

Over 9.1 million pilgrims visited Mahakumbh this year **2**

IFFCO To Fill Up Oxygen Cylinders For Hospitals Free Of Cost **3**

Hina Khan gives an emotional explanation to Twitter user on a query on her dad **6**

Now umpires Menon, Reiffel pull out of IPL **7**

## Centre issues fresh guidelines, asks states to clamp lockdown in high caseload areas

New Delhi, Apr 29: The Centre on Thursday asked states and Union Territories to immediately impose lockdowns in areas with high Covid spread. The government, however, did not make any mention of a national lockdown in its Covid guidelines for the month of May. Through an order issued on Thursday evening, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) asked the states and UTs to take "the necessary containment measures" in view of "the unprecedented surge in Covid cases across the country". The MHA asked the states and UTs to implement an "in-



tensive, local and focused containment framework, in specific district/cities/areas" identified based on the criteria that it had prescribed in its earlier communication to the states and UTs. In an advisory issued on April 25, the MHA had asked

the states and UTs to identify districts where "either the tests positivity had been more than 10% or more in the last one week; or, where bed occupancy was more than 60%." The ministry reiterated the need to identify such districts, stating that such

places which fulfilled "any of the above two criteria should be considered for taking intensive and local containment measures." The MHA also asked the states to consider the containment measures, as conveyed in an advisory issued by the Min-

istry of Health and Family Welfare on April 25 for immediate implementation based on an assessment of the situation. The guidelines for the pandemic come on a day when India registered a record 3,645 fatalities taking the total number of casualties from the pandemic to 2.04 lakh. On the same day, the covid cases recorded a rise of 3,79,257 cases, pushing the number of active cases past the 30 lakh mark and taking the overall Covid tally to 1,83,76,524. According to the most recent data released by the government, the overall recovery rate has dipped to 82.10%.

## Naveen Urges Modi To Waive Charges For Central Forces Deployment In Odisha



Bhubaneswar, Apr 29: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today urged Prime Minister Narendra to waive the charges towards deployment of Central Forces in Odisha. In a letter dated April 29, 2021, Patnaik requested PM Modi to direct the Ministry of Home Affairs to waive an amount of Rs 4561.23 crore of Odisha Government towards deployment charges of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) upto October 1, 2020. Earlier, the CM had written to the Centre on June 10, 2015, appealing to reconsider the decision of charging Odisha Government for deployment of Central Forces to combat Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in the State. "In response, the then Union Home Minister vide his D.O. letter No.27012/93/2014-PF-V, dated August 25, 2015 had intimated that there had

been no change in the extant policy of the Government as approved earlier by the Cabinet Committee on Security. As such, all States except the few Special Category States, viz., North-East, J&K and HP, are required to bear full charges for deployment of CAPFs in their states. Further, he intimated that due to overall constraint of resources, it was not feasible to exempt the State Government from payment of deployment charges," CM wrote today. It is worth to mention here that only in Odisha, but also the Naxal violence has spread to large areas of the country. As the Left Wing Extremism is a national issue and a grave internal security threat to the integrity of Nation, this major challenge has to be addressed by both Government of India and the State Government(s) jointly, Patnaik said in the let-

ter. He said that the Government of Odisha Government has been proactive in spending from its scanty resources in creating and deploying security forces even amidst its tight fiscal situation. "Around 15 battalions of State Police have been raised, specifically to combat Left Wing Extremism. 30,000 posts in police cadre have also been created including armed formations along with Specialised Training Centres and other logistics facilities for their deployment. Thus, considering the fact that Left Wing Extremism is an issue of joint responsibility and the State Government is doing its lots to combat the menace, Government of India may appreciate the difficulties of States like Odisha while charging for such deployment of Central Forces for dealing with Left Wing Extremism," the letter read.

## Over Rs 5.24 Cr Fine Collected In Odisha In April From People Not Wearing Mask



Bhubaneswar, Apr 29: It seems a significant number of people in Odisha have not been following the Covid protocols as understood from DGP Odisha, Abhay's disclosures on the amount of fine collected in the month of April for not wearing masks. In a presser, Abhay informed whopping Rs 5.24 cr-plus fine was collected from people in the State in April for not wearing mask. He further stated the police either fined or prosecuted around 1.5 lakh people during the month for violation of the mask wearing norm.

Moreover, the Odisha Police collected more than Rs 5.66 crore fine from people for not wearing masks and following the social distancing norms. Emphasising that the police department's main task is to check the crime, the DGP said persons with heinous crime records and cases pending against them are yet to be nabbed. But collection of fine for not following Covid protocols and mask wearing norms are being done only in the larger interest of the people of the State, he added. Around 350 shops or other institutes were sealed for violations of the Covid norms. While 418 persons were arrested for the Covid norm violations in April, as many as 18,000 vehicles were seized and more than 1,300 excise cases lodged in April, the DGP informed. "It has been observed that a substantial number of people are not following the Covid protocols. The number of Covid cases will decline in the State if people wear mask all the time," he added.

## Covid-19: SBI bank, 4 govt offices sealed in Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar, Apr 29: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation on Thursday sealed four government offices and State Bank of India at Sriya Square after detection of Covid-19 positive cases. While the bank has been sealed for four days, the government offices Bhubaneswar Sub Collector office, office of

the Tahasildar Bhubaneswar, office of the sub registrar Khandagiri and office of the dist sub-registrar, Bhubaneswar, located inside the Judicial Complex at Lewis Road have been sealed for seven days. Premises of these offices and the bank will be sanitized and entry into these offices has been barred.



## Delhi doesn't have vaccines for 18-44 age group: Health minister

New Delhi, Apr 29: Delhi has placed an order for 13.4 million doses of the vaccine, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had said on Monday. There is no clarity on how private

vaccination drive for those between the ages of 18 and 44 years on May 1, Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said on Thursday. "We don't have enough vaccines.

cines should be available for inoculation to begin. As soon as these things are made clear and we receive the vaccines, we will let you know in a couple of days or so. We haven't received the schedule from companies yet, which includes how many vials will reach on which dates," the minister said at a press briefing. Delhi has placed an order for 13.4 million doses of the vaccine, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had said on Monday. Adding to the confusion, private hospitals also have no clarity on how to procure vaccine doses on their own.



hospitals are to procure vaccine doses on their own. With no vaccine doses available, Delhi will not begin Phase 3 of the

We have requested for procurement of vaccines from the respective companies. Despite all preparations being made, vac-

## Uttarakhand suspends 'Char Dham Yatra' in wake of rising Covid-19 cases



New Delhi, Apr 29: The Uttarakhand government on Thursday suspended the 'Char Dham Yatra' in the wake of rising Covid-19 cases across the state. "Conducting the yatra amid

the raging pandemic is not possible. Only priests of the four temples at Badrinath, Kedarnath, Yamunotri and Gangotri will perform rituals and puja," Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat said

while announcing the decision. This comes after Uttarakhand recorded the highest single-day spike of 6,054 Covid-19 cases on Wednesday, taking the cumulative tally to 1,68,616, while 108

deaths pushed the toll to 2,417. There are 45,383 active Covid-19 cases in the state, while 1,17,221 have recovered, a state health department bulletin. Speaking about measures that are being taken to contain the pandemic, Rawat added, "We are conducting as many tests as possible. I would like to urge people to always wear masks whenever they step out." When asked regarding the death rate that has spiked in the last few weeks, he said, "We are surrounded by Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh from where critical patients

often travel to Uttarakhand for treatment. As such, it becomes difficult for us to save them. Hence, people should get tested as soon as they feel any symptoms so as to avoid severities." The country has also been witnessing an unprecedented rise in coronavirus cases, recording 3.79 lakh new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, its sharpest spike since the beginning pandemic. With this the total caseload rose to 1.8 crore. Meanwhile, with 3,645 deaths, the death toll surged to 2.04 lakh.

# Over 9.1 million pilgrims visited Mahakumbh this year

New Delhi, Apr 29: Mahakumbh started officially on April 1 when the state government issued the official notification for its beginning. The fair, which coincided with the worst surge in Covid-19 cases that has overwhelmed hospitals and triggered a shortage of medical oxygen, medicines, and beds, will end on Friday. A bulk of over 9.1 million pilgrims, who visited Haridwar for the Mahakumbh from January, arrived in the holy city this month even as the mega fair was curtailed from four months to one month and held in April due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Kumbh Mela Force data. Mahakumbh started officially on April 1 when the state government issued the official notification for its beginning. The mega fair, which coincided with the worst surge in Covid-19 cases that has overwhelmed hospitals and triggered a shortage of medical oxygen, medicines, and beds, will end on Friday. Mahakumbh, which is held once every 12 years, traditionally starts in January with the first festive bath on Makar Sankranti (January 14). It concludes towards the end of April with the last Shahi Snan (holy dip) in the Ganga



on Chaitra Poornima. Because of the Covid situation, the state government curtailed the Mahakumbh. According to the data of the Kumbh Mela Force, over 9.1 million pilgrims arrived in Haridwar to take the holy dip in Ganga from January 14 to April 27. The highest gathering of 3.5 million pilgrims was reported for Somvati Amavasya holy dip on April 12. On March 11, when Maha Shivratri was celebrated, 3.2 million pilgrims arrived for the Kumbh bath. As many as 1.3 million pilgrims gathered in Haridwar for another bath on Mesh Sankranti-Baisakhi (April 14). The number was devotees was comparatively lesser than for earlier Shahi Snans due to the spike in Covid-19 cases and strict implementation of norms. The

number of pilgrims plummeted to 25,000 for the last Shahi Snan on Chaitra Poornima (April 27) days after Swami Avdheshanand Giri, Mahamandleshwar (head) of Juna Akhara, the largest of the 13 sects of seers, was on April 17 forced to declare the conclusion of the Mahakumbh amid the surge in the cases. The announcement came after a phone call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who requested only symbolic participation in the fourth and last Shahi Snan on Tuesday. Bathing in the river during Mahakumbh is believed to cleanse devotees of sins and ensure salvation. The Union health ministry last week warned the gathering of devotees could send coronavirus cases surging. It said up to 40 people were being

tested positive for the disease daily around the site of the Mahakumbh. The ministry said coronavirus testing of 55,000 people daily in Haridwar was not enough. Kumbh Mela Force inspector general Sanjay Gunjyal said their major task was to ensure peaceful completion of the Mahakumbh. "...with the support of Akharas [sects], seers, local people and volunteers... [the force] ensured the fair was held smoothly with Covid-19...[protocols]," he said. Surjeet Singh Pawar, the superintendent of Kumbh police, said their personnel were Covid-19 tested prior to their departure after Kumbhmela duty. Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad, the apex body of all the Akharas, lauded the Kumbh Mela administration for the

successful completion of the fair. "Due to commitment by the government and dedication of the Kumbhmela administrative personnel despite the Covid scenario, the fair was held successfully. From Prime Minister Narendra Modi to chief minister Tirath Singh Rawat, mela officer Deepak Rawat, ...Sanjay Gunjyal... we thank all of them for hosting a successful Kumbh," said Shri Mahant Hari Giri Maharaj, Akhara Parishad general secretary. Four seers died of Covid-19 after participating in Mahakumbh. When the mega fair began on April 1, Uttarakhand had 2,236 active Covid-19 cases. The active cases rose to 45,383 on Wednesday. Political and religious gatherings have been cited among the reasons for the worst surge of Covid-19 infections that India faces. The second wave of the pandemic has pushed the death toll in the country close to 200,000 and starved hospitals of life-saving medical oxygen and beds. The daily infections have surged above the 300,000-mark daily in the country over the last few days.

