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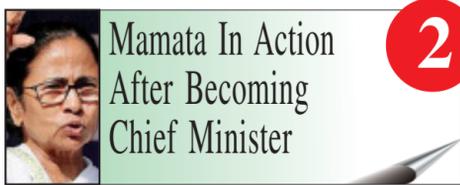
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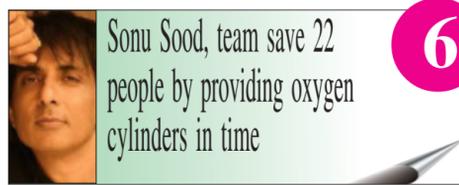
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Odisha CM Announces Khalikote Autonomous College As Unitary University



Bhubaneswar, May 5: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday announced unitary university status to Khalikote Autonomous College in Ganjam district, a press release issued by the Chief Minister's Office said. Khalikote Autonomous College is one of the oldest and famous colleges in the

state having a rich academic tradition. Many of its alumni have established themselves in various fields, the CMO release quoted. Unitary university status to this college has fulfilled the aspirations of the people of southern Odisha and will usher in a new academic journey promoting research, new studies relevant to current

times. It may be noted that after the State Higher Education Department's February 2020 order converting the Khallikote Cluster University to a Unitary University, Khallikote Autonomous College which was the lead college under its territorial jurisdiction was re-affiliated to Berhampur University with effect from June 1, 2020.

N440K alert: Odisha tightens the reins on Andhra border

Bhubaneswar, May 5: With emergence of a new and more virulent strain (N440K) of coronavirus in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Odisha government on Tuesday imposed stricter measures in the bordering districts to monitor flow of people from both the states. Anyone coming to Odisha from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana by personal or hired vehicle, trains and flights will have to undergo mandatory institutional quarantine for 14 days in cluster temporary medical centres (TMCs). The government asked the collectors of all border districts to erect check posts on all inter-state roads along Andhra Pradesh and Telangana with immediate effect and keep track of all those entering Odisha. The districts include Ganjam, Gajapati,



Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur. Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said administrations of these districts will ensure tracking of all the major and minor entry points, national highway, state highways and local roads for people coming in from these two states. Adequate police arrangements should be made for such tracking. The TMCs to provide quarantine facilities to entrants will be managed by the block develop-

ment officers (BDOs) in rural areas and executive officers of urban bodies. The SRC said the district administrations will ensure appropriate facilities and logistic support to the cluster TMCs. However, people travelling from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to other states through Odisha will be allowed without disembarking from their vehicles. The SRC said sarpanchs, ward members and volunteers will be mobilised to create awareness in their areas and report to BDOs,

police stations and local authorities about persons coming in from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana who are not quarantined in institutional facilities. Besides, all passengers from these two states alighting at Bhubaneswar or Jharsuguda airports or at railway stations in the State will be mandatorily subjected to institutional or paid quarantine for 14 days at facilities identified by the district collectors and municipal commissioners. The SRC, however, said any person

who has been successfully vaccinated (two doses) and produces the certificate or RT-PCR negative test report within 48 hours of entering Odisha will be allowed home quarantine for seven days. If there is no suitable facility for home quarantine, such persons may opt for institutional or paid quarantine. Those found violating home quarantine will have to undergo institutional quarantine for seven days, he added. The SRC said persons coming on emergency work for management of Covid-19 by government and private hospitals or coming in for any work permitted by Odisha government will be exempted from this order. However, such persons will have to strictly follow Covid guidelines and perform minimum travel only to do the task for which he or she has been drafted, he added.

Odisha Weather Alert: 23 Dists Likely To Experience Thunderstorm Today

Bhubaneswar, May 5: As many as 23 districts of Odisha are likely to experience thunderstorm today, the Regional Meteorological Centre forecasted. "Thunderstorm with lightning and gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 kmph very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara Cuttack,

Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Angul, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Boudh and Rayagada. Also, heavy rainfall likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Cuttack, Jajpur, Bhadrak and Balasore," the Meteorological Centre predicted. No large change in maximum



temperature (day temperature) at most places over the districts of Odisha during next 4-5 days, it added.

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Odisha Govt Warns Of Strict Action Against Hoarders



Bhubaneswar, May 5: As Odisha began enforcement of 14-day lockdown today to curb spread of COVID-19, Food

Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain warned strict action against those involved in hoarding and black-marketing of essential commodities during the period. The Minister instructed Civil Supply Officers (CSOs) of all 30 districts to personally visit the local markets to keep a check on the hoarders. "I have instructed all CSOs to

visit the markets and send filed officers to strictly monitor the situation. Stern action will be taken against hoarders and black-marketers during the lockdown," said the Minister. It is pertinent to mention here that, people are allowed to buy essential items near their houses by walking to only 500 metre distance between 6 AM and 12 Noon during the lockdown.

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Orissa High Court quashes school merger plan

Cuttack, May 5: The Orissa High Court on Tuesday quashed the notification issued by the School and Mass Education department for merger of schools on March 11, 2020. The judgment comes at a time when around 4,500 schools from among the nearly 16,000 identified for amalgamation have already been merged. The single judge bench of Justice BR Sarangi quashed the March 11, 2020 notification while allowing a batch of 168 petitions. Justice Sarangi directed the department to restore the position of the schools in question as before and provide necessary infrastructure for smooth running of the same. "Instead of finding the reasons for decreasing roll strength, merger of school will not serve the purpose. It is just like without finding the cause of disease, treatment has been started. There are innumerable



reasons for decreasing of roll strength. Instead of eradicating the ground difficulties, merger has taken place due to decision taken at higher level without realising the ground level reality", Justice Sarangi observed. Faced with the huge setback, official sources said the department will move the Supreme Court against the judgment. The ruling came on petitions that had challenged the merger notification on the ground that it violated the Odisha Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2010. The petitioners had pointed out that clause (a) of sub-rule 1 of Rule-6 prescribed that a school teaching students of Class I to V

has to be established within a walking distance of 1 km of the neighbourhood. The Court endorsed the contention of the petitioners that the decision to merge government primary schools with UP schools is highly arbitrary as that would put the small children into great difficulty. As per the notification, schools with students less than 40 were to be merged with bigger nearby schools known as lead schools. As per the plan, integration of primary, UP and high schools with the nearby bigger schools will ensure fully functional schools with increase in number of teachers per class and concentrated investment of resources, it stated.

Petrol, Diesel Price Rise Sharply For 2nd Day

New Delhi, May 5: Petrol and diesel prices in the country rose again sharply by 19 paise and 21 paise per litre respectively on Wednesday as Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) continued to

cover for their losses on holding back price rise for past 18 days due to state elections. This is second increase in fuel prices in as many days as petrol and diesel prices rose by 15 paise and 18 paise per litre respectively even on Tuesday after a 18 days break. OMCs benchmark retail fuel prices to a 15-day rolling average of global refined products' prices and dollar exchange rate. In the last

fortnight global oil prices have hovered in \$66-67 a barrel range higher than the levels when petrol and diesel prices were last revised. Crude prices have jumped over \$69 a barrel on Wednesday. The price

of the two auto fuels had fallen by 16 paise and 14 paise per litre respectively on April 15 after a 15 day break when OMCs kept its prices static. Thereafter revision of fuel prices have been halted. The

OMCs went on price cut for the first time this year on two consecutive days - March 24 and 25 after keeping oil prices steady for past 24 days. It again reduced the price on March 30.

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Coronavirus Third Wave Inevitable: Indian Government



New Delhi, May 5: Principal Scientific Advisor to PM of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Vijayaraghavan has said that a third wave of corona may also come. He says that given the manner in which the virus has just spread, it can be said that a third wave will definitely come. For that, we have to prepare for now. Vijayaraghavan has also denied that the new variants of Corona are more contagious. He has said that the new variants are also contagious like the original variants. They do not

have a new kind of infection potential. K.K. Vijayaraghavan had said that the peak of the second wave of Corona may come by the end of this month. He had said that as of now there is no such variant of virus on which vaccines are not effective. He has said about the dreaded condition of corona infection that it has happened due to many reasons, not one. Vijayaraghavan said—a very large number of cases are coming up in reality, which is a matter of serious concern. But if peak and fall is

taken care of, then it takes about 12 weeks. And this time has to be seen in the context of states and districts. It will take a little more time to reduce the cases as a whole, but we will see the cases getting less in the last month or early next month. Meanwhile, looking at the new strains, we have to pay attention to every aspect of healthcare, whether it is a case of distancing, analysis of strains or a large number of vaccinations. That is, the focus should be on what we can do, not on what will happen.

Mamata In Action After Becoming Chief Minister



Kolkata, May 5: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee (CM Mamata Banerjee) has come into action after her swearing-in. Mamta Banerjee has given several important orders in view of the growing cases of Corona virus in the state. According to the orders of the Chief Minister, local trains will be closed in Bengal

from Thursday. Along with this, RT-PCR test of all passengers will be done at the airport. Also, wearing masks has been made mandatory in the state. According to the order of the Mamta government, 50 percent of the employees will be present in all government offices. At the same time, shopping malls / com-

plex, swimming pool has been closed till further orders. Social, cultural, educational and entertainment programs have also been banned in the state. At the same time retail shops have been allowed to open from 7 am to 10 pm and from 5 pm to 7 pm. All political meetings in the state have been completely banned.

