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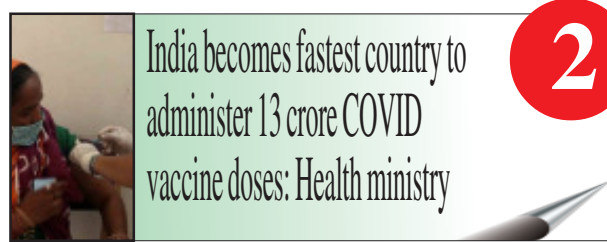
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VOLUME - 2

ISSUE - 271

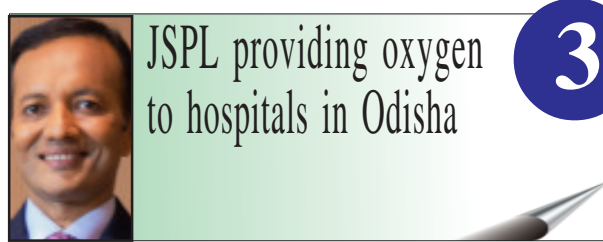
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Amid COVID-19 resurgence, Odisha matriculation exam Cancelled

Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: Amid the resurgence of COVID-19, the Odisha government on Wednesday announced cancellation of the annual matriculation examination that was scheduled to begin from May 3. School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash informed that the Board of Secondary Education (BSE), which conducts the annual Class X board examination, will prepare the results on the basis

the marks awarded to him/her, will be given an opportunity to sit in the examination that would be held when the situation is conducive," Dash told mediapersons. Like the Class X exam, all tests of the Odisha State Board of Madrasa Education scheduled to begin from March 19 have also been cancelled. The Director, Secondary Education, who is also the president of Odisha State Board of Madrasa

mode of marks to the students who were supposed to appear in the Madrasa Board Examination. A meeting in this regard was held by the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik with the stakeholders of the School and Mass Education department on April 15. On Tuesday, Class X students had staged a demonstration outside Naveen Nivas demanding cancellation of the examinations. Earlier, the ICSE and



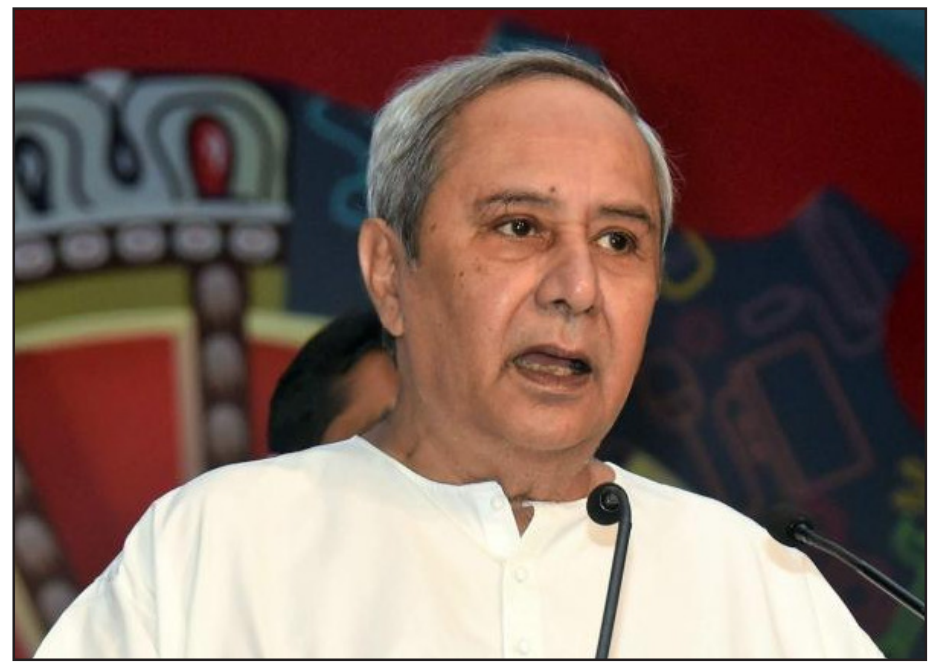
of objective criteria. "Any candidate, who will not be satisfied with

Education will take appropriate steps for awarding alternate

CBSE had cancelled the Class X examinations of their boards.

CM asks collectors to keep tab on migrants, ramp up beds with oxygen

Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: As the worsening Covid-19 situation has fuelled return migration of workers from the affected states, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday asked the collectors to be prepared for returnees and make all necessary precautionary arrangements for them. Reviewing the pandemic situation in the State at a high-level meeting, the Chief Minister said the protocols followed earlier should be re-activated by the collectors immediately, based on the existing database. Stating that quarantine norms and testing should be ensured for all the returnees, he called upon the senior officials appointed as Covid observers for different districts to put their best efforts like last year. The Chief Min-



ister directed the Health department to ramp up beds for Covid patients with oxygen support. "Although there is no problem of beds and oxygen in the State currently, still then we will have to remain prepared," he said. Stating that health system in some cities is under severe strain due to rapid increase in Covid cases,

the Chief Minister asked the officials to closely monitor the oxygen supply situation and ensure that all related accessories at the hospital level are available on priority. "The number of beds in Covid hospitals and Covid care centres should be increased across the State. Special focus should be on providing maximum number of beds

with oxygen support. The system has to work on war-footing to ensure this within committed timelines," he said. The Chief Minister said many states are facing critical medicine shortage and though Odisha has sufficient medicine stock, buffer stock should be ensured to tackle the higher demand in the coming weeks. He stressed

ramping up the IEC campaign and educating people on the dangerous spread of the second wave along with the need for active adherence to Covid protocols. The community, Mission Shakti groups, members of PRIs should be actively involved in the process, he said and asked the administration to strictly implement enforcement activities across the State. Requesting the people to cooperate, the Chief Minister said, "We are facing grave danger and unless the people act responsibly, it will be very difficult to tackle the situation. It is in the interest of State and people that Covid situation should be managed without lockdown. Wearing mask and maintaining social distance will help in this regard," he said.

Poor internet hits education

Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: Poor connectivity and network problems have emerged as a serious problem for Odisha as online activities have increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Minister of State for Information Technology Tushar Kanti Behera said that educa-



tion sector has been mostly affected because of emphasis on online classes due to the pandemic. He said that online classes have

affected students of rural areas as all villages do not have 4G network. The Minister said that meetings of guardians of the students

in schools are being called to discuss the situation emerging from the pandemic. Besides, the State government has also discussed the issue with telecom operators BSNL, Airtel, Idea and Jio. He said that because of the intervention of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Airtel has given connectivity in

some areas of Malkangiri. The Minister admitted that there is network and connectivity problem in Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Sundargarh and Koraput districts. He said that the Chief Minister and the government have written several letters in this regard as it is a Central subject.

AIIMS OPD To Remain Closed From 25th

Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: The Bhubaneswar AIIMS Hospital OPD will be closed from the 25th of this month. It has been decided to close the hospital OPD as some health workers and patients of the hospital have been positively identified and some health workers have come in contact



with corona patients. The hospital's OPD will be closed for a few

days from the 25th of next month, the hospital said.

Centre grants exclusive subsidy policy for urea generated by TFL



Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved an exclusive subsidy policy for urea produced through coal gasification route by Talcher Fertilizers Limited (TFL). The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave the approval to the proposal of the department of Fertilizers. It would assist in reducing urea imports to the tune of 12.7 LMT per annum leading to savings in foreign exchange, Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal told reporters in Delhi after the Cabi-

net meeting. "Considering the strategic energy security and urea self-sufficiency of the country, it has been decided go ahead with Talcher Fertilizer Limited plant based on coal gasification technology. The project shall improve availability of fertilizer to farmers thereby boosting development of eastern region and will save transport subsidy for supply of urea in eastern part of the country," he said. The project will also give a boost to 'Make in India' initiative and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' campaign and help development of infrastructure providing major

boost to economy. The project will also provide new business opportunity in form of ancillary industries in the catchment area of the project, Goyal said. He further said that coal gasification plants are strategically important as coal prices are non-volatile and it is abundantly available. Talcher plant will also reduce dependence on important natural gas for production of urea leading to reduction in LNG import bill. "We are confident that this project will write a new chapter in India's fertilizer security and will also introduce this new technology in India," he added. The gasification process adopted in Talcher unit is a clean coal technology with negligible sulfur oxide, nitrogen oxide and free particulate emissions as compared to directly coal fired processes.

Andhra feels heat of Odisha border check

Srikakulam, Apr 21: As the new Covid-19 infections in the coastal Andhra districts, particularly in Srikakulam district, report a serious spike, neighbouring Odisha is restricting entry of people from the State into its territory. Only those with Covid-19 negative report or a certificate saying that the person is vaccinated twice are being allowed into Odisha. Special check posts are arranged at Rayagada bordering Vizianagaram district and also at Paralakhemundi and Girisola in the Andhra-Odisha Border (AOB) by Odisha authorities to restrict people from AP entering the neighbouring state. People living in the bordering villages cross over to Odisha for their daily needs as the vil-



lages and major towns are easily accessible when compared to coming to mandal or district headquarters in Srikakulam or Vizianagaram. As several districts in Odisha, some of them on the borders of Andhra Pradesh, have already declared night curfew and weekend shut down from April 17 and imposed restrictions on movement of vehicles from other states, the

authorities have decided to restrict movement of people from AP to stop the further spread of the virus in their State. Police are allowing citizens of Odisha having proper identity cards and are sending back the people from Andhra Pradesh. Odisha officials are conducting thermal screening and Covid tests for drivers of goods vehicles and allowing them only after they test negative.

Odisha's Gajapati District Collector Anupam Kumar Saha is personally monitoring the movement of people at Mahendra Tanaya Bridge which was constructed between Pathapatnam of AP and Paralakhemundi of Odisha. Police personnel manning the check posts at Parvathipuram-Rayagada and Pathapatnam - Paralakhemundi, Ichchapuram-Girisola

are also strictly implementing Odisha government restrictions and sending away people of AP without Covid negative report. Huge hoardings were also erected at the border checkpoints on the restrictions imposed by the Odisha administration. When contacted by TNIE, Srikakulam District Collector J Nivas said that Odisha officials at AOB are restricting movement of people from other states as per their government orders. As on date, there are no restrictions on inter-state movement issued by the Government of India but the Odisha government is implementing the restrictions," he said, adding that the AP authorities have not put any restrictions on inter-state movement at the AOB.