# Domestic travel bans can increase total number of Covid-19 infections: Research

New Delhi, Apr 29: The working paper by academics at the University of Chicago published in the Becker Friedman Institute for Economics' website uses data from travel restrictions imposed in Mumbai during the first wave of Covid-19 last year. A new study has concluded that policy makers should resist imposing domestic travel bans if they cannot commit to sufficiently long restrictions. Certain travel bans can not only cause severe hardship to the poor migrant population but also counter-intuitively lead to an increase in Covid-19 cases. This is because release of travel bans of intermediate duration are associated with an increase in the total number of infections in the country as the sink destination—where migrant workers (many of whom are likely to be infected due to the time spent in Covid-19 hot spots before being allowed to travel) return — also record a spike. This was seen in the case of Mumbai last year. The working paper by academics at the University of Chicago published in the Becker Friedman Institute for Economics' website uses data from travel restrictions imposed in Mumbai during the first wave of Covid-19 last year. A nationwide lockdown was imposed on March 25

which caused immense suffering among migrant workers as the economy rapidly contracted and unemployment rose, according to the paper. Under intense pressure, the government allowed the first wave of migrants to return to homes outside Maharashtra on May 8 (Phase 1). Migrants returning to districts in the Mumbai Metropolitan Area were allowed to leave on June 5 (Phase 2); migrants departing to all other destinations were able

to leave on August 20 (phase 3). The researchers used the susceptible-exposed-infective-recovered (SEIR) model, commonly used to study epidemics, to understand the impact of the travel ban in Mumbai on cumulative infections. The approach uses the evolution of Covid-19 cases in each migrant home district from before a ban release and after the release. "After the bans are relaxed, we find that cases rise somewhat in Phase 1 districts (relatively short ban), substantially in Phase 2 districts (intermediate ban), and negligibly in Phase 3 districts (relatively long ban)," the paper states. "The national lockdown in the first wave trapped millions of migrants inside big cities like Mumbai that were fast-growing coronavirus hotspots. Eventually people were able to leave, but variations in government policy meant that the length of time they were detained depended on where they wanted to go. In the case of rural districts where people could return quicker



—using the Shramik Special Trains for example—cases rose modestly at the destination. But for those areas where bans were in effect longer, there was a much more intensive increase in coronavirus, likely because the returning population was now more likely to be infected, having been trapped in the hot spot longer," explained Anant Sudarshan, South Asia Director of The Energy Policy Institute at the university of Chicago and co-author of the paper.

# Vaccination of 18-45 age group in phased manner, says Karnataka CM, Kumaraswamy seeks door-to-door drive



Bengaluru, Apr 29: The Karnataka government Thursday announced that it will take up the vaccination drive for people aged 18-44 in a phased manner. "The state government is procuring 1 crore doses of vaccine while another work order has been placed to procure one crore more of additional vaccine doses. The fourth phase of the vaccination drive will be taken up in stages," CM BS Yediyurappa said. He added that the Centre had supplied 99.4 lakh doses of Covid vaccine to the state to date. "While 93.5 lakh doses have been administered, around 5.9 lakh doses are available now," Yediyurappa said. The CM further added the Centre had

"liberalised" the fourth phase "by allowing direct procurement from manufacturers directly and making an implementation plan" based on requests made by many states. Yediyurappa further informed that a third vaccine was being introduced, other than Covishield and Covaxin. "Pharmaceutical companies are enhancing their production capacity to meet out the increased demand. Under these circumstances, vaccination drive will continue based on the availability of doses. The drive will be planned to ensure systematic, disciplined and smooth implementation," he said. Janata Dal (Secular) leader and former CM HD Kumaraswamy Thursday urged the

in the population as well as to arrest the spread of Covid," he said. Further, in a series of tweets, the former CM noted that many aged above 45 in the state were yet to get the first dose due to alleged lack of vaccine supply. "And most from the 45-60 age group haven't received the second dose. Does Government of Karnataka and Government of India have enough supplies to walk the talk?" he asked. To date, Karnataka has administered 93.63 lakh doses of Covid vaccine since the drive began on January 16. While 79.13 lakh of these were administered as first doses to people across categories, only 14.45 lakh doses have been administered as the second dose.

# Himachal: 20-person limit on social gatherings, ban on community feasts

Shimla, Apr 29: CM Jai Ram Thakur said that bed capacity is being enhanced in heavy case-load districts such as Kangra, Mandi, Shimla, Solan, Una and Sirmour, and a more effective mechanism is being evolved to restrict and regulate the entry of people coming to Himachal from other parts of the country. The Himachal Pradesh government on Thursday banned community feasts (dhams) during marriages and other celebrations in the state and further restricted the maximum size of social gatherings from 50 to 20 persons to check the spread of Covid-19. Schools, colleges and other educational institutions will continue to remain closed till May 10, and temples in the

state will also remain closed for devotees during this period, the government decided during a Covid review meeting held here. It was further decided that government offices will continue to observe a five-day week with 50 per cent attendance till May 10. CM Jai Ram Thakur said that bed capacity is being enhanced in heavy case-load districts such as Kangra, Mandi, Shimla, Solan, Una and Sirmour, and a more effective mechanism is being evolved to restrict and regulate the entry of people coming to Himachal from other parts of the country. Thakur has also asked the Union Health Ministry to provide the state with 5,000 D-Type and 3,000 B-Type oxygen cylinders. Meanwhile,



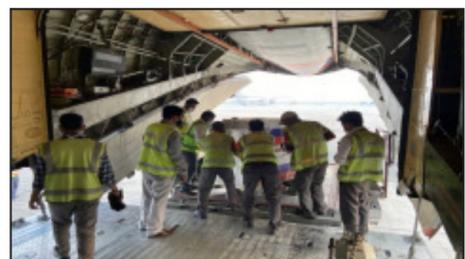
the state government has constituted four committees for Covid management, including a logistic committee to monitor oxygen availability and bed capacity, a Covid patients/ambulance management committee to create triage space at all health facilities and monitor inter-district movement of patients, a corporate social responsibility co-

ordination/contribution committee to seek corporate and CSR contributions to the state government's Covid relief fund and coordinate other donations, and a media/IEC (Information, Education and Communication) committee to provide updated data and correct information to the media besides eliminating information gaps at

various levels. Himachal officially reported 33 Covid-related deaths on Wednesday which was the highest single-day death toll in the state since the beginning of the pandemic. A total of 1,429 deaths in the state have been officially linked to Covid so far, and there are currently over 16,000 active cases here.

# Russia sends 22 tonnes of Covid relief material to help India fight Covid-19

New Delhi, Apr 29: Two planes landed in India today, carrying 20 oxygen production units, 75 ventilators, and 2,00,000 packs of medicines, according to a statement released by the Russian Ambassador to India Nikolay R. Kudashev. Russia on Thursday sent 22 tonnes of medical supplies to India to assist the country in its battle against the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Two planes operated by the Russian EMERCOM



landed in India this morning, carrying 20 oxygen production units, 75 ventilators, and 2,00,000 packs of medicines, according to a statement released by the Russian Am-

bassador to India Nikolay R. Kudashev. "Russia is closely watching the situation in India, which is becoming more and more alarming with unprecedented spread of the

coronavirus infection. We sincerely empathise with the Indian people due to our traditionally warm and friendly relations," Kudashev said. "The Russian Federation decided to send humanitarian assistance to India in the spirit of the special and privileged strategic partnership between our two countries, as well as in the context of our anti-Covid-19 cooperation," he added. Russia sent relief material to India following a phone conver-

sation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin. PM Modi said Putin had assured the country of his support as it combats the second wave. "We also reviewed our diverse bilateral cooperation, especially in the area of space exploration and renewable energy sector, including in hydrogen economy. Our cooperation on Sputnik-V vaccine will assist humanity in battling the pandemic," PM Modi had tweeted.

## RPF persons recovered original documents

(A.O. Bureau) Puri, Apr 29: At about 03.30 pm, while Officer's & Staff of Puri [ASI B.K.Bal & others] were engaged for checking of Station area recovered one file folder containing original educational documents i.e. matric, 10+2, ATM Cards, Adhar Card & bank pass book/cheque etc of one Sipra Mandal, At-Shyam Sunder Pur, PS-Taldangra, Dist-Bankura [W.B.] - 722156. The above named RPF Officer also noticed that, con-



tact number of the concern student was also mentioned in the front of the file folder. Immediately ASI B.K.Bal made contact with the concern female student

& it could be noticed that at that time she was traveling by train No.02838 [Dhouli Express] from Puri-Howrah, vide PNR No.65500014 along

with her two female friends & her train was running between Baleswar-Kharagpur. On getting information the above named female passenger requested to keep the recovered all the documents at RPF Post Puri till her reaching at Puri. Accordingly on 27.04.2021, the above female passenger attended RPF Post Puri & after due verification all the recovered documents handed over to the concern Passenger/student. She also informed that, she is a

medical student in Bhubaneswar base college & on 24.04.2021 just before returning to home due to Covid she along with her friends make plan to visit Puri, but on arrival at Puri she found without fulfillment of Covid protocol they didn't allowed to move outside the station, so they were waiting their train in 1st class waiting hall & unfortunately forget/left behind her file folder. She also appreciated the outstanding example of dedication of ASI B.K.Bal & RPF team Puri.

