



VIEWPOINT
Actor Shruti Haasan doesn't agree that a gothic look can be risky for actresses
LEISURE P2



GUERRILLAS CAPTURE BASE
Ethnic Karen guerrillas said they captured a Myanmar army base Tuesday near the border with Thailand
INTERNATIONAL P10



CSK FACE SRH TODAY
Chennai Super Kings look to continue their winning run when they face an inconsistent Sunrisers Hyderabad
SPORTS P12

VACCINES HAVE VANISHED

Govt not sure as to when the doses for Covid-19 vaccination would arrive in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: The state government Tuesday said the Co-WIN portal meant for registration of the new set of beneficiaries aged between 18 and 44 would start the registration from Wednesday. However, the state health department said while all eligible persons can register on Co-WIN, their real vaccination may be delayed as there are no vaccines available now. In Cuttack, vaccination stopped due to lack of vaccines at government and private hospitals, Tuesday. Inoculation drive was shut at all government and private medical facilities. While 100 doses were administered at CDA CHC, 200 shots were given at SCBMCH. The state government is not yet sure as to when the doses would arrive. The state health and family welfare director, Bijay Panigrahi, Tuesday admitted that there might be a delay for the inoculation drive for the 18 plus group to start. "The registration of people in this age group on the Co-WIN website can start from Wednesday. But there can be no booking of slots. We will announce slot-booking when we get enough supply of vaccines," he added. Talking about the registration, the official said people will need to seed their



mobile numbers and register through OTPs and other ID details in Co-WIN. When asked when the vaccines will arrive here, he said, as per the information the government has it may get Covishield doses in mid May. The Serum Institute of India will inform the government about their likely date of consignment, he said. "We are hopeful of getting Covaxin supply in May. The vaccine drive in the state depends

KIT CRUNCH HITS TESTING

BHUBANESWAR: Even as the state government makes tall claims on its Covid management, people in many parts of the state are facing a tough time to get tests. According to reports, people were denied testing at Komna community public health centre in Nuapada district Tuesday. "I was waiting in a queue for Covid test. But, now, the health officials say they don't have antigen kits," said a man. The health centre-in-charge has admitted that they were not getting enough antigen kits to conduct tests. The situation was similar in Bhubaneswar: Test kits in the community health centre at Brahmeswar Patna got exhausted at 10 am Tuesday. "We get fewer test kits from Capital Hospital. So we were not able to test people coming here," said a lady staff of the hospital. The testing tim-

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Remdesivir missing from open markets

Bhubaneswar, April 27: With a steep hike in Covid-19 cases, the shortage of remdesivir in the open market has added to the problems of Covid patients in the state. The state is facing a shortage of remdesivir, the drug used for treating the SARS-CoV-2 virus in hospitalised adults, Drugs Controller Annada Sankar Das told media here Tuesday. Das said the Centre has brought the distribution of the essential drug under its control. The Centre is providing the anti-viral drug to states, he said. The Drugs Controller supplies remdesivir to private hospitals whereas the Odisha State

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Can't have him in Covid data collection team, sir. He is honest and good in counting.

LIFE-SAVING GAS



The first Oxygen Express train for Delhi carrying 70 tonnes of the gas reaches Delhi Cantt early Tuesday morning

At time of national crisis, we can't be a mute spectator: SC

New Delhi, April 27: Terming the massive resurgence of COVID-19 cases a "national crisis", the Supreme Court Tuesday said it cannot remain a mute spectator and made clear that its suo motu proceeding on devising national policy for COVID-19 management is not meant to supplant high court cases. A bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud said high courts are in a better position to monitor the pandemic situation within their territorial boundaries. There is a need for top court's intervention on certain national issues as there might be matters related to coordination between states, it said. "We are playing complementary role, if High Courts have any difficulty in dealing with issues due to territorial limitations, we will help," said the bench, also comprising Justices L Nageswara Rao and S Ravindra Bhat. Last Thursday, the bench took note of the pan-

MANOJ DAS PASSES AWAY

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Eminent writer, editor and columnist Manoj Das passed away Tuesday evening. He was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Pondicherry. He was 87. Das was suffering from age-related ailments and was admitted to the hospital for past few months. Das was the foremost bilingual Odia writer and a master of dramatic expression both in his English and Odia short stories and novels. In 2000, he was awarded with Saraswati Samman. He was awarded Padma Shri in 2001 and Padma Bhushan in 2020 for his contribution in the fields of literature & education. The Kendra Sahitya Akademi awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award Fellowship to Das. Das was born February 27, 1934 in Shankari village in Balasore district. Governor

EC bans 'victory march' by parties

New Delhi, April 27: In view of the rapidly increasing threat posed by coronavirus in the country, the Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday banned any kind of 'victory procession' by any political party after the results of the Assembly elections held in five states are declared on May 2. Any violation of this EC order will invite strict action against the candidate and his party. Not more than two people will accompany the candidate while receiving the victory certificate. Covid-19 cases are increasing at an alarming rate in the country with more than 3.5 lakh cases coming up every day. The Madras High Court (HC) had recently held the EC responsible for the surge in Covid-19 cases and said a "murder case should be registered for the deaths caused due to the virus". A day after the Madras HC observations, the EC

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	48944.14 ↑ 557.63
NIFTY	14653.00 ↑ 168.00
DOLLAR	75.22 ↓ ₹0.16
EURO	90.14 ↓ ₹0.24
GOLD	₹47,446 ↓ ₹16
SILVER	₹68,829 ↑ ₹149

CEOs of 40 US cos create Covid task force to help India

The first-of-its-kind global task force to address a public health crisis in another country was addressed by US Secretary of State Tony Blinken

Washington, April 27: In a show of solidarity, the CEOs of about 40 top American companies have come together to create a first-of-its-kind country-specific global task force to mobilise resources and coordinate efforts to help India fight the battle against COVID-19.

The new US public-private partnership to provide India critical medical supplies, vaccines, oxygen and other life-saving assistance amid an unprecedented surge in coronavirus cases is called the 'Global Task Force on Pandemic Response: Mobilising for India'. The first-of-its-kind country-specific global task force to address a public health crisis in another country was addressed by US Secretary of State Tony Blinken. The conversation showed how the United States and India can leverage the expertise and capabilities of the US private sector towards solutions for India's COVID-19 crisis, Blinken said in a tweet. "A number of American com-

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	41.7°C	39.0°C
MIN	27.2°C	26.0°C
Humidity	72%	64%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Light rain likely

has banned 'victory processions' by political parties. The results of the Assembly elections in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam and Puducherry will be declared May 2. The Madras High Court Monday came down hard on the Election Commission and called it the "the most irresponsible institution" for the alleged spread of the second wave of Covid-19 in the country. In stinging remarks, the court said EC officials may be booked under murder charges too. The first bench of Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy made the observation on a public interest writ, seeking for a direction to authorities to ensure fair counting of votes May 2 in Karur by taking effective steps and proper arrangements with Covid-19 protocols. Judges had also orally warned that they would not hesitate in stopping counting of votes May 2.

leisure



'FATHERHOOD MADE ME GROW UP QUICKLY'

Singer Tom Jones confessed that having a child when he was a teenager made him grow up quickly. "Because when you have a wife and child, you become a man very quickly. I was about to turn 17, and she was just 16 when Mark was born," Jones said in an interview.

PARIS HILTON DECLARES SHE IS 'SLIV QUEEN'

Entrepreneur-socialite Paris Hilton Tuesday declared herself the 'Sliv Queen'. Sliv is a term that Paris had coined during an interview with German singer Kim Petras. It means 'killing it and slaying' in one word.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Passion will rule today. You may want to talk to him/her all day long, but there will be bills to pay, dear. A bit of balance will do no harm, says Ganesh. However, if you've decided to go the extra mile, make sure you're wearing the right shoes.

TAURUS
There is a good chance that you will be able to make changes at your workplace that you had desired since a long time. You will be generous with gifts and favours, which will go down well with your loved ones (though not with your bank balance!). You will win favours from the opposite sex later in the day, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
It is the right day to reveal your innermost feelings to your loved ones and friends, and as well as to make them privy to your thoughts and opinions. Your courteous and kind nature will come to the fore today. Health and diet should not be issues today, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will work with concentration in office. So tasks will be finished fast. Your life is turning a new turn, whereby you feel it is full of thrill and affection. You will achieve perfection, says Ganesh.

LEO
Your expenses will increase today owing to your carefree attitude. You need to curb down on your spending. The later half of the day will see you deal with minor issues related to the work-place. If you ignore these issues now, they will crop up into major problems later on. Hence, resolve them immediately, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Ganesh predicts that you will achieve the targets that you set out to achieve today. The heavy pressure of work will not affect you in any way. Ganesh says the secret of your success is being patient. You are bang on target.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will take up a task and complete it by hook or crook. The higher officials and colleagues in your office will be highly impressed by your working capacity and capability. This is reflect when you will be either given a promotion in the office or there may be a rise in your pay scale to the effect.

SCORPIO
You have all the qualities of becoming a team leader. And today, you have the opportunity to showcase your skills and abilities for the same. A dynamic personality yourself, you are likely to prove that you are the sailor of stormy seas.

SAGITTARIUS
Your belligerent mood will be taken care of by the good news that may light up your face and cheer you up. Your imagination has just got wings as you become creative and think beyond boundaries. Go on a long drive with friends or beloved in the evening.

CAPRICORN
Don't be surprised if you get unexpected success in your financial dealings, it's all on the cards! You will be pliant, more than the usual, and will be sensitive to and understanding of others' problems, says Ganesh. For those pursuing studies, academic growth is certain.

AQUARIUS
The wanderer in you has suddenly come alive. You scan through travel magazines, surf internet and probably go on a tracking tour or just randomly go to distant places all by yourself. Take some of your close friends or like minded people along with and double the fun, suggests Ganesh.

PISCES
You will contemplate adopting a new strategy today. It is an auspicious day for making a new beginning and undertaking new ventures. A promotion may be on the cards at the work front and you will find success knocking at your front door today. Your self confidence will find a new lease and you will emerge much more certain of your capabilities and goals. Overall, it is a good and prosperous days, says Ganesh.

Priyanka's image from Citadel set goes viral



LONDON: Priyanka Chopra has shared a behind-the-scene image from her upcoming international series *Citadel* on Instagram Stories for the very first time, and the photo has gone viral.

In the picture, Priyanka's face is covered with a gold face mask covering traces of blue make-up that is visible below her eyes. She looks into the camera as an attendant takes care of her open hair.

Priyanka chose not to caption the frame. Rather, she invited fans to do so.

"Caption this," she wrote on the picture. A box beneath, which lets followers key in their captions, has "Type something" written in it. She has also given fans a space to "Reply to Priyankachopra," and tagged the image with #setlife, #citadel and @goochie60.

Citadel is helmed by Avengers makers Joe and Anthony Russo, and the spy thriller series, co-starring Richard Madden, is billed as an ambitious global event for OTT. IANS

Shruti talks about her love for gothic look



CHENNAI: Actress Shruti Haasan's love for the gothic look and make-up is known to her social media followers. She shares how being an actor doesn't stop her from experimenting with a look that she connects with.

"I was really into metal and alternative culture from graphic novels to dark gothic literature, so it just felt like a natural extension," the actress, who is also a musician, said.

Shruti does not agree that a gothic look could be risky for actresses.

"There is nothing risky about connecting to a look or vibe that looks authentic to you. The riskier thing to do in life is dressing, speaking, behaving and presenting yourself to the world in the way that they approve of," she says.

The actress adds: "There is a risky thing about approvals as well. What is accepted now keeps changing. So, you may as well do what makes you happy without stepping on people's toes."

On the work front, Shruti was recently seen in the Pawan Kalyan-starrer *Vakeel Saab*. IANS

Ayushmann, Tahira contribute to Maha's CMRF

MUMBAI: Star couple Ayushmann Khurrana and Tahira Kashyap has contributed to Maharashtra Chief Minister's Relief Fund, to help those affected by Covid-19. Ayushmann posted an Instagram note Tuesday urging everyone to help the needy.

"We have been in the eye of the storm since last year: This pandemic has broken our hearts, made us endure pain and suffering like

never before, showed us how solidarity with one another can make us handle this humanitarian crisis," he wrote.



Ayushmann added: "Today, again, this pandemic asks us how to show fortitude, resilience and mutual support. People across India have stepped forward to do as much as possible for each other and Tahira and I thank each and every individual who has inspired us to do more."

"We have been constantly doing our bit to help as many as possible and have now contributed to Maharashtra Chief Minister's relief Fund in this hour of need." IANS

A pioneering auction dedicated to female artists

According to auction house Sotheby's, artworks on sale range from a 1680s Dutch painting by a 22-year-old Rachel Ruysch to Dame Laura Knight, the first woman to be granted full membership of the Royal Academy in the 1930s

In its first auction dedicated to female artists across the centuries, many of whom have been categorised or marginalised by history due to their gender, auction house Sotheby's will stage the 'Women Artists' sale next month. It will explore the art historical contributions and personal stories of these artists across 400 years.

According to Sotheby's, artworks on sale range from a 1680s Dutch painting by a 22-year-old Rachel Ruysch to Dame Laura Knight, the first woman to be granted full membership of the Royal Academy in the 1930s, and a sculpture by YBA artist and first-female Turner Prize winner, Rachel Whiteread.

"The divisive classification 'women artists' but never 'male artists' is at the heart of a debate that



A Dame Laura Knight work

has been disputed for decades, and yet continues to be a trap that is so often fallen into. Female artists should not be pigeon-holed nor segregated, which is precisely why we are holding a sale that appears to be

doing exactly that - in order to turn the tables and open up this debate. Yes, these artists are women, but more importantly, they are artists," says Marina Ruiz Colomer, a contemporary art specialist in London.

According to Sotheby's Mei Moses, in the past five years the rise in prices for female artists has outpaced male artists by 29 per cent across the market. Notably, the record for any work by a living female artist is at \$12.5 million (approximately Rs 93 crore) for Jenny Saville's *Propped*, sold at Sotheby's London in October 2018.

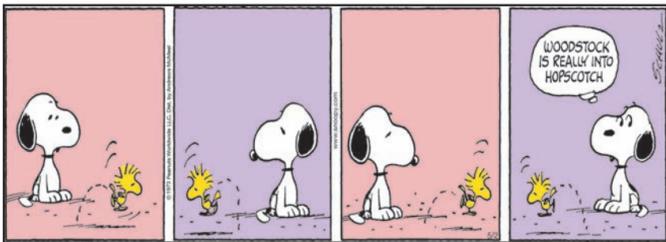
"Many of the female artists we are offering here were well known and respected within their lifetimes, but history has not treated them kindly. They have come to be remembered as the wives of painters, as the ones that enabled their husbands, fathers and brothers to paint or as their muses, but rarely ever as they deserved to be: the artists in their own right!" says Lisa Stevenson, impressionist and modern art specialist. The 'Women



A painting by Rachel Ruysch

Artists' sale will take place online from May 20-27. AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

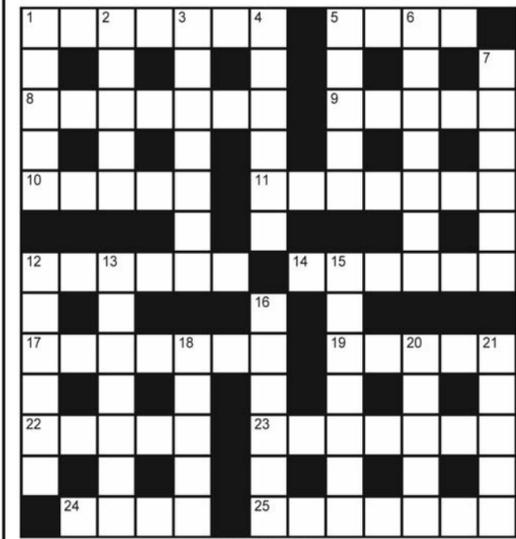


BREVITY



FUN post

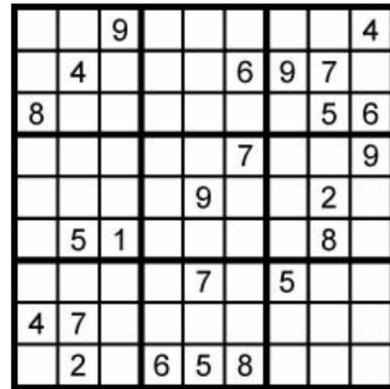
CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Swooned
 - 5 Waiters' rewards
 - 8 Storm aftermath
 - 9 Dawdle
 - 10 Sweetener
 - 11 Prophets
 - 12 One of the Gorgons
 - 14 Clean house (4,2)
 - 17 Fast
 - 19 Forebodings
 - 22 Fragrance
 - 23 Jubilance
 - 24 Blood carrier
 - 25 Emblematic staff
 - 4 Yukon
 - 5 Territory town
 - 6 Aquarium fish
 - 7 European mint
 - 12 Grassland
 - 13 Undress
 - 15 Set apart
 - 16 Ticks off
 - 18 Cook's attire
 - 20 Kick out
 - 21 Burn slightly
- Down
- 1 Flowerless plants
 - 2 Cupcake topper
 - 3 Knight's tunics

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

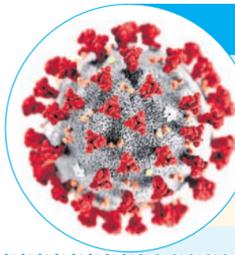


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



PUJA AMID PANDEMIC

Women offer puja to Maa Mangala on the last Tuesday of Chaitra month in Nayapalli area of Bhubaneswar



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	14,87,49,379	12,64,93,175	31,37,898
India	1,76,36,307	1,45,56,209	1,97,894
Odisha	4,20,129	3,71,200	2,007

END OF AN ERA



The Brightest Sun of Indian literature goes down, A permanent void in Odia literary circuit.. A magician who could instill life to his character bids adieu...

These were some of the headlines of popular social media handles after the death of Manoj Das, arguably the greatest writer Odisha has ever produced.

Manoj Das had appeared in Indian-English literary sky as a luminous star during the mid-sixties of last century. Needless to say, he was one of the few gifted writers of India who could write in Odia, his mother tongue and English with equal ease and dexterity.

A follower of the vision and philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, Manoj always sought to explore the hidden truth in the different realities of life. He was an optimist who believed in a transformed future of mankind. A great architect of tran-



Manoj Das (right) during a visit to Egypt

scendental literature, Manoj Das dealt with a number of themes. They ranged from the happenings of everyday life to the events suggestive of supernatural. At the same time his stories are greatly influenced by Indian literature-mythology and folklore. As an Indian writer, he has never forgotten to re-

fect on the age-old rich cultural and literary tradition of India. He always felt that there are certain truths that are found only in Indian culture and they should be presented on global platform. **Orissa POST** takes a close look at his life and body of works.

Manoj Das was born at Shankhari, a small village in Balasore district. He had started writing early as his first work, a book of poetry in Odia, 'Satavdira Artanada', was published in 1949 when he was all of 15. He launched a literary magazine, Diganta, in the next year. His first collection of short stories Samudrara Kshudha (Hungry Sea) came out that year.

