



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Actor Tamannaah Bhatia has promised that her upcoming trilingual web series will keep the audience hooked till the end

LEISURE P2



US JOINS CHORUS

US has decided to support India and South Africa's proposal to temporarily waive Covid-19 vaccine patents

INTERNATIONAL P10



VILLA JOINS ODISHA FC

David Villa joins Odisha FC's football committee and will head the global football operations of the club

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Somewhere deep in my heart, I am greatly indebted to the previous govts. We can blame them for anything and everything

SINGLE SPUTNIK DOSE MAY PREVENT COVID



MOSCOW: Russian authorities gave regulatory approval Thursday to a single-dose version of the country's Sputnik V vaccine. They argued that the move could accelerate the process of achieving herd immunity against Covid-19. Named 'Sputnik Light', the new version is identical to the first dose of the two-dose Sputnik V. Russia started human trials of 'Sputnik Light' in January and is currently assessing results. 'Sputnik Light' is the fourth domestically developed Covid-19 vaccine approved in Russia. President Vladimir Putin said, "It's nice to know that this range of tools (against COVID-19) is expanding."

SHORT TAKES

3 militants killed in J-K encounter

Srinagar: Three Al-Badr militants were killed while one surrendered before security forces in an encounter Thursday in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said. They added that security forces after getting input about the presence of militants in the Kanigam area of Shopian in south Kashmir a search operation was launched. An encounter broke out when the militants were located as three of them spurned the offer to surrender.

9-day lockdown

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala government announced Thursday a nine-day complete lockdown in the state from the morning of May 8 to arrest the massive spread of COVID-19 in the state. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the lockdown would extend up to May 16 after which the situation will be reviewed. "Kerala will be under lockdown from 6.00am on 8 May to 16 May. This is in the background of a strong 2nd wave of #COVID19," Vijayan tweeted.

Pvt hospitals to continue vax

18-45 YEARS AGE GROUP BENEFICIARIES CAN GET THE INJECTION BY PAYING ₹100 AT FACILITIES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: With the aim to speed up vaccination in Odisha, the state government has allowed private hospitals to administer the jab to persons in the 18-45 years age group. Vaccination of people in 45-plus category will henceforth be available for free at all government-run medical facilities, Additional Chief Secretary PK Mohapatra said Thursday.

"Many private hospitals were engaged in vaccination, charging recipients ₹250 per shot. However, since May 1, the Centre stopped providing vaccines to private facilities and asked them to procure it on their own. As they have failed to do so, the Odisha government will provide these facilities with vaccines so that the speed of the drive increases. The 18-plus populace will have to pay ₹100 to the private hospital from which they will get the jab," informed Mohapatra. He also said about 17 lakh persons are waiting for second dose in Odisha.

Mohapatra informed that there is abundant quantity of the Covaxin jab which is being provided to people in the BMC area. "The rest of the state is being given the Covishield injection and the problems regarding it is well known," he said. "The chief minister, health minister and other officials have repeatedly written to the Centre to provide us with the



WAITING WITH HOPE: People queue up in large numbers for getting the jab at a health centre in Unit-IX

Covishield vaccine. We have demanded 15 lakh doses of it. Hopefully we will get it soon," he added.

Mohapatra further said that Odisha is likely to get 1,00,000 Covishield doses in the next couple of days and hopefully the entire amount by May 15.

"We are also putting pressure on vaccine manufacturers for quick supply of vaccines. We have told them that we are ready to make advance payments as we are committed to vaccinate all 18-45 years people of Odisha. As per rough calculation, there are

ODISHA REGISTERS RECORD SPIKE

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha's COVID-19 tally breached the five-lakh mark Thursday with 10,521 fresh cases. It is the highest so far in a single day reported in the state. It pushed the tally in Odisha to 5,00,162. In the last 24 hours 17 fresh fatalities have taken the toll to 2,121, a senior health department official said. The number of people infected by the virus in the state capital went past the 50,000-mark with 1,118 new cases. This is the highest single-day spike in the City, added the official. Of the 10,521 new cases, 5,945 were from quarantine centres and the rest detected during contact tracing. Odisha currently has 81,585 active Covid-19 cases, while 4,16,403 patients have so far recovered, the official said

1.16 crore people who are above 45 years in Odisha. Out of them 43.55 lakh (37.5 per cent) person have received first dose. Till date 6,00,000 have got the second jab, the ACS informed.

TARGET SET FOR JUNE 2022 BY STATE GOVT BBIL urged to start vaccine production

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: Facing an acute shortage of Covid-19 vaccine, the Odisha government has asked Bharat Biotech to start Covaxin production by June next year in the state. Bharat Biotech International Ltd (BBIL) had taken 30 acres of land to set up a vaccine unit at Andhra, on the outskirts of the capital city. However, the project till date, remains a non-starter for reasons best known to the authorities.

The foundation stone for the project was laid twice. The stone for the Biotechnology Park was laid October 25, 2009 while the groundbreaking ceremony for setting up of a multiple human vaccine production plant was laid November 16, 2017.

Holding a review meeting virtually, Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra directed Thursday concerned officials to expedite construction of the anchor vaccine production unit and execution of



other critical infrastructure. Target to start production of vaccines including Covaxin has been set for June, 2022.

The construction of the vaccine production unit has already started at the proposed project site. The required statutory clearances and permissions have also been granted for setting up the unit, officials said.

Mahapatra has directed the Science and Technology department to set up a professional directorate of Bio-Technology for having a focused approach towards incubation and setting up new industries in the sector. Around ₹15 crore rupees were allocated under the 'Fund of Funds' of MSME department for providing equity support to the incubating units.

NO GAG ON MEDIA: SC TELLS ELECTION PANEL

EC should take criticism in right spirit, says apex court

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, May 6: The Supreme Court said Thursday that constitutional authorities should perform better rather than complain and ask for restrictions on the media. It was hearing the Election Commission's (EC) petition complaining about media reports on the Madras High Court telling the poll body it should be 'booked for murder' for not stopping political rallies amid Covid-19. The apex court observed that the question of expunging the Madras High Court's critical remarks does not arise as they are not part of a judicial order.

A bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud acknowledged however that the high court's remarks were 'harsh' and at times 'off the cuff' remarks are susceptible for misinterpretation. The bench, also comprising Justice MR Shah, said the media cannot be restrained from reporting observations made



during the course of hearings. The bench lauded the high courts for commendable work done by them in effectively supervising Covid-19 pandemic management. "It will be retrograde to restrain HCs from making observations or gagging media from reporting observations," the top court said.

Courts have to remain alive to evolving technology of the media and it is not good if it is restrained from reporting judicial proceedings, the bench said. The apex court further stated that Article 19 of the Constitution not only gives the right to freedom of speech and expression to people but also confer the same right to media. "Something is observed in the

Centre ordered to stock oxygen

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court said Thursday that India needs to be prepared for the third wave of COVID-19 and emphasised upon the need to create a buffer stock of oxygen. It also asked the Centre not to reduce oxygen supply to Delhi from 700MT till further orders. It clarified to the Centre and Delhi government that it will not allow the top court of India to be a ground of recrimination between the two as both indulged in a blame game on the issue of allocation and supply of oxygen. A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and MR Shah said: "We need to be ready for the third surge of COVID-19. So a buffer stock of oxygen has to be created immediately."

larger public interest. The Election Commission should treat it as a bitter pill in the right spirit," the bench observed

Fuel prices hiked for third straight day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: In one of the steepest increase since daily rate revision started again, petrol price Thursday was hiked by 25 paise per litre and diesel by 30 paise as oil companies raised rates. Petrol price in the national capital was increased to ₹90.99 per litre from ₹90.74 while diesel rates went up to ₹81.42 a litre from ₹81.12, according to a price notification by state-owned fuel retailers.

This is the third straight day of increase in petrol and diesel prices since state-owned fuel retailers ended an 18-day hiatus in rate revision during Assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

CITY FUEL PRICE

PETROL:	₹91.73 (+0.25)
DIESEL:	₹88.75 (+0.33)

Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending on the local incidence of taxation (VAT)

In three days, petrol price has increased by 59 paise per litre and diesel by 69 paise. The hike has neutralised most of the reduction that came between March 24 and April 15. State-owned fuel retailers, IOC, BPCL and HPCL had reduced petrol price by 67 paise a litre and diesel by 74 paise per litre effected between March 24 and April 15.

Oil companies, who have in recent months resorted to unexplained freeze in rate revision, had hit a pause button after cutting prices marginally on April 15. This coincided with electioneering hitting peak to elect new governments in five states including West Bengal.

However, now officials said prices have been on a continuous uptrend since April 27. They added that crude oil prices are near USD 70 per barrel mark.

Central and state taxes make up for 60 per cent of the retail selling price of petrol and over 54 per cent of diesel. The union government levies ₹32.90 per litre of excise duty on petrol and ₹31.80 on diesel.

Union minister's car vandalised in Bengal

BJP LEADERS RESPONSIBLE FOR INSTIGATING VIOLENCE, THEY SHOULD STOP VISITING THE STATE: MAMATA

AGENCIES

Kolkata, May 6: Even as the Trinamool Congress (TMC) criticised Thursday the Centre for sending a team to probe post-poll violence in West Bengal, Union Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan's car was vandalised at Panchkuri village in West Midnapore district. The minister was visiting the area in connection with alleged post-poll violence on saffron party workers.

Muraleedharan alleged in a tweet that 'TMC goons' were behind the attack on his convoy. "I went to West Midnapore to meet party workers who have been attacked and their homes vandalised. I was moving from one house to another with my convoy and then all of a sudden a group of people started charging towards us and attacked," Muraleedharan said. "I am safe, but my driver was injured, few car windows were also smashed," the minister stated.



IN AGGRESSIVE MOOD: Villagers armed with bamboo sticks attack Minister V Muraleedharan's car at a village in West Midnapore district; (Inset): The interior of the ransacked vehicle

An officer of Kotwali police station in West Midnapore said that they are probing into the incident of the attack on the minister's convoy. No one has been detained or arrested so far, the police officer said. The BJP has alleged that 14 of

its workers have so far been killed in West Bengal. A four-member fact-finding team from the Union Home Ministry also arrived Thursday in the state and met the home secretary and DG. They are scheduled to visit places where allegedly, clashes have

taken place after the results were announced May 2. In a separate development, the Ministry of Home Affairs has asked Governor Jagdeep Dhankar to give a report on the law and order situation in the state. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee

on the other hand said Thursday that 16 people have died in post-poll violence. She claimed that violence and clashes were taking place in areas where BJP candidates have won. She also announced an ex-gratia of ₹2,00,000 to families of those killed in poll violence irrespective of their political inclinations. "It's not yet been 24 hours since the government took over and they are sending teams and ministers here. I am surprised," Banerjee said. "However the Centre is keeping mum over our request for vaccines," she added.

TMC MLA Firdah Hakim hit out at the Centre for sending teams instead of COVID-19 vaccines. "They should send vaccines first, that's the responsibility of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We are grieved that some people have died, and action will be taken against the culprits," Hakim said. "But, what will happen to the inoculation process which is stalled because of the vaccine crisis?" he asked.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	48949.76 ↑ 272.21
NIFTY	14724.80 ↑ 106.90
DOLLAR	74.31 ↓ ₹0.24
EURO	88.82 ↑ ₹0.23
GOLD	₹47,554 ↑ ₹54
SILVER	₹71,506 ↑ ₹1887

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	39.2°C	36.6°C
MIN	25.5°C	22.5°C
Humidity	56%	63%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Light rain likely	



'WOULDN'T LOOK LIKE THIS UNLESS I HAD TO BE NAKED IN MOVIES'

Hollywood star Channing Tatum shared he has a good physique thanks to his job profile, as acting often requires him to take his clothes off. "I promise you I would not look like this unless I had to be naked in most of my movies." Tatum said.

CURTIS PRAISES SMITH FOR HIS 'WORST SHAPE' POST

Actress Jamie Lee Curtis has given a motivating response to Hollywood star Will Smith's social media post saying he is currently in his 'worst shape', post-pandemic. Curtis reinforced his positive message by reminding people to set their own realistic self-acceptance goal.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you may look around and feel grateful for the wonderful blessings bestowed on you — your family, home, job, friends. This may prompt you to organise a little thanksgiving kind of get-together with your family and friends. Ganesha gives a thumbs up.

TAURUS
The desire to rule your community, your neighbourhood is likely to get hold of you, today. Don't get carried away by the idea and go bossing around. No one is likely to appreciate your acting high and mighty. Be sure.

GEMINI
You will be more busy with religious pursuits rather than work today. Religious rituals, charity, philanthropic work, service to the needy, these are some of the issues that will take up your time today.

CANCER
The day may not see you in best of the moods, yet you will manage to remain congenial, assures Ganesha. As a boss, you will be authoritative in your actions and that's not a bad thing at all. Although, on most occasions you are a lenient leader, today you will not spare the rod for those who cross lines.

LEO
It is not an especially bright day for you. You will experience mental stress. Minor conflicts will seem like mountains to you. If you try to calmly solve these problems, then you will definitely be able to resolve these issues.

VIRGO
Ganesha warns that anger will run riot today. You will probably blow hotter than a volcano. During the afternoon, you could draw out the plans for a big business project. You will gain the support of your colleagues.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today you will try to master the technical aspects of your work. You will be full of happiness, enthusiasm and vigor today. You may get tensed or feel under the weather towards afternoon. Your hunches will prove right today and you may be able to score a good profit in the share market too.

SCORPIO
You are on a creative high today. Be it personal or professional, your work speaks volumes about creativity, innovation and imagination. Romantic developments and friendly interactions during the latter half of the day will bring about a change in your life.

SAGITTARIUS
You are likely to get dominated by your soul mate today, and this is not working out. This may leave you grumpy for the entire day. Put aside your ego, and try to resolve your differences. This would pump in some oxygen in your relationship, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Love is a sensitive issue for you, and today you will enter into a new phase of your life. If you are already in a relationship, you will strengthen the emotional bond with your sweetheart. Such expression of love will not be one-sided.

AQUARIUS
You did try to be polite and affectionate while solving problems, but it didn't make any difference. Today, you will call a spade a spade and resolve pending issues, says Ganesha. You will be very sensitive today and the slightest of problem will irritate you. You will see the results of your efforts by the end of the day.

PISCES
You must have realised by now that financial planning is important. It is a good day to rethink your finances. By noon you will be able to see new opportunities at work. Ganesha has blessed you and so all your issues will be resolved.

Record-breaking epic Ramayan is back on TV



New Delhi: The late Ramanand Sagar's blockbuster mythological show *Ramayan* is back on television. The serial had gained immense popularity upon release on Doordarshan in 1987, and the national broadcaster had re-tecast the show during last year's lockdown. Upon being aired again in 2020, the show once again broke several records of viewership. The cast members of *Ramayan* have become pan-India celebrities over the decades. Arun Govil as Ram, Deepika Chikhalia as Sita, Sunil Lahri as Laxman, Arvind Trivedi as Raavan and Dara Singh as Hanuman are particularly recalled for their performances even today. This time, *Ramayan* is being aired on Colors channel, starting Thursday.

Sonu foresees severe blood crisis in India



Mumbai: Singer Sonu Nigam urged every non-vaccinated person in India to step forward and donate blood because he says there is will be a severe blood crisis amid the second wave of Covid-19. "There is going to be a severe crisis in blood banks. People who haven't been vaccinated till now need to step forward and donate blood. The situation, which could turn serious in the coming time, can easily be controlled with blood donation," said Sonu. The singer, who donated blood and oxygen canisters at a blood donation camp in Juhu, urged all not to wait till the time the crisis is on us. "Rather than waiting for the crisis to arrive and then start looking for a solution, it is a lot easier to foresee the problems and start looking for solutions right away. That's what I am doing here, trying to make arrangements for the crisis," added Sonu. Sonu had tested Covid positive earlier and he has not taken the vaccine yet.

Tamannaah shares her 'gratifying experience'



Mumbai: Actress Tamannaah Bhatia stars as an ethical hacker in the upcoming web series *November Story*. The seven-episode whodunit is directed by Ram Subramanian, and also includes Pasupathy, GM Kumar, Aruldas and Vivek Prasanna in the cast. Tamannaah plays ethical hacker Anuradha whose biggest concern is selling her father's house so she can pay for his Alzheimer's treatment. "Anuradha is a young, independent, fearless and intelligent woman who takes it upon herself to save her father from being punished for a cold-blooded murder. Portraying such a strong female character who is the hero of the story was one of the most gratifying experiences in my career so far," says Tamannaah. She promises fans that the series has a "compelling storyline and unique narrative" that will keep the audience "hooked till the end as the mystery around the murder is uncovered". *November Story* is set to release May 20 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu on Disney+ Hotstar VIP.

Happy Birthday bags nominations at NY film fest



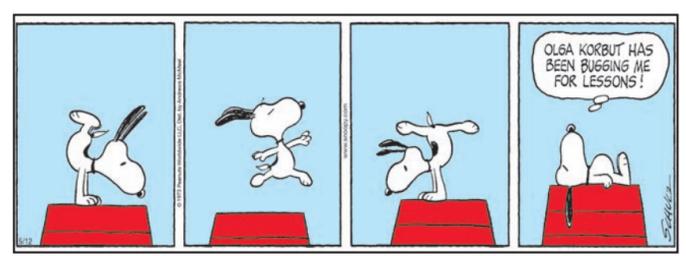
Mumbai: Short film *Happy Birthday*, featuring Aahana Kumra and Anupam Kher, has bagged multiple nominations at the New York City International Film Festival (NYCIFF). While Anupam and Aahana are in contention for Best Actor and Best Actress awards respectively, the film has also secured nomination in the Best Short Film category. Prasad Kadam has bagged a nomination for the Best Director award. "It always feels incredible to be appreciated because an artist puts so much effort into making the film. This project is very close to my heart. I am so grateful and thrilled to be nominated at such a prestigious Film Festival, and I hope the team wins big," Aahana said. The film recently made it to the final of the Paris Film Festival.