## Will Odisha opt for harsh measures?

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Apr 29: WITH Covid-19 positive cases witnessing an exponential rise in Odisha during the last 24 hours, the question in everyone's mind now is will the State government go for

worsening situation in the Capital city has put the State government in a dilemma. Highly placed sources said that though a decision has not been taken about stricter measures for Bhubaneswar to bring down the infection

the active case tally close to 6,500-mark. While reviewing the Covid-19 situation on Tuesday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said that the constant rise of positive cases in border districts of the State has emerged as a challenge for the



stricter measures to control the infection rate as the restrictions put in place so far have failed to yield results. Imposition of weekend shutdown and night curfew in all urban areas of the State has not been able to keep a check on the virus spread. Particularly worrisome has been the rapid increase in cases in Khurda district and the Capital city of Bhubaneswar. Sources said that the

rate, if the growth in the positive cases continues at the present pace nothing can be ruled out. After remaining around 6,000 positive cases for the last three days, Odisha saw a growth of 38 per cent cases on Wednesday with 8,386 more people testing positive during the last 24 hours. The Capital city also reported its highest-ever single-day spike of 1,044 new cases in the last 24 hours pushing

government. He had also clearly maintained that he does not favour lockdowns and shutdowns as they would have an impact on the economy of the State. Sources, however, maintained that if the situation continued to worsen at the present rate, it is not unlikely on the part of the State government to go for harsher measures like other states including New Delhi, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

## Nine held for cheating businessman

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Apr 29: The City police on Wednesday arrested eight persons including three policemen for cheating a businessman and seized Rs 99.5 lakh from them. The accused policemen are constables, Sandipta Kumar Prusty of Badamba, Prafulla Kumar Bhuyan of Bhanjanagar and Havildar Dilip Kumar Mallick of Pipili. While Dilip was staying at the reserve police office in the Capital, Bhuyan was staying at the reserve police office in Cuttack. This apart, Prasanta



Kumar Panda of Gop, Abhishek Sethy of Capital's Airfield area, Raj Rayabhadur of Chauliaganj in Cuttack, Prashant Padhy of Rasulgarh Sabar Sahi and Maheswar Sahoo of Ghatagaon in Keonjhar were arrested by the police. Police said Maheswar along with a middleman and the other accused had

lured businessman Kamal Saha of Karanjia into investing Rs 1 crore with the promise of a return of Rs 50 lakh in addition to the principal amount. The accused had told Saha that they will invest his money in the Angadia scheme. Angadias are people who deal in unofficial banking-cum-courier services. Such services

are usually used by businessmen who transact in huge sums. Apart from banking, Angadias also transfer cash and jewellery to cities like New Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata. Police said the accused had asked Saha to come to Hotel Bijaya Palace along with the cash on Tuesday. Saha arrived at the hotel carrying the cash in 40 bundles. However, the middleman, who is absconding, and the three policemen ditched their associates and took away nine bundles of cash containing Rs 22.5 lakh. Before fleeing, they

called the police and lodged a false complaint that an IPL betting racket is on in the hotel. While police conducted raided the spot, they found that Saha had been duped of his money. They then apprehended the eight accused and seized Rs 99.5 lakh, nine mobile phones and two motorcycles from them. Police said a manhunt has been launched to nab the middleman. Meanwhile, the three police personnel were suspended by Commissionerate police following their arrest.

## Medico Duped Of Rs 60 Lakh For PG Admission; Accused Held



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Apr 29: Khandagiri Police arrested a person on charges of duping a medico of a huge amount on pretext of helping the latter to get admission for post-graduation course in a medical college in Bhubaneswar. The accused person has been identified as Debasish Mekherjee.

He had allegedly cheated Asish Patnaik, a medical practitioner and resident of Shatabdi Nagar in Bhubaneswar, of Rs 60 lakh for facilitating his admission into PG course in a private medical college in 2018. According to reports, the accused had taken total amount from Asish in three in-

stallments. After the doctor realised that Debasish was a fraud, he had asked him to refund his money. When the fraudster did not pay him back total amount, the victim approached the Khandagiri Police. Based on a complaint, the police arrested the accused on Wednesday night. He will be produced before a local court today. Police source said that the accused person is involved in several fraud cases. He has allegedly duped people of crores of amount impersonating himself as owner of a web channel.

## Pyres keep burning at Satichaura as Covid rages

(A.O. Bureau) Cuttack, Apr 29: The pyres at Satichaura cremation ground, burning continuously for the last two days, present a chilling picture of the Covid-19 crisis in the city. With bodies piling up, people can be seen waiting for hours to cremate their loved ones at the site. The exhausted workers of the cremation ground are bearing the brunt of the crisis and do not even get time to have food. Of the 20 bodies cremated at the site on Monday, 10 were brought from SCB Covid hospital and the rest from other hospitals in the city. Similarly, of the 25 bodies



cremated on Tuesday, 12 were brought from the SCB Covid hospital and the rest from private facilities. On Wednesday, 21 bodies were cremated at the ground. The site saw a steep surge in cremations in the last one week. As many as 102

bodies were cremated at the ground from April 20 to 26. During the first wave last year, while 1,200 bodies were cremated as per Covid protocol in the city from August 18 to December 31, the highest 24 bodies were cremated on a day in September. As

the bodies of Covid victims keep arriving at Satichaura, volunteers of a social organisation are arranging pyres for 5-6 bodies in a line which are lit at the same time. One of the volunteers, Bibhuti Kumar Ray said generally it takes two-and-half

hours to 3 hours to cremate a body. "However, in the wake of surge in cremations, we are cremating 5-6 bodies at a time by arranging the pyres accordingly," he said. As in the rest of the State, the large number of cremations as per Covid protocol at Satichaura belies the district administration as well as the State government's claims on fatalities due to the virus. When asked about the discrepancy, a senior health official, on condition of anonymity said the cases are analysed by experts who declare the casualties as per comorbidities of the victims.

## IFFCO To Fill Up Oxygen Cylinders For Hospitals Free Of Cost

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Apr 29: In a good news amid alleged shortage of oxygen for critical COVID-19 patients, the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has decided to fill up oxygen cylinders for hospitals free of cost in Odisha, informed Dr. U S Awasthi, Managing Director & CEO, IFFCO. "Those wishing to avail the service need to bring own cylinders for free refill. Security deposit will be required if cylinders taken from IFFCO to avoid hoarding of oxygen," said



Awasthi. "IFFCO's 4th medical oxygen plant in Paradeep will fill 520 big D type cylinders daily

and 200 medium B size cylinders on demand supplied to hospitals free from 15th June," he said.

"IFFCO has ordered its 4th oxygen plant for free oxygen to hospitals in nation's service with ca-

capacity of 150 Cubic Mtr/hr in its Paradeep unit. It will produce 520 cylinders per day, which will commence by 15th June," he added. The transposition of these plants requires some time. A dedicated separate team has been also assigned for this project in all the plants. It's an automatic cylinder filling turnkey plant, the cooperative said. IFFCO said it will fill up at free of cost the oxygen cylinders for hospitals in Odisha and adjoining areas. They need to bring their own cylinders for a refill.

## Stamp duty is mandatory for every vaklatnama



(A.O. Bureau) Cuttack, Apr 29: Stamp duty is mandatory in every vaklatnama since May 14. The State Bar

Council has issued notice in this connection. According to the notice, advocates across the state will attach an adhesive ticket formu-

lated by the State bar Council Odisha on the vaklatnama. The Chief Justice of Orissa High Court Justice Dr. S Muralidhar unveiled the ticket on Tuesday in the presence of the President State Bar Council Ashok Parija to mark Madhu Jayanti. The fund mobilized from the ticket will be saved in the account of Odisha Advocates Corpus Fund which will be utilized for the welfare of Advocates, said Parija.

## EDITORIAL

## What's in a name?

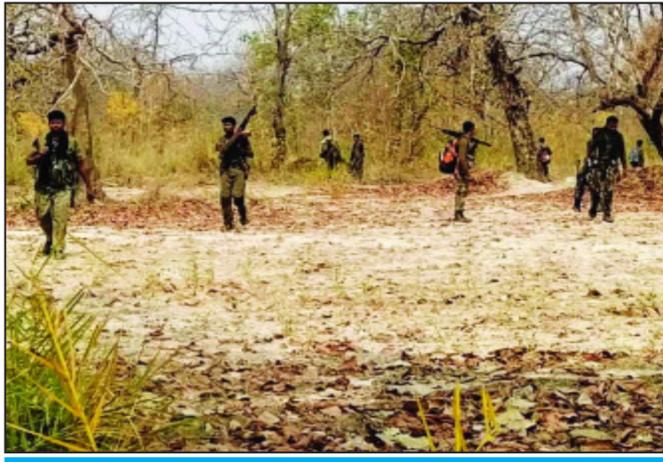
'Janata curfew' or 'local restrictions', the curbs are almost as distressing as in the hard lockdown. It's been more than a year since the Union Government acknowledged the onslaught of the COVID-19 virus and obligated the citizenry to officially follow the hard lockdown rules. It led to myriad problems of a severe nature: People stayed indoors and were affected by loneliness leading to mental health or psychological issues; industries and businesses shut down, leading to a sudden spike in unemployment; all intra- and inter-State travel was banned, and public transport was taken off the roads. The sum total of it all was that the multitudes of jobless migrant labourers, with their malnourished families in tow and worldly possessions balanced precariously on their head or hanging from shoulders, had to walk hundreds of kilometres under the sweltering sun back to their native places. The arduous journey claimed many a life. The heart-wrenching scenes, after the people's patience wore thin when the situation didn't significantly improve for months, steadily turned the public mood against the establishment. And so it remained until the second wave of COVID-19 erupted. However, having grown wiser with its last lockdown experiment and unwilling to further stir the swell of public disillusionment, the Centre this time round chose not to invite the blame on its door and did two clever things. First, it allowed the individual States to decide if any curbs were necessary in their respective provinces; and, two, it explicitly and unequivocally stated that there won't be any "lockdown" per se this time. Surely, the restrictions are not as universal as last time but these are no less severe in their degree of limitation. Only these have been given new, fancy names to distinguish them from last year's hard lockdown. For instance, if one were to look out the window during the "day/night/weekend curfew" in Delhi or Noida-Ghaziabad, the eerie silence and the sight of vast vacant roads give one the sense of déjà vu. On weekdays, the roadside markets and other shops are forcibly shut before 8 pm by lathi-wielding cops and loudspeaker-toting police jeeps. Even the revenue-generating avenues such as alcohol vends are not operational in Delhi for over a week now and in the NCR during the weekends. Not much has changed on the ground since last year, so the question remains: Doesn't naming it something else but retaining its intrinsic "lockdown" spirit amount to cheating the public by the politicians?