He was active in student politics while studying BA in Cuttack College. He was a youth leader with radical views during his college days and spent a year in jail for his revolutionary activities. In 1959, he was a delegate to the Afro-Asian students' conference at Bandung, Indonesia. During his college, he kept on writing and he published a novel 'Jeebanara Swada', a collection of

Known as the chief architect of transcendental literature in India and beyond, Manoj Das was one of those living writers on whom maximum number scholars have done their doctoral theses

short stories titled 'Vishakanyar Kahani' and a collection of poems 'Padadhawani'.

After graduating with a degree in English literature, he got a post graduate degree in English literature from Ravenshaw College. After a short stint as a lecturer in Christ College (Cuttack), he joined Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry. Since 1963, he has been a Professor of English Literature at Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry.

He edited the cultural magazine, The Heritage, published from Chennai in 1985-1989. This apart, he wrote columns on quest for finding eternal truth in common lives in national dailies like The Times of India, The Hindustan Times, The Hindu and The Statesman.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POSITIONS

Among the other important positions that Das held are Member, General Council, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi 1998-2002, and author-consultant, Ministry of Education, Government of Singapore, 1983-85. He was the leader of the Indian delegation of writers to China (1999).

AWARDS AND HONOURS

- Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award (1965 and 1987)
- Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award (1972)
- Sarala Award (1981)
- Vishuba Award (1986)
- Sahitya Bharati Award (1995)
- Saraswati Samman (2000)
- Orissa State Film Award for Best Story (2001)
- Padma Shri (2001)
- Padma Bhushan (2020)
- Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, (2006)
- Atibadi Jagannath Das award (2007)
- NTR Literary Award (2013)
- Amritakeerti Puraskar (2013)



Deeply saddened to know about the passing away of legendary litterateur #ManojDas. Shri Das has left an indelible mark in the field of literature with his vast variety of immortal works and left a void which can never be filled.

SELECT BODY OF WORKS

NOVELS

- The Escapist, 2001
- Tandralokara Prahari, 2000
- Aakashra Isara, 1997
- Amruta Phala, 1996 (Saraswati Samman)
- A Tiger at Twilight, 1991
- Bulldozers and Fables and Fantasies for Adults, (1990)
- Cyclones, 1987
- Prabhanjana
- Godhulira Bagha
- Kanaka-Upatyakara Kahani
- Amruta phala
- Sesha tantrikara sandhanare[28]

SHORT STORIES

- Upakatha Sataka
- Abu Purusha
- Sesa Basantara Chithi, 1966
- Manoj Dasanka Katha O Kahani, 1971
- Dhumabha Diganta O Anyana Kahani, 1971
- The Crocodile's Lady: A Collection of Stories, 1975
- Manoj-pancha-bimsati, 1977
- The Submerged Valley and Other Stories, 1986
- Farewell to a Ghost: Short Stories and a Novelette, 1994
- Legend of the Golden Valley, 1996

FICTION

- Samudra-kulara Eka Grama (Balya Smruti), 1996
- Aranyaka; (adapted to Aranyaka, 1994)
- Bhinna Manisha O Anyana Kahani
- Abupurusha O Anyana Kahani
- Lakshmiri Abhisara
- Abolakara Kahani
- Aranya Ullasha

TRAVELOGUE

- Chasing the Rainbow: growing up in an Indian village, 2004
- Kete Diganta (Part I)
- Kete Diganta (Part -II)

POETRY

- Antaranga Bharata (Part I) (My Little India)
- Antaranga Bharata (Part II)
- Dura-Durantara
- Adura Bidesh - 2004
- Tuma Gaan O Anyana Kabita, 1992
- Kabita Utkala

HISTORY & CULTURE

- Bharatara Aitiha: Shateka Prashnara Uttara, 1999
- Manoj Das Paribesita Upakatha Shataka (Tales Told by Mystics), 2002
- Mahakalara Prahelika O Anyana Jijnansa, 2006



Das with Indo-Anglian writer Mulk Raj Anand

CM for smooth supply of O₂, drugs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Expressing concern over the prevailing crisis of oxygen and some Covid-19 drugs in many states, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday directed senior officials to ensure smooth supply of the same to the patients.

Patnaik gave this direction while holding a high-level meeting on Covid management Tuesday evening through videoconferencing.

Stating that oxygen is the most vital requirement in treating Covid patients, the Chief Minister directed officials to ensure that the supply of oxygen continues in a smooth manner and that adequate oxygen is delivered to the patients on time. He also advised the officials to stock essential medicines and ensure their flawless supply. "Every life is precious and we continue to do our best to save one life. If one infection is reduced, the pressure on one ICU and one bed will be reduced," he said.

The state government continues to work towards providing the best possible healthcare facility to Covid patients, and doctors and health workers continue to work day and night. Therefore, the administration has to work very carefully to reduce the burden on the healthcare system, Patnaik said.

The Chief Minister said, "Despite increase in number of infections, we continue to serve. But the situation in some districts has raised concerns. The double and triple mutants of the virus



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik reviews the Covid management in state through videoconference, Tuesday

are spreading rapidly, and in this second wave our youth are particularly infected. We need to be prepared to deal with the worst situations in the world, just as we have in dealing with natural disasters."

He directed the district Collectors and SPs to assess the situation at the grassroots level and formulate a micro management plan. The Covid observers have been asked to be vigilant. The CM instructed the Chief Secretary to review the matter on a regular basis and inform him at the next meeting.

He lauded the trade associations in different districts, who had voluntarily stepped in to control Covid by restricting business hours and closing shops in some places.

Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra said senior officials are keeping a close watch on the situation. Covid Care Centres and all Covid hospitals have been operationalised. Steps are

being taken to increase the number of beds in medical colleges and converting new private hospitals into Covid hospital, he said. Number of oxygen beds is being increased to 35 per cent from existing 30 per cent.

Additional Chief Secretary, Health, PK Mohapatra said there are currently 50,958 active cases in the state and 70 per cent active cases reported from seven districts.

He said the state now has 31,471 beds. Apart from ICU beds, oxygen support is being facilitated at 17,495 beds. He said steps are being taken to increase the number of beds in both public and private Covid hospitals. The government is working towards providing more oxygen to the beds, Mohapatra added.

Collectors of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Balasore and Khurda districts briefed the meeting about the situation and steps they had taken in their districts.

SOP issued for rational use of O₂

BHUBANESWAR: The state Health department Saturday issued a fresh SOP for rational use of oxygen in hospitals especially in treatment of Covid-19 patients.

Additional Chief Secretary PK Mohapatra sent the SOP to the district Collectors and other officials concerned. In his communication to the officials, Mohapatra said that indiscriminate usage of medical oxygen must be stopped.

"It is noticed that the number of Covid cases are increasing by the day and government is keen on setting up of sufficient Covid facilities with general beds, high dependency units (HDU) beds and ICU beds. Such patients require oxygen which is the mainstay of treatment. Oxygen is precious and we may face acute shortage if not

State sends out 1,675 tonne oxygen

Cuttack: Odisha has sent 90 tankers carrying 1675.781 tonnes of oxygen to other states in last five days, sources said. It sent 23 oxygen tankers to Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana Tuesday. The Odisha police has created a green corridor for speedy transport of the life saving gas.

managed properly, rationally and judiciously," the letter to Collectors read.

"Also timely use of oxygen can reduce the mortality as well as morbidity to a large extent. In view of the above, the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) shall be followed scrupulously for rational use of Oxygen in the Covid facilities. This shall be followed in true letter and spirit in all government and private Covid-19 hospitals," the letter read.

Mohapatra also said that expert teams would visit hospitals periodically for strict compliance of such protocols. "Any deviation to the rational use shall be viewed seriously," the government order said.

State reports 10 more fatalities, 6,073 cases

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Odisha's Covid-19 caseload Tuesday surged to 4,20,129 after 6,073 more people tested positive for the infection, while 10 fresh fatalities pushed the toll to 2,007, a Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

Accordingly, the number of active cases rose to 50,958, which is 12.12 per cent of the caseload.

Of the 6,073 new cases, 3,522 were detected from quarantine centres and the remaining during contact tracing, the official said.

Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of new cases at 1,092, followed by Bolangir at 457 and Nuapada at 400. Other districts which reported more than 100 cases include Sundargarh (371), Jharsuguda (359), Bargarh (286), Kalahandi (277), Keonjhar (266), Angul (239), Puri (266).

Four fatalities were reported from Khurda, three from Sundargarh, two from Rayagada and one from Boudh.

The state's case-fatality ratio (CFR) stands at 0.47 per cent, the official said.

As many as 3,67,111 people have recuperated from the highly infectious disease. Odisha's positivity rate has touched 4.22 per cent.



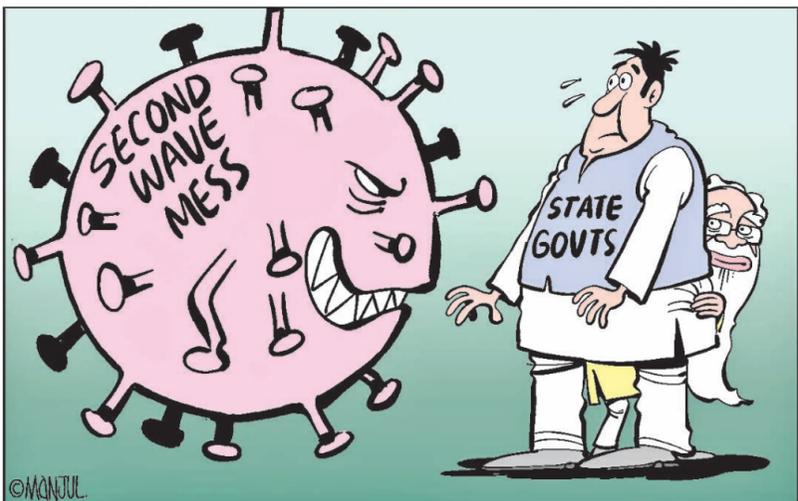
Tribal Museum shut for public

BHUBANESWAR: Amid the rising Covid-19 cases, the ST & SC Development department Tuesday decided to temporarily shut the Odisha State Tribal Museum located on the premises of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) here for public.

People, however, can take a virtual tour of the museum as part of an online initiative that was launched in August 2020. "The virtual tour will enable audience visualise the exclusive tribal artefacts, habitats and unique aspects of the Tribal Museum," SCSTRTI director AB Ota said.

Meanwhile, the Odisha Crafts Museum has also been temporarily shut for public.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



'Ganjam not nCoV hotspot this year'

In 2020, Ganjam was termed as a 'Covid hotspot' of Odisha. However, this year the district admin believes the condition is quite better.

Speaking to Manish Kumar of **Orissa POST**, Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange talks more on the issue. Excerpts:

Do you now see influx of migrants to Ganjam like last year?
Last year, around 4 lakh migrants had come to Ganjam from different parts of the state and the country when the Covid cases rose across India and lockdown was imposed.

However, this year the numbers are quite low. This year, we have seen return of only 11,000 migrants. The number this time is not expected to swell like last year.

Where the maximum migrants of Ganjam are heading towards?

Ganjam migrants are not distressed migrants. They are skilled people. Maximum migration is towards Surat in Gujarat. Many of them are doing good job in the textile and diamond industries there.

There was Covid explosion in Ganjam last year. What were the reasons behind this?

Till the initial days of May 2020, we had been reporting the minimum cases of the infection in the state but as large number of people from other states came back to the district, the cases kept on rising.



However, this year there is hardly any chance of the district becoming a hotspot again due to absence of lockdown and shutdown of industries in Surat.

How well prepared the Ganjam administration is to tackle the pandemic?

This time we are working more on improving hospital infrastructure to ensure more facilities to cater the needs of Covid patients.

We have two Covid hospitals as of now. Two more such hospitals are coming up in the next five days. We are eyeing to scale up the number of hospital beds to 6,000 and 50 per cent of them will be with oxygen beds. We can see the results on the ground within next 10 days.

Ganjam is known to host the maximum cases of HIV/AIDS. What steps you are taking to reduce this fatal infection?

HIV/AIDS cases are declining in the district. We have taken several steps to bring the cases down. We are working on increasing awareness, holding counselling sessions and also taking the women folks of the migrant families for counselling classes to make them more informed on the disease and keep their families away from the disease.

Cong demands postponement of Pipli bypoll

THE PARTY HAS ALREADY LOST ITS CANDIDATE AJIT MANGARAJ TO COVID-19 LEADING TO THE DEFERMENT OF POLLING DATE TO MAY 16

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Opposition Congress Tuesday demanded postponement of the May 16 by-poll in Pipli assembly seat in Odisha in the wake of the resurgent Covid-19 pandemic across the country.

A delegation of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC), led by its working vice-president Pradeep Majhi, submitted a memorandum at the office of the state Chief Electoral officer addressing to the Election Commission (EC).

"We are optimistic that our appeal will be heard and the polling to be postponed," Majhi told reporters.

The Congress leader said that allowing polling May 16 is as good as putting the lives of people in danger as health experts have warned that the Covid-19 infection will reach its peak in the second week of May.

Majhi questioned, "The leaders are becoming super spreaders (of coronavirus) as they reach out to the masses. Therefore the campaign is now restricted. What is wrong if we put polling on hold till the situation becomes normal?"

Congress has already lost one of its candidates, Ajit Mangaraj to Covid-19 leading to the deferment



The Congress delegation at the office of the CEO in Bhubaneswar OP PHOTO

of the polling date to May 16.

"When the situation in Odisha has assumed alarming proportions, why is the Election Commission determined to conduct the by-poll? Are the votes so important for the Election Commission? We demand that the by-poll be postponed till the pandemic is brought under control," Majhi said at a press conference here. Besides, it is not possible for any party to campaign in Pipli as the people of the constituency block roads to their villages to prevent political leaders from canvassing. "Under such circumstances, how will the political parties campaign for their candi-

dates?" Majhi asked.

He also appealed to the ruling BJD and opposition BJP to make similar demands to the EC in the larger interest of public health. "You see the situation of West Bengal where elections are being held. It is better for the lives of 4.5 crore people of the state to refrain from any kind of election for now," he said.

BJD vice-president Debi Prasad Mishra said as the EC, as a statutory body, has decided to conduct the by-poll under the 'Representation of Peoples Act' of the Constitution, neither BJD nor the state government has anything to say about it.

The BJD is not campaigning as per the direction of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, he added.

State BJP leader Prithviraj Harichandan said if the political parties strictly follow the Covid appropriate behaviour while campaigning, the by-poll will be held without any problem and will set a precedent for the ensuing elections in the neighbouring states.

The demand to defer the Pipli by-poll is a "political gimmick" of the Congress, he asserted.

Majhi rejected Harichandan's charge and said that there is no politics behind the demand. People's lives are important, not elections, he added. The EC has totally banned election meetings and rallies. It has allowed only five persons including the party candidate, to conduct door-to-door campaigns. This is being resisted by the people who are not willing to allow outsiders into their villages and houses.

Covid-19 has already claimed the lives of two leaders in Pipli. While Pipli MLA Pradeep Maharathy died of the infection in October, 2020 leading to the by-election, Congress candidate Ajit Mangaraj too succumbed to coronavirus April 14 in the middle of campaigning. The by-poll which was slated for April 17 was then rescheduled to May 16.

50-year-old forces child to marry him; probe begins

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: In deference to the direction of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the state Crime Branch (CB) has started an investigation into allegations of torture and harassment of a minor girl and her family in Puri.

The CB took up the probe in three cases registered at Talabania and Town police stations in Puri and Lingaraj police station in Bhubaneswar.

According to sources, the minor girl had lodged a complaint with Talabania police accusing a 50-year-old person of putting pressure on her to marry him March 16, 2021. The girl also alleged that the accused had threatened to make viral her obscene photos on social media when she refused to budge. The family members of the accused allegedly threw poisonous snakes in front of their residence preventing the family from going outside. The mother of the minor girl had also filed a similar complaint with Town police in Puri accusing the persons of forcing the 12-year-old girl to marry the

BMC to augment call handling capacity of 1929

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: In a bid to augment the call handling capacity of 1929, a round-the-clock Covid helpline service in the City, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Tuesday decided to get some of its outgoing calls managed by the 104 call centre.

Operating from the Bhubaneswar Operations Centre of Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) office here, the helpline service, 1929, has been witnessing an exponential rise in the daily calls from denizens seeking Covid-related help.

1929 has been witnessing an exponential rise in daily calls

"1929, which is a single point solution to issues related to coronavirus, has been successfully addressing all queries of Covid patients in Bhubaneswar. The capacity of the helpline will be further increased in coordination with 104 helpline service as it would help reduce the call waiting time during this pandemic," Water Resources Principal Secretary Anu Garg, who is also the Covid observer for Bhubaneswar, said after a virtual meeting senior officials managing the twin helplines.

Applications invited for FM varsity VC post

Bhubaneswar: Higher Education department Tuesday put out a notification for appointment of new Vice-Chancellor of Fakir Mohan University, Balasore. As per the notification, applicants are invited from eligible candidates below 60 years of age for the post. The applicants should be distinguished academicians with proven academic and administrative excellence and a well-rounded personality with a minimum of 10 years of experience as Professor in a university system or 10 years in an equivalent position in reputed research and/or academic organisation. The post carries a pay of Rs 2,10,000 (Rupees two lakh and ten thousand) with special allowance of Rs 5,000/- per month and other usual allowances. The tenure will be of four years from the date he/she assumes office or till he/she attains 67 years of age, whichever is earlier.

2nd wave more severe: Experts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Doctors at the state government-sponsored medical briefing Tuesday said that the second wave infections are more severe which trigger more demand of oxygen from the Covid infected persons.

Dr Sampath Kumar Das, Aditya Ashwini Hospital Tuesday briefed the people on Covid-19 and ways to tackle it. In a virtual communication with the state health department, Dr Das cited the difference in symptoms in the second wave com-

pared to the first wave and the difference in terms of severity.

"In the second wave we are seeing a difference in symptoms. Last year, we used to see moderate and low grade fever among the Covid patients. This year, the fever is often high grade. Last year, gastro intestinal issues in were not seen much which is more visible in the second wave infections."

He also said, "This year, the severity and oxygen demand needed in Covid cases are higher compared to last year."

Meanwhile, Dr Jayant Kumar

Panda from SCB Hospital, Cuttack said that the mortality in the second wave is lower but the infection rate is quite high.

"The second wave mutant strains are more infectious in nature. This year, the kids and youths are also getting infected in good numbers. The new strains are staying suspended in the atmosphere for longer period of time in indoor areas and where number of people are more," he said. He also added, "The chances of infection in overcrowded areas are much higher now. Chances of infection are higher in people who are not wearing masks properly or not wearing masks at all. Those people who have not been vaccinated are becoming victims of the disease. However the mortality rate in the second wave is a bit lesser which has given us a new hope."

MGM Minerals donates ₹1cr to Odisha CMRF

POST NEWS NETWORK



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: MGM Minerals Limited Tuesday donated Rs 1 crore to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) in a bid to support the state government's efforts in the fight against Covid-19.

Company's chief managing director Pankaj Lochan Mohanty handed over a cheque of Rs 1 crore to Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra at Lok Seva Bhawan here. According to Mohanty, Odisha government's prompt and timely Covid management strategy has been helping the coastal state to curb the spread of the virus.

Mahapatra, on the other hand, thanked Mohanty for his noble gesture.

Man loses ₹20 lakh to cyber fraudsters

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Cyber fraudsters duped an employee of the National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) of several lakhs promising to facilitate the victim get back his money invested in share markets at a lucrative interest rate.