After 'split' report, EC says 'unanimous' there shouldn't be curbs on media reporting

New Delhi, May 5: After The Indian Express reported that the Election Commission was split over its response to the censure by the Madras High Court on its role in conducting elections during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the poll body Wednesday said it is "unanimous" that there shouldn't be a restriction on media reporting. In a statement, the poll body said it has come across certain press reports concerning its position in relation to media. The EC said its approach on the collaboration with media is that of a natural ally and remains un-

changed. The EC had approached the Supreme Court with a Special Leave Petition (SLP) against oral observations by

ties from wanton abuse of the Covid-19 protocol" in election rallies. In its plea, the Commission termed the HC's re-



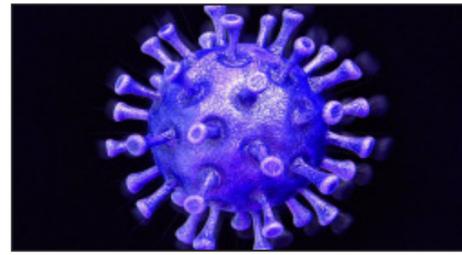
the Madras High Court that the Commission "should be put on murder charges" for "not stopping political par-

marks as "uncalled for, blatantly disparaging and derogatory". The High Court, which is an independent constitu-

More Than 1 Lakh Active Coronavirus Cases In These 12 States: Luv Agrawal

New Delhi, May 5: Regarding Covid-19 Cases and deaths in the country, Joint Secretary of Health Ministry Luv Aggarwal said that there are 2.4 percent more cases on Wednesday than Tuesday. Aggarwal said that the deaths from Corona also increased compared to the previous day. The Joint Secretary said that 3,82,315 cases have been reported in the country in the last 24 hours, 12 states have more than one lakh active cases, 7 states have 50,000 to one lakh ac-

tive cases, 17 states have more than 50,000 active cases. There are about 1.5 lakh active cases in Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. The Joint Secretary told that in 24 states the positivity rate is 15 percent. At the same time, the positivity rate has reached 25 percent in 10 states. He said that cases are falling in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand,



Andaman, Lakshadweep. At the same time, cases of corona are increasing in Karnataka, Kerala, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Bihar, Chandigarh, Tripura, Assam, Himachal Pradesh. Highest deaths in these

five states: Luv Aggarwal said that more deaths have been reported in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi and Haryana. He said that there are some areas of concern. In Bangalore, about 1.49 lakh cases

have been reported in the last one week. There have been 38,000 cases in Chennai. Covid cases have increased rapidly in some districts, including Kozhikode, Ernakulam, Gurugram. Regarding the vaccination campaign, Luv Aggarwal said that the liberalized policy for vaccination was launched on 1 May. Under this, the campaign has started smoothly in 9 states and 6.71 lakh people between the age of 18-44 have been vaccinated.

Three killed, six injured in explosion while refilling oxygen cylinder in Lucknow

Lucknow, May 5: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the loss of lives in the incident and directed officials to probe the reasons behind the incident. Three people lost their lives and six others were injured when an oxygen cylinder exploded while it was being refilled in Chinhat area here on Wednesday, police said. "Three people have died, and six others were injured in the explosion which took place while refilling an



oxygen cylinder. Two injured persons are admitted at Ram Manohar Lohia hospital, while four are undergoing

treatment at the trauma centre of KGMU. I have visited the explosion site, RML Hospital and KGMU trauma

centre. The injured are being the best medical treatment free of cost," District Magistrate of Lucknow, Abhishek

Prakash, told PTI. SHO of Chinhat police station Dhananjay Pandey said the incident occurred at at KT oxygen plant. (Express Photo by Vishal Srivastav) A team, comprising the additional district magistrate, additional DCP, chief fire inspector and drug inspector, has been formed to probe the incident, he said. Lucknow Police Commissioner D K Thakur, who also reached the spot, said that efforts were on to ascertain the identity of the deceased.

Its tankers unfit for 'Oxygen Express', Punjab takes road route to transport O2

Chandigarh, May 5: While pulling all stops to transport oxygen in a speedy manner from Bokaro steel city, Punjab government is faced with a peculiar problem as majority of its tankers — 14 out of 15 available — are not being allowed on the 'Oxygen Express' for not meeting the height standards. As a result, the Punjab-bound tankers are being forced to take the road route which is taking them 3 days to reach the state instead of 30 hours by train. With limited resources, Punjab

government is not being able to avail "90 metric tonnes of daily oxygen quota" from Bokaro allocated to the state by the Centre. Out of the 15 oxygen tankers that the state has, only one has been found to make it to 'Oxygen Express', with its height meeting the ceiling cap of 3.5 metres, The Indian Express has learnt. After the railways refused to carry the oxygen tankers airlifted from Punjab to Jharkhand on 'Oxygen Express' citing height issue, the Punjab government went in for



to "double check" the height measurements from legal meteorology department. However, after the exercise, it was found that only one tanker was good enough to be permitted on 'Oxygen Express'. The height parameters by the railways have been fixed factoring in

height of the tunnels, and the bridges on rail route. From April 28, Punjab has airlifted two such tankers daily by the Indian Air Force to Jharkhand. However, after being denied transportation through 'Oxygen Express' due to height issue, the tankers full of oxygen

from Bokaro took the road route with police escort. Punjab government also requested for "green corridor" for smooth road transportation. The first batch of two oxygen tankers was airlifted to Jharkhand on April 28, and two tankers are being despatched via air route to Jharkhand daily since then. According Punjab Industries Director Sibin C, it took about three days for the tankers to reach Punjab from Bokaro after completion of all formalities there.

JPNadda vows to 'save' people of Bengal from 'cycle of political violence'

Kolkata, May 5: BJP president J P Nadda on Wednesday took a symbolic oath here to protect democracy and "save the people of West Bengal from the cycle of political violence". Nadda, who had attended a dharna near a Gandhi statue in the central part of Kolkata on Tuesday, said his party will ensure that the entire country gets to know about the widespread violence unleashed in the state following the declaration of Assembly poll results. "I will be visiting districts such as North 24 Parganas to be on the side of our members who were at the receiving end of this brutality... We



want to tell the entire country about this," Nadda said at a programme organised by the saffron camp at its Hastings office here. The BJP has claimed that at least six of its workers and supporters, including a woman, were killed in attacks allegedly perpetrated by the TMC following its

victory in the assembly elections. "We will continue to serve the help the people of Bengal and help them realise their dreams. We will strive to break this chain of political violence," he said at the programme, which was attended by state BJP chief Dilip Ghosh among others.

Odisha records highest GST collection of Rs 3,849 crore in April

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 5: Amid a fierce Covid-19 second wave, Odisha recorded the highest ever GST collection of Rs 3,849.48 crore, including Rs 1,126.67 crore of SGST in April, posting an overall growth of around 17 per cent (pc) over the collection of March. The growth in collection of tax in April over the total collection in March, which was supposed to be the month of highest collection being the end of financial year, indicated an impressive turnaround of the State economy. Finance department sources said the gross GST collection of Rs 3,849.48 crore last month was the highest since the inception of GST regime in Odisha as Rs 2,955.6 crore was collected during April 2019 and Rs



774.29 crore in April 2020. The State collected Rs 1,126.67 crore SGST, Rs 952.43 crore CGST, Rs 1,157.05 crore IGST and Rs 613.33 crore Cess in April. The SGST collection was Rs 927.6 crore in April 2019 and it drastically came down to Rs 360.36 crore in April last year due to nationwide lockdown for the pandemic. The previous highest was Rs 954.62 crore collected in

March this year. The significant rise in SGST collection during April has been attributed to better compliance, increased collection from the iron and steel sector besides from matured GST demand made by tax officers after return scrutiny. Since all VAT paying dealers (petrol and liquor) had paid tax till March 25 during the month of March itself, the balance collection of Rs 218.95 crore for

remaining five days was collected during April as against Rs 130.11 crore in the same month last year and Rs 183.92 crore in April 2019. Of the total collection, petroleum products registered a growth of 175.31 pc with Rs 166.87 crore in April as compared to Rs 60.61 crore in the same month last year. "The Commercial Tax and GST organisation has been focusing on increasing the tax-base

of GST with regular survey and registration. As many as 52,210 new registrants were brought under the GST fold in the last fiscal. All circles have been instructed to ensure 90 pc return filing within due date," said a tax official. Commissioner of CT and GST Sushil Kumar Lohani has instructed all field officers to detect the wrong return filers by applying data analytics and collect all taxes from them as per the provisions of law. Tax officials have been asked to facilitate genuine tax payers and ensure that they are not put to any unnecessary harassment. The total e-way bill generated during April was 15.28 lakh against 11.91 lakh during April 2019 and 3.56 lakh during the same month last year due to the negative impact of Covid-19.

Kaliaboda crematorium comes up in Cuttack

(A.O. Bureau) Cuttack, May 5: Amid rise in Covid-19 fatalities, the district administration has earmarked the Kaliaboda crematorium for funerals to ease the load on Satichaura. This apart, the Gorakbar and Kadam Rasool burial grounds have been readied by the administration for burial of bodies belonging to Christian and Muslim communities,

have been selected, steps are being taken on war footing to make them ready for cremation of bodies of Covid victims," said project director, DRDA Cuttack Ambar Kar. He said people would not be allowed to cremate bodies of those succumbing to the disease at the village crematoriums. Sources said the block administrations are facing a tough task in arranging manpower



informed district Covid nodal officer, Dr Umesh Ray. As per the State government's direction, the district administration has asked tehsildars and BDOs to identify new cremation grounds in areas under their jurisdiction to facilitate cremation of bodies of patients succumbing to the disease. "We have already identified suitable places for setting up new crematoriums at every block as per Covid protocols. While sites for new crematoriums in all 14 blocks of the district

to make the special crematoriums functional. "Though we have identified two grounds on Mahanadi and Chitroptala river banks near Kendupatana and Sirlo, we are yet to make them functional due to shortage of manpower. Even as the administration has declared incentive of Rs 7,500 for disposal of the body of a Covid victims, nobody is coming forward to take up the risky jobs," said an official on condition of anonymity.

Covid Lockdown: Get Permission For Marriage Function Or Funeral In Bhubaneswar Via WhatsApp



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 5: As the 14-day state-wide lockdown has been in force from May 5 to prevent the spread of coronavirus, the police of Bhubaneswar Urban Police District (UPD) issued a mobile number for residents of the city seeking permission for marriage or funeral-related activities. Bhubaneswar Deputy

Commissioner of Police (DCP) Umashankar Dash today informed those seeking the permission to hold marriage or funeral activities can call 100 or 8144207100. Through WhatsApp the police will then send a particular format to the concerned person. Once the police get the filled-up format through WhatsApp, permission

letter will be sent to the applicant, he added. In case of movement for marriage or funeral-related activities and organising the programmes during the lockdown, the concerned person can produce the permission letter when asked by the police, Dash stated. Today's move will help people get the necessary permission without visiting the Bhubaneswar DCP office, the police officer stated. Worth mentioning, people were required to visit the Bhubaneswar DCP office to get permission for marriage or funeral activities in the Bhubaneswar UPD area during the Covid lockdown.