Sunny, PETA to feed 10K migrant workers

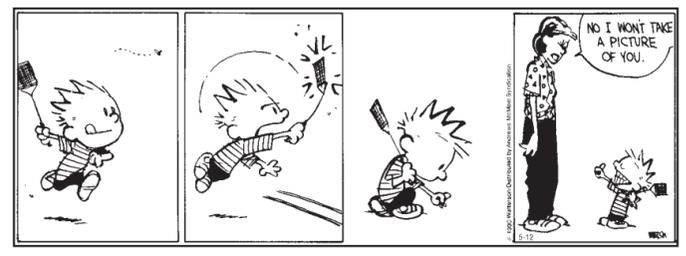


New Delhi: Sunny Leone has joined hands with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) to feed 10,000 migrant workers in the city. "We are facing a crisis, but together with compassion and solidarity we will come out ahead. I'm delighted to join hands with PETA India again - this time to get protein-packed vegan meals to thousands in need," Sunny said. The meals consist of daal and rice or 'khichdi' and often fruit. Sunny was named PETA India's Person of the Year in 2016 and previously starred in the organisation's campaigns in support of vegan fashion, vegetarian eating, and dog and cat adoption and sterilisation. PETA and Sunny will donate food through Uday Foundation.

PEANUTS



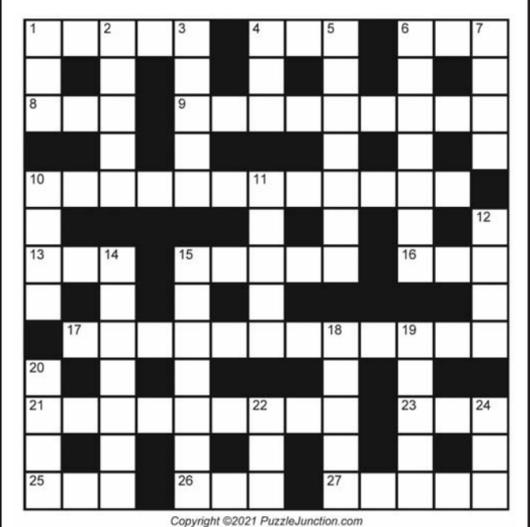
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Big pigs
 - 4 Rainbow's shape
 - 6 Mongrel
 - 8 Outback runner
 - 9 Actor's problem (6-3)
 - 10 Chang and Eng, e.g. (7,5)
 - 13 Silent
 - 15 Disreputable
 - 16 Health resort
 - 17 Pompous sort (7,5)
 - 21 Small aquariums (4,5)
 - 23 Historic period
 - 25 Parisian way
 - 26 Study
 - 27 Petrol unit
 - Down**
 - 1 Honey maker
 - 2 Caribbean cruise stop
 - 3 Bolivian capital
 - 4 Elbow's site
 - 5 They can be seeds
 - 6 Gaming venues
 - 7 Mantas
 - 10 Big rig
 - 11 Wipe clean
 - 12 Sentry's cry
 - 14 Leading figure of fauvism
 - 15 Studio couch (4,3)
 - 18 Rope fibre
 - 19 Like helium
 - 20 Many miles off
 - 22 Triumphed
 - 24 Gibbon, for one

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

A	S	T	I	R	G	I	R	A	F	F	E
C	A	N	B	U	G	A	G	O	R	A	
I	U	I	R	A	R	U	T				
E	R	O	D	C	H	E	E	R	I	O	
N	U	S	O	D							
T	E	S	T	W	R	I	N	G			
		A	K	O	N	A					
C	U	M	U	L	U	S		N	O	V	E
U	I	I	T	A	L						
R	O	G	U	E	S	K	I	D	O	E	
E	H	E	N	O	M	E	R				
D	E	T	E	S	T	S	E	S	S	A	

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



TAKING STOCK
Civil supplies officials inspect a potato godown at Chhatra Bazar in Cuttack, Thursday, in the wake of rise in price of the kitchen essential

COVID-19 TRACKER			
	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	15,61,52,279	13,35,67,799	32,60,203
India	2,10,77,410	1,72,80,844	2,30,168
Odisha	5,00,162	4,23,257	2,121

Covid caseload breaches 5L; toll 2,121

Bhubaneswar, May 6: Odisha's Covid-19 tally breached the five-lakh mark Thursday with 10,521 fresh cases – the highest so far in a single day – pushing the tally to 5,00,162, while 17 fresh fatalities raised the toll to 2,121, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

Khurda accounted for four deaths and Balasore and Malkangiri two each
Of the 10,521 new cases, 5,945 were reported from various quarantine centres and the rest detected during contact tracing
Over 1.03 crore samples have been tested in the state for Covid-19, including 48,314 since Wednesday

Of the 10,521 new cases, 5,945 were reported from various quarantine centres and the rest detected during contact tracing, the official said.

Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of new cases at 1,477, followed by Sundargarh at 1,186 and Cuttack at 963.

The positivity rate of Covid-19 in Odisha now stands at 4.82 per cent. Taking to Twitter, the H&FW department said, "Regret to inform about the demise of seventeen numbers Covid positive patients while under treatment."



A youth takes the Covid jab at a vaccination centre in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

Khurda accounted for four deaths and Balasore and Malkangiri two each. One patient each succumbed to the infection in Boudh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Kalahandi, Nayagarh, Rayagada, Sambalpur and Sundargarh.

This apart, 53 other Covid-19 patients in the state have died due to comorbidities.

Meanwhile, the H&FW department tweeted that 6,854 people have recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours.

Record single-day spike in Capital City

The Covid positive tally in the state Capital crossed 50,000-mark as the city reported a record 1,118 cases. As per the data provided by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), a total of 50,448 Covid positive cases have been detected in the city till 9am May 6. Of the total positive cases detected in the city, as many as 933 were local contact cases whereas 185 were quarantine cases. The data further mentioned 673 Covid patients in the city recuperated from the disease in last 24 hours.

Over 1.03 crore samples have been tested in the state for Covid-19, including 48,314 since Wednesday, he added.

RT-PCR -ve report must for WB visit

BHUBANESWAR: In view of the recent upsurge and high positivity rate of Covid-19, the West Bengal government has made RT-PCR negative report mandatory for passengers coming from other states. The test should have been conducted 72 hours before the departure of the train from originating stations. The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has requested the passengers

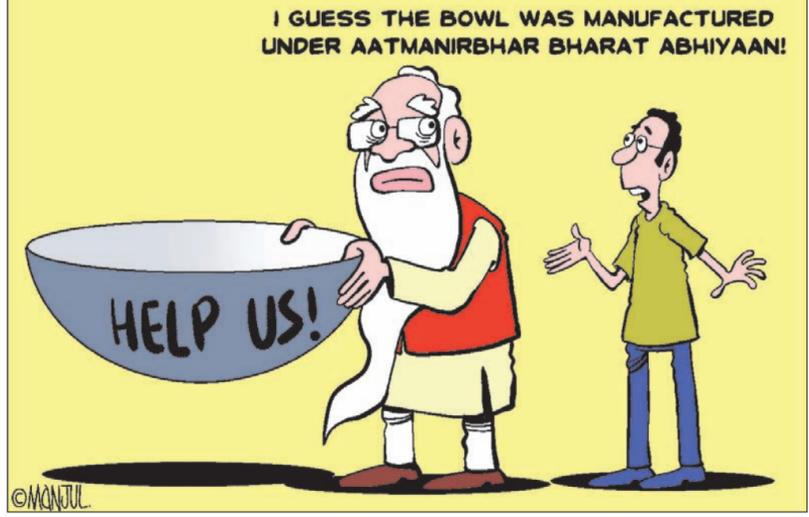
under its jurisdiction going to any place in West Bengal to take RT-PCR negative report within 72 hours of boarding the train.

Passengers of trains originating from Puri, Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur such as Puri-Howrah Special, Puri-Howrah Duronto Special, Puri-Howrah Special, Bhubaneswar-Howrah Special and Sambalpur-Howrah Special should

have to bring RT-PCR negative report with them for a hassle-free journey during this pandemic situation, the ECoR said.

Moreover, passengers of trains passing through ECoR jurisdiction and providing stoppages in West Bengal area should also possess RT-PCR negative report both during boarding and after getting down at their destinations.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



CRPF DIG SK Parth loses battle to virus

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: A senior IPS officer Thursday lost his battle to Covid-19 while undergoing treatment at a hospital in the Capital city here.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Sunil Kumar Parth who had tested positive for Covid-19 a few days ago succumbed to the virus Thursday. He was posted as DIG at CRPF Bhubaneswar centre. Due to his untimely demise, the

CRPF lost a most efficient officer, a statement issued by the group centre said.

"Homage to Departed soul. With deep grief, CRPF remember Shri Sunil Kumar Parth, DIG who lost his battle in fighting with COVID-19 in Hospital on 6/5/2021," it added.

During his tenure at Group Centre CRPF, Bhubaneswar, Parth had made sincere efforts for monumental changes in different regimental institutions with standard of living conditions.

The group centre described him as a great leader and a source of inspiration for all ranks. "His dedication bear tangible results during first wave of pandemic and not a single casualty occurred in Bhubaneswar CRPF campus' the statement added. His untimely and sudden death was irreparable loss for the central forces.

"He will remain in our thoughts and hearts for his good work and noble personality." Group Centre, CRPF, stated.

CANAL OR DUMPYARD



A canal at Benagaon in Kanas block of Puri district turns into a garbage dump due to lack of civic sense among the locals and alleged callousness of the Irrigation department

BMC to hire health workers to tackle nCoV crisis in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has decided to hire medical officers, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals on temporary basis to manage the worsening Covid-19 situation.

The additional district urban & public health officer (ADUPHO) invited applications from eligible Ayush Medical Officers (AMOs), unemployed and registered auxiliary nurse and midwives (ANMs), staff nurses and pharmacists to be engaged on a daily wage basis for Covid management.

"We are taking steps to increase our manpower to efficiently manage the pandemic in coming days. At present, we have about 70 staff members under each category. We are looking for additional 20-30 AMOs, about 50 ANMs and 100 nurses. The additional force will be engaged in administering vaccines, management of Covid care centres, distribution of Covid kits and other activities," said a BMC official.

The official also mentioned that the new recruits would work on a temporary basis for a period of three months. The merit list will be prepared based on marks obtained in their professional or degree courses.

Mentioning the remunerations



CONTRACTUAL POSTING
The ADUPHO is looking for additional 20-30 Ayush Medical Officers, about 50 ANMs and 100 nurses
The additional force will be engaged in administering vaccines, management of Covid care centres, distribution of Covid kits and other activities
The AMOs will be provided with a daily remuneration of ₹2,200 while trained and registered ANMs will be paid ₹850 per day

for different categories and eligibility, the notification issued by the ADUPHO stated that only those AMOs who are permanent residents of the state and below 50 years can apply. The candidates thus selected will be provided with a daily wage of ₹2,200. "The unemployed, trained and

registered ANMs will be provided with ₹850 per day as remuneration if engaged in Covid care facilities / RRTs or in other works. However, they will be given a stipend of ₹500 per day if engaged in works related to Covid-19 vaccination. Similarly, unemployed trained and registered staff nurses and pharmacists will be given ₹1,000 per day for their duties. In case of non-availability of ANMs, the ADUPHO may engage alternatively the staff nurses and pharmacists and be paid accordingly," the application read.

Meanwhile, sources at the BMC said that hiring and engagement of additional health workers will be done within this week. While the initial period for their work is stated to be three months, it could be extended after observing the condition of the pandemic in the city.

Cong slams govt over Covid care, vaccine crunch

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: The Congress party Thursday came down heavily on the state government alleging that the people of the state are not getting proper care as far as Covid-19 is concerned.

Congress leader and Jatni MLA Suresh Routray Thursday said, "The Odisha government is struggling to ensure proper care for people infected with the novel coronavirus. People are struggling to get beds in hospitals. I have often told the government to use the schools and other educational institutions for treatment of Covid patients. Most of the hospitals in Bhubaneswar are fully packed with Covid patients and many infected people are suffering in silence in the Capital city."

The leader also said that the government needed to take adequate steps for the welfare of Odia migrants. Routray said, "Migrant workers are facing scores of difficulties. Due to restrictions imposed on movement of vehicles, they are facing several issues. Proper arrangements should be made to ensure their welfare so that they would never migrate again. The government also needs to test them before their entry to the state."

Most of the hospitals in Bhubaneswar are fully packed with Covid patients and many infected people are suffering in silence in the Capital city
SURESH ROUTRAY | CONGRESS LEADER

Cuttack-Barabati MLA and Congress leader Mohammed Moqim Thursday wrote to the state government seeking attention towards the vaccination programme of people in the age group of 18-44 years.

"Vaccination for youngsters has come to a grinding halt due to dearth of shots in Cuttack city. Further, the supply of doses for people above 45 years of age is not keeping pace with the people turning out for vaccination," he said in his letter to the state health minister.

He also added, "I, therefore, request you to take steps for adequate supply of vaccine doses for youngsters and compensate the short supply of vaccines for aged people as early as possible."

Chandan Yatra likely in Narendra pond

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, May 6: The Chandan Yatra of Srimandir deities would be organised at Narendra pond here in strict adherence to Covid-19 guidelines.

This was decided at a virtual meeting of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chaired by Srimandir chief administrator Krishan Kumar Thursday.

Last year, the summer ritual was organised inside the 12th century shrine due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown, SJTA sources said.

"The Chandan Yatra would be organised at Narendra pond in the presence of minimum number of servitors. The district Collector will prepare a list of servitors who would participate in the ritual. However, a final decision on the summer ritual of the deities would be taken at a meeting of Srimandir Chhatisha Niyog May 11," said a temple official.

The meeting also discussed various issues related to Akshay



Trutiya ritual and construction of chariots for this year's Rath Yatra, added the official.

As per a decision taken at the meeting, a micro plan would be devised to vaccinate all servitors who are performing the day-to-day and special rituals of the presiding deities. "The administration may open an additional vaccination centre for Srimandir servitors. This apart, a special helpline would be in place to ensure treatment to the virus in-

fectured servitors," said the official. SJTA chief Krishan Kumar said, "Special attention is given to protect Srimandir servitors from getting infected with the novel coronavirus. Apart from door-to-door surveillance for early detection and treatment of Covid-19 cases, the administration will provide medicine kits to asymptomatic servitors living in isolation."

Puri Collector Samarth Verma, SJTA administrator (development)

SUMMER RITUAL WITH COVID CURBS

The water sports of the Srimandir deities would be organised at Narendra pond in the presence of least possible number of servitors

Last year, the summer ritual was organised inside the 12th century shrine due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown

The meeting also discussed various issues related to Akshay Trutiya ritual and construction of chariots for this year's Rath Yatra

Ajay Jena, SJTA administrator (Rituals) Jitendra Jena, senior officials of Srimandir and a few servitors participated in the virtual meeting, sources said. Notably, the 12th century shrine has been shut for people till May 15 to counter the second wave of Covid-19.

COOLING OFF



Boys dive into a canal at Balipatna on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar to escape the scorching heat, Thursday

IMD predicts rain, thunderstorm for four days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Thursday said that light rains and thunderstorms are likely to be witnessed in different parts of the state in the next four days.

While issuing a yellow warning for Friday, the IMD said, "Thunderstorm with lightning and gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 km/h is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Angul, Boudh, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Nabarangpur, Koraput, Malkangiri, Gajapati, Sambalpur, Balasore, Bhadrak and Jajpur."

Meanwhile the department has also forecast light to moderate rains in different parts of the state. Similar trends are likely to prevail in the next three days as per the weather prediction of the department. The department however said that chances of change in the maximum day time temperature in the state for the next four days are low. After that the temperature is likely to rise by 2 degree to 3 degree Celsius in different parts of the state.

The IMD also said maximum and minimum temperatures in the state capital are very likely to be around 37°C and 25°C respectively.

Thursday, the highest temperature was recorded in Sonepur which saw 40.8°C while the minimum temperature i.e. 18.5°C was recorded in Daringbadi.

₹15Cr Covid fines collected in April

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: Odisha Police has collected over Rs 15 crore from violators of Covid-19 guidelines since April. The Director General of Police (DGP), Abhay, revealed Thursday that the amount was collected from persons not wearing masks, violating social distancing norms, and vehicles flouting guidelines.

He stated that the cops collected Rs 6.34 crore from mask violators and Rs 8.29 crore from people found violating various traffic and Covid-19 related rules.

As many as 553 violators have been arrested during the above period. The cops have seized 21,806 vehicles and registered 1,632 excise cases during the period.

The DGP again appealed to everyone to follow all the restrictions issued by the government. He urged people not to visit police stations and the offices of respective district SPs during the lockdown and shutdown.

The state police has started telephone-based grievance system to address the complaints of the citizens.

He instructed people to contact police through the phone numbers given in the state police website or issued by the district police who will collect complaints from their doorsteps.

NSUI for online classes during vacation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: The Odisha unit of National Student's Union of India (NSUI) Thursday protested against the state government's decision of cancelling online classes of colleges and universities during summer vacation.

NSUI, Odisha president Yashir Nawaz said that cancelling online classes would affect the studies of students as online classes are the only way they are continuing their academic education and are completing their academic courses which will now be halted.

The state government May 4 decided to declare summer holiday at all educational institutions under Higher Education department till May 31 and also cancelled online classes and examinations.

476 lose ₹1.19Cr to cyber frauds in April

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: The cyber fraudsters continue to dupe citizens from across the state of lakhs everyday under various pretexts. The cyber help desk opened at the office of Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) has received 476 calls from victims from various parts of the state who lost their money to such criminals in April.

According to the data shared by the Commissionerate Police, the cyber fraudsters duped ₹1,19,63,297 from 476 victims in April only.

However, the actual amount whisked away by the fraudsters would be several times more since many people are unaware of the help desk in the state. The desk exclusively investigates fraud cases reported by denizens of the Bhubaneswar Urban Police District (UPD) only.

As many as 220 victims from Bhubaneswar, who sought help of the desk, reported the loss of ₹74,05,114 to the fraudsters last month. The cybercriminals duped 156 people, including 68 from Bhubaneswar, through various Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platforms.

As many as 80 persons have been duped by the unknown fraudsters who promised to provide various credit card and ATM related services in April.