Hadibandhu Nayak of Nalco Nagar, Angul has lodged a complaint with the Cyber Police Station at state crime branch head quarters, Cuttack in this regard. Nayak works as Smelter operator at the NALCO plant, Angul.

According to sources, the victim who used to invest money in the share market had reportedly lost more than Rs 50 lakh between 2015 and 2016. Subsequently, he stopped investing in the share markets following heavy losses.

The cyber fraudsters managed to get his Demat account details and contacted Nayak through his phone numbers registered with the account in the first week of December last year.

The cyber criminals initially sent messages on WhatsApp or e-mail address offering to help him

The victim who used to invest money in the share market had reportedly lost more than ₹50 lakh between 2015 and 2016. He stopped investing after facing severe losses

get his money back. They also promised him to give high interest rate on his investment. However, he used to ignore the messages but they started calling him on the phone. The cyber fraudsters send him various fake documents like MOU agreement papers, his Demat account details to earn his faith. Gullible Nayak readily accepted their offer and deposited Rs 20.29 lakhs in various bank accounts as per the directions of the cyber fraudsters.

He smelt a rat when the criminals continued to demand more money from him under various pretexts. Crime Branch has started investigating into the matter after registering a case in this regard.

Boudh records 43.1 degrees Celsius

Bhubaneswar: Heatwave condition continued to prevail in many places across the state, Tuesday. Boudh recorded the highest day temperature of 43.1 degrees Celsius and became the hottest place in Odisha Tuesday. The maximum temperature at Angul was 42.7 degrees while it was 42.5 degrees each at Titlagarh and Baripada. Similarly, the maximum temperature at Bolangir and Talcher was 42.4 and 42.3 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Miscreant dupes jewellery shop owner

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: A miscreant has allegedly duped a jewelry shop owner of around Rs 1 lakh by selling him fake gold ornament. The complainant Chittaranjan Patra is the resident of Baliaanta area.

As per his complaint, one Rabi Kumar Dash came to his show-

room 'Maa Tarini Jewelers', situated at Hanspal Square, April 12. Dash told Patra that he wanted to sell his old gold chain and buy some other gold ornaments in exchange. Patra, after checking, told Dash that he would pay him Rs 2 lakh for the gold chain. Dash agreed at the price set by Patra.

Subsequently, accused Dash took two pairs gold earring, rings and

chains in exchange of the cash. However, Patra later received a shock when he found that the gold chain exchanged by Dash was a duplicate one. He tried to contact Dash but failed as the accused had allegedly given wrong address to Patra.

Patra later lodged a complaint with the Mancheswar police in this regard Monday.

NSS to conduct virtual awareness programme

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LOST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: The Higher Education department Tuesday directed all the National Service Scheme (NSS) programme officers in all universities to conduct 'Virtual Awareness Programme' on 2nd wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

In a letter, deputy secretary of Higher Education department Ramesh Chandra Behera directed the NSS to conduct massive awareness programme on present pandemic through online mode. This programme will help the volunteers and their family members as well as neighbours in acquiring first-hand knowledge on Covid management.

The focus area of the programme will be- Precautionary and preventive measures to be undertaken, taking care of the Covid patients at home isolation, information about the availability of medical facilities in nearby areas, information about the availability of

medicines, encouragement of mass vaccination, handling post Covid effects etc.

For the programme, doctors and medical experts may be invited as resource persons. Each NSS unit will submit a report with supporting documents to the concerned NSS bureau by the end of May 2021. The NSS bureau will then submit it to state NSS cell by June first week.

Earlier, the NSS of PG Unit of Utkal University had organised an awareness rally for coronavirus pandemic on university premises April 22. As part of the awareness, members of the NSS had distributed masks and sanitizers to cleaning personnel, hostel staff and shopkeepers of the Gobind Sahu market complex situated on the university premises.

They had also distributed masks to security staff of the university at the new administrative building and had given them an update about how to stay safe from Covid-19 while on duty.

CHANDAN YATRA PREP



Preparations on for the upcoming Chandan Yatra of Srimandir deities at Narendra pond in Puri, Tuesday OP PHOTO

No vaccine drive in Keonjhar, Jajpur today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: The state government is now grappling with massive shortage of Covishield vaccine, government data hinted Tuesday.

According to the state government, by 8pm of Tuesday the government was left with only 54,040 doses of Covishield vaccine in the state, raising doubts over the smooth vaccination drive.

The state has planned only 464 sessions instead of its earlier plan to undertake the drive at 1,500 active sites. The government has now planned to halt the vaccination drive for Keonjhar and Jajpur for Wednesday.

The Health department Tuesday was able to conduct the drive at only 617 active sites. Vaccine was not available in many areas in several district vaccination centres and people were being turned away.

The government claims that by Tuesday a total of 57,04,916 persons have been vaccinated. On the other hand, the government was able to vaccinate only 65,766 persons Tuesday.

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SECOND PIPELINE PROJECT

Vedanta's bid to use Tel water faces roadblock



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, April 27: Vedanta Alumina refinery has reportedly made an effort to draw water from Tel river near Kesinga in Kalahandi district for its plant there. The company is bracing up to lay a pipeline, but the locals have strongly opposed the move.

It will be the second pipeline of the company to draw water from the river.

Angry over the company's move to exploit the river water, locals have warned of agitation. In fact, many villagers are bracing up for a legal recourse against such move.

According to local residents, the company has been drawing 1 lakh litres of water daily from Tel river since 2005. As a result, water level in the river has plummeted drastically, leading to water crisis in the area during summer.

According to local residents, the company has been drawing 1 lakh litres of water daily from Tel river since 2005. As a result, water level in the river has plummeted drastically, leading to water crisis in the area during summer.

Now, the company is in need of more water and, hence, is making an effort to construct an intake well near Kurudapada

Aside from constructing the intake well, the company has sought permission of the local NAC authorities to lay a pipeline on NAC land

pany is not working on its promises it made to the villagers regarding developing the peripheral area," locals fumed.

Now, the company is in need of more water and, hence, is making an effort to construct an intake well near Kurudapada. Earlier, a gram sabha had been held at Tahansir and Kanteisira over the project. At these gram sabhas, people of both the villages insisted on fulfilling their various demands first.

Aside from constructing the intake well, the company has sought permission of the local NAC authorities to lay a pipeline on NAC land.

Locals have opposed the move. "The second pipeline will worsen the water crisis in the region. So the NAC should not grant permission for the project. Though the company is using the river water, it has failed to work on the peripheral development," alleged local residents like former NAC chairman Ramakant Gouda, journalist Suresh Agrawal and Anil Jain. They said that they would move court on the issue.

The company authorities were contacted over phone, but they did not attend the call. Meanwhile, the NAC has issued a letter to the company after receiving a complaint from locals.

litres of water daily from Tel river since 2005. As a result, water level in the river has plummeted drastically, leading to water crisis in the area during summer.

"On the other hand, the com-

Covid fear: Weekly market shut for 5 days

SARASKANA: Various regions of Mayurbhanj are witnessing an upsurge in coronavirus infection. Traders in Saraskana area are scared of the pandemic in their area as some have already succumbed to the disease. As a result, traders and shopkeepers here have decided to shut the weekly market at Jharpokharia from Tuesday till Sunday to ward off congregation and crowding. They pronounced their decision of bazaar showdown through a public address system Monday.

Healthy boy born to Covid-hit woman

MALKANGIRI: A piece of good news emerged from Malkangiri district Sunday. A Covid-19 infected woman gave birth to a healthy boy at the district headquarters hospital here. Since the news spread in the area, locals and family members have heaped praises on the doctors and staff of the hospital. The pregnant woman from Podaghat village under Khairapat block in Malkangiri district had tested Covid positive five days ago. Her kin admitted her to the DHH's Covid ward.

Lecturer held for raping girl student

ASKA: Police arrested a lecturer Tuesday under this police limits here in Ganjam district on charges of raping a girl and making her objectionable photos and videos viral. The accused was identified as Pradip Sahu, an Economics lecturer by profession. He was arrested following a complaint filed by the girl at Aska police station. Police said that the accused had been raping the girl since 2014 when she was studying in Class IX. She further alleged in the complaint that as she has been going to the Lecturer's residence since she was studying in Class IX, the accused lured her and clicked some obscene photos and videos. Sahu raped the girl on different occasions, blackmailing her to make the obscene photos and video viral. Sahu even threatened the girl and her family members of dire consequences if she did not marry him. Later, he forcibly took her Plus II pass certificate and gold ornaments on the pretext of marrying her. The accused made the objectionable photos and video viral after the complainant refused him to let her sexually exploited, the FIR read.

Woman murdered by husband, son

UDALA: A woman was allegedly beaten to death by her husband and son over a minor family tiff at Dighinua Sahi village under Udala police station in Mayurbhanj district, Monday night. While the deceased has been identified as Chandrakanti Behera, the accused husband and son have been identified as Chhatish Behera and Kartik Behera respectively. According to sources, Chandrakanti and Chhatish had a tiff over a money transaction Monday night. The scene turned ugly as Chhatish lost his cool and started thrashing his wife. Later, his son joined him. Far from showing any mercy, they allegedly forcibly poured a poisonous substance in her mouth. Hearing Chandrakanti's painful cries, some neighbours rushed to her rescue. They took her to the Udala government hospital. Later she was shifted to Pandit Raghunath Murmu Medical College and Hospital in Baripada as her condition deteriorated. She breathed her last. The deceased's brother has lodged a report with the Udala police station alleging that his sister was murdered. However, the deceased's father-in-law termed the allegation "baseless". On the basis of the report lodged by the deceased's brother, police have registered a case and launched a search for the absconding father and son.

THROWING CAUTION TO WIND



People waiting to get vaccinated stand in long queues outside the Zilla Kala Kendra in Angul district in violation of Covid-19 protocols, Tuesday

Sabai grass helps women to be self-sufficient

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chitrada, April 27: Sabai grass, which is cultivated in many pockets of tribal-dominated Mayurbhanj district, has turned out to be a money spinner for scores of women in Morada block. They make various household, handicraft and decorative items from sabai grass. On selling these items, they are earning in thousands.

Women of Haduapani village under this block have scripted success stories in self-sufficiency centering on sabai grass by dint of their effort and determination.

Notably, sabai grass is a natural fibre. It is grown abundantly in the hilly areas such as Jadunathpur, Kamalashol, Purnachandrapur,



Beladunguri and Astajharan in tribal-dominated Badasahi and other blocks.

According to reports, 35 women from nine self-help groups had taken seven-month training on making

household, handicraft and decorative items. They use sabai grass, date stems and threads to make about 25 different items, including flower baskets, bags, dust bins, fruit baskets,

On an average, each woman engaged in this work earns ₹3000 a month. Women supplement their family incomes, says Dhanabati Dhal

pachhia (a kind of sieve) and other household items. Now, their business has started given them financial benefits as these items have high demand in the market.

Sale of these items is going up. "On an average, each woman engaged in this work earns ₹3000 a month. Women are becoming self-sufficient and supplement their family incomes," says Dhanabati Dhal.

"Our family members extend a helping hand in our work. If our group is registered, we will carry forward our income-generating activities," said Lili Nayak.

"The items that we make have high demand in the market. It has potential for good incomes, observed Sanjukta Raj.

BPM of Odisha Livelihood Mission, Himansu Bhusan Sahu said that he is aware of the group and advised Minati Das of Chadeigaon about the benefits of registration.

If these women approach the authorities in 2021-22, their group will be formed and registered, he added.

Besides, there are many other groups who are making a living from sabai grass items in Udala, Betanoti, Kuliana, and Shuliapada blocks.

WATER WOES



Women of Dhalpur village stage a road blockade on Puruna Katak-Dhalpur road in Boudh district demanding potable water supply, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Migrant returnees pooh-pooh Covid curbs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bari, April 27: The second wave of Covid-19 has been playing havoc in various parts of the state, but migrant workers returning from hotspot states are allegedly pooh-poohing Covid protocols and moving freely in villages in Bari block of Jajpur. While such action of the returnees has scared the locals, the administration is turning a blind eye to the menace, a report said.

According to the report, migrants are returning to villages at different times. As per guidelines, they should get themselves registered at the panchayat level and tested for Covid-19 before entering their villages. But this is not happening in many villages, locals alleged.



FILE PHOTO

They also pointed out that during the Covid-19 restrictions in the first wave, the administration kept watch on the migrants and carried out contact tracing of the infected migrants.

The migrants were subjected to

isolation for a specific period.

It is alleged that this time the migrants are returning from hotspot regions like West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and other states. They are freely moving outside their homes violating the Covid

guidelines. Sadly the administration has not identified them yet.

As these migrants are coming in contact with the local people, they are likely to spread the virus.

Meanwhile, three people have died of Covid-19 at Udaynathpur, Balibili and Ishanpur panchayats.

The block administration has opened four isolation centres at Balia, Swainkhand, Atira and Udaynathpur. But there are no efforts to bring the Covid-infected to these centres.

Bari BDO Shibananada Swain said, "If people are not conscious, the administration is helpless. We are bound by official norms. We will try to sensitise people about the severity of the second wave of pandemic with help of people's representatives."

Blood banks may face shortage as vax drive for youths begins May 1

While the vaccination drive has triggered fears of slowdown in blood collection, the weekend shutdowns and the sweltering heat of the summer are also playing truant

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, April 27: Blood donation drives by the blood banks in the state might get seriously affected with Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Sunday announcing free vaccination for all above 18 years in the upcoming vaccination drive from May 1 for the Covid-19 pandemic, a report said.

The move for free vaccination for youths by the state government has received wide appreciation from various quarters. Youths who are above 18 years are equally ecstatic for taking the vaccine with the pandemic spreading its tentacles in the state.

According to reports, blood banks are making all efforts to ensure that they don't run out of blood for emergency patients. However, various bottlenecks are preventing them in achieving the desired results.

While the vaccination drive has triggered fears of slowdown in blood collection, the weekend shutdowns announced by the state government and the sweltering heat of the summer are also playing truant. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic has also slowed down the blood collection drive as people are hesitant to attend blood donation camps fearing infections.

It is apprehended that blood banks in the state might run out of blood and emergency patients in need of blood transfusion could face serious problems with a large number of youths opting for vac-



ination at a time. This is because youths who are the major contributors of blood to the blood banks might not be able to donate blood for a period of 28-days after taking the vaccine, the report said.

When contacted, Debashis Mishra, officer of blood bank at VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla, said that the youth are the major blood donors at any blood donation camp organised anywhere in the state.

He said that blood donation camps are organised at various places in the state to ward off the blood shortage in the blood banks, especially during the pandemic. This has helped in preventing blood shortage in various blood banks in the state. As a result, critical and other patients have been able to receive blood when they required it.

The weekend shutdown has also affected the blood collection drive as people fear to step out of their homes fearing crackdown by the police. Moreover, kin of emergency pa-

tients find it difficult to reach the blood banks and receive blood for the same reason.

He said that the blood bank currently has 200 units of blood, while 70-80 units of blood are supplied daily to the patients in VIMSAR. He, however, said that the situation might improve after a month as there are plans to organise five blood donation camps by April end to ensure that there is no shortage of blood.

Dr Kalpesh Kakad, an officer of blood bank at the district headquarters hospital, said that the blood bank in the hospital faced acute blood shortage with only 30 units of blood in its stock. However, the number went up after organising two camps at two different places.

The total blood collection reached 111 after collecting 61 units from one camp and 50 from another camp. Now, the blood bank is left with only 141 units of blood, which is likely to be exhausted in five days. Two more camps will be organised by April end, he added.

Man hangs self after beheading wife in Nabarangpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, April 27: In a shocking incident, a man allegedly committed suicide after beheading his wife at Bhandimal village under Kodinga police limits in Nabarangpur district late Monday night.

The deceased have been identified as Parbati Jani and her husband Niladhar Jani. They were residents of Dumarada village under Dabugaon police station. However, they were staying at a relative's house at Bhandimal.

The police are yet to ascertain the reason as to why the man committed the gruesome act of beheading his wife and then killing himself.

On Tuesday morning, residents of Bhandimal were shocked when they came to know about the gruesome incident. They found Parbati's body and her severed head lying by the road, while Niladhar's body was hanging from a nearby tree. The spot is just a few yards from their relative's house where they had been staying.

When the villagers informed the police about the incident, a team from Kodinga police station reached the spot and sent the bodies for post-mortem.

Police sources said that Niladhar must have beheaded his wife in a fit of rage. Thereafter he lost his mental balance and hanged himself. Police are investigating all the aspects that might have led to the tragedy.



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
MAYURBHANJ MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, BARIPADA
Tel. No. (06792)260788, e-Mail ID mi.mayurbhanj@yahoo.co.in
"e" Procurement Notice
No 1211 Dated 20.04.2021
Identification No-E.E. M.I.D. Bpd. No.- 01/MID, MBJ/2021-22
No.A-78- The Executive Engineer, Mayurbhanj M.I. Division, Baripada on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids through e-procurement to be received in online mode only for the works as detailed in the table below.

1	Name of works	Civil Construction works as mentioned in the website
2	Total No. of works	07 Nos.
3	Estimated Cost	13.39 Lakh to 26.80 Lakh (Detail list of work Annexed)
4	Class of contractor	As Mentioned against Work.
5	Period of Completion	As Mentioned against Work.
6	Date & time of availability of Bid Document in the Portal	29.04.2021 at 10.00 AM to 10.05.2021 up to 5.00 P.M.
7	Last date/ Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	10.05.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
8	Date /time of opening of bid	11.05.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
9	Name and Address of the Officer Inviting the Bid	Executive Engineer, Mayurbhanj, M.I. Division, Baripada
10	Mode of Payment of Bid Cost	Online
11	Further details can be seen from the "e" Procurement Portal "https://tendersorissa.gov.in"	

Sd./MP Patnaik 20.04.2021
Executive Engineer, Mayurbhanj M.I. Division, Baripada
OIPR-32041/11/0002/2122

FOCUS DECARBONISATION

CLIMATE CHANGE GEOPOLITICS



By tackling climate change and biodiversity loss, everyone will be better off, thanks to better jobs, cleaner air and water, fewer pandemics, and improved health and well-being. But, as with any broad transition, the coming changes will upset some and benefit others, creating tensions within and between countries

mate targets. The CBAM, we hope, will trigger a race to the top. Though the green transition will bring about more sustainable and resilient economies, it will not automatically usher in a world with less conflict or geopolitical competition. The EU, harbouring no illusions, will need to analyse the impact of its policies across different regions, recognising the likely consequences and planning for the foreseeable risks. For example, in the Arctic, where temperatures are rising twice as fast as the global average, Russia, China, and others are already trying to establish a geopolitical foothold over territory and resources that were once under ice. While all of these powers have a strong interest in reducing tensions and "keeping the Arctic in the Arctic," the current scramble for position is putting the entire region at risk.

To Europe's south, there is enormous potential to generate energy from solar and green hydrogen, and to establish new sustainable growth models based on renewable energy. Europe will need to cooperate closely with the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere to seize these opportunities.

The EU has embarked on a green transition because science tells us that we must, economics teaches us that we should, and technology shows us that we can. We are convinced that a world run on clean technology would benefit people's well-being and political stability. But the road to get there will be fraught with risks and obstacles.