## Eyes shut tight

Neither politicians nor the poll panel seem to have learnt any lessons from the courts' censure. Coronavirus may have grown into a deadly scourge in India, thanks to the criminal apathy by every section of our society and important stakeholders of our democracy, but no lessons have been learnt yet. Even after the Madras High Court (HC) fumed that the Election Commission was singularly responsible for the spread of the virus, mass mobilisation continues unabated for the local body elections in Uttar Pradesh and Telangana. The Allahabad HC on Tuesday issued notices to the State Election Commission (SEC) to respond to a news report that 135 officials have so far died of COVID-19 during the four-phase panchayat elections and asked it to explain why it failed to enforce the COVID protocols. In a damning criticism, the HC said: "It appears that neither the police nor the EC did anything to save the people on election duty from getting infected." It's high time that the judiciary took tough measures against those who plunged the country's most populous State into a frenzy of electioneering when COVID-19 was at its peak. The election started on April 15, when India was clocking more than two lakh cases a day, and will end today. It's needless to point out that massive political mobilisation goes into such elections and COVID-appropriate protocols are tossed aside by the contestants and their supporters. The fact that the State Government didn't do anything to postpone these elections makes it equally culpable. One hopes that in future, the judiciary will take a proactive view of such situations and come down hard on the institutions that prostrate before the political leadership and compromise the well-being of the State and nation. The situation in Telangana is equally chaotic. Television channels are flooded with the footage of massive rallies and road shows as part of the political mobilisation for the civic body elections. But the SEC once again showed criminal apathy by declaring on Tuesday that the polls to two municipal corporations and five municipalities would be held as scheduled on April 30. Several political parties and activists had urged the SEC to postpone the urban body polls but to no avail. C Partha Sarathi, the SEC, said the elections would be held "with strict adherence to all COVID-19 regulations". Doesn't he know that any such exercise could jeopardise the lives of lakhs of people? It's time for all political parties to come together and resolve to put off elections till normalcy returns. The HCs and the Supreme Court should also take cognisance of such criminal apathy by the SEC officials and sentence a few of them to jail to sensitise the lot of them about the grave danger lurking in the air. It's heartening to note that the Supreme Court has said it will not intervene to stop the HCs from hearing such matters of public interest. The observation is significant as it comes just days after the apex court reversed a decision by the Allahabad HC telling the UP Government to impose strict lockdown in five districts.

## Remembering Jagdish Khattar

Maruti Suzuki India's former MD should be remembered for what he did with the company, not his later failures. It might not be the best way to start an obituary, but the last time Jagdish Khattar was in news before his passing away on April 26 was last year when the Central Bureau of Investigation chargesheeted him for conspiring to defraud the Punjab National Bank of Rs 110 crore. This surrounded his one-stop shop for car sales and service called 'Carnation', which he had begun as a 65-year-old after he retired from the helm at Maruti Suzuki. 'Carnation' was a good idea at the time, indeed such a service remains a good idea, but one reason it failed was that many of those who Khattar had counted upon to help him, did not come to the table. The man who cultivated an entire generation of leaders in the automotive industry was let down by some of them. Of course, the argument can be made that the industry did not want to help Khattar establish a business which would directly impact their dealers' main revenue stream, but a professionally run third-party service might have succeeded and its failure was unfortunate, maybe undeserved, just like the case against Khattar. Now that it is out of the way, I will remember Khattar sitting in his corner office at the Life Insurance Corporation building on Delhi's KG Marg, sipping tea with me and my former colleague Deepak Joshi. The Hindustan Times office where I worked at the time was a two-minute walk away. What is remarkable about this was that I was just starting out as an automotive industry reporter and Khattar was in the midst of transforming India's largest carmaker. Yet he was generous with his time and patient with my queries. Not



Kushan Mitra

every automotive industry chieftain was like that, although I will say that BVR Subbu at Hyundai was also extremely good with journalists. Khattar understood the power of communication for marketing. He had taken the helm at Maruti Suzuki in mid-1999 and one must remember the state of the Indian automotive market and Maruti Suzuki at the time. The market was being transformed by the entry of foreign carmakers; the Americans Ford and General Motors had come with their European products and, having tasted success in China, believed they could dominate India. Also, Korean carmakers Daewoo and Hyundai with relatively fresher models, particularly the Matiz and Santro, respectively, had recently arrived. It was not as if Suzuki did not have products to compete with the Koreans but the relations between Suzuki and the Government of India, their joint-venture partner in Maruti Suzuki, had nosedived. The partners were equal shareholders and everything worked "in turns" but the Government's appointment of RSSLN Bhaskarudu as the Man-

aging Director (MD) ruptured relations with Osamu Suzuki. Only after the fear of Maruti Suzuki potentially becoming irrelevant after the sales success of the Matiz and Santro did the partners relent, agreeing on Khattar as the MD. Khattar had left the Indian Administrative Service and joined Maruti on the advice of RC Bhargava, an ex-IAS officer who established the company and still serves as Chairman. From the UP cadre, he joined Maruti Suzuki as the Director, Marketing, in 1993. He told me once that his introduction to marketing started in 1983 when, heading the Tea Board of India's operations in London, he thought it would be a good idea to use India's World Cup team to try and sell Indian tea. As we know, the Kapil Dev-led team went on to an epic victory and the campaign was a success. But most importantly, Khattar's role was to mend the ties between the partners and persuade Suzuki Motor Corporation to send new technology and models over to India. The WagonR was already scheduled for launch but it

was supplemented by the Alto. The Maruti 800 and Zen, which were India's most popular small cars at the time, felt relatively old-fashioned compared to the new Korean competition. The WagonR and Alto changed the market for Maruti. It is a testament to those launches that the Alto remains one of India's best selling cars alongside the Swift, another car in whose development and production Khattar played an integral role. He ensured that Indian engineers had a say in the Swift's development and also negotiated with the Haryana Government for a massive new factory at Manesar to build this new car. I was fortunate to be the very first journalist to be allowed access to this factory for a cover story I wrote for Business Today where I was at the time. Khattar's maniacal obsession with controlling costs and reducing wastage transformed the company. He implemented the Kaizen system that dramatically reduced problems with finished cars at the end of the line, improving processes at suppliers and on the final assembly line. Bringing in elements of the Just-In-Time production system, he brought inventory costs down for Maruti as well as vendors. He slashed inefficient dealers and added new suppliers when others were not up to the task. Despite all his globe-trotting on work and remaining immensely busy, he always had time to answer his phone and meet up for a cup of tea. I will be eternally grateful for his time, and I regret that I did not keep in touch with him over the past few years. But I will remember him as the man who transformed the Indian automotive industry by keeping Maruti Suzuki not just relevant but as the big daddy. In no other major automotive market in the world does one company own half the market like Maruti does in India, and that is Jagdish Khattar's legacy.

## Vaccines should be free and for all

Shashi Tharoor, Salman Anes Soz



The Centre's vaccination policy is a maze of confusion that could doom India's future prospects. Covid-19 has unleashed a devastating second wave in India. The government has proven woefully unprepared for this crisis. We can blame hubris or incompetence or a combination thereof for India's unfolding tragedy. However, it should now be everyone's goal to shorten the duration of the broader crisis, which won't remain restricted to this second wave. A humanitarian and economic catastrophe looms. With this in mind, we write to warn against the government's recently announced vaccine policy. This policy is unconscionable and potentially disastrous. It will likely create confusion, limit vaccination coverage, breed inequality, and prolong the duration of the crisis. Better alternatives are available, which can help save both lives and livelihoods. What should be the goals of a vaccination policy during a global pandemic? We believe a good policy will seek to achieve maximum coverage, as close to universalisation as possible and do so as quickly and cost effectively as possible. We should also account for the institutional capacity to implement such a policy. Given that the pandemic disproportionately impacts poor and low-income families, it is vitally important that the policy also be equitable. Since there is broad

consensus that vaccinations provide the safest path to herd immunity, their deployment offers a relatively quick exit from the crisis. That path also ensures a sustained revival of economic activity, which is the surest way to avert a humanitarian crisis in India. Even as we combat the second wave, it is important that we already begin to prepare for future waves. Vaccines have a major role in ensuring that. Currently, over 1 billion doses have been administered across 172 countries. India accounts for 141 million of these doses. After a relatively quick rollout, vaccinations have stalled. Only 1.6 per cent of the population is fully vaccinated. The goal of vaccinating 300 million Indians by August appears daunting. At the current rate, it may take India two years to vaccinate 75 per cent of the population. The government's vaccine policy could make things considerably worse. We believe the government's policy is fatally flawed on almost all counts. Creating multiple price points for different categories of vaccine buyers will breed confusion. This will likely slow down vaccine procurement, as multiple buyers negotiate with manufacturers about purchase quantities, delivery logistics, and payment plans. When so many buyers are in a queue to purchase vaccines, private manufacturers could be in a position to determine public health outcomes. That is untenable. This confusion will clog vaccine logistics, delay the vaccine programme, and prolong the Covid-19 crisis. The government's policy is also iniquitous. In most major countries, vaccines are being given free to all residents. In that most capitalist of nations, the United States, even bil-

lionaires are getting free vaccines. Not just that, undocumented workers are also part of the free vaccine programme. The easiest way to ensure maximum coverage is to offer vaccines for free to everyone. By creating a private market for vaccines, in a situation where supply is limited, the better-off sections of society will get to jump the queue. That is unconscionable and an insult to those Indians who are the biggest victims of this crisis. The government's centralising tendencies are obvious to most, despite all the talk of cooperative federalism. However, in the revised vaccine policy, those in power have suddenly developed a taste for decentralisation. As the staggering toll of the second wave becomes evident, the crisis is being palmed off to the states. This is cynical at best. The Centre has a big role to play in dealing with this pandemic because the virus respects no state (or national) boundaries. The Union government cannot shirk its responsibilities. As we explain below, the states too have a critical role, as does the private sector. We propose that all vaccine procurement in India be done by the Union government. Identifying manufacturers, negotiating prices, scheduling deliveries, and executing payments should be handled by the central government. The Centre should also devise a transparent formula for distributing vaccines to individual states. All data associated with the vaccine programme must be proactively published online. Vaccine administration will be critical. Since speed is of the essence, we need a public-private

partnership to scale up the vaccination programme quickly. For this, each state government can enlist private entities to vaccinate people at a pre-determined per dose price. This creates an incentive for private players and also enables people to get vaccines without having to queue up at fewer locations. Online registration systems can handle the queuing process. For those without access to the internet, mass vaccination sites that require no appointments can be set up. We must make it extremely easy for people to get a vaccine. Won't this be costly? No. The cost of a prolonged crisis will be far more devastating to the economy. In 2020-21, the crisis probably cost us close to Rs 8 trillion in economic output. Besides, we know what other countries are paying. The EU paid \$2.15 for an Oxford-AstraZeneca dose while the UK and the US paid \$3 and \$4 respectively. India is a giant buyer. Surely, we can get doses for similar prices. We also have international data on costs to administer vaccines. This can help negotiate prices with private sector entities wishing to participate in vaccine administration. The Covid-19 crisis threatens to erode decades of development gains. The first wave probably destroyed some economic output permanently. However, we were fortunate to escape with a relatively low death toll. But this second wave will leave a trail of unimaginable human suffering. We simply did not plan ahead and allowed the virus to run rampant. More waves are likely, given what we have seen elsewhere. But universal and rapid vaccinations can limit our losses. Unfortunately, the government's vaccine policy is a maze of confusion that could doom India's future prospects. We need to correct our course before it is too late.