'Katuri' Gang Busted In Odisha Capital; 5 Robbers Arrested

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 5: The Commissionerate Police busted a robbers' gang known as 'Katuri' gang and arrested its five members in Bhubaneswar. The valuables including 19 gold chains and silver ornaments were seized from possession of the accused persons. "The Commissionerate Police achieved success in busting the 'Katuri' gang or 'Pulsar' gang that had created panic



among residents in Twin City Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. A special

Nagar Police and Khandagiri Police managed to apprehend five members of the gang," informed Police Commissioner Saumyendra Kumar Priyadarsi today. At a presser, he said that the 'Katuri' gang was active in past four months in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. The gang members were especially targeting the morning walkers and passersby. They were attacking them with 'Katuri' (dagger) and

fleeing the scenes with gold and silver jewelries. The police seized 19 gold chains, 6.2 kg silver ornaments, Rs 13,600 cash from possession of the accused persons. Besides, a motorcycle (Pulsar), a scooter (Honda Activa) and the dagger used for crime were also recovered from them. The gang was involved in 25 cases, of which 18 had been registered at different police stations in Bhubaneswar and remaining 7 in Cuttack.

Packaged Food To Be Provided At Aahaar Centres In Odisha Capital During Lockdown

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 5: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has decided to provide packaged food to people at 12 Aahaar centres in the city during the lockdown in Odisha. Meal quantity has been



reduced at the Aahaar centres due to less footfall in view of the lockdown restrictions. The decision has been taken to avoid food wastage and the meal quantity will be increased on the basis of demand, an official of the BMC said.

President of KABP Satyabrata Dash has extended thanks to the Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and the NHAI



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 5: President of Khandagiri Anchalika Bikash Parishad (KABP) Satyabrata Dash has extended thanks to the Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and the NHAI, Bhubaneswar for opening of the Khandagiri Flyover on the 4th May 2021. Although about 10% of the construction work and lighting etc are

yet to be done the President, KABP requested the Union Minister on Twitter for opening of the Flyover keeping the public convenience in view. The people of Khandagiri area have expressed pleasure for functioning of this Flyover which was highly essential to reduce heavy traffic on NH 16 at Khandagiri Square.

Odisha records highest single day spike in fatalities

15 people lost their lives to Covid-19 taking the toll to 2,088

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 5: As the novel coronavirus continues to rage across the country, Odisha recorded 8,216 more new Covid-19 cases from all 30 districts in last 24 hours pushing the active case tally close to 60,000 in just one week. The disease also claimed 15 lives, the highest in a single day this year, taking the death toll to 2,088. While maximum five patients from Khurda and three from Rayagada succumbed, two each from Kalahandi and Sundargarh and one each from Cuttack, Puri and Sonepur fell to the virus. Khurda, Sundargarh, Cuttack and Puri continued to be worst affected apart

from the western Odisha districts with 1,271, 636, 447 and 402 cases respectively. Eight districts registered more than 300 cases each and 10 others reported over 100 cases each. After overwhelming the health apparatus in western region of the State that contributes a bulk of the daily caseload, Covid is spreading fast into rural areas which were largely unaffected in the first wave last year. Nine of the 10 districts bordering Chhattisgarh put together 2,968 new infections, accounting for 36 per cent of the tally. It is not only the western districts that the villages are witnessing a surge in cases, but the industrial areas in Angul, Jajpur and Cuttack besides districts like Nayagarh and

Sonepur have also been contributing more cases to the State's tally. The spread in Balasore, Bhadrak and Jajpur is being blamed for the arrival of returnees from West Bengal. The healthcare crisis in rural areas started compounding as most of the medical infrastructure, especially the tertiary care facilities are concentrated in the cities like Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, where serious patients are now heading in a hope to get quality treatment. Most of the fatalities are, however, attributed to delay in getting treatment. Senior medicine specialist Dr Niroj Mishra said lack of awareness and reluctance to testing and treatment make the rural population more susceptible to Covid.

"People with symptoms need to come forward for testing and the government should intensify contact tracing of positive cases," he suggested. The State has conducted 43,682 tests including 15,374 through RT-PCR with a test positivity rate of 18.8 pc slightly down from the previous day. Surprisingly, not a single sample was tested through RT-PCR in the worst-hit Nuapada while only seven RT-PCR tests were carried out in Kalahandi, 15 in Bhadrak and 16 in Balangir. With this, the Covid tally soared to 4,79,752 of which 4,10,227 have recovered. The active cases stood at 67,384 and nearly 88 pc among them were in home isolation.

Shiva buys water tanks and supplies water



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 5: Lockdown is going on with unbearable heat. Drinking water problems have emerged in various parts of Old Bhubaneswar at this time. Shiv Prasad Behera, a local social activist, has set an example. He buys a water tank at his own expense and fills it with water. People here are desperate for water in various old Sahibs of old Bhubaneswar. You can go to different ponds for bathing, but it's difficult to get out because of the lock

down. The biggest problems are household cooking, bathing small children, washing dishes, water and drinking water. So while the water problem is here, the government babu heard one day and did not show up for four days. Meanwhile, the editor of the Jageshwari Club has started a campaign to buy water tanks from his own hands and supply water. He started the project by supplying water to more than 20 people in Old Town. That is why Shiva has been praised by the locals for this great work.

EDITORIAL

The bubble bursts

Finally, COVID-19 has breached the IPL franchises' 'safe and secure' bio bubble. So, the ongoing edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) has been suspended indefinitely. Officially, they tell us, the reason is that the bio-secure bubble was inexplicably breached and then, before we knew it, the cricketers and support staff started falling prey to the accursed virus one after another. Since the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is quite concerned about the "health and wellbeing" of the IPL players, it was left with no option but to suspend the matches. Well, cutting clear of all the jargon that is being thrown at us, and more of it will come our way in the coming days, here's a simpler, possible narrative. The greed of the cricket authorities managing the show — namely the BCCI, the various State cricket Boards and the IPL governing council — is mainly responsible for the current fiasco. Remember, even when the situation wasn't dire last year, they arranged for the matches to be held in the UAE and even roped in a company, renowned globally for its expertise in creating and maintaining bio-secure bubbles. So, especially this year when the situation has rapidly worsened in terms of the exponentially rising cases and the healthcare personnel and equipment are stretched thin, what was the need to organise the tourney in India? And that, too, without re-engaging the bio bubble firm which had performed its duties last year with aplomb and finesse. Only because the cricket authorities wanted to save cheap pennies, even though it was crystal clear even before the start of the tournament that COVID-19's second wave, with its more virulent and burgeoning strains and mutants, was a definite risk to everybody associated with the cash-rich league. Another point: Just as they now started contemplating moving all the machinery and paraphernalia from Ahmedabad and Delhi back to the Wankhede and DY Patil stadia in Mumbai, why weren't the authorities content to host all the matches in Mumbai and Pune in the first place; something that would have helped the teams avoid air travel and significantly cut their exposure risk? But, no, the State cricket associations also needed to be kept in good humour with a slice of the profits' pie! Hopefully, the cricket authorities won't plan to resume the IPL in a hurry. In this hour, when our nation needs all possible help from all quarters, let's not get busy listening to the tinkle of silver and neglecting human life. Basically, let it not boil down just to the lure of lucre.

Sticky wicket

The political wind blowing across Uttar Pradesh (UP) may not be very soothing for the ruling BJP. The results of the recent panchayat elections give the first indication of the emergence of a challenge for the saffron outfit in rural UP. The Opposition, led by the Samajwadi Party and Independents, has made significant inroads in the village politics of the State. Though Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath still remains well-entrenched and the BJP continues to enjoy enormous appeal among the masses, one has to keep a close eye on the change in popular perception about the Government in the wake of the COVID-19 surge as it can pose a serious challenge to Yogi's bid to retain power in 2022. Both the BJP and its rivals are claiming victory in the polls, but reports trickling in from the counting booths clearly indicate that the saffron outfit has not done as well as its leaders might have planned while plunging the State into such a massive exercise in the dreaded Corona era. The panchayat elections were being treated as a referendum on the Yogi Government's work. These elections are not contested on any party symbol, but the BJP named its candidates. This was done with the belief that its candidates would win the elections and then the party would go to town claiming its hegemony in rural politics. Sadly for the BJP, the Independents stole the march in the gram sabha polls while the SP exceeded expectations in the district panchayat elections. Many relatives of the BJP leaders lost to the SP or Independents. Take the case of Lucknow where Sarita, the daughter-in-law of BJP MP Koushal Kishore lost the district panchayat election in Mohanlalganj. Kishore's wife Jaya Devi is the MLA from Malihabad. Vijay Laxmi, the wife of SP MLA Ambrish, won this segment. The reports from other districts like Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Ayodhya, Kanpur and Kannauj, too, do not augur well for the BJP. In Ayodhya, of the 40 District Development Council seats, the SP won 22, the BJP eight, the BSP four and the rest of the seats went to Independents. In Varanasi, the BJP failed to reach double digits while the SP won 17 seats. In Etawah, the SP swept the polls, winning 18 seats. In Mainpuri, Sandhya Yadav, the niece of SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav who contested on the BJP's ticket, lost to the SP-backed candidate by 1,905 votes. In Mathura, the BJP-supported Chanda Devi lost to Devati, an Independent, by over 12,000 votes. The panchayat elections are important as they help gauge the influence of political parties in the rural areas. It is believed that a gram pradhan can sway 10-15 per cent votes in any gram sabha while the BDC and DDC members can influence the block and district voters, respectively. The DDC chairman is considered the 'first person' of the district. The poll outcome shows that the BJP will have to revise its political strategy while Akhilesh Yadav needs to strengthen his party organisation to replicate this success in the 2022 Assembly elections.