That is why the geopolitics of climate change must inform all of our thinking. Geopolitical risk is not an excuse to alter our course or reverse direction. Rather, it is an impetus to accelerate our work toward a just transition for all. The sooner we can ensure that global public goods are there for everyone to enjoy, the better.

Frans Timmermans is Executive Vice President of the European Commission. Josep Borrell is Vice President of the European Commission.

The European Union is emerging as the world's climate trailblazer. Just recently, lawmakers and European governments agreed on the European Climate Law, which anchors our climate-neutrality target in statute. With the Green Deal as our growth strategy and our 2030 emissions-reduction target of at least 55 per cent, the EU is well on the way to achieving climate neutrality by 2050. But Europe is not alone: a critical mass is developing globally as more countries strengthen their decarbonisation commitments.

Recent meetings with John Kerry, the US special presidential envoy for climate, confirmed that the EU and the US are once again working closely to mobilise an international coalition around the goal of substantially raising climate ambitions for November's United Nations climate summit (COP26) in Glasgow.

There is no time to lose. Unchecked climate change – with its devastating droughts, famines, floods, and mass dislocations – would fuel new migration waves and significantly increase the frequency and intensity of conflicts over water, arable land, and natural resources. To those who complain about the large investments needed to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss, we would simply point out that inaction would cost far more.

By tackling the climate and biodiversity crises, everyone will be better off, thanks to better jobs, cleaner air and water, fewer pandemics, and improved health and well-being. But, as with any broad transition, the coming changes will upset some and benefit others, creating tensions within and between countries. As we accelerate the transition from a hydrocarbon-based economy to a sustainable one based on renewable energy, we cannot be blind to these geopolitical effects.

In particular, the transition itself will drive power shifts away from those controlling and exporting fossil fuels, and toward those mastering the green technologies of the future. For example, phasing out fossil fuels will significantly improve the EU's strategic position, not least by re-

ducing its reliance on energy imports. In 2019, 87 per cent of our oil and 74 per cent of our gas came from abroad, requiring us to import more than €320 billion (\$386 billion) worth of fossil-fuel products that year.

Moreover, with the green transition, the old strategic choke points – starting with the Strait of Hormuz – will become less relevant, and thus less dangerous. These seaborne passages have preoccupied military strategists for decades. But as the oil age passes, they will be less subject to competition for access and control by regional and global powers.

Phasing out energy imports will also help to reduce the income and geopolitical power of countries like Russia, which currently relies heavily on the EU market. Of course, the loss of this key source of Russian revenue could lead to instability in the near term, particularly if the Kremlin sees it as an invitation to adventurism. In the long term, though, a world run on clean energy could also be a world of cleaner government, because traditional fossil-fuel exporters will need to diversify their economies and free themselves from the 'oil

course' and the corruption it so often fosters.

At the same time, however, the green transition itself will require scarce raw materials, some of which are concentrated in countries that have already shown a willingness to use natural resources as foreign-policy tools. This growing vulnerability will need to be addressed in two ways: by recycling more of these key resources, and by forging broader alliances with exporting countries.

Moreover, as long as other countries' climate commitments are not on par with our own, there will be a risk of "carbon leakage." That is why the EU is working on a carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM). We know that some countries, even among our allies, are concerned about this. But we want to be clear: setting a price on imported carbon-intensive goods is not meant to be punitive or protectionist.

In addition to ensuring that our plans are compliant with World Trade Organisation rules, we will engage with our international partners early on to explain what we have in mind. Our goal is to facilitate cooperation and help others reach their cli-

Business of Vaccine

Let the games begin! This used to be the Roman phrase for letting the hungry lions enter the arena to fight slaves. Today, in India, we seem to be going back to the Roman mindset. If we look back into history, India as well as the world has encountered many epidemics. Spanish flu, cholera, plague, swine flu, small pox as well as diseases that do not strictly fall into epidemic category such as malaria, polio, tuberculosis, leprosy and such have always made the administration dole out free medical assistance in the form of vaccines, medicines and hospitalization. There have been reports about patients of different castes and religions receiving differential treatment during the Spanish flu pandemic in India. However, there is no record of government fixing prices of essential lifesaving vaccines or medicines for epidemics and large scale contagious diseases. Children receiving polio drops have been common knowledge for long many years. Similarly, leprosy patients being administered MDT tablets is also known. All such medicines have always been free for citizens globally and not just in India. Rather, India has gone a few steps ahead by ensuring leprosy patients take their MDT tablets on a regular basis by involving the VLWs (Village Level Workers) in distribution of the medicines.

Move forward to the present day. India is hitting global headlines because of dire shortage of not only oxygen and hospital beds but also vaccines during this Covid-19 pandemic. While some claim this is a second wave with double and triple mutants, others assert the first wave continues while the virus is constantly mutating. With this in the backdrop, the Supreme Court of India has suddenly woken up to the situation and is claiming that it can no longer remain a mute spectator. Notably, the SC could not respond in time to the plight of citizens, especially the migrant labour force, after the sudden national shutdown announced by Prime Minister Modi last year. This year too, after a long delay, the SC has asked the government to give complete details based on which the costing of the vaccines have been computed. The exercise for the life saving vaccination of every citizen has been under discussion in all countries across the world. Interestingly, all nations are offering free double dose of the vaccines to their citizens. India, which till the other day, was boasting of its ability to produce large number of vaccines and claimed it could also export vaccines worldwide, is now failing to meet its home demand. On top of that, the unspoken promise of free vaccination has now sunk into discussion of cost per unit. The shortage of vaccines is evident in a state like Orissa where AstraZeneca's Covishield produced by Serum Institute of India has completely disappeared even in a place like Cuttack. State government has officially declared almost all vaccination centres shut. That apart, private hospitals too have depleted their stocks and are turning away people who wish to have their first or even their second jabs.

It is necessary to analyse why such a situation has arisen. The moment people in power demanded that the Central government permit releasing 50 per cent of the vaccines to the open market, the free vaccines simply vanished from the centres. Most citizens would be aware that government supplied free medicines are usually plundered and sold to the black market by the concerned officials. It is also a known fact that even gauze, cotton, syringes and such supplies to government hospitals find their way to the select few medicine shops strategically located across the street. Now, with the situation of life and death in a balance for everyone, the concept of half paid and half free will create an immense scope for huge amounts of illegal money to be made. In the process, those who can afford the jabs will be forced to pay a much higher price while majority of the poor and indigent will not be able to access the free portion of the jabs that is their due. It needs no reminding that most families in India have single bread earners. The bulk of employed youth in urban and semi-urban India are barely able to make both ends meet. It would be near impossible for this segment to afford vaccines at a cost of Rs 600 or Rs 1200 for themselves and their families. Apart from this, rural India has a majority of population living below poverty line. Resultantly, these huge sections of citizens would opt out of a high cost vaccine and take chances with their lives. This will ensure the pandemic continues in India for a long time and extracts a heavy toll on human lives and the economy.



Only the soul that is naked and unashamed, can be pure and innocent, even as Adam was in the primal garden of humanity.

SRI AUROBINDO

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WISDOM CORNER

- Ten people who speak make more noise than ten thousand who are silent. NAPOLEON BONAPARTE
- The fairest thing in nature, a flower, still has its roots in earth and manure. DH LAWRENCE
- Let every dawn be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as its close. JOHN RUSKIN

WORDSWORTH

Mournival

A mournival beats a gleeck. If we were playing poker, you might well comment equivalently that four of a kind beats three. We are, indeed, in the realm of card games, though gleeck, which takes its name from the threesome group in it, is one you have probably never heard of. People are first recorded playing it in England under that name early in the 1530s, though Henry VIII's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, was reportedly fond of it in her youth, which would take it back to the beginning of the century or perhaps a little earlier. In fact, it's almost certainly the same game as the earlier French glic. It was a gambling game for three players, often called halfpenny gleeck, penny gleeck or twopenny gleeck, whose names refer to the monetary value of each point scored, not the total bet. An English penny was worth a lot at the time, so losing could be expensive – in 1646, the poet and writer John Hall warned that "gleeke requires a vigilant memory and a long purse". Samuel Pepys recorded in his Diary in February 1662, "We played at gleeke, and I won 9s. 6d. clear, the most that ever I won in my life. I pray God it may not tempt me to play again." One phase of the game involved declaring any gleecks or mournivals of aces or court cards that you had in your hand, which gained money from each opponent. In penny gleeck, for example, a mournival of aces got you eight pence from each of the other two players. Mournival comes most probably from old French mornifole for a group of four cards, which may be the same word as that for a slap in the face (which might be the figurative effect of finding an opponent has one). Gleeck is also French, perhaps from an older Dutch word that means "like". It's unconnected with the obsolete English word of the same spelling, contemporary with the card game sense, that refers to a joke or playing a trick on somebody.

Moxie

Moxie, usually so spelt, was (and in New England it would seem still is) the name of a non-alcoholic drink, first produced in substantial quantities by the Moxie Nerve Food Company of Lowell, Massachusetts in about 1884. Its founder, Dr Augustin Thompson, originally developed it in the 1870s as a patent medicine or nerve tonic, claiming it cured paralysis, loss of manhood, and softening of the brain. The name may come from the Algonquin Indian word maski- "medicine" which became moxie as a name for wintergreen, one of the early constituents of this bitter drink. Moxie was the first carbonated and bottled soft drink that was widely distributed in America (just beating Dr Pepper and Coca-Cola), being sold from "Moxie bottle wagons" and later "Moxiemobiles".

IN JEST THIS

Appreciate your benefits, don't exploit them



Melvin Durai

MANY PEOPLE, OF COURSE, HAVE CALLED OFF SICK FROM WORK WITHOUT A TRULY LEGITIMATE REASON, SUCH AS A WORLD CUP MATCH ON TV

If you're a full-time employee of a large organisation, you probably enjoy a number of benefits, including paid holidays, sick leave and maternity leave. These benefits vary widely from employer to employer, as well as from country to country. The movie streaming company Netflix, for example, offers both fathers and mothers up to one year of paid leave after the birth or adoption of a child. There is a catch though: you have to allow Netflix to come to your home and record the reality series "First Year with Baby."

Actually, the only catch seems to be that any parental leave that is longer than 30 days needs to be approved by the human resources department. All you need to do is give HR a call. First you'll have to speak to Miguel in Manila, who will soon transfer you to Manoj in Mumbai, who will transfer you to Marisol in Mexico City, who will put you on hold for 30 minutes. Just as you're about to hang up, you'll hear a voice that says, "Hello, this is Manuel in Madrid. May I help you?"

In other words, it might not be easy to be approved for a full year of parental leave. But even if cer-

tain benefits aren't always easy to get, at least you have an opportunity to get them. If you're lucky enough to have them, you shouldn't take them for granted.

Employees of Zomato, the food delivery company, should be pleased that the company introduced a policy in 2020 that offers women up to 10 days of period leave a year. Even if you're a man, you should be happy to work for a company that cares about its employees. Today, it offers time off to recover from periods; tomorrow, it might offer time off to recover from mother-in-law visits.

It's also important to use benefits only when necessary, to not take advantage of them, to show your employer that you can be trusted. Many people, of course, have called off sick from work



NETFLIX

without a truly legitimate reason, such as a World Cup match on TV. They make sure they use up all the sick days they're eligible for, even if they have to risk running into a co-worker at the movie theater.

Taking advantage of the system may make it harder for other employees to legitimately gain access to a benefit. But that wasn't a concern for a bank employee in Taiwan who ensured that he'll never get the "Employee of the Year" award.

Employees in Taiwan are required to give employees eight days of leave when they get married. Most employees take advantage of this policy only once in their lifetimes, unless they happen to get divorced and remarried. But in 2020, the bank employee decided to get married not once, not twice, not

thrice, but four times! By doing so, he was able to qualify for 32 days of paid leave.

This man devised a way to take advantage of the policy four times, while also ensuring that he didn't have any ex-wives.

On April 6, the man married his bride for the first time. Ten days later, on April 16, the couple got a divorce, only to remarry the next day, allowing the man to qualify for another eight days of paid leave. The second marriage ended in divorce on April 23, but the couple reconciled in time to remarry the next day, giving the groom another eight days of leave. On May 11, they divorced again, before remarrying the next day, allowing the bank employee to get eight more days of leave.

While the employee was technically eligible for 32 days, the bank did not approve his application and he had to appeal to the Labour Department. The case has not yet been resolved. But needless to say, the employee would be wise to start working on his résumé. If he and his wife are thinking of having children, he may want to apply to Netflix.

Rap on the knuckles

Sir, Politicians are not ready to buy the theory that rallies ignited or augmented the second Covid wave. West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, two states that went to polls, are seeing a rush in the number of Covid patients. The politicians are in denial, but the High Courts of the country are leaving no stone unturned in taking them to task. Seen in this backdrop, the Madras High Court severely lambasting the Election Commission (EC) for allowing massive congregation in political rallies is welcome, apt and timely. The HC has reflected the people's sentiments by holding the EC 'singularly responsible' for the Covid situation. The court went to the extent of saying that the EC should be 'booked for murder'. When the top election body permits huge rallies, the question paramount at the back of its mind should be whether such rallies are feasible under the circumstances. The answer should have obviously been 'no'. But the EC did not see the writing on the wall. It cannot abdicate its responsibilities by shifting the onus on the police because it is preposterous to expect the latter to enforce discipline among the large crowd, majority of whom were without masks, and cared two hoots for social distancing. The HC wants strict personal protection protocols in Tamil Nadu on the counting day, or else, it would 'stop the counting process'. Very strong words, but appropriate rap on the knuckles for the EC.

Flattened curve?

Sir, Daily COVID-19 cases in Odisha are fluctuating between 6,000 and 6,700 over the last six days. The figures of April 27 saw a 9 per cent drop from April 26. Also, 7-day average and the actual figures of April 27 are the same which shows that the curve has flattened and will move southwards now. Strict measures to control the second surge taken by government are to be continued till the situation is totally under control.

Gopal Mittal, BHUBANESWAR

Save street children

Sir, The Tourism Finance Corporation of India Limited and an NGO have started an initiative called School on Wheels to provide COVID education, food, medical assistance, and necessary support to street children in Bhubaneswar. This is a praiseworthy move to empower street children in these harsh times. Joint efforts can bring happiness to the lives of street children. Amit Singh Kushwaha, SATNA (MP)

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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Maha faces uphill task in vax drive

THE STATE MAY GET SII VACCINE DOSES ONLY AFTER MAY 20

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 27: Sparking worries, the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) has informed the Maharashtra government that it can supply Covishield vaccines to the state only after May 20, Health Minister Rajesh Tope said here Tuesday.

Tope said the availability of vaccines remains an uphill task and the state needs at least one week's quota delivered at one go in order to inoculate the maximum number of people.

"The SII has informed the state government that it can supply the Covishield vaccines only after May 20," Tope told mediapersons, even as the state has only 72 hours left before rolling out the vaccination drive for people in the 18-45 age group from May 1.

Expressing concern over the development, the state spokesperson of the Congress, Sachin Sawant, said that SII's stance that it cannot supply the vaccines till May 20 since all stocks have been booked by the Modi government would put question mark on the upcoming inoculation drive for the 18-45 age group.

Slamming Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sawant said that this is not the time to discuss lack of availability of vaccines.

"Where is your strategy? Modiji has no clue about supply of vaccines. The Centre has restricted the supplies to only two companies, and now it wants the states to buy from these two companies for the 18-45 age group," Sawant pointed out.

Since vaccines are in short sup-



BMC medical staff administer COVID-19 vaccines to beneficiaries at Nair Hospital, in Mumbai, Tuesday.

ply and the Centre will take care of the 45-plus population, he sought to know whether the PM can set a target date for completing the vaccination drive in India.

On revised prices announced recently by the SII and the government-run Bharat Biotech International Ltd (BBIL), Tope said that the Centre's intervention asking them to slash the prices may help.

While SII's Covishield will be

sold to the states at ₹ 400/dose, BBIL will sell its Covaxin for ₹ 600/dose, and the prices shall be even higher for the private hospitals.

Tope said that the state has an estimated 5.71 crore people in the 18-45 age-group and needs around 12 crore vaccines over the next several months.

"At the prevailing rates, the state will have to shell out around ₹ 7,500 crore for inoculating the entire 18-

45 age group population. In this situation, the state government will bear the cost of vaccinating the economically weaker sections of society," Tope said.

Earlier Tuesday, Health Secretary Pradeep Vyas sent letters to the two companies wanting to know how many doses they can supply each month for the next six months for the massive inoculation drive scheduled to begin from May 1.

Goa CM, Health Minister differ over lockdown as Covid spike intensifies

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, April 27: Goa's battle against the raging Covid-19 pandemic appears to have reignited a fresh bout of one-up-manship between Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Health Minister Vishwajit Rane.

Traditional political rivals before Rane formally joined the BJP in 2017, the see-sawing relationship between the two leading politicians, who are anchoring Goa's fight against the steep surge in Covid-19 infections, has played out in the open once again over the issue of imposing lockdown in the state.

Rane Monday made a plea for imposition of a Maharashtra and Karnataka-like lockdown in Goa, on a day when the state registered a record 2,321 fresh cases and 38 deaths.

"Goa definitely needs to go under lockdown on the lines of other states like Maharashtra and Karnataka for a particular period. More than economic activities, the lives of the people matter to us," Rane had said.

The Health Minister even tweeted that Goa could stand to lose more than 200-300 lives "within the next 10 days" if the lockdown was not imposed. The tweet was later deleted.

When asked for a response to the comment made by Rane seeking a lockdown, Sawant said: "You can ask him about it."

Sawant has, however, remained steadfast in his position that a lockdown is not feasible yet and the measure would be considered if



the situation in the state deteriorates further.

The Chief Minister for now has found the backing of the state's business and industry captains, who have thrown their weight behind Sawant over the issue of skipping lockdown.

A lockdown, said the president of the Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Manoj Caculo, is unnecessary, while restraint is essential, as he slammed wedding parties and election related public gatherings.

"We strongly support the CM in his decision to keep economic activities rolling by avoiding a complete lockdown. We need to keep businesses running to ensure that all the employees are paid. It's the uncontrolled social and political events that are responsible for the spread," Caculo said.

"Look at the videos of election results day or wedding parties... are the protocols being followed? Let the

government impose strict restrictions on them," Caculo said.

Rane's popular cry for imposing a lockdown has, however, once again exposed the rift between him and the Chief Minister, that too at a time of crisis.

Opposition politicians like Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party MLA Sudin Dhawalikar have pitched their support behind Rane and his demand for a lockdown for now.

"Our health infrastructure is overburdened, and as per reports from the health department and senior doctors, we are expecting to witness more cases and higher mortality rate if the situation remains the same. We need to prioritise human life over economy. We can bring back the economy, but not the dead," Dhawalikar said.

Meanwhile, state Congress president Girish Chodankar has accused Sawant and Rane of trying to score brownie points over each other at a time of a crisis.

Maha govt floats global tender to procure Remdesivir, oxygen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 27: The Maharashtra government has floated a global tender to procure 10 lakh Remdesivir vials, 40,000 oxygen concentrators and 25,000 metric tonnes of oxygen in the wake of a surge in COVID-19 cases, state Health Minister Rajesh Tope said Tuesday.

ing gas as buffer stock for emergency use," he said.

All powers have been delegated to a three-member committee for the procurement of these quoted items, he said. The government has given three days to the bidders to quote their prices.

