

2 Ajit Pawar Spends Rs 6 Crore On Social Media, BJP Slams Shiv Sena



3 98-year-old Woman Defeats Second Wave



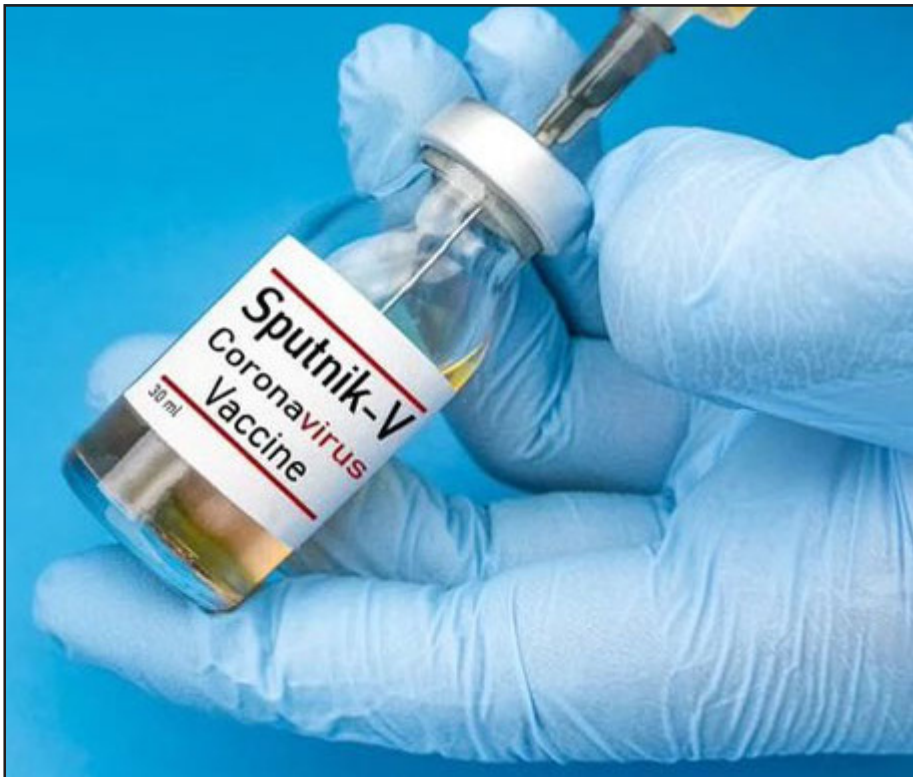
6 FIR filed against TMKOC actor Munmun Dutta for using casteist slur in video



7 Controversy brews over transgender weightlifter set to create history at Tokyo Olympics

Russia's Sputnik V Covid-19 Vaccine To Be Available In Market From Next Week: Govt

New Delhi, May 13: The Union Health Ministry on Thursday announced that Russia's Sputnik V, the vaccine against the Covid-19 pandemic, will be available in markets across the country early next week. The announcement comes 12 days after the first consignment of 150,000 doses of the Sputnik V vaccine landed in Hyderabad from Russia. Sputnik V is developed by Russia's Gamaleya National Center. It will be the third vaccine to be cleared for use in India at a time when the country is in the grip of an intense second wave and demand for vaccines has shot up. Dr V.K. Paul, member NITI Aayog, made the announcement at a Health Ministry press briefing on the Covid-19 situation in the country. Paul also said that the



local production of Sputnik V will begin in July and Hyderabad-based Dr. Reddy's Laboratories will manufacture the vaccine in India. Dr Reddy's top executives recently hinted that Sputnik V is likely to be sold at \$10

(around Rs 750) a dose in India. Last month, the Indian regulator Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) granted restricted use authorisation to Sputnik V amid an alarming rise in the country's fresh Covid-19 infections.

Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) is manufacturing the Oxford University-AstraZeneca shot as Covishield while Bharat Biotech International Limited, located in Hyderabad, has developed Covaxin. With an

efficacy of 91.6 per cent, Sputnik V is reportedly the first vaccine against Covid-19 in the world. On August 11 last year, Russia gave approval to the Sputnik V. It is reported in the Lancet Medical Journal that the vaccine has been cleared and approved for mass use in more than 50 countries. The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) has signed a deal to produce 750 million doses of Sputnik V in India. Dr Reddy has entered into an agreement with RDIF for import of 125 million people equivalent doses in India. The firm's plan is to ramp up manufacture of the vaccine in India after the initial imports. India's vaccination drive against Covid-19 began on January 16, two weeks after the DCGI announced clearance for both Covishield and Covaxin.

Odisha CM To Release Assistance To Farmers Under KALIA Yojana

Bhubaneswar, May 13: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will be releasing assistance to farmers tomorrow under the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) Yojana. Assistance to farmers under KALIA Yojana will be released on the eve of Akshaya



Trutiya and Krushak Divas at 5 PM tomorrow, said an official

press communique.

Children Above 2 Years Must Wear Masks: Govt



Bhubaneswar, May 13: The Odisha government today advised parents to ensure their children above two years wear masks when go outside.

The advisory has been issued in the wake of an increase in Covid positive cases among children during the second wave of the pandemic. In a letter to the

Women and Child Development Department that will issue a detailed advisory for children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women in the State later, the Health and Family Welfare Department's Additional Chief Secretary PK Mohapatra suggested children above two years must wear masks as per recommendation of Indian Academy of Pediatrics.

PM-KISAN 8th Installment To Be Released Today



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release the 8th installment of financial benefit under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme on 14th

May at 11 AM via video conferencing. This will enable the transfer of more than Rs 19,000 crores to over 9.5 crores beneficiary farmer families. The Prime Minister will also interact

with farmer beneficiaries during the event. Union Agriculture Minister will also be present on the occasion. Under the PM-KISAN scheme, a financial benefit of Rs 6000 per year is provided to the eligible beneficiary farmer families, payable in three equal 4-monthly installments of Rs 2000 each. The fund is transferred directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries. In this scheme, Samman Rashi of over Rs 1.15 lakh crores has been transferred to farmer families so far.

Weather Alert ! Heavy Rainfall To Lash These Districts In Next Two Days

Bhubaneswar, May 13: Heavy rainfall may lash several parts of the State in next two days, a weather bulletin released by Meteorological Centre, Bhubaneswar said today. The regional meteorological centre has issued orange warning for 17 districts where heavy rainfall likely to occur today and tomorrow morning. Day 1 (Valid upto 8.30 AM of May 14)



: Orange Warning: Thunderstorm with lightning with gusty surface wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph likely at isolated places over the dis-

tricts of Khordha, Cuttack, Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Jharsuguda,

Dhenkanal, Angul, Nayagarh, Kandhamal, Ganjam, Gajapati and Rayagada. Heavy rainfall likely to occur at isolated places in Khordha, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jajpur and Bhadrak districts during the period. Yellow warning: Thunderstorm with lightning at isolated places over the districts of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda,

Deogarh, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Sonepur, Boudh, Balangir, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Koraput and Malkangiri. Day 2 (Valid from 8.30 AM of May 14 upto 8.30 AM of May 15): Yellow warning: Thunderstorm with lightning at isolated places over the districts of Jajpur, Bhadrak, Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput and Malkangiri.