Oxygen politics between Delhi, Haryana and UP



Delhi, Apr 21: At a private Oxygen dealer at Sahibabad in Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday. Far from hospital corridors, the oxygen crisis in the national capital also played out in the corridors of power as Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh traded charges over supply of oxygen to hospitals in the city. The Delhi government, which had until Tuesday been accusing Uttar Pradesh of curbing supply of oxygen to the capital, was on Wednesday accused by Haryana of stealing oxygen from a tanker. Haryana health minister

Anil Vij said the tanker was on its way to supply oxygen to hospitals in Faridabad. To avoid a repeat of such an incident, Vij said he had issued instructions that all tankers carrying oxygen across Haryana would be escorted by state police force. "I came to know that the tanker was stopped by certain people in Delhi yesterday, while it was on its way to Faridabad for distributing oxygen to certain hospitals. If the governments forcibly start stealing oxygen like this, it will lead to chaos. It is highly condemnable," he said in a video. Delhi's Deputy

Chief Minister Manish Sisodia responded: "Delhi does not have any oxygen plant so the allegation that we looted their truck is baseless... There is a problem in bringing oxygen to Delhi. I was reading a report which said that the reason for limited supply of oxygen in many hospitals in Delhi today was because the oxygen that was earmarked for Delhi from a plant in Faridabad was monopolised and directed towards Haryana by an official from the Haryana government." He added: "When the central government has to decide

on the quota of oxygen for each state, then state governments should not come in between and hoard oxygen. Similar ordeal took place yesterday in a plant near Modi Nagar (Ghaziabad) when we had to call a senior central government minister. It was only after his help that the oxygen supply reached Delhi. I plead to the Centre to ensure that state governments don't take undue monopoly over oxygen and make sure this does not become a fight between state governments," he said. During the day, hospitals in Delhi said that Linde India Limited,

which supplies oxygen to them from their Faridabad plant, had been stopped by the Haryana government from supplying oxygen outside the state. Senior Delhi government officials echoed this allegation, claiming that Faridabad Deputy Commissioner Garima Mittal had stopped oxygen from the plant. Mittal, however, denied the allegations: "We have not stopped any suppliers from providing oxygen to Delhi, or stopped any vehicles engaged in this. We have received no such orders." By evening, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal shared some reassuring news, tweeting: "Central government has increased Delhi's quota of oxygen. We are very grateful to centre for this." According to officials, Delhi was getting 378 metric tonnes of oxygen till Wednesday afternoon, which has now been increased to 480 metric tonnes. The Delhi government had asked for the allocation to be increased to 700 metric tonnes.

Complete lockdown in Puducherry this weekend

Chennai, Apr 21: Amid the surge in COVID-19 cases, Puducherry Lieutenant governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan has announced a complete lockdown in the Union Territory from April 23 (Friday) night till April 26 (Monday) morning. The lockdown is imposed apart from the night curfew the Union Territory is following since yesterday (Tuesday). Restaurants, food courts, and tea shops have been permitted to operate till 8 pm with 50 per cent capacity and take away is allowed till 10 pm. Starting Monday, all shops and

COVID-19 cases reported in Puducherry, 70 in Karaikal, 41 in Yanam, and 38 in Mahe. A total of 38530 COVID-19 cases reported in Puducherry till date. A total of 20 areas have been identified as containment zones. As per the instructions by the All India Medical Council, based on the number of COVID-19 cases, they have been differentiated into Red, Orange, and Yellow and thoroughly monitored. Tamilisai urged everyone to wear masks and follow other safety precautions said strict action will be initiated against



Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan conducting a meeting over covid situation in Puducherry

other establishments have been allowed to operate till 2 pm only. As per the letter issued by the Lieutenant governor, the restrictions will be in place till the situation is brought under control. The Beach Road will be closed post 5 pm on all days. As per the latest reports, a total of 470 new

those who fail to adhere to the COVID-19 guidelines. As of April 20, a total of 2428 bed facilities have been set up for COVID-19 treatment and 1398 of them are vacant. From today (Wednesday), masks and sanitizers would be sold at subsidized prices through cooperative milk parlours.

India becomes fastest country to administer 13 crore COVID vaccine doses: Health ministry



New Delhi, Apr 21: India took only 95 days to administer 13 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccine, the fastest country to do so, the Union Health Ministry said on Wednesday. The US took 101 days to administer 13 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccine, while China took 109 days to cross the same number, it said. The cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has reached 13,01,19,310 with 29,90,197 vaccine

doses being given in a span of 24 hours, according to data updated at 7 am. Eight states — Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala — 59.33 per cent of the total doses given so far in the country. The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 with healthcare workers (HCWs) getting inoculated and vaccination of frontline workers (FLWs) start-

ing from February 2. The next phase of COVID-19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for those over 60 years of age and for people aged 45 and above with specified comorbid conditions. India launched vaccination for all people aged more than 45 from April 1. Meanwhile, the government on Monday decided to expand its vaccination drive by allowing everyone above 18 eligible to be vaccinated from May 1.

Vikas Dubey encounter case: Inquiry commission gives 'clean chit' to UP Police

Lucknow, Apr 21: The three-member inquiry commission probing the encounter killings of gangster Vikas Dubey and five of his alleged associates has given a clean chit to Uttar Pradesh Police because of lack of evidence, sources said on Wednesday. The commission is headed by former Supreme Court judge B S Chauhan. The other two members are former Allahabad High Court judge Sashi Kant Agrawal and former UP Director General of Police K L Gupta. The panel submitted its reported to the state government on Monday, eight months after it was set up. "Yes the commission has submitted its report to the



state government on Monday. A copy of the report will be submitted in the Supreme court also," Gupta told PTI. He, however, did not elaborate on the contents of the report. Asked about it, Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Awanish Kumar Awasthi said, "I would not like to comment on

it." According to the sources, the inquiry commission has found no evidence of wrongdoing by the state police. Speaking to PTI, a senior police official said, "No witnesses came forward to challenge the police claims even after advertisements in newspapers and media. Also, no one

from the media came forward to get their versions recorded." There were, however, witnesses supporting the police version, he added. On July 3 last year, eight policemen were killed in an ambush in Bikru village in Chaubeypur area of Kanpur when they were going to arrest Vikas Dubey. Police

later killed Prem Prakash Pandey (55) and Atul Dubey (35) in an encounter in Kanpur on July 3. On July 8, Amar Dubey (30), who carried a reward of Rs 50,000 on him, was killed in an encounter in Maudaha village in Hamirpur district. On July 9, Praveen Dubey, alias Bauwa (48), and Prabhat, alias Kartikeya (28), were killed in separate encounters in Etawah and Kanpur districts. Six PILs were filed in the Supreme Court after this to seek a court-monitored probe into the encounter killings. The apex court had then on July 22, 2020 approved the Uttar Pradesh government's decision to institute the inquiry commission.

Covishield vaccine to be priced at Rs 400/dose for states; Rs 600/dose for private hospitals

New Delhi, Apr 21: Serum Institute of India's Covishield will be available to state governments at Rs 400 a dose and private hospitals at Rs 600 a dose, the Pune

headquartered company said Wednesday. The announcement comes two days after the central government decided to open up vaccinations against Covid-19 to those

above the age of 18 years. As per the government's latest decision, around 50 per cent of the doses produced by vaccine makers will be provided "in the open market" at a

pre-declared price. State governments, private hospitals and private industry members can purchase these doses for vaccinations of those between the ages of 18 and 45

years. It is not clear at this stage how much over this cost private hospitals will be able to charge those in this age group when they arrive at their facilities for vaccinations.

Private Covid vaccination centres to procure directly from manufacturers starting May 1

New Delhi, Apr 21: From May 1, the present system of private COVID-19 vaccination centres receiving doses from the government and charging up to Rs 250 per dose will cease to exist and they will procure directly from vaccine manufacturers. According to the Liberalised Pricing and Accelerated National

COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy, COVID-19 vaccination will continue to be free for eligible population groups comprising healthcare workers, frontline workers and population above 45 years of age in government COVID vaccination centres which receive doses from the Government of India. Vaccine

manufacturers would make an advance declaration of the price for 50 per cent supply that would be available to state governments in the open market before May 1. Based on this price, states, private hospitals, industrial establishments may procure vaccine doses from manufacturers. Private hospitals



would have to procure their supplies of COVID-19 vaccine ex-

clusively from the 50 per cent supply earmarked for other than the Gov-

ernment of India channel. The price charged for vaccination by private hospitals would be monitored, it said. "Consequently the present dispensation where private COVID vaccination centres receive doses from the government and can charge up to Rs.250 per dose will cease to exist," the Union Health minis-

try document said. Vaccine manufacturers would supply 50 per cent of their monthly Central Drugs Laboratory (CDL) released doses to the Government of India and would be free to supply remaining 50 per cent doses to state governments and in the open market. For Government of India vaccination cen-

tres, the eligible population would be the same which exists today that is healthcare workers (HCWs), frontline workers (FLWs) and population above 45 years of age. For other than the government of India channel, the eligibility would be all adult citizens of the country, the document said.

Shraddha Divas of J.B. Pattnaik Celebrate at Khordha



(A.O. Bureau) Khordha, Apr 21: The former Chief Minister Of Odisha Janaki Ballabha Pattnaik 6th Shraddha Divas Celebrated at Janaki Ballabha Park at Khordha by Janaki Ballabha Smruti Committee Trust. The Sec-

retary of the Trust Sanjaya Pattnaik Preside over the meeting. The guest of the occasions Senior Congress Leader and MLA, Jatni Suresh Kumar Routray, MLA, Khordha, Joytrindra Nath Mitra, former vice-chancellor North

Odisha University Maj. Khirod Prasad Mohanty, Treasurer of the Trust Prakash Chandra Samantaray, Guru Charan Pattnaik, Former President Khordha District BAR, Association Sisir Kumar Parida, Senior Advocate Bichitra

Badjena, Mahammad Kefatullah, Bijaya Mohapatra, New Thinking Forum President Narendra Prusty, Padma Charan Ray, Kuni Dalabehera, Amit Mohanty, Siladitya Pattnaik, Bijaya Kumar Sethy and others are pay homage to

Mr.J.B. Pattnaik and remembered Mr. Pattnaik was three time Chief Minister of Odisha. While Pattnaik is considered as a master politician's for his craftiness. When he was an forced retirement as Governor of Assam, he was among the few Governors appointed by the UPA Government who were allowed to complete their full term by the NDA Government. Besides his political career Mr. Pattnaik won many literary awards. He also translated the M a h a b h a r a t a , Ramayana and Shrimad Bhagabat Gita into Odia language, all of which were highly acclaimed works.