"You can also call it an expression of interest, where we will come to know about the expectations of

Maharashtra is facing shortage of the liquid medical oxygen and Remdesivir injections are in high demand for treating COVID patients amid the surge in cases of the viral infection



Bidders have been given three days to quote their prices for the supply of these items, he told reporters here.

"A global tender has been floated for 10 lakh Remdesivir vials, 40,000 oxygen concentrators, 132 PSA (pressure swing absorption) plants for oxygen, 25,000 MT of liquid medical oxygen and 27 oxygen ISO tanks for storing the life-sav-

suppliers," the minister said.

Maharashtra is facing shortage of the liquid medical oxygen and Remdesivir injections are in high demand for treating COVID-19 patients amid the surge in cases of the viral infection. Monday, the state reported 48,700 new COVID-19 cases, taking the total count of infections to 43,43,727, while 524 deaths pushed the toll to 65,284, as per official figures.

SC panel against Goa rail project

The panel, in its report, says the project will destroy the fragile eco-system of the Western Ghats, an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, April 27: The Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee has said it does not find any justification for undertaking the rail double-tracking project in Goa, which is being opposed by environmental experts.

The panel, in its report April 23, said a project of this nature will destroy the fragile eco-system of the Western Ghats, which is an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot and also one of the most important wildlife corridors of the country.

"Moreover, this doubling project will only be marginally enhancing the capacity of the most inefficient section of the railway network passing through the ecologically sensitive and bio-diversity rich tiger reserve, two wildlife sanctuaries and a national park," the committee said in its 110-page report.

"In these circumstances it is recommended for the consideration of this Honble Court to revoke the permission granted by the standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) for doubling of the railway track passing through the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats..." it said.

Several local groups had raised objections over three linear projects, including double-tracking of the South Western Railway line, four-



Several local groups had raised objections over three linear projects - doubling of the South Western Railway line, four-laning of an NH and a laying of a power transmission line by GTTPL

laning of a national highway and a laying of a power transmission line by the Goa Tamnar Transmission Project Limited (GTTPL).

The projects were cleared by the NBWL's standing committee despite apprehensions that they would severely affect the bio-diversity of the Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary and the National Park at Mollem, both located on the Goa-Karnataka border.

The committee was formed following an application filed before the Supreme Court by the Goa Foundation NGO.

The committee was formed following an application filed before the Supreme Court by the Goa Foundation NGO.

The Congress had claimed the railway line was being double-tracked to allow the movement of coal from Goa's Mormugao Port Trust to Karnataka.

Leader of Opposition in the Goa Assembly, Digambar Kamat, issued a statement on Tuesday saying, "the report of the Central Empowered Committee has vindicated our stand that the BJP is all out to sell Goa to Crony Club for making fortune by destroying the environment and identity of Goa."

Kamat demanded Chief Minister Pramod Sawant clear his stand and write to the Centre to stop all the three projects.

Goa court verdict in Tejpal case May 12

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, April 27: A sessions court in Goa Tuesday said it will pronounce the verdict in the Tarun Tejpal case May 12.

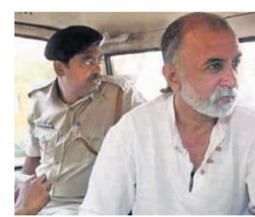
The former Tehelka editor-in-chief is accused of sexually assaulting a female colleague inside the elevator of a luxury hotel in Goa in 2013.

The additional district court was to pronounce the verdict on Tuesday Judge Kshama Joshi adjourned the verdict to May 12.

Public prosecutor Fransisco Tavares said the judge made the announcement without citing a reason for the postponement of the judgement.

The Goa police registered an FIR against Tejpal in November 2013 following which he was arrested. He has been out on bail since May 2014.

The Goa crime branch had filed a chargesheet against Tejpal.



He faced trial under IPC sections 341 (wrongful restraint), 342 (wrongful confinement), 354 (assault or criminal force with intent to outrage modesty), 354-A (sexual harassment), 354-B (assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe), 376(2)(f) (person in position of authority over women, committing rape) and 376(2)(k) (rape by person in position of control).

He had earlier moved the Bombay High Court, seeking a stay on the framing of charges against him, but his petition was dismissed.

Maha govt orders probe against Param Bir Singh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 27: The Maharashtra government has ordered a 'preliminary inquiry' into corruption allegations against former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh.

Singh, now transferred to the Home Guards, had accused then state home minister Anil Deshmukh of corruption and also filed a PIL against him.

The state home department, by an order dated April 20, asked Director General of Police Sanjay Pandey to conduct a 'preliminary inquiry' into a complaint lodged by assistant police inspector Anup Dange against Singh February 2. Dange's complaint accused Singh of being involved in corruption. The home department order became available Tuesday.

Pande has also been asked to look into a report prepared by assistant police commissioner (crime) which was submitted April 7.

"A preliminary inquiry report based on all the points raised by Dange should be prepared and submitted to the state government at the earliest," the order said.

Singh was shunted out from the post of Mumbai police commissioner last month in the aftermath of a bomb scare outside industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence here, the murder of businessman Mansukh Hiran, and the arrest of police officer Sachin Waze by the NIA in both the cases.

Singh then made a sensational allegation against Deshmukh, alleging that he had asked police officers including Waze to collect ₹ 100 crore from bars and restaurants.

Social group ensures dignified farewell to Covid victims

WITH DEATHS INCREASED IN THE SECOND WAVE OF THE VIRAL INFECTION, THE GROUP IS NOW WORKING 24X7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, April 27: A social welfare group is working round-the-clock with the Pune civic body to give a dignified farewell to COVID-19 victims, irrespective of their religion, and claimed to have performed the last rites of over 1,200 victims since the pandemic began last year.

The organisation comprises about 40 members, including some auto-rickshaw drivers and mobile technicians, in the age group of 22 to 64 years.

A senior group member said their workload has increased during the current second wave of COVID-19.

"We have been helping conduct the last rites of COVID-19 victims, irrespective of their religion, for the last 14 to 15 months. So far, we have buried or cremated over 1,200 victims in Pune city and adjoining villages in the Maharashtra district,"



Ummat Foundation member Javed Khan told PTI.

"Many a times, family members or relatives are unable to come, but we ensure that the last rites are conducted with all respect and as

per their tradition," Khan said.

He said the number of deaths due to COVID-19 has increased in the second wave of the viral infection, and their group members are now working 24X7.

Two days ago, they got a call about the death of an elderly member of a Brahmin family, which was in isolation after contracting the viral infection, he said.

"Our volunteers in PPE kits reached there with a body bag, brought the mortal remains to a crematorium and conducted the last rites as per their rituals," he said.

Sharfuddin Shaikh (64), the oldest member of the group, said their work was all about 'humanity' and the objective was to

give the dead person a decent farewell in the absence of relatives and loved ones.

Many a times, family members or relatives are unable to come, but we ensure that the last rites are conducted with all respect and as per their tradition.

JAVED KHAN | UMMAT FOUNDATION

national

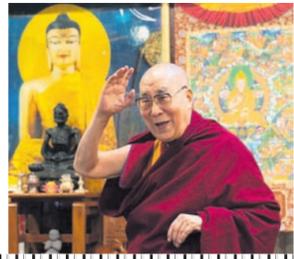


This is the time for the armed forces to rise to the occasion and support the civil administration in creating Covid mitigation facilities in a time-bound manner. Timely support at this juncture is important

GEN BIPIN RAWAT | CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

DALAI LAMA GETS 2ND JAB; CONTRIBUTES TO PM-CARES

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama Tuesday has received his second dose of Covid vaccine at his residence and announced to contribute to the PM-Cares Fund as a token of solidarity with fellow Indian brothers and sisters



of the day quote

The Bengal experience -- the ongoing Assembly elections in the State are spread over eight phases -- has taught us that even multi-phase elections do not prevent violence, hatred and personal attacks

T S KRISHNAMURTHY | FORMER CEC

I welcome the decision of the ECI banning celebrations and processions of electoral victories. I have directed all state units of BJP to strictly adhere to this decision. All karykarts of BJP are using their energies to help the ones in need in this hour of crisis

J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

In the first wave everything was centralised and now the government says that health being a state subject - you decide on your own (how to arrange, pay and administer the vaccine), and on lockdowns too

SACHIN PILOT | SENIOR CONG LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Soldier kills self

Jammu: A soldier reportedly shot himself dead Tuesday in an army centre in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district. Police sources said the slain soldier was identified as Asangeppa Madar belonging to Karnataka. He reportedly used his service rifle to shoot himself inside an army centre in Banihal area. "After hearing gunshots, his colleagues rushed to the spot where he was lying in a pool of blood. He was immediately shifted to the hospital where doctors said he was dead on arrival." "An FIR has been lodged and investigation started to ascertain all the facts," police sources said.

O2 black marketing

New Delhi: Three men were arrested from south Delhi for allegedly hoarding oxygen, nitrogen cylinders and flow meters and selling them at inflated prices, police said Tuesday. Mohit (23) is a resident of Jharoda Kalan, Sumit Saini (33) lives in Gurgaon, and Anzar Ahmed (41) is from Shaheen Bagh, Okhla, they said. "Monday, police got a tip-off that a person was coming near Ghitorni metro station for selling the oxygen cylinders at high rates. Thereafter, a trap was laid and a car, driven by Mohit, was checked," Deputy Commissioner of Police (south) Atul Kumar Thakur said.

Beef seized, 2 held

Thane: Two people were arrested allegedly with a consignment of 1,500 kilograms of beef being transported illegally from Nashik to Thane, police said Tuesday. A tempo was stopped for checking by a police team on Mumbai-Nashik Highway at around 2 am Sunday, an official said. "We found 1,500 kilograms of beef worth Rs 1.8 lakh in the tempo. The vehicle's driver Wasim Attar and cleaner Sameer Shaikh were arrested.

Poll candidate killed

Bhadoli (UP): A candidate in the Uttar Pradesh panchayat polls was beaten to death at a village here, police said. Lalji Gautam (51) was attacked by members of his rival group at Dudwa Dharampuri village Monday night, Circle Officer Prayank Jai said. He died Tuesday at his house, the officer said, adding that Gautam was a candidate for the post of village head. Four persons have been detained in the case and a probe is on in the matter, Jai said.

HC, CENTRE SLAM DELHI GOVT OVER O2 CRISIS MGMT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: The Delhi government has come under scathing attack from both the High Court and the Centre over its handling of the medical oxygen crisis that has hit COVID-19 patients here with the former saying Tuesday if the state cannot handle the situation it will ask the latter to take over gas refiller units as it can't let people die. "Our confidence (in you) has shaken. Mr Rahul Mehra (Delhi government counsel) get your house in order," the Delhi High Court said, observing that the Delhi government has left re-fillers "to have a free run" even as hospitals "are crying hoarse for oxygen".

"Enough is enough. If you can't do this, tell us, we will ask the central government to take over these (oxygen refilling) plants. We can't let people die," a bench of justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli observed, as it came down heavily on the AAP government over its "failure" to check black marketing of oxygen cylinders. "The problem lies with the Delhi government."

In a strong criticism of the Kejriwal government for its alleged failure to arrange tankers for transportation of oxygen for the city's hospitals overstretched by mounting COVID-19 cases, the Centre said pro-active actions by it on a "war footing" could

Delhi hospitals to reopen admissions

New Delhi: After days of scrambling for oxygen, hospitals in Delhi Tuesday said they are in a comparatively better situation in terms of supply and have reopened admissions. Amid the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the national capital, medical facilities across the city and its suburbs put out desperate pleas for help on social media and other platforms last week, flagging their dwindling stock of oxygen. Dr D K Baluja, medical director of Jaipur Golden Hospital, said the hospital has enough supply to last the day.

have "avoided tragic incidents".

In a hard-hitting letter to Delhi Chief Secretary Vijay Dev, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla also claimed that the Delhi government's efforts to resolve logistical issues for procuring oxygen have "not been up to the mark" at a time when other states and union territories have been making earnest and professional efforts on the matter. Bhalla wrote the letter April 25. However, Tuesday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal told a media briefing that the huge demand for the life-saving gas witnessed last week amid a surge in coronavirus cases has been addressed and the situation has improved significantly in the past two days.



Enforcing COVID norms states' responsibility: EC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: Facing flak over its alleged failure to ensure COVID-19 appropriate behaviour during poll campaigns, the Election Commission Tuesday said enforcing provisions of the law to fight the pandemic is the responsibility of state disaster management bodies.

The commission also asserted that it has continuously directed state and district authorities to enforce instructions of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

The poll panel underlined that on "no occasion" it takes over the task of a state disaster management authority (SDMA) for enforcement of instructions issued in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.



The Election Commission's (EC) remarks came a day after the Madras High Court made harsh observations against it for failing to enforce COVID appropriate behaviour during poll campaigns.

Elections have been held in Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and the Union Territory of Puducherry. The last of the eight phase West Bengal polls is Thursday. Counting for votes for all the assembly elections is May 2.



IAF airlift the Oxygen containers from Bangkok last night. The airlift is being coordinated by MHA. It will enhance oxygen availability amid current COVID19 surge

Covishield, Covaxin effective against 'Indian strain' of virus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: Covishield and Covaxin - the two coronavirus vaccines currently in use in India - have efficacy against the 'Indian strain' and show "milder" illness in case of infection post vaccination, a senior scientist said on Tuesday citing preliminary results of a study.

Anurag Agrawal, the Director of the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), said the study on effectiveness of the available vaccines on the B.1.617 variant of SARS-CoV2 suggests that post vaccination, the infections are milder. The B.1.617 variant is also being called a 'double mutant' or



the 'Indian strain'. "Initial positive neutralisation studies of B.1.617, with both post-Covaxin or Covishield sera, are correlatable with milder disease during post-vaccination breakthrough infections. This is a positive while we get quantitative data for better understanding of infection protection," Agrawal tweeted. IGIB is an institute under the Council for Scientific and Industrial

Research (CSIR). Another study by the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad under the CSIR suggests that early results using in-vitro neutralisation assay show that both convalescent (prior infection) sera and Covishield-vaccinated sera offer protection against the B.1.617 variant.

"Very preliminary but encouraging result: #Covishield protects against #B1617. Early results using in vitro neutralization assay show that both convalescent (prior infection) sera and Covishield vaccinated sera offer protection against the B.1.617 variant, aka #DoubleMutant." CCMB Director Rakesh Mishra tweeted last week.

Prone position helped octogenarian beat Covid

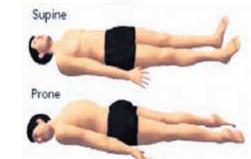
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Goarakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), April 27: As Covid patients across the state gasp for oxygen, an 82-year-old woman from Goarakhpur has managed to bring up her oxygen levels by lying in a prone position.

She has recovered from Covid without an oxygen cylinder and is setting an example for others.

Vidya Srivastava from Alinagar in Goarakhpur tested positive for Corona earlier this month.

Her elder son, Hari Mohan Srivastava, said, "My mother tested positive and we kept her in home isolation. One day her oxygen levels dipped to 79 and everyone in the family was worried. However, we did not give up and made her lie down in the prone position with stomach down towards bed. Gradually, the situa-



tion improved and the oxygen level rose to 94 within four days."

Hari Mohan spent four days in his mother's room and monitored her oxygen levels regularly. She was not given an oxygen cylinder. The entire family then tested positive but we did not lose hope and tried to keep each other in a positive frame of mind. We took precautions and medicines after taking advice from the doctor. Now, finally the entire family has recovered from the deadly virus, he said.

Indians suffer from mental stress as Covid resurges

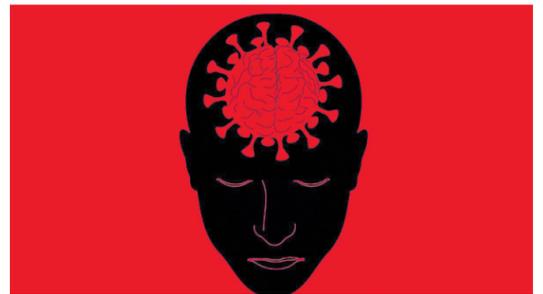
THE LOCKDOWN-RELATED STRESS, IN 2020, REPORTEDLY CAUSED OVER 300 CASES OF SUICIDES FROM MARCH 19 TILL MAY 2

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 27: The second wave of Covid-19 has turned more lethal, infecting more people and taking more lives. Besides causing financial and physical problems, it has also affected people mentally, creating panic in their minds.

The uncertainty about their present and future, coupled with government mandates to stay at home, is all exacerbating mental illness. The feeling of being cooped up at home, distant from their loved ones, devoid of social support and fear about new variants is increasing mental illness, according to mental health experts.

"The current situations are affecting the mental well-being on account of the uncertainty of the present and the future, the impact on the physical health of the self and loved ones, impact on work and



productivity, and as a result, an effect on the relations that surround them," Dr Samir Parikh, Director, Department of Mental Health and Behavioural Sciences, Fortis Healthcare, told IANS.

While the current scenario is affecting all individuals, regardless of their age, gender or other demographics, more adolescents and

adults have reached out seeking help for mental health issues.

"Since the beginning of April, there has been a rise in tele-psychiatric consultations by at least 20 per cent. While the face to face consultations have plateaued, tele-consultations requests for seeking help have steadily increased," Dr Satish Kumar, Consultant Clinical

Psychologist, Manipal Hospitals, Bengaluru, told IANS.

The most prominent problem reported by people is anxiety and depression. Teens are more stressed out about their future plans, resulting in an existential crisis while the adults are overwhelmed by the fear of survival, financial insecurity and job security.

These fears are coupled by "Covid anxiety/pandemic anxiety. People fear that they are going to die, increasing their death anxiety issues", Kumar said.

"People are also worried about being spreaders and causing harm to their loved ones. Even those people who never had mental health issues, even in their family history, are now reaching out for medical support as they are facing a lot of emotional stress," Kumar.

"Many experience guilt around not being able to adequately support

those around them. These experiences can impact people's sense of self, their confidence and belief in the worldviews they hold as well as their positivity, optimism and resilience to cope with situations," Parikh said.

To cope with the current situation, Parikh suggested that one must: focus on the here and now; try and look at the things that you can control; attempt to maintain a routine and follow a balanced schedule; integrate relaxing and recreational activities to help unwind and relax; not engage in excessive information overload to not feel overwhelmed; focus on the small good things that will allow you to maintain positivity in your thoughts; speak to people around and maintain social connectedness; and ensure to follow all safety protocols and maintain Covid appropriate behaviour.

Indians doubt efficacy of domestic drugs: Govt to SC

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 27: The Union government has informed the Supreme Court that the people in the country have developed a perception that only imported drugs can effectively treat the inflammatory burst medical condition in COVID-19 patients and the domestically produced drugs cannot.

In an affidavit filed in the suo motu case before the Supreme Court on the COVID-19 crisis, the Union government submitted that Tocilizumab Injection, manufactured by a company situated in Switzerland, is approved in the country for treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. The provision of its administration to COVID-19 patients is listed only as an investigation therapy in the national clinical management protocol for COVID for severe cases.

The Union government also informed the apex court that there are other domestically produced alternative drugs available for the treatment of COVID-19 which are either equivalent to or better than Tocilizumab such as Itulizumab, dexamethasone, methyl prednisolone etc to treat a medical condition which exactly the Tocilizumab injection treats.