The Myanmar crisis lingers on

The General has to decide whether to escalate the conflict or seek a temporary pact through a mediated political dialogue. The most effective means of foiling a coup is a counter-coup. In Myanmar, that will not happen as the military is rock solid and led by an officer corps that considers itself elite and the guardian of Myanmar's core values. As the coup in Myanmar enters its fourth month with multiple centres of resistance taking root, it will take more than an Asean summit and its five-point consensus agreement to unlock the impasse. Senior Gen Ming Aung Hlaing will not ride into the sunset anytime soon. Signs of a third front, after Kachins in the north and Karens in the east have battled central forces, are developing at Meiktila in the central plains after rocket attacks struck the military base there. Meanwhile, the protestors have taken to flash marches that will enable people to disappear before confrontation with the police. The Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) activists are asking people to start non-cooperation campaign by stopping payment of electricity, taxes and repayment of loans. In its 73-year history, the Myanmar Army has never fought foreigners but its own people in internal wars. The coup has marked the battle lines between an Army led by the Burman-dominated officer corps and a range of opposition forces — the CDM consisting of youth aged 20 or below who have tasted a decade of democracy: the Committee representing National Parliament that has morphed into a National Unity Government. This organised resistance has the po-



Ashok K Mehta

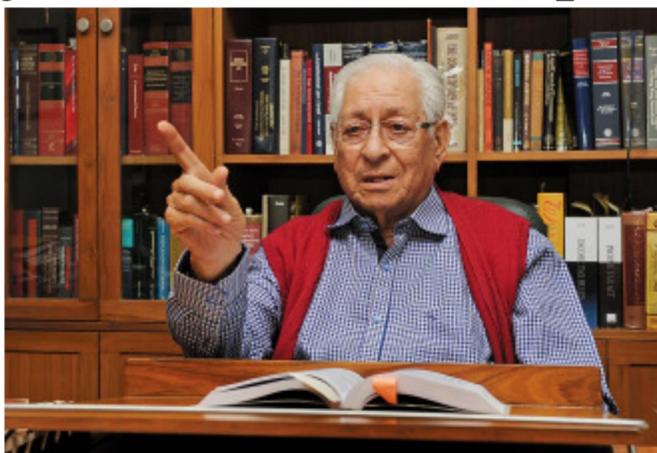
tential to explode into a civil war when some of the 20 Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) like Karen or Kachin join the NUG to challenge the Tatmadaw, the primary centre of power. A call has been made by a Karen, General Baw Kyaw Heh, to all ethnic groups to unite to fight the Burmese military dictatorship. This could be a game changer. The General has to decide whether to escalate the conflict into a bloodier phase or seek a modus vivendi through a mediated political dialogue. Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy had won a clear and outright political victory trouncing the military-backed USDP. It seems inconceivable that the NLD's victory can be set aside by the military on grounds of fraudulent voting. It will be unconstitutional. Can the clock be set back to January 31? Hlaing is from the Army's elite 77 Light Division. He was the mastermind of the ruthless operations against the Rohingyas in Rakhine in 2017 where this Division was

employed. In the 1988 coup, 77 LID was used and 3,500 protestors were killed. But that was 30 years ago. The General's aim is for Myanmar to return to 2011-16 when the USDP was in power and when he took over as the C-in-C in 2011. He does not have much time if he is to return Myanmar to his vision of a disciplined democracy. This goal is a bridge too far even for the Tatmadaw to achieve, especially in 2021. The General has to weigh in the consequences of the coup and preserving the gains the military has secured in the 2008 Constitution. By travelling out of Myanmar, attending the Asean summit, meeting UN envoy Christine Burgene and returning to his citadel, Hlaing has scored a diplomatic victory. Never before has a coup leader been treated with such respect and circumspection. Had he been in Europe, he would have been arrested for alleged genocide against the Rohingyas. The widespread violence has threat-

ened the economy and encouraged criminal activity. In the 1950s, Burma's per capita income was higher than Thailand's and Malaysia's but today it is at the bottom of the Asean GDP. People have been fleeing from townships like Mandalay, Bago and Yangon into the interiors. A new transnational criminal activity hub — comprising small arms, narcotics and wildlife, coupled with an underground financial system reminiscent of the Golden Triangle of yore — has come up. It is a shame that a country which was the hot favourite of foreign investment and growth is suddenly moving in reverse gear. It is estimated the economy will shrink by 20 per cent in 2021-22. The latest UNDP report paints a grim picture: That 12 million people could fall into dire economic strait as businesses remain shuttered in a standoff between the junta and the CDM. The hardest hit will be the poor urban populations and the female heads of households will be the worst hit. India has learnt to play ball with more than one power centre in Myanmar. It has welcomed the Asean initiative and will continue to play a constructive role in resolving the current situation through steadfast support of the democratic process. The end of this political process — when it is started, and a UN Civil Protection Force is accepted by the General — will mark a political milestone in conflict resolution. Some Asean leaders are privately suggesting keeping Myanmar out of the grouping till the coup is undone. The consensus brief is either the first step towards reining in the Generals or, more likely, letting them buy time.

Soli Sorabjee's heart beat for people's rights

I am shocked at the sudden death of my very close friend Soli Sorabjee. I had only just recently, in December 2020, visited his home and met him and his wife, and found him in excellent spirits. We discussed with laughter and cheer, our old times together. I have known Soli since 1975 and we had a common interest in fundamental rights, including the freedom of speech and expression as also the right to life and liberty in its expanded form. We argued the habeas corpus case together during the Emergency in the Supreme Court. I had come from Allahabad and he from Bombay. During the 1977 elections, I was in Bombay with Jayaprakash Narayan presiding over an election meeting. Soli and some other lawyers were in the audience and they shouted that they wanted to hear me speak. I was then called to address the Bombay crowd. In 1977, when I became law minister, I persuaded Soli to leave Bombay and move to Delhi as Additional Solicitor General. I was very happy when he accepted my request. S V Gupte was then the Attorney General and later on we also brought K K Venugopal as second Additional Solicitor General after Soli. It was an excellent team and we functioned beautifully. I became close to Soli and his family and used to visit his home very often. In the 1977 elections, the Janata Party won a two-thirds majority in



Shanti Bhushan

the Lok Sabha with the Congress failing to get a single seat in nine northern states where they still had a majority in the state assemblies. We felt that, having lost the trust of the people, the Congress continuing to rule the state governments would be undemocratic and we decided to dissolve nine state assemblies and call for fresh elections. All nine state governments challenged this decision in the Supreme Court. Though Soli was still only the Additional Solicitor General, I asked him to represent the central government in this case. He argued brilliantly and eventually a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court upheld the decision of the central government. Fresh elections were held in the states and everywhere the Congress was voted out of power. This was also an important contribution of Soli

Sorabjee towards establishing real democratic rights. After the Bhopal disaster, a settlement took place between the government and Union Carbide which absolved the latter of all liability including criminal liability, in consideration of their paying \$470 million. This settlement was endorsed by the Supreme Court presided over by the then Chief Justice R S Pathak. We decided to file a review application challenging that settlement on behalf of the victims. At that time, I am happy to record, that Soli, who was then Attorney General, argued to support our review on behalf of the government. The review petition was heard at length by Justice Venkatchaliah's bench and was partially allowed, with the criminal liability waiver being set aside. Many impor-

tant principles were laid down in that judgment. Soli's stand showed that his heart was with the victims of the Bhopal tragedy and he did not want them to be shortchanged by this settlement. When V P Singh became Prime Minister, he was very keen that I should become the Attorney General. In fact, he called me and tried to convince me to take up the post. I however told him that Soli would be the more appropriate choice, because my interest was in parliamentary issues and not so much arguing cases in court at that stage. Thereafter, Soli was appointed the Attorney General. Soli, as his name suggests, was a great soul. His heart was for people's rights, for which he struggled throughout his life. I do not regard him as anything less than Nani Palkhivala. He was one of the outstanding Bombay lawyers and had been trained in the chambers of the then great lawyers. Bombay, at that time, used to produce great lawyers like M C Seetalvad, Nani Palkhivala and Fali Nariman. It has been my great privilege to have started appearing in the Bombay High Court way back in 1965 and then again in 1969 and later in 1975 (when Indira Gandhi's election case was decided). While at the Bombay bar, I developed a great affinity especially for my dear friends Soli, Fali, Nani, Seervai, and others. I will miss Soli for the rest of my life. He died in honour and glory and the nation is proud to have had a son like him.

Two life's lose by thunderstorm kalabaisakhi



(A.O. Bureau) Ganjam: (Shergarh), May 5: An old man Purna Chandra Pradhan aged about 70 and a child Kanha Pradhan aged about 8 yrs were killed when a tree fell on them in Brahmanchai village under Shergarh block of Ganjam district at around five PM this evening. When purna feeding his cattles at his cattleshed and neae by the another was playing under a tree. At that moment suddenly the tree branches fall

down by heavy thunderstorms so as the old man and kid was under it influence of kalabaisakhi. Two valuable life's lost a very unexpectedly and a very mourning environment in the village. Local sarapanch intimated to local police and fire station by the Firefighters rushed to the incident place and rescued the body, while the old man died at the scene and the kid declared dead at Hinjicut medical by doctor.

Distribution of cooked for needy by Aska Police and Block admins.

(A.O. Bureau) Aska, May 5: Lockdown was strictly enforced at Aska today. From early morning, Aska Police Station IIC Prashant Kumar Sahu make people aware of lockdown and appeal to general public to coptrate the administration. After that Local Tahasildar Sadananda Sethi, BDO Roshan Shatapathi along with

Police Officer Prashant Kumar Sahu went to various parts of Asika town to distribute cooked food among the helpless mentally physically challenged and needy people's. Besides request all Aska public with the business vendors they strictly obey the Panchasutri rule and make people's aware and be safe from the second wave of covid.