Create awareness to prevent child marriages: Government



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: The occasion is considered an auspicious day in the Hindu calendar and a large number of children are usually married off on this day in rural parts of the State. The Women and Child Welfare department has di-

rected the district child protection officers (DCPOs) to take all possible measures to prevent child marriages which the authorities fear would take place on the occasion of Akshya Trutiya on May 14. The occasion is considered an auspicious day in the

Hindu calendar and a large number of children are usually married off on this day in rural parts of the State. The DCPOs have been asked to organise village level meetings to create awareness among people against the social evil from May 1 to May 15.

International Sand Artist Mr.Manas Kumar Sahoo has created a Sand Art on the Puri beach to mark the " Earth Day"



(A.O. Bureau) Puri, Apr 21: The internationally renowned Sand Artist Mr.Manas Kumar Sahoo has created a Sand Art on the Golden Sea Beach of Puri near the Light House on the occasion of "World Earth Day". In it, he shows the world how to stay away from

Corona and how to create an atmosphere of serenity and peace to the world again. The second wave of the Corona is now going on all over the world. The Sand Art shows how Corona can be completely destroyed from the World in protest by using sanitizers, wearing

masks, and maintaining social distance. It took 7 long hours by Mr.Manas to build this sand art & has consumed 12 tons of sand. The Sand Art is 12 ft in width. In it, he delivers the message of "Let's Repel Covid, Save Earth" and " Earth Day".

JSPL providing oxygen to hospitals in Odisha

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: Reaffirming its principles of 'People First', the Naveen Jindal led steel manufacturing company Jindal Steel & Power Ltd (JSPL) has assured Angul District Administration to supply medical oxygen for treatment of COVID-19 affected persons. JSPL's Executive Director and Angul Unit Head in a letter to Collector and District Magistrate Angul has said, "As a responsible corporate, JSPL is committed for the wellbeing of well being of the people of Odisha and always with the district administration to address the emergency situation of COVID-19 pan-



demic". Responding to the JSPL's noble gesture, Collector Angul has also thanked the Company and its Social Arm JSPL Foundation in his tweet. JSPL's Chairman Shri Naveen Jindal already announced that JSPL will supply 50 to 100 tonnes every day of medical oxygen from its Odisha and

Chhattisgarh Unit. Shri Jindal said "JSPL has been always standing with the Country and Countrymen during calamities and emergencies and will continue to do so during this Pandemic. For us, it is Nation First. I am sure together we shall defeat the Pandemic". "We can compromise steel production for a while to supply oxygen

to the government to save precious lives. Our priority is people first," said JSPL's MD Mr. VR Sharma, in a statement on Twitter. The Company had supplied 725 tons of liquid oxygen in Odisha last year to save human lives from COVID Pandemic. Medical Oxygen is critical in the treatment of medical complications that develop due to the COVID-19. JSPL has also taken multipronged initiatives to fight the second wave of COVID-19 across all its operational locations, including Odisha. The Company has instituted COVID Care Centres in each of its business locations. Thermal Screening of the

Workforce, employees, vaccination, periodic testing of all employees and workers, facilities for sanitisation, distribution of masks, operation of isolation centres etc. are being done extensively to keep JSPL workplace safe. Pursuing its CSR responsibility the Company under the umbrella of its Social Arm JSPL Foundation has been providing hot cooked meals to the underprivileged and vulnerable everyday also has been distributing face masks, Sanitizers, Phenyls, etc. manufactured by the Women SHGs to the C o m m u n i t y , Workforce and the front line COVID warriors for last one year since the onset of the global pandemic.

BJP limits campaign to door-to-door canvassing

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: AMID rising concern over political parties holding rallies and public meetings, the BJP has decided to limit its campaign for the Pipili by-election to door-to-door canvassing. The saffron party has instructed its booth and mandal (electoral block) level workers and functionaries to continue door-to-door campaign without any violation of the Covid protocols. "Mandal level meetings are being organised even after adjournment of the bypoll following the death of Congress candidate Ajit Mangaraj. These are small meetings by BJP



functionaries to keep the party workers motivated and chalk out strategies on how to motivate the voters to support the BJP candidate," State BJP general secretary Prithviraj Harichandan told TNIE. He said the BJP is equally concerned about the Covid-19 situation as many of the

party workers involved in the Pipili electioneering turned out to be coronavirus positive. Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Pradipta Naik who has been campaigning extensively in the constituency has also been tested Covid positive. Though the party is yet to make a formal announcement

like the BJD not to hold any election rallies and public meetings, State BJP president Samir Mohanty said the party is not in favour of public meetings as the Covid surge is taking alarming proportions across the State. "The party will extensively use electronic and audio visual platforms for the cam-

paign. As the Covid situation is worsening in the western Odisha districts due to return migration from worst-hit states, the party has shifted its focus to assist the people in vaccination, help corona infected patients in hospitalisation, plasma donation, sanitisation and distribution of masks," Mohanty said. Not many leaders of the BJP are interested to expose themselves to the crowds after the untimely demise of the Congress candidate who was a victim of the pandemic. Some of the party leaders and a majority of the State functionaries have recovered from the infection in the first wave.

Amid a searing second wave, Odisha hits the brakes on testing

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: The Covid-19 surge in the State continues to aggravate as it hit yet another peak with 4,761 people testing positive in the last 24 hours. The disease claimed five more lives during the period. However, even as the new cases soar to new highs everyday, declining tests have left health experts worried. The number of tests has come down from 37,245 on April 16 to 32,349 on April 19 pushing the positivity rate up from 8.44 pc to 14.71 pc in four days. Raising alarm that the low testing may worsen the situation at a time when identifying as many cases as possible is key to control the spread of infection, noted microbiologist and former member of ICMR Dr Tribhuban Mohan Mohapatra said Odisha government needs to accelerate testing on a war-footing. "At least 60,000 tests, including 30,000 through RT-PCR, should be conducted. The system put in place during the first wave should be revived and every district should conduct at least 1,000 RT-

PCR tests. Since the infection is spreading fast, identification and isolation of cases should be the strategy apart from treatment and vaccination," he said. Meanwhile, 23 pilgrims, who had recently returned from Haridwar Kumbh Mela, have tested positive. They have been isolated and test reports of 10 others are awaited. Sources said samples of 30 return-

5. It had taken 129 days to reach the peak on September 25 last year from 51 cases on May 20, he said adding that the testing is being ramped up to 50,000 a day, including 20,000 RT-PCR tests, with additional labs in three districts. The fresh cases spread across 30 districts included 2,785 from quarantine and 1,976 local infections. The number of in-



ees were sent for RT-PCR test after they landed at Cuttack on Monday, of whom 13 were found to be infected. Similarly, 10 people of Rayagada district have tested positive after their arrival from Uttarakhand. Additional Chief Secretary of Health PK Mohapatra said the transmission is rapid as the number of infection reached 4,761 in just 43 days from the lowest figure of 10 cases on March

fections crossed 500-mark in three districts with Khurda registering its highest single-day spike of 820 cases followed by Sundargarh (673) and Nuapada (534). Ten districts bordering Chhattisgarh logged 2,502 cases contributing nearly 52 per cent (pc) infections to the daily tally. The migrants from the worst-hit states continued to fuel the number of infections in Khurda, Cuttack and Puri dists.

Jail warder, constable arrested over Hyder escape

(A.O. Bureau) Cuttack, Apr 21: Cuttack Police on Tuesday arrested a warder of Sambalpur Circle Jail and constable of Sambalpur Police Reserve for

their alleged negligence which helped gangster Sk Hyder in his sensational escape from SCB MCH here on April 10. Warder Sibanarayan Nanda and constable Md

Mousim had escorted the gangster to the medical college. Both were formally arrested by Mangalabag police. DCP Prateek Singh said, police had started investigation

basing on Mousim's FIR but in due course found out about the duo's negligence in the case. "Constable Mousim was in Hyder's escort team all the three times when

he visited SCB and had given the gangster maximum undue scope to meet his family members and relatives in gross dereliction of his duty," he said.

EDITORIAL

Lip service?

The parties' decision to curtail electioneering in Bengal smells more of hypocrisy than concern. The parties in the West Bengal poll fray have realised, albeit too late in the day, that it is essential to break the transmission chain to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. With the number of infections in the country skyrocketing on a daily basis, the contagion has clearly marked itself a wide territory and the decision of the politicians appears to be a myopic case of too little, too late. In fact, rather than an act of genuine concern and empathy, it resembles a rat race with the parties vying to score brownie points about which one of them has its heart in the right place vis-à-vis the health of their constituents. Had these parties and their leaders really cared for the masses, they wouldn't have waited five phases to show their fraternal concern. Only after the Left, the Congress and TMC announced that they would not hold big rallies in the State in the backdrop of rising Coronavirus cases did the BJP proclaim that it would cut down on the number of attendees at the public meetings, including those addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Sadly, but fittingly, none of the parties deserves a commendation for such a decision; maybe their leaders are now actually worrying about their own well-being after their fellow partymen are falling like ninepins to the virus. The Congress and its motley group of allies, pragmatically speaking, were never truly in the battle for West Bengal; so it doesn't really matter if the Gandhi scion campaigns there. For the TMC — the ruling party in the State which is fighting a resolute BJP tooth and nail — it's not easy to yield and fold up like the Congress; hence it would still go ahead with canvassing but will organise only small meetings with 20-minute speeches. The BJP is also toying with a similar plan. But the question is: Does the SARS-CoV-2 virus take longer than 20-odd minutes for transmission? However, on Didi's part, it's a calculated move to send out the message that she cares for her State's people. However, the BJP has emerged in this episode as the party most indifferent to the electorate's health and safety. Being the ruling party at the Centre, one would have expected from it more maturity and seriousness in fighting the global crisis, and certainly not the bullheadedness that at best overarches the majority in an Assembly. No doubt, the BJP-led Government has made laudable efforts in the fight against COVID-19, but it cannot afford to look boorish when its political opponents are airing concern for people. On a separate note on the COVID-19 issue, the Centre has allowed all adults to get vaccinated from May 1 under the nationwide inoculation programme. Rather than looking like a graded response based on empirical data, the new liberalised vaccine policy appears more of a knee-jerk reaction to the sudden and exponential rise in the Coronavirus infection cases. However, it is the destiny of the common man in our country to stand in a long queue for long hours, be it outside a polling booth or vaccination centre.

