 in the district. ADM Birsan Pradhan said 4279 migrants have entered the district through border points. The migrants have been allowed after checking their RTPCR and vaccination status.

# Artisans keep alive a unique tradition

A pair of lacquer idols in bedrooms is believed to ensure conjugal happiness

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasore, April 23:** They are making every effort to not let the Covid-19 pandemic affect their unique tradition of 'Jau Kandhei Bahaghar' - a ceremonial wedding between lacquer idols. Members of 'Jau Kandhei Bahaghar Utsav Committee' in Balasore district have already started

preparing for the event with strict adherence to Covid-19 guidelines.

An amalgamation of folk art, culture and tradition is found in the wedding celebrations and hence it is a unique annual event. However, last year due to the Covid-19 outbreak, celebrations were muted. This year also it will not be any different. The idol-making

process for the celebration starts from Ram Navami.

"As per tradition, the bride and groom were christened on the occasion of 'Dola Purnima'. They were named 'Samalei' and 'Shambhunath', named after deities of Western Odisha. The idol-making process started on Ram Navami. 'Lagnadhara' ritual will be held on Chandan Purnima which falls May 26, and the wedding will be solemnised June 6. Thereafter, the villagers will participate in a feast," informed committee convener Keshu Das.

"It is not just a festival which is celebrated without a cause and just for fun. The aim of conducting the marriage ceremony is to keep alive a tradition which is on the verge of extinction. It is believed that a pair of lacquer idols in bedrooms brings conjugal happiness. So a bride's family always gifts a pair of idols to the newly-weds," he added.

The revival of this tradition of giving lacquer idols to newlyweds will also help artisans, Das said. They will be able to make out a living by selling such idols, he pointed out.



**LOST**  
I, Sri SATRUGHANA PALEI, Son of Dhobi Palei residing at Muktapur, Kerandantangi, Nayagarh states that, I am the previous owner of the land area of Ac 0.026 decimals in Plot No.-913/1238, Khata No. 269/49 at Mouza - Muktapur, Tahasil-Ranpur, Dist.- Nayagarh and That, I have purchased the property on 23.06.2010 vide sale deed No. 11411000886. That, I have lost my above mentioned sale deed (No.11411000886) in Chandapur Market on 08.09.2020 but I have with me the original ROR having Khata No. 269/49 inspite of my best effort, I failed to get the same. If anybody has found the same, kindly deliver same to IDFC first Bank or contact Mob. 9348304538 within 7 days from the date of this notice. My son taking loan against this property from IDFC First bank.  
Sd./- Sri Satrugana Palei

**ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, L.I. DIVISION, BHUBANESWAR**  
e-Mail: eeolicdivn.bbsr@gmail.com, Tel: 0674-2391847  
**e-Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No. 1379/2020-21 Dt.19.04.2021  
No. CAD-170: The Executive Engineer, Lift Irrigation Division, Bhubaneswar on behalf of ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LIMITED, BHUBANESWAR invites percentage rate bids in online mode for installation & Energisation of Lift Irrigation Projects in Puri & Khordha district under BKVY in TURNKEY BASIS as mentioned below from the reputed contractors/firms having valid HT licence issued by E.L.B.O., Odisha and Civil licence as mentioned below with experience in similar nature of work.  
1. Nature of Work : Execution of work for installation & Energisation of 16 Nos. TW & RL Projects in different blocks of Puri & Khordha district.  
2. No. of Packages : 16 Nos.  
3. Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs.1483942/- to Rs.1880875/-  
4. Period of Completion : 90 days  
5. Date & time of availability of bid documents in the portal : 30.04.2021 at 10.00 A.M.  
6. Last date & time for receipt of bids in the portal : 12.05.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.  
7. Date & time of seeking clarification : 30.04.2021 at 10.00 A.M. to 10.05.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.  
8. Opening Date & time : 13.05.2021 at 11.00 A.M.  
9. Name & address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, Lift Irrigation Division, Bhubaneswar.  
The details of tender are available in the Government tender website i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in and other related documents are available in the DTCN for bidding. Any Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation of tender will be available in the said website.  
Sd./- Executive Engineer, L.I. Division, Bhubaneswar  
OIPR-32155/11/0002/2122

**WORKS DEPARTMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, ROURKELA (R&B) DIVISION, UDITNAGAR, ROURKELA**  
No. B-40 E-Mail Id - eepwdrkl@gmail.com  
**Government of Orissa "e" Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No.: 01/2021-2022 Dated:22.04.2021  
1. Number of works : 7 (Seven) number of Works  
2. Estimated cost : Rs.79.49 Lakhs to 87.15 Lakhs  
3. Period of completion : 3(Three) calendar months  
4. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : Dt 05.05.2021 at 11.00 A.M.  
5. Last date/ Time for receipt of bids in the portal : Dt 17.05.2021 up to 05.00 P.M.  
6. Date of opening of Bid : Dt. 21.05.2021 at 11.00A.M.  
7. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, (R & B) Division, Rourkela , UditNagar.  
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal http://tendersorissa.gov.in".  
Sd./- Executive Engineer R & B Division, Rourkela  
OIPR-34068/11/0002/2122

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SONEPUR (R&B) DIVISION, SONEPUR**  
No. B-38 E-Procurement Notice  
BID IDENTIFICATION No: EE/R&B/SNPR/ 01 / 2021-22  
E-mail - eepwdsnpr@gmail.com Phone -06654-221081  
No.1522 Dt. 16.04.2021  
1. The Executive Engineer, Sonepur (R&B) Division, Sonepur on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites Percentage Rate bids in Single Cover System in Online Mode for construction of Road / Building and Electrical works as detailed in the DTCN from the eligible Class of Contractors.  
2. No. of work : 02 (Two)  
3. Tender Cost : Rs. 6,000/- for Serial No.1 and Rs. 4,000/- for Serial No.2  
4. Class of Contractor : "D" Class & "C" Class for Serial No.1 & OEM/Authorized dealer having tie up with Electrical contractor for Serial No.2  
5. Date and time available in Website & receipt of Bids : From 10.00 A.M. of 22.04.2021 to 5.00 P.M. of 03.05.2021.  
6. Date of Opening of Tender : 04.05.2021 at 11.30 A.M.  
7. The Bidders have to participate in Online bidding only, further details can be seen from the Web Site.  
8. Any Corrigendum / Addendum will be displayed in the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in only.  
Sd./- D.Kaibarta  
Executive Engineer, Sonepur (R&B) Division  
OIPR-34081/11/0001/2122

FOCUS CULTURE

# BECOMING REASONABLE



**Becoming reasonable is a less sharply defined aim than becoming a scientist or a journalist. But, as Locke explained, our understanding is the "last resort a man has recourse to in the conduct of himself" in every important matter**

honor reason if we didn't think it dishonorable to abandon it. Cropsy, engaged in the same work of becoming reasonable that he invited us to join, didn't need or presume to wag his finger.

Anyone who has done time in a classroom might doubt the power of teachers to influence the norms of praise and blame that guide their students. It's all we can do to get students to stop deleting our emails. But we also know that they can be drawn into communities whose standards differ from those they had when they first arrived on campus.

Members of a scientific community, for example, are expected to channel their ambition into the pursuit of a common good, the truth about nature. So, they offer their findings to be confirmed or debunked. Scientific communities shape their initiatives to be proud of pursuing the truth via experiment, and therefore of their readiness to live with the intellectual ground shifting beneath their feet.

Similarly, professions like journalism, medicine, and law have intellectual and moral standards that define praiseworthy and shameful activity, and reshape the people working in them. The professions' success, however incomplete, at transmitting their standards to recruits should make educators optimistic about initiating students into a community that honors reason. We should not treat them as if their standards of praise and blame are fixed forever.

Becoming reasonable is a less sharply defined aim than becoming a scientist or a journalist. But, as Locke explained, our understanding is the "last resort a man has recourse to in the conduct of himself" in every important matter. And even if none of our students enters college in answer to the call to be reasonable, they can still be moved to heed it.

*The writer is a professor of politics at Ursinus College.*

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

**W**e expect spokespeople and other hired guns to do their best with losing arguments if no winning ones are available. But it is dismaying when we, too, behave like a cornered politician's press secretary, scoring points however we can and ignoring what we can't refute.

We find ourselves in that position not because we don't understand basic logic, but because we are straying from good sense — something we normally regard as demeaning. If a friend exclaims, "Be reasonable!" they don't mean, "Mind your syllogisms!" A question lurks behind their exclamation: "Aren't you ashamed?"

But to be reasonable is not merely to use "critical thinking" tools. Consider a man trained in what John Locke called "the art and formality of disputing." He is ashamed, above all, of being shown to be unable "to maintain whatever he has once affirmed."

The reasonable person, on the other hand, considers nothing to be more shameful than refusing to "yield to plain reason and the conviction of clear arguments." For her, reason is not a tool but an authority that is honorable to obey and disgraceful to betray. In short, reasonable people are ashamed of the right things.

Colleges and universities should shape reasonable people, but that does not appear to be an educational priority nowadays, perhaps because shame has become a dirty word. To shame someone is to judge them, and who are we to judge?

In fact, shame is rife on campuses in the United States and elsewhere. Mark Edmundson, a veteran English professor at the University of Virginia, describes a "culture of hip," in which "passion and strong admiration," particularly for what one encounters in school, must be suppressed if they arise and hidden if they can't be suppressed.

If other students roll their eyes at the nerd who responds enthusiastically to a professor's plea to dig into Dante, it isn't necessarily because they resent her intelligence. They may be just as clever as she is. The nerd's offense, of which she is expected to be ashamed, is her earnestness. She cares too much about the wrong things, which is uncool.

More present to our minds, because more sensational, is "call-out culture." When, in 2017, student protesters at the College of William & Mary shouted down Claire Gastañaga, then executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia, they chanted "Shame!" They called out Gastañaga for caring too little about the right things, for standing on First Amendment principle rather than with the targets of white supremacist speech.

The students who silenced Gastañaga subscribed to a standard of praise and blame according to which it is disgraceful to be on the "wrong side of history." That standard suits activist communities whose members are convinced they know where history is headed and how to hurry it along.

Neither of these shaming cultures suits a college or university



Jonathan Marks

**WE EXPECT SPOKESPEOPLE AND OTHER HIRED GUNS TO DO THEIR BEST WITH LOSING ARGUMENTS IF NO WINNING ONES ARE AVAILABLE. BUT IT IS DISMAYING WHEN WE, TOO, BEHAVE LIKE A CORNERED POLITICIAN'S PRESS SECRETARY**

## Khattar govt's curbs on senior officials

Officials in Haryana close to retirement have been directed not to issue any fresh order pertaining to promotions, transfers and tenders etc. They have been instructed to take prior approval from the state Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan while issuing such orders or face disciplinary action.

Sources say that the Manohar Lal Khattar government took this step after receiving complaints of the misuse of official position by senior bureaucrats prior to their retirement. Subsequently, the Chief Secretary issued the order.