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As many as 80 persons have been hoodwinked by the unknown fraudsters who promised to provide various credit card and ATM related services in April

The help desk of the twin city Commissionerate Police managed to refund and block the transfer of ₹5,36,140 after receiving complaints through a dedicated helpline

platforms.

As many as 80 persons have been duped by the unknown fraudsters who promised to provide various

credit card and ATM related services in April. The criminals have illegally withdrawn money from 55 persons of the city through the above modus operandi.

Meanwhile, the help desk managed to refund and block the transfer of money to the tune of ₹5,36,140 after receiving complaints through the helpline number issued by the Commissionerate Police.

A total of 11 cases have been registered in this regard in April.

Odisha sends 6,354 MT oxygen to 10 states

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: The state has so far dispatched as many as 345 tankers carrying 6,354.742 metric tonne (MT) of medical oxygen with a police escort from Rourkela, Jajpur, Dhenkanal and Angul districts to at least 10 states facing acute shortage of the life-saving gas in treating Covid patients, an official said Thursday.

According to the data shared by state police, as many as 35 tankers were dispatched from Angul with 585.98 MT of oxygen, 84 from Dhenkanal with 1322.78 MT of the life-saving gas, 88 from Jajpur with 1815.99 MT of oxygen and 138 tankers from Rourkela with 2629.992 MT of the gas.

"As many as 105 tankers with 2147 MT of oxygen were sent to Andhra Pradesh, while 97 tankers with 1657.109 MT of oxygen were

sent to Telangana. Tamil Nadu received seven tankers with 136.42 MT of medical oxygen, while Haryana got 41 tankers filled with 783.822MT of the gas," according to a statement from the state police.

It added that 14 tankers with 234.36 MT of oxygen were sent to Maharashtra, while 243.461 MT of oxygen-filled in 16 tankers have left for Chhattisgarh. While 27 tankers have carried around 488.68 MT of oxygen to Uttar Pradesh, 35 tankers with 601.52 MT of oxygen were sent to Madhya Pradesh.

Moreover, two tankers with 33 MT of oxygen were sent to Delhi and one tanker with 29.32 MT sent to Punjab in the last 14 days.

Notably, a special cell has been formed under ADG (Law and Order) YK Jethwa to monitor the transportation of medical oxygen by Odisha to various states facing a deficit of medical oxygen.



LOCKDOWN IN TWIN CITIES



Jaydev Vihar Square in Bhubaneswar

Roads look largely empty, shops dotting the thoroughfares shut and women on way home after buying essentials, within the permitted time, Wednesday, the second day of the two-week lockdown enforced by the Odisha government to break the chain of Covid-19 transmission in the coastal state

OP PHOTOS



Rasulgarh Square in the Capital city



Sahid Nagar in the Temple City



Malgode in Cuttack

NSUI for online classes during vacation

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The state government May 4 decided to declare summer holiday at all educational institutions under Higher Education department till May 31 and also cancelled online classes and examinations.

ECoR cancels four special trains

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has decided to cancel four special trains originating under its jurisdiction owing to poor passenger patronization and the surge of Covid-19 infection.

The trains to be canceled are Bhubaneswar-Jagdulpur-Bhubaneswar Special (08445/08446), Visakhapatnam-Kirandul-Visakhapatnam Special (08516/08515), Tirupati-Visakhapatnam-Tirupati Special (02708/02707) and Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam-Secunderabad Special (02784/02783).

The Bhubaneswar-Jagdulpur-Bhubaneswar Special will stop running from Bhubaneswar from 8 to 22 May and from Jagdulpur from 9 to 23 May. The Visakhapatnam-

Kirandul-Visakhapatnam Special will be stopped from Visakhapatnam from 7 to 21 May and from Kirandul from 8 to 22 May.

The Tirupati-Visakhapatnam-Tirupati Special will stand cancelled from Tirupati from 7 to 30 May and from Visakhapatnam from 8 to 31 May. Similarly, The Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam-Secunderabad Special will be cancelled from Secunderabad from 8 to 29 May and from Visakhapatnam from 9 to 30 May.

Earlier, five special trains were cancelled due to similar reasons. They were Puri-Gunupur-Puri Special (08417/08418), Sambalpur-Puri-Sambalpur Special (08303/08304), Puri-Durg-Puri Special (08425/08426), Indore-Puri-Indore Special (09371/09372) and Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam-



Secunderabad Special (02204/02203).

11 trains cancelled for weekends
ECoR has decided to cancel eleven more pair of Special train services running on Saturdays

& Sundays, from 8th to 16th May. They are Bhubaneswar-Kendujhargharh-Bhubaneswar Special, Puri-Angul-Puri Special, Bhubaneswar-Bhadrak-Bhubaneswar Special, Puri-Cuttack-Puri Special, Cuttack-Bhadrak-Cuttack Special, Cuttack-Paradeep-Cuttack Special, Cuttack-Bhadrak-Cuttack Special, Visakhapatnam-Raipur-Visakhapatnam Special, Bhubaneswar-Palasa-Bhubaneswar Special, Rayagada-Sambalpur-Rayagada Special from both the directions on 8th, 9th, 15th & 16th May.

Similarly, Bhubaneswar-Bangiriposi-Bhubaneswar Special from Bhubaneswar on 8th, 9th, 15th & 16th May and from Bangiriposi on 9th, 10th, 11th & 17th May will remain cancelled.

Get permission for marriages, funerals through WhatsApp

AGENCIES

Cuttack, May 6: Following the footsteps of the Bhubaneswar Urban Police District (UPD), the Cuttack UPD Thursday issued helpline numbers for residents of the Silver City who are seeking permission for marriage functions or funerals during the 14-day lockdown.

Cuttack DCP Prateek Singh took to Twitter to say that the Cuttack UPD issued a helpline number - 6370701550 for those seeking permission for marriage and funeral related activities. Someone from the city can fill-up a particular format and send the same to the helpline number through WhatsApp.

After reviewing the application, the police will provide the per-

mission letter through WhatsApp to the applicant, he pointed out. In order to lodge complaints, residents of the city can call up another helpline number - 8763068167. The police will send the FIR copy to the complainant through WhatsApp.

In case of other emergency, one can contact the police in Cuttack city by calling up 100 or 112, the Cuttack DCP added.

Minor reshuffle in CP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: The Commissionerate Police Thursday effected a minor reshuffle in Bhubaneswar Urban Police District (UPD). Pranakrushna Rout, who was the ACP Zone III, has been appointed as Additional DCP for Bhubaneswar UPD.

Bharat Chandra Sahoo, who currently holds the post of IIC Laxmisagar police station, has been appointed as the ACP for Zone III. Meanwhile, Om Prakash Mohanty will be the new IIC of Laxmisagar police station.

2 women critical as fire engulfs house

PIPLI: Two women sustained severe burns and a house was destroyed when a fire broke out at Jhinkirimal village Wednesday night. The house of Debraj Pradhan of the village was reduced to cinders, said sources. Swapnarani Pradhan, 31, and her mother-in-law Pashori Pradhan, 63, were trapped by the flames and suffered severe burns. They have been admitted to the SCBMCH in Cuttack. Sources, meanwhile, said Swapnarani, who sustained 90 per cent burns, is struggling to survive. Pashori too faced burns while attempting to save her daughter-in-law. Pipli Fire brigade managed to control the blaze.

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Weavers forced into distress sale as Boyanika drags feet



from Bargarh district. She said the committee has purchased clothes of around ₹70 lakh from two agencies in her own district instead from local weavers. Pitambar Soor, president of Gokarneswar Weavers Cooperative Society from Gopalpur weaver village under this block in Jajpur, claimed that the state body was making preferential treatment in buying clothes. As a result, the clothes manufactured by them are left unsold, he said. Prabhat Mohanty, secretary of Krushnadaspur cooperative society said he has been contacting Boyanika for a year to sell clothes manufactured by weavers in his society. However, Boyanika has re-

Rasulpur, May 6: Even as the state government has sanctioned a bailout package worth ₹15 crore for weavers associated with Boyanika, the latter has not purchased clothes from them and is accused of meting out preferential treatment to the artisans, a report said. The complaints against Boyanika have come from weavers in Rasulpur block of Jajpur district and their counterparts in Bargarh, Cuttack, Sonepur, Ganjam, Sambalpur, Khurda and Koraput districts. As a result, weavers in these regions have been pushed into distress sale of their products due to lack of support from the government. The state owned Odisha State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society Ltd (OSHWCS) popularly known as Boyanika acts as an intermediary in providing marketing support and quality raw materials to scores of weavers in the state. The weavers function under primary weavers cooperative societies and produce quality handwoven fabrics. However, the members of the Odisha Weavers Federation have alleged that Boyanika is spending the fund in buying clothes from its

The state owned Odisha State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society Ltd (OSHWCS) popularly known as Boyanika acts as an intermediary in providing marketing support and quality raw materials to scores of weavers in the state. The weavers function under primary weavers cooperative societies and produce quality handwoven fabrics. Pitambar Soor, president of Gokarneswar Weavers Cooperative Society from Gopalpur weaver village under this block in Jajpur, claimed that the state body was making preferential treatment in buying clothes. As a result, the clothes manufactured by them are left unsold. Prabhat Mohanty, secretary of Krushnadaspur cooperative society said he has been contacting Boyanika for a year to sell clothes manufactured by weavers in his society. However, Boyanika has refused to listen to them. They have lodged complaints with the secretary and director of the handloom and textile department but their pleas are yet to be addressed. He alleged that lakhs of rupees have been lying idle in the 'Akshayakosh' bank accounts of primary societies but the money is not being spent in raising infrastructure. When contacted, Mili Samantray, general manager of Boyanika, termed the allegations baseless while denying any wrongdoing. She said the government has fixed some parameters to purchase clothes. Moreover, advice of expert team is also taken before buying clothes from weavers, she added.

chosen manufacturer rather than purchasing from them. They further alleged there is no transparency in buying of clothes and held its general manager responsible for the problem. This has seriously hit their business as they urged the state government to conduct a probe and alleviate their problem. The members alleged that Boyanika has formed a committee to purchase clothes from the weavers. Three senior officials in charge of this committee buy clothes from private business houses instead of primary societies formed by the weavers, alleged Sukanti Meher, a national award winner weaver and vice president of Odisha Weavers Federation



Milk farmers protesting against a private agency's refusal to buy their milk due to closure of shops amid lockdown pour milk on National Highway-57 in Baunsuni of Boudh district, Thursday

₹ 5-CR CYBER FRAUD IN NHM

CB probe looks at multiple angles

Sonepur, May 6: The State Crime Branch has intensified its investigation into financial wrongdoing in the National Health Mission (NHM) in Sonepur. The CB, which is looking at multiple angles linked to the fraud, has arrested Samir Pati, a resident of Rourkela Thursday. Notably, cyber fraudsters have allegedly managed to withdraw over ₹5.1 crore from the bank account of NHM at the district headquarters hospital. The cyber fraud came to the fore after district accounts manager of the NHM Saroj Kumar Panda filed a written complaint in this regard a few days ago. The Economic Offence Wing of the Crime Branch, Bhubaneswar, is looking into the matter. A four-member CB team led by DSP Iti Das started investigation

from Wednesday. The investigating team visited the NHM office at the district headquarters hospital and enquired about monetary transactions through NHM. The CB officials have hinted that the fraud will be exposed soon. NHM has its account (32333146321) at the main branch of the SBI here. The CB came to know that money has been transferred online to ac-

count number (3123355704) at Central Bank in Rourkela from the NHM account April 7. The account in the Central Bank has been opened in the name of MS Natural. The NHM authorities came to know about the fraud after the SBI provided monthly account details to the former. It is surprising, how such huge amounts of money were transferred without the knowledge of the NHM, that too through Public Financial Management System. It is suspected that someone might have provided ID and password of the NHM account. Without ID and password, it is not possible to transfer money from the NHM account to the other. As a rule, the signatures of the CDMO and the ADMO are mandatorily required whenever there is a need to withdraw cash up to ₹10 lakh from the NHM account. When

more than ₹10 lakh is withdrawn, signatures of the Collector, the CDMO and the ADMO are required. The CB officials found that there has been gross violation of this rule in the ₹5-crore online cash transfer from the NHM fund. The CB officials are trying to ascertain the bank staff who had visited the bank on the day when the money was transferred online. The investigating team is likely to check the CCTV footages of the SBI branch. It is suspected that some staff might have received the debit and OTP messages of the money transfer in their cell phones. How the officials of the NHM could not get hints of such a huge fraud in the NHM. Which NHM officials are involved in the fraud and which officials are hands in glove with MS Natural. The CB is delving into all such above-said angles of the cyber fraud in the NHM.

2 trampled to death in separate jumbo attacks

Angul/Sambalpur, May 6: At least two persons including an elderly woman were killed in separate incidents of elephant attack in Angul and Sambalpur districts, Thursday. In the first incident, the deceased woman was identified as Mamata Sathy. She was a resident of Talagarh village under Bantala police limits in Angul district. The elderly woman had gone to a mango orchard in the wee hours of Thursday to collect mangoes. All of a sudden, a jumbo appeared before her while she was collecting mangoes. The raged pachyderm trampled her to death. As the elderly woman did not return home till the morning, her family members launched a frantic search in nearby areas. They finally found her crushed body in the mango orchard, a villager said.

On being informed, forest officials reached the spot to take stock of the situation. Tension prevailed in the village following the death. In the second incident, a man came on the way of a jumbo and was trampled to death. The incident took place at Jaripani village near Luhapanka panchayat under Rairakhol forest range in Sambalpur. The deceased man was identified as Dhanu Dehury of Mahulapal village in Angul district. He had gone to Luhapanka area to search for his missing cow when an elephant attacked and killed him.



Docs swear by plasma therapy

Balasure, May 6: Even as the second wave of Covid-19 is sweeping across the state, doctors increasingly pin their faith on plasma therapy for the treatment of Covid-19 positive cases at the district headquarters hospital in Balasure, a report said. Notably, a plasma bank was inaugurated at the DHH August 18, 2020. Scores of Covid-19 patients from various parts of Balasure, Bhadrak and Mayurbhanj are benefitting from the plasma therapy. Earlier, Covid patients from north Odisha used to go to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack to avail of plasma therapy. Now, the plasma bank has 69 units of plasma in stock. The critically ill Covid patients are immediately provided with plasma therapy. Doctors say, as immunity in some Covid patients gets low, their condition worsens. In the second wave of the Covid-19, patients have poor immunity leading to an increase in the number of fatalities.



If the plasma therapy is put to use in time, critical Covid patients have good chances of quick recovery, they added. Plasma therapy has proved beneficial for people affected by Swine Flu and Ebola. They added that even during the first wave of the Covid-19, patients have been treated successfully in the state. Experts say, about 80 per cent of the Covid-19 patients recover due to plasma therapy. Chief district medical officer Dr Dulalens Jagdev asserted that the

Life bid on Dalit rape victim in Bhadrak

Bant, May 6: A young woman of the Dalit community was allegedly kidnapped and raped by a youth in Kenduapada police limits under Bant block of Bhadrak district. After committing the crime, the accused had tried to kill her by pushing her into a river, a report said. The accused, identified as Ashis Kumar Mohapatra, was arrested Thursday. The incident took place Tuesday night. But it came to the fore Thursday after the victim lodged a complaint at Kenduapada police outpost in this regard. Police have registered a case. According to the complaint, the victim was allegedly kidnapped by Ashis Mohapatra, a youth of Gandagara village at around 11 pm Tuesday. He took her to an unknown place in Jajpur Road area where she was raped. She was abused with

The victim was allegedly kidnapped by Ashis Mohapatra, a youth of Gandagara village at around 11 pm Tuesday and raped her at an unknown place in Jajpur casteite slurs and threatened with her life. The accused, along with six others, took her to Patuli Bakharpur village Wednesday evening where they attempted to kill her by pushing her into the river. The woman, however, cried for help. Hearing her cries, local residents rushed to the spot and rescued her. She was later handed over to police.

Man goes missing from Covid Care hub

Angul, May 6: An elderly man went missing from a Covid Care Centre in Angul town. After all attempts to trace him proved futile, his son lodged a complaint at Sadar police station Thursday. According to a source, Jugal Pradhan, a resident of Para village under Chhendipada block in Angul district had taken his ailing father Gobind Pradhan to Angul

district headquarters hospital (DHH) April 30. There his swab sample was collected and he tested positive for Covid-19. Following this, he was admitted to Adarsha Covid Care Centre. Two days later, his daughter received a call from her father. He told her that he is being shifted somewhere else. After coming to know this from his sister, Jugal tried to contact his father on his mobile phone. Not

getting any answers from him, a disturbed Jugal visited the Covid Care Centre and met doctors and nurses asking them about the whereabouts of his father. The Covid Care Centre authorities told him that his father has been shifted to the DHH. Jugal visited the DHH and asked doctors and nurses about his father, providing them with all details about him. But nobody could tell him anything about his father's whereabouts.

Disaster waiting to happen

Kesinga, May 6: With four transformers near the underpass bridge close to the railway level-crossing in Kesinga of Kalahandi district lying open, any major mishap is just a matter of time. The local residents have been demanding to shift these transformers somewhere else but to no avail. The callous attitude of the department is only infuriating people. Of the four transformers, three are on the left side of the bridge and one on the right side. Thousands of vehicles, motorcyclists and cyclists use the underpass to go to different destinations. For these commuters, the transformers are always posing threat. One transformer has exposed live wires. "The railway department officials supervised the under bridge construction work. They even pulled down houses of 47 families at Ambaji Pada. But it did not come to their minds to relocate the transformers to somewhere else. It seems, they are waiting for a major mishap," alleged some fumed local residents. "Even the government, electricity department and Kesinga NAC officials are commuting past



officials will be held responsible," they added. A year has passed since the local residents took the matter up with the electrical SDO of the railway department, Kesinga SDO and Kesinga NAC officials. But no step has so far been taken in this regard. "As rainy season is ahead, loss of lives and properties due to these open transformers cannot be ruled out," observed some. Residents urged the officials to take steps to relocate the transformers. When contacted, Kesinga SDO Manas Ranjan Mati said he would try his level best to shift the transformers before the onset of the rainy season.