## Businessmen commit suicide by defaulting on bank loans

(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, Apr 29: Money is essential to living with dignity. Unless anyone is volunteering to come up with a pretty template? In such cases, if you do not have the resources you need, you are forced to borrow from a bank. But if you can't establish yourself in a business competition, it's difficult to pay off your debts. The bank's pressure on him to bear the brunt of the situation has forced her to make the wrong decision. The deceased was identified as Karthik Bairagi, 48, of MV (109) village under Chipari panchayat under Korkunda block of Malkangiri district. According to information received from the scene,



Karthik was living in MV 109 village with his wife Anjana and two sons and a daughter. He lived in the village and supported his family by doing business. Kartik's family borrowed nearly Rs 4.8 lakhs from the HDFC Bank branch near MV 37 villages in January last year to

provide safe drinking water, with a monthly installment of Rs 20,000. For some reason, the bank authorities went to Karthik's house to collect the installment money about two days ago as he could not repay the monthly installment money on time due to the loan. They also

warned that legal action would be taken if the money was not paid on time. According to family members, Karthik lost his temper. Last night he ate and slept with his family. At around 4am, Karthik's wife, Anjana, broke down and found that Karthik was not in the room. Anjana was

found to be suspicious. There was no Karthik in the room. When he entered the warehouse and saw that the door to his warehouse was open, Karthik was found to have committed suicide by hanging himself with a rope around his neck. A police team led by ASI Jayaprakash Narayan Hota, on the orders of Orkel police IIC Soumendra Shekhar Tripathi, reached the spot, seized Karthik's body and sent it to the Malkangiri District Hospital for postmortem. "The police have registered a case of suicide No 16/2021 and are investigating," he said. No response was received as bank authorities could not be reached for comment.

## Battery-powered tricycle given to 8 handicape person



(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, Apr 29: Malkangiri district's Kalimela block has provided eight battery-powered tricycles to 8 people with 80 percent

disabilities! The Malkangiri Legislator Aditya Madhi, Block development Officer Uma Shankar Dalei, Block Chairman Mala Majhi and Block Social Secu-

rity Officer Desha Kamaram were present at the block office premises and distributed tricycles to the disabled persons the person were quite happy on receive the tricycle.

## 30 more Corona positive identified in Malkangiri

(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, Apr 29: Thirty more cases of coronary heart disease have been reported in Malkangiri district today, according to the district administration. Among the identified are 3 from Malkangiri municipality, 7 from Malkangiri block, 2 from Korukonda block, 3 from Mathili block, 8 from Khairput block, 4 from Kalimela block and 3 from Padia block! Of the 30 identified today, one is from Ward No. 7,

9, 5 in Malkangiri Municipality, four from Sikhali Panchayat in Malkangiri block and one from Tamsa, Padmagiri and Markapali Panchayats. One from the Potrel and Tarla Kota panchayats of the Korukonda block! 2 from Mathili block Sadar sub-division and one from Kiang panchayat! 4 from Govindpalli Panchayat in Khairput block and 4 from Kudumuluguma Panchayat! One from

Kalimela Block Sadar Panchayat, one from Mala Bharam, Nala Gundi, and one from Lugel Panchayat! Padia Block Sadar Panchayat, Girkanpalli and Bapanpalli "" "There is one from the panchayat! To date, 5,510 people have been diagnosed with the first and second wave of the outbreak in the district! Of those, 5,290 have recovered and returned home! There are currently 195 active cases in the district!

## 37 vaccination centres shut due to dose scarcity

(A.O. Bureau) Jagatsinghpur, Apr 29: Amid rising cases of Covid-19 across the State, shortage of vaccine supply has hit the inoculation drive hard in Jagatsinghpur district causing resentment among locals. Hundreds of people on Wednesday returned without getting the jab as all 37 centres in the district were shut down due to vaccine shortage. Sources said health officials have informed locals that vaccination will be suspended for three to four days or more starting Wednesday, till



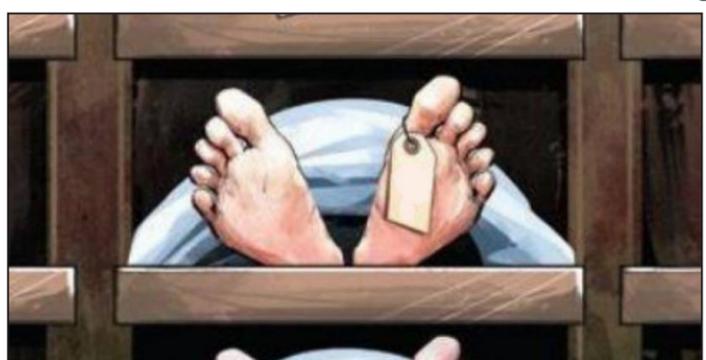
the centres are restocked. With cases surging in the district, the demand for vaccine has gone up considerably since last 15 days. However, health officials have assured that the

immunisation drive will continue uninterrupted as soon as stocks arrive. District Immunization Officer PK Barik has confirmed that all 37 vaccination centres including the one at the

district headquarters hospital have been closed for an indefinite period and will resume service once restocked. Meanwhile, the BJP has sought the intervention of administration to in-

crease the number of vaccination centers to avert crowding. Party leader Rajkishore Behera accompanied by other BJP leaders of Tirtol assembly constituency have also sought provision of drinking water and temporary sheds for people waiting for their turn to get the jab at the centres amid the searing heat. Among other demands, the party leaders have sought more testing centres, report within 24 hours and a Covid hospital at Jagatsinghpur having requisite medical infrastructure.

## Woman records video message before killing self



(A.O. Bureau) Jeypore, Apr 29: The video of a 35-year-old woman committing suicide at Sunabeda on Wednesday has gone viral on social media. The woman reportedly took the extreme step after being allegedly harassed for money by her

deceased husband's friends. In the video which she shot just before committing suicide, the woman blamed her husband's friends for torturing her mentally for money. She also accused her in-laws of harassing her and pleaded the police to punish

them. The victim, a resident of Athamallick village, had married a supervisor at HAL, Sunabeda eight years back. Her husband was also into a private business in which several HAL employees were involved. On February 9 this year, he died at his

home under mysterious circumstances. Since then, the woman was staying with her brother-in-law in Bhubaneswar. On Monday afternoon, the woman made a video call to her brother-in-law and said she will commit suicide. Shocked, he tried to dissuade her but in vain. He then rang up some of his relatives and asked them to rush to the woman's house. However, it was too late as she had already taken the extreme step. The victim's brother-in-law said though she was unaware of her husband's financial dealings, the latter's

friends harassed her for money. He urged the police to take action against those who forced her to take the extreme step. Sunabeda IIC Bhimsen Nayak said a case has been registered in this connection. "We will call the persons mentioned by the victim in her video as part of the investigation," he added. If you are having suicidal thoughts, or are worried about a friend or need emotional support, someone is always there to listen. Call AASRA's 24x7 Helpline: +91-9820466726 for assistance.

## Deserted by husband, challenged woman assaulted by villagers



(A.O. Bureau) Dhenkanal, Apr 29: Parents of a 35-year-old mentally challenged woman from Nihalprasad village in Dhenkanal district, have alleged that she was sexually assaulted and impregnated by a fellow villager. They filed a complaint with the local police on Monday. Police began investigation on

Tuesday. The incident came to light on Monday when the victim was found five months pregnant by her mother. She then narrated the ordeal to her parents. Sources said the woman, who was married and had two children, lived in Jajpur district. However, her husband forced her to return to her parental home

at Nihalprasad after she reportedly developed some mental health issues two years back. Her parents have stated in the FIR that post her return, the woman was sexually exploited repeatedly by some villagers taking advantage of her mental state. Nihalprasad IIC Jitu Sahoo said the woman's statement could not be taken as she was mentally unstable. "We have sent her to the district hospital for medical examination. We will nab the accused once the report arrives," he said.

## Records massive surge, 1 in 2 persons Covid positive in Kalahandi

(A.O. Bureau) Kalahandi, Apr 29: The worst fears of Odisha entering the explosive phase of Covid-19 that has the potential to overrun the healthcare system has begun to come true with the State registering a massive surge of 8,386 new cases on Wednesday. But what is more worrying is that the test positivity rate (TPR) has shot up to nearly 20 per cent that translates into

one in every five persons tested. The fresh cases rose by over 38 pc in a day pushing the active cases over 50,000. The situation is more catastrophic in western Odisha districts with Kalahandi the worst hit. Every one in two persons getting tested in the district is turning out to be Covid-19 positive. The district with a population of 16 lakh has been recording more than 50 pc

positivity rate for the last two days. While the TPR in the district was 62.38 pc on Monday, it was 55.75 on Tuesday. What is worrying is that the district continues to test less despite the explosive outbreak and the share of RT-PCR test is negligible. Of the 226 samples tested including 209 through rapid antigen kits, in the last 24 hours, 126 were found to be positive. Similarly, 277 had



tested positive of the 444 samples the previous day. The share of RAT was 281. Not only Kalahandi, the TPR is above the State average of 19.7 pc in 13 districts. The posi-

tivity rate was 42.64 pc in Sundargarh, 39.4 pc in Sambalpur, 31.84 pc in Khurda, 30.5 pc in Jajpur, 26.7 pc in Nabarangpur, 26.3 pc in Bargarh, 25.9 pc in

Angul, 25.7 in Jharsuguda, 24.2 pc in Nuapada, 23.2 pc in Balangir and 23.1 pc in Puri. While a bulk of the cases on the day were from Khurda with 1,840 people testing positive, eight western Odisha districts bordering Chhattisgarh contributed 3,035 cases to the tally. Among the worst hit districts, Sundargarh reported 933 cases, followed by Cuttack (496),

Jharsuguda (433), Nabarangpur (388), Balangir (358) and Sambalpur (307). With 1,044 cases, the TPR in Bhubaneswar at 21 pc was the highest ever recorded so far. A member of the technical committee formed to advise the State on Covid management said even if the government is not in favour of lockdown, a complete shutdown of districts and cities having

high TPR is the only possible way to block the transmission at this juncture. "If the TPR is above 50 pc with maximum antigen tests, the situation is really grim. The actual positivity rate will be much higher because there would be many asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic patients who are not getting themselves tested. We are not testing enough," he observed.