"Recently a public perception is development that, being an imported drug, it is only Tocilizumab injection which can effectively treat the inflammatory burst medical condition in COVID-19 patients and not the domestic drugs. This is a wrong perception," the Centre told SC.

The Union government contended that the production of Remdesivir drug has been upped in light of the growing demand for the same during the second surge of COVID-19.

Army Chief visits eastern Ladakh and Siachen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: Army Chief Gen MM Naravane Tuesday visited eastern Ladakh and Siachen and reviewed India's operational preparedness in the strategically key sectors, official sources said.

He was accompanied by Lt Gen YK Joshi, Army Commander of the Northern Command, and Lt Gen PGK Menon, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Leh-based Fire and Fury Corps.

The sources said Gen Naravane interacted with troops and complimented them for their steadfastness and high morale while being deployed in some of the harshest terrain, altitude and weather conditions.

The Chief of Army Staff was later briefed by Lt Gen Menon on the prevailing security situation and operational preparedness in the region. He is scheduled to return to the national capital on Wednesday.



The Modi government must realise that the battle is against Covid, it is not against the Congress or other political opponents
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

FREE HOME DELIVERY OF DAIRY PRODUCTS

To stop the surge in coronavirus infections, a complete lockdown has been imposed in Indore. A major decision has now been taken to provide free home delivery of milk and dairy products by Indore Cooperative Milk so that the general public do not face any problem of getting everyday essential food services.



of the day quote

The holy occasion of Hanuman Jayanti is the day to recall the spirit of compassion and dedication of Lord Hanuman. I wish that his blessings are always upon us in the continuing fight against the COVID pandemic
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

India is better prepared mentally and physically this year with more experience to beat the COVID-19 pandemic as compared to 2020
HARSH VARDHAN | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

Fake data is being given to show fewer deaths, while a rush is being witnessed at crematoriums and graveyards. It is the government's failure that even BJP MPs, MLAs are not satisfied with the current state of affairs. The number of doctors, hospitals and other facilities given by the BJP is mostly fake
AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

World joins hands to rescue India

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 27: Nations across the world have come forward to help India in its fight against the raging second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, which is extremely virulent and has ravaged the country in the past few weeks.

As per official sources, the US, the UK, France, Ireland, Australia, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, the UAE, Kuwait and Russia have assured medical aid to India with much of the support on its way.

The UK is sending 495 oxygen concentrators, 120 non-invasive ventilators and 20 manual ventilators this week. Out of these, 100 ventilators and 95 oxygen concentrators have already arrived on Tuesday.

France is sending relief material in two phases. In the first phase, eight large oxygen generating units that can be installed quickly, liquid oxygen, 28 respirators and their consumables and 200 electric syringe pushers are arriving this week. In the second phase, five liquid oxygen containers will arrive next week.

Similarly, Ireland is sending 700 oxygen concentrators this week. Sources said that Germany is sending a mobile oxygen production unit which will be made available



SECOND WAVE OF PANDEMIC

for three months along with 120 ventilators and 80 million KN95 masks.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced Tuesday that his government will send 500 ventilators, one million surgical masks, 500,000 P2 and N95 masks, 100,000 goggles, 100,000 pairs of gloves and 20,000 face shields to India. Kuwait and Russia have also committed to send medical supplies.

Some of the medical supplies are also coming through private channels from various countries. For example, Singapore is sending 500 BiPAPs, 250 oxygen concentrators, four Cryogenic oxygen containers

and other medical supplies. Saudi Arabia's aid of 80 MT of liquid oxygen is enroute via the sea route, Hong Kong is sending 800 oxygen concentrators, while Thailand is sending four Cryogenic oxygen tanks. India will also get six Cryogenic oxygen containers from the UAE.

Also, India's Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) is importing 23 mobile oxygen generation plants from Germany.

After US President Joe Biden spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over phone on Monday, the US has committed to provide a range of emergency assistance, including oxygen-related supplies,

3.23 LAKH NEW COVID-19 CASES

With 3,23,144 people testing positive for the coronavirus in a day, India's infection tally has climbed to 1,76,36,307, while the national recovery rate further dropped to 82.54 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Tuesday. The death toll mounted to 1,97,894 with 2,771 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed. There has been a slight dip in the daily cases as compared to the number of new infections reported in the past few days.

vaccine materials and therapeutics. A consignment of containers for transportation of medical oxygen arrived in India from Thailand while some more empty tankers will be airlifted from Singapore and Dubai Tuesday, the Union home ministry said. Several member nations of the European Union are rushing in medical supplies like oxygen concentrators and ventilators to India in line with an announcement made by the bloc to support the country in its fight against a devastating second wave of coronavirus infection. EU member countries France, Ireland, Belgium, Romania, Luxembourg, Portugal and Sweden are sending medical supplies to India through the bloc's Civil Protection Mechanism.

Over 1 cr vax doses still available: Centre

The government of India has so far provided 15,65,26,140 vaccine doses to the states and UTs free of cost



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: More than one crore vaccine doses are still available with states and union territories, and another 80 lakh doses will reach them in the next three days, the Union Health Ministry said Tuesday.

The government of India has so far provided 15,65,26,140 vaccine doses to the states and UTs free of cost. "The total consumption, including wastage, is 14,64,78,983 doses. More than 1 crore doses (1,00,47,157) are still available with the states and UTs to be administered. More than 80 lakh (86,40,000) doses will be received in addition by the states and UTs in the next

three days," the ministry stated. The ministry said that recently some media reports quoting some government officials from Maharashtra have pointed out that the state has exhausted vaccine doses, thereby adversely impacting the vaccination drive. "It is clarified that the total COVID vaccine doses received by Maharashtra as April 27 (at 8 am) are 1,58,62,470. Of this, the total consumption, including wastage (0.22 pc), was 1,49,39,410.

"Balance of 9,23,060 doses is still available with the state for administration of vaccine doses to the eligible population groups. Furthermore, 3,00,000 doses of COVID vaccines are in the pipeline for delivery in the next three days," the ministry stated.

SHORT TAKES

Assam imposes night curfew

Guwahati/Shillong: To check the rapid surge in the number of Covid-19 cases, the Assam government Tuesday enforced a night curfew across the state from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m., officials said. Assam Chief Secretary Jishnu Barua said in his order that the curfew would remain in force till May 1.

Vajpayee's niece dies of Covid-19

Raipur (Chhattisgarh): Karuna Shukla, a Congress leader and the niece of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, died of Covid-19 in the Ramakrishna Care hospital in Raipur. After testing positive for the virus, she was undergoing treatment at the hospital here. Shukla breathed her last late Monday evening.

nCoV patient fails to get bed, dies

New Delhi: Family members of a woman, who allegedly died due to COVID-19 after failing to get a bed at Apollo Hospital in south Delhi, attacked the staff of the private healthcare facility Tuesday, police said. However, they said no complaint has been filed in this regard so far.

Three killed in road mishap

Bahraich (UP): Three people were killed and six others injured when two buses collided head-on in Jarwal area of the district, police said Tuesday. The incident took place late Monday night when a roadways bus going from Lucknow to Gonda collided with a private bus coming from the opposite direction, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Kunwar Gyananjanay Singh, said.

Sec 144 imposed in Haryana

Chandigarh: Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij Tuesday said that prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPc are to be imposed throughout the state. He also directed all Deputy Commissioners to provide a blueprint for oxygen beds, oxygen storage capacity and other requirements, including ventilators in all private and government hospitals of their districts by 10 a.m. Thursday. Along with this, in view of the alarming Covid situation, orders have also been given to strictly enforce Section 144.

MP couple ties knot in PPE kits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ratlam (MP), April 27: While most people spend lakhs on their wedding attire, a couple in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district tied the knot wearing PPE kits after the groom tested positive for coronavirus.

According to the district authorities, the 28-year-old groom may now face action for allegedly violating the government order by stepping out of the containment zone. A video of the couple taking their 'saat pheras' in the protective gear has gone viral on social media at time when the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has engulfed the country.

In the purported video, the 25-year-old bride and the groom are seen participating in the ceremony, while a priest, also in the PPE kit, is chanting mantras. The marriage was solemnised at a function hall in the presence

of eight people at Indira Nagar of Ratlam, an official said.

The administration had got information about the wedding of a coronavirus infected person Monday, Naib Tehsildar Naveen Garg said. When a team from the administration reached the spot, the family members sought permission pleading that an elderly member of the family, who was unwell, wanted to see the groom getting married, he said.

After a consultation with senior officials, the ceremony was allowed in PPE kits and in compliance with the COVID-19 protocol, the official said. "After testing positive for coronavirus, the groom should have stayed in the containment zone. By coming out of the area, he has violated the government order," he said. A report will be submitted to the senior authorities, who may take action against the groom for violating the containment zone restrictions, Garg said.



MOTHER'S LOVE



A woman tries to protect her child from the Summer heat in Amritsar

PTI PHOTO

Rlys handed over 169 Covid care coaches to different states

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 27: The Indian Railways has handed over 169 train coaches to various states for Covid care.

In the united fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, the Railways has developed nearly 4,000 Covid care coaches with almost 64,000 beds ready for use by the states.

In a statement, the Ministry of Railways said, "New demand for Covid coaches has come from Nagpur district. In this direction, an MoU has been signed between the divisional railway manager, Nagpur, and the commissioner of Nagpur Municipal Corporation."

Accordingly, the Railways will deploy a Covid care rake with 11 coaches comprising modified sleepers with a capacity to accommodate 16 patients in each coach.

The coaches will be equipped with the necessary medical infrastructure by the state health authorities with Railways devising the segmentation of space and utility for medical personnel in line with the MoU, besides taking care of sanitation and catering arrangements.

The Railways will also mobilise Covid care coaches for Nagpur, Bhopal, Ajni ICD (Nagpur), and Tihi (near Indore) as per the states' demand.

KUMBH MELA: SEERS KEEP LAST 'SHAHI SNAN' SYMBOLIC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun/Rishikesh, April 27: The last 'shahi snan' at the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar Tuesday was a subdued affair with seers keeping the ritual symbolic in view of a nationwide surge in COVID-19 cases.

Till the conclusion of the royal bath, nearly 2,000 seers of 13 'akhadas' (sects) had taken a dip in the Ganga at Har Ki Pauri ghat which was reserved exclusively for them, officials said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi April 17 had appealed to sadhus to observe the remaining duration of the Kumbh only in a 'symbolic' manner. Following this different 'akhadas' had agreed to keep their participation symbolic.

Crowds at the ghats of the Ganga started thinning down drastically since last week after the key 'akhadas' of seers began pulling out of the Maha Kumbh, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, citing the spike in the number of coronavirus cases.

Many spots wore a deserted look Tuesday at the Kumbh which will formally close only April 30.

Centre's Covid jab for world spells 'ouch' in India?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 27: In a startling revelation under RTI, it has emerged that the country has exported the Covid-19 vaccines to at least 47 countries globally at rates cheaper than India, even as the domestic patients run helter-skelter for the life-saver jab.

Replying to an RTI query by a Nagpur-based activist-based lawyer, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)'s Under Secretary Arun Kumar has stated that vaccines were supplied as 'grant' and 'contractual supplies' under the Covax facility.

"For grant supplies, vaccines were procured at a rate of ₹200/dose plus GST from Serum Institute of India Pvt Ltd (SII-Pune) and at a rate of ₹295/dose from Bharat Biotech International Ltd (BBIL), in accordance with the authorization given by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MHFW)," the MEA's RTI reply stated. In addition, the MEA said that the prices of other supplies undertaken by the manufacturers in accordance with their commercial agreements are not



available with the government. The development comes on a day when the government appealed to the two main vaccine manufacturers SII (private) and BBIL (government-owned) to slash their prices for the mega-phase of inoculations starting May 1. Till today, a total of 14.53 crore people have got their first or second jabs, as per the official data. "As per the data supplied

till April 10, the Centre has already exported a total of 6.37 crore doses to 89 countries. This constitutes 1.03 crore doses at ₹200+GST rates, and the rest 3.44 crore doses at commercial rates. For the same doses, now the Centre has allowed the same companies to levy double the rates in the Indian markets," Adv Ajmera told IANS. According to the current data

(April 27), the number of beneficiary countries has gone up to 95 and the total doses supplied are 6.63 crore, including 1.07 crore as grant ₹200/dose+GST, and the rest 3.57 crore doses as per commercial agreements, he pointed out.

Among the beneficiaries, Bangladesh - which Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited last month - has got the lion's share of 1.03 crore doses, including 33-lakh doses as 'grant' and the rest commercially.

The other big ones are Myanmar (17-lakh doses), Nepal (11-lakh), and on the lower rung is Seychelles (0.5-lakh) and Dominica (0.7-lakh), and a 'grant' of 2-lakh doses to UN Peacekeepers.

"The question that arises is - when India with such a huge population is dying for the doses, where is the need for us to display such generosity to far-flung countries with low rates of infections and fatalities, many not heard of in India or visible on maps, some never visited by Indian leaders," Adv Ajmera asked.

He said the surprise is 'grant' to prosperous countries like Bahrain

and Oman, Nigeria, Kenya, and the tearing hurry in which at least 12 nations got their doses even before the drive had fully got underway in India! Against this, the two companies have announced their latest prices for the vaccines supplies for the domestic market.

The SII is supplying its Covishield vaccine to state governments at ₹400/dose and to private hospitals for ₹600/dose, and the BBIL is giving it at ₹600/dose to state governments and ₹1200/dose to private hospitals. Apparently justifying their rates, the SII said that global vaccines in the private markets are available at much higher rates - ₹1,500/dose (American jabs), and ₹750/dose (Russian and Chinese jabs), while BBIL said the company is exporting its products at between \$15-20/dose (roughly averaging to ₹1,200/dose).

Adv Ajmera said that ideally, India should have ensured sufficient doses for her own citizens, create a surplus before doling out the doses or permitting commercial exploitation by Indian companies at the cost of the local population.



The question is whether the White House is ready to commit to a full-fledged negotiations strategy, or whether it will continue to play it safe and keep the policy on the back burner

US LAUNCHES SPY SATELLITE INTO SPACE

A US spy satellite was launched into space from California. The NROL-82 satellite lifted off from Vandenberg Air Force Base aboard a United Launch Alliance Delta IV Heavy rocket Monday



of the day quote

We obviously have a problem with India. Some of the tests conducted in India either aren't accurate or aren't believable, and clearly that's causing some issues here

MARK MCGOWAN | PREMIER OF THE WESTERN STATE, AUSTRALIA

The purpose of this spurious report is in no way related to human rights, but to an ongoing attempt by HRW to undermine the State of Israel's right to exist as the nation state of the Jewish people

MICHAEL BITON | STRATEGIC AFFAIRS MINISTER, ISRAEL

We have a global comprehensive strategic partnership with India. But the secretary has been clear this is not about shots in arms in return for political favours, in return for any sort of transactionalism

NEED PRICE | STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON, US

SHORT TAKES

Oz suspends Indian flights

Melbourne: Australia Tuesday suspended all direct passenger flights from India with immediate effect until May 15 due to the "very significant" spike in COVID-19 cases, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced.

Chad against military transition

N'Djamena (Chad): Thousands of people protested and two people were killed in Chad Tuesday in demonstrations against the rule of a transitional military council headed by the son of the late President Idriss Deby Itno, who was killed last week.

B'Baria massacre to oust Hasina

Dhaka: Zakaria Khan, militant leader of Hefajat-e-Islam, has confessed that the violence was conducted in compliance with the instruction of Hefajat's central leaders as part of a plan to oust the ruling pro-liberation war government, led by Sheikh Hasina.

Ethnic allies capture govt base

THE FIGHTING TOOK PLACE AS THE JUNTA SAID IT WOULD "POSITIVELY" CONSIDER THE BLOC'S SUGGESTIONS TO END THE TURMOIL IN MYANMAR BUT ONLY WHEN STABILITY WAS RESTORED

REUTERS

Bangkok, April 27: Ethnic minority Karen insurgents attacked a Myanmar army outpost near the Thai border Tuesday in some of the most intense clashes since a military coup nearly three months ago threw the country into crisis.

The Karen National Union (KNU), Myanmar's oldest rebel force, said it had captured the army camp on the west bank of the Salween river, which forms the border with Thailand.

The Myanmar military later hit back against the insurgents with air strikes, the KNU and Thai authorities said. The fighting took place as the junta, in a setback for diplomatic efforts by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said it would "positively" consider the bloc's suggestions to end the turmoil in Myanmar but only when stability was restored.

The ASEAN leaders said after

MYANMAR UNREST



meeting at the weekend they had reached a consensus with the junta on steps to end violence and promote dialogue between the rival Myanmar sides. The outbreak of hostilities in the border area shifted the focus of opposition to the junta away from the pro-democracy protests that have taken place in cities and towns across the country since the coup on Feb 1.

The military overthrew the elected government of Aung San

Suu Kyi, detained her and other civilian politicians, and then cracked down with lethal force on anti-coup protesters.

Security forces have killed more than 750 civilians in the demonstrations, an activist group says.

The Karen and other ethnic minority forces based in frontier regions have supported the largely urban-based pro-democracy opponents of the junta.

PRE-DAWN ATTACK

In Tuesday's fighting, villagers on the Thai side of the river said heavy gunfire started before dawn. Video posted on social media showed flames and smoke on the forested hillside and KNU forces had captured the outpost, the group's head of foreign affairs, Saw Taw Nee, told Reuters.



The Myanmar military later mounted air strikes, Saw Taw Nee said. There was no word on casualties and 450 Thai villagers were moved away from the border to safety, the Thai military said. The Myanmar army made no comment. It has historically portrayed itself as the one institution that can keep together the ethnically diverse country of more than 53 million people.

Palestinians plan to call off elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jerusalem, April 27: Egyptian officials say the Palestinian authority plans to call off its first elections in 15 years, citing Israel's refusal to allow voting in east Jerusalem.

The decision would effectively grant Israel a veto over the holding of elections, though President Mahmoud Abbas could also benefit from the cancelling a vote in which his fractured Fatah party is expected to lose power and influence to the Islamic militant group Hamas.

An Egyptian diplomat and an intelligence official said they had been briefed on the decision, which will be announced Thursday at a meeting of Palestinian factions. They said Egypt is in talks with Israel to reach a compromise to allow the vote but those efforts have so far failed.

IN SYNC



Turkish soldiers attend a wreath laying ceremony at the Turkish memorial to mark the 106th anniversary of the World War I battle of Gallipoli in Canakkale, Turkey

Lanka Cabinet approves proposal to ban burqa in public places

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, April 27: Sri Lankan Cabinet Tuesday approved a proposal to ban all forms of face coverings in public places, citing a threat to national security.

However, wearing face masks to combat COVID-19 is allowed.

The move came weeks after Minister of Public Security Sarath Weerasekera signed a paper in March, seeking the approval of the Cabinet to ban burqas -- outer garments that cover the body and face worn by some Muslim women.

The Cabinet has decided to ban all forms of face coverings in public places, Cabinet spokesperson and information minister Keheliya Rambukwella told reporters here, without specifying burqas.

"All forms of face covers are a threat to national security," he said. The covering of the

full face will automatically include burqa and niqab.