Bitter homecoming

The migrant workers are rushing back because they don't trust the Governments' assurances. As the pandemic's second wave surges, India's migrant workers are again heading home, just like they did when the first wave resulted in a hard nationwide lockdown in a matter of four hours last March. This time around, fortunately, we are not witnessing the heartbreaking mass migration of impoverished workers with families in tow, carrying all their worldly goods on their shoulders, as they trudge back home in the searing summer. Now, the workers don't trust the insensitive Governments, employers and city dwellers enough so as to be left in the lurch. As more cities come under the contagion's grip and as the Governments start increasing the number of restrictions and curfews/short lockdowns, the migrant workers who had just started to resettle in the cities after returning to their jobs a few months ago, are rushing back. The trains going to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the biggest sources of migrant workers, are leaving Mumbai, Lucknow, Delhi-NCR and Ahmedabad with standing room only. Even though most of the workers know that they are returning to joblessness and penury, they say they prefer starving at home among their loved ones than be stranded in an alien place without any social security, hope or helping hand from the Governments or the people. The trauma they went through last year will stay a lifetime and they have chosen what, to their mind, is an easier option. However, this exodus does not augur well for the nation's fiscal health that had just started recovering after last year's hard lockdown delivered another crushing blow to an already tottering economy. Comprising 20 per cent of the workforce, migrant labour is vital to every economic sector, especially the informal sector and MSMEs, and constitutes nearly 50 per cent of India's GDP. Even though most State Governments and the Centre, too, are clear that there will be no hard lockdown this time, the message seems to be lost on the unnerved workers. The only option for the Government to stop this migration is to get the message across loud and clear. The workers need to be assured that they will not be left to fend for themselves this time around. If the Governments fail to convince them, the nation's rural and urban economies will be in a shambles. This is surely not something we can afford right now.

COVID-19 Pandemic & Future Implications



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The world is seeing the effect of COVID-19 and multiple re-immersion in different variant forms around the globe. This has been met by unequal responses in many countries which has led to different outcomes and has impacted the populations in North America, Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa and Australia. Because of the gravity of the situation, extraordinary progress was made to secure some vaccines in spite of short clinical trials. Pfizer BioNTech, Oxford AstraZeneca, Bharat Biotech Covaxin, Gamaleya Sputnik V, Sinovac, Johnson & Johnson are being used or will be used shortly for the mass vaccination programme. However, because of delay in the vaccination cover due to various reasons and the evolving SARS-CoV-2 variants, instead of bringing the crisis to a close we might be witnessing a new phase of the pandemic. Although, we are having good responses to the treatment of COVID-19 with a variety of pharmaceutical agents at our disposal and supportive measures, the burden of hope is still largely dependent on mass vaccination and creation of herd immunity. However, the problem here is unless a rapid vaccination scheme achieves a high population coverage and offer a

reasonably long lasting protection, then it might not end the pandemic anytime soon. Many governments are faced with the behaviour of its citizens, where a large number of the population are fully aware and do understand that wearing face



masks, maintaining social distancing and hand hygiene are very important to prevent the horizontal transmission of the virus, a significant number either do not understand the way the viral transmission occurs or ignore it entirely due to various reasons and undo the very process of the preventive actions. Added to this is the mutation and the formation of more SARS-CoV-2 variants leading to rapid transmission and very likely less effectiveness of the vaccines in use. There is always a risk that misinformation and disinformation along with vaccine hesitancy could compromise the global response if an international effort is not mounted simultaneously instead of many countries taking the nationalist ap-

proach to the vaccine delivery and immunisation programs. Although, we might not be able to eradicate it totally because of animal reservoirs including some domestic animals, non-optimal vaccine coverage and unpredictable degrees of immunological

protection, but a containment can be assured globally if the correct epidemiological and public health strategies are formed and implemented. We also need to look at the potency of each type of vaccine available to us including its efficacy against the variants which are emerging in different parts of the world. There is a common belief that once vaccinated, the person can not carry the virus and infect another person. This can happen through the viral shedding mechanism and especially if it is a variant. There is also theoretically a concern of viral escape as more and more mutants start circulating among the population or animals. Some virologists are predicting that these mutants could be more

virulent than the current one but there is no hard evidence yet. There is this pessimistic scenario, where these re-emerging variants will have the ability to escape vaccine immunity which might lead to high income countries to respond by rapidly manufacturing the adapted vaccines for multiple rounds of reimmunisation with the idea of achieving a national control while rest of the world struggles to achieve a similar parity following repeated onslaughts by the mutant waves and the current available vaccines not being sufficient in mounting an effective response against these circulating variants. This will lead to frequent outbreaks even in the high income countries and to achieve some degree of normality will not be possible. Therefore, unless a global strategy is adapted for all countries working in tandem to scale up preventive healthcare efforts, this will remain a constant threat to re-emerge again even in places where it been satisfactorily contained. A panel of global experts, like that of the interim COVID-19 working group of the International Science Council (ISC) in conjunction with the WHO and the UN should deal with this pandemic in a robust fashion with all the options it has at its disposal in a global manner, if we were to contain this virus and its variant in good time. This would also carry a message of optimism to all countries fighting this deadly virus.

Michael Anthony Windey: A Messiah of Ruralisation Movement in India

On Birth Centenary of Jesuit Father Michael Anthony Windey



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Jesuit Father Professor Dr. Phil. Dr. Theol. Michael A. Windey was born on 28th April 1921 in Buggenhout (Belgium) in a family of 12 brothers and sisters (several became priests and nuns, one brother was a bishop). He went into "Mahasamadi" on 20th September 2009 in Heverlee (Belgium) at the age of 88. Michael Windey studied 2 semesters on philosophy in Paris with Professor Henri Bergson (1859 - 1941), Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1927. Windey later wrote his dissertation on Bergson's ideas of "Élan Vital". In Louvain (Belgium), Michael Windey wrote his theological dissertation on "Jesus Christ and the Way to Liberation". Michael Windey's father was English, his mother German. Michael Windey had a full command of 9 European and 6 Indian languages. In 1946 he left Southampton for Mother India and spent more than two decades as a university professor at Ranchi. He got in close touch with Mahatma Gandhi who encouraged Michael Windey to become concerned for the villagers in India. All Indian leaders from Nehru onwards appreciated Windey's outstanding activities. Windey was closely connected with H.H. The XIV Dalai Lama, Dom Bede Griffiths, Mother Teresa, Raimon Panikkar. He knew Henri Le Saux (Abhishiktananda) and Jules Monchanin very well. The life of

Father Michael Anthony Windey SJ is a long, tiring and fascinating journey, and India has blown with its wind in a powerful way on the sails of its journey, since the distant January of 1946. During this period Father Windey founded the well-known St. Xavier Institute in Ranchi, Bihar, and was the first Director. He was also, at that time, Director of schools, promoter of the Marian Congregations and of important Catholic Organizations in the same state. It was during the Bihar period, until 1967, that he came into contact with Jayaprakash Narayan, the famous Indian social worker and thinker, and worked in collaboration with him. An ante litteram environmentalist, he applied Gandhian economic law that "there are enough resources in the world for everyone's needs but not for the greed of some". Then the necessary must be manufactured and equally distributed, drawing on nature in a non-predatory way, with a lot of respect for animals and plants, and distributing the work among all. Self-sufficiency, village and even more national, was an absolute principle. Production was to take place in a cooperative form, in small village units linked together. Of course, basic industries, and services like railways and post offices, required a national dimension; and then, wrote Kumarappa, "both the government produces, albeit with risks of waste, because the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few is an even greater waste". A cyclone of immense proportions in Guntur, Andhra

Pradesh, brought him to the state of the southeast. In May 1969, Father Windey gave up his "career" as university scholar and founded the "Christian Relief Organization" in Guntur, later transformed into "Village Reconstruction Organization", his goal is to help rebuild village communities. The name recalls Gandhi's Village Reconstruction Program: Father Windey had a brief encounter with the Mahatma and was greatly influenced by it. In India he is recognized as one of Gandhi's successors. Popularly known in India as VRO, the base of the Organization has remained Guntur, even though its Reconstruction operations of rural entities have developed in the States of Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir and in the Union Territory of Pondicherry. In Odisha, the organisations presence is remarkably felt in Kendrapara, Jajpur, Bhadrakh, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Puri, Kandhamal, Rayagada and Kalahandi districts. The motto of the VRO is: "better villages for a better world" and its volunteers bring standards of progress for the life of small communities, create teaching centers where village children can learn a job, create schools, health centers in remote areas where if there were no VRO, there would be very few opportunities for the inhabitants. Father Michael Windey devised innovative systems for the management of schools and hospitals, still applied today by the VRO in its health, education and training programs, so as to ensure

sustainable development. Thanks to the work of volunteers from all over the world and religious confession, Father Windey's activity continues. Over the past thirty years, he has received numerous awards, including the Gandhi Prize. In over 38 years he realized it with a team of permanently 400 volunteers over 1,500 village projects all over the country. His capacity to work and to organize was unique. He could easily remember the names of several thousand villages which he physically visited and volunteers he worked with. The Village Reconstruction Organization is made up of volunteers and over time it has received several acknowledgments of merit: already in 1972, the municipality of Guntur declared VRO to be "the best non-governmental organization"; in 1982 the VRO was reported by Gandhian groups as the "best realization of Gandhi's Village dream, the rural Indian dream". In 1992 Prof. Michael Windey was awarded with the International Man of the Year Award by the International Biographical Center in Cambridge, England. In March 2001, the Xavier Labor Relations Institute of Jamshedpur awarded the prize to the VRO for the Promotion of Industrial and Social Peace. The "International Nuclear Disarmament Forum" (co-founded by Yehudi Menuhin) in collaboration with more than 40 world leaders from the East and West gave Father Windey the "Global Dialogue Peace Award" in Zug in Switzerland. In the year 2005, he was awarded with "Knight of the Order of Leopold Award", the highest civilian award of Belgium.