## When Ranbir Kapoor spoke on relationship with dad Rishi Kapoor: 'I wish we could be friendlier, spend more time together'

New Delhi, Apr 29: The foreword which Ranbir Kapoor wrote for his father's biography *Khullam Khulla: Rishi Kapoor Uncensored* gave a detailed account of the kind of relationship the father-son duo shared. Ranbir Kapoor had said that he wished he was 'friendlier' with his father Rishi Kapoor while he was growing up, reflecting on the 'formal' relationship he shared with the late actor and how he was 'closer' to his mother Neetu Kapoor. The foreword which he wrote for his father's biography *Khullam Khulla: Rishi Kapoor Uncensored* gave a detailed account of the kind of relationship the father-son duo shared. The Rockstar actor described his bond with Rishi Kapoor as "one of complete rever-

"He had it in him to better his craft, go shopping for his costumes or examine every minute aspect. He is that kind of man; very detail-driven. This is something I deeply admire," Ranbir shared. The young actor also recalled how after doing similar roles for the first 20 years of his career, Rishi Kapoor reinvented himself and started experimenting with his roles in his second innings at the movies. Ranbir wrote, "He started having fun with his work. I sensed a child-like enthusiasm and a certain abandon when it came to his approach to roles. Again, this was done with a lot of respect — his ultimate goal was always to excel in what was offered to him." Just like many others, Ranbir was also a fan of his father's



ence". Ranbir wrote, "I am closer to my mother. I feel that Dad modelled his relationship with me on the one he shared with his own father. And it is true that I have never crossed a certain line with him. But there is no sense of loss or vacuum here. I do wish sometimes that I could be friendlier with him or even spend more time with him." For Ranbir, the most precious thing his father gave him was the unconditional love for their mother Neetu. "He showed us by example that she was at the centre of all our lives and our home. With her as our bedrock, none of the ups and downs in our lives could really touch us," remembered Ranbir. It was from Rishi Kapoor that Ranbir learnt to respect his work. When he started his journey in Bollywood in 2007 with Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Saawariya*, senior Kapoor had that 'enthusiasm' in him to work.

acting. He found him to be a 'spontaneous' and a 'natural' actor. Praising his father, he wrote, "I do not see anyone on the same level as Rishi Kapoor. There is a certain naturalness about him, a certain spontaneity. And he was like this way before anyone else. Most actors of the earlier generation had a distinct style to their acting, but my father was very natural and effortless." Also, Ranbir believes his father never let his physique get in the way of his performance, "See *Chandni*, *Deewana* or *Bol Radha Bol*, or for that matter any of his work in the 1980s and '90s, and you will see that, despite his weight, his charm remained infectious. Now, with his second innings — *Agneepath*, *Do Dooni Chaar*, *Kapoor & Sons*, and others — my father is winning more accolades and awards than he ever did in his first stint. Nothing can keep a good actor down.

## Irrfan Khan's wife Sutapa, son Babil pen heartbreaking notes on actor's death anniversary: The clock stopped for me



Mumbai, Apr 29: It has been a year since the versatile actor Irrfan Khan passed away. On Irrfan's first death anniversary, wife Sutapa and their son Babil penned emotional and deeply philosophical notes, remembering the artist and the way he chose to lead his life. Babil remembered how the actor was in the face of immense pain and odds in his last two years. He wrote, "Chemo burns you from the inside, so to find joy in the simple things, like building your own table to write your own journals. There is a purity, I have not yet discovered. There is a legacy that has already been concluded by my Baba himself. A full stop. Nobody can ever replace him. Nobody will ever be able to. To the greatest best friend, companion, brother, father, I ever had and ever will have. I love you so much, for the rest of this chaos we are choosing

to call life. I miss you, more than all that shah-Jahan/mumtaz stuff; I would have built a space monument that could have taken us to the furthest parts of a blackhole singularity you were always intrigued by, but I would have been there with you Baba, and we could have gone together, hand in hand. (Exploring the last mysteries)." He shared it with a photo of Irrfan smiling as he worked on the chair. Sharing how Irrfan's last moments were spent in the hospital before he passed away, Sutapa shared that she and her friend present with Irrfan sang his favourite songs instead of prayers and chants. Sutapa wrote, "People living deeply have no fear of death"... Anaïs Nin. Your favourite poet Irrfan. Last year tonight me and my friends sang songs for you, all your favourite songs. The nurses were looking at us strangely as they



were used to religious chants in critical times but I had overdone that for you Irrfan morning, evening and night for two years and since they told me it was time I wanted you to go with memories you loved...so we sang songs...next day you left for the next station I hope you knew where to get down without me... 363 days eight thousand seven hundred and twelve hours..when each second is counted." She also shared how Irrfan passed away at a particular time, calling it his love for the mystical. She wrote, "How exactly does one swim this huge ocean of time. The clock had stopped. At 11.11 on 29th April for me. Irrfan you had a keen interest in mystery of numbers .and funny you had three 11's on your final day . some say actually many say this is a very mystical number 11/11/11." "How does one walk ahead the pan-

demical just adds to the anxiety, fear and pain. The days went by with umpteen responsibilities some extremely new ones like signature galore for changing of name." Sutapa also spoke about her difficulty in changing her name. "My fingers kept stopping on that how could I just take his name away and make it Sutapa, I was unable to sign took a day off and the name game played on my mind. Like a film in a projector." Sutapa also shared a memory from their days in National School of Drama (NSD), where they first met and fell in love. She notes, "I remember sitting outside NSD late evening... beautiful girls from kathak kendra floating out... they were all very well dressed up unlike us we were always in our blue trackpants and sky blue t-shirt... Both boys and girls wore the same... and you mispronounced my name and I tried to

correct and rubbed it in as usual my permanent thing that north Indians are so stupid and they only can pronounce Sunny, Vicky, Rahul type names and proceed to kake ki dukaan in gol chakkar to have ek bata do chai... its been a long journey of correcting each other spanning a life time. Fighting, arguing laughing, evolving together. You were the loner in a crowd. And now a whole crowd has followed you up there... by the way OM from the tea stall in the nukkad went some years back has he made a chai ka stall up there? are you having ek bata do chai there. And, are drinking water from the running streams?" "All of you stay in peace remember us that we loved you, all of you. And remember all of you is missed by some one or the other... all your families grieve... may you all rest in peace! I hope there is enough space, I hope some of you will forgive us for not been able to give a respectable cremation," Sutapa concluded. Irrfan Khan's health had been on the decline ever since he was diagnosed with neuroendocrine cancer in 2018. He had been travelling to London frequently for treatment. He passed away on April 29 in Mumbai's Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, after a long battle with the disease.

## Arjun-Anshula help over 30,000 people: 'Invested my life's savings'

New Delhi, Apr 29: Actor Arjun Kapoor has said that he has invested his life's savings for a venture that has helped people in need during the Covid-19 pandemic. Along with his sister Anshula Kapoor, he has raised over ₹1 crore and has helped over 30,000 people across India through their online celebrity fundraising platform, Fankind. Expressing his happiness to have been able to lend a helping hand during this crisis, Arjun said in a statement, "I had invested my life's savings for this venture and it makes me proud that the platform has supported those in serious need in these desperate and trying times." Arjun said, "The pandemic has



made us stare at an abyss of suffering. It has made us all step forward and help as many people as possible in our own, unique way. From monthly ration kits to hot meals, to cash in hand for migrant workers, to providing hygiene kits for Covid-19 prevention, the initiative has managed to touch the lives of many

and hopefully has helped them in a small way to fight the virus and its far-reaching devastating impact." The 2 States actor was recently seen in an episode of *Star Vs Food*, a celebrity cooking show. While on the show, he opened up about his parents, producers Boney Kapoor and Mona Shourie Kapoor's di-

voice in 1996 and how it led him to seek comfort in food. "When my parents split up, I looked at food for comfort. I got caught up in the way I felt emotionally, so I started eating, and then I really enjoyed eating. It is very difficult to let go because eventually, there is nobody to stop you beyond a point. Your mother loves you, she will reprimand you, but you are still a kid. They give you benefit of the doubt ki yeh umar hai khane ki, theek hai (that this is the age to eat, so it is okay). It reached a point where I developed asthma, I developed injuries because of it and I reached 150 kgs by the time I was 16," he said on the show. He made his debut in Bollywood

with *Ishaqzaade* in 2012. He was last seen on the big screen in *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*, which got a theatrical release. Fans will see him next in the Netflix film *Sardar Ka Grandson* which will mark Arjun's digital debut. The movie also features Rakul Preet Singh as well as Neena Gupta and will be out on May 18. Speaking about it, Arjun recently told *Hindustan Times* in an interview, "As we sit in this post and in pandemic world, it seems exciting to know my film will be released on a streaming platform and be consumed by millions across the world. It will be an opportunity for it to be seen in different languages with subtitles."

## Renuka Shahane: It is scary when you get Covid as we haven't understood it properly yet

Mumbai, Apr 29: The actor is glad that she and her family are feeling better and recovering, though she was worried about her 81-year-old mum, who tested positive too and her husband, Ashutosh Rana, who was hospitalised. "It will take all of us some time to come back to feeling totally normal," says

much better," she shares, glad that her husband returned from the hospital after a week and is recuperating at home. Shahane has been avoiding watching forwarded videos and the news on Covid as she gets emotional due to her "vulnerable" condition. She is disheartened to see so many whatsapp



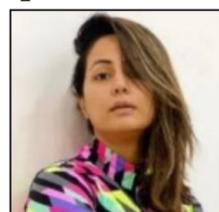
Renuka Shahane, who recently tested positive along with her entire family. She is glad that all of them are recovering well, and they will be in quarantine for another few days before testing again. "I was most worried about my 81-year-old mum, who tested positive as she was staying with us. (Ashutosh) Ranaji (husband-actor) returned from a shoot and got a fever and immediately we got him tested. He was admitted to the hospital later and we all got tested but our results came three days later. The first few days were really bad. My fever lasted a long time and that was worrying the doctors but as my oxygen levels were good, so we felt confident that things would get better. Dr Yatin Gadgar looked after all of us, remotely and all of us are

forwards, which call the pandemic "a conspiracy theory". "Oh, please! It exits and is curable but the infection rate is so high that before you know it, you've infected 50 other people. The doctors and health workers have been working non-stop and they need a break. We have to be responsible and ease their burden and help them stay healthy. People don't understand or think for others, at all. It is scary when you get Covid as we haven't understood it properly yet. We should err on the side of caution rather than be overconfident and say, kuch nahin hoga. Look at the situation we are in today, in terms of availability of beds, oxygen and ventilators. The rising cases and situations at hospitals are too heart-breaking," she says.