No Morning, Evening Walks, Cycling During Lockdown: Police Commissioner

Bhubaneswar, May 13: Tightening noose on Covid-19 lockdown norms violators, Commissionerate Police on Thursday imposed a complete ban on activities like morning walk, evening walk and cycling in the Twin Cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar during the lockdown period. Around Rs 2.8 crore fine has been collected from Covid guideline violators, 71 cases have been registered, 269 arrested and 8300 vehicles seized. Addressing the media, Twin City Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi said, "As per the lockdown norms, morning walk, evening walk and cy-



cling have been prohibited. The move aims at restricting crowd on the roads during the restriction period." "The State government has imposed lockdown and weekend shutdown to cull the spread of coronavirus. The citizens in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar have

been cooperating and police is working as a friend and facilitator," he said. "A 24X7 Dial-100 facility is available in the Twin City. People can dial the number in any emergency. A helpline number has also been launched for the senior citizens and employees

of the industries and corporate houses are given relaxation to go to their workplaces provided they have authorisation letter," the top cop added "E-pass arrangement through WhatsApp for marriage and funeral has been done," he stated. Moreover, Additional

DG (Law & Order) Yashwant Jethwa has cautioned that stringent action will be taken against those involved in black marketing and hoarding of Covid-19 essentials. "As many as 22 flying squads have been formed to check hoarding and black marketing of drugs and medical supplies for treatment of the deadly disease. Furthermore, action will be taken against the private hospital who are charge more for Covid-19 treatment," Jethwa said. "Around Rs 2.8 crore fine has been collected from Covid guideline violators, 71 cases have been registered, 269 arrested and 8300 vehicles seized," he added.

MP Govt To Pay Rs 5,000 Monthly Pension To Pandemic Hit Families

New Delhi, May 13: The Madhya Pradesh government has announced Rs 5,000 pensions per month to families hit by the pandemic where poor and destitute children have lost their parents or guardian to coronavirus. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, referring to the deepening crisis due to the pandemic, said, "The corona epidemic has broken many families. There are families where Covid has snatched the earning members and aged people have been left alone as there is no one to take care of them. There are some families where innocent children were orphaned as their parents have died due to Covid. Hence we have



decided to provide a pension of Rs 5,000 per month so that they can survive without anyone's support." Chouhan, referring to the children who were in trouble due to this pandemic, said that free education will be provided to all such children so that they don't drop out of school. Such families will be given free

ration also even if they are not eligible. The Madhya Pradesh government has also decided to help women in distress due to coronavirus. The Chief Minister said that such women will be provided loans without interest on the government's guarantee so that they can start a business for livelihood.

Bengal's villages hit harder by Covid-19

Kolkata, May 13: West Bengal's Bolpur block in Birbhum district reported 15 Covid-19 cases in March. In April, the cases shot up to 617. The block, where 90% of people live in rural areas, earlier reported 160 and 170 infections in October and November when the disease reached its peak in the state. The exponential rise in Covid-19 cases in Bolpur coincided with the West Bengal assembly elections in March and April. An official added the scenario is almost the same in other rural areas. Birbhum reported an 11-fold increase in the daily count of Covid-19 cases compared to

North 24 Parganas 4,091 on Wednesday. The rise is still less than five times that of the last year's peak. Every political leader boasted of huge gatherings in their rallies not knowing what harm they were doing. Covid-19 spread rapidly even in the rural areas as huge political rallies were held in the villages, sans any safety protocols. This came at a time testing, tracing and treating had gone down," said Abhijit Chowdhury, a health expert, who was a part of the advisory panel set up by chief minister Mamata Banerjee last year. The first phase of the eight-phase elections was held on March



last year's peak on Wednesday with 928 infections. On October 22, when West Bengal witnessed the peak of the first wave with 4,157 new cases, Nadia, another district in south Bengal, reported under 200 cases. On May 12, the district registered 1,171 cases, a rise of six times over last year's peak. Just like Birbhum, Nadia has over 72% rural population. Urban areas like Kolkata and its adjoining district of North 24 Parganas have been reporting the maximum cases. Kolkata reported 3,989 cases and

27. The poll process continued for over a month. Active cases in Paschim Bardhaman, East Midnapore and Hooghly have shot up four to six times over last year's peak on October 22. Compared to this, active cases in Kolkata and North 24 Parganas, two urban districts, have shot up by around 3.5 times during the same period. On May 7, when West Bengal registered over 19,000, Union health minister Harsh Vardhan said that some districts in the state were registering a 40% positivity rate.