Tele-consultation Service 'e-Sanjeevani' amid COVID in Sundargarh District

(A.O. Bureau)
Sundargarh, Apr 21: Amid COVID19, patients need not visit higher health facilities to consult with specialist doctors. They can avail specialist advice through 'e-Sanjeevani' tele-consultation service by visiting their nearest Health & Wellness Centres (HWC). In Sundargarh district, people are largely benefiting from this programme. 'e-Sanjeevani' has been launched by the National Health Mission in view of the COVID pandemic. At present, patients are being offered 3 day counsel per week on General Medicine (Monday), Paediatrics (Wednesday) and Gynaecology (Friday) through 'e-Sanjeevani'. For a variety of ailments, patients often have to go to higher health facilities to seek advice of senior



and specialist doctors. So looking at the risk of COVID infection, the 'e-Sanjeevani' tele-consultation service has now come to the rescue. The patients are advised to visit to a nearby Health and Wellness Centre where the officials can connect with the specialists at leading government hospitals in the district using the tele-consultation facilities available. The ser-

vice is operational at sub-hubs like District Headquarter Hospital (DHH, Sundargarh), Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH), Rourkela Additional District Urban Health Center (ADUPHC) along with Kuarmunda, Bargaon, Sargipali, Majhapada, Birkera, Mangapur and Kutra Community Health Centre (CHC). These sub-hubs are connected

to the nearest Health and Wellness Centres via internet. The patients who visit to the HWCs are facilitated to consult directly with specialist doctors available at the higher health institutions. The Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences & Research (VIMSAR) in Burla has been taken as the main hub for tele-consulting services in the region. Therefore, where nec-

essary, patients of Sundargarh district also get the opportunity to seek medical advice of experts at VIMSAR using 'e-Sanjeevani' available at the HWC. "Due to 'e-Sanjeevani', the CHCs & District HQ Hospital, Sundargarh have been able to control the crowds. Patients get benefit of top medical advice through this digital facility. Patients also get free medicine under Niramaya", said Dr. Purna Chandra Sahu, DMO and Medical Superintendent of the DHH Sundargarh. Computers, webcams, microphones, speakers and printers have been provided to various health centres in the district to strengthen 'e-Sanjeevani' service. The local doctor has been assigned as the nodal officer for the tele-consultation service.

Central University of Odisha felicitates Comptroller and Auditor General of India



(A.O. Bureau)
Koraput, Apr 21: The Central University of Odisha felicitated Shri Girish Chandra Murmu the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and former first Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir

at his Office in New Delhi on 13 April 2021. On behalf of Prof. I. Ramabrahmam, the Vice-Chancellor of the Central University of Odisha, Er. Padmalochan Swain and Shri Jitendra Panda visited the Office of CAG and fe-

licitated him. During the visit, they highlighted various development activities of the University. The CAG, while appreciating the academic endeavors of the University, assured all-round support to the development of the University.

Due to Corona epidemic primary schools became mahua warehouse



(A.O. Bureau)
Malkangiri, Apr 21: Malkangiri District Padia Block Kaldapalli Panchayat Kurti Primary school has become Mahua Warehouse. However, the school has been found to have bags of mahua in various rooms. Some people have even been seen doing mahua business on school grounds. The school has been closed for more than a year due to corona epidemic. The condition of the school is deplorable as no teachers come to the school. Businesses man's

have turned the school into a mahua warehouse, taking advantage of the fact that the school is closed for Corona and no teachers are coming. On the other hand, there is a general discussion that the rooms will be destroyed in the coming days as the mahus packed bags are stored. On this issue when asked to Padia Block Education Officer Chittaranjan Padhi he said it would be investigated. Locals have demanded an immediate investigation and action against the school authorities.

Another worker was seriously injured in a road accident at Shyam Metallis factory



(A.O. Bureau)
Rengali, Apr 21: Another worker was seriously injured in a road accident at Shyam Metallis factory in Pandloi in Rengali block of Sambalpur district due to security concerns. Although there are policy-related accidents due to company security breaches, there are

frequent accidents due to administrative negligence. At around 10.30am on Tuesday (20/04), an employee named Budhu Oram was cutting a SC scarp with a gas cutter on the front side of SMS 2. Budhu Oram's entire body was burnt to death with a neck fire while the scarp was being cut. He

was rushed to SCB Medical College, Cuttack, where he was in critical condition. Om Namay Shivhai, who works under Budhu Shyam Metallis, works for a contractor. The use of chest girders, face slips and leather globes when using gas cutters due to security breaches saw Budhu's body wounds as he did not wear any safety equipment, resulting in accidents and loss of life and property due to such safety negligence. Has become the subject of. Meanwhile, the company authorities did not report the incident to Rengali police station in writing until two days after the incident.

Surprise check of covid related medicines at Rayagada

(A.O. Bureau)
Rayagada, Apr 21: Today i.e. on 21.4.2021, the joint squad of Police, Revenue and Drugs department conducted surprise check of Medicine Stores, Stockists in Rayagada Town area as well as Oxygen Filling Center at Sirikona, Rayagada against illegal hoarding and black marketing of Covid related medicines and Oxygen stock. Stock positions with physical stock of Medicines and Oxygen cylinders were properly



checked. Owners of those establishments

have been properly cautioned regarding the pe-

nal actions against hoarding and black mar-

keting of any such item. Sri Ramprasad Sahu, Addl. SP, Sri Nihar Ranjan Pradhan, UC Rayagada PS, Addl Tahasildar Sri Sunil Khora, Drug Inspector Sri Priya Ranjan Naik and their staff were the members of the Squad. Such type of surprise checks will continue regularly in the district to detect and take legal actions against hoarding and black marketing of Covid related medicines and Oxygen cylinders.

Bauxite mine workers end protest after 83 days



(A.O. Bureau)
Koraput, Apr 21: The association consists of workers engaged in different capacities at Kodingamali bauxite mines near Laxmipur in Koraput. After 83 days of staging dharna in front of Collector's office demanding proper wages, workers of Kodingamali bauxite mines near Laxmipur called off their protest on Tuesday. Disappointed with the lackadaisical attitude of Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) and Mythri Infra Ltd, members of Kodingamali Mine Workers Association submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik through Collector Mohd Abdaal Akhtar.

The association consists of workers engaged in different capacities at Kodingamali bauxite mines near Laxmipur in Koraput. Association leader Raju Kuldip alleged that since the day workers asked for minimum wage and welfare as per mining rules and act and started unionising workers to press their demands, the company abruptly issued an unsigned transfer notice to 34 workers to a uranium mining unit of the company in Jharkhand. Furthermore, the company allegedly deleted their names from the attendance punching machine and disallowed them to work from December 29, 2020.

Hundreds of migrants are returning through Motu to own, districts administration and police monitoring

(A.O. Bureau)
MalKangiri, Apr 21: Hundreds of migrants enter Malkangiri every day through the motu border with Andhra Pradesh in Malkangiri district. Police and the administration are investigating and keeping eye on them Corona. As the second wave unfolded, it engulfed the entire country. Hundreds of migrants enter Malkangiri every day through the border with Andhra Pradesh in Malkangiri district. Hundreds of migrants, including those from Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana, have been declared red zones by the central government. However, all border areas adjacent to Malkangiri district have been sealed off and are being closely monitored by the police and the administration. A checkpoint has been set up there as migrant Oriyas working in various states are coming along the entire road in Malkangiri district. It is



being checked there 24 hours a day. Every vehicle and people are being investigated. There is a medical team, teachers from the administration for registration, block administration, tehsil administration, transport department staff are on duty day and night. Hundreds of migrants arrive at the border every morning in various motor vehicles. Registering your name here is going to your own area. However, according to government regulations, those who have received two vaccines are not screened. Similarly, those who took the RTPCR test 72 hours ago will not be deterred. Immigrants are reportedly returning to those districts. As a result,

they are expected to test their corona there. However, the investigation is underway under the direct supervision of the Motu Tahsildar Sashank Mishra. Similarly infusion Motu, police found the recommendation to verify bordering Motu night. The administration has provided shelter for migrants, drinking water, and more. As the number of migrants is likely to increase in the coming days, the administration has already begun to make all arrangements for their convenience throughout. Despite the low number of coronavirus infections in the district, everyone's cooperation is needed to ensure that the security system is in place.

Vanity vans of Ranveer, Alia's movies in service of Mumbai police on Covid duty



New Delhi, Apr 21: With film shoots in Mumbai on a standstill owing to the curfew in the city, a vanity van owner has diverted his vans in the service of Mumbai Police. In an attempt to flatten the curve, the Maharashtra government has imposed a curfew which

has brought movie shoots to a standstill. With his vehicles parked with no use, vanity van owner Ketan Rawal has diverted his vans for the use of Mumbai police on Covid-19 duty. It has been reported that half a dozen vanity vans are currently in service of the police on the fore-

front. These include the vans used on the sets of Ranveer Singh's Cirkus, Alia Bhatt's Gangubai Kathiawadi and Akshay Kumar's Raksha Bandhan. Speaking to a leading daily, Ketan said, "I have diverted vans from Rohit Shetty's Cirkus, Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Gangubai

Kathiawadi, and Anand L Rai's Raksha Bandhan in service of the Mumbai police." He added, "I have a large number of vanity vans in service of the Mumbai police, they are the frontline workers; last year we offered it to the women officials who are field duty and needed to

rest, use washrooms while doing their duties and of course change before going home." He is also providing rations and other help to theatre artists who have been out of work due to the pandemic. Maharashtra is among the worst-affected states in the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. On Tuesday, the state registered 62,097 positive cases. There were 519 related fatalities, as the death toll reached 61,343. The state's infection tally stood at 3,960,359. Mumbai had reported 7,192 new Covid-19 cases and 34 related deaths. A few celebrities have come forward to urge fans to stay at home and share compiled resources lists to help those in need. These include Priyanka Chopra, Sonam Kapoor and Shraddha Kapoor.