Illgal Training camps are running violating Covid Rules. District administration unaware

(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, May 5: The training camp is being run illegally in government schools in violation of the Covid Act, with minors being run out of state with no paperwork, but the administration is not yet aware. Temporary sewing training camps are being run illegally in government schools in violation of the Covid Act. The sewing training was carried out with more than 40 girls, who were without notice of the administration. It is alleged that they are an attempt to seduce a minor. Such an unfortunate incident took place in Nuaguda village of N a k a m a m u d h i panchayat under Korukonda block of Malkangiri district. In the Nuaguda village primary school, there has



been a sewing training program for more than 40 tribal girls for more than a month, and will take them to a company in Balangir. A man named Birendra Nanda of Balangir, who claimed to be the owner of a sewing company, took only two young men from the local area to the tribal villages. He promised to train his daughters and

take them to his company in Balangir. 2 girls of Nakamamudhi of Korukonda block, 2 of Kadamguda, 4 of Nilapari, 4 of Sorlukonda, 1 of Tarlakota, 1 of Balimela, 4 girls of Kaning and 3 of Lambasingh of Chitrakonda area, 2 of Kumaraguda and 1 of all girls from Baleguda village. The gathered

in Nuaguda school. All the girls were told that they would be hired by a company in Balangir, but a bus from Tamil Nadu came to the area on Tuesday to pick them up. Locals immediately protested when they heard the girls were being driven out of state. In addition, the girls were not allowed on the bus. Upon hearing the

news, some of the girls' relatives came and took them to their homes. More than 25 girls were living at Nuaguda Primary School. Among the girls were four minors. So when we asked the district labour officer, he said he was not aware. He also said he would send his staff to investigate. So when we asked Chitrakonda OIC Surya Prakash Nayak, he sent his staff and informed that they would investigate the incident properly. However, there have been calls in various quarters to take legal action against Birendra Nanda, a person who is illegally transporting minors to such a state-run school without a license and proper permission of District administration.

Awareness program on behalf of the District Youth Red Cross MKG



(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, May 5: As from 01.05.2011, the vaccination process for people over the age of 18 has been launched across the country. Generally, people between the ages of 18 and 55 can help with anemia by donating blood voluntary. However, no person who has been vaccinated can donate blood for up to 28 days after vaccination, which can lead to disrupted spontaneous bleeding and a lack of blood in the blood bank. Therefore, at the urging of the Odisha State Branch of the Youth Red Cross, an awareness program was organized

by the Malkangiri District Youth Red Cross. The event was hosted by the District Youth Red Cross host and secretary including a young Red Cross volunteer from the Government Science College Ranjan Kumar Swain, District Youth Red Cross Coordinator. Ashish Rathore and uniquely interested youth joined. An awareness bicycle rally was held. The rally started at the Government Science College and returned to Subash Chowk, followed by DNK Chowk. LDM SB Narsingh Charan Padhi inaugurated the rally as the chief guest,

while social activist Rajendra Prasad Panda and RM Child Officer Satyajit panda of the District Child Protection Authority Satya Jit Panda were the guests. At the rally, students chanted slogans and warned everyone to donate blood before vaccination. Principal Chandan Mishra encouraged and encouraged the students through discussions. College Lecture Mr Ratnakar Mishra, Ness Sabar and Bhaskar Sahu joined in praising the program. Sameer Kumar Dakua and Lakshmi Dhara Matia of the college contributed to the event.

All comodity prices have risen since the 14 day lockdown announcement

(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, May 5: The price of all consumer goods is slowly increasing! As a result, consumer is unable to buy any consumable goods. Despite the fact that fast food shops have the rule of making and writing plaques of the fixed price list of consumable goods, it is openly violated by the Malkangiri traders pulses Cereals, Rice, vegetables potatoes, onions, garlic, ginger, soybeans, etc. Consumable products are sold at different prices



in different shops. It is being sold arbitrarily Mustard and sunflower oil etc. are being sold on a daily basis, which is not available every day. Every day, unscrupulous traders have to be ex-

exploited at every turn. On the other hand, the prices of vegetables, fish, meat, and eggs have skyrocketed. The middle class, the poor, and the financially disadvantaged are in a quandary.

Concerns among Rairangpur residents grow as admin has not set up designated crematoria to conduct funerals



(A.O. Bureau) Baripada, May 5: With increase in Covid-related deaths in the district, resentment is brewing among residents of Rairangpur municipality in Mayurbhanj as the administration is yet to set up designated crematoria to conduct the last rites of bodies of infected patients. Locals blamed the authorities and tehsildar for delay in setting up of a crematorium protesting cremation in open fields despite availability of spaces near forest areas and river/canal banks. The resentment took an extreme turn when administration cremated bodies in places close to human settlement like Gambhari bridge, between Rairangpur-Bahalda at Dubulabedha and Champa Buda forest. Earlier, bodies of some Covid patients were detained for several

hours at Rairangpur Sub-Divisional Hospital due to lack of arrangement for a cremation place. Yaduram Hansdah, an infected patient who died undergoing treatment at the hospital was detained for nearly 30 hours inside an ambulance as there was no place earmarked for cremation. He was later cremated near Gambhari bridge. "The municipality should select an isolated place far away from human habitat for cremation of covid infected bodies as it is creating panic among locals," said Ratan Singh, a resident. Sub-Collector Dharmaranda Behera said administration had selected at least four places for cremation of infected bodies but women in tribal villages do not let the body be cremated in another village due to cultural reasons and prefer cremation in their native villages.

Demand to improve NTPC Medical College & Hospital as Covid facility grows

(A.O. Bureau) Rourkela, May 5: The alarming Covid-19 situation notwithstanding the newly-constructed NTPC Medical College & Hospital (NTPCMCH) at Sundargarh town which was recommended by the Odisha government to be converted into AIIMS, continues to be under-utilised as a Covid facility. Members of the Sundargarh District Bar Association (SDBA) led by president Sukanta Kumar Mohapatra on

Tuesday handed over a memorandum to the Sundargarh Collector Nikhil Pawan Kalyan on the issue. Mohapatra said before the NTPCMCH - which is well-equipped to perform bigger roles in healthcare delivery - could start working, the pandemic struck last year. Since then, the MCH's role has been restricted to limited Covid care activities. He demanded creation of 50 to 100 ICU beds immediately with deployment



of manpower so that critical patients of the region could be saved from travelling 100 to 160 km to Rourkela for availing Covid treatment. He demanded to set up an oxygen plant to attach all 400 beds of the hospital with oxygen. "An RT-

PCR test lab should also be set up here considering the high Covid-19 caseload here", said the SDBA president. Accusing the NTPC officials of mismanaging the MCH, he alleged that even after the death of patients their families are

not being informed about it. "And at times, bodies are left on beds for hours", he said. Health & Family Welfare Department sources said after the first wave the NTPC Covid-19 Health Centre has been opened to treat Covid-19 patients with mild symptoms. Of total 400 beds, about 200 are now equipped with oxygen support and the present deployment of manpower is capable of serving a maximum of 250 beds.

Jagatsinghpur administration gears up for virus management during lockdown

(A.O. Bureau) Jagatsinghpur, May 5: With the State entering a 14-day lockdown from Wednesday, Jagatsinghpur administration has directed medical superintendents of primary and community health centres (PHCs and CHCs) to ensure that all Covid facilities in the district have essential infrastructure like oxygen supply, power and

drinking water in place, to meet any exigency. The district has a 65-bed Covid hospital in Paradip, two Covid Care Centres (CCC) - one at a commercial establishment in Paradip and another at a Kalyan Mandap in Jagatsinghpur town - and 30 temporary medical camps (TMC) with total 1,162 beds. At a review meeting on Monday, Col-

lector Sangram Keshari Mohapatra asked district and health officials to focus on smooth management of the Covid-19 situation during the lockdown period. During the meeting, Paradeep Phosphate Ltd (PPL) was asked to install the Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen generation plant at the Covid hospital by May 25. Post

installation, oxygen will be provided to all beds in the hospital through pipelines. While PPL will bear the cost of setting up the plant, the government will take care of other auxiliary expenditure regarding oxygen supply to the Covid hospital. Besides, BDOs of all eight blocks and executive officers of both Jagatsinghpur and Paradip Municipality were in-

structed to use public address system to ensure lockdown adherence. It was decided to provide two ambulances and a rapid response team in each block. BDOs have been also asked to seek help of locals to cremate bodies of Covid patients. The latter will be eligible to get Rs 7,500 for cremation of each such body, as per norms.

Ranbir Kapoor's Oscar-nominated short film Karma screened at Bandra Film Festival



New Delhi, May 5: Not many know that Ranbir Kapoor starred in Oscar-nominated short film Karma, which was directed by Abhay Chopra, the grandson of veteran filmmaker BR Chopra. Ranbir's first short, which revolves around the theme of capital punishment in India, has been selected to be screened

at the Bandra Film Festival's (BFF) YouTube Channel. The film, also starring Sharat Saxena and Milind Joshi, releases on Wednesday. Karma first released in 2004 and went on to grab a nomination at the Student Oscars. The movie happened to Ranbir when he was a film student along with

Abhay Chopra. This was even before the actor made his Bollywood debut with Saawariya (2007). The near half an hour long film revolves around the relationship of a father and son. It follows a jailer's dilemma of performing the execution of his own son. Recollecting memories of teaming up with Ranbir,

Abhay Chopra said, "I have fond memories of directing Ranbir Kapoor. He had not even started his career back then. He is such an effortless actor. Acting really runs through his veins. Sharat Saxena has done a phenomenal job in the film and has such powerful screen presence. I'm glad I could tell this

story and that it is getting an extended viewership at the Bandra Film Festival." Further adding how Karma is inspired from real life stories, Abhay added, "The year I made this film, capital punishment was a part of every prime-time debate and churned out scores of opinion pieces and cover stories. India saw the hanging of Dhananjay Chatterjee for the rape and murder of Hetal Parekh which fuelled these debates. Karma is fiction but heavily inspired from reality." Along with Karma, Mara Ahmed's feature documentary A Thin Wall revolving around Partition, and Nyay Bhushan's short Backdrop depicting a patriotic glimpse at the Wagah border ceremony will go live on the YouTube channel of the digital film festival.

Tarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah's Sunayana Fozdar on Neha Mehta's comeback as Anjali bhabhi: 'I am no one to comment on it'

New Delhi, May 5: Actor Sunayana Fozdar, who has replaced Neha Mehta in the popular show Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah, recently spoke about reports doing the rounds that Mehta wants the role back. Neha Mehta essayed the role of Anjali bhabhi on the show. Addressing the rumours, Sunayana told the Bombay Times, "I have no clue. It has been almost eight months since I am playing Anjali. If Neha Mehta wants to come back to the show, then it is entirely producer Asit Kumarr Modi's call. I am no one to comment on it." Many fans of the series have also been commenting about how similar the styling and fashion sense of

New Anjali is to the old Anjali. Sunayana stated she has no control over the creative decisions taken by the makers of the show, and has done her best to do with what has been given to her.

makers have a particular perception about it," concluded the actor. Not too long ago, Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah was in the news after a couple of users pointed out that the



"From costume to styling, it is the creative decision of the team. I understand that people have a lot of expectations from the character but I decided to just go with the flow and do what I felt best. Besides, how can I bring any change in the character's look, if the

show's standard has fallen drastically from its earlier days. Director Malav Rajda took the criticism in his stead and wrote a simple, "ok point noted," in return. Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah airs on SAB TV. It has been on for more than a decade now; its first episode premiered in 2008.