STORE ON WHEELS



Mission Shakti women selling potatoes and onions at fair price at a mobile vegetable shop in Steel City. The van was launched by Rourkela Municipal Corporation, Thursday

EAST COAST RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM No.2 TO
E-Tender Notice No. ETCPMVSKP2021019
Dated : 12.04.2021
The following modification has been made in the Tender Notice / Tender Document which may be noted.
Date & Time of Closing of Tender : MODIFIED AS 03.06.2021 at 1200 Hrs.
All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.
The intending tenderer(s) are advised to go through the Corrigendum from the website www.ireps.gov.in and to quote their e-offer accordingly.
Chief Administrative Officer (Con),
Bhubaneswar
PR-12/CE/21-22

In Loving Memory ...
We offer sincere tribute to Our beloved Artist friend

Umakanta Mallick
who left us on 26th April 2021
You will be missed dear!!
1991 Batch Classmates
BK College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar

A quiet mind does not mean that there will be no thoughts or mental movements at all, but that these will be on the surface, and you will feel your true being within, separate from them, observing but not carried away.

SRI AUROBINDO



Fourth industrial revolution

Silicon Valley leaders tell us that the Fourth Industrial Revolution will bring untold benefits. They say it is already underway and accelerating, powered by artificial intelligence and other technologies, and warn that we will be left eating dust if we don't get with the program.

This upheaval – which also reflects the impact of robotics, bio- and nanotechnology, 5G, and the Internet of Things (IoT) – is a general-purpose revolution. Its leaders and their boosters promise that it will help societies to tackle climate change, address poverty and inequality, and stem the dramatic loss of biodiversity.

The revolution might play out like that. Or it might not. Consider the most recent digital revolution, which brought us Google, Facebook, and Twitter, and changed the way information flows around the world. At first, the ability to connect to others online, and to create and share digital content seamlessly through ever-growing virtual social networks, seemed straightforwardly beneficial.

But today, the global flood of misinformation enabled by these platforms is making it more difficult to manage the Covid-19 pandemic and tackle climate change. Few realised what was happening until it was too late, and now we are dealing with the fallout. So, how can societies minimize the risk of inadvertent, ignorant, or willfully malicious use of the next generation of technology?

My work has increasingly focused on the collision of two worlds. The technosphere comprises the stuff that humans have created, which amounts to an estimated 30 trillion tons, or 50 kilograms per square meter of the Earth's surface. The biosphere is the thin layer clinging to the Earth's surface where life thrives, and where humans have enjoyed a 10,000-year stretch of relatively stable climate.

First became interested in the relationship between these worlds while exploring the growth of semi-automated global early-warning systems for disease control. This made me appreciate how deeply technology alters human, organizational, and machine behavior. Sometimes that influence is linear, simple, and direct. But more often than not, the effects of technological change are indirect; they move through complex webs of causation and become visible to us only after a long time. Social media are a good example of this.

The technosphere is all around us. It is on track to become so-called "cognitive infrastructure," with the ability to process information, reason, remember, learn, solve problems, and at times even make decisions with minimal human intervention through increased automation and machine learning.

In evolutionary terms, this may prove to be a giant leap. But decisions regarding the technosphere's design and direction must reflect social goals and the state of the planet. Building a more sustainable future therefore requires us to rethink some deeply held assumptions about the role of technology, and artificial intelligence in particular.

The biggest imperative may be to broaden the dominant "AI for climate change" narrative. In its simplest form, this narrative focuses on using AI to predict climate, or to optimize energy systems or traffic flows. But the climate system is fundamentally connected to the biosphere, with its biodiversity, forests, oceans, and agricultural ecosystems. Developing and deploying AI responsibly to tackle urgent sustainability challenges requires embracing this connection with the living planet, and our role in it.

Moreover, framing AI's contribution in terms of optimization and efficiency is the wrong way to think about bolstering the long-term resilience of people and the planet. Resilience – the ability to rebound from shocks and adapt to changing conditions – requires diversity and redundancy. A city with one huge freeway through its center is vulnerable to gridlock if hit by a flash flood or terrorist attack. One that has many routes from one place to another is more resilient.

Systems that are optimized to maximize output (say, of a particular crop) are prone to shocks and changing circumstances. Optimizing agricultural land for maximum yields using predictive analytics and automation is a tempting strategy, but it could accelerate loss of local ecological knowledge, amplify existing inequalities, and increase reliance on monoculture in response to commercial pressures.

AI's potential to help address the climate challenge lies not in optimizing systems, but in augmenting people's capacities to become stewards of the biosphere. Such a broader view is urgently needed today. But there are two big risks in striving to direct intelligent machines to foster biosphere stewardship.

The first is hype. As the pressures on our planet and the climate system increase, so will the hope that AI solutions can help "solve" deeply complex social, economic, and environmental challenges. Our knowledge about whether AI actually offers large climate benefits (and to whom) is limited, and existing assessments are often wildly optimistic, given what we know of technological evolution. All claims must be rigorously and independently tested as AI technologies evolve and diffuse over time.

The second risk is acceleration. The deployment of AI systems and related technologies like IoT, 5G, and robotics may well lead to more rapid loss of biosphere resilience and increased extraction of fossil fuels and the raw materials that underpin these technologies. For example, oil and gas firms are increasingly seeking to cut costs through digitization. According to one estimate, the market for digital services in the fossil-fuel sector could grow 500% in the next five years, saving oil producers about \$150 billion annually.

Digitisation, automation, and AI have untapped potential both to strengthen sustainability and to optimize exploitation. To harness the Fourth Industrial Revolution to sustainability, we need to start directing its technologies better and stronger now.

The writer is Deputy Director of the Stockholm Resilience Centre at Stockholm University and Program Director at the Beijer Institute of Ecological Economics at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

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LOL

Stupid people

George W. Bush and his VP running mate, Dick Cheney, were talking, when George W. said, "I hate all the dumb jokes people tell about me." Wise Old Cheney, feeling sorry for his old boss, said sage-like, "Oh, they are only jokes. There are a lot of stupid people out there. Here, I'll prove it to you." Cheney took George W. outside and hailed a taxi driver. "Please take me



to 29 Nickel Street to see if I'm home," said Cheney. The cab driver, without saying a word, drove them to Nickel Street, and when they finally got out, Cheney looked at George W. and said, "See! That guy was really stupid!" "No kidding," replied George W. "There was a pay phone just around the corner. You could have called instead."



Shivaji Sarkar

THE DAILY BUSINESS LOSS DUE TO LOCKDOWN IN DELHI IS LIKELY TO BE AROUND ₹600 CRORE, WHILE FOR OVERALL INDIA IT COULD BE AROUND ₹30,000 CRORE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT FULL LOCKDOWN, PARTIAL LOCKDOWN, NIGHT CURFEWS

It is an ominous year now. Panic decisions and maniac actions of keeping people off work has done wonders of squeezing out taxes – GST, income tax, cesses, tolls, fees, charges, high petrol prices – and the ultimate of keeping people in perpetual hunger through severe inflation and total brake on activities.

The core inflation has hit its activity so hard that a relapse of the lockdown has led crores of traders cry for deferment of GST and other taxes. The daily business loss due to lockdown in Delhi also is likely to be around ₹600 crore, while for overall India could be around ₹30,000 crore taking into account full lockdown, partial lockdown, night curfews and other forms of restrictions, according to Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal. Non-compliance of these stipulations, he says, will attract huge penalties on traders across the country.

So far Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has refused to budge as her economy has collapsed over almost -23.9 plus another about 8 per cent since June 2020. There is no thinking, policy or revival plan except that economy is shrinking as people's incomes are in a tail-spin, markets have sagging demand and activities are at a virtual thaw after a year of inaction.

On the face of it, India panicking into inaction on March 24, 2020 was the severest debilitating process of incarceration without giving a simple thought how 130 crore Indians would survive if their livelihood was snatched away. It happened and the next three months revealed that the decisions to close down all treatments except the so-called Covid-19 had led the country to a devastating path. At least 10 crore of the 18 crore migrant workers hit the road amid loss of work, dignity and humiliation heaped on by state governments of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Telangana and which not.

The offence could have been pardonable had a government that

FOCUS NDA REGIME

ECONOMIC LETDOWN



It is an ominous year now. Panic decisions and maniac actions of keeping people off work has done wonders of squeezing out taxes – GST, income tax, cesses, tolls, fees, charges, high petrol prices – and the ultimate of keeping people in perpetual hunger

invoked National Disaster Management Act 2005 merely to amass power; did come out with a road map of a year ahead. But, the nation remained adrift in complacency of "having conquered" Covid-19 and patting of self back, only to realise a year later that it has once again been failed, infections are spurring, oxygen and medicines unavailable – sorry nobody ever thought the country would need these. Millions are losing lives and the State remains a mute spectator leading the courts to intervene to stop the administration from smothering voices being raised against the monumental failure.

It is a year of massive failure that the Council of Ministers April 30 without listing an outcome, says the press release, "PM Narendra Modi said that all arms of the government are working unitedly and rapidly to deal with the situation". The nation is still expecting an action but it is being only sounded the news of deaths and failures of the healthcare system. It is grim. It speaks volumes as the nation apparently has stopped a process for thinking and reports from countryside say that half-baked hospitals are doing more

harm and how they are cremating bodies remain mystery.

"The State has failed in its fundamental obligation to protect the basic fundamental right that is right to life under Article 21", says an anguished Delhi High Court April 30. The bench, earlier during the same hearing, had noted the "complete failure of the State" when dealing with another petitions. There was silence and moist eyes in the court following the announcement by a lawyer who was representing the patient, his brother-in-law, before justices Rekha Patil and Vipin Sanghi. That sums up the national inaction. It does not begin so suddenly. It appears that the nation in euphoria of collecting brownie points, has given up the thought about people's lives or economy. It started in 2014 itself.

The Planning Commission was an institution in the Government of India, which was formulated in 1938 by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, who had been persuaded by Meghnad Saha to set up a National Planning Committee. In 2014, the new NDA government decided to wind it down. It began the process of economic wilderness and whimsical decisions of demonetisation

on November 8, 2016, without even caring to discuss with a woman, who bore its brunt or introduce an abandoned GST by the Congress, severe joblessness and turning India's entrepreneurship into a naught.

It followed putting brakes on the Indian Railways during the past one year; demolishing what the nation painstakingly built strong public sector organisations, Central Vista, an unnecessary new Parliament building and taking decisions to fill up the coffers of private companies, who have doubtful contributions to nation building. Destroying even the credentials of national institutions like HAL, which have build Sukhoi, Gnat and many others. The decision-making process was steamrolled during the past few years.

The latest indicators from the RBI on the banking system do not bring a happy note. The bank losses or NPAs are mounting. Credit squeeze is obvious. Rupee is plunging. Petrol prices are at an artificial high. The young students have become skeptical of claims and wonder if the country has not done a bit in 70 years what it aspires to sell to the sharks. Even a Project Monitoring Group (PMG) that was set up by UPA government, credit was usurped by the NDA government, not required the least, for at least Prime Minister Narendra Modi government who had so many politically dividend paying rural housing schemes, electrification, Ujjwala cooking gas and Swachha Bharat and others.

The time for corrections has come. It needs to own up not successes of Covid-19 and its relapse, failures of joblessness following the note ban, severe individual and social crisis but also how to reformulate the resurgence of a nation with the help of all the opposition, religious and social groups not for GDP but a massive survival plan of informal sector, free flow of cash and giving up all political ego.

Healthcare has now to become the bedrock but laced with a prudent economic policy even if that means forming a national government.

INFA

SPECTRUM ASSEMBLY POLLS 2021

Dominance of regional leaders



K S Tomar

ONE OF THE BIGGEST TAKEAWAYS FROM THE OUTCOME OF THE RECENT ASSEMBLY POLLS IS THE DOMINANCE OF STRONG REGIONAL STRAPS LIKE MAMATA BANERJEE, PINARAI VIJAYAN AND MK STALIN, WHO CAN WIN ON THEIR OWN

One of the biggest takeaways from the outcome of the Assembly polls in West Bengal, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu is the dominance of strong regional straps like Mamata Banerjee, Pinarai Vijayan, and MK Stalin, who can win on their own. For the national leaders, it may be a good idea to groom local leaders and avoid imposing them from Delhi.

The results of five Assembly elections may force a change of approach of the national parties in the ensuing Assembly polls next year. Especially, even the most popular leader like Narendra Modi now cannot guarantee victory for the party.

But, general elections to Lok Sabha would be a different story, as Modi may not have a proper challenger.

In West Bengal, analysts believe that BJP's five-point strategy, including polarisation, did not work as the *Bhadralok* (elite class) did not support BJP, and 'Bengali pride' worked in favour of Mamata Banerjee. The BJP simply had no answer after she turned the battle into a 'Daughter of Bengal' versus outsiders' fight.

Corruption as an issue did not pay dividends to the BJP as it thought it would. The man on the

street was not impressed with corruption charges as for them the image of Mamata Banerjee, dressed in simple cotton saree and hawai chappals were the epitome of simplicity.

For the BJP, absence of a chief ministerial face cost it dear and the fight became Mamata versus Modi affair. Clearly PM failed to help BJP win.

The RSS too frowned at the borrowed leaders from other parties and felt this affected the morale of the dedicated old BJP workers, who seemed overshadowed by turncoats.

Finally, BJP's promise of 'Sonar Bengal' could not work in the face of the 'daughter of the soil theme'.

The RSS had cautioned BJP about the over-dependence on Modi and Shah for elections. It also strongly opposed relying on borrowed leaders as their ideological commitment could be in question. The RSS had worked hard for 40 years to create a base in West Bengal but defections of 34 MLAs from Trinamool Congress demoralised its old leaders and cadres.

Observers feel that regional leaders like Naveen Patnayak, Arvind Kejriwal, Udhav Thakre, Nitish Kumar; Lalu Prasad Yadav, Prakash Singh Badal, Mulayam Singh Yadav,

Mayawati and others (some of them have been replaced by younger ones) are popular amongst the masses and cannot be unsettled by popularity ratings of national leaders.

The BJP took a leaf out of late Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi's dictatorial stylebook, and thrust leaders like Yogi Aditya Nath in Uttar Pradesh, ML Khattar in Haryana, Jairam Thakur in Himachal Pradesh and earlier Devendra Fadnis in Maharashtra. Chances are they may not be able to win Assembly elections. The Congress too persists with the policy of imposing leaders from Delhi, resented by rank and file. Due to this, it has also lost some leaders to BJP.

BJP's aggressive bid to expand its footprint across South and East has been blunted by strong regional leaders in the face of a strong Hindutva campaign and a popular Prime Minister.

The BJP can find some comfort in retaining Assam and winning the consolation prize of Puducherry.

Congress party's slide continued as it failed to win any of the three states it contested on its own. It needs a serious introspection before the Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab next year. It was purely 'charisma' and 50

years of grooming that helped DMK president MK Stalin, who unseated the AIADMK after its ten-year rule. The BJP had sought to enter TN aggressively and had arm-twisted AIADMK into an alliance. In all this, the DMK's alliance partner, Congress got a fresh breath of air, winning 18 out of the total 25 seats it contested. The BJP could win only four out of 20 it contested.

Kerala Chief Minister's unprecedented victory in Kerala has kept Communist's legacy intact whereas it has evaporated in West Bengal, where its cadres have shifted to BJP.

In Bengal, the BJP has to rest content with a huge increase of its seats from three in 2016 to 77 in 2021. Mamata and master strategist Prashant Kishor fought an all out battle against the entire might of the BJP after assessing its strengths and weaknesses. The BJP had won 18 seats in 2019 Lok Sabha election, translating into leads 122 seats with 44.64 per cent of votes. This time, the BJP won only 77 out of them and the vote share too fell from its Parliament poll performance.

The writer is a columnist and political analyst.

Covid surge: Who is responsible?

Sir, An important piece of news that the Election Commission is responsible for the second wave of Covid-19 has caused a stir in the media. Is this news really true? The Election Commission sets the policy at the behest of the government that runs the system, because the Election Commission is part of this capitalist system. The decision on when and whether the elections will take place is taken by the representatives of the capitalists. The Election Commission is a medium only. The court blamed the Election Commission without blaming the system's representatives. It should be noted here that the court itself is a key part of the system. It can never go against the representatives of the system. This is because if the court had gone against the representatives, there would have been a crackdown on the government. Who allowed the Kumbh Mela? Why didn't the court blame the Kumbh Mela? Of course the government permitted, but could the court convict the government? All in all, the government's unscientific steps and poor healthcare are fully responsible for the first and second waves of the corona.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

'Bed-for-cash' scam

Sir, Bangalore South Constituency BJP MP Tejasvi Surya has made startling revelations in media saying that a bed scam exists in Karnataka in an unprecedented scale. The modus operandi of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike authorities in allotment of beds is to book the bed in the name of asymptomatic patients who are self-quarantined at home without the knowledge of the patients in whose name the beds are allotted. When the serious patients approach the hospital, they are allotted bed if they grease their palm with ₹50,000 per bed. The beds allotted in the name of asymptomatic patients will unlock after 12 hours from the time of booking if no patient arrives. The MP has aptly questioned the need for keeping the bed blocked for 12 hours without any patient in the bed. The rationale behind keeping the bed blocked is to wait for the really needy patients. A woman named Nethravathi who was allegedly involved in the scam has been arrested. Dr. Regina Joseph is said to be the kingpin of black marketing of blocking bed allocation. The MP has termed the on-going bed scam, not corruption, but mass murder. Scams of this kind may exist elsewhere too. If the MLAs and MPs of respective constituencies evince interest, they can also break the backbone of the authorities involved in making fast bucks through unfair means.

KV Seetharamaiah, HASSAN

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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Home Ministry team in Bengal to probe post-poll violence

The central team, led by an Additional Secretary of the Home Ministry, arrived in West Bengal Thursday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, May 6: A four-member fact-finding team of the Union Home Ministry, tasked with looking into reasons for the post-poll violence in West Bengal, arrived in the state Thursday.

Led by an additional secretary of the ministry, the team visited the state secretariat and held a meeting with the Home Secretary and DGP, sources said.

The team, which will also assess the ground situation in the state, is likely to visit several areas in the city as well as South 24 Parganas, Godkhali, Sunderbans and Jaggadal, they said.