The order states that such actions in the past have invited complaints of financial irregularities and loss to the state exchequer. It further adds that "the cases for which prior approval has to be sought include processing of tenders for allotment of work or release of payments or purchases, cases of appointment, fresh recruitments, promotions and transfers of official of all categories and disciplinary actions were charges stand proved".

The state government is hoping that the fear of "disciplinary action" close to their retirement might help bring these babus in line.

### MAHARASHTRA BABUS SEEK CENTRAL DEPUTATION

The fierce face-off between the ruling Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government and the opposition BJP has led to many "blue-eyed" officers seen as close to former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis seeking the "cooler climes" of a Central deputation. Sources say that several IAS and IPS officers who wielded clout in the tenure of Fadnis are on deputation to the Centre.

Sources say that GST Commissioner Sanjeev Kumar, a 1993-batch IAS officer, has taken over as chairman of the Airports Authority of India, while BEST general manager SK Bagde has been appointed an additional secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. While Bagde had completed his tenure, Sanjeev Kumar was GST Commissioner for only a year and four months. Similarly, former DGP SK Jaiswal has taken over as DG of CISE, while former state intelligence commissioner Rashmi Shukla has now gone to the CRPF. Another senior IPS officer, Manoj Kumar Sharma, who was in the Maharashtra State Security Corporation, has taken up a Central deputation.

While it would be erroneous to see political colour in what should be seen as routine assignments, few observers are willing to buy this line.

### TAILPIECE

A significant recent non-babu event was Dr Karan Singh's 90th birthday, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a unique edition of the Bhagavad Gita, in 11 volumes with 20 commentaries on each verse in facsimile.

The function held at the Prime Minister's residence was attended mainly by family members and a few bureaucrats involved in evolving the Kashmir policy. Dr Karan Singh opened the proceedings with a talk on the Bhagavad Gita and steered away from current political matters. The Prime Minister, too, spoke as expected, on the Bhagavad Gita, and closed his speech by paying high compliments to Dr Karan Singh, the elder statesman of the Kashmir region. What the babus were left wondering was how the tea leaves of this event needed to be read.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

### WISDOM CORNER

There is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self. **ALDOUS HUXLEY**

If you want to succeed you should strike out on new paths, rather than travel the worn paths of accepted success. **JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER**

Where there is a will, there is a way. If there is a chance in a million that you can do something, anything, to keep what you want from ending, do it. Pry the door open or, if need be, wedge your foot in that door and keep it open. **PAULINE KAEEL**

### WORDSWORTH

#### C3

In the First World War, as a result of conscription under the Military Service Act of January 1916, British recruits were graded from A1 to C3. The latter was the lowest grade, for men who were totally unsuitable for combat training, fit only for clerical and other sedentary jobs (it was discovered that a scandalously and horrifyingly large proportion of men — about 40% — fell into this category). The C3 classification became a figurative term for somebody of the lowest grade or of grossly inferior status or quality. The system was simplified not much more than a year later, but C3 caught on as a dismissive epithet and took a long time to vanish again. It turns up in the literal sense in D H Lawrence's Novel Kangaroo of 1923: "He was only two hours in the barracks. He was examined. He could tell they knew about him and disliked him. He was put in class C3 — unfit for military service, but conscripted for light non-military duties." And it was used figuratively by Sir Albert Howard in An Agricultural Testament (1943): "The population, fed on improperly grown food, has to be bolstered up by an expensive system of patent medicines, panel doctors, dispensaries, hospitals, and convalescent homes. A C3 population is being created." As you say, it was a favourite of PG Wodehouse in the Bertie Wooster stories. Today C3 is better known as the military abbreviation for "command, control and communication".

### LOL

#### DIVORCED BARBIE

Ralph is driving home one evening, when he suddenly realizes that it's his daughter's birthday and he hasn't bought her a present. He drives to the mall, runs to the toy store, and says to the shop assistant, "How much is that Barbie in the window?" In a condescending manner, she says, "Which Barbie?" She continues, "We have Barbie Goes to the Gym for \$19.95, Barbie Goes to the Ball for \$19.95, Barbie Goes



Shopping for \$19.95, Barbie Goes to the Beach for \$19.95, and Divorced Barbie for \$265.00." Ralph asks, "Why is the Divorced Barbie \$265.00 when the others are only \$19.95?" "That's obvious," the saleslady says. "Divorced Barbie comes with Ken's house, Ken's car, Ken's boat, Ken's furniture..."

### SPECTRUM RECYCLING WASTE

# Turning food waste into resources



Sanjib Kumar Karmee

**IT IS REPORTED THAT THE ESTIMATED VALUE OF FOOD WASTAGE IN INDIA IS AROUND ₹92,000 CRORE PER ANNUM**

**IT IS REPORTED THAT THE ESTIMATED VALUE OF FOOD WASTAGE IN INDIA IS AROUND ₹92,000 CRORE PER ANNUM**

India is important as an agricultural nation. Agriculture and allied activities are the main source of livelihood for over 60-70% population in rural India. Agriculture largely produces edible food products for consumption. Apart from food grains, agriculture also produces raw materials for industries. When we talk of food waste or food loss we actually denote food that is left unconsumed or discarded. The reasons of food waste or loss are many. Food loss occurs at different stages in a food-chain system during production, processing, distribution, retail as well as consumption.

According to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), one-third of the total global food production is wasted resulting in huge burden to the economy as well as environment. Globally, India ranks seventh in terms of overall food waste generation. It is reported that the estimated value of food wastage in India is around Rs92,000 crore per annum, which is enough to feed the entire population of Bihar for a year. In general, in low-income countries most of the food waste is generated during production; whereas, in developed countries food is largely wasted at the consumption stage. Most of these wastes are dumped into landfills causing environmental and health concerns since landfills causes malodour, water pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and infectious disease caused by breeding flies and mosquitoes.

In the above context, attempts have been made by researchers for recycling food waste into wealth. Composting food waste is relatively easy and requires less resources and time. Composting methods such as worm compost and compost bins are employed to produce high-value compost. In Odisha, compost and biofertilizer can be used extensively in Bargarh district to minimise the usage and negative impact of chemical fertilizers. Another way to recycle food waste is to produce animal feed. Indians have a long tradition of feeding animals with leftover food.

Food waste recycling through animal feed is cost effective and will lead to good profit for livestock owners. Large restaurants, bakeries, fruits and vegetable shop owners can donate waste residues to farmers for feeding the animals. Swine farmers can easily use these wastes since pigs would eat anything. A joint effort by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Cuttack

Municipal Corporation and animal farm associations will lead to better utilisation of food waste generated in metropolis like Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. After successful implementation of such a project, it can be replicated in other cities like Samabalpur, Berhampur and Rourkela.

Technically food waste can be converted into fuels and valuable chemicals. For instance, lipids from food waste and waste cooking oil are used to synthesize biodiesel. Furthermore, sugar-rich food wastes are fermented into bioethanol. Both biodiesel and bioethanol are liquid fuel. Vegetable wastes generated in mandis, food wastes from restaurants, bakeries and other organic wastes are potential feed stocks for biogas production. In house, restaurant chains can effectively use the generated food wastes for biogas production; in turn the obtained biogas can be consumed by the same restaurants for cooking purposes.

During COVID-19 pandemic, London designer Alice Potts demonstrated that food waste and flowers from London parks can be used for making biodegradable PPEs. She created several bio-plastic face shields from wastes. Various researchers investigated the prepa-

ration of polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHAs) from food waste. Polyhydroxyalkanoates are biodegradable and used for the preparation of bio-plastics. A high-value chemical called succinic acid is obtained from bakery (cake, pastries and bread), fruit and vegetable wastes through biological routes. Several other chemicals viz. lactic acid, 2,3-butanediol and n-butanol are also produced from food wastes. Lactic acid is a commercially important chemical with applications in the food, chemical, cosmetic and life science industries. Butanediol has many applications in industries for the production of printing inks, perfumes, fumigants and plasticizers. n-butanol is a popular solvent and also being explored as a fuel.

It is evident that food waste is a potential no-value resource to produce valuable products such as bio-fertilizer, animal feeds, fuels and chemicals. Industries across the world are investing on innovative ideas and startup pertaining to food waste utilization since it is important from the point of view of wealth creation, resource recovery, and circular economy.

*The writer is a scientist and an alumnus of IIT Madras.*

### Politicians must learn

Sir, India is said to be the largest democracy in the world and its Constitution is credible. Justice and rights are the same here for everyone. That being said, the fact is that the more powerful and prestigious people are, the better they are. Everything is different for the poor. But it surprising to learn that, and it would be an example for all democracies in the world, that the Norwegian Prime Minister has been fined 20,000 Norwegian crowns (\$2,352) for violating the COVID-19 rules. Norwegian police said Friday they have fined Prime Minister Erna Solberg for breaking COVID-19 social distancing rules when she organised a family gathering with 13 family members to celebrate her 60th birthday at a mountain resort in February. While the police would not have issued a fine in most such cases, the PM has been at the forefront of the government's work to impose restrictions. The whole world is watching the activities of Indian politicians in this regard. They are making their invaluable contribution to the spread of the coronavirus by ignoring all the laws and regulations for the sake of their politics. But the law does not apply to them. But if the general public violates the law then they are severely beaten. Indian politicians must learn from the Prime Minister of Norway and admit their mistakes. **Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR**

### Floyd gets justice

Sir, A former member of Minneapolis Police, Derek Chauvin was found guilty for murdering an African American George Floyd, who was brutally abused by police force in a full day light on May 25 last year during an arrest after a store clerk alleged, he had passed a counterfeit \$20 bill in Minneapolis. Chauvin pinned down Floyd with his knee on a pavement for continuous nine minutes, Floyd last words were, "I can't breathe. I can't breathe", but still Chauvin didn't release him and Floyd died. The horrific death of Floyd resulted in a nationwide violent protest. Now Chauvin have been charged guilty for all 3 counts, second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. President Joe said it was a murder in the full light of day and it ripped the blinders off for the whole world to see the systemic racism in the country. Minneapolis people's are so happy that they were dancing on roads because at the end of the day Floyd got justice. **Anshita Rochwani, UJJAIN**

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**ORISSAPOST**  
B-15, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



## PM's MEETING WITH CMs

## DELUGE OF DEATHS

# Kejriwal's comments draw Centre's ire; CMO 'regrets'

Delhi CM Kejriwal's comments regarding pandemic situation in the national capital and acute oxygen crisis in hospitals has triggered a row, with the Union government accusing him of "playing politics"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 23: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's televised comments during the interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday regarding pandemic situation in the national capital and acute oxygen crisis in hospitals has triggered a row, with the Union government officials accusing him of "playing politics".

The officials also accused him of descending to a "new low" with his decision to broadcast the "private conversation" of the meeting.

"His entire speech was not meant for any solution but for playing politics and evading responsibility. All chief ministers spoke about what they are doing to improve the situation but he had nothing to say on what he is doing," a source said, suggesting that his remarks, which were made public, have not gone down well with the Central government.