The proposal now must be approved by Parliament to become a law. Last month, Pakistan's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Ambassador Saad Khattak had criticised the proposal to ban the wearing of burqas in the country, saying such "divisive steps" in the name of security will not only hurt the sentiments of Muslims but also strengthen wider apprehensions about the fundamental human rights of minorities in the island nation.

Meanwhile, Weerasekera in a Facebook post wrote that the Cabinet has approved the proposal to ban all face coverings, including the burqa.

The Buddhist-majority nation in 2019 had temporarily banned wearing of burqas under emergency regulations following the Easter Sunday attacks.

Court restricts Navalny's anti-corruption foundation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Moscow, April 27: A court in Moscow ruled Tuesday to restrict the activities of an organisation founded by imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, pending a decision on whether it should be outlawed as an extremist group.

The Moscow City Court's ruling on Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption came amid a sweeping crackdown on Russian President Vladimir Putin most prominent critic, his allies and his political infrastructure.

The Moscow prosecutor's office petitioned the court this month to label the foundation and Navalny's network of regional offices as extremist groups and effectively outlaw their activities, exposing members and supporters to lengthy prison terms.

If the court grants the request, it would be a crippling blow to Navalny's beleaguered team. He has been in prison since January,

and many of his aides and associates were arrested or facing criminal charges.

Monday, the prosecutor's office ordered Navalny's offices in dozens of Russian regions to suspend their activities, prompting them to effectively shut down. The Tuesday ruling on the foundation just barred it from performing certain activities. Ivan Pavlov, a lawyer representing the foundation, said the organization is no longer allowed to use the media or the internet to distribute content or to organize rallies and public events, take part in elections or use bank deposits.

Restrictions on the foundation, however, will not disrupt its work, director Ivan Zhdanov said on social media, arguing that most of the restrictions don't apply to the anti-corruption organization's activities.

"Some nonsense," Zhdanov tweeted. "(These) aren't going to influence our work in any way."

Navalny's foundation opened 10 years ago and has since targeted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tehran, April 27: Iran said Tuesday that it was seeking the release of all Iranian prisoners held in the US amid talks in Vienna meant to bring Tehran and Washington back into the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

Cabinet spokesperson Ali Rabiee also hinted that another exchange of prisoners between Iran and America was possible, saying that "the idea of a swap of prisoners has always been on the agenda and adding they should be released because of "humane concerns."

Rabiee did not offer details on how many Iranians are held in the US, and claimed that releasing their names could harm them. However, he said, "their number is bigger than that of American prisoners in Iran."

In 2019, a prisoner exchange saw Iran free a Chinese-American scholar from Princeton who had been held for three years on widely criticized espionage charges. At the time, Tehran said American authorities were holding about 20 Iranian nationals in jail.

Iran has expressed readiness for prisoner swaps with the US. When they do take place, the exchanges are seen as rare diplomatic breakthroughs between Tehran and Washington. Tuesday, Rabiee said Iranian judiciary has also voiced "readiness" for a swap. His remarks marked the second statement by Iranian officials on a possible

The idea of a swap of prisoners has always been on the agenda and adding they should be released because of humane concerns

ALI RABIEE | CABINET SPOKESPERSON, IRAN

prisoner release in less than two weeks.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh last week made comments suggesting Tehran hopes to swing a major prisoner swap as part of ongoing negotiations in Vienna. A similar swap accompanied the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

Iranian media in recent days identified seven Iranians in US custody by name while the US regularly asks Iran to release American prisoners, including Siamak and Baquer Namazi, who are serving 10-year prison sentences on spying charges. As nuclear talks are about to get underway Tuesday in Vienna following a brief break, Tehran has been insisting that the U.S. lift all sanctions imposed under then-President Donald Trump after he pulled America out of the nuclear deal, including those not related to its nuclear program.

Meanwhile, Washington has said Iran needs to comply with all restrictions imposed under the deal. In response to Trump's withdrawal, Iran has gradually violated the terms of the accord, including limits on uranium enrichment.



high-ranking Russian officials with exposes on corruption, many in the form of colorful and widely watched YouTube videos.

One of its latest posts, which received 116 million views, alleges that a lavish palace on the Black Sea shore was built for Putin through an elaborate corruption scheme. The Kremlin has denied there are any links to Putin.

Along with the foundation, Navalny set up a vast network of regional offices in dozens of Russian regions when he was campaigning to run against Putin in the 2018 presidential election. He eventually was barred from running but kept the infrastructure in place.

The regional sites began their own investigations of graft by local officials and recruited activists, some of whom later ran for public offices themselves. The locations also were instrumental in organizing nationwide rallies in support of Navalny this year.

Navalny himself was arrested in January upon his return from Germany, where he spent five months recovering from a nerve agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin -- accusations that Russian officials reject.

The arrests triggered protests across Russia that proved to be the biggest show of defiance in years. However, they didn't stop authorities from putting Navalny on trial for violating the terms of a suspended sentence while he was in Germany. The sentence stemmed from a 2014 embezzlement conviction widely that Navalny has characterized as politically motivated. He was ordered to serve 2 1/2 years in prison and last month was transferred to a penal colony notorious for its harsh conditions.

Soviet documents reveal cover-ups at Chernobyl

AFTER A BOTCHED SAFETY TEST IN THE FOURTH REACTOR OF THE PLANT, CLOUDS OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL FROM CHERNOBYL SPREAD ACROSS MUCH OF EUROPE IN WHAT REMAINS THE WORLD'S WORST NUCLEAR DISASTER

REUTERS

Ukraine, April 27: The Soviet Union knew the Chernobyl nuclear plant was dangerous and covered up emergencies there before the 1986 disaster, the Ukrainian authorities said as they released documents to mark the 35th anniversary of the accident on Monday.

After a botched safety test in the fourth reactor of the plant, located in what was then Soviet Ukraine, clouds of radioactive material from Chernobyl spread across much of Europe in what remains the world's worst nuclear disaster.

The archives show there was a radiation release at the plant in 1982



that was covered up using what a KGB report at the time called measures "to prevent panic and provoca-

tive rumours", Ukraine's security service (SBU) said in a statement Monday. There were separate "emer-

gencies" at the plant in 1984, it added. "In 1983, the Moscow leadership received information that the Chernobyl nuclear power plant was one of the most dangerous nuclear power plants in the USSR due to lack of safety equipment," the SBU said.

When a French journalist collected water and soil samples from the Chernobyl area after the accident in 1987, the KGB swapped the samples for fake ones in a special operation, the SBU cited another KGB report as saying.

Thirty-one plant workers and firemen died in the immediate aftermath of the 1986 disaster, mostly from acute radiation sickness. Thousands more later succumbed

to radiation-related illnesses such as cancer, although the total death toll and long-term health effects remain a subject of intense debate.

The present day government in Kyiv has highlighted the Soviet authorities' bungled handling of the accident and attempts to cover up the disaster in the aftermath. The order to evacuate the area came only 36 hours after the accident.

"The 35th anniversary of the Chernobyl tragedy is a reminder of how state-sponsored disinformation, as propagated by the totalitarian Soviet regime, led to the greatest man-made disaster in human history," the foreign ministry said.

Rush to hospitals, big gatherings worsen India's Covid crisis: WHO

REUTERS

GENEVA, April 27: People in India are rushing unnecessarily to hospital, exacerbating a crisis over surging Covid-19 infections caused by mass gatherings, more contagious variants and low vaccination rates, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Tuesday.

India's death toll is now pushing towards 200,000, and hospitals that do not have enough oxygen supplies and beds are turning away coronavirus patients. The WHO is providing critical equipment and supplies to India, including 4,000 oxygen concentrators, which only require an energy source, WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said. Less than 15% of people infected with Covid-19 actually need hospital care and even



fewer will need oxygen, he said. "Currently, part of the problem is that many people rush to the hospital (also because they do not have access to information/advice), even though home-based care monitoring at home can be managed very safely," Jasarevic said. Community-level centres should screen and triage patients and provide advice on safe home care, while information is also made available via hotlines or dashboards, he said.

business



I have not sold any of my Bitcoin. Tesla sold 10 percent of its holdings essentially to prove liquidity of Bitcoin as an alternative to holding cash on balance sheet
ELON MUSK | TESLA CEO

APPLE CAPTURES 48% SHARE IN INDIA PREMIUM PHONE MARKET

Apple maintained its leading position in the India premium smartphone market with nearly 48 per cent share in the first quarter of 2021. Apple witnessed a massive 207 per cent growth (year-on-year) in India in Q1 2021



of the day quote

A collective initiative of the US-India Business Council of the US Chambers of Commerce, and the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum and Business Roundtable, the task force is committed to get 20,000 oxygen concentrators to India in the next few weeks

PUNIT RENJEN | DELOITTE CEO

Genetec LifeSciences will start production of remdesivir injections, used in the treatment of COVID-19, in Wardha (Maharashtra) from Wednesday

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

A good number of Covid survivors will opt for life insurance in the country. Covid-19 survivors are now coming for life insurance, more so post the raging second wave of the pandemic.

VIBHA PADALKAR | MD AND CEO OF HDFC LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LTD

SHORT TAKES

Toyota buys Lyft's self-driving unit

San Francisco: Toyota is acquiring the autonomous car division of ride-hailing platform and Uber rival Lyft for \$550 million, as the self-driving car industry begins to grow. Woven Planet Holdings, a subsidiary of Toyota, will acquire Lyft's self-driving division, Level 5, for \$550 million in cash. Toyota has provided \$200 million to Lyft and the \$350 million will be paid out to Lyft over five years. The ride-hailing company says it will see an annual savings of \$100 million of non-GAAP expenses.

Promoters of Indiabulls booked

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Police has booked Indiabulls group companies, including its flagship Indiabulls Housing Finance (IBHL), for allegedly siphoning off funds and for accounting irregularities committed by the promoters and directors of the company between 2014 and 2020. A first information report was registered by the Palghar police April 13 under various sections of Indian Penal Code dealing with cheating, fraud and criminal conspiracy.

Maruti Suzuki Q4 profit declines

New Delhi: India's largest car manufacturer Maruti Suzuki India Tuesday reported a standalone net profit of ₹1,166.1 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2021 (Q4FY21). It was down 9.72 per cent from previous year's profit of ₹1,291.7 crore on account of lower sales volume, increase in commodity prices, adverse foreign exchange movement, and lower non-operating income. In the December quarter, PAT stood at ₹1,941.4 crore. On a consolidated basis, the net profit slipped 6.1 per cent to ₹1,241.1 crore.

Fuel prices unchanged

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged on Tuesday, April 27, 2021. In the national capital, petrol is being sold at ₹90.40 per litre, and diesel is priced at ₹80.73 per litre, according to the Indian Oil Corporation. In Mumbai, the price of petrol is ₹96.83 per litre and diesel is ₹87.81 per litre, according to the state-run oil refiner. Currently, fuel prices are the highest in Mumbai among the four metro cities.

RBI issues guidelines for appointment of statutory auditors of banks, NBFCs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 27: The Reserve Bank of India Tuesday issued guidelines for appointment of statutory auditors of banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), including housing finance companies.

Guidelines for Appointment of Statutory Central Auditors (SCAs)/ Statutory Auditors (SAs) of Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs), UCBs and NBFCs (including HFCs) will be applicable for financial year 2021-22 and onwards. However, non-deposit taking NBFCs with asset size below ₹1,000 crore have the option to continue with their extant procedure.

The guidelines provide necessary instructions for appointment of SCAs/SAs, the number of auditors, their eligibility criteria, tenure and rotation, etc. while ensuring the independence of auditors, the Reserve Bank said.

As the guidelines are being implemented for the first time for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) and NBFCs from 2021-22, "they shall have the flexibility to adopt these guidelines from the second half of FY 2021-22, in order to ensure that there is no disruption".

Banks and UCBs will be required to take prior approval of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for appointment/reappointment of



THE GUIDELINES PROVIDE NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF SCAS/SAS, THE NUMBER OF AUDITORS, THEIR ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, TENURE AND ROTATION, ETC.

Non-deposit taking NBFCs with asset size below ₹1,000 crore have the option to continue with their extant procedure

Banks and UCBs will be required to take prior approval of RBI for appointment/reappointment of SCAs/SAs, on an annual basis

SCAs/SAs, on an annual basis, the guidelines said.

For entities with an asset size of ₹15,000 crore and above as at the end of previous year, statutory audit should be conducted under

joint audit of a minimum of two audit firms. All other entities should appoint a minimum of one audit firm for conducting statutory audit.

"It shall be ensured that joint auditors of the entity do not have any common partners and they are not under the same network of audit firms. Further, the entity may finalise the work allocation among SCAs/SAs, before the commencement of the statutory audit, in consultation with their SCAs/SAs," it said.

The guidelines further said that in order to protect the independence of the auditors/audit firms, entities will have to appoint the SCAs/SAs for a continuous period of three years, subject to the firms satisfying the eligibility norms each year.

Banks to remain closed for 12 days in May

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 27: Banks in India will remain shut for up to 12 days in May 2021, including weekends and festivals. Only the gazetted holidays are observed by banks all over the country. According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), banks in most of the states will remain closed May 14, 2021, on account of Eid-UI-Fitra. In May, banks including the public sector, private sector, foreign banks, cooperative banks and regional banks, will observe holidays on May 1, May 7, May 13, May 14 and May 26 on account of Labour Day, Jumat-ul-Vida, Id-UI-Fitr, Akshaya Tritiya and Buddha Pournima, respectively.

May 2, May 8, May 9, May 16, May 22, May 23 and May 30 are weekly off days for bank employees

However, banks will not be closed for all five days as for all states as holidays vary from state to state. The list of holidays given below has been notified by RBI under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

In addition, May 2, May 8, May 9, May 16, May 22, May 23 and May 30 are weekly off days for bank employees.

CAIT for action against Amazon, Flipkart over non-essential supplies

Apart from accusing Flipkart and Amazon of delivering non-essential items amidst the curbs, CAIT has also charged both the companies of violating the inventory control norms

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 27: The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Tuesday wrote to Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal seeking action against e-commerce giants Flipkart and Amazon for "supplying non-essential items" amid the COVID-19 restrictions imposed by several states.

"Amazon and Flipkart are making illegitimate financial gains by supplying non-essential items which have been strictly prohibited by many state administrations due to ongoing lockdowns to prevent the spread of COVID-19," the traders' body stated in its letter to Goyal.

Amidst the raging pandemic, the foreign e-commerce companies are trying to "capture the market share from small traders by defin-



ing every item as essential including mobile phones and accessories," the CAIT alleged.

The CAIT, further marking its angst, said that the "government is closing its eyes towards all violations" by the e-commerce companies as they are "larger than life corporations".

The letter by the traders' body to Goyal comes days after a number of state governments imposed lockdown-like curbs, providing only a four-to-five-hour window to shops selling essential items including groceries. The non-essential shops and establishments have been asked to completely remain shut.

The e-commerce activities are allowed throughout the day in most of the states, but are restricted to only essential deliveries.

The CAIT, apart from accusing Flipkart and Amazon of delivering non-essential items amidst the curbs, has also accused both the companies of violating the inventory control policy.

Allow debt recast for borrowers of NBFCs: FIDC to RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 27: The Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC) has written to the Reserve Bank seeking restructuring of stressed retail and individual borrowers of non-banking finance companies, irrespective of whether these loans have been restructured earlier.

In a letter written to the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, the industry body also requested loan recast for smaller NBFCs, having asset size of less than ₹500 crore.

"Considering the severe second wave of COVID-19, the retail borrowers, including the MSMEs, as also the retail and wholesale trader industry shall be in urgent need of support from the lenders, to revive their economic activities," FIDC said requesting extension of the restructuring scheme till March 31, 2022.

It said the borrower accounts, irrespective of whether or not such accounts had been 'restructured' on any earlier occasion and which are 'standard' accounts as on March 31, 2021, may be allowed 'restructuring' without any downgrade in asset classification.

However, this will be subject to the lending NBFCs undertaking fresh credit assessment of the borrowing entity, it said.

The industry body urged the RBI to allow standstill on buckets for restructured accounts for the first quarter of FY22. The letter further said the only mode of borrowings for the smaller NBFCs (having asset size of less than ₹500 crore) is to raise term loans from banks, fi-



ancial institutions like Sidbi, Nabsamruddhi and Nabkisan and large NBFCs. These smaller players do not have access to the capital markets and they do not issue bonds.

"We therefore submit that these small NBFCs may be given the benefit of getting their loans restructured (one-time) from banks and financial institutions (FIs)," the FIDC said. It said the restructuring will ensure that these small NBFCs remain eligible for further bank finance, there is no mismatch in their asset liability position and will help them to support their wholesale and retail borrowers with fresh credit.

The industry body also urged the RBI to increase the overall support outlay to All India Financial Institutions (AIFIs) - Nabard, Sidbi, NHB and Exim Bank - from ₹50,000 crore to at least ₹75,000 crore.

"While the existing allocation for other sectors may continue at their prescribed limits, the additional ₹25,000 crore may be made available exclusively to medium and small NBFCs, through Sidbi for a period of three years," the letter said.

SC allows Vedanta's Tuticorin O2 plant to operate

VEDANTA SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER, OPERATE COPPER SMELTING PLANT UNDER GARB OF THIS ORDER, SAYS SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: The Supreme Court Tuesday allowed Vedanta to operate its closed oxygen plant at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu, saying the order has been passed in view of "national need" for oxygen and there should be no political bickering over the generation of the gas by the company as the country is facing a "national crisis".

The apex court made it clear that Vedanta shall not be allowed to enter and operate its copper smelt-



ing plant under the garb of this order and that permission to operate oxygen plant would not create any equity in the company's favour.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, L Nageswara Rao and S Ravindra Bhat directed the Tamil Nadu government to form an oversight committee to oversee the functioning of the plant which would include District Collector and Superintendent of Police (SP) of Tuticorin, District Environmental Engineer, Sub-Collector Tuticorin and two government officials.

The bench asked Vedanta to submit a list of technical and non-technical staff to the committee who are essential to run the oxygen plant.

It said the order allowing Vedanta to operate its oxygen plant would be in operation till July 31, 2021 after that it will assess the ground situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While submissions were being made raising various issues connected with the plant, the bench said, "We are in a national crisis today where people are dying due to the lack of oxygen."

"There cannot be political bickering in this Court. We are in a national crisis, we have to support nation as a court. It's a national calamity," it said. The top court also directed the Ministry of Environment and Forests to form a three-member panel of environmental experts from Tamil Nadu.

The victims of the Vedanta crisis can choose two out of them to be in the committee. If the victims fail to nominate such members within 48 hours, the State should nominate the members, it said.

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for the organisation of affected families, contended that he is not averse to the idea of oxygen production but history of litigation shows Vedanta has tried several times to restart the plant and take people inside.

The bench then said, we are not hearing appeal against Madras High Court order. "We are only dealing with restarting oxygen plant."

TOP GAINERS 27 APR		
48,944.14 BSE SENSEX		
POINTS	%	
1380.35	L&T	3.33%
4873.45	Bajaj Finance	3.02%
1988.90	Reliance	2.66%
882.25	IndusInd Bank	2.66%
352.90	SBI	2.48%
1438.50	HDFC Bank	2.39%
536.00	Bharti Airtel	1.60%
598.80	ICICI Bank	1.36%
10125.15	Bajaj Finserv	1.27%
3783.50	Bajaj Auto	1.21%

JSPL to divest coal fired power business

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 27: Jindal Steel & Power has accepted a binding offer from Worldno Private to divest its 96.42 per cent stake in Jindal Power, a material subsidiary of the company.