The ministry had Wednesday sent a terse reminder to the West Bengal government to submit a detailed report on the post-poll violence and to take necessary measures to stop such incidents "without any loss of time".

It has also asked West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankar to give a report on the law and order situation in the state, particularly the violence that took place following the election results May 2.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday said that 16 people have lost their lives in post-poll violence in the state. The BJP has alleged that TMC-backed goons have killed a number of its workers, attacked women members, vandalised houses and looted shops. Rejecting the charges, Banerjee had Wednesday said violence and clashes were taking place in those areas where BJP candidates emerged victorious in the Assembly polls. Meanwhile,



A vandalised vehicle after Union Minister and BJP leader V Muraleedharan's convoy was allegedly attacked by goons of ruling Trinamool Congress during his visit to the state, in West Midnapore district, Thursday

Mamata announces ₹2L compensation

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday said 16 people have lost their lives in post-poll violence in the state, and announced a compensation of ₹2 lakh each for their families. Banerjee, during a press meet here, also said that her government will provide jobs of home guard to one family member each of all five persons killed in CAPF firing in Cooch Behar's Sitalkuchi area last month. She further said that a CID team has initiated a probe into the incident of firing in Cooch Behar that took place when the voting

exercise was underway for the fourth phase of assembly elections, April 10. "At least 16 persons - mostly from the BJP and the TMC and one of the Samyukta Morcha - died in post-poll violence. We will pay a compensation of ₹2 lakh to their family members. Our government will also provide jobs of home guard to the next of kin of Sitalkuchi victims," she said. Taking a swipe at the BJP, the CM said that the saffron party was yet to come to terms with people's mandate. She accused central leaders of inciting violence in the state.

Trinamool Congress MLA Firhad Hakim hit out at the Centre for sending teams instead of COVID-19 vaccines.

"They should send vaccines first, that's the responsibility of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We are

grieved that some people have died, and action will be taken against the culprits.

"But, what will happen to the inoculation process which is stalled because of the vaccine crisis?" Hakim said.

MP announces 'janata curfew' till May 15

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, May 6: Terming Covid-19 as a big health crisis before humanity, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Thursday said the only way to break the chain of transmission and contain COVID-19 cases is for people to "close down everything" till May 15.

Chouhan also announced providing free treatment for Covid-19 for patients from poor financial background, common citizens and middle class population in Madhya Pradesh, an official of the state's public relations department said.

To facilitate this, a package will be unveiled Friday under the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme, he quoted the chief minister as saying at a meeting.

Also, the government plans to sign an agreement with private hospitals for free CT scan and other

medical tests of patients, the official said. At the meeting with senior bureaucrats, the Chief Minister reviewed the Covid-19 situation in the state. Covid is a big crisis for humanity. The only option to control the corona is to break the chain of infections.

"We can't close down everything for long. We have to make peoples life easy. Therefore, till May 15, we should close down everything. Strictly follow janata curfew and break the chain of infection," Chouhan said.

Currently, Madhya Pradesh is under a slew of restrictions to stem the spread of Covid-19.

He said health infrastructure is being readied to deal with a possible third wave of the coronavirus infection.

"Oxygen plants are being set up in each district. A total of 95 such plants will be established in the

state," Chouhan said.

He appealed to people to reschedule marriage plans to avoid gathering of guests during the pandemic. Works under MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) should be immediately stopped in villages where even a single coronavirus case has been reported, Chouhan said. He asked officials to launch a "kill corona campaign" in cities and villages by conducting door-to-door surveys and identifying patients whose treatment can start immediately.

"Open Covid-19 assistance centres

in cities for distribution of medical kits," the public relations department official quoted the CM as saying in the meeting.

The Chief Minister asked rural populace to make their village coronavirus-free by ensuring that nobody from outside enters the village before completing the mandatory quarantine period.

For this, he suggested launching the 'Mera Gaon Corona Mukta Gaon' (my village is corona free) campaign. He directed officials to provide ration free of cost to the poor without insisting on completing formalities like submission of Aadhaar card and giving thumb impression.

We can't close down everything for long. We have to make peoples life easy. Therefore, till May 15, we should close down everything. Strictly follow janata curfew and break the chain of infection

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

STANDSTILL LIFE



Trains parked at a railway yard after the West Bengal government suspended local train services, as coronavirus cases surge in Howrah district, Thursday

RAT tests to help clear piled-up bodies in hosps: Mamata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, May 6: Following reports that bodies of suspected Covid-19 patients are getting piled up in hospitals of West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that delay in getting RT-PCR test results has led to such a situation.

She said that the government has decided to conduct Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) to quickly find out whether a person died of coronavirus or not and perform the last rites.

"There are reports of bodies piling up in hospitals. This is because doctors wait for RT-PCR tests conducted on a person and it takes at least 72 hours for the results to arrive. We have decided to conduct RAT tests, results of which can be obtained in three hours. Cremation will be done with due respect in presence of the family members," she said.

MP shocker: Patients in fields, IV bottles hang from trees

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agar Malwa (MP), May 6: In a shocking sight from Madhya Pradesh, patients in its Agar Malwa district were seen being treated in fields with IV fluid bottles dangling from tree branches.

The increasing number of Covid patients in the district has put a lot of pressure on health care system. Hospitals are overwhelmed with Covid patients and no beds are available. In such a situation, doctors are forced to treat patients wherever they get space. While the corona epidemic wreaks havoc, a large number of patients in the rural areas are suffering from common cold, cough but are not getting tested for Covid. They are not even ready to go to the district headquarters for treatment.

In such a situation, doctors and quacks working in rural areas have found novel ways to treat patients and earn whatever they could.

In the rural areas of Agar Malwa district, patients are being treated in fields with glucose bottles hanging from tree branches, in complete disregard of medical rules. The agricultural fields look like hospital beds and trees have become glucose bottle stands.

Health Officer Manish Kuril says that the action will be taken against doctors who are treating the patients like this.

Tweeting a video of patients being treated in fields, Congress spokesperson Syed Jaffer said: "Agar Malwa is a district which has been under the charge of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Now look at the pictures."



80K forced to abandon homes in Bengal: Nadda

Months ago, they were hit by Amphan and now they are facing Mamataphan," Nadda said without making a mention of "tortured communities"

AGENCIES

Kolkata, May 6: BJP national president JP Nadda has alleged that more than 80,000 people had to abandon their homes in the wake of post-poll violence in Bengal. "Village after village was ransacked in Gosaba, Sandeshkhali and East Canning. People from Cooch Behar had to take refuge in neighbouring Assam. People from South 24 Parganas have suffered a double tragedy.

Months ago, they were hit by Amphan and now they are facing Mamataphan," Nadda said without making a mention of "tortured communities", unlike some Bengal BJP leaders. The BJP president promised to take up the cause in a democratic way. Nadda assured BJP karyakartas that helplines were being put in place for people to contact the party.

He was in no mood to demand President's Rule in Bengal. "There is a procedure for that. The Governor generates a report and the MHA examines it. As far as the party is concerned, we are going to take up the cause on our own strength," Nadda said, highlighting the "sab

ka saath, sab ka vikas and sab ka vishwas" approach.

Responding to Trinamool Congress' "fake video" allegation that was later endorsed by the state police, the BJP president said: "Send me the video clips. We will take care. But don't tell me about the state police. They had said during the attack on me on my way to Diamond Harbour that it came from disgruntled men from our side."

Before the press meet, the BJP president paid a visit to victim Shobharani Mandal's Jagaddal home in North 24 Parganas. He also read a "pledge" along with 77 newly elected BJP MLAs at the state party office on taking up the cause of Bengal people under provisions of the Constitution.

Reports of violence, meanwhile, came pouring in from Indas Assembly constituency in Bankura where BJP booth agent Arup Ruidas was found hanging from a tree after he was killed allegedly by Trinamool marauders. In Birbhum's Suri, BJP worker Uday Hazra was badly injured. In Sainthia, houses of BJP workers were allegedly ransacked. The house of Aziza Khatun, con-

venor of the party's minority morcha in Birbhum, too was ransacked.

On Wednesday evening, violence spread in Murshidabad's Burwan, Bharatpur and parts of Kandi. Acting on complaints that women and children were rendered homeless over the past 24 hours, the DIG (investigation) of National Human Rights Commission on Wednesday constituted a team of officers to verify the allegations and report within two weeks. NHRC has already formed a team to conduct

"on the spot fact-finding investigation".

"District administration and local law and order enforcement agencies appear not to have acted to stop such violation of human rights of the affected persons," NHRC said in a press statement. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has written to the state's chief secretary raising concerns over violence affecting children. It has sought an investigation.



All hospitals have been informed about it, the Chief Minister said.

"We are giving priority to those who will get the second dose of the vaccine. But we are not getting ample numbers of vaccines. We have given requisition of three crore vaccines and have got only a few lakhs," Banerjee said.

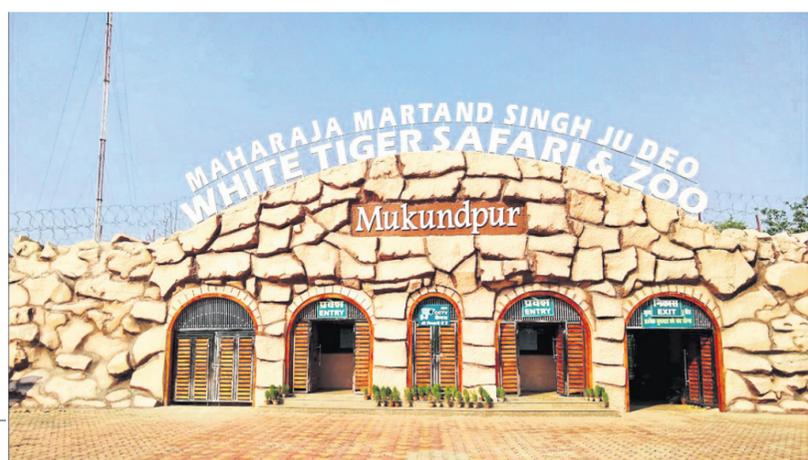
She also said that the state would inoculate journalists as well as transport workers and hawkers.

Around 2.75 lakh quack doctors will be allowed to provide preliminary treatment to Covid patients following a guideline of the state health department, she said.

Banerjee said that by next week, another 3,000 beds would be added to the existing number of 27,000 Covid-beds in various hospitals in the state.

COVID-19 IMPACT

Madhya Pradesh zoos, tiger reserves put on alert



MP Forest officials and zoo authorities have been put on alert with eight Asiatic lions at the Nehru Zoological Park in Hyderabad testing positive for Covid-19

AGENCIES

Bhopal, May 6: Madhya Pradesh Forest department officials and zoo authorities have been put on alert with eight Asiatic lions at the Nehru Zoological Park (NZP) in Hyderabad testing positive for Covid-19.

NZP officials were informed by the Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology (CCMB) orally that the RT-PCR tests of these lions were positive. MP is home to the highest number of tigers in the country (526), and several other species.

Officials say, the zoos, tiger reserves, national parks, sanctuaries and safaris were already on

alert following an advisory from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) regarding possibility of spread of Covid-19 virus among wild animals and deaths of lions.

"With Hyderabad zoo lions testing positive we would be more cautious. However, there won't be any random testing. Collecting samples from lions and tigers in the zoo is not that easy. It will cause undue stress on them. But if we find any of them sick, we will follow the protocol," says Upendra Yadav, of Gwalior zoo, which hosts lions, tigers and leopards along with several other wild animals.

MoEF advisory, which was sent to MP among other states, calls for reducing human-animal interface citing reports of animals contracting the disease from both symptomatic and asymptomatic human carriers of Covid-19. It says, field functionaries must be Covid-19 negative when they are deputed for duties and should follow Covid-appropriate behavior. Besides, the constitution of a taskforce/rapid action force with field managers, veterinary doctors and frontline staff has been advised to manage the situation as quickly as possible. Officials have also been asked to set up essential services for emergency treatment of animals and their safe release back to natural habitats as and when required.

Also, the advisory mentions enhancing disease surveillance, map-

ping and monitoring systems through coordinated efforts amongst various departments. The MoEF has asked chief wildlife wardens of all states and Union Territories to close down the national parks/sanctuaries and other protected areas to tourists immediately and also to take all preventive measures to stop the transmission and spread of the virus from humans to animals and vice-versa.

The advisory says "In view of spread of Covid-19 in the country and reports of deaths of lions due to Covid-19, it is felt that there are possibilities of spread of the virus amongst animals in national parks/sanctuaries and other protected areas and also transmission of virus from human to animals and vice-versa."

of the day quote

The prime minister's failure and zero strategy on part of the central government are pushing the country towards a complete lockdown

As railway tankers can ferry large quantity of oxygen at a time at a lesser freight cost, we have requested the Railway Ministry to run more Oxygen Express trains to the state from Odisha

The Union Government must issue notification under Sections 92 and 100 of the Patents Act to freely license all patents necessary for vaccine and drug production, including for equipment and all raw materials for vaccines, hospital equipment and drugs to treat COVID-19

SHORT TAKES

Kerala imposes total lockdown

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala government Thursday announced a complete lockdown in the state from May 8 morning in view of the severe COVID-19 surge in the second wave of the pandemic.

4 women allege rape by godman

Jaipur: Four women, three from the same family, have accused a self-proclaimed godman of raping them in his ashram in Jaipur, police said Thursday.

BSF shoots dead intruder along IB

Jammu: The Border Security Force Thursday shot dead an intruder along the Indo-Pak border in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, officials said.

9 dead drinking meds to get high

Bilaspur: At least nine persons have died over the last two days after allegedly consuming an alcohol-based homeopathy medicine as a substitute for liquor in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur district, police said Thursday.



As soon as the results of the elections came, the central government increased the price of petrol and diesel and started putting burden on the people who are already affected by the pandemic

ONLINE BOOKING OF O2 CYLINDER

Covid infected patients living in home isolation in Delhi would now find life saving oxygen cylinders through online booking.



Prepare for third wave: SC

During the hearing, the top court observed that Centre's oxygen formula required complete revamp

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 6: The Supreme Court Thursday asked the Centre to spell out its plan to deal with a possible third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, even as it held that the Centre's formula to distribute oxygen to state governments, particularly the national capital, was a gross underestimate.

A bench comprising Justices D Y Chandrachud and MR Shah said, "The third surge which is around the corner, according to experts, will affect children. What is the problem in enhancing the supply? It will save from oxygen panic and create a buffer."

The top court told the Centre, which claimed though it supplied 730 MT oxygen Wednesday, that this much oxygen was not required in Delhi. However, it also emphasised need for a speedy vaccination process, and suggested forming a committee of experts for oxygen audit as sought by the Union government.

Earlier, during the hearing, the top court observed that Centre's oxygen formula requires complete revamp. If preparations are made right away, we may be able to tackle the third wave for which scientific planning to vaccinate persons would be needed, it said.

Elaborating on the third wave, the



top court observed that when a child goes to hospital, the mother and father will also have to go. That is why vaccination will have to be over for this group of people. We need to plan for this in a scientific way and thus make arrangement, it said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, submitted that the government must have

to explore the possibility of utilising services of doctors who have completed MBBS and waiting to enroll for PG courses. Under these pressing times, their services could prove crucial for the third wave, it said.

Today we have 1.5 lakh doctors who have finished medical course but waiting for NEET exam. How do you tap them? 1.5 lakh doctors and 2.5 lakh nurses are sitting at home.

The observations were made by the top court during the hearing of an appeal filed by the Centre challenging the show cause notice for contempt issued against its officers by the Delhi High Court for failing to provide 700 MT of oxygen to Delhi as per top court order. Yesterday, the top court had stayed the High Court order of contempt, noting that contempt will not help salvage the oxygen situation.

The top court had asked the Centre to submit a tabulated plan to meet the 700 MT oxygen target by 10.30 am Thursday. The Centre submitted the plan to the top court. During the hearing, the top court noted that Centre's formula needs to be re-examined, as it only takes into account ICU beds and hospital admissions, but not those who need oxygen at home or requirements for ambulance etc.

The bench added that if we prepare today, we may be able to handle it. It also urged the government

Foreign aid received up to May 5 allocated to states/UTs: Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: The Health Ministry Thursday said as many as 1,841 oxygen concentrators, 1,814 oxygen cylinders, nine oxygen generation plants and more than 28 lakh Remdesivir vials received as foreign aid have been delivered to 31 states and Union Territories so far.

All items received up to 5th May 2021 have been effectively allocated and promptly dispatched to the states/institutions. This is an ongoing exercise, the ministry said in a statement. It said the Empowered Group No 3 met Thursday under the chairmanship of NITI CEO Amitabh Kant to discuss ways and means of expediting the distribution of material aid received from abroad.

The meeting was attended by Union Secretary (I&B) Amit Khare, Union Secretary (Expenditure) Dr T V Somanathan, Additional secretary (MEA) Shrir Dammu Ravi, and Additional Secretary (Health) Arti Ahuja. Additional Secretary (MEA) told the meeting that as and when they come to know about the relief material leaving off shores, the information is sent to the Union Health Ministry which then works out the distribution plan.

Additional Secretary (Health



Ministry) said the distribution plans of material received from abroad are already in place by the time it lands in India.

The Centre has been receiving international donations and aid of COVID-19 relief medical supplies and equipment since April 27 from different countries/organisations, the ministry said.

The ministry said, 1841 Oxygen Concentrators, 1814 Oxygen Cylinders, 09 Oxygen Generation Plants, 2403 ventilators Bi PAP PAP, more than 2.8 L Remdesivir vials delivered so far. On receiving the consignment of COVID-19 equipment as part of international aid, Dr N N Mathur of Delhi's LHMC Hospital said, "The equipment has already been deployed in the hospital."

The Centre has designed a streamlined and systematic mechanism for effective allocation and distribution of the support supplies received, the health ministry statement said.

UK variant dominates North India, double mutant Maha, Guj, K'taka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: The UK strain of coronavirus is currently dominating parts of north India while double mutant could be found mostly in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat, Sujet Singh, Director of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), has said.