"He (Kejriwal) raised the point of airlifting oxygen, but did not know that it is already being done. He spoke about oxygen express by the railways but railway officials say that he has not communicated anything about it to the ministry," the Central government source said.

Responding to the sharp reaction of the Union government of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting with Chief Ministers on COVID-19 situation through video conferencing, in New Delhi, Friday

officials, the Chief Minister's office (CMO) issued a brief statement, saying "today, the CM address was shared live because there has never been any instruction, written or verbal, from Central government that the said interaction could not be shared live."

"There have been multiple occasions of similar interactions where matters of public importance which had no confidential information were shared live. However, if any inconvenience was caused we highly regret that."

During the meeting, Kejriwal said the Centre should take over all oxygen plants through the Army and requested Modi to direct Chief Ministers of all states to ensure smooth movement of oxygen

tankers coming to the national capital. "People are in major pain due to oxygen shortage. We fear a big tragedy may happen due to oxygen shortage and we will never be able to forgive ourselves. I request you with folded hands to direct all CMs to ensure smooth movement of oxygen tankers coming to Delhi," he said during the meeting.

"We need a national plan to deal with the crisis. The Central government should take over all oxygen plants through the Army and every tanker coming out of the oxygen plant should be accompanied by an Army escort vehicle," he said.

"The oxygen supply scheduled to come to Delhi from Odisha and West Bengal should either be airlifted or brought through the Oxygen ex-

press started by the Centre," he said.

The Chief Minister also objected to different rates being charged from state governments and the Centre for the COVID-19 vaccine, and said "one nation, one rate" policy should be followed.

Union government sources alleged that Kejriwal has chosen to spread lies on vaccine prices despite knowing that the Centre does not keep one vaccine dose with itself and shares with states only.

Modi held a meeting Friday with Chief Ministers of 10 states with the most number of COVID-19 cases. The meeting via video conferencing comes amid a huge surge in coronavirus cases, which have now clocked a daily total of over 3 lakh in the country.

# Mass cremations for COVID victims in Delhi

People in Delhi, where 306 people have died of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, are turning to makeshift facilities that are undertaking mass burials and cremations as crematoriums come under pressure



A mass cremation of COVID victims at a crematorium ground in New Delhi

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 23: Delhi resident Nitish Kumar was forced to keep his dead mother's body at home for nearly two days while he searched for space in the city's crematoriums - a sign of the deluge of death in the capital where coronavirus cases are surging.

On Thursday, Kumar cremated his mother, who died of COVID-19, in a makeshift, mass cremation facility in a parking lot adjoining a crematorium in Seemapuri in north-east Delhi.

"I ran pillar to post but every crematorium had some reason... one said it had run out of wood," said Kumar, wearing a mask and squinting his eyes that were stinging from the smoke

blowing from the burning pyres.

India recorded the world's highest daily tally of 3,14,835 coronavirus infections Thursday, with the second wave of the pandemic crushing the country's health infrastructure. In Delhi alone, where hospitals are running out of medical oxygen supplies, the daily rise was over 26,000.

People losing loved ones in Delhi, where 306 people have died of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, are turning to makeshift facilities that are undertaking mass burials and cremations as crematoriums come under pressure.

Jitender Singh Shunty who runs a non-profit medical service, the

Shaheed Bhagat Singh Sewa Dal, said as of Thursday afternoon 60 bodies had been cremated at the makeshift facility in the parking lot and 15 others were still waiting.

"No one in Delhi would have ever witnessed such a scene. Children who were 5 years old, 15 years old, 25 years old are being cremated. Newlyweds are being cremated. It's difficult to watch," said a teary-eyed Shunty.

Shunty, dressed in protective gear and a bright yellow turban, said last year during the peak of the first wave the maximum number of bodies he helped cremate in a single day was 18, while the average was eight to 10 a day.

# Left, Congress attack Modi govt's 'flawed' vaccine policy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 23: Both the traditional rivals in Kerala's political rubric, the ruling Left and the Congress-led Opposition, Friday launched attacks on the vaccine distribution policy of the Narendra Modi government, terming it "flawed".

Economist-turned-politician Minister Thomas Issac, who completed 10 years as state Finance Minister over two terms, coined a new statement "between COVID and Modi" to replace the popular usage of "between the devil and the deep sea".

**Economist-turned-politician, Finance Minister Thomas Issac coined a new statement "between COVID and Modi" to replace the popular usage of "between the devil and the deep sea"**

ine the massive loss that will happen," said an angry Issac.

"It is strange that there is a differential price system that has been announced for vaccines. For the Centre, the vaccine is priced at ₹150, for states, it is ₹400 and ₹600 for private hospitals. The very same people who were speaking of 'One Nation' have dumped it when it

comes to precious human lives. They have been speaking of ₹20 lakh crore package and they might well use it for vaccines," he said.

Noting that Kerala will have to raise ₹1,100 crore for vaccines, Issac said that it will do it.

Leader of Opposition Ramesh Chennithala termed the vaccine policy of the Centre as a "mad one".

"The way things are going on... the country is facing its worst-ever crisis, it is pretty bad. Advance warning was given that there might be a shortage of oxygen, but nothing was done and seen what has happened. Likewise, when vaccines should be rightfully given free of cost, the Centre has thrown its citizens to the mercy of vaccine manufacturers, who are making merry when people are suffering. People should be given free vaccines," he said.

## LONG TREK TO HOME



Residents walk home along a highway during the extended curfew to curb the spread of the coronavirus, in the outskirts of New Delhi, Tuesday

# Kerala to be tough on violators of GO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, April 23 (PTI): Amid rising COVID-19 cases, the Left government in Kerala Friday said stern action would be taken against those who venture out unnecessarily Saturday and Sunday.

DIG K Sanjay Kumar Gurudin, who heads the COVID special surveillance team, told reporters that only emergency services would function April 24 and 25.

In a government order issued April 21, the government had said it would be a holiday for all government offices, banks and public sector undertakings April 24.



It had said only essential services and emergency activities would be allowed April 24 and 25. "Those engaged in essential services and emergency activities can travel after showing their ID cards. The mar-

riages, decided earlier, can take place by strictly following the COVID-19 health protocol," Gurudin said.

Gurudin, who is also the Thiruvananthapuram Range IG, said under his range alone, 447 officers and 1,100 police officials would be deployed every day to ensure that COVID protocol is strictly followed. The officer said there were 14,093 violations in the State on Thursday alone and awareness classes were held for over 75,000 people.

Explaining the restrictions Saturday and Sunday, the DIG said those who are out for emergency and essential work need to carry their ID cards. "Only those stores which sell provisions, vegetables, fruits

fish and meat will function. Dining at restaurants will not be permitted but parcel is allowed till 9 PM," he said.

Long distance trains services would not be affected.

Public and goods transport would be permitted, the police officer said.

In the famous Guruvayur temple in Thrissur district, the curbs on conducting marriages would be lifted from Saturday.

All the marriages registered from this day can take place strictly following the COVID health protocol. Only 12 members can take part in the ceremony. On Saturday, 40 marriages would take place and 140 Sunday, temple officials said.

# Harish Salve recuses as amicus curiae in SC's COVID hearing

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 23: Senior advocate Harish Salve has appealed to the Supreme Court to be recused as the amicus curiae to assist the court in the suo motu proceedings over the Centre's handling of the COVID-19 crisis in India.

Harish Salve has said this case is perhaps one of the most sensitive cases that the court will handle in its existence.

"The country is on tenterhooks. This is one of the most sensitive cases the court will ever handle. I don't want it to be taken up under a shadow that I was appointed as the amicus because I know the CJI," said Harish Salve over allegations made by critics and the Opposition since the Supreme Court hearing Thursday.

At the outset of the hearing Friday, Harish Salve said, "I was there for the hearing yesterday because the Vedanta case was being mentioned. Vedanta is my client." CJI Bobde said appointing Salve was a collective decision by the bench.



**The country is on tenterhooks. I don't want it to be taken up under a shadow that I was appointed as the amicus because I know the CJI**

HARISH SALVE | SENIOR ADVOCATE

# Who will it be in Kerala - Chandy or Chennithala?

IF ONE LOOKS INTO THE LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS, IT'S GOOD NEWS FOR CHENNITHALA, AS ALL THE PARTY'S OPPOSITION LEADERS IN THE ASSEMBLY WENT ON TO BECOME THE NEXT CHIEF MINISTER

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 23: With May 2 fast approaching, when votes will be counted in Kerala, it's all happening as the rival factions have in all earnestness started to do what they know best to rally behind two times former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and present Leader of Opposition and former Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala.

"Without doubt, 77-year-old Chandy, the last of the pan Kerala popular political personality, on account of the way he carries himself and his vast experience, but none can just discount Chennithala, who for the past five years has been doing yeoman service taking on

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan with ease," opined a media critic.

Moreover, if one looks into the legislative history of the Congress party in the past several decades, it's good news for Chennithala, as all the party's opposition leaders in the Assembly went on to become the next Chief Minister, which include, K Karunakaran, AK Antony and Oommen Chandy.

Looking back in 2011, when Chandy led the Congress-led UDF in the Assembly polls to victory, minutes before the Congress parliamentary party meeting was going to be held to elect the new leader, the call came from AICC headquarters asking Chennithala to inform the media that he is not going to contest for the post and as a result, Chandy



without any effort got the post of the Chief Minister.

Chandy's close aides, however, are leaving nothing to chance and has

persuaded him at no cost should he willingly move out for Chennithala.

"In the Congress party, the general norm is those who go on to become the parliamentary party leader, when the party's legislators elect, normally gets the green signal from the party high command. In the 92 seats that the Congress party contested in the 140-member Assembly, Chandy's well wishers and aides outnumber Chennithala.

"Should Chandy's faction get the maximum number of seats, Chandy will definitely go on to become the next Chief Minister, leaving Chennithala to get the post of deputy CM wielding the Home Portfolio," said a top Congress leader. Meanwhile, Chennithala's camp

is burning the midnight oil and is leaving nothing to chance as they know in the scheme of things of the AICC, so far there has been no precedent of sharing the CM's post between two leaders.

Similarly, the AICC has a practice of sending observers to gauge the mood of the winning legislators and also the allies of the Congress-led UDF.

And if there is going to be such an assessment, where the opinion of legislators and allies are taken individually behind closed doors, Chandy is definitely going to be a clear winner and hence, Chennithala and his aides are hoping against hope that the only way is to get maximum winning legislators to raise hands for him.

However, Salve sought permission from the court to be recused so that there is "no sideshow of unnecessary allegations". CJI Bobde said, "We understand you must be pained by it."

"We were not happy to read what some senior advocates have said on the issue. We will have to start looking for amicus curiae who we don't know," said the CJI.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said, "It was very unfortunate what I read on digital media yesterday. Someone in the judiciary will have to take cognisance. I request Salve to reconsider his decision."

Harish Salve said, "We have reached a situation where we have to consider what the narrative is. We have lost elegance, narrative."