Abhishek Banerjee is thankful Paatal Lok broke his comedic actor image

Mumbai, May 5: Actor-casting director Abhishek Banerjee says after starring in back-to-back comedy films, he was scared of getting typecast but his role of the fearsome killer Hathoda Tyagi in the series Paatal Lok helped him break out of that image. Banerjee, who turned 36 on Wednesday, has emerged as one of the most successful faces on OTT platforms with movies such as Unpaused and Ajeeb Daastaans post the critical and commercial success of the Amazon Prime Video neo-noir show. The actor shot to fame with

runs casting company Casting Bay with Anmol Ahuja. The actor, however, is quick to clarify that he will continue to balance his slate with all kinds of roles. He is, however, more attentive towards what he is being offered to him now. "I am paying more attention to the characters and I understand that there are some characters that are going to be easy, and some are not going to be easy. I am trying to strike a balance. I am not saying 'I am not taking up easy characters' because that's my bread and butter. But I will also experiment with



light-hearted movies like Stree, Bala and Dream Girl that cemented his position as a comedy star but Banerjee had hoped that people will also take note of his dark role in the Marathi film Aaji. And now his wish seems to have come true. "I was getting a bit scared of typecasting and felt why are people only offering me comedy? Why are they not able to see beyond my comedy? And that too, when I had done Aaji," Banerjee told PTI in an interview. The actor said he knew that not many people had watched Aaji but expected filmmakers to take note of his performance. "I was wondering as to how I am getting the same kind of roles only to play and how do I break this. Thankfully, Paatal Lok broke it for me. People started realising that I am not only good at comedy and that I can pull off different kinds of characters," Banerjee said, adding that a director's trust in an actor can help change perceptions. "It is also necessary to take risks," he noted. "After a time, you will get bored of doing the same thing, the audience and the maker too will get bored. So why not try and apply different rules with different characters?" Banerjee made his start in the world of entertainment as a casting director in 2015 and one of the rules that he abides by is to not repeat his actors in similar roles. He

roles." With his career taking off with the 2018 sleeper hit Stree, where he played Janna, a friend to Rajkumar Rao's character Vicky, Banerjee said 2020 was supposed to be his big year but with the coronavirus pandemic affecting every walk of life, some of his releases were postponed. But things did change overnight for Banerjee when the trailer of Paatal Lok dropped on his birthday last year on May 5. It made him believe in the universal law that "all good things take time", he said. With 2021 bringing a more severe second wave of infections in the country, Banerjee, who has a slew of projects, including the Varun Dhawan-starrer Bhediya, Rashmi Rocket with Taapsee Pannu and Karan Johar's Dostana 2, said he is still hoping for the best. As the only child in his family, the actor said his birthdays used to be a day of celebration but with the surge in Covid-19 cases, it will be spent in helping as many people as possible. "Last year was very difficult because when the lockdown was announced, it was new for all of us. We had not seen anything like this. It was quite depressing and grim. "Now it seems, this is how it is. And when everything is falling apart around you, you don't know how to celebrate your birthday," he added.

Ramayan actor Sunil Lahri quashes rumours of co-star Arvind Trivedi's death: 'He is doing fine'

New Delhi, May 5: Actor Sunil Lahri, who played Lakshman in Ramayan, on Wednesday took to Instagram to quash rumours of his former co-star Arvind Trivedi's death. Trivedi essayed the character of Ravan in the popular TV series Ramayan. Sharing a still of Trivedi from Ramayan, Sunil wrote, "Aajkal Koi Na Koi Buri Khabar sunane Ko milati Hai carona ki vajah se, Upar Se Arvind Trivedi ji (Ravan) ki jhuthi khabar, Meri Prathna Hai jhuthi afwah failane Walon se kripya Karke Is Tarah ki khabar na



Sunil Lahri and Arvind Trivedi shared screen space in the TV show Ramayan.

failaye... Bhagwan ki Daya se Arvind ji theek hain aur Prathna Karta Hun Ki Bhagwan unhen sadaiv Swasth rakhen. (These days, one gets to

hear ill news every other day, and then there is this fake news of Arvind Trivedi's death floating around. I request those who circulate such

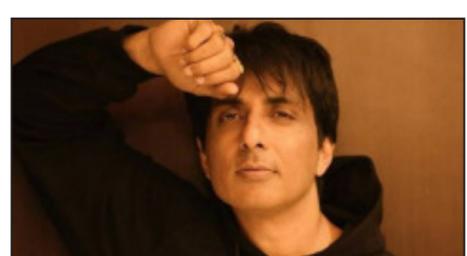
rumours to not do this any more. By God's grace, Arvind ji is doing fine, and I hope he remains in good health always." This is not the

first time such a thing has happened to Arvind Trivedi. A similar rumour had started doing the rounds last May as well. The actor's nephew, Kaustubh Trivedi, took to Twitter to quash the rumours. Recently, singer Lucky Ali's death rumours were posted widely on the internet, which prompted Nafisa Ali to issue a statement on his behalf. Dismissing the rumours, Nafisa wrote on her social media account, "Lucky is totally well and we were chatting this afternoon. He is on his farm with his family. No Covid. In good health."

Sonu Sood, team save 22 people by providing oxygen cylinders in time

New Delhi, May 5: Bollywood actor Sonu Sood and his team recently saved 22 people's lives by providing them with oxygen cylinders. Sood's team had received an emergency call from Bengaluru hospital ARAK. "This was sheer teamwork and the will to help our fellow countrymen. As soon as we got the call from Inspector Satyanarayan, we verified it and got to action within minutes. The team spent the entire night not thinking about anything else but just helping the hospital get oxygen cylinders. Had there been any delay, many families would have lost their close

ones," NDTV quoted the actor as saying. Later, Sonu Sood tweeted about the incident. He wrote on Twitter, "It's not about 22 lives now... It's about how to save thousands who need us." Sood also shared an Instagram story, thanking his team for their dedication and effort. He wrote, "Sood Charity Foundations is proud of our heroes who worked the whole night to provide oxygen cylinders to the patients at the ARAK hospital in Bangalore." Tagging his team members, he further wrote, "Once again so proud of you all. Let's us all of us work together to save some more lives."



Amitabh Bachchan announces Kaun Banega Crorepati 13 open, registration begin from May 10

Mumbai, May 5: In a time where the nation is reeling from the coronavirus' second wave, television audience have found a reason to be happy. Amitabh Bachchan would be soon back with a new season of Kaun Banega Crorepati. Sony TV on Wednesday announced that the registration for KBC 13 is set to begin from May 10. Calling people for registration, Amitabh Bachchan in the 20-second video talks about how one can complete the distance between dream and reality by trying. He also shares that he and the hot seat are waiting for people, and that they too should gear up for the show now. "Aapke aur aapke sapon ne beech ka fasla kitna hai? Teen aksharon ka, koshish. Toh apne sapne sakaar karne ke liye uthaiye phone aur hojaiye tayar. Kuyuni 10 May se shuru horaha

hai mere sawal aur aapke KBC 13 ke registration. Hotseat aur main intezaar kar rahe hai aapka. Aap bhi bas tayar hojaiye. Due to the stopping of shoots in Mumbai, the team could not create a new promo. The host would also be recording all questions to be aired on the channel. "We are

the makers will stick to digital audition. The entire process would be divided into four parts—registration, screening, online audition and personal interview. For about two weeks, everyday starting May 10, Amitabh Bachchan would ask a question on Sony TV at 9 pm. In order to register, one



just kickstarting registrations now, it's a long process before we get our final contestants for shoot. We are hopeful by then, situation would have improved in Mumbai and we can film the episodes in our studio," added the source. Similar to last year, this season too,

needs to answer the question correctly either through text messages or the SonyLIV app. In a statement last year, SonyLIV had shared that it witnessed more than 3.1 crore initial audition entries, and a 42 per cent jump in participation compared to previous year.

Looking back, organisers may have tweaked few things: Cummins on hosting IPL in India

Melbourne, May 5: Australia pacer Pat Cummins feels the IPL organisers, in hindsight, would have "tweaked a few things" after deciding to host the league in India amidst a raging COVID-19 pandemic. Cummins, a key part of the Kolkata Knight Riders team, said previous edition held in UAE was incredibly "well-run" and the organisers pushed it "little step further" by organising it at home this year. The IPL was "indefinitely suspended" on Tuesday, following multiple COVID-19 cases inside the bio-bubble. Last year, IPL was first postponed and then shifted to the UAE with India being in the grips of the first wave of virus. "Last year we had the IPL held over in the UAE and that was an incredibly well-run tournament," Cummins told Foxsports. "This year, they tried to push it that little step further and have it over here in multiple cities in India. I'm sure looking back they might

man Wriddhiman Saha, Delhi Capitals' spinner Amit Mishra and KKR's Varun Chakravarty and Sandeep Warrier. Chennai Super Kings' bowling coach L Balaji was also among the prominent non-playing staff to test positive and later it emerged that batting coach Michael Hussey also returned positive for COVID-19. There were a lot of criticism for conducting the T20 league at a time when India was facing such a devastating health crisis. "It's two different worlds. We're lucky, we're safe, we're comfortable and there's people just trying to get basic medical treatment," the Australian vice-captain said. "First thing was to find out whether us playing the IPL was the right thing and basically everyone said, we would be lost without the IPL for three or four hours every night. I'm just trying to do my bit. India's been such a good country to me and cricketers." With the T20



have tweaked a few things." His comments were made before the postponement of the league on Tuesday. The decision was taken after the virus breached the bio-bubble, infecting SunRisers Hyderabad bats-

event being postponed, the Australian IPL players and support staff might fly off to Maldives in a bid to get home. The Australian government last week banned travellers from COVID-ravaged India till May 15.