## Hina Khan gives an emotional explanation to Twitter user on a query on her dad

Mumbai, Apr 29: Actor Hina Khan, in an interaction with a Twitter user, revealed why she will always address her family as her father's family. Actor Hina Khan, who is grieving the death of her father, had an emotional reply to a Twitter user, who

had a question about him. It concerned Hina's reply to actor Rubina Dilaik's tweet. Rubina tweeted her support to Hina and had written in a tweet: "Stay strong girl @eyehinakhan ... my prayers are with you and your family." Reply-



ing to her, Hina had replied: "Thank you Ruby.. Plz keep my Dad

and his family in your prayers." It was the use of the phrase "his family" by Hina, which saw a Twitter user ask Hina as to why the actor chose to write "his family" and not "my family". She said: "I'm sorry for out of topic comment. Just wanted to know,

why is it twitted as dad and 'his' family.. Y not my family." Earlier this month, Hina had shared a note on Instagram on her father's death. She had written: "My beloved father Aslam Khan left for heavenly abode on the 20th of April, 2021.

# WTC Final: Kohli not getting much help from teammate Jamieson

Ahmedabad, Apr 29: In the IPL nets, Virat Kohli is literally using every trick in the bag to prepare for the World Test Championship final against New Zealand but is not getting much help from current teammate and Black Caps pacer Kyle Jamieson. RCB all-rounder Dan Christian has revealed that Jamieson, who is playing his first IPL after being bought for Rs 15 crore, is carrying a couple of Dukes balls, which will be used in the WTC final in Southampton from June 18 between India and New Zealand. However, when his RCB skipper Kohli asked Jamieson to bowl with the Dukes to him in the nets, the New Zealander did not fall for that trick. "Pretty cagey from Virat actually, right in the first week we were here. The three of us were sitting down after the nets



and these two were talking about Test cricket. "Virat said: 'So Jamie (Kyle Jamieson) have you bowled much with the Dukes ball?' and they are talking about that stuff. "Jamie says: 'Yeah, I have a couple of them here, I will have

a bowl leading in before I go over there' and Virat says 'Oh, if you want to have a bowl against me in the nets, I am more than happy to face'. "Jamie was like, 'No chance I am going to ball at you!' He would have looked at

his release point and everything that he does with the Dukes ball! (chuckles)," Christian said on The Grade Cricketer's YouTube channel. Jamieson had troubled the Indian batsmen, including Kohli, when they toured

New Zealand early last year and it was the main reason why the lanky pacer attracted a huge bid at the IPL auction. When it comes to off the field activities in the RCB camp, Christian said Kohli is not as involved as other stars like AB de Villiers and Glenn Maxwell. "You don't see Virat a lot off the field, you see a little bit. He will, maybe, come to half of the things but he has his family here too from the start so we might see more of him now. "So AB (de Villiers) is the happiest, most humble... Never got a bad word to say about anybody, will be there from start to finish. Maxi (Glenn Maxwell) is there from start to finish as well," said Christian. RCB, who are aiming to win their maiden IPL title, have started well this season.

# Now umpires Menon, Reiffel pull out of IPL

New Delhi, Apr 29: India's top umpire Nitin Menon and his Australian counterpart Paul Reiffel has pulled out of the IPL due to personal reasons. It is learnt that Menon, a resident of Indore, has left the IPL bio-bubble after his wife and mother tested positive for COVID-19. Menon is the only Indian in the ICC elite panel of umpires and was recently praised for his work during India's home series against England. "Yes, Nitin has left as his immediate family members have COVID-19 and he is currently not in a mental state to conduct games," a BCCI official told PTI. In Reiffel's race, the Australian government imposing a

travel ban from India in the wake of the rising COVID-19 cases led to his quick departure. Menon is the second Indian to pull out of the tournament after Indian off spinner Ravi Ashwin, who also went home after all his family members tested positive. Three Australians Andrew Tye, Kane Richardson, Adam Zampa have left home due to the unprecedented health crisis in India. However the BCCI is going ahead with the tournament and interim CEO Hemang Amin has assured all players and support staff that they remain safe in the bio-bubble. BCCI is likely to replace Menon and Reiffel with two of its own pool of umpires.



# MCA postpones Mumbai T20 League amidst COVID-19 pandemic

Mumbai, Apr 29: The MCA on Thursday issued a press release stating their tournament would be deferred till further notice. Originally, the event was expected to start shortly after the IPL 2021 final on May 30. The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) has decided to reschedule the third season of its annual Mumbai T20 League because of the pandemic. The decision comes at a time when debates have raged about the Indian Premier League (IPL) continuing amidst the second wave of COVID-19 in the country. The MCA on Thursday issued a press release stating their tournament would be deferred till further notice. Originally, the event was expected to start in the first week of June, shortly

Milind Narvekar, was based on humanitarian grounds. "When so many people in the country have been affected due to the pandemic, and there's a scarcity of oxygen and vaccines, it is not prudent to organise a cricket tournament in such times," Narvekar, who is also the personal assistant to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, told The Indian Express. Given the current situation, President Vijay Patil Ji and I, in my capacity as the Chairman, have decided to not conduct the T20 Mumbai League till further notice. "So on humanitarian grounds, we have decided to defer the tournament till the situation comes back to normal. We don't want our cricketers to play in these conditions. Today

council member Suraj Samat however, explained that there were a few more challenges at hand when it came to organising the Mumbai League. "Apart from the situation, the only time we could start our league was in June, which is when the monsoon starts. We don't know what it will be like ahead, and had to keep all stakeholders in mind. Hence we felt that it's better not to take the risk," he said. The MCA's decision to defer its league comes just two days after the BCCI had granted it permission to organise the event. In a letter to the MCA, TNCA and SCA, BCCI chief executive officer Hemang Amin wrote: "Your request for organizing the tournament falls within the 15-day period after the IPL 2021



after the IPL final on May 30. Interestingly, the MCA had written to the parent body, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), last year, asking for permission to host the regional league. And on Tuesday, the BCCI granted permission to the MCA, the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) and Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) to continue with their respective leagues. The MCA's decision though, as stated by its league chairman

life is more precious than anything else. We will definitely organise the T20 Mumbai League as soon as conditions improve." Despite the thousands of daily cases the city had recorded earlier in April, the Wankhede Stadium hosted the first leg of IPL matches behind closed doors. The BCCI had put into effect a strict bubble to protect all personnel involved in the matches, including the four teams that were based in the city for three weeks. MCA governing

gets over on May 30, 2021. The issue was discussed at the Apex Council meeting of the BCCI. After some deliberations, it was decided that owing to the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, the BCCI is giving permission to organize the tournament within the 15-day period after the completion of IPL 2021." The MCA has called off its league due to the pandemic, while the TNCA have announced that the Tamil Nadu Premier League will start in June.

# Chennai move to No 1



New Delhi, Apr 29: Rituraj Gaikwad's cool quotient blended beautifully with Faf du Plessis' flamboyance as Chennai Super Kings outsmarted Sunrisers Hyderabad by seven wickets in an IPL match, here on Wednesday. Gaikwad was calmness personified as he tore apart the Sunrisers attack during his 75 off 44 balls after

Du Plessis (56 off 38 balls) launched the initial assault, making a target of 172 looking easier than it actually was. The win was CSK's fifth on trot which helped them leapfrog Royal Challengers Bangalore to the top of the table while Hyderabad stayed at the bottom. If Du Plessis shimmied down the track to loft

left-arm spinner Jagadeesha Suchith over long-on for a six, Gaikwad would rock back and pull him over deep mid-wicket for a boundary. If Gaikwad's inside out lofted boundary off Suchith over extra cover was a treat, the use of crease to back-cut the bowler off the very next delivery was equally delectable. There was a stage at the

end of the Powerplay, when Du Plessis had scored double the runs of his younger partner but before one could bat an eyelid, the Pune batsman was on even keel with the former Proteas captain. And once both crossed 50, Du Plessis enjoyed Gaikwad's repertoire of strokes from the best seat in the house. The temperament was there for everyone to see and one would understand why MS Dhoni has been bullish about giving the youngster every possible opportunity despite a dry run at the start of the tournament. A pitch that his skipper Dhoni had termed a bit tacky before the start of the match looked like a batting paradise. The dew did play its part but not an ounce of credit can be taken away from the batsmen. By the time Rashid Khan (3/36) quickly accounted for Gaikwad after a 129 run opening stand followed by

Moeen Ali and Du Plessis, SRH captain David Warner had a resigned look on his face. Earlier, after opting to bat, contrasting half-centuries from Manish Pandey and skipper Warner along with a cameo from Kane Williamson ensured a decent 171/3 for SRH. Warner (57 off 55 balls) and Pandey (61 off 46 balls) added 106 runs for the second wicket at the Kotla but it was Williamson's 26 not out off 10 balls and Kedar Jadhav's 12 off 4 balls which ensured a competitive total for SRH. Lungi Ngidi was the best bowler for CSK, returning figures of 2 for 35 from 4 overs while Sam Curran (1/30) got the other wicket. Warner, who passed 10,000 T20 runs during the course of his innings, appeared frustrated at times at the inability to force the pace on a track where ball wasn't always coming onto the bat.

# Adam Zampa clarifies 'vulnerable' comment on IPL bio-bubble

New Delhi, Apr 29: Adam Zampa has said his feeling of 'vulnerability' in the IPL 2021 bio-bubble was not because of fears that he might be infected by the Covid-19 virus. "My comments about the vulnerability of the IPL bubble had nothing to do with feeling that the virus would enter the bubble at any stage. The BCCI and RCB had many precautions to make us feel safe. I believe the tournament is in great hands... It was a personal choice to leave for many reasons," the Australian leg spinner said in an official statement released by Royal Chal-

lengers Bangalore (RCB) on Thursday. "Kane and I have both reached Melbourne safe and sound. Thanks to the RCB management for the way the situation... Their understanding of the situation made the process a lot easier," Zampa said. Zampa had said the bio-bubble put in place for the ongoing T20 event was the "most vulnerable" he has been a part of while also suggesting that it should have been held in UAE, like last year. This was after Zampa and his RCB and Australian teammate Kane Richardson pulled

out of the season to go home for "personal reasons", as had been announced by the IPL franchise on Monday. This announcement came less than 24 hours before Australia announced a pause on all direct flights from India due to the surge in COVID-19 cases and deaths in India. Zampa and Richardson landed in Melbourne on Thursday afternoon having caught a connecting flight out of Doha. They will now spend the next two weeks in hotel quarantine. "I spoke to Zampa a little while ago and he made a very compelling argument for



going home. But for me, I feel like it's safer for me to stay in the bubble than try and get home at the moment." Coulter Nile told cricket.com.au. Zampa's RCB teammate Dan Christian

lauded the strict measures in place for the tournament. "It's pretty secure, and no expense spared as you can imagine in this tournament," Christian told the same publication.