The state government stands for women's empowerment and thus it rolled out schemes like Sunna Vaddi, Aasara, Cheyutha and Jeva Kranthi to strengthen women in all aspects

SHOCKING REPORT

Amid the rising number of Covid-19 cases in Assam, samples of the double mutant variant of novel coronavirus have been found at the Dibrugarh Airport, the first such detection in the northeastern region, officials said Friday



of the day quote

Saturday and Sunday, we will have to all remain indoors and it could well be called a sort of lockdown

Illegal immigration, syndicates and extortion are big hurdles in the path of West Bengal's development

I would also like to strongly advise that keeping in view the supply constraints, oxygen allocation to various districts and cities need to be rationalised, keeping in view the number of active cases

India to airlift O2 making plants from Germany

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 23: The defence ministry has decided to airlift 23 mobile oxygen generation plants from Germany as several states reeled from an acute shortage of medical oxygen due to a massive surge in coronavirus cases, officials said Friday.

They said each plant will have a capacity to produce 40 litres of oxygen per minute and 2,400 litres per hour. In a separate move, the defence ministry has decided to give extension to 238 short service commissioned doctors in the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) till December 31 to tide over the current situation, the officials said.

On procurement of oxygen generation plants from Germany, Principal Spokesperson in the defence ministry A Bharat Bhushan Babu said they will be deployed in the AFMS hospitals treating COVID-19 patients. The decision by the ministry came four days after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced granting emergency financial pow-



IAF ferries Covid essentials across country

The Indian Air Force Friday carried out sorties to and from various parts of the country, airlifting oxygen containers, cylinders, essential medicines, equipment required for setting up and maintaining covid-19 hospitals and facilities in the fight against a sharp surge in infections. Officials said the IAF also airlifted doctors and nursing staff from Kochi, Mumbai, Visakhapatnam and Bengaluru for various hospitals in Delhi, besides transporting essential medicines as well as equipment required by the designated COVID hospitals in various parts of the country. The officials said the IAF deployed its transport aircraft C-17, C-130J, IL-76, An-32 and Avro while keeping its Chinook and Mi-17 helicopters on standby.

ers to the three services and other defence agencies to make necessary procurement to enhance medical infrastructure in view

of the pandemic.

"Twenty-three mobile oxygen generation plants are being airlifted from Germany. These will be deployed in AFMS hospitals catering to the COVID patients," Babu said. He said the oxygen generating plants are expected to be airlifted within a week.

Another official said the Indian Air Force has been told to remain ready to keep its transport aircraft ready to bring the plants from Germany once required paper works are completed. The official said more oxygen generation plants may be procured from abroad.

"The advantage of these plants is that they are easily portable," said Babu. India is struggling with a second wave of coronavirus infection and hospitals in several states are reeling under shortage of medical oxygen and beds in view of rising COVID-19 cases.

The country recorded a one-day tally of 3.32 lakh new coronavirus cases and 2,263 new fatalities, according to official data released on Friday.

Bihar's 'oxygen man' saves lives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, April 23: People hardly know him by his real name in Bihar, but one mention of the 'oxygen man' and he is instantly recognised as the life-saver for critically ill COVID-19 patients in times of severe shortage of oxygen supply

The man on a mission, Patna-resident Gaurav Rai, has helped save the lives of over 1,100 patients in home isolation in the state capital and other parts of Bihar so far by providing oxygen cylinders free of cost. "In the current spell of the second wave, 365 oxygen cylinders have been provided to those in extreme need of these in Patna itself," he told PTI in an interview.

At a time when hospitals are turning away COVID-19 patients



due to shortage of beds and oxygen cylinders, Rai has come across as an 'angel' for the distressed, said several patients who have got a new lease of life owing to his efforts. Rai, 52, who works in a private company engaged in the manufacture of high-security number plates for cars in Patna, and his wife Aruna Bhardwaj, operate an 'oxygen bank' with more than 250 cylinders of 10 kg each. With tears in his eyes, Rai said the idea came to him after he fell prey to the deadly virus in July last year.

SHORT TAKES

Fire, O2 audits in Maha hosps

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government directed the district administrations to conduct oxygen and fire audits at all hospitals in the state. These directives from Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte come in the backdrop of the oxygen leak incident at a state-run hospital in Nashik, in which 22 COVID-19 patients lost their lives and the fire at a hospital in Virar, where 13 patients were killed. Speaking at a virtual meet, the chief secretary said oxygen tankers have been given the status of ambulances and transportation of the life-saving gas has to be under police security.

Night curfew to be clamped in AP

Amaravati: Night curfew will be clamped across Andhra Pradesh from Saturday in a bid to curb the virulent spread of coronavirus as the state crossed the one million mark in total cases. "The night curfew will be in force daily from 10 pm to 5 am. Only essential and emergency services, like medical and health, milk supply, will be allowed," Deputy Chief Minister (Health) A K K Srinivas (Nani) told reporters after a high-level COVID review meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Shah reviews Guj nCoV situation

Ahmedabad: A 950-bed facility for coronavirus patients at the GMDC ground here will be functional from Saturday, while another temporary hospital with 1,200 beds will come up in Gandhinagar soon, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced here Friday. Shah held a high-level review meeting with Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, deputy CM Nitin Patel and top government officials on the coronavirus situation in Gujarat.

Engineer held

Chennai: A 27-year-old aeronautical engineer working in a city based information technology (IT) company was arrested for smuggling narcotics drug, said Commissioner of Customs, Chennai International Airport Friday. In a statement issued, the Commissioner said the department got information about some narcotics drugs that are likely to be smuggled through postal parcels from Africa. Five parcels, one declared as containing flower vases and the other four declared to contain rosemary and dried spices from Nairobi, that arrived at the Foreign Post Office, Chennai were held back.

Centre depriving Bengal of oxygen, alleges Mamata

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, April 23: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Friday accused the Central government of diverting the oxygen supply meant for Bengal to the other states, which will create shortage of oxygen in the state, jeopardising the treatment of Covid patients.

"In 2020, the WHO had told the Central government to increase the storage of oxygen but it had ignored the suggestion. Now when the entire country is reeling under the crisis of oxygen shortage, it has decided to divert the oxygen supply scheduled for the state to Uttar Pradesh.

"SAIL, which used to supply oxygen to us, has been asked to send the oxygen to Uttar Pradesh. This will increase the crisis of oxygen in our state," Banerjee said at a press conference on Friday.

"Presently, there is a crisis of oxygen and medicines. We have stopped supplying oxygen for industrial purposes and decided to use it for medical purposes only. We have arranged for a stock of 5,000 cylinders and there is an additional stock of 15,000 cylinders. This will create a storage of 20,000 cylinders which will meet our requirements for the next few days," the Chief Minister added.

Later, the state government said in a note, "The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, government of India, had April 21 allotted 200 MT of oxygen from different plants located in West Bengal to outside the state. As per the current patient load and the rising trend of the infection, it is expected that the consumption level in West Bengal will radically rise to roughly 450 MT per day in the next couple of weeks.



"Hence, the present allocation of liquid oxygen to outside West Bengal will jeopardise the medical treatment of Covid patients in the state. The government of West Bengal has accordingly requested the government of India on April 22 to consider the need of the state and not divert the medical oxygen available in West Bengal to elsewhere."

Accusing the Centre of being negligent and responsible for the rise in Covid cases in the country, the Chief Minister said, "This is a failure of the Central government. It has not only ignored the WHO warning, but has also been lackadaisical in taking steps against the rise of the disease in the country.

"Instead, it has put in all their efforts to conquer Bengal. Small and big BJP leaders have been in this state for months and we don't know whether they have Covid. They are risking the lives of the people of this state."

Banerjee also claimed that she was not invited to the meeting held by the Prime Minister on Friday with the CMs of the high burden states to discuss the Covid situation.

5 Covid patients die as hosp runs out of O2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jabalpur (MP), April 23: Five coronavirus patients admitted to the ICU of a private hospital here died allegedly after its oxygen supply ran out, prompting the authorities to order a probe.

The incident which took place on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday at Galaxy Hospital came amid a grave medical oxygen shortage crisis in many parts of the country. "As per the family members, the patients died after the stock of oxygen got over," said City Superintendent of Police (CSP) Dipak Mishra.

The hospital management, however, was not available for comment despite several calls. A police team which was on patrolling duty in the area reached the spot after receiving information about commotion and loud protests by patients' relatives outside the hospital.

Zydus' 'Virafin' gets emergency approval

AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, April 23: Zydus Cadila Friday announced it has received restricted Emergency Use Approval from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for the use of antiviral 'Virafin' in treating moderate Covid-19 infection in adults.

The single dose subcutaneous regimen of the anti-viral drug reduced the need for supplemental oxygen, indicating that it was able to control respiratory distress and failure -- one of the major challenges in treating Covid-19, according to results of a multicentric trial conducted in 20-25 centres across India.

About 91.15 per cent of patients treated with the drug were RT-PCR negative by day seven, the company said in a statement. The drug has also shown efficacy against other viral infections, it added. It will



Workers scatter wheat for drying at a grain market in Amritsar

PTI PHOTO



be available on the prescription of a medical specialist for use in hospital/institutional setup. "The fact that we are able to offer a therapy which significantly reduces viral load when given early on can help in better disease management. It comes at a much-needed time for patients and we will continue to provide them access to critical therapies in this battle against Covid-19," Dr Sharvil Patel, Managing Director, Cadila Healthcare Ltd, said in a statement.

In its Phase 3 clinical trials, the therapy showed better clinical improvement in the patients suffering from Covid-19. Earlier the Phase 2 clinical trials study established the early safety, efficacy and tolerability of Virafin and indicated that Pegylated Interferon alpha-2b had significant statistical clinical impact on the patient suffering from moderate Covid 19 disease by reducing their viral load helping in better disease management such as reduced duration of oxygen support.

Remdesivir production will be up, says MHA

New Delhi: The Union home ministry said several steps have been taken to augment the production and supply of Remdesivir injections from 38.80 lakh units per month to 74 lakh units per month by early next month, and asked the states to ensure its seamless supply and transport. Remdesivir injection is used for treating COVID-19 patients and is currently in scarcity in the country. Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, in a letter to chief secretaries of all states and Union territories (UTs), also conveyed that there will be interim allocation and supply of the life-saving injection to the states/UTs from April 21 to April 30.

Despite Covid, Kaziranga attracts 2L tourists in 6 months

THE PARK-CUM-TIGER RESERVE WAS CLOSED FOR THREE MONTHS LAST YEAR DUE TO THE PANDEMIC -- FROM MARCH TO MAY -- BEFORE THE ANNUAL FLOODS INUNDATED AROUND 95 PER CENT OF THE 1,302 SQ KM AREA OF KNP & TR FOR FOUR MONTHS (JUNE TO SEPTEMBER)



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, April 23: The Covid-19 pandemic, the resultant economic fallout and the ensuing restrictions could not foil the spirit of around two lakh tourists, including 570 foreigners, from visiting the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNP & TR), considered as one of the best conserved wildlife reserves in India.