BCCI to help arrange charter flights for IPL's Australian players via Maldives or SL: CA

Sydney, May 5: Cricket Australia's interim chief executive Nick Hockley on Wednesday said that the BCCI is working to arrange a charter flight for IPL's Australian recruits, who are likely to stay in Maldives or Sri Lanka before heading back home because of a travel ban on the COVID-19 ravaged India. The IPL's 40-strong Australian contingent, comprising players, support staff and commentators, could be flown to Maldives or Sri Lanka before getting a connecting flight for home. "What the BCCI is working to do is to move the entire cohort out of India where they will wait until it's possible to return to Australia," Hockley told reporters in Sydney. "The BCCI has been working on a range of options. That's now nar-



rowed down to the Maldives and Sri Lanka. The BCCI is committed not only to the first move but also to putting on a charter to bring them back to Australia." The IPL was "indefinitely suspended" on Tuesday after multiple cases of COVID-19 emerged from Kolkata Knight Riders, Delhi Capitals,

SunRisers Hyderabad and Chennai Super Kings. There are 14 Australian players along with coaches and commentators who might now take a detour as the Australian government has imposed strict sanctions for people returning from India. Asked if the IPL could resume this year, the CA official said it's "premature to

speculate on that." "At the moment, the BCCI is very focused on getting all the players, not just the Australians, home safe." Chennai Super Kings' batting coach Mike Hussey, who has tested positive for COVID-19, will stay back to complete his 10-day quarantine in India. Australian Cricketers Association

(ACA) chief executive Todd Greenberg said Hussey was in "good spirits" despite contracting the highly contagious virus. "His symptoms are relatively mild, so he's in for a stint of isolation in his hotel for at least 10 days, but his team have got some really good support systems around him, which is good," Greenberg was quoted as saying in 'Sydney Morning Herald'. Considering the current situation, the players will leave in batches, starting as early as Thursday. "This is a two-step process. The first step is getting them out of India and the next step is getting them safely home," Greenberg said. "We're still waiting to hear what the government are going to do post-May 15 and once we have that confirmation we'll put the next start step in place."

Former top-ranked doubles player Barbora Strycova retires

Prague, May 5: Barbora Strycova, a former top-ranked doubles player and Wimbledon singles semifinalist, has announced her retirement. "Until now, tennis was the only world I knew," Strycova said in a statement on Tuesday. "I have always had enormous love for this amazing sport. Even though all the pain, tears, renunciation and sweat, all the great

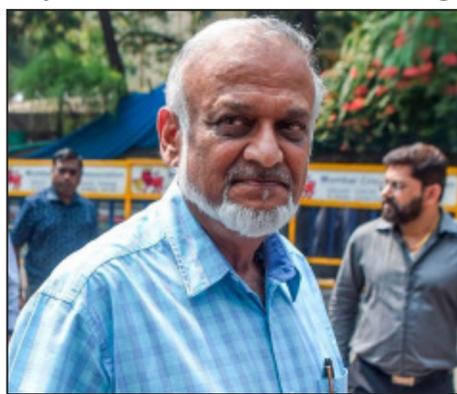
moment(s) and victories were worth it." The 35-year-old Czech player previously announced her pregnancy. She is due in September and doesn't plan to return after giving birth. "I never planned to end my career during a pandemic," she said. "However, some moments in life just can't be planned and I am super excited for my next life role as a mom." Strycova won



two WTA singles titles and 31 in doubles. She was at her best at Wimbledon in 2019, when she won the women's doubles with Hsieh Su-wei to become No. 1 and reached the singles semifinals, losing to Serena Williams. Her career-high in singles was No. 16. In 2016, she teamed up with Lucie Safarova to win the bronze medal at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

We'll find way to send back foreign players: IPL chairman

New Delhi, May 5: IPL chairman Brijesh Patel on Tuesday said the BCCI will "find a way" to send the league's foreign recruits back to their respective countries after the event was suspended indefinitely due to a Covid-19 outbreak in its bio-bubble. "We need to send them home and we will find a way to do that," Brijesh told PTI when asked how will the foreigners return home but did not elaborate beyond that. The foreigners involved in the lucrative league are concerned about returning to their respective countries due to travel restrictions imposed in the wake of a deadly resurgence of the pandemic in India. The BCCI had



assured foreign players of a safe return earlier as well. The IPL had 14 Australian players left, after three pullouts a few days ago, along with 10 from New Zealand and 11 Englishmen. South Africa had 11 players in the league, which also featured nine West Indians, three Af-

ghans and two from Bangladesh. In a joint statement, Cricket Australia and the Australian Cricketers Association said they respect their Government's decision to suspend flights operating out of India due to the Covid surge here and will not seek exemptions for its

players stuck in the country ravaged by a deadly second wave of the pandemic. "CA is in direct contact with the BCCI as they work through plans to ensure the safe accommodation and repatriation of Australian players, coaches, match officials and commentators back home to Australia. "CA and the ACA respect the decision of the Australian Government to pause travel from India until at least May 15 and will not seek exemptions." They further stated, "CA and the ACA thank the BCCI for their efforts and cooperation for the safe repatriation of all participants at the IPL." Reacting to the big BCCI move, Cricket South Africa said

it is in contact with its players who will need to home quarantine on arrival from India as per the World Health Organization recommendations. "Those travelling back to South Africa will undergo home quarantine in line with the current World Health Organization recommendations," it said in a release. "CSA and the South African Cricketers Association (SACA) are in contact with all players and are assured of their safety and comfort in their respective locations." CSA said it supported the BCCI decision of suspend the league keeping in mind the current situation and thanked the Indian board for looking after its players.

IPL called off

New Delhi, May 5: The Indian Premier League was on Tuesday suspended indefinitely after multiple Covid-19 cases were reported in its bio-bubble, ending a month-long relatively smooth run for cricket's most glamorous and cash-rich event in the middle of a raging pandemic. "The tournament has been suspended indefinitely. We will try to conduct the event in the next available window but this month is unlikely," league chairman Brijesh Patel said. The announcement came after Sunrisers Hyderabad's wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha tested positive for Covid-19 along with Delhi Capitals' veteran spinner Amit Mishra. Hours after the postponement, CSK batting coach Michael Hussey also tested positive for the dreaded virus. "... We will take stock if we can find a suitable window later during the year. It could be September but these are all speculations. As of now we are not conducting it any further," BCCI vice-president Rajiv Shukla said. On Monday, Chennai Super Kings bowling coach Lakshmi Prasad Balaji along with Kolkata Knight Riders bowlers Sandeep Warrier and Varun Chakravarty had also returned positive results. The spread of infections had led to postponement of two IPL games earlier. The league organisers also issued a formal statement and said that safety of its players and staff is paramount. "The Indian Premier League Governing Council (IPL GC) and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in an emergency meeting has unanimously decided to postpone IPL 2021 season, with immediate effect," the statement read. "The BCCI does not want to compromise on the safety of the players, support staff and the other participants involved in organising the IPL. This decision was taken keep-

ing the safety, health and well-being of all the stakeholders in mind," it added. The IPL said BCCI will do all it can to ensure that players in the event get back to their homes safely. IPL features stars from England, Australia, and New Zealand among other countries. "These are difficult times, especially in India and while we have tried to bring in some positivity and cheer, however, it is imperative that the tournament is now suspended and everyone goes back to their families and loved ones in these trying times," the IPL stated. "The BCCI will do everything in its powers to arrange for the secure and safe passage of all the participants in IPL 2021." The tour-



namment began on April 9 and ran smoothly before KKR's Covid-19 cases caused the initial jitters on Monday. The tournament final was planned for May 30. There was cause of concern in Delhi too as a few groundsmen at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium tested positive even though DDCA chief Rohan Jaitley asserted that "none of the groundsmen on duty" were among the infected. According to Cricbuzz, an official said that the board could look at the September window after England's tour of India is complete and before the T20 World Cup scheduled in India for October-November. "A September window is being considered. By then the England-India series would be over and the foreign players would be ready for the T20 World Cup. That small window is being explored," said a franchise official who is in know.

T20 World Cup set for UAE shift

New Delhi, May 5: This year's T20 World Cup is set to be moved from India to the UAE with the BCCI acknowledging that none of the participating teams would be "comfortable" coming here because "a third wave" of Covid-19 cases is expected at the time of the event. While a final decision will be taken in a month's time but it is understood that even the Indian cricket board is jittery about holding the 16-team tournament in Oc-

tober-November after the ongoing IPL had to be suspended because of multiple Covid-19 cases inside the bio-bubble. It is learnt BCCI officials have had very recent discussions with some of the top decision-makers in the central Government and a shift to the UAE has been more or less agreed upon. The dates of the marquee competition, which was planned across nine venues, have not yet been finalised. "The suspension of IPL



within four weeks is an indicator that it's not really safe to host a global event of that magnitude at a time when the country is fighting its worst health crisis in last 70 years," a senior BCCI source privy to development said. "There is a chance of a third wave hitting the Indian shores in November. So while BCCI will remain the hosts, the tournament will probably shift to the UAE," he added. The dire situation in India, where a daily addition of

over 3 lakh new cases has continued for the past many days, has shaken most of the member boards and the ICC is unlikely to take a risk with safety of International cricket teams. "You can be rest assured that most of the top nations wouldn't like to tour India within next six months unless the situation comes to normalcy. The players and their families would be very wary to travel if they are in the middle of another surge.