Chiranjeevi announces free Covid-19 vaccination to cine workers, journalists

Chennai, Apr 21: Telugu actor Chiranjeevi posted a video, requesting cine workers and journalists associated with Telugu film industry to get vaccinated, as part of the Corona Crisis Charity he leads. Actor Chiranjeevi led Corona Crisis Charity (CCC) in association with Apollo 247 will provide free Covid-19 vaccines to cinema workers and journalists in Hyderabad. Chiranjeevi has urged people to enroll in their respective associations to get vaccinated for free. Last year, several Telugu celebrities came forward to donate money to Corona Crisis Charity, which was set up by Chiranjeevi to help daily wage workers of Telugu industry. In a video shared on Twitter, Chiranjeevi announced that free vaccine drive will commence from April 22. He urged cin-

ema workers and journalists above the age of 45 to come forward and get vaccinated and also bring their spouses if they are eligible. The vaccine drive will go on for a month. Last year, Telugu actors such as Varun Tej, Ravi Teja, Vishwak Sen, Sai

?10 lakh and Rs. 5 lakh, respectively. Actor Chiranjeevi, who led from the front on behalf of Telugu film industry to fight against coronavirus pandemic, donated ?1 crore as relief fund. "The lockdown situation while mandatory to deal with



Dharam Tej and Sharwanand came forward to donate funds towards Corona Crisis Charity. While Varun Tej and Ravi Teja donated ?20 lakh each, Sharwanand chipped in with ?15 lakh while Sai Dharam Tej and Vishwak Sen donated

the coronavirus, also adversely impacts the lives of daily wage workers and lower income groups in the country including Telugu film industry. Keeping this in mind, I am donating ?1 crore for providing relief to the film workers," Chiranjeevi had tweeted.

Vijay Deverakonda, Rashmika Mandanna reunite for new television commercial

New Delhi, Apr 21: Actors Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna, who've worked together in films such as Geetha Govindam and Dear Comrade, have come together again for the third time for a television commercial for a popular soap brand. On Tuesday, a clip from

seen presenting what appears to be a soap to Rashmika. Vijay is currently busy with the shoot of upcoming Telugu-Hindi bilingual film, Liger, which marks the Telugu debut of Ananya Panday. The film is being directed by Puri Jagannadh. In Liger, it is believed that Vijay plays a fighter with

"The film will be shot simultaneously in Telugu and Hindi, and will be dubbed into other regional languages as well. Besides Telugu, I am planning to dub my lines in Hindi as well," Vijay had said. Karan Johar and Apoorva Mehta will distribute the film in Hindi. Apparently, the script of Fighter was originally pitched to Jr NTR a few years. For reasons unknown, the project never took off and both of them got busy with their respective commitments. Rashmika, on the other hand, was recently seen in Tamil film, Sulthan. It marked her debut in Tamil industry. She's currently shooting for her upcoming Hindi project Goodbye with filmmaker Vikas Bahl. This film also stars Amitabh Bachchan in a crucial role.

When Aamir Khan said he was wary of working with Kajol, thought she was 'aggressive, brash and harsh'

New Delhi, Apr 21: Aamir Khan and Kajol, who shared the screen space in several films including 2006 starrer Fanaa, spoke about their family in a throwback video. In the video, while Kajol called herself Nysa's favourite actor, Aamir opened up on his bond with his first wife Reena Dutta. The video begins with Aamir talking about Kajol's 'brash and harsh' personality. He spoke about how he was apprehensive of working with the actor. "I always liked your work. On a certain level, I was looking forward to this film. I was creatively sure that you are right for the film," adding that to an outsider, Kajol's personality can appear 'aggressive, brash and harsh'. He said it is only after working with her that he realised that it is a



part of her nature but she doesn't mean to hurt or throw attitude. He jokingly added that he sure was disappointed with her sense of humour. When Aamir asked Kajol about her favourite actress, the actor recalled how she is the favourite actress for her daughter Nysa. "She calls me Cartoon Network. I am the best actress in the world for her," Kajol said and later, admitted of being a fan

of Sridevi. "I met her once and told her that she should really open an acting school because if you watch her, it is amazing how she knows everything about her job," Kajol said adding that Sridevi is one such actor who knows every details of being in front of the camera. When Aamir asked if today's actors don't have it, Kajol replied that many, including herself, don't pay attention to details. "It

takes a long time to get them to get to a certain finesse," she replied. The 46-year-old spoke about how being married changed her perspective on life, "I feel marriage has in one way changed me. I really saw the world in black and white but now, I see the grey areas, which I didn't before. I got married at 24. I was already in the industry." Aamir, who got married at the age of 21, also spoke

about his relationship with ex-wife Reena Dutta. "I don't have regrets about my life at all. Though Reena and I ended in a divorce, I am grateful for the time I spent with her. I value it a lot. Life comes with so many different things, with time, I have learned not to be judgemental and ease out a bit. I have learned to observe," the actor expressed. In the video, Aamir also expressed his wish to direct a film. Fanaa, which released in 2006, was directed by Kunal Kohli. The film marked Kajol's comeback to films after taking a sabbatical in 2001. At present, Kajol was last seen in Tribhanga, a Netflix film which released earlier this year. Aamir, on the other hand, is awaiting the release of Laal Singh Chaddha, a Hindi remake of Forrest Gump.

Samantha calls out media: 'Since when did actors' opinions matter so much'

Chennai, Apr 21: Actor Samantha Akkineni took a dig at media who criticise actors for not voicing their opinion on important issues. Taking to Instagram, she shared a reel as she took part in the 'What did she say' challenge. The text on video read, "Them: We need your opinion on 'this important topic'. Me: Wondering since when did actors' opinions matter soooooo much." The caption with her post read, "We're entertainers, Not fact-checkers. Several celebs and her fans reacted to her post and supported her on the matter. Yami Gautam wrote 'spot on', Pragyaa Jaiswal said 'haha..love it !!!' Vimala Raman commented, 'Love it haha' on the post. Recently, the actor had praised fellow

actor Kangana Ranaut after the trailer release of Thalaivi and called her the 'bravest' actor of our generation'. Taking to Twitter, Samantha wrote: "#Thalaivi Trailer is outstanding @KanganaTeam You are the bravest, most daring and indisputably the most talented actress of our generation #Vijay sir goosebumps stuff just goosebumps stuff. Can't wait to witness this magic in the theatre." Even after watching Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi in 2019, Samantha had said, "It has been two days and I can't get her performance out of my mind. The only explanation I can give myself is that she must have been 'possessed' it couldn't have been an act it just couldn't. Please con-

gratulate her and tell her she has our greatest support." Samantha will be seen in Shaakuntalam, a mythological drama film, written and directed by Gunasekhar and produced by Neelima Guna and Dil Raju. She will mark her digital debut with the second season of the popular

lar Hindi series The Family Man. She is the wife of

actor Naga Chaitanya and the pair got married in Goa in October 2017.



Middle age people at higher dementia risk if sleeping less than 6 hours: Study

New Delhi, Apr 21: Scientists said that while the research, which was based on data from a long-running survey, could not prove cause and effect, it did draw a link between sleep and dementia as people age. The study, published Tuesday in the journal Nature Communications, showed a higher risk of dementia in those sleeping six or fewer hours per night at the ages of 50 or 60, compared to those who have a "normal" seven hours in bed. There was also a 30 percent increased dementia risk in those with consistently short sleeping patterns from the age of 50 to 70, irrespective of cardiometabolic or mental health issues, which are known risk factors

for dementia. The study authors from the French national health-research institute INSERM analysed data from a long term study by University College London, which has followed the health of 7,959 British individuals since 1985. Participants self-reported their sleep duration, while about 3,900 of them also wore watch devices overnight to confirm their estimates. Nearly ten million new cases of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, are counted each

year worldwide, according to the World Health Organization, and disrupted sleep is a common symptom. But a growing body of research suggests sleep patterns before the onset of dementia could also contribute to the development of the disease. Time spent sleeping is linked to dementia risk in older adults -- 65 years and older -- but it is unclear whether this association is also true for younger age groups, according to the authors.



CSK post 220/3 against KKR



Mumbai, Apr 21: Sent into bat, Chennai Super Kings posted 220 for three against Kolkata Knight Riders in their IPL game here on Wednesday. Faf du Plessis (95 not out) and Ruturaj Gaikwad (64) knocked the daylight out of KKR bowlers, adding 115 for the opening wicket to lay the foundation. After Gaikwad was back in the hut, du Plessis continued

his rampage and alongwith Moonen Ali (25) and MS Dhoni (17) took CSK past the 200-run mark. For KKR, Varun Chakravarthy (1/27), Sunile Narine (1/34) and Andre Russell (1/27) took one wicket each. Brief Score: Chennai Super Kings: 220 for 3 in 20 overs (Faf du Plessis 95 not out, Ruturaj Gaikwad 64; Varun Chakravarthy 1/27).

KL Rahul opts to bat against Sunrisers Hyderabad



Chennai, Apr 21: Punjab Kings skipper KL Rahul won the toss and elected to bat against Sunrisers Hyderabad in their Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday. Punjab Kings have replaced Riley

Meredith, Jhye Richardson and Jalaj Saxena with Fabian Allen, Moises Henriques and Murugan Ashwin. Sunrisers have also made three changes with Kane Williamson, Kedar Jadhav, Siddarth Kaul

coming in for Manish Pandey, Mujeeb-ur-Rehman and Abdul Samad. Teams: Punjab Kings: KL Rahul (c), Mayank Agarwal, Chris Gayle, Moises Henriques, Nicholas Pooran, Deepak Hooda, Shahrukh Khan, Fabian Allen, Murugan Ashwin, Mohammed Shami, Arshdeep Singh.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: David Warner (c), Jonny Bairstow, Kane Williamson, Virat Singh, Vijay Shankar, Abhishek Sharma, Kedar Jadhav, Rashid Khan, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Khaleel Ahmed, Siddarth Kaul.