The Director of the UNESCO world heritage site, Karmashree P. Sivakumar, said that since the park-cum-tiger reserve was re-opened on October 21 last year, as many as 1,98,595 tourists, including 570 foreign nationals, have visited KNP & TR in the six months till Wednesday (April 21).

"Around 1.74 lakh tourists, including 11,595 foreigners, had visited the park during the corresponding period of 2019-20. Thousands of more tourists are expected to visit Kaziranga before it is closed ahead of the monsoon,"

Sivakumar told IANS.

The authorities of KNP & TR, extending across Assam's five districts -- Golaghat, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Biswanath and Karbi Anglong -- along the Arunachal Pradesh border, earn Rs 5 crore on an average each season.

Earlier this month, the officials had successfully translocated three rhino calves, two females and one male, which were rescued two years ago during the floods, to the Manas Tiger Reserve (MTR) in western Assam.

Like previous years, the floods in Assam badly hit the KNP & TR between June and September last year, with 18 rhinos and 135 other wild animals dying due to the deluge. Sivakumar said that 172 wild animals were rescued from the flood waters last year. In 2019, 263 animals, including many endangered rhinos, were killed in the floods while 169 animals were rescued. "Maximum efforts are being made, including construction of highland, to take care of the animals in

the national park during the floods and other calamities," Sivakumar said. Set up in 1908, the KNP & TR is one of India's seven UNESCO world heritage sites in the natural and environment category since 1985. It is home to more than 2,400 Indian rhinoceros.

Besides rhinos, the KNP & TR has 121 tigers, 1,089 elephants and large numbers of Asiatic buffalo, swamp deer, wild boar, hog deer, porcupine and other endangered animals and reptiles. Renowned environmentalist and wildlife expert Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar said that KNP & TR is a natural wonder and a great treasure of the planet.

"People from all over the world give utmost importance to this universal property of mother earth. Kaziranga not only protects rich biodiversity and diverse wildlife, but it also carries the identity of the Assamese people and their culture. It must be well protected for future generations and preservation of nature and wildlife," Lahkar told IANS.



# international



Earth Day is about the health of the planet and everyone and everything on it. The US has more than enough vaccines for every American, but we are denying countries like India desperately needed support

## FLORIDA ZOO WELCOMES BABY KLIPSPRINGER ANTELOPE

A baby klipspringer antelope is bonding with its mother before making a public debut at a Florida zoo. The calf was born April 15 to mother Deborah and father Ajabu at the Brevard Zoo in Melbourne. The calf weighed 27.5 ounces (.78 kilograms) at birth, zoo officials said in a news release Friday



## of the day quote

You, President Biden, can finance the Planting Life program in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The proposal is that we extend this programme to southeastern Mexico and Central America, to plant 3 billion more trees and create 1.2 million jobs



Min Aung Hlaing, who faces international sanctions for his role in military atrocities and the brutal crackdown on pro-democracy protesters, should not be welcomed at an intergovernmental gathering to address a crisis he created



The increase on the pre-pandemic forecast is unprecedented and highlights the extraordinary impact of the pandemic on government revenues and spending



# US Senate passes bill targeting anti-Asian hate crimes

THE MEASURE WOULD EXPEDITE THE REVIEW OF HATE CRIMES AND PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THOUSANDS OF REPORTED VIOLENT INCIDENTS IN THE PAST YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 23: The Senate Thursday passed a bill that would help combat the rise of hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, a bipartisan denunciation of such violence during the coronavirus pandemic and a modest step toward legislating in a chamber where most of President Joe Biden's agenda has stalled.

Police have seen a noted uptick in such crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. That includes the February death of an 84-year-old man who was pushed to the ground near his home in San Francisco; a young family that was attacked in a Texas grocery store last year; and deadly shootings last month in Atlanta, where six of the victims were of Asian descent.

The names of the six women

killed in Georgia are listed in the bill, which passed the Senate on a 94-1 vote. The House is expected to consider a similar bill in the coming weeks.

"These unprovoked, random attacks and incidents are happening in supermarkets, on our streets, in takeout restaurants -- basically, wherever we are," said Democratic Sen. Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, the legislation's lead sponsor.

She said the attacks are "a predictable and foreseeable consequence" of racist and inflammatory language that has been used against Asians during the pandemic, including slurs used by former President Donald Trump.

Republicans said last week that they agreed with the premise of the legislation and signaled they were willing to back it with minor changes, an unusual sign of comity



amid frequent standstills in the polarized Senate. Hirono worked closely with Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, to incorporate some additional Republican and bipartisan provisions, including better reporting of hate crimes nationally and grant money for states to set up hate crime hotlines.

The changes would replace language in the original bill that called for "guidance describing best practices to mitigate racially discriminatory language in describing the COVID-19 pandemic." The legislation would require the government to issue guidance aimed at "raising awareness of hate crimes

during the pandemic" to address some GOP concerns about policing speech. It's unclear whether the bipartisan bill is a sign of things to come in the Senate, where Republicans and Democrats have fundamental differences and often struggle to work together. Under an agreement struck by Senate leaders at the start of the year, Republicans and Democrats pledged to try to at least try to debate bills and see if they could reach agreement through the legislative process. The hate crimes legislation is the first byproduct of that agreement.

Republicans agreed to back the bill after the Senate also voted on and rejected a series of GOP amendments, including efforts to prevent discrimination against Asian Americans in college admissions and reporting about restrictions on religious exercise during the pandemic.

## Canada ban flights from India, Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Toronto, April 23: Canada has said it would ban all flights from India and Pakistan for 30 days due to the growing wave of COVID-19 cases in that region.

Transport Minister Omar Alghabra said the ban would start late Thursday, speaking hours after India reported a global record of more than 314,000 new infections in the previous 24 hours.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, meanwhile, apologised Thursday for a failed attempt to close playgrounds and allow police to stop and question people who were not in their homes -- measures that created a backlash from police forces, health officials and the public.

The leader of Canada's most populous province, in his first public appearance since announcing the restrictions, said his government had moved too fast with the measures.

"They left a lot of people angry and upset. I know we got it wrong. I know we made a mistake and for that I'm sorry and sincerely apologize," said Ford, who appeared to choke back tears at one point. But Ford said he won't resign despite widespread calls for him to do so.

He also suggested his government will offer province-paid paid sick leave for COVID-19 patients, but announced no details. The lack of such a program has led to widespread complaints.

# Frantic search for Indonesian sub's crew as oxygen dwindles

The KRI Nanggala 402 went missing after its last reported dive Wednesday off the resort island, and concern is mounting the submarine may have sunk too deep to reach or recover

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jakarta (Indonesia), April 23: Indonesian navy ships were scouring the waters off Bali Friday as they raced against time to find a submarine that disappeared two days ago and has less than a day's supply of oxygen left for its 53 crew.

The navy chief said the submarine was expected to run out of oxygen by around 3 A.M. Saturday.

"We will maximise the effort today, until the time limit tomorrow 3 a.m.," military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Achmad Riad told reporters.

There have been no signs of life from the submarine, but the spokesperson refused to speculate on its fate. A total of 24 navy and other ships and a patrol plane were being mobilized for Friday's search with a focus on the



area where an oil slick was found after the submarine disappeared during an exercise. Rescuers made similar massive searches in the past two days.

An Australian warship equipped with a sonar device and a helicopter was set to arrive later Friday. A second Australian warship as well as Singaporean and Malaysian rescue ships was also expected in the coming days.

"These two Australian ships will help expand the search area and extend the duration of search effort," Australian Navy Rear Adm. Mark Hammond said.

On Friday, Indonesian President Joko Widodo was heading to Banyuwangi port, where the rescue ships left earlier. He asked Indonesians to pray for the crew's safe return, while

ordering all-out efforts to locate the stricken submarine. "Our main priority is the safety of 53 crew members," Widodo said in a televised address Thursday. "To the family of the crew members, I can understand your feelings and we are doing our best to save all crew members on board."

There's been no conclusive evidence the oil slick was from the sub. Navy Chief of Staff Adm. Yudo Margono said oil could have spilled from a crack in the submarine's fuel tank or the crew could have released fuel and fluids to reduce the vessel's weight so it could surface. Margono said an unidentified object with high magnetism was located at a depth of 50 to 100 meters (165 to 330 feet) and officials held out hope it's the submarine.

# China wants to help India in combating nCoV surge

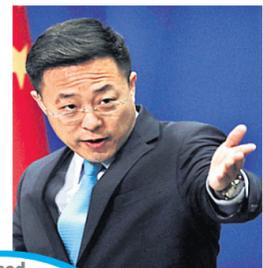
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, April 23: China Friday said it firmly supports the Indian government and the people in their fight against the coronavirus pandemic and is in communication with New Delhi on its offer to provide assistance to deal with the surge in COVID-19 cases in the country.

China Thursday offered to provide the necessary support and assistance to India to deal with the sharp increase in the COVID-19 cases in the country.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here that "for the recently deteriorating epidemic situation in India we send our sincere sympathies".

"The Chinese government and the people firmly support the Indian government and their people in their fight," he said responding to a question from the official Chinese media. "Based on the need of the Indian side, we stand ready to offer support and assistance. We are now holding communications with the Indian side,"



Based on the need of the Indian side, we stand ready to offer support and assistance. We are now holding communications with the Indian side

ZHAO LIJIAN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, CHINA

he said. "We believe the Indian people will surely conquer the epidemic at an early date," he said.

A team of WHO experts, which probed the origin of the coronavirus, concluded last month that "all hypotheses" included the allegation that COVID-19 could have emanated from a bio lab "remained open".

India is currently facing a massive surge in coronavirus infections. India Friday added a record over 3.32 lakh new coronavirus cases in a single day taking the country's tally to 1,62,63,685, while active cases crossed the 24-lakh mark.

## SHORT TAKES

### Navalny to end hunger strike

Moscow: Imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny says he is ending his hunger strike after getting medical attention and being warned by his doctors that continuing it would put his life at risk. In an Instagram post Friday afternoon, the 24th day of his hunger strike, Navalny said he would continue to demand a visit from his doctor to address a loss of sensation in his legs and arms -- the main demand the politician announced when he launched his hunger strike.

### 3 rockets strike near Baghdad

Baghdad: At least three rockets have hit near Baghdad international airport, the Iraqi military said. Eight missiles were fired and three landed near the airport complex late Thursday, the statement said. It did not detail whether the attack caused casualties. The rockets struck areas known to contain Iraqi security forces. One hit close to a central prison, the second near an academy of the elite Counter-Terrorism Service, and a third near the headquarters of the Rapid Response regiment.

### 4 killed in Dhaka

Dhaka: Four people, including a security guard, were killed and at least 17 including three firefighters were injured in a fire at a six-story building in Dhaka, which was housing a chemical warehouse located in densely populated Armanitola area. The incident took place at around 3 a.m. Friday when the devotees were having food for fasting on Muslim holy month Ramadan.

### Europe migrants feared dead

Cairo: More than 100 Europe-bound migrants are feared dead in a shipwreck off the Libyan Mediterranean coast, independent rescue groups said. SOS Mediterranee, which operates the rescue vessel Ocean Viking, said late Thursday that the wreck of a rubber boat, which was initially carrying around 130 people, was spotted in the Mediterranean Sea northeast of the Libyan capital, Tripoli.