As per a JSPL statement, the divestment is in line with the company's strategic objective to continuously reduce its debt, focus on its 'India Steel' business and significantly reduce its carbon footprint by almost half as part of its ESG objectives. "The equity value is an all-cash offer of ₹3,015 crores for 96.42 per cent stake in JPL including 3,400 MW Coal fired power plants



in State of Chhattisgarh and other non-core assets owned by JPL," the statement said.

According to the company, the divestment is subject to receipt of requisite approvals including approval from shareholders of JSPL, approval from lenders of JPL and JSPL, and such other statutory approvals, consents, permissions and sanctions as may be necessary in line

with the extant relevant guidelines.

"This divestment is in line with our ESG objectives to be amongst the top 10 lowest CO2 emitting steel companies of the world. It is yet another step towards our vision to reduce debt substantially and create a robust balance sheet for our investors and stakeholders," said VR Sharma, MD, JSPL.

"Looking to the future, JSPL will be a key growth driver in the Indian steel industry and will now focus on undertaking expansion of its Andhra steel plant from 6 MTPA to 12 MTPA. Infrastructure spending in India is bound to grow exponentially and JSPL is fully aligned with GoI's vision."

India's 4G subscriber base may grow to 820mn in FY22: Crisil

The active subscriber market share data indicates Jio and Airtel, are neck and neck, with neither ready to bite the bullet and raise tariff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 27: Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio are neck and neck in terms of active mobile subscriptions, and hence the industry is unlikely to see any unanimous tariff hikes in 2021-22, a report said Tuesday.

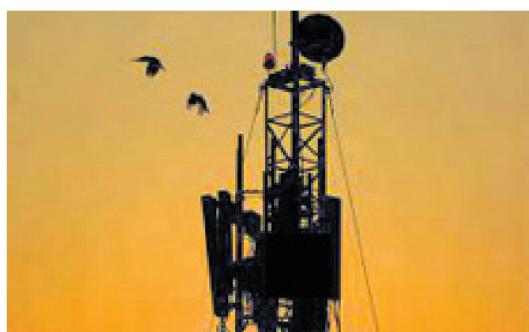
Domestic credit rating agency Crisil's research wing pointed out that there is a close contest between the top two telcos, when one goes by active subscriber base with Jio's share at 33.7 per cent and Airtel's at 33.6 per cent.

The active subscriber market share data indicates the top two players are neck and neck, with neither ready to bite the bullet and raise tariffs, it said.

The build-up in competitive intensity also indicates that the industry is unlikely to see unanimous tariff hikes at least in the near term, limiting a large upside in average revenue per user (ARPU) in fiscal year 2022, it added.

The report said there is a universe of 250-300 million active non-4G subscriber base which will be on the radar of the telcos for conversion to 4G users in order to increase revenues.

While competition to attract this user base did exist before, inadequate spectrum and 4G coverage made operators err on the side of caution, it said, adding that with the recent spectrum acquisition, telcos are well-positioned to handle any surge in data traffic, leading to increased



aggression by the players to gain market share.

However, a price war like the one seen before 2019 is unlikely and

competition will be indirect in the form of tie-ups with smartphone manufacturers for low-cost phones, increased bundling of over the top

(OTT) content and lower entry points for upgrade customers, the report said.

It said Jio's recently launched JioPhone 2021 plans offering handsets along with one and two-year unlimited calling validity for ₹1,499 and ₹1,999, respectively, is representative of the same.

Individual players will most likely increase tariffs on selected plans given their immediate need to improve ARPU, it said. While all players agree that tariff hikes are paramount, they have differing levels of urgency to implement the hikes.

With the onset of the second wave of the pandemic and the resultant restrictions, there is once again reverse migration of labour. That could mean another quarter

of subscriber churn. Also, given the restrictions in major cities, smartphone sales are likely to be impacted as well, which would slow 4G subscriber additions in the current quarter, it said.

The pace of additions should pick up gradually over the remainder of this fiscal as competitive intensity in the wireless-telecom market increases, the report said.

In the best case, 4G subscribers may rise to 820 million by the end of this fiscal year from 720 million in 2020-21 end, assuming restrictions last only for the current quarter. In the bear case, where lockdowns extend through the second quarter, the number will reach 800-810 million, it said.

RCB BEAT DC IN THRILLER

IPL foreign recruits assured safe return

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: The BCCI Tuesday said it would do everything to ensure that foreign players competing in the IPL reach their respective countries seamlessly once the tournament ends, a day after three Australians quit the event amid an upsurge of COVID-19 cases in India.

Andrew Tye (Rajasthan Royals) and the duo of Kane Richardson and Adam Zampa (both Royal Challengers Bangalore) withdrew as apprehension set in after a couple of weeks went by smoothly for the league held in front of empty stands across six venues.

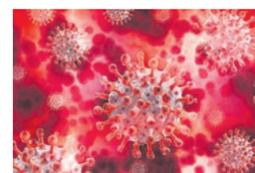
"We understand that many of you are apprehensive about how you will get back home once the tournament concludes... We want to apprise you that you have nothing to worry about," BCCI COO Hemang Amin said in a letter addressed to the players.

"The BCCI will do everything to ensure that you reach your respective destinations seamlessly. The BCCI is monitoring the situation very closely and is working with the government authorities to make arrangements to get you home once the tournament concludes.

"Be rest assured that the tournament is not over for BCCI till each one of you has reached your home, safe and sound," he added. India is recording over three lakh daily cases for the past few days and the health infrastructure is struggling to handle the rise with shortage of oxygen and some crucial medicines adding to the crisis.

Australia, Tuesday, suspended all direct passenger flights from India with immediate effect until May 15 due to the "very significant" spike in COVID-19 cases.

Kolkata Knight Riders mentor David Hussey acknowledged that Australians in the IPL are a "bit nervous" about getting back home in the wake of the situation here. Amin lauded the players for carrying on.



"As some of you have said, 'if we can help distract people from all the troubles of recent times, even if it is for a short while, we have done a great job'. When you all walk out onto the field, you are bringing hope to millions of people who have tuned in.

"If, even for a minute, you can bring a smile on someone's face, then you have done well. While you are professionals and will play to win, this time you are also playing for something much more important," he concluded.

The letter also stated that the teams will no longer be allowed to order food from outside. "...Earlier in the tournament, we had permitted food deliveries from outside your designated hotels, but these privileges have also been withdrawn. Apart from this, we have also increased our level of caution to strengthen our bio-bubbles," it said. "I am sure you will understand and co-operate with us on these steps taken to strengthen the bubble."

Several England and New Zealand players are also competing in the event but haven't yet spoken about their concerns. The IPL final is scheduled to be held May 30 in Ahmedabad.

As many as 14 Australian players remain in the event, including stars such as Steve Smith (DC), David Warner (SunRisers Hyderabad) and Pat Cummins (Kolkata Knight Riders), as well as coaches Ricky Ponting (DC) and Simon Katich (RCB).

Commentators Matthew Hayden, Brett Lee, Michael Slater and Lisa Sthalekar are also among the Australians involved with the league right now.

Kuggeleijn replaces Richardson for RCB

AHMEDABAD: New Zealand pacer Scott Kuggeleijn was Tuesday announced as a replacement for Kane Richardson in the Royal Challengers Bangalore squad for the remainder of IPL 14. Along with compatriot Adam Zampa, Australian Richardson Monday quit the tournament midway citing personal reasons in the wake of a second COVID-19 wave in the country. The Aussie cricketer flew back to his nation as the cases of Covid-19 kept mounting in India. Kuggeleijn, who has been part of the IPL bubble as a reserve for Mumbai Indians, moved to RCB as a replacement for Richardson, 'ESPNcricinfo' reported. No replacement has been named yet for leg-spinner Zampa. Richardson and Zampa are set to be flying back to their country from Mumbai, Tuesday night via Doha.

ing his first match of the season, got rid of the dangerous Padikkal.

With two new batsmen in the middle, the seasoned speedster went on to bowl a wicket maiden to slow down the proceedings as RCB collected 36/2 in the Powerplay.

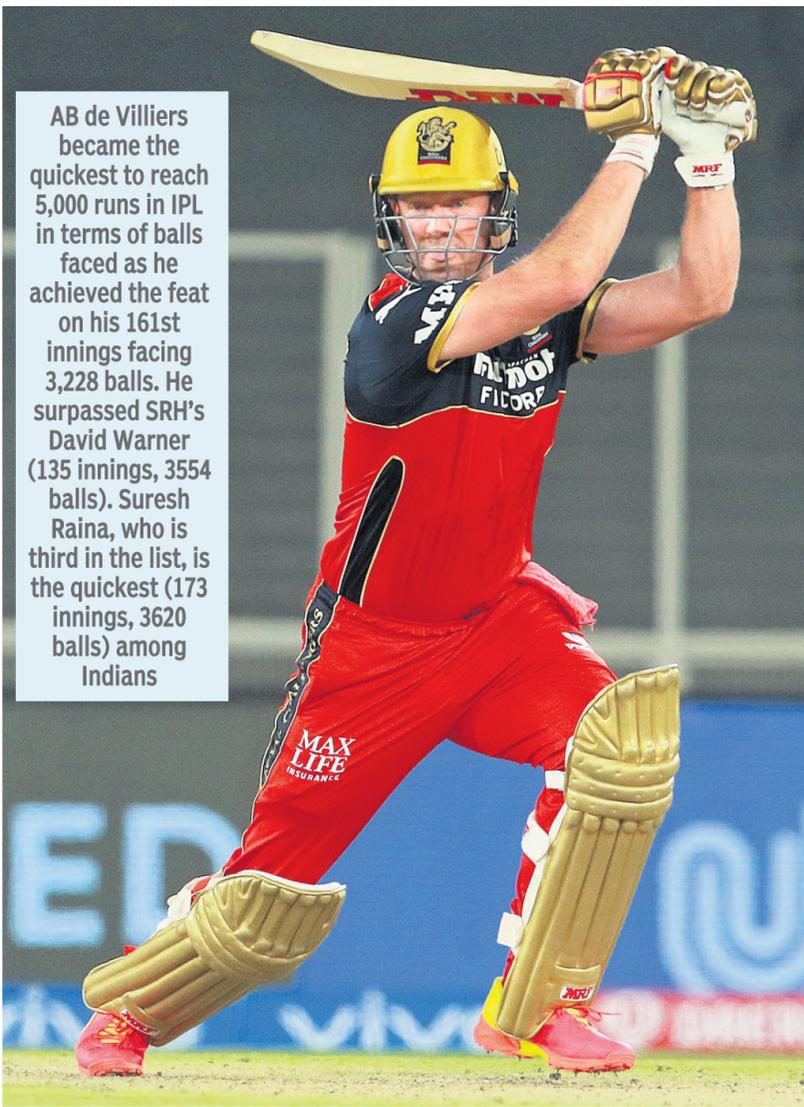
Maxwell played a short cameo but was caught at long on by compatriot Smith of leggie Mishra as RCB reached 68/3 at the half-way mark. Patidar and De Villiers steadied the ship by stitching a 54-run stand but all-rounder Axar, who accounted for the Indian in the 15th over. Barring De Villiers all RCB batsmen were guilty of not capitalising on good starts.

BRIEF SCORES

Royal Challengers Bangalore 171/5 (AB de Villiers 75 n o, Rajat Patidar 31, Glenn Maxwell 25; Avesh Khan 1/24, Ishant Sharma 1/26) **beat Delhi Capitals 170/4** (Rishabh Pant 58 n o, Shimron Hetmyer 53 n o, Harshal Patel 2/37) **by 1 run.**

Pacer Avesh provided the Capitals with the first breakthrough, dismissing the RCB captain in the fourth over. In the very next ball, Ishant, play-

AB de Villiers became the quickest to reach 5,000 runs in IPL in terms of balls faced as he achieved the feat on his 161st innings facing 3,228 balls. He surpassed SRH's David Warner (135 innings, 3554 balls). Suresh Raina, who is third in the list, is the quickest (173 innings, 3620 balls) among Indians



CSK favourites against SRH

Goa play out draw vs Al Rayyan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: Operating like a well-oiled unit, Chennai Super Kings will start as overwhelming favourites when they clash with struggling Sunrisers Hyderabad in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match, here Wednesday.

The MS Dhoni-led CSK have bounced back in style after losing the opening match. They are on a roll with four straight wins and will hope that the new venue - Feroze Shah Kotla ground - also favours them.

The three-time champions had an underwhelming 2020 season but the team, packed with seasoned players, is now displaying the efficiency it is known for.

All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has been the driving force behind CSK's impressive run so far. His blister-



ing assault on Harshal Patel in the final over shut out RCB Sunday. He has been among the wickets with his accurate left-arm spin apart from effecting stunning run-outs.

Openers - Faf du Plessis and Ruturaj Gaikwad - have found form while Suresh Raina and Ambati Rayudu are due for big knocks. The CSK batters are aware of the Rashid Khan threat but the rest of the SRH attack doesn't inspire much confidence.

Hyderabad rely heavily on their foreign recruits, led by skipper David Warner, opener Jonny Bairstow, Kiwi great Kane Williamson and Rashid, which is a cause for concern.

Their biggest weakness is a fragile batting order and over-reliance on the top order. The inability of the

team's Indian middle order to step up has cost SRH more often than not and the think-tank needs to get the combination right if they have to move out of the last spot on the points table which they currently occupy.

Warner needs to shrug off his poor run and for that he needs to negotiate CSK pacer Deepak Chahar, who has impressive ability to strike upfront, well. Apart from Chahar, spin all-rounder Jadeja and veteran Imran Tahir along with Sam Curran form a strong CSK bowling unit.

SRH will need one of Warner, Bairstow and Williamson to go big and hope that the middle-order can make a meaningful contribution to thwart CSK.

The Hyderabad bowling has been

NATARAJAN GOES UNDER THE KNIFE

NEW DELHI: India's yorker sensation T Natarajan Tuesday underwent a surgery to treat a knee injury that had ruled him out of IPL-14. The SRH pacer was ruled out of the League last week due to the injury that he originally picked up during the tour of Australia earlier this year. He thanked the BCCI and medical team for looking after him. "Today, I underwent knee surgery and am grateful for the expertise, attention and kindness of the medical team, surgeons, doctors, nurses and staff. I'm grateful to @bcci and to all that have wished well for me," Natarajan tweeted. The 30-year-old Natarajan had played only two games for SRH this season. It is understood that he had never fully recovered from the knee injury because of heavy workload he endured on the tour of Australia.

atchy with the experienced Bhuvneshwar Kumar lacking consistency while the absence of yorker specialist T Natarajan due to injury is a huge blow. It's an onerous task for SRH to revive their fortunes with the limited resources they have at their disposal.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Margao, April 27: FC Goa conceded an 89th minute goal to squander the chance to become the first Indian club to win a match in the prestigious AFC Champions League (ACL) as they played out a 1-1 draw with Al Rayyan of Qatar here Monday.

Jorge Ortiz gave FC Goa the lead in the third minute of the Group E match but Ali Ferydoon equalised with just a minute left in the regulation time. Al Rayyan had the majority of possession in the first half but it was an even contest in the second session.

The Indian Super League side went out of reckoning for a knock-out berth after Al Wahda of the UAE beat last season runners-up Persepolis FC 1-0 in another Group E match played earlier in the day.

Persepolis are still on the top group standings with 12 points while Al Wahda are second with 10 points. FC Goa are third with three points and Al Rayyan at the bottom with two points.

All the four teams have one match remaining in the double round-robin league. The top team in each of the five groups and three best runners-up sides advance to the Round of 16 knock-outs.

FC Goa had played out a 0-0



Jorge Ortiz, who put FC Goa ahead against Al Rayyan, in action, Monday

draw with Al Rayyan in their first leg match before holding Al Wahda to another goalless draw. The Goa side then lost to Persepolis FC 1-

2 and 0-4 in the double header. FC Goa's last match against Al Wahda Thursday will thus be an inconsequential one.

LEE DONATES BITCOIN FOR FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: Inspired by his countryman Pat Cummins' gesture, former Australian pacer Brett Lee on Tuesday decided to donate one bitcoin (approximately ₹40 lakh) to help India in its fight against the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

Cummins, Monday, won lots of hearts when he announced a USD 50,000 donation towards the PM CARES Fund for oxygen supplies in India's hospitals ravaged by a deadly second wave of the pandemic.

"It saddens me deeply to see people suffering due to the ongoing pandemic. I feel privileged to be in a position of making a difference and with that in mind, I'd like to donate 1 BTC (Bitcoin) to Crypto Relief to help with the purchase of oxygen supplies for the hospitals across



India," Lee said in a statement which he posted on Twitter.

"India has always been like a second home for me. The love and affection that I have got from the people of this country both during my professional career and even after my retirement, holds a special place in my heart."

One bitcoin was trading at over ₹40 lakh, Tuesday evening. Bitcoin is not considered legal tender in India but that has not stopped Lee, one of the fastest bowlers to have played the game, from lending a helping hand.

Like Cummins, who plays for Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL, Lee is also in India as part of the IPL commentary panel.

"Now is the time to be united and ensure we do as much as we can to help the ones in need. I'd also want to thank all the frontline workers who have been working round the clock during these tough times.

"I request people to please take care, stay at home, wash your hands and head out only if absolutely necessary, wear a mask and maintain social distancing. Well done Pat Cummins for the initiative yesterday," Lee said.

Foxes move closer to Champions League

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leicester, April 27: Kelechi Iheanacho extended his career-best scoring form with a blistering winning goal as Leicester rallied to beat Crystal Palace 2-1 in the English Premier League and establish a seven-point cushion in the top four.

The Nigeria striker made it 14 goals in his last 14 games in all competitions - and brought Champions League qualification one step closer for Leicester - when he brought down a long ball forward from Jonny Evans, cut inside and smashed a rising shot with little back-lift inside the near post in the 80th minute.

Iheanacho had earlier set up Timothy Castagne for the 50th-minute equaliser, which canceled out Wilfried Zaha's opening goal for Palace, and is proving to be a revelation in the second half of the season after coming into the team in February because of injuries to



Kelechi Iheanacho celebrates his winner against Crystal Palace, Monday

teammates Harvey Barnes and James Maddison.

It is his first lengthy stint in the starting lineup since joining from Manchester City in the offseason of 2017 and he is even outshining strike partner Jamie Vardy, for so long

the team's talisman and most likely scorer.

The brilliant finish, which saw Iheanacho shift the ball onto his favored left foot and shoot before the defender and goalkeeper in front of him were set, came as no surprise

to Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel.

Iheanacho's hot streak could push Leicester over the line in the race for Champions League qualification, too. The win cemented third place for Brendan Rodgers' team, which is four points ahead of Chelsea in fourth and seven clear of West Ham in fifth. Liverpool is a point further behind, with all four teams having five games to play.

The Foxes faded away badly at the end of last season to drop out of the top four on the final weekend. That doesn't look like happening this time, with a second year in the Champions League - after 2016-17 - looking likely even after a grueling season that included a Europa League campaign.

Leicester's win left Liverpool with even slimmer hopes of qualifying for the Champions League, just a year after Jurgen Klopp's team won the league for the first time in 30 years.