# Oxygen Express To Carry LMO From Angul | Anil Agarwal Pledges Rs 150 Crore To Support Govt In Tackling National Health Emergency



(A.O. Bureau) Angul, Apr 29: Indian Railways Oxygen Express continues transporting life-saving Oxygen on mission mode. Oxygen Express Operations of Indian Railways continues to bring relief to the States as its operations expanded to the States of Haryana & Telangana after Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi. Since the first Oxygen Express with empty tankers left from Mumbai on April 19 for Visakhapatnam under East Coast Railway jurisdiction, Indian Railways has consistently carrying Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) towards different destinations of the country. Continuing the momentum, there are Two more trains from East Coast Railways, carrying Liquid Oxygen or on the way to the loading

plants. It is expected that cumulative liquid medical oxygen (LMO) carried by Indian railways will reach almost 640 MT in next 24 hrs. Two Empty LMO Tankers unloaded from cargo flight today has been moved to Angul where. This will be loaded on Train to load Oxygen from the Steel Plant, tonight and thereafter to proceed towards Haryana. Haryana will receive its first Oxygen express as the train with two tankers is expected to leave Angul today. Telangana govt. has also requested Indian Railways for Oxygen express. An empty rake is on its way from Secunderabad to Angul via Raipur with 5 empty tankers and is expected to reach Angul tomorrow. Railways is in full preparedness for providing oxygen transportation services to all the states in

need. In the ongoing operation, States provide tankers to the Railways. Railways then proceeds in fastest feasible mode to bring the Oxygen supplies from the locations and delivers it the requisitioning State. The deployment and use of this Oxygen is done by the State Government. Liquid Oxygen being a cryogenic cargo has many limitations like maximum speed at which it can be carried, maximum acceleration & deceleration and loading restrictions like availability of liquid oxygen tankers and loading ramps etc. Route mapping also takes care of the maximum clearances available along the route (because of various RUBs and FOBs). East Coast Railway has taken all precautions for safe running of Oxygen Special Trains from its jurisdiction and will send these trains at the earliest.

- Vedanta to create additional capacity of 1,000 hospital beds panIndia.
- Critical care beds to be placed in state-of-the-art 'field hospitals' across 10 locations.
- Latest pledge of Rs 150 crore is in addition to Rs 201 crore contribution made last year to combat COVID
- Vedanta business units supporting 700 Covid beds, to increase number of beds to 1,000.

New Delhi, Apr. Mr. Anil Agarwal, Chairman of Vedanta, India's leading producer of metals and oil & gas, has pledged Rs. 150 Cr to help the country in its fight against the rapidly spreading second wave of Covid 19. This is over and above Rs. 201 Cr that was spent by the Vedanta group last year. In an effort to support the tremendous efforts being made by the Government of India and State governments, Vedanta Ltd will create additional capacity of 1,000 critical care beds in 10 cities pan-India. The critical care beds will be placed in state-of-the-art 'field hospitals' which will be attached to recognized and reputed hospitals. Each facility will have 100 beds in an air-conditioned tent with full electrical support and designed specifically for Covid care. The critical care facilities will have 90 beds equipped with oxygen support while the remaining will have ventilator support. Speaking on

the initiative, Mr. Anil Agarwal, Chairman, Vedanta, said, "I am deeply concerned and anguished to see the impact of the second wave of Covid-19 and loss of precious lives. Vedanta group has come forward to pledge Rs 150 Cr towards our commitment to fight the pandemic and we stand firmly with our people and the government at this difficult time. We believe that this additional infrastructure that will be set up immediately will bring much-needed relief for those affected by this deadly virus. Vedanta will also provide essential medical equipment for our heroic doctors and healthcare workers. We will continue to do everything possible that will help us together overcome this crisis." The states where the additional capacity of critical care beds will be created are Rajasthan, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Goa, Karnataka and Delhi NCR. The company has set a target for the first set of facilities to



be ready and commissioned within 14 days and balance facilities will be augmented within 30 days. Vedanta has estimated this support for a minimum 6-month period. Vedanta is working closely with the government bodies and local administration to provide medical facilities and hospital care to those in need. The company is currently supporting around 700 beds for Covid patients across its business locations, which will be increased to 1,000 in the near term. Meanwhile, Hindustan Zinc (HZL), ESL and Sesa Goa Iron Ore Business have stepped in to augment oxygen supplies to Covid-19 patients as part of the Vedanta Cares initiative. HZL is currently supplying 5T (100 per cent of Liquid Oxygen capacity) of oxygen per day which can be used for

medical treatment and is in the process of increasing it by another 2-3T. Sesa Goa Iron Ore Business is supplying 3T of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) daily to the Goa State Government and hospitals, while ESL, the Vedanta group's steel maker, has registered its plant near Bokaro for LMO and has committed to supply up to 10T of oxygen daily. Sterlite Copper has received approval from the Supreme Court to supply oxygen from its Tuticorin plant. Sterlite Copper's oxygen plants have a capacity to produce 1,000 tonnes of oxygen daily. Vedanta is in talks with producers to procure the vaccines in bulk for our employees and their families. So far, over 5,000 employees and family members have been vaccinated and we would cover the whole of the Vedanta family

and our business partners in the coming days. The company has rolled out a telemedicine program for Nand Ghar communities with 'Doctor on call' facility in Rajasthan, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka and UP. It has also set up a 24/7 dedicated helpline with Apollo Hospital to provide medical assistance to all employees and their families. Last year, Vedanta had contributed Rs 201 crore in the wake of the Covid crisis. This included a contribution to the PM-CARES Fund and Vedanta's commitment of catering to three specific areas-livelihood of the daily wage workers across the nation, preventive health care and support to all its employees and contract partners across its plant locations.

## Covaxin price dropped to 400 for states; still 1,200 for pvt hospitals

(A.O. Bureau) New Delhi, Apr 29: Bharat Biotech, the maker of first indigenous Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) vaccine, Covaxin, on Thursday reduced the selling price of a single vaccine dose to state governments from 600 to 400, the company said in a statement on Thursday. The announcement comes just a day after the Serum Institute of India, which manufactures the Covishield vaccine developed by Oxford University and British drug firm AstraZeneca, lowered the cost of its Covid-19 vaccine for state governments by 25% to 300. "Bharat Biotech is deeply concerned with the critical pandemic circumstances that India is facing at this time.



Recognising the enormous challenges to the public health care system, we have made Covaxin available to state governments at a price of ₹400 per dose," Bharat Biotech said in a statement. The Union government had earlier nudged the two manufacturers to revise the cost of vaccines to state governments. There has, however, not been any change in the

cost of the vaccines procured by private hospitals and institutions. Bharat Biotech earlier announced that a single dose would cost hospitals 1200 while SII had pegged the cost of its vaccine for private hospitals at ₹600. The two vaccines, which are being used for the national Covid-19 immunisation programme, are sold to the central government

for ₹150 per dose. Bharat Biotech, which co-developed Covaxin with the Indian Council of Medical Research, has a production capacity of about 10 million Covaxin doses each month, and is looking at scaling up its capacity across multiple facilities at Hyderabad, and Bangalore. With the help of the central government, the company is working towards ramp-

ing up the production capacity by at least 100% by May-June, 2021, and with a target set of producing nearly 100 million doses per month by September 2021. "We wish to be transparent in our approach to pricing which was determined by internally funded product development, several operationally-intensive BSL-3 manufacturing facilities (the first of its kind in our country) and clinical trials. We wish to champion innovation in India and our commitment to public health is absolute," the company's statement read. According to reports, the Union finance ministry also approved a credit line of 1500 crore to Bharat Biotech for the purpose of scaling up its production capacity.

## OPPO A53s 5G: India's most affordable 5G phone, with MTK Dimensity 700, priced only at INR 14,990

(A.O. Bureau) New Delhi, Apr 29: OPPO, the leading global smart device brand, today announces the launch of the all new OPPO A53s 5G - The sleekest and the most affordable 5G ready phone in the pocket-friendly segment. The phone offers up to 8 GB memory and is powered by MediaTek's Dimensity 700 chipset. OPPO A53s 5G will surely be a must-have for users that are fans of OPPO's A Series phones as this generation is "Big on memory, high on speed". The price

OPPO Reno5 Pro 5G, F19 Pro+ 5G in the premium segment, OPPO A74 5G, in the pocket friendly segment to now, the OPPO A53s 5G. A Series users aren't just about getting a grasp on the latest technology. They're about embracing technology that benefits their lives, with minimal interruption. From a high-end performance and long-lasting battery to a beautiful display and fashionable design, A Series phones offer great value but all the core features that they need to enhance

and you won't experience the frustration of being interrupted while enjoying your entertainment," said Danyant Singh Khanoria, Chief Marketing Officer, OPPO India. Big on memory, high on speed: With any smartphone, an uninterrupted network connectivity is crucial and can make or break the user experience. OPPO A53s 5G support a fast 5G network connection thanks to a Dual SIM 5G that runs on MediaTek's Dimensity



## Covid-19 patients under home isolation must wear 3-layer medical mask: Centre

(A.O. Bureau) New Delhi, Apr 29: No need for testing after the home isolation period is over, says Centre adding that gargling, taking steam can help. The Union health ministry has issued a revised guideline for Covid-19 patients under home isolation detailing what diet

and medicines they should follow and what they should do to not spread the infection among other family members. The room where a Covid-infected person will be isolated must be well-ventilated and all windows should be kept open. The patients should use triple-

layer medical mask at all times, the guideline said. "Discard mask after 8 hours of use or earlier if they become wet or visibly soiled. In the event of caregiver entering the room, both caregiver and patient may consider using N 95 mask," it said adding that masks should be dis-

carded only after disinfecting it with 1% Sodium Hypochlorite. While such patients have to track their temperature, heart rate, oxygen, breathing difficulties if any and overall wellbeing, they should also drink a lot of fluids. "Elderly patients aged more than 60 years and

those with co-morbid conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung/liver/ kidney disease, cerebro-vascular disease etc shall only be allowed home isolation after proper evaluation by the treating medical officer," the guideline said.

of OPPO A53s 5G starts at just INR 14,990/. .OPPO is committed to make next-gen futuristic technology accessible to all. In line with this, over the last few months, OPPO has been launching 5G devices across price points. Starting with

their life. "We're excited to be able to deliver another new 5G phone from our A Series line, with the new OPPO A53s 5G. This phone offers powerful features that not only ensure that your phone lasts a full day, is 5G network ready, and enough storage

700 chip. But there's more than meets the eye. Dual SIM Dual Standby (5G) enables you to use up to two 5G SIM cards. And OPPO A53s 5G adds a few extra conveniences around its 5G capability.