# UK experts hail efficacy of new malaria vaccine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 23: An under-trial malaria vaccine was Friday hailed as delivering "unprecedented efficacy levels" to achieve the WHO specified goal of 75 per cent efficacy and is now set to enter the next stage of trials, in collaboration with the Serum Institute of India, to deliver its doses in the coming years.

Researchers from the University of Oxford and partners reported the findings from a Phase II (b) trial of the candidate malaria vaccine R21/Matrix-M to say that it had proved to be 77 per cent effective in over 12-

months of follow-up.

The researchers, in collaboration with the Serum Institute of India and Novavax Inc, have now started recruitment for a Phase III licensure trial to assess large-scale safety and efficacy in 4,800 children, aged 5-36 months, across four African countries.

"These are very exciting results showing unprecedented efficacy levels from a vaccine that has been well tolerated in our trial programme," said Halidou Tinto, Professor in Parasitology, Regional Director of IRSS in Nanoro, and the trial Principal Investigator.



Italy's Martina Maggio in action during the Women's Beam at the European Artistic Gymnastics Championships in St. Jakobshalle, Basel, Switzerland

# SpaceX launches 3rd crew with recycled rocket and capsule

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cape Canaveral (US), April 23: SpaceX launched four astronauts toward orbit Friday using a recycled rocket and capsule, the third crew flight in less than a year for Elon Musk's rapidly expanding company.

The astronauts from the US, Japan and France should reach the International Space Station early Saturday morning, following a 23-hour ride in the same Dragon capsule used by SpaceX's debut crew last May. They'll spend six months at the orbiting lab.

It was the first time SpaceX reused a capsule and rocket to launch astronauts for NASA, after years of proving the capability on station

supply runs. The rocket was used last November on the company's second astronaut flight.

Embracing the trend, spacecraft commander Shane Kimbrough and his crew weeks ago wrote their initials in the rocket's soot, hoping to start a tradition.

For NASA astronaut Megan McArthur, it was a bit of déjà vu. She launched in the same seat in the same capsule as her husband, Bob Behnken, did during SpaceX's first crew flight. This time it was Behnken and their 7-year-old son waving goodbye. McArthur blew kisses and offered virtual hugs.

Also flying SpaceX on Friday: Japan's Akihiko Hoshide and France's Thomas Pesquet, the first



European to launch in a commercial crew capsule. A masked Musk met briefly with the astronauts at NASA's Kennedy Space Center before they boarded white gull-winged Teslas from his

Rapid reusability is critical to Musk's effort to open space to everyone, land NASA's next moonwalkers and, his loftiest goal by far to build a city on Mars

electric car company.

The astronauts' spouses and children huddled around the cars for one last "love you" before the caravan pulled away and headed to the pad in the predawn darkness.

Despite the early hour, spectators lined surrounding roads to watch the Falcon take flight an

hour before sunrise. Liftoff was delayed a day to take advantage of better weather along the East Coast in case of a launch abort and emergency splashdown.

For Friday's automated flight, SpaceX replaced some valves and thermal shielding, and installed new parachutes on the capsule, named Endeavour after NASA's retired space shuttle. Otherwise, the spacecraft is the same vehicle that flew before.

"We're thrilled to have a crew on Endeavour once again," SpaceX Launch Control radioed minutes before liftoff.

The first-stage booster aimed for a touchdown on an ocean platform nine minutes after liftoff.

# business



**Companies like SBI Cards, which went public during the early stages of the pandemic, were heavily affected during their initial public offering and were listed at a discounted price**

**GAURAV GARG** | HEAD OF RESEARCH, CAPITALVI

## ACT AGAINST HOSPS DENYING CASHLESS CLAIMS: IRDAI

India's insurance sector regulator has directed general and health insurance companies to take action against hospitals if they don't provide cashless facility for Covid-19 claims



## of the day quote

**We have always kept employee wellbeing on the top of the pedestal, as they are the backbone of our institution. As the pandemic struck, we proactively issued alerts and opened a full-fledged control room to address the panic and concerns among our employees**



**SADAF SAYEED** | CEO, MUTHOOT MICROFIN

**As India is grappling with a sudden surge of Covid cases with different parts facing various challenges related to healthcare infrastructure, ramping up vaccination drive by involving Indian and global organisations will prove to be beneficial in the longer run and will reduce the burden on the healthcare ecosystem**



**HARSH MAHAJAN** | PRESIDENT, NATHEALTH

**Equity markets opened gap down but soon recovered during H2 amidst positive global cues and progress on vaccination front. Global cues were positive as strong economic data from US and China and impressive quarterly results boosted sentiments**



**SIDDHARTHA KHEMKA** | HEAD, RETAIL RESEARCH, MOTILAL OSWAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

## SHORT TAKES

### IFFCO to start 2nd oxygen plant

**New Delhi:** Fertiliser cooperative IFFCO Friday said its second oxygen plant is being set up in Uttar Pradesh, at Bareilly, will commence operation from May 30 and will provide the supply for free to hospitals in the state and adjoining areas. IFFCO is setting up total four oxygen plants in India at a cost of about ₹30 crore. Two plants will be established in Uttar Pradesh: (Bareilly and Prayagraj). One each plant is coming up at Paradeep (Odisha) and Kalol (Gujarat).

### RIL buys UK's Stoke Park for £57mn

**New Delhi:** Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has bought Britain's iconic country club and luxury golf resort, Stoke Park, which featured in James Bond movies, for ₹57 million (about ₹592 crore). The acquisition adds to Reliance's current stake in Oberoi hotels and hotel/managed residences in Mumbai that it's developing. Over the past four years, Reliance has announced \$3.3 billion in acquisitions, with 80% being in the technology, media, and telecom (TMT) sector.

### RBI restricts American Express

**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank (RBI) has restricted American Express Banking Corp and Diners Club International Ltd from on-boarding new domestic customers onto their card networks from May 1 for violating data storage norms. The order will not impact the existing customers of these two entities, the central bank said in a statement Friday.

### Zomato names new directors

**New Delhi:** Online food ordering platform Zomato Friday said it has appointed five independent directors on its eight-member board, including four women. "More than gender diversity though, what we have always been gunning for is cognitive diversity across levels in our organisation. Evidence based research shows that a key prerequisite for innovation comes from cognitively diverse people," founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal said.

## '2nd wave may pose downside risk to domestic auto demand'



AGENCIES

**Mumbai, April 23:** The second wave of Covid-19 could pose downside risks to the domestic auto industry demand in the near term, a report said Friday. The demand for commercial vehicles (CVs) may revive in the second quarter of 2021-22 as economic activities improve, and also due to the lower capacity in the system after consecutive double-digit decline in 2019-20 and 2020-21, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said in the report.

Demand for CVs, particularly medium and heavy CVs, is likely to also benefit from various government initiatives to help revive the economy. However, the revival of the passenger carrier segment is still some time away, it said.

The domestic automobile industry's sales volume declined 14% y-o-y in the last fiscal year with passenger and commercial vehicle segments sale fell 2% and 21% respectively, while the two-wheel-

## REVIVAL UNDER COVID BLANKET

The demand for CVs may revive in the second quarter of 2021-22 as economic activities improve

The domestic automobile industry's sales volume declined 14% y-o-y in the last fiscal year with passenger and commercial vehicle segments sale fell 2% and 21% respectively

ers volume fell 13% Y-o-Y. The decline in sales volume is in line with Ind-Ra's estimate of 14-18% decline for the year, it said.

For 2020-21, the total retail sales volume fell 34% Y-o-Y led by 17% drop in passenger vehicle (PV) sales, 51% fall in CV sales and 34% drop in two-wheeler (2W) retail registrations, respectively, Ind-Ra said. Amid lower discretionary pur-

chases by consumers, PVs remained the saving grace for the domestic retail market, it said.

However, retail PV sales volumes grew 28% in March 2021 over the year-ago period while other segments such as CVs, 3Ws, and 2Ws tell a rather grim story as retail sales declined 42%, 51% and 35% Y-o-Y, respectively last month, said the report.

The double-digit decline in retail sales across segments, except PVs, in March 2021 indicates that consumer sentiment has not fully recovered, it said, adding Ind-Ra believes that the second wave of Covid-19 could pose downside risks to the domestic auto industry demand in the near term.

According to the report, the domestic auto industry recorded positive growth for the eighth consecutive month in March 2021. PV and 2W sales volumes were up 115% and 73% YoY, respectively in March 2021, aided mainly by the low base of March 2020.

Export volumes also continued the growth trend in March 2021, up 57% from March 2020, boosted by 63% YoY growth in 2W exports. For 2020-21, the total export volumes declined 13% Yo-Y with PV, CV, and 2W exports volume falling 39%, 17%, and 7% Yo-Y, respectively, Ind-Ra said.

The PV segment has benefitted the most from the preference for personal mobility, resulting in the low decline among segments; also lower than Ind-Ra's expectation of a 5-8% decline for 2020-21.

## Vaccinating all above 18 years to cost just 0.36% of GDP: Ind-Ra

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 23:** Vaccinating all citizens above the age of 18 years against COVID-19 will cost ₹67,193 crore, of which states together will incur ₹46,323 crore, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has said.

As the second wave of Covid-19 sweeps the country with alarming speed and severity, the government has announced a liberalised and accelerated Phase 3 strategy of Covid-19 vaccination. Under this scheme, all persons above 18 years of age will be eligible to get Covid-19 vaccine doses from May 1.

"This means that the total size of the population that will now be eligible for vaccination would be 84.19 crore out of the total population of 133.26 crore," it said a note. India Ratings calculated that this "may cost ₹67,193 crore, of which the Union government will incur ₹20,870 crore and state governments together will incur ₹46,323 crore".

The government has made the pricing, procurement, eligibility and administration of coronavirus vaccines flexible. While the vaccination drive will continue as before, providing free vaccination to priority populations such as healthcare workers, frontline workers and population above 45 years of age, states and Union territories have been allowed to procure additional



**Indian vaccine manufacturers would now be supplying 50% of their production to the central government and the balance 50% would be available for procurement by the state governments and private hospitals**

Covid-19 vaccine doses directly from the manufacturers and open vaccination to people above the age of 18 years.

As a result, Indian vaccine manufacturers would now be supplying 50% of their production to the central government and the balance 50% would be available for procurement by the state governments and private hospitals.

Ind-Ra said the Union government has already spent ₹5,090 crore on procuring 21.4 crore vaccines from Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech.

## Global VC funding jumps to \$1.3bn in Jan-Mar: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 23:** Global venture capital funding in energy storage, smart grid and energy efficiency rose to \$1.3 billion during January-March 2021, registering a whopping 410% y-o-y growth, a report released Friday said. According to the report by Mercom Capital Group, the said segments saw a combined funding of \$252 million

in same period of 2020.