Khaleel, Bairstow shine as SRH outclass Punjab Kings by nine wickets

Chennai, Apr 21: Fast bowler Khaleel Ahmed led an impressive bowling effort before Jonny Bairstow smashed an unbeaten fifty as Sunrisers Hyderabad snapped their three-match losing streak with a convincing nine-wicket win over Punjab Kings in an IPL game here on Wednesday. Asked to bowl first, Sunrisers Hyderabad's pace-spin duo of Khaleel (3/21) and Abhishek Sharma (2/24) did bulk of the damage to bundle out Punjab Kings for a below-par 120 in 19.4 overs. Senior pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/16), star Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan (1/17) and Siddarth Kaul (1/27) also picked up a wicket each as Punjab never gained momentum. Chasing the total, SRH openers Jonny Bairstow (63) and David Warner (37) pummelled Punjab into submission, adding 73 runs off 60 balls to set the foundation. Bairstow and Kane Williamson (16) then knocked off

the remaining runs as SRH romped home with 8 balls to spare. Bairstow and Warner smashed five boundaries and two sixes during their 50-run stand in the powerplay, while Punjab had managed nine fours and two maximums in their entire innings. Warner picked up the first boundary when he sent Mohammed Shami across point in the third ball of the innings. Bairstow then welcomed Fabian Allen with a four and a six in the next over. A low full toss by Shami was then sent across the mid-wicket by Bairstow before Warner hit the Indian through backward point. Bairstow also pulled Moises Henriques over long leg, while Warner swatted Arshdeep Singh over the backward square leg. Warner sent Deepak Hooda sailing over extra cover for a six but in the next over he holed out to Mayank off Allen, who bowled a wicket maiden, as SRH were 73 for 1. Bairstow found an able ally in

Williamson, who was playing his first match of the season, as they added an unbeaten 48 runs to help SRH log their first win of the season. Earlier, Shahrukh Khan (22) and Mayank Agarwal (22) were the top scorers for Punjab Kings, who came into the match after two losses. In an innings

Chidambaram Stadium, Punjab lost their in-form skipper KL Rahul (4) early on. Agarwal and Chris Gayle (15) stitched 24-run partnership. However, at the end of the seventh over, Khaleel got rid of the Indian with Rashid making no mistakes this time at midwicket. West Indian Nicholas Pooran

mark as wickets continued to tumble at regular intervals. Deepak Hooda (13) and Australian all-rounder Moises Henriques (14) got starts but were unable to capitalise on them. Spin all-rounder Fabian Allen (6) also struggled on his debut. Local star Khan tried to inject some hope into



when clearing the boundary seemed to be a tall task, Khan managed two sixes, while Agarwal, who was dropped on 0 in the very first over by Rashid, hit two fours. Opting to bat in their first game at MA

(0) was out for a diamond duck as Sunrisers skipper David Warner effected his run out in the eighth over. Gayle followed his compatriot in the next over as he was adjudged leg before. Punjab was reeling at 53 for 4 at the halfway

the Punjab camp but a slower ball by Khaleel ended his cameo. Murugan Ashwin (9) hit a boundary but Kaul accounted for the spinner in the last over which was followed by the dismissal of Shami (3), who was run out.

Fans confront relegated Schalke players, eggs thrown

New Delhi, Apr 21: Schalke has condemned the fans who it says endangered players' safety in a confrontation hours after the team was relegated from the Bundesliga. Schalke has condemned the fans who police said pelted players with eggs hours after the team was relegated from the Bundesliga. Fan groups confronted the

players in the early hours of Wednesday morning when the team returned from its 1-0 away loss at Bielefeld which confirmed Schalke would drop out of German soccer's top tier for the first time in 30 years. "During this encounter, so far unidentified individual people from the crowd crossed lines which FC Schalke 04



considers non-negotiable," the club said. Schalke added that it understood the anger but "the club will never accept the physical welfare of its players and staff being endangered. That is exactly what happened last night due to the actions of individuals." Police in Schalke's home city of Gelsenkirchen said up to

600 people, some with pyrotechnics, gathered at the club's stadium to await the team's return. When the team left the bus, "the players had eggs thrown at them and were verbally attacked." Police said they intervened to stop the incident escalating further. There was no immediate report of arrests but police are still investigating.

Super League collapses after six English clubs withdraw

Manchester, Apr 21: The Super League collapsed before a ball was kicked in the European breakaway competition after being abandoned by the six English clubs, leaving the Spanish and Italian participants stranded. Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester United, Manchester City and Tottenham throughout Tuesday evening deserted the proposal to launch a largely-closed midweek competition amid an escalating backlash from their supporters and warnings from the British government that legislation could be introduced to thwart it. The Super League project was overseen by Real Madrid President Florentino Perez, who also signed up Barcelona and Atlético Madrid in Spain, and Juventus, AC Milan and Inter Milan from Italy. The rival for the UEFA-run Champions League became unviable without the six clubs from the world's richest league. The remaining fledgling Super League organization was defiant, blaming "pres-



sure" being applied for forcing out the English clubs and insisting the proposal complied with the law and could yet be revived in some form. "Given the current circumstances," the Super League said in a statement, "we shall reconsider the most appropriate steps to reshape the project, always having in mind our goals of offering fans the best experience possible while enhancing solidarity payments for the entire football community." The English clubs heeded the appeals from UEFA President Aleksander

Ceferin to remain part of the Champions League, which has a qualification criteria based on a team's performance in the domestic league. "I said yesterday that it is admirable to admit a mistake and these clubs made a big mistake," he said. "But they are back in the fold now and I know they have a lot to offer not just to our competitions but to the whole of the European game. "The important thing now is that we move on, rebuild the unity that the game enjoyed before this and move forward together." As it became clear Chelsea and



City were quitting the Super League on Tuesday evening, Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson and his teammates posted a message advocating staying within the open European competitions. Liverpool, which is owned by the Boston Red Sox investment group, eventually issued a statement thanking those inside and outside the club for "valuable contributions" before making the decision to stick within existing structures. Manchester United defender Luke Shaw also went against his club by tweeting his backing of

the existing Champions League minutes before his club's about-turn. "We have listened carefully to the reaction from our fans, the UK government and other key stakeholders," said the club owned by the American Glazer family and listed on the New York Stock Exchange. "We remain committed to working with others across the football community to come up with sustainable solutions to the long-term challenges facing the game." Just as the Glazers also own the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Stan Kroenke has the NFL's

Los Angeles Rams in his portfolio along with Arsenal. It is the closed models of American sports that were believed to be so appealing to the U.S. owners by offering financial certainty. But they were resisted by fans of English clubs. "It was never our intention to cause such distress, however, when the invitation to join the Super League came, while knowing there were no guarantees, we did not want to be left behind to ensure we protected Arsenal and its future," the north London club said. "As a result of listening to you and the wider football community over recent days we are withdrawing from the proposed Super League. We made a mistake, and we apologize for it. "We know it will take time to restore your faith in what we are trying to achieve here at Arsenal but let us be clear that the decision to be part of the Super League was driven by our desire to protect Arsenal, the club you love, and to support the game you love through greater solidarity and financial stability."

AC Milan indicate withdrawal from breakaway Super League

New Delhi, Apr 21: AC Milan followed city rivals Inter on Wednesday and indicated their withdrawal from collapsing plans for a breakaway European Super League. "The voices and the concerns of fans around the world have clearly been expressed about the Super League, and AC Milan must be sensitive to the voice of those who love this wonderful sport," the Serie A club said in a statement. "We will continue to work hard to deliver a sustainable model for football." Inter said

League clubs involved withdrew on Tuesday. Spain's Atletico Madrid have also pulled out, leaving Barcelona and Real Madrid still standing. Juventus boss Andrea Agnelli told Reuters on Wednesday that the Super League, whose founding members would not have been exposed to relegation, could no longer proceed. The clubs came under massive pressure from inside the sport and society at large, with politicians and even British royals adding their voices in oppo-



earlier that they were no longer part of the project. Milan were one of three Italian clubs among 12 founding members announced on Sunday but the plan fell apart when the six English Premier

sition. AC Milan chief executive Ivan Gazidis had said on Tuesday that the proposed breakaway, a rival to the UEFA Champions League, would be good for the club and for whole of football.

Tata Steel and HSBC successfully execute a blockchain enabled, paperless trade transaction - a global first for the steel industry

(A.O. Bureau)
Mumbai, Apr 21: Tata Steel and HSBC successfully execute a blockchain enabled, paperless trade transaction - a global first for the steel industry. The live trade finance transaction involved the export of steel by Tata Steel, India to Universal Tube & Plastic Industries, UAE. The end-to-end paperless trade transaction, executed over the Contour platform was made possible by a unique collaboration pivoted by Tata Steel across the spectrum over the Contour and essDOCS platforms. The Letter of Credit (LC) was issued by HSBC UAE for Universal Tube & Plastic Industries, UAE (importer) with HSBC India as the advising and negotiating bank for Tata Steel, India (exporter). This transaction validates the commercial and operational viability of blockchain as an alternative to conventional exchanges for paper-based documentation. Tata Steel has also sig-

nalled its intent to explore similar opportunities in other geographies in future. Peeyush Gupta, VP (Steel Marketing & Sales), Tata Steel, said: "We continuously leverage our in-house potential and that of the external ecosystems through carefully curated partnerships to drive innovation. Adoption of this platform is in line with our objective of agility and enabling a faceless yet trustworthy all-time interface to better customer experience. This unique initiative, executed in collaboration with HSBC, demonstrates our continued efforts to lead technology led disruptions by challenging the status quo and reimagining the global trade set-up." Commenting on the transaction, Hitendra Dave, Head-Global Banking & Markets, HSBC India, said "Having pioneered the deployment of Blockchain technology in trade finance, we are focused on enhancing its utilisation across a wider spectrum of trade finance transactions.