He, however, added that the B.1.1.7 lineage of SARS CoV-2 (UK variant) is declining in proportion across the country in the last month and a half. Addressing a press briefing Wednesday, Singh said the UK strain is dominating parts of north India including Punjab (482 samples) and Delhi (516), followed by Telangana (192), Maharashtra (83) and Karnataka (82).

He said 10 top government laboratories and institutions have been sequencing the genomes of coronavirus since December. A total of 18,053 samples have been sequenced so far, he added.

Singh said the information on genome sequencing has been shared with the states twice in February, four times in March

and again four times in April.

He said in the video-conferencing with states, the Health Ministry also informed about the current status of variants of concern and new mutants and stressed on increased and stringent public health interventions.

The double mutant variant, also known as B.1.617, is mostly dominating Maharashtra (761), West Bengal (124), Delhi (107) and Gujarat (102), Singh said. The South African variant, also known as B.1.315, was predominantly found in Telangana and Delhi.

Brazilian variant (P1) was only found in Maharashtra in a negligible proportion, he said.

Singh said there is a frequent written communication on the variants by the Health Ministry and the NCDC to all states and UTs. He said states/UTs are advised to keep strict surveillance in the districts reporting new variants of concern where they can take up stringent public health measures including contact tracing, genome sequencing of positive samples of persons having history of international travel.

IN THE MAKING



Construction work underway as part of the Central Vista Redevelopment Project, at Rajpath in New Delhi, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

Railways cancels premium trains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: The Northern Railways Thursday cancelled a slew of Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto Express, stating low patronisation and rising coronavirus cases as the reason behind the decision.

The to-and-fro services of eight Shatabdi Express, two Rajdhani Express, two Duronto Express and one Vande Bharat Express are among around 28 trains that have been cancelled till further advice by the Northern Railways.



Among these are Shatabdis originating from Delhi to places like Kalka, Habibganj, Amritsar, Chandigarh, Rajdhani trains from Delhi to Chennai, Bilaspur, Duronto trains to Jammu Tawi and Pune.

Poor patronisation of once popular trains also indicates that a lesser number of people are travelling amidst the surge in coronavirus cases, officials said.

The Northern Railways has decided to cancel the following special trains due to poor patronisation and a surge in COVID-19, an NR spokesperson said.

The Central Railways has cancelled 23 passenger trains. These include Nagpur-Kolhapur special up to June 29, the CSMT-Kolhapur special up to July 1, the CSMT-Pune special up to June 30.

Mumbai ATS seizes uranium, nabs two

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 6: In a sensational developing during lockdown, the Mumbai Anti Terrorist Squad (Nagpada Unit) has seized 7.10 kgs of radioactive Natural Uranium and arrested two persons, an official said here Thursday.

The seized material was sent to the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre which has said in its report that it was 'Natural Uranium' which is highly radioactive and very dangerous to human life.

Disability cert to be issued online

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: In a relief for people with disabilities, the Central government has now made it mandatory for disability certificates to be issued online.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has issued a gazette notification for this Monday.

It is mandatory for all states/UTs to grant certificate of disability through online mode only using UDID portal with effect from June 1. States/UTs have been advised for compliance, the ministry's disability affairs department tweeted.

The sector had been demanding such a move, especially during the coronavirus crisis where people with disabilities were unable to get their certificates due to the prevalent restrictions.

For people with disabilities, a disability certificate is a necessity as they can avail the benefits of different government schemes by furnishing the document.



'No test needed after 10 days of home isolation in mild cases'

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PROCURE OR ADMINISTER REMDESIVIR AT HOME, SAID THE HEALTH MINISTRY GUIDELINES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 6: The Union Health Ministry has issued revised guidelines for home isolation for patients with mild or asymptomatic symptoms.

The new revised guidelines said,

"Patient under home isolation will stand discharged and end isolation after at least 10 days have passed from onset of symptoms (or from date of sampling for asymptomatic cases) and no fever for 3 days. There is no need for testing after the home isolation period is over."

As per the revised guidelines, the patient should be clinically assigned a mild asymptomatic case by the treating Medical Officer. The asymptomatic cases are laboratory confirmed cases not experiencing any symptoms and having oxygen saturation at room air of more than 94 per cent.

Clinically assigned mild cases are patients with upper respiratory tract symptoms (and/or fever)



without shortness of breath and having oxygen saturation at room air of more than 94 per cent are recommended for home isolation,

the revised guidelines said. It said that a caregiver should be available to provide care on a 24x7 basis and a communication link be-

tween the caregiver and hospital is a prerequisite for the entire duration of home isolation. Elderly patients aged more than 60 years and those with co-morbid conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung, liver or kidney disease, cerebro-vascular disease shall only be allowed home isolation after proper evaluation by the treating medical officer.

Talking about treatment protocols, the revised guideline said, Patients must be in communication with a treating physician and promptly report in case of any deterioration. If fever is not controlled with a maximum dose of Tab Paracetamol 650mg four times a day, consult the treating doctor who may consider

advising other drugs like non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) (ex Tab. Naproxen 250 mg twice a day).

It further stated that consider Tab Ivermectin (200 mcgkg once a day, to be taken empty stomach) for 3 to 5 days. Inhalational Budesonide (given via inhalers with spacer at a dose of 800 mcg twice daily for 5 to 7 days) should be given if symptoms (fever and/or cough) are persistent beyond 5 days of disease onset.

The decision to administer Remdesivir or any other investigational therapy must be taken by a medical professional and administered only in a hospital setting. Do not attempt to procure or administer Remdesivir at home, it said.

of the day quote

Despite misuse of power and official machinery and use of money power by rival parties, the performance of BSP is encouraging and the results will infuse new energy and enthusiasm in people for the Assembly elections

MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

This time around the second wave has hit like a tsunami. And the unfortunate part is it has not spared any part of our country

KIRAN MAZUMDAR SHAW | BIOCON FOUNDER

Regular auditing of oxygen, availability of beds and medicines in the hospitals should be done so that the future and present strategies regarding demand and supply can be made in advance. A district-level team for monitoring oxygen supply and demand in every hospital should be constituted at the earliest

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR | HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

4 youths killed in road mishap
Chandigarh: Four youths were killed and one was injured when their car was hit by a truck on the Rewari-Narnaul road in Haryana's Rewari district, police said Thursday. The incident took place when the youths were returning from Mahendergarh to their village in Gurgaon past midnight, a police official from Khol police station in Rewari said over the phone.

25 held for cheating people
Buldhana: The police Thursday arrested 25 villagers for allegedly robbing and cheating people with the offer of selling them gold coins at a low price in Maharashtra's Buldhana district, an official said. The accused allegedly cheated three persons from Pune, who had come to a locality in Antras village on Wednesday to purchase gold coins, the official said.

4-yr-old boy falls into open borewell
Jaipur/Jodhpur: A four-year-old boy fell into a nearly 90-foot-deep open borewell in a village in Rajasthan's Jalore district Thursday, police said. The child, identified as Anil Dewasi, is alive, and efforts are underway to rescue him, they said. Station House Office (SHO), Sanchole, Praveen Kumar Acharya said the rescue was delayed by a few hours in the absence of required expertise for such an operation. It began after teams of the National Disaster Response Force and the state disaster relief force reached the spot in Lachhri village, he said.



The news of former Union Minister Ajit Singh's demise is very sad. May god give peace to the departed soul. My condolences to his family and admirers

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

ARMY SETS UP COVID MANAGEMENT CELL

The Indian Army has set up a Covid Management Cell to bring in greater efficiency in coordinating real time responses to address exponential rise in Covid cases across the country, a statement said Thursday



REST IN PEACE



A family member conducts last rites before cremation of a person who died of COVID-19, at Sarai Kale Khan Cremation Ground in New Delhi

Chartered plane makes belly-landing at Mumbai airport



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 6: A chartered plane carrying five people, including a patient and a doctor, landed on its belly at Mumbai airport late Thursday evening after declaring a full emergency, with the airport authorities foaming the runway to avoid the plane catching fire.

All passengers were evacuated safely after belly-landing of the plane, which was flying from Nagpur to Mumbai, according to the airport. A full emergency was declared for the non-scheduled Beechcraft flight.

While it could not be independently confirmed, reports said that a wheel of the aircraft came off soon after taking off from Nagpur. Pictures of the plane landing on the foamed runway were also doing the rounds on social media. In a detailed statement, the Mumbai airport said the plane -- carrying two crew members, one patient, one relative and a doctor -- did a belly-landing at the airport at 2109 hours on Thursday. "As a precautionary method, CSMIA also foamed RWY 27 in order to avoid the aircraft catching fire. All passengers were evacuated safely and flights operating in and out of CSMIA remain on schedule," the airport said in a statement. According to an official, the aircraft belonged to Gurugram-based Jet Serve Aviation Pvt Ltd. "The airport's emergency response team, including the fire and rescue responders, follow-me vehicles, CISEF medical team amongst many others, was activated instantly and on standby to provide immediate assistance to ensure the safe evacuation of the passengers," the statement said.

Oximeters, thermal scanners for cows in UP's 'gaushalas'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, May 6: Amid the surge in coronavirus cases, the Uttar Pradesh government is providing oximeters and thermal scanners for cows housed in the state's 'gaushalas'.

A recent press release from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's office also said the state government has issued instructions to set up help desks in every district for the welfare of cows, taking forward

its cow protection agenda. The government has issued instructions that all cowsheds must strictly follow the COVID-19 protocol, and made wearing masks and frequent thermal screening mandatory there. It is providing thermal scanners and oximeters, apparently to detect early symptoms in animals of COVID-19, which authorities said Thursday had killed 353 people in the state over the past 24 hours. There are reports of hospitals

turning away patients and long waits at crematoriums at several places in the state as it battles the second wave of the pandemic.

The press release on cowsheds said the 'gaushalas' will be "equipped with all the medical equipment such as oximeters and thermal scanners for cows and other animals as well".

"In view of the current Covid situation, a total of 700 help desks for the welfare of cows have been set up across the districts of the state. With this, 51 oximeters and 341 thermal scanners have also been provided to ensure better animal care and testing," it said.

The statement said stray cows in large numbers are being given shelter at the 'gaushalas' due to the efforts of the chief minister. The government is also rapidly increasing the number of the existing cow shelters to deal with the stray cattle menace, it said.



Representational images

Three Navy warships on way to Mumbai with O2

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 6: Three Indian Navy warships -- INS Kochi, INS Tabar and INS Trikand -- are currently enroute Mumbai as part of the Operation Samudra Setu-II ferrying Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) and associated medical equipment from the Persian Gulf to strengthen India's fight against the raging second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

INS Kochi and INS Tabar departed Kuwait while INS Trikand left from Doha on Thursday, carrying a total of seven 20-tonne liquid oxygen tanks and 1,400 oxygen cylinders. INS Kolkata and INS Airavat are already enroute from

Kuwait and Singapore, respectively, with more than 4,000 oxygen cylinders, two 20 MT oxygen filled containers and eight oxygen tanks.

Earlier, INS Talwar had arrived at the New Mangalore port in Karnataka Wednesday with the first consignment of 54-tonne liquid oxygen tanks from Bahrain.

Meanwhile, a 26-member medical team, including seven doctors, two nursing officers, two paramedics and 15 Battle Field Nursing Assistants (BFNA) have been deputed from the Eastern Naval Command to augment the frontline medical team at the Dhanvantari Covid hospital in Ahmedabad.



'Onset of Monsoon expected around June'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 6: Monsoon rains that mark the start of the four-month rainy season are likely to enter India through the southern coast around June 1, in line with typical patterns, a top government

official said Thursday. "This is an early indication," Madhavan Rajeevan, secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, said in a tweet. India's weather office will issue its official forecast for this year's monsoon onset May 15, Rajeevan said.

Nearly half of the country's farmland, which has no irrigation cover, depends on annual June-September rains to grow crops such as rice, corn, cane, cotton, and soybeans. The country's weather office said last month the country was expected to get average monsoon rains this year, raising expectations of higher farm output, which is central to the country's economy.

Last year, monsoon rains, which typically arrive on the southern tip of Kerala state around June 1 and retreat from the desert state of Rajasthan by September, were above average for the second year in a row - the first time that has happened in more than six decades. Last year's monsoon rains replenished soil moisture and led to higher crop yields.



Representational images

Include scribes in 'COVID warriors' category: PCI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: The Press Council of India Thursday reiterated its recommendation to the Centre and state governments that journalists be included in the category of 'COVID warriors' and also given insurance cover.

In a statement, the print media watchdog commended the governments of Odisha, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh who have considered journalists among "frontline workers for their hard work in this pandemic situation" and have extended financial help to them.

The Press Council of India (PCI) reiterated its recommendation to the Centre and state/Union territory governments regarding in-

cluding journalists and for including journalists in the category of COVID Warriors.

While reiterating its resolution of September last year, the PCI urged all state governments, Union territories and the central government to frame and implement a group insurance scheme for the journalists on the lines of the policy framed by the Haryana government. The Council also recommended to the central, state governments and the Union territories to include the journalists in the category of 'COVID warriors' like doctors, confer them with the same benefits and give immediate financial assistance to the families of all those journalists who died due to COVID-19.

23cr Indians pushed into poverty amid Covid: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 6: As the pandemic and the eventual lockdowns wreaked havoc on the economy and livelihoods, around 23 crore Indians have been pushed into poverty during the past one year, showed a report by Azim Premji University.

It said that the rural poverty rate increased by 15 percentage points and the urban poverty rate was up nearly 20 points.

"The number of individuals who lie below the national minimum wage threshold (Rs 375 per day as recommended by the Anoop Satpathy committee) increased by 230 million during the pandemic," said the report titled 'State of



Representational images

Working India 2021: One Year of Covid-19. It noted that though incomes fell across the board, the pandemic has taken a far heavier toll on poorer households.

In April and May, the poorest 20 per cent of households lost their entire incomes. In contrast, the richer

households suffered losses of less than a quarter of their pre-pandemic incomes. Over the entire eight-month period (March to October), an average household in the bottom 10 per cent lost ₹15,700, or just over two months' income. Further, as per the report about 1.5

crore workers remained out of work by the end of 2020. About 10 crore people lost jobs during the nationwide April-May 2020 lockdown. "Most were back at work by June 2020, but even by the end of 2020, about 15 million workers remained out of work," it said. Incomes also remained depressed.

Average monthly household income per capita in October 2020 (Rs 4,979) was still below its level in January 2020 (Rs 5,989). Job losses were higher for states with a higher average Covid case load. Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi, contributed disproportionately to job losses.

During the lockdown and in the months after, 61 per cent of working men remained employed and

7 per cent lost employment and did not return to work. For women, only 19 per cent remained employed and 47 per cent suffered a permanent job loss during the lockdown, not returning to work even by the end of 2020.

The report showed that younger workers were much more impacted, experiencing higher job losses, of a more permanent nature. Around 33 per cent of workers in the 15-24 years age group failed to recover employment even by December 2020.

Vice-Chancellor of Azim Premji University, Anurag Behar said: "The pandemic has revealed a systemic and moral failure that makes the most vulnerable always pay the greatest price for everything. We have to change this from the core."

international



So far, we've sent 4 gray tails to India, containing 1 million Rapid Diagnostic Tests, 545 Oxygen Concentrators, 1,600,300 N95 masks, 457 Oxygen cylinders, 440 regulators, 220 pulse oximeters and 1 Deployable Oxygen Concentration System
LLOYD AUSTIN | DEFENSE SECRETARY, US

SPACEX STARSHIP FINALLY NAILS 1ST LANDING WITHOUT EXPLODING

SpaceX managed to land its prototype Starship rocket at its Texas base without blowing it up, the first time it has succeeded in doing so in five attempts. "Starship landing nominal!" tweeted founder Elon Musk triumphantly



of the day quote

Ukraine needs a clear signal about the European and Euro-Atlantic prospect. Postponing these issues for later has to end. We need to be more supported, given some special status - NATO membership
VOLODYMYR ZELENKYY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

I will be in Lebanon tomorrow with a message of great firmness to political leaders and a message of our complete solidarity to the Lebanese. Firmness in the face of those hindering the formation of a government: we have taken national action, and this is just the start
JEAN-YVES LE DRIAN | FOREIGN MINISTER, FRANCE

The Mozambique government has been asking for help. We will try to send a training mission (like) the one we have in the Sahel in order to contain the security situation
JOSEP BORRELL | FOREIGN POLICY CHIEF, EU

SHORT TAKES

Sri Lanka bans Indian travellers

Colombo: Sri Lanka Thursday announced that all arrivals from India will be banned with immediate effect due to the record rise in Covid-19 cases in the neighbouring country. Several countries like the UK, the UAE, Australia and Singapore have already banned travellers from India as well as other South Asian countries. The Civil Aviation Authority Thursday said that travellers from India will not be allowed to disembark in Sri Lanka.

Russia okays single dose of Sputnik V

Moscow: Russian authorities gave regulatory approval Thursday to a single-dose version of the country's Sputnik V vaccine, arguing that the move could accelerate the process of achieving herd immunity against the coronavirus. Named Sputnik Light, the new version is identical to the first dose of the two-dose Sputnik V and has yet to complete the advanced testing needed to ensure its safety and effectiveness in line with established scientific protocols.

Egypt, Turkey to end 8-year rift

Cairo: Egyptian and Turkish delegations led by senior diplomats held talks in Cairo in a bid to normalise ties and end eight years of rift between the two countries. "Now, the political consultations between Egypt and Turkey begins, chaired by Ambassador Hamdi Sanad Loza, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and his Turkish counterpart Ambassador Sadat Onal at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters in Cairo," Ministry spokesman Ahmed Hafez tweeted.

Oz travel ban to India challenged

Melbourne: Australia's controversial temporary ban on citizens returning home from coronavirus-hit India was challenged in the federal court in Sydney Thursday by a 73-year-old Australian, who has been stranded in Bengaluru since March last year. The Australian government, for the first time in history, recently imposed a ban on its citizens from returning home. The government threatened to prosecute them with a possibility of five years of jail term or a penalty of 66,000 Australian dollars.

MONUMENTAL MOMENT

US backs patent waiver plan for vax

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE WTO'S GENERAL COUNCIL TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, May 6: The Biden administration has announced to support India and South Africa's proposal before the World Trade Organisation to temporarily waive anti-Covid vaccine patents to boost its supply.