The venture capital (VC) funding (including private equity and corporate venture capital) raised by battery storage companies in Q1 or January-March quarter of 2021 came to USD 994 million in 13 deals compared to USD 164 million in six deals in Q1 2020, it said.

The report said 33 VC investors participated in battery storage funding during the said quarter. The



VC funding for smart grid companies increased 254% in the first quarter of 2021 to \$287 million in 10 deals, compared with \$81 million in seven deals a year ago, it said. 28 investors participated in smart grid VC funding rounds, it added.

During the quarter under review, the energy efficiency VC funding round saw single participation. The segment saw a funding of \$5 million, down from \$7 million raised in

three deals in the year-ago period. Mercom Capital Group is a global communications and research and consulting firm focused on cleantech.

It delivers market intelligence, funding and merger and acquisition (M&A) reports covering battery storage, smart grid and energy efficiency, and solar. It also advises companies on new market entry, custom market intelligence, and strategic decision-making.

## Xiaomi unveils its most expensive smartphone

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 23:** Smartphone maker Xiaomi Friday unveiled its most expensive handset, Mi 11 Ultra, at a price of ₹69,999 in India to compete in the premium segment.

Before this, the company had launched Mi 10 5G for ₹49,999 and ₹54,999 in January which clocked sales of ₹400 crore within three weeks of the launch.

"With the launch of Mi 11 Series, we have introduced technology that is not only future proof but also elevates the overall user experience, like no other. Pushing the boundaries of innovation, we have taken a giant leap forward in departments such as camera, sound, performance and display," Xiaomi India marketing lead for Mi Sumit Sonal said on the sidelines of launch.

Mi 11 Ultra is the first phone in the world to come with a pro-grade



triple camera setup on the rear side which includes 48 megapixel (mp) ultra wide camera, 50 mp Truepixel GN2 camera and 48 mp periscope telephoto camera.

The phone has a 5G chipset from Qualcomm, Snapdragon 888 which claims to deliver 35% faster processing speed than the previous version.

At the beginning of 2020, Xiaomi had announced that Mi and Redmi are going to operate as separate brands, with separate product, business and marketing teams.

## Bitcoin sinks below \$50,000

**NEW YORK:** Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies suffered hefty losses Friday on concern that US President Joe Biden's plan to raise capital gains taxes will curb investment in digital assets. The selloff came after reports that the Biden administration is planning a raft of proposed changes to the US tax code, including a plan to nearly double taxes on capital gains to 39.6% for people earning more than \$1 million (roughly ₹7.4 crores).

Bitcoin, the biggest and most popular cryptocurrency, slumped 5%, falling below the \$50,000 (roughly ₹3.6 crores) mark for the first time since early March, while smaller rivals Ether and XRP fell around 7%. The tax plans jolted markets, prompting investors to book profits in stocks and other risk assets, which have rallied massively on hopes of a solid economic recovery. Levies on investment gains were reported to be in line for record increases.

## BIZ BUZZ

### Shree Cement revs up oxygen supply

**BHUBANESWAR:** Shree Cement, one of India's top cement manufacturers, is running its oxygen plants at 100% capacity to cater to the shortage of oxygen in the country. Shree Cement is continuing a steady supply of oxygen cylinders to hospitals across India from its production units in Rajasthan, Karnataka, Bihar, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. The plants are also providing free oxygen refills at all its units.

The Shree Cement Management team has pledged to maintain a steady supply of oxygen from all its units. Last year, the company constructed a dedicated ward for Covid patients in the Government Hospital of Pali district in Rajasthan. This centre is now operating as a critical care unit. This has led to a shortage of oxygen in the hospitals.



### Samsung launches Neo QLED TV range

**BHUBANESWAR:** Samsung launched its ultra-premium Neo QLED TV range, a new benchmark in TV technology and design that will transform one's living spaces. Neo QLED range is priced from ₹99,990 onwards and available at all Samsung retail stores, leading consumer electronic stores, and across online platforms. Samsung is introducing a whole new display technology, Neo QLED, to its flagship 8K and 4K TV models. The line-up will be available in 5 sizes 85-inch, 75-inch, 65-inch, 55-inch and 50-inch. Neo QLED will take QLED TVs to the next level with Quantum Mini LED, precisely controlled by Quantum Matrix Technology and Neo Quantum Processor, a powerful picture processor optimized for Neo QLED. These Mini LEDs are 40 times smaller than regular LEDs, which allows the device to display fine light and contrast levels.

## Tea crop prospect looks bleak in Assam, Bengal: TAI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Guwahati, April 23:** The crop prospect in the current season for the tea industry in Assam and West Bengal looks bleak due to the drought-like situation prevailing in both the states, a leading industry body said.

Tea Association of India (TAI) Secretary General PK Bhattacharya said that after the aftermath of prolonged period of lockdown and losing around 140 million kgs of made tea last year, the tea industry in north was hopeful for a fresh start in 2021, but is again foreseeing grim days ahead, faced as it is with the onslaught of natural calamities resulting in lesser crops.

In a statement, TAI said that the

situation has worsened due to the recent massive hailstorm in the tea-growing regions of north Bengal.

According to the TAI, Assam has harvested only 0.23 million kg during the period of January-February this year as against 0.27 million kg last year and 0.44 million kg in 2019. It said that while the crop figure for the month of March is yet to be released by the Tea Board, the figure is expected to lower by around 10-15 per cent in March and April this year as compared to 2019.

"Similarly, north Bengal has harvested only 1.92 million kg this year as against 4.04 million kg in 2019 during January-February," Bhattacharya said.

He said that there is huge less rainfall recorded during January and



February both in Assam and in north Bengal and the situation has worsened during the months of

March and April as reported by the tea estates of both the states. The TAI statement said that due

to shortage of supply during the lockdown, tea prices witnessed a surge in prices for a brief period in 2020. However, the price rise could not be sustained for a long period and

auction prices subsequently declined sharply in the last few auction sales in 2020. However the increase in tea prices in 2020 has been largely offset by the loss in production.

The TAI said that Assam produces around 45 per cent of its total crop in the month of March and around 6 per cent in April which is around 32 million kg and 44 million kg, respectively. Similarly, West Bengal also produces around 5.5 to 6 per cent of its total crop in March and April amounting to around 23-25 million kg. "The figure is expected to be lower by around 10-15 per cent in the month of March and April as compared to the corresponding period of 2019," the tea industry body said.

## Facebook begins testing ads on Instagram Reels



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 23:** Facebook has said it will start testing ads on Instagram Reels, a short video offering, in India and other markets as it looks to help brands better engage with relevant audiences. In July last year, Instagram had unveiled its new format 'Reels' in India that allows users to create and share short videos.

Reels and other short video platforms have seen strong growth userbase and time spent after the Indian government banned a number of apps with Chinese linkages, including popular short video TikTok. The monetisation efforts by Facebook would help the company tap into that opportunity.

In a blogpost Thursday, Facebook said people are discovering and watching video in diverse formats across its family of apps, each offering distinct viewer and ad experiences.

"Today, we're announcing new topic targeting options within Facebook In-Stream video, testing of Instagram Reels Ads and other ad experiences in Facebook Stories to help increase opportunities for brands to better engage with relevant audiences," it added.

The social media giant said Instagram will begin testing Reels ads in India, Brazil, Germany and Australia with tests expanding to more countries in the coming months.

## AT 5.56%, FY'21 CREDIT GROWTH AT 59-YEAR LOW: SBI



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 23:** Despite the government's credit-driven stimulus to help tide over the impact of Covid-19, bank credit growth hit a new low for the second year in a row in FY21 at 5.56%; the lowest in 59 years, according to an analysis by SBI Research.

Credit offtake in FY21 at ₹109.51 lakh crore was lower than FY20's when it had clocked a growth of 6.14 per cent - which was the lowest in as many as 58 years. It was way back in FY1962 when credit growth was lower than this at 5.38%.

Only around ₹3 lakh crore of the ₹20 lakh crore stimulus amounting to 11% of GDP was actually used in fiscal stimulus to fight the impact of Covid-19 as the remaining amount was through credit support with no impact on the fiscal numbers of the government.

However, system-wide deposits nearly jumped to 11.4% in the year to ₹151.13 lakh crore, from 7.93% in FY'20, SBI Research said, quoting RBI data.

# KINGS OVERPOWER MUMBAI

## Partnership with Kohli made it easier: Padikkal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 23:** It is a challenge to hit boundaries in the middle overs, concedes Royal Challengers Bangalore's young star Devdutt Padikkal but he found the task to be relatively easy thanks to the partnership with skipper Virat Kohli in the IPL game against Rajasthan Royals.

Padikkal notched up his maiden hundred of the IPL Thursday, putting to rest all talks about his strike rate after a couple of unimpressive outings. The 20-year-old smashed an unbeaten 101 off 52 balls in an opening stand of 181 with Kohli in RCB's 10-wicket victory over Rajasthan Royals.

"It's about the situation of the game, I always have a particular role that I have to play and I have to do that as well as possible," Padikkal said at the post-match press conference.

"Sometimes it can get challenging in the middle overs and it's not easy to hit boundaries all the time. It was a good wicket, we had the partnership going and we were complementing each other well. So, in that situation it was easier to hit those boundaries because we are always rotating the strike," he added.

Asked what was on his mind when he was inching closer to his maiden century, Padikkal said he wasn't thinking about his milestone as the win was more important.

"To be honest, I was just looking to finish the game off, that's what mattered the most. We wanted to get the win as early as possible and when I was out there I was never really thinking about my hundred," said Padikkal.

Padikkal enjoyed a breakout IPL season last year followed by an impressive domestic campaign with Karnataka. In the ongoing edition



of the T20 league, he has scored 137 runs in three games at a strike rate of 147.31.

"In the last two seasons, I've only looked to keep things simple and I have not tried to do anything different and special. I have tried to stick to my process, be as consistent as possible and thankfully I have been able to do that," said Padikkal.

The youngster had missed out on the first match against defending champions Mumbai Indians after tested COVID positive. However, Padikkal was back in the RCB playing XI from their second game.

"Coming out of COVID definitely was a big challenge and I was really glad that I was able to contribute to the team's win from the second game. As long as I am contributing and the team is winning that what that matters to me," said Padikkal.



Ravi Bishnoi reacts after dismissing a Mumbai Indians batsman in Chennai

the last five overs for the loss of four wickets.

As has been the case so far at Chepauk, batsmen found it extremely difficult to get going early in the innings on a slow pitch. Quinton de Kock perished as early as the second over after he mistimed one off spinner Deepak Hooda (1/15) to be caught at mid-on.

Ishan Kishan (6) came ahead of Suryakumar at No.3 but the south-paw struggled once again before being caught behind in Bishnoi's first over, making it 26/2 in seven overs.

Rohit, at the other end, managed to keep the scoreboard ticking. Left-arm spinner Fabian Allen bowled a high full toss to Rohit in the 10th over and he duly dispatched it over

the cow corner for a six to release some pressure.

After Suryakumar joined Rohit in the middle, batting suddenly started looking much easier. A well-set Rohit started playing the ball late and was good with finding the gaps.