Energy Minister Reviews the progress of FANI Rectification works done by TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 5: Reliable & safe power has always been a basic requirement of every individual and with an objective to cater this, TP Central Odisha Distribution Ltd. (TPCODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha under the guidance and support of Govt. of Odisha has carried forward a program to complete the Rectification of net-



work effected under FANI. On 3rd May 2019, cyclone FANI caused severe damage to Odisha paralysing major part of Sub-Transmission and Distribution Networks, Equipment and Consumers Service Connection in operational area of TPCODL. Back then power supply was restored by setting right the damaged network temporarily which in long term was not reliable and could

pose safety hazards. This severity of the situation was reviewed jointly by GoO and TPCODL for rectification of the temporarily rectified FANI affected Network taking in consideration the safety of Public, Animal and Operation and also to enhance Power Supply Reliability and Quality. Under the guidance of GoO post FANI rectification works of affected networks have been taken up by TPCODL for which

Honorable Energy Minister, Mr. Dibyasankar Mishra reviewed the progress of works with Mr. M. Shenbagam, Chief Executive Officer, TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited. Speaking on the developments Honorable Minister appreciated the approach and Quality work being done by TPCODL for rectification of FANI affected Networks. He stressed on completion of works on a war footing basis by deploying

multiple fronts and deploying enough resources. He also assured to extend all kind of support for the interest of Public. CEO TPCODL has shown and explained the micro level planning for completion of the Project and he assured to meet the timeline even though unfortunate surge of Covid-19 is posing a tough challenge for maintaining seamless flow of materials and retaining/ augmenting works force.

Modification Of Industrial Oxygen Regulator

(A.O. Bureau) New Delhi, May 5: In the light of COVID-19 pandemic, Diesel Loco Shed at Visakhapatnam has made a useful life saving project, i.e., modification of industrial oxygen regulator and provision of in-house design humidifier to save the life of oxygen support patients in view of non-availability of medically used regulator and oxygen flow meter in the market. The Loco Shed has modified the existing industrial oxygen regulator to meet the requirement for supplying oxygen through an in-house fabricated humidifier for supplying oxygen to the patients to save their lives in case of urgency and non-

availability of regular oxygen flow meter. The said equipment is fabricated by utilising different components to suit the requirement of Divisional

successfully tested at Divisional Railway Hospital for its workability and to meet the urgency. 15 Nos. such devices have been hand over to Di-



Railway Hospital at Waltair for supplying oxygen to the patients and in view of urgent requirement and rise of oxygen support patients to save their lives. The device is

visional Railway Hospital, Waltair within a day. The cost incurred for such modification of one set device is about Rupees 475/- (excluding Industrial Oxygen Regulator).

DLSA Secretary's Farewell Address meeting held at Malkangiri

(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, May 5: District Legal Services Authority, Malkangiri Secretary's Farewell Address meeting held at Malkangiri on 05.05.2011 at the local District Legal Services Authority office. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Ranjan Kumar Swain, Professor and Para legal Volunteer. Mr. krushna chandra Nayak Registrar cum Dist Asst. Judge joined as chief guest and told his work

the NALSA mega legal services program and equipment distribution program in Malkangiri district. Many such legal awareness camps were also held. During the Covid epidemic, various forms of awareness, such as the anti liquor campaign with have been performed. He is well-known in the Malkangiri district as an efficient, honest, punctual and efficient judge. The meeting was attended by

partment Malkangiri college, Mr. Pranab Kumar, Court Manager. The meeting was attended by Subrata Kumar Das, Head Clerk of the District Legal Services Authority, and other staff members. Former Chief Secretary District Legal Services Authority and Judge Permanent and Permanent People's Court, Malkangiri were given a farewell reception and handed over a bouquet of



experience as Secretary in Malkangiri district. During his tenure, about 17,000 people participated in the mega tree planting, mega blood donation camps and

Mr. Harishi Rupal Nehru Yuba kendra sangathan, one of the distinguished guests, Malkangiri, Mr. Umesh Chandra Raut, Head of the English De-

flowers by the Chief Guest and other dignitaries and his new workplace was relocated to Berhampur. Was prayed to happy life.

7500+ people vaccinated by Vedanta at its plants in Odisha and Chhattisgarh



(A.O. Bureau) New Delhi, May 5: Vedanta Aluminium & Power Business, India's largest producer of aluminium and value-added aluminium products, has accelerated the COVID vaccination initiative and vaccinated over 7500 of its people across its plants. Further, it has swiftly augmented the capacity of its COVID Care Centres and quarantine centres across its plant sites in remote areas of Odisha and Chhattisgarh to effectively handle the pandemic scenario around its areas of operations. With over 550 beds, Vedanta's COVID Care Centres at Jharsuguda and Lanjigarh

in Odisha, and BALCO in Korba, Chhattisgarh, are equipped with required infrastructure and medical personnel to provide proper care to those affected by COVID. Additionally, Quarantine Centres have been created for isolation and post-treatment recovery. Vedanta is supporting the District COVID Hospital at Jharsuguda in treating the affected populace from the region. At the District COVID Hospital in Bhawanipatna at Kalahandi district, Odisha, the company is working to set up an oxygen generation facility. It has recently provided 10,000 RTPCR testing kits to the District Government Hospital at

Bhawanipatna. Vedanta is also aiding local administrations in carrying out vaccination drives in the periphery. Its own hospitals are also in a state of preparedness to assist the respective district administrations in the fight against COVID. The company has plans to further augment COVID management efforts by both state governments and develop state-of-the-art field hospitals with all medical infrastructure specifically required for COVID treatment as needed. To aid the ongoing efforts to manage the second wave of the pandemic, Vedanta Chairman, Mr. Anil Agarwal has pledged INR 150 Cr. Last

- Chairman Mr. Anil Agarwal pledges INR 150 Cr to aid in the fight against second wave
- 550+ bedded COVID Care Centres & Quarantine Centres are currently operational across its plant sites in Chhattisgarh and Odisha, with plans for capacity augmentation

year, Vedanta had contributed INR 201 Cr to the fight against COVID-19 in the form of contribution to the PM-CARES Fund, supporting livelihood of the daily wage workers across the nation, and giving preventive health care and support to all employees and business partners across its plant locations. Mr. Ajay Kapur, CEO - Aluminium & Power and MD - Commercial, Vedanta Ltd., said, "As the entire country battles to overcome the pandemic, we are committed to supporting our people, partners, communities and government through this critical period. Appreciating the company's efforts, Shri. T Ashok Kumar, Nodal Officer (COVID Operations), and Divi-

sional Forest Officer, Southern Division, Kalahandi, said, "Vedanta has come forward with all required support in the prevention of COVID-19, since the outbreak of the pandemic, in supporting the district health authorities. The spread of the disease can be contained with large-scale testing and timely isolation and treatment of the COVID positive patients. Vedanta is a leader in value-added Aluminium products that find critical applications in core industries. With its world-class smelters, power plants and alumina refinery spread across India, the company fulfils its mission of spurring emerging applications of Aluminium as the 'Metal of the Future' for a greener tomorrow.

Tata Steel reports highest ever consolidated quarterly EBITDA

(A.O. Bureau) New Delhi, May 5: Consolidated EBITDA of Rs.14,290 crores and consolidated Profit after tax of Rs.7,162 crores in 4QFY21. Consolidated EBITDA of Rs.30,892 crores and consolidated Profit after tax of Rs.8,190 crores in FY21. Consolidated Free Cash Flows of Rs.8,826 crores in 4QFY21 and Rs.23,748 crores in FY21. Net debt decreased by Rs.29,390 crores to Rs.75,389 crores. Net debt to EBITDA improved to 2.44x and Net debt to equity improved to 0.98x. The Pellet plant and Cold Roll Mill complex at Kalinganagar is under

construction. The 5mtpa expansion project has been restarted India 1 operations. Achieved highest ever quarterly crude steel production of 4.75 mn tons; registered a 3% QoQ growth in 4QFY21. FY21 production stood at 16.92 mn tons. Steel deliveries grew 16% YoY to 4.67 mn tons in 4QFY21. FY21 steel deliveries increased to 17.31 mn tons despite the pandemic led disruption in 1QFY21. Achieved highest ever quarterly EBITDA of Rs.12,295 crores with 40% QoQ and 2.7x YoY growth in 4QFY21. This translates into an EBITDA per ton of Rs.26,309 and an

EBITDA margin of 40.9%. FY21 EBITDA was Rs.28,587 crores. Tata Steel standalone also registered highest ever quarterly EBITDA at Rs.9,206 crores with 37% QoQ and 2.5x YoY growth in 4QFY21. This translates into an EBITDA per ton of Rs.27,828 and an EBITDA margin of 43.4%. FY21 EBITDA was Rs.21,952 crores. Tata Steel BSL registered its highest ever quarterly EBITDA of Rs.2,583 crores which translates into an EBITDA per ton of Rs.21,648. Tata Steel Long Products also registered its highest ever quarterly EBITDA of Rs.506 crores which translates into an EBITDA

per ton of Rs.29,439 respectively. TSBSL and TSLPFY21 EBITDA increased to Rs.5,481 crores and Rs.1,154 crores respectively. Shareholders have approved the merger of Tata Steel BSL with Tata Steel. A joint Scheme Petition has been filed with the NCLT to sanction the scheme with effect from 1st April, 2019. The merger of Tata Metaliks and Indian Steel and Wire Products with Tata Steel Long Products is also underway. Steel deliveries at Tata Steel Europe grew 17% QoQ and 3% YoY to 2.47 mn tons in 4QFY21. EBITDA improved sharply to *125 million

in 4QFY21. Tata Steel is committed to sustainability of operations and is taking initiatives to adopt best available technologies for decarbonization and water neutrality. Tata Steel and Tata Steel Europe have been recognized as Steel Sustainability Champion for 4th consecutive year by the Worldsteel Association. The Board of Directors recommended a dividend of Rs.25 per fully paid equity share and Rs.6.25 per partly paid equity shares. India includes Tata Steel Standalone, Tata Steel BSL Ltd. and Tata Steel Long Products Ltd. on proforma basis without inter-company eliminations.

IDBI Bank offers facility of KYC updation through Video Identification Process

(A.O. Bureau) Mumbai, May 5: RBI, in its key announcements on May 5, 2021, on Covid measures, has decided to extend the scope of Video based Customer identification process (V-CIP) known as Video KYC. It has advised inclusion of additional categories of the customers as well

as periodic updating of KYC records through Video KYC, as a customer friendly measure. As a response, IDBI Bank has launched the facility of periodic KYC updation through the V-CIP. Announcing this initiative, Shri Suresh Khatanhar, Deputy Managing Director said "In continuation of various

digital measures introduced by IDBI Bank, customers can now update their KYC through the V-CIP without any need to visit the branches. The customers can initiate the process at their convenience through the V-CIP link available on the Bank's website. This is a completely contactless process"