US Trade Representative Katherine Tai said this is a global health crisis and the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic call for extraordinary measures.

"The (Biden) administration believes strongly in intellectual property protections, but in service of ending this pandemic, supports the waiver of those protections for Covid-19 vaccines," Tai said.

The General Council's meeting is currently underway in Geneva. "We will actively participate in text-based negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) needed to make that happen. Those negotiations will take time given the consensus-based nature of the institution and the complexity of the issues involved," Tai said.

Over the last one month, Tai had extensive consultations with various stakeholders both within and outside the US. The White House described it as a policy process.

"The administration's aim is to get as many safe and effective vaccines to as many people as fast as possible. As our vaccine supply

for the American people is secured, the administration will continue to ramp up its efforts - working with the private sector and all possible partners - to expand vaccine manufacturing and distribution. It will also work to increase the raw materials needed to produce those vaccines," Tai said.

The opposition Republican party had also written to President Joe Biden and Tai expressing concerns over the proposal.

On the other hand, more than 100 Democratic Congressmen and 10 Senators had written to Biden in support of TRIPS waiver.

Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden said pitching in to defeat the Covid-19 pandemic globally is essential to protecting Americans' health and accelerating economic recovery.

"More importantly it is simply

Pharma body disappointed

A US pharmaceutical trade body has expressed disappointment over the decision of the Biden administration to support India and South Africa's proposal before the WTO to temporarily waive anti-Covid vaccine patents to boost its supply. PhRMA president and CEO Stephen J Uhl said this change in longstanding American policy will not save lives. "It also flies in the face of President (Joe) Biden's stated policy of building up American infrastructure and creating jobs by handing over American innovations to countries looking to undermine our leadership in biomedical discovery," he said. "This decision does nothing to address the real challenges to getting more shots in arms, including last-mile distribution and limited availability of raw materials. These are the real challenges we face that this empty promise ignores," Uhl said.

the right thing to do. I support the administration's efforts to quickly identify and break down barriers to getting vaccines in arms as rapidly and safely as possible. I plan to work with USTR throughout this process to ensure they negotiate a waiver of vaccine IP protections that will get results and save lives around the world," Wyden said.

EU ready to discuss US patent proposal

European Union leaders said Thursday that in the wake of the US backing for waiving patents on Covid-19 vaccine technology the 27-nation bloc will start discussing such plans immediately. Their first get-together to mould a common view will come as soon as during their two-day summit in Porto, Portugal, starting Friday. While many insist that such a patent waiver could be no more than a part of the solution to end the pandemic and likely in the midterm only, French President Emmanuel Macron said he "completely" supports opening up intellectual property protections for Covid-19 vaccines. "Evidently, we must turn this vaccine in a global public good," he said. EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said "we are ready to discuss how the US proposal for waiver on intellectual property protection for Covid vaccines could help" end the crisis.

Pak court asks India to cooperate in Jadhav case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 6: A top Pakistani court hearing the case of death row convict Kulbhushan Jadhav has asked India to cooperate in the legal proceeding over the matter, saying appearing before the court did not mean a waiver of sovereignty.

A three-member bench of the Islamabad High Court (IHC), comprising Chief Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb, Thursday resumed hearing of the petition by Pakistan's Ministry of Law and Justice seeking appointment of a lawyer for Jadhav.

Attorney General Khalid Jawed Khan told the bench that to comply with the ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Pakistan last year promulgated the law, CJ (Review and Reconsideration) Ordinance, 2020, to enable Jadhav to

avail himself of the statutory remedy.

However, he argued, the Indian government deliberately avoided joining court's proceedings, was raising objections to a trial before a Pakistani court, and had declined to even appoint a counsel for the IHC's proceedings saying it "is tantamount to surrendering sovereign rights".

"It appears the Indian government has objected, not for non-implementation of ICJ's verdict but to engineer default on the basis of which it would [try to] justify going to the ICJ again," he said.

The chief justice expressed surprise that the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, which had approached the IHC seeking the release of five prisoners and had secured a decision in their favour; was questioning the legitimacy of the same court, the report said.

China condemns G7 criticism on human rights

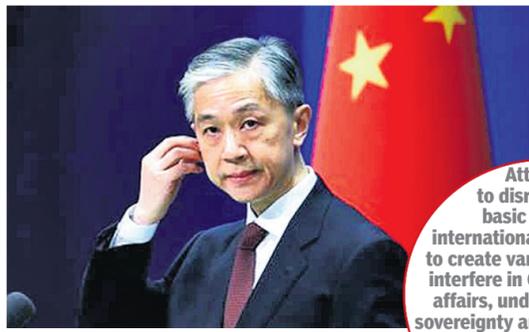
AGENCIES

Beijing, May 6: China condemned Thursday a joint statement by G7 foreign ministers that expressed support for Chinese-claimed Taiwan and cast Beijing as a bully, saying it was a gross interference in China's internal affairs.

G7 foreign ministers said in a communique after a London summit that China was guilty of human rights abuses and of using "coercive economic policies", which the G7 would use collective efforts to stop.

In an unusual step, the G7 also said they supported Taiwan's participation in World Health Organization forums and the World Health Assembly - and expressed concern about "any unilateral actions that could escalate tensions" in the Taiwan Strait.

Speaking in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin condemned the statement saying it made "groundless accusations" that were a gross interference in China's internal affairs.



WANG WENBIN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, CHINA

"Attempts to disregard the basic norms of international relations and to create various excuses to interfere in China's internal affairs, undermine China's sovereignty and smear China's image will never succeed," he said.

The G7 as a group should take concrete action to boost the global economic recovery instead of disrupting it, he added.

Wang also attacked G7 countries

MYANMAR UNREST



at least 769 people including 51 children as young as six years old and detaining several thousand activists, journalists, civil servants and politicians. Hundreds of others have disappeared, it said.

"No government should sell a single bullet to the junta under

these circumstances," the NGOs said. "Imposing a global arms embargo on Myanmar is the minimum necessary step the Security Council should take in response to the military's escalating violence."

The organisations urged the United Kingdom, the Security Council nation in charge of drafting resolutions on Myanmar, "to begin negotiations on a resolution authorizing an arms embargo as soon as possible."

This "will demonstrate to the junta that there will be no more business as usual," they said.

territory and opposes any official Taiwan representation on an international level. China has also stepped up military activities near Taiwan in recent months, trying to assert its sovereignty claims.

The G7 statement was warmly received in Taipei, where the government said this was the first time the foreign ministers had mentioned the island in their joint communique.

Taiwan's Presidential Office thanked the G7 for its support. "Taiwan will keep deepening the cooperative partnership with G7 member countries, and continue to contribute the greatest positive force to global health and people's well-being, as well as the peace, stability, and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region," said spokesman Xavier Chang.

Tumbling Chinese rocket expected to re-enter atmosphere May 8

THE ROCKET'S EXACT POINT OF DESCENT INTO EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE AS IT FALLS BACK FROM SPACE CANNOT BE PINPOINTED UNTIL WITHIN HOURS OF ITS RE-ENTRY, SAID US SPACE COMMAND

AGENCIES

Colorado, May 6: Remnants of a large Chinese rocket launched last week are expected to plunge back through the atmosphere this weekend in an uncontrolled re-entry being tracked by US



Space Command, the US military said Thursday.

The Long March 5B rocket blasted off from China's Hainan Island April 29 carrying the Tianhe module, which contains what will become living quarters for three crew on a permanent Chinese space station. The Tianhe launch was the first of 11 missions

needed to complete the station.

The rocket's exact point of descent into Earth's atmosphere as it falls back from space "cannot be pinpointed until within hours of its reentry," which is projected to occur around May 8, Space Command said in a statement posted online. Harvard-based astrophysicist

China silent amid rising concerns

China Thursday declined to comment on reports that the debris of its Long March 5B rocket amid concerns that it could cause damage if it crashes in civilian areas. While the Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin parried questions about the reports that the US defence department was tracking the falling rocket debris, official media here quoted Chinese experts as saying that the parts of the disintegrated rocket will fall in international waters. Asked what measures China is taking to deal with the situation arising out of the falling rocket, Wang said "for specifics I refer you to the competent authority." "As a principle, China is committed to the peaceful use of outer space and believes we should conduct international cooperation in this area," he said. "We stand ready to work with all parties to make efforts for the peaceful use of outer space and uphold its safety and security," he said.

Jonathan McDowell said potentially dangerous debris will likely escape incineration after streaking through the atmosphere at hypersonic speed but in all likelihood would fall into the sea, given that 70% of the world is covered by ocean.

There is a chance that pieces of the rocket could come down over

land, perhaps in a populated area, as in May 2020, when pieces from another Chinese Long March 5B rocket rained down on the Ivory Coast, damaging several buildings, though no injuries were reported, said McDowell.

The 18th Space Control Squadron at Vandenberg Air Force Base, about

160 miles (257 km) northwest of Los Angeles, is tracking the spent rocket, plotting updates on its location as it descends, the US Space Command said. The squadron tracks more than 27,000 man-made objects in space, most of them in low orbit, it said.

Based on its current orbit, the debris trail is likely to fall somewhere as far north as New York, Madrid or Beijing and as far south as southern Chile and Wellington, New Zealand, or anywhere in between, McDowell said.

McDowell said most countries have sought to design spacecraft in such a way as to avoid large, uncontrolled re-entries, since large chunks of the NASA space station Skylab fell from orbit in July 1979 and landed in Australia.

"It makes the Chinese rocket designers look lazy that they didn't address this," he said, calling the situation "negligent."

business



India has some of the most difficult mountain terrains in the world, therefore we chose to construct tunnels...Economising the cost of construction of tunnel with minimum construction period without compromising safety is need of the hour

NITIN GADKARI | ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER

DELHI FALLS TO 32ND IN GLOBAL PROPERTY INDEX

New Delhi's rank declined to 32nd among global cities in terms of prime residential properties. Knight Frank, in its 'Prime Global Cities Index Q1 2021' report, also said that Bangalore moved down four spots in the latest index, to 40th rank



of the day quote

Companies in low-resilience sectors such as retail, hospitality, auto dealerships, travel and tourism, and residential real estate are likely to be impacted the most by the resurgence of the pandemic, and therefore more likely to opt for the restructuring,

RAHUL GUHA | DIRECTOR, CRISIL

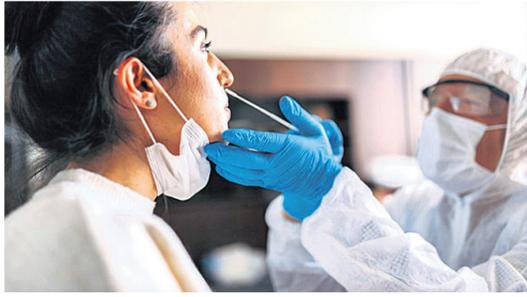
Working professionals and homemakers are now more inclined towards simple food that is hygienic, safe, and easy to prepare. That is where HyFun products will deliver convenience and provide easy solutions for daily meals

HARESH KARAMCHANDANI | CEO, HYFUN

The decline in prices of prime residential properties in India during the first quarter of 2021 can be attributed to multiple factors such as uncertainty around the second wave of the pandemic, high liquidity in capital markets, as well as the backlog of supply

SHISHIR BAJAL | CMD, KNIGHT FRANK (INDIA)

'India's fiscal response to Covid conservative'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, May 6: India's fiscal response to the Covid-19 pandemic has so far been conservative, according to a new report, which suggested a ₹5.5 lakh crore stimulus package to deal with the crisis.

Bold measures will be required to emerge stronger from the crisis, said the report, 'State of Working India 2021: One Year of Covid-19', released Wednesday by Azim Premji University.

It said the impacts of the second wave are still unfolding and may be as large, or larger than the first one.

Further, coming as it does on the back of depleted savings, debt, and reduced fallback options, the second wave can lead to potentially larger impacts on work, incomes, food security, health and education, the report said.

The states, which are at the forefront of the pandemic response in terms of containment as well as welfare, are severely strained in their finances. "There are thus compelling reasons for the Union government to undertake additional spending now," it said.

The report proposed extending free rations under the PDS beyond June, at least till the end of 2021, and cash transfer of ₹5,000 for three months to as many vulnerable households as can be reached with the existing digital infrastructure, including but not limited to 'Jan Dhan' accounts.

It suggested expansion of MGN-REGA entitlement to 150 days and revising programme wages upwards to state minimum wages, and enhancing the programme budget to at least ₹1.75 lakh crore.

The report also proposed launch-

The report proposed extending free rations under the PDS beyond June, at least till 2021 end, and cash transfer of ₹5,000 for 3 months

ing a pilot urban employment programme in the worst-hit districts, possibly focused on women workers, and increasing the central contribution in old-age pensions to at least ₹500.

A Covid hardship allowance to 2.5 million Anganwadi and ASHA workers of ₹30,000 (5,000 per month for six months) was also suggested, among others.

"These measures, taken together, will amount to approximately ₹5.5 lakh crore of additional spending and bring the total fiscal outlay on Covid relief to around 4.5 per cent of GDP over two years", it said, adding, this large fiscal stimulus is justified given the magnitude of the crisis.

The report cautioned that failure to take action now will cause short-term hardship to continue and may compound the long-term effects leading to years of lost welfare gains, and increased poverty as well as loss of savings and productive resources can lead to poverty traps.

"Nutritional and educational deficits, occurring due to stressed household finances, can have long-term effects. Women leaving the labour market can lead to long term increases in already large gender gaps," it pointed out.

The report documents the impact of one year of Covid-19 in India, on jobs, incomes, inequality, and poverty.

Mahindra Group sets up advanced design centre in UK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: Mahindra Group Thursday announced the setting up of an advanced design centre for mobility products in the UK. Mahindra Advanced Design Europe (MADE) is being set up in the West Midlands, and the new Centre of Excellence (CoE) will be a part of the Mahindra global design network that includes the Mahindra Design Studio in Mumbai, and Pininfarina Design in Turin (Italy), Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd said.

It will be operational from July 1, 2021, and will also support the creation of highly skilled design roles, drawing from Coventry University, Royal College of Art, and other design colleges in the UK and Europe.

"MADE is a strategic enhancement of Mahindra's global design capabilities and renews its commitment to bring to its customers, sophisticated, authentic SUVs with an unmissable presence," it added.

India, EU to announce resumption of FTA talks

Launched in 2007, FTA talks between India and the EU hit a roadblock in 2013 when the two sides failed to bridge substantial gaps on crucial issues, including tariff, data security status for the IT sector and market access

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: After a gap of eight years, India and the European Union are set to resume negotiations for an ambitious and comprehensive free trade agreement, and an announcement on the formal resumption is expected to be made at a virtual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top leadership of the 27-nation grouping Saturday.

Official sources in the European Union (EU) also said the free trade agreement package will include an investment protection pact as well as a framework on geographical indication.

Launched in June 2007, the FTA talks between India and the EU hit a roadblock in May 2013 when the two sides failed to bridge substantial gaps on crucial issues, includ-



ing tariff, data security status for the IT sector and market access.

India and the EU will agree to resume the negotiations at the virtual summit between Prime Minister Modi and top leadership of the bloc, sources said Thursday.

The two sides are also likely to announce a connectivity partnership at the summit that is aimed at boosting cooperation in sectors like railway, maritime and aviation as well as in the digital domain to bring people of the two

sides closer to each other, sources said.

Prime Minister Modi was scheduled to visit Portugal for the India-EU summit but it was called off in view of the coronavirus crisis and both sides decided to hold the deliberations virtually.

A strategically important grouping for India, the EU as a whole was country's largest trading partner in 2018. India's bilateral trade with the EU in 2018-19 stood at \$115.6 billion with exports valued at \$57.17 billion and imports worth \$58.42 billion. In the 15th India-EU summit in July last year, Prime Minister Modi had pitched for bringing out an action-oriented agenda to further expand ties between the two sides.

In that virtual summit, the two sides came out with a roadmap to further strengthen strategic partnership by 2025.

China suspends economic dialogue with Australia

REUTERS

Beijing, May 6: China "indefinitely" suspended Thursday all activity under a China-Australia Strategic Economic Dialogue, its state economic planner said, the latest setback for strained relations between the two countries.

"Recently, some Australian Commonwealth Government officials launched a series of measures to disrupt the normal exchanges and cooperation between China and Australia out of Cold War mindset and ideological discrimination," China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) said on the decision.

The commission did not say in the statement what specific measures prompted the action.

China's foreign ministry spokesman, Wang Wenbin, told a



daily conference the suspension was a "necessary and legitimate" response to Australia "abusing" the concept of national security to pressure cooperation with China.

"Australia must bear full responsibility," he said. The Australian dollar fell sharply on the news and was as low as 0.7701 to the US dollar from Wednesday's \$0.7747.

Bilateral ties were strained in 2018 when Australia became the first country to publicly ban Chinese tech giant Huawei from its 5G net-

work. Relations worsened last year when Australia called for an independent investigation into the origins of the novel coronavirus, prompting trade reprisals from China.

Australian Trade Minister Dan Tehan said the commission's decision was disappointing because the economic dialogue was "an important forum for Australia and China to work through issues relevant to our economic partnership". "We remain open to holding the dialogue and engaging at the ministerial level," he said.

The last meeting was in Beijing in 2017, when Australia's trade minister signed an agreement on cooperation on Belt and Road projects in third-party countries. Australia has, however, declined to sign agreements on direct participation in China's flagship foreign policy initiative.

'Govt should allow cryptocurrencies'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 6: The government should regulate and control cryptocurrencies instead of prohibiting them, former finance secretary SC Garg said Thursday.

Addressing a virtual event organised by industry body Assocham, Garg also said there is undue emphasis on cryptocurrencies and these digital assets will require standard frameworks.

"I don't think we still have full clarity and understanding about how to regulate cryptocurrencies...Regulate, control cryptocurrencies but allow the crypto assets, encourage the crypto services," he said.

Addressing a virtual event organised by industry body Assocham, SC Garg said there is undue emphasis on cryptocurrencies and these digital assets will require standard frameworks

Cryptocurrencies are digital or virtual currencies in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of their units and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently of a central bank.