Suryakumar, at the other end, got into the groove with a four and six off left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh. Their partnership ended after Suryakumar failed to execute a reverse sweep to be caught at short third man off Bishnoi's bowling, leaving Mumbai at 105 for three with 23 balls left in the innings.

Some much-needed lusty blows were expected from the likes of Hardik Pandya and Kieron Pollard in the death overs but Punjab were able to keep them quiet.



Chris Gayle (L) and KL Rahul have something to talk about during their match-winning partnership against Mumbai Indians, Friday

**BRIEF SCORES**  
MUMBAI INDIANS 131/6 (Rohit Sharma 63, Suryakumar Yadav 33; Ravi Bishnoi 2/21, Mohammed

Shami 2/21) LOST TO PUNJAB KINGS 132/1 (KL Rahul 60 n o, Chris Gayle 43 n o; Rahul Chahar 1/19) by 9 wickets.

## ATLETICO RETURN TO TOP POSITION IN LA LIGA WITH WIN OVER HUESCA

# Messi masterclass lifts Barca

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Madrid, April 23:** Lionel Messi scored twice and set up another as Barcelona stayed in the title race with a 5-2 victory over Getafe, while Atletico Madrid defeated Huesca to regain sole possession of the Spanish league (La Liga) lead.

Angel Correa and Yannick Carrasco scored a goal in each half to secure a 2-0 home victory for Atletico, who moved three points in front of second-placed Real Madrid.

Messi helped Barcelona return to third place. The Catalan club is two points behind Real and five behind Atletico with a game in hand. Defending champion Real Madrid had provisionally taken the lead Wednesday by winning 3-0 at Cadiz.

Atletico was coming off a 5-0 rout of last-place Eibar after two consecutive setbacks had allowed Madrid and Barcelona to move closer to the top.

Someone was still without forwards Luis Suarez and Joao Felix because of injuries. Correa, one of the players replacing Suarez and Felix, opened the scoring after going past a defender inside the area and firing a low shot into the net in the 39th minute at the Wanda Metropolitano Stadium. Carrasco sealed the victory by converting a cross inside the area in the 80th.



**ARGENTINE NIGHT:** Lionel Messi wheels away in celebration after scoring his first goal in Barcelona's match against Getafe; (inset) Messi's Argentina teammate Angel Correa rejoices after opening Atletico Madrid's first goal against Huesca, Thursday

Correa had scored twice in the game against Eibar last weekend. It was the second consecutive loss

for Huesca, which stayed just inside the relegation zone. Messi reached 25 league goals

for the season by opening the scoring in the eighth minute and making it 3-1 in the 33rd at the Camp Nou.

The teams had traded own goals before that. Barcelona defender Clement Lenglet deflected the ball into his own net in the 12th and Sofian Chakla gifted one back when he tried to hit a back pass to his goalkeeper, who had rushed off his line, and it trickled into the goal in the 28th.

Enes Unal made it 3-2 with a penalty in the 69th, but Ronald Araujo, who was at fault for gifting Getafe the penalty, added Barcelona's fourth with a header in the 87th. Antoine Griezmann sealed the victory by converting a penalty in stoppage time.

Griezmann was fouled inside the box while going for an overhead kick. However, it was Messi whose selfless act helped the Frenchman find his name on the scoresheet. Generally Messi takes the spot-kick for Barca, but this time he, despite the fact he could have completed a hat-trick, selflessly let Griezmann take the penalty.

Getafe is four points above the relegation zone in 15th place, having scored just 24 league goals in total — one fewer than Messi. It was Barcelona's first match since winning the Copa del Rey title against Athletic Bilbao last weekend.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 23:** A desperate Kolkata Knight Riders will look to bring their campaign back on track after a hat-trick of defeats when they face a beleaguered Rajasthan Royals in their IPL clash here, Saturday.

Big on paper, KKR, led by England's World Cup winning skipper Eoin Morgan, have so far failed to come together as a unit and slipped to sixth in the table after starting the tournament on a high against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Facing bottom-placed Rajasthan Royals, who have been the most inconsistent team so far in the season, KKR will be desperate for a turnaround.

The rise of Pat Cummins as a batsman in their 18-run defeat to CSK will provide a big boost but it can't paper over the failure of their star batsmen, who have floundered even while chasing even modest target. The seamers too have leaked runs in the death overs.

Having struggled on Chepauk's slow surface, KKR had hoped to return to winning ways at the Wankhede but Paf du Plessis and Ruturaj Gaikwad took their attack to the cleaners and amassed a massive 220/3 in their previous match. If that was not all, their famed top-



five, including Shubman Gill and Morgan, surrendered inside the Powerplay Andre Russell and Dinesh Karthik then revived the chase before Cummins produced some sensational powerhitting, slamming a 34-ball 66 not out before running out of partners as KKR finished on 202 after being 31/5 in 5.2 overs.

The other positive has been Russell's return to form. It was his 54 off 22 balls that had set the tone and it would not be a bad play for Morgan to promote the Jamaican up in the order, while Cummins provides late blitz.

The skipper will himself look to get back among runs, while he will be equally concerned about Gill, who once again failed to con-

vert his starts and he returned with a golden duck against CSK.

Rajasthan Royals, on the other hand, are coming into the match after a humiliating 10-wicket loss against RCB. Sanju Samson's men have failed to inspire after posting their only win of the tournament, against Delhi Capitals in their second match.

Samson has fizzled out after a blazing 119 against Punjab Kings and the top and middle-order look brittle with Jos Buttler, Manan Vohra and David Miller enduring poor form.

Bowling is also a big concern for the inaugural edition champions as their big buy Chris Morris and Mustafizur Rahman have struggled to check runs.

## Atanu, Deepika enter semis at Archery WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guatemala City, April 23:** Country's top archery couple Atanu Das and Deepika Kumari battled heavy winds to storm into their respective semifinals of the recurve section as India continued to make giant strides in the World Cup Stage 1 here.

Returning to the World Cup after almost two years, Das and Deepika, who got married last year, also paired up to advance to the bronze playoff in the recurve mixed event Thursday night to keep India in the hunt for five medals.

Defying severe winds at the Sports Complex Los Arcos here, Deepika, who qualified as the number three seed, displayed some incredible shooting to down German archer Michelle Kroppen in straight sets.

The former World No.1 drilled volleys of 29, 30 and 30 points. While the rest of the field struggled with the breeze, Deepika shot fast and confidently on her way to an easy win.

The World No.9, who is the highest seed remaining in the draw, will next face Alejandra Valencia of Mexico in her quest for a gold medal Sunday.

Meanwhile, Das was a bit lucky in the quarter-final as his Candian rival Eric Peters had a miss in the last set as the Indian wrapped it up 6-4 to keep himself in line for his first ever individual podium. His previous best was a fourth-place finish in Antalya in 2016. He will face Alvarado Sunday for a place in final.

Seeded second in the mixed pair event, the duo of Das and Deepika defeated Spain in straight sets to make the semifinal but only to falter against Mexico in the shootout after the scores were tied 4-4. They will take on the top-seeded USA duo of Brady Ellison and Casey Kaufhold in Sunday's bronze playoff.

India also remain in the hunt for medals in the men's and women's team events after advancing to the quarterfinals in both.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### NATARAJAN, ARCHER RULED OUT OF IPL

**CHENNAI:** Sunrisers Hyderabad pacer T Natarajan has been ruled out of the ongoing IPL due to a knee injury for which he will have to undergo a surgery. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Friday announced that fast bowler Jofra Archer will not play in the cash-rich league, compounding his franchise Rajasthan Royals' misery. Last week, Archer was given the all-clear by his hand consultant to resume training as his right hand continued to heal following his operation, March 29. The 30-year-old Natarajan had played only two out of the four games for Sunrisers Hyderabad this season. He originally sustained this injury during the tour of Australia earlier this year. "Unfortunately, I have to undergo knee surgery and will miss this season," the yorker specialist said in a video posted by SRH on its official twitter handle. He, however, did not specify when the surgery will take place.

### GREEN BAGS CRICKET AUSTRALIA CONTRACT

**MELBOURNE:** All-rounder Cameron Green landed his maiden national contract but big names, including Matthew Wade and Travis Head, missed out as Cricket Australia Friday announced a 17-strong list of contracted players for the upcoming season. The 21-year-old Green, who scored 236 runs at 33.71 during the home four-Test series against India, was the only new name in the contract list which has been trimmed down to 17 players from 20 in previous years. However, opener Joe Burns, all-rounders Mitchell Marsh and Marcus Stoinis along with former Test vice-captain Head and wicketkeeper-batsman Wade failed to get a deal for the 2021-2022 season, which includes the T20 World Cup in India and a home Ashes series. **Contract list 2021-22:** Ashton Agar, Alex Carey, Pat Cummins, Aaron Finch, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Marcus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Glenn Maxwell, Tim Paine, James Pattinson, Jhye Richardson, Kane Richardson, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, David Warner & Adam Zampa.

### SACHIN BAGS GOLD AT YOUTH WORLDS

**NEW DELHI:** Indian boxer Sachin (56kg) Friday added an unprecedented eighth gold to the country's historic medal haul at the youth world championships in Kielce, Poland, a day after all seven women swept the top honours in an astonishing performance. Sachin rallied to defeat Kazakhstan's Yerbolat Sabyr 4-1 in a gritty performance by the end of which his confident opponent was left with a bloodied face and exhausted body. India thus ended their campaign with 11 medals — eight gold and three bronze medals to claim the top spot in overall standings. This was an improvement on two gold, two silver and six bronze medals claimed at the event's 2018 edition. Earlier Thursday, Gitika (48kg), Babyrojisana Chanu (51kg), Poonam (57kg), Vinka (60kg), Arundhati Choudhary (69kg), Thokhom Sanamachu Chanu (75kg) and Alfia Pathan (+81kg) ensured a perfect finish to the women's campaign.

## Rafa beats Nishikori at Barcelona Open meet

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Barcelona, April 23:** Rafa Nadal beat Kei Nishikori 6-0, 2-6, 6-2 to advance to the quarterfinals of the Barcelona Open. The 11-time tournament champion looked ready to roll to a quick victory after dominating the first set, but Nishikori responded with some fine net play to level it at 1-1.

Nadal broke Nishikori twice in the decisive set, converting his second match point by driving a forehand winner down the line.

The top-seeded Nadal is still searching for his best tennis after being upset in the Monte Carlo quarterfinals by Andrey Rublev. He needed three sets to beat 11th-ranked Ilya Ivashka of Belarus in his first match in Barcelona on Wednesday.

Nadal will face Britain's Cameron Norrie next. Norrie advanced after David Goffin retired in the second set of their match due to injury. Nishikori won the outdoor clay-



court tournament in 2014 and 2015 when Nadal was battling injuries.

Second-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas defeated Alex de Minaur 7-5, 6-3, while Rublev got past Albert Ramos-Vinolas 6-4, 6-7(4-7), 6-4. The tournament was not held last year because of the coronavirus pandemic.