- As part of its vision to be a technology and innovation leader in the steel industry, Tata Steel pivots a unique end-to-end blockchain enabled digital trade finance
- The steel major signals intent to explore similar opportunities in other geographies

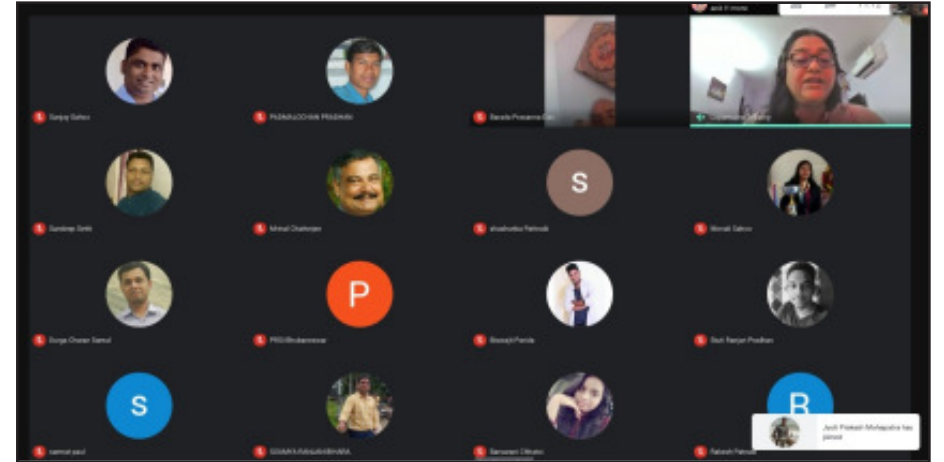
We're delighted to partner with Tata Steel in this landmark transaction for the steel industry. This transaction is a significant step towards the mass commercialisation and adoption of this technology and we look forward to its transformative impact on trade finance." How it works: Contour, which has been built on blockchain technology has enabled comprehensive digitisation of the end-to-end Letter of Credit transaction including the e-presentation of trade documents. Contour enables the underlying LC trade trans-

action to be fully digitised from the LC issuance to the presentation of documents. It also enables transaction parties to transfer, manage and present electronic Bills of Lading (eB/Ls) and supporting documents within its platform via the interface with essDOCS' CargoDocs platform. Benefits: With trade documents digitised, corporates can reduce the costs associated with handling paper-based documents, its reconciliation and streamline their processing flow. The use of blockchain technology

in trade finance enables comprehensive visibility for all involved parties and enhanced security. Importantly, it helps to significantly reduce the document negotiation and banking transaction cycle times from week(s) to a few days, thereby aiding unlocking of working capital for businesses. It also helps to increase the velocity of trade, particularly in situations where shipping routes are relatively short.

Removing the hurdles of close-proximity trade: UAE is India's third largest trade partner and increased economic collaboration between the two is expected to further drive up their bilateral trade. While the physical transfer of goods between India and UAE takes a relatively short time, the administrative paperwork can delay their delivery. Reduced transaction times will help boost the efficiency of trade in the India-UAE corridor that is characterised by many close-proximity shipping routes.

PRSI Bhubaneswar Chapter & IIMC Celebrate National Public Relations Day 2021



(A.O. Bureau)

Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: Bhubaneswar Chapter of Public Relations Society of India celebrated National Public Relations Day today with a webinar, in association with the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Dhenkanal. Communication for Development Specialist of UNICEF India Ms Lopamudra Tripathy, and Senior Public Relations Professional & Former Chief of Communications Rourkela Steel Plant Mr Ramendra Kumar deliberated on the topic on 'Public Relations for Public Awareness: Let's build a COVID Free World', which was the theme of this year. National President of PRSI Dr Ajit Pathak, Regional Director and Head of IIMC, Dhenkanal Prof Mrinal Chatterjee and Chairman of PRSI Bhubaneswar Chapter Mr Amar Jyoti Mohapatra also addressed in the webinar. COVID-19 has also posed varieties of communication challenges and Public Relations strategies

can effectively contribute to addressing the same, said the speakers. In addition to the Vaccine, awareness about the practice of the social vaccine is highly important for fighting the global pandemic. The social vaccine is about maintaining physical distancing, use of face masks, frequent hand washing, sanitising, and other COVID-19 appropriate behaviour. Communication Professionals need to work on sensitising people about the Social Vaccine, the speakers suggested. Students of IIMC, Dhenkanal and KIIT School of Mass Communication and members of PRSI Bhubaneswar Chapter participated in the programme. Senior Member of the Chapter Mr. Shashank Pattnaik presented the welcome address and Assistant Professor of IIMC, Dhenkanal Sambit Pal facilitated the question and answer session. Secretary of the Chapter Sanjay Kumar Sahoo coordinated the webinar.

Lemon Tree PREMIER Opens in Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar, Apr 21: An iconic 4 Star Hotel Lemon tree PREMIER has been inaugurated on virtual mode by Shri Naveen Patnaik, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha on 21st April 2021. Smt.

side of Fortune Tower) with its posh environs, this hotel is the ultimate in luxury, comfort and ambience. The Hotel is having - 1. Banquet area of 22,000 sqft on 6th Floor; 2. Swimming pool, Bar,



Shreemayee, Misha Hon'ble Chair Person (O.T.D.C), Shri. Sachin Ramachandra Yadav (I.A.S) Director Tourism & Culture Department., Smt. Susanta Kumar Rout (M.L.A. Bhubaneswar North), & Shri. Mahesh Iyre (Vice president, Operation, Lemon Tree) attended the function as valued Guests of Honour and were welcomed by its founder Mr. Rashmi Ranjan Routray, Mr. Hardhik Routray and Miss. Umang Routray., Located at Maitri vihar Road, Jayadev Vihar, Bhubaneswar (Back

2 restaurants (Thai & Chinese) & 5,000 sqft. of deck area on 7th Floor; 3. Spa & Gym on 8th Floor; 4. 9th to 12th floor guest area having 76 Deluxe rooms and suites designed to offer unparalleled hospitality and unmatched service and economy to its valued guests visiting this heritage city., and it will give an opportunity of employment to more than 150 skilled and unskilled youth of Odisha. We share the vision of our Hon'ble Chief Minister to make Bhubaneswar a city of dreams.

Vedanta Launches 'Saathi' Programme to Fuel the MSME Growth Story

(A.O. Bureau)
New Delhi, Apr 21: Vedanta Limited, India's leading producer of metals and oil & gas, announced the formal launch of its flagship offering for the Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSME) - the 'Vedanta Saathi' programme. Shri. Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, and Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Government of India, launched the programme today in the presence of Mr. Anil Agarwal, Executive Chairman - Vedanta Resources Ltd. With a significant MSME customer and supplier base, the company has been fostering the MSME ecosystem for over two decades through its expansive value-chain, supply-chain and social-developmental programmes. Vedanta's key offerings for MSMEs under the Saathi programme include: Channel financing at attractive rates and fast disbursement, in partnership with a host of leading banks, NBFCs and FinTech firms; Soon to be launched e-commerce solutions for an agile, easy and transparent way of buying from Vedanta's entire bouquet of high-quality value-added products, with doorstep delivery



- Announces key offerings in channel finance, e-commerce, technical upskilling, and market development to boost MSME ecosystem
- Seeks partnerships with MSMEs to set up downstream and ancillary manufacturing units near its plants

through micro-logistics partners; Avenues for technical upskilling with access to the company's wide community of research institutes, industry associations, in house and external global experts; Opportunities for MSMEs to set up downstream/ancillary manufacturing units near Vedanta's plants, with benefits like just-in-time delivery of raw material (hot metal supplies), low working capital and capex involvement. Single window for MSMEs to interact with Vedanta's Quality, Product Application, Engineering and Innovation teams through a dedicated web portal. Inaugurating the Vedanta Saathi programme, Shri. Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, and Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Government of India, said, "The pandemic has triggered a significant restructuring in the global supply chain, with countries and industries looking to diversify

their sources of supply and services. This offers our MSMEs a huge opportunity to tap into the new markets that are opening up, and get integrated into these global supply chains. The Government of India has already taken significant steps to help revive the MSME sector. Now, we must ensure that digital transformation takes place that enables them to capitalise on this current opportunity. In parallel, there needs to be a greater focus on capability building for MSMEs. This includes helping them with right inputs on design, manufacturing, maintaining product quality and scaling their business. Endeavours by private companies, like Vedanta's Saathi programme, which is aligned to these very objectives, can prove to be a gamechanger for our MSMEs." Mr. Anil Agarwal, Executive Chairman - Vedanta Resources Ltd., said, "In India, MSMEs and start-ups contribute only 7% to-

wards the GDP, whereas the global average stands at ~40%. There are immense opportunities for our MSME sector to scale up their businesses, with access to new-age technologies, opportunities to upskill, and quality raw materials. This will boost opportunities for rojgar, benefitting our talented youth and alleviating poverty. Vedanta is glad to partner with our MSMEs to accelerate this growth journey. Currently, more than 150 of the company's MSME customers have availed channel financing to access a credit limit of ~INR 1000 Cr by leading banks and NBFCs. Vedanta is committed to grow this limit by 5x for MSME customers, adding more banks and NBFCs to its fold. Besides helping MSMEs, this will also provide an attractive and low risk opportunity to banks and lending partners to strengthen their base with one of the strongest customer networks in India. Mr. Vishal Kothari, MD - Kothari Metals, added, "We have over two decades of wonderful relationship with Vedanta - a partnership that has enabled us to grow multi-fold, in a short span of time. Today, we are the largest manufacturer and exporter of zinc wires

from India, with global footprint in 30+ countries. We have benefited immensely from Vedanta's channel funding program. It was quickly disbursed and collateral free. All MSMEs should consider availing the same to fast-track the growth of their business." The company's upcoming e-commerce offerings shall offer significant advantages like transparent pricing and live pricing options, direct buy access to a diverse product portfolio with no bar on quantity, as well as easy delivery tracking and micro-logistics. Vedanta is keen to offer its community of industry associations, technical experts and research institutes for collaboration with MSMEs to engineer development of new products, product applications and new markets for those applications, helping upskill MSMEs to match global standards and eventually substitution of imports. The company is putting in place dedicated teams to cater to customers' requirements in quality, product application and engineering. Contributing towards the vision of making India a global manufacturing hub, Vedanta is looking to enable MSMEs to set up their ancillaries and downstream manufacturing facilities near its plants. Besides immensely benefiting

MSMEs in terms of just-in-time access to raw materials, low working capital and capex involvement, and proximity to Vedanta's Quality teams and expert network, it will also aid in significant employment generation locally and bring about a positive transformation in the quality of life of local communities. Vedanta Limited, a subsidiary of Vedanta Resources Limited, is one of the world's leading Oil & Gas and Metals company with significant operations in Oil & Gas, Zinc, Lead, Silver, Copper, Iron Ore, Steel, and Aluminium & Power across India, South Africa, Namibia, and Australia. For two decades, Vedanta has been contributing significantly to nation building. Governance and sustainable development are at the core of Vedanta's strategy, with a strong focus on health, safety, and environment. The company has been featured in Dow Jones Sustainability Index, and was conferred CII-ITC Sustainability Award, the FICCI CSR Award, Dun & Bradstreet Awards in Metals & Mining, and certified as a Great Place to Work. Vedanta Limited is listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange in India and has ADRs listed on the New York Stock Exchange.