The RBI had virtually banned cryptocurrency trading in 2018 and had directed all entities regulated by the central bank to cease dealing in virtual currencies.

The Supreme Court had asked the Centre in 2019 to frame policies for crypto, and in 2020, struck down the curbs imposed by the RBI. All Indian companies should only be keeping digital accounts in the next three to five years, Garg said, adding "it is possible to integrate national accounts with company accounts."

In the times to come, the entire system of accounting, auditing and reporting can be automated, he added.

SHORT TAKES

Biden to sell \$2.3tn infra plan

Washington: US President Joe Biden will push the case for his \$2.3 trillion infrastructure plan in the reliably Republican state of Louisiana — directly challenging GOP lawmakers who say that low taxes for corporations and the wealthy will fuel economic growth. Biden is leaning into the stagecraft of the presidency Thursday by choosing to speak in the city of Lake Charles in front of a 70-year-old bridge that is 20 years past its designed lifespan.

NDDB inks MoU with EESL

New Delhi: National Dairy Development Board Thursday said it has signed an agreement with Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) to promote efficient renewable technologies in the dairy industry. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed May 5 at Ananda, Gujarat by NDDB Executive Director Meenesh Shah and EESL Director (Projects) Venkatesh Dwivedi in the presence of senior officials, it said.

Volkswagen's profit rebounds

Frankfurt: Volkswagen Group's after-tax profit rebounded strongly to 3.4 billion euros (\$4.1 billion) in the first three months of the year as sales rebounded in China, the company's largest single market, and as customers went for the more profitable models in the company's lineup. Sales of electrified cars more than doubled. The first-quarter profit figure improved from 517 million euros in the same period of 2020.

GDP growth forecast lowered

Mumbai: Credit Suisse has sharply lowered its real GDP growth forecast for this fiscal year to around 8.5-9%, citing economic disruptions in the country due to the raging second wave that is likely to shave 100-150 bps growth off the economy. The Swiss brokerage has also warned that it will delay the economy reaching potential growth rate by an additional two-three years beyond 2022-23. The consensus forecast for FY22 growth is between 10 and 11% by most analysts, including international raters like S&P, Fitch and Moody's.

BIZ BUZZ

ESL Steel ready to augment O2 supply



Bhubaneswar: ESL Steel Limited registered its plant at Sijaljori near Bokaro for liquid medical oxygen (LMO) supply based on the requirements of the MoHFW and Steel Ministry. ESL Steel also has stepped in to augment oxygen supplies to Covid patients. It is committed to deliver LMO via a green corridor in the plant for faster oxygen allocation by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Ministry of Steel. ESL has been supporting life by rushing oxygen containers for critical patients across Punjab, Bihar and Jharkhand. Company's CEO, NL Vhatte said, "We are committed to supply LMO daily as per the requirements of the Ministry of Steel." Private sector steelmakers have supplied about 1.43 metric tonne of LMO to various parts of the country for the treatment of Covid patients so far.

UFO Moviez joins hands with Collective Artists Network

Bhubaneswar: UFO Moviez India Ltd. (UFO) and the Collective Artists Network Pvt. Ltd. have entered into a partnership to offer influencer marketing, branded content, and social media solutions to brands across the country. This collaboration for offering a highly innovative digital-first, hyperlocal service, tells the tale of resilience and agility of both the companies. As part of this association, UFO and Big Bang Social (an initiative wholly-owned by The Collective Artists Network) will offer end-to-end social media and branded content solutions to a wide base of local and global brands across India. The optimum use of their networks will mean a steady growth trajectory for both the companies notwithstanding the overall business slump.



Covid secured: IGIA deploys AI to curb pandemic spread

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 6: Giving a boost to its bio-safety credentials, national capital's IGIA Airport has deployed an AI-based system which ensures all Covid related precautions are followed by passengers as well as the staff. Accordingly, the system alerts terminal authorities on any breach of social distancing norms. It focuses on key areas of the airport such as entry gates, check-in counters, security check and hold zones.

The new system and associated protocols assume significance amid massive surge in Covid-19 infections.

"The use of advanced technology and implementation of robust protocols has made the IGI Airport as one of the safest zones in Delhi," DIAL Chief Executive Videh Kumar Jaipuria said.

Besides, DIAL has formed 'Cross Function Teams' (CFTs), which include staff from DIAL Security, CISF and other stakeholders to ensure that Covid protocols are being followed by employees and passengers.

"These team carry out regular audits of the terminals to ensure COVID protocols are followed by all." "If they find any violations, they first ask the violators to comply with the procedures, but if he



or she refuses they issue challan." Presently, over 15,000 employees, including of DIAL, airlines and others stakeholders, are working at Delhi Airport.

Furthermore, DIAL has installed a filtration system which ensures high air quality is maintained in-

side the terminal building.

"To ensure this, fresh air is injected inside the terminal every 10 minutes after passing it through HEPA filters and UVC lighting, which cleans air from any kind of pollutants." Additionally, the company has made stay arrangements

for essential employees for uninterrupted service at the airport. "Company has arranged accommodation for operational team at different locations." At parallel are some frontline employees aged above 45 who have already been vaccinated. "Few are waiting for

their second dose." Recently, in an effort to aid the country in the battle against the second wave, DIAL has set up a dedicated logistic facility for imported relief materials.

In addition, in a span of just five days, it has handled around 25 Covid relief flights totaling around 300 tonnes cargo, originating from various countries like the US, UK, UAE, Uzbekistan, Thailand, Germany, Qatar, Hong Kong, China amongst others.

At present, IGIA has the largest 'Cargo Hub Airport of South Asia', with two integrated 'Cargo Terminals' having annual cargo handling capacity of 1.8mn MT.

THE USE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ROBUST PROTOCOLS HAS MADE THE IGI AIRPORT AS ONE OF THE SAFEST ZONES IN DELHI

PRESENTLY, OVER 15,000 EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING OF DIAL, AIRLINES AND OTHERS STAKEHOLDERS, ARE WORKING AT DELHI AIRPORT

RECENTLY, IN AN EFFORT TO AID THE COUNTRY IN THE BATTLE AGAINST THE SECOND WAVE, DIAL HAS SET UP A DEDICATED LOGISTIC FACILITY FOR IMPORTED RELIEF MATERIALS

At present, IGIA has the largest 'Cargo Hub Airport of South Asia', with two integrated 'Cargo Terminals' having annual cargo handling capacity of 1.8mn MT.

Chelsea oust Real Madrid to set-up an all-English Champions League final with Manchester City as Turkish city set to witness face-off between the Blues and Sky Blues

INTO THE ISTAN-BLUES

Spanish papers begin Real post-mortem

MADRID: Real Madrid were slammed by Spain's sports newspapers Thursday following their Champions League exit at the hands of a dominant Chelsea, tearing into Zinedine Zidane's men, after they crumbled at Stamford Bridge to a 0-2 defeat (1-3 on aggregate).

MARCA wrote: 'Madrid rolled over by a train', as they slammed Zidane's 'exhausted and out of place' squad, also taking aim at the manager's tactics, saying Sergio Ramos and Eden Hazard shouldn't have started the game.

Mundo Deportivo, meanwhile, led with the headline: 'Shaken and out on the street', saying that Real 'didn't measure up' to their 'superior' opponents.

In AS, they carry the headline: 'Without strength and without the Champions League', going on to praise 'solid' Chelsea for eliminating an 'exhausted' Madrid. AS too saved some criticism for Hazard, who they say 'didn't work in the wide position' alongside Vinicius Junior.



Real Madrid players look dejected after conceding second goal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, May 6: Chelsea's decision to fire a club legend suddenly doesn't seem so callous after all. While Frank Lampard's name has hardly been forgotten by the Chelsea fans — there were chants outside Stamford Bridge before kickoff Wednesday — new manager Thomas Tuchel is quickly creating his own legacy after leading the London club into the Champions League final against Manchester City.

Chelsea even made record 13-time European Cup champions Real Madrid look ordinary as goals from Timo Werner and Mason Mount sealed a 2-0 victory that ousted Madrid 3-1 on aggregate.

Perhaps the stragglers leaving the bars near Stamford Bridge could hear the roar Tuchel let out on the field inside the empty stadium long after his players had departed the field. It will certainly have been heard in the Chelsea boardroom by the directors whose decision to

dismiss Lampard in January and hire Tuchel now seems vindicated.

Just like when owner Roman Abramovich made mid-season managerial changes in the 2007-08 and 2011-12 seasons, Chelsea will end the campaign by contesting the biggest game in European football.

And by the end of the month two Champions League trophies could be at Stamford Bridge, with Chelsea the first club to reach the men's and women's finals in the same season.

Even though the men's showpiece will be an all-English encounter May 29, the Premier League rivals will have to fly four hours to play the UEFA showpiece in Istanbul, which is currently in a coronavirus lockdown.

Istanbul will turn blue when the Blues (Chelsea) and the Sky Blues (Man City) face each other for the European club football's biggest crown.

While City has never lifted the European Cup, Chelsea's only tri-

umph came in 2012 when the 22-year-old Mount was in the youth system.

Unlike last season's final — when Tuchel's PSG lost to Bayern Munich — fans are set to be allowed in. Chelsea supporters have yet to see Tuchel managing their team in the flesh due to England's ongoing coronavirus restrictions. But they can't deny the impact he has made. Chelsea was five points outside the four Champions League qualification places when he was hired, but heads into the final four games of the Premier League season in fourth place with a three-point cushion.

There's a chance to pick up a trophy before the trip to Turkey, too, with an FA Cup final against Leicester May 15 after beating City in the semifinals.

Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane is left to focus on trying to wipe out Atletico Madrid's two-point lead in Spain to win La Liga, rather than adding to the three Champions League titles he won from 2016 to 2018.

After conceding a costly away goal last week, Madrid lacked the attacking nous or threat to turn this semifinal around as Chelsea kept an 18th clean sheet in 24 games under Tuchel.

Karim Benzema was denied by the first in a series of fine saves by Chelsea goalkeeper Edouard Mendy before Werner's opener but the visitors were sluggish, lacking a creative spark from Eden Hazard on an ineffective return to his former home.

Even in a debut season of misfortune, not even Werner could miss in the 28th minute when presented with an unguarded net to head into from close range after Kai Havertz had lobbed former Chelsea goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and hit the crossbar.

The chants of 'Timo' from the substitutes' bench reflected the delight from his teammates that the Germany forward had scored only his fourth goal in 35 games for Chelsea. For all the scrutiny faced, though, Werner has still managed 12 goals and 10 assists since last year costing Chelsea up to USD 68 million.

For all Chelsea's threat, Madrid only needed to score once to force the second leg into extra time. When the second half opened with Havertz heading against the crossbar and having a low shot saved it looked like the misses could prove costly.

And so they did, helped by the arrival of Christian Pulisic from the bench as Werner's replacement to spark the second goal. The American headed to N'Golo Kante and received the ball back to feed Mount, who lifted a shot over Courtois in the 85th.



Chelsea scorers Timo Werner (L) and Mason Mount rejoice after the former's goal

Currently in lockdown, Turkey to stage CL final

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, May 6: Thousands of English football fans will be hoping that a ban on international travel ends in time for them to get to Turkey in three weeks to see Chelsea and Manchester City contest the Champions League final without facing restrictions.

In a further easing of coronavirus laws in England, the government is set to allow overseas travel again from May 17 but it's unclear which destinations will still require forms of quarantine on return.

High infection rates saw Turkey last week enter its first national lockdown. That is due to end May 17, creating the possibility of that country not being on the green list to allow fans to return from the all-English Champions League final May 29 without having to self-isolate at home for 10 days.

Up to 4,000 fans from both Chelsea and City could be allowed into the 76,000-seat Atatürk Olympic Stadium, which was originally due to host last season's final.

In Wednesday's daily coronavirus up-

date, Turkey announced 26,476 new coronavirus cases and 356 deaths, taking its overall toll to 41,883.

Chelsea, which won the 2012 Champions League title, advanced to the final by beating Real Madrid 2-0 Wednesday to oust the 13-time European champions 3-1 on aggregate. City reached it first European Cup final by beating Paris Saint-Germain 2-0 Tuesday to complete a 4-1 aggregate win in the semifinals.

This will be the third time the Champions League final has involved a meeting of

English clubs. Chelsea lost to Manchester United in 2008 at Moscow, which is a flight of more than four hours from England — a similar time to Istanbul.

It was a shorter trip in 2019 when Atletico Madrid's stadium was the venue for Liverpool's victory over Tottenham.



Villa joins hands with Odisha FC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: Spanish football great David Villa has joined Indian Super League side Odisha FC's football committee as he will head the global football operations of the club, the club announced in a statement Thursday.

"I will try to bring my experience. Obviously, I didn't play in India but I played football for 20 years as a professional and before that in the academy. And in all of the projects that we (my team) are involved in, I try to give all of my experience that I have in football," said Villa in the statement.

Speaking about the development, OFC CEO Rohan Sharma explained, "It's an absolute pleasure to welcome David Villa and the DV7 group to the Odisha FC family! It's crazy to think that when I started watching football I used to see David, on my TV. Now together we are trying to help grow football in Odisha."

"It's also a pleasure to work with Victor Onate who has years of football business experience in Spain and of course Coach Gombau who is not only a fan favorite but family to us. Together we are going to make sure Odisha FC matches our lofty expectations by finding the best players, coaches, and staff for the club," he added.

Meanwhile, club president Raj Athwal said: "David's arrival is a statement of intent for Odisha Football Club, the region, the supporters and, of course, the Indian Super League in general."



Vishal Dev, principal secretary of Department of Sports and Youth Services, Government of Odisha, also welcomed the new association. "He won the Euros and the World Cup with Spain, and La Liga and the Champions League with Barcelona."

"We are hoping he will bring that formula to Odisha FC which will see Odisha FC hopefully make it to the top of the ISL table next year. We are very, very excited, delighted and confident that his arrival will make a big, big difference to the club."

Former Odisha FC head coach Josep Gombau and Victor Onate are also associated with Villa as a part of the DV7 group and have joined the Football Committee. Their role includes advising the coaching staff, improving the Indian and youth players, providing general support to the on field activities among others.

Hussey, Balaji flown in air ambulance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, May 6: Chennai Super Kings' batting coach Mike Hussey and bowling coach L Balaji have been flown into the city from Delhi in an air ambulance as they recover from COVID-19, a top franchise official said Thursday.

Hussey and Balaji were among the prominent non-playing staff to test positive when the IPL was 'indefinitely suspended' Tuesday, following multiple COVID-19 cases inside the bio-bubble.

"We decided to bring Hussey and Balaji to Chennai by an air ambulance as we have better contacts here and wanted to ensure better medical facilities in case of any need," the CSK official told this agency. He further said the duo



Rest of the Australians participating in the IPL left for Maldives Thursday to serve out the waiting period before they can board a flight to Australia

The CSK official said the franchise made arrangements for the foreign players of the team to leave by charter planes



was "asymptomatic and doing fine".

The CSK official said Hussey would have to wait for a COVID-19 negative report to be able to leave the country.

The official also informed that CSK skipper MS Dhoni would leave for his hometown Ranchi in the afternoon once all his team members head for their respective bases.

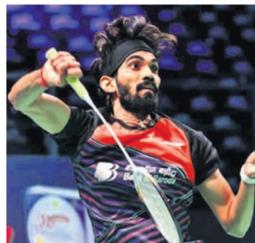
Saina, Srikanth's Olympics hopes hang by a thread

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: London Olympics bronze-medallist Saina Nehwal and men's star Kidambi Srikanth's last hopes of Olympic qualification hang in balance as the Indian government negotiates for their participation in the Malaysian Open amid a ban on flights from India in that country.

Following the postponement of the India Open (May 11-16), Saina and Srikanth's hopes of qualifying for the Tokyo Games hinge on the (May 25-30) Kuala Lumpur event followed by the Singapore Open (June 1-6).

In the wake of an unprecedented COVID-19 surge in India, Malaysia and Singapore have banned flights



from the country effective April 28.

"The Sports Ministry, through the Ministry of External Affairs, has approached the Malaysian Government requesting to grant permission to the Indian Badminton Team to travel to Malaysia to participate in the Malaysian Open



scheduled from May 25 to May 30," the Sports Authority of India said in a statement.

"This is in light of a temporary travel ban that has been imposed by Malaysia on travellers from India, owing to the rising COVID-19 cases in India," it added.

4 English counties interested to host remainder of IPL 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 6: Four premier English counties — Middlesex, Surrey, Warwickshire and Lancashire — have expressed interest in hosting the remaining 31 games of the Indian Premier League, which was postponed after coronavirus breached the bio-bubble to infect four Indian cricketers.

With India anticipating a third wave of the pandemic later during the year, BCCI is exploring a window in September after the conclusion of India's England tour to complete the tournament. India's tour of England ends September 14.

According to 'ESPNCricinfo', Lord's, Oval (both London), Edgbaston (Birmingham) and Emirates Old Trafford (Manchester) are understood to be part of the group who wrote to the ECB expressing their interest.

"The plans would see the tournament completed in around two weeks in the second half of September," according to the report. BCCI is ideally looking at a 20-day window in order to complete the meet.

It is expected that at the ICC Chief Executives Meeting scheduled later Thursday, the representatives of the BCCI and the ECB may discuss the matter. A logic that goes in the favour of IPL is that it provides a good opportunity to players to prepare for the World T20 which in all likelihood will be moved to the UAE from India.

India said it has still not given up hope and is awaiting for a response from the Badminton World Federation (BWF).

"Indian nationals won't be allowed in Malaysia as well as in Singapore, this is already in public knowledge. This is why we had written to both the Member Countries to consider our request as a special case with respect to the Olympic Qualification of some of our players," BAI general secretary Ajay Singhania told this agency.

"The matter has been taken up with BWF as well and we are awaiting Badminton Malaysia's response. Until they decline any possibility we will continue to pursue every opportunity that we have to send our shuttlers."

The tournament is one of the last events that contribute to Olympic qualification which ends June 15. All top Indian singles and doubles players like PV Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, Kidambi Srikanth, Sai Praneeth, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty, Ashwini Ponnappa and Sikki Reddy are due to participate in this.

The Badminton Association of