'Tauktae' likely to be an intense cyclone as oceanic conditions favourable, warn scientists

New Delhi, May 13: A low pressure area has formed over southeast Arabian Sea and adjoining Lakshadweep area on Thursday. It is very likely to become well marked over Lakshadweep by Friday and gradually intensify into cyclonic storm Tauktae on May 16. Once formed Cyclone Tauktae can strengthen further very rapidly as all atmospheric conditions are favouring its rapid intensification. "We cannot rule out intensification similar to Super Cyclone Amphan. At present it is difficult to say which category of intensification the cyclone will reach. But conditions are extremely favourable for its rapid intensification. Ocean heat potential is above normal; sea surface temperatures are 1-2 degree C above normal and Madden Julian Oscillation is also favouring rapid intensification. We should be prepared," said Sunitha Devi, in-charge of cyclones at India Meteorological Department. "MJO is a wave type of propagation west to east across the globe which causes cloudiness and changes in wind direc-



tion," explained Sunitha adding that it is difficult to predict the exact landfall location immediately. "There will be major influence on the Gujarat coast as this is a large and intense system. We are still studying the landfall location possibilities." The Madden Julian Oscillation (MJO) is characterised by a band of rain clouds moving across the tropics, depending on their location they can assist cyclone build up, she explained. Tauktae meaning gecko (named by Myanmar) will be the first cyclone of this year. By Saturday morning the well-marked low-pressure area is likely to concentrate into a depression over the same region and intensify into a cyclone during the subse-

quent 24 hours. It is very likely to intensify further and move north north-westwards towards Gujarat and adjoining Pakistan coasts and reach near Gujarat coast around May 18 evening. Light to moderate rain with extremely heavy rain (over 20 cm) is likely over Lakshadweep on May 13 and 14; over Kerala on May 13; over ghat areas of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka on May 15. It is likely rain on May 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 in all these places. In Konkan and Goa, light to moderate rainfall at many places with heavy rainfall at isolated places is very likely on May 15 and heavy to very heavy falls at a few places on May 16 and 17. In Gujarat, rainfall activity is very

likely to commence from May 17 with significant increase during the subsequent 2 days and heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places over Saurashtra and Kutch on May 18 and 19. Sea condition over southeast Arabian Sea and adjoining Lakshadweep - Maldives area and equatorial Indian Ocean is likely to be rough to very rough on May 13 and 14. Over east central Arabian Sea its likely to be very rough to high (wave height of 6-9 metres/ wind speed 34-47 knots) on May 15 and high to very high (wave height of 9-14 metres/ wind speed of 38-63) on May 16 and over northeast Arabian Sea from May 18. Sea conditions will be rough to very rough over

Comorin area and along and off Kerala coast on May 14 and 15, very rough to High over east central Arabian Sea along & off Karnataka coast on May 15 and Maharashtra - Goa coasts on May 15 and 16. It is very likely to be very rough to High over northeast Arabian Sea along and off south Gujarat coast from May 17 morning. Tidal wave of about 1 meter height above the astronomical tide is very likely to inundate low lying areas of Lakshadweep Islands on May 15 and 16. Fishermen out in the deep sea are advised to return to coast. Fishermen are advised not to venture into southeast Arabian Sea, Lakshadweep - Maldives areas from May 13, east central Arabian Sea along and off Karnataka coast from May 14, into east central Arabian Sea and along and off Maharashtra - Goa coasts from May 15 and into east central and adjoining northeast Arabian Sea along and off Gujarat coast from May 17. "Both ocean and atmospheric conditions are conducive for cyclone formation.

More than 2 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines to become available in India soon

New Delhi, May 13: The Centre on Thursday reiterated that any vaccine which is approved by United States' Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) can come to India. The announcement was made at a press conference by NITI Aayog member VK Paul, who also heads the national expert group on vaccines. "Import license will be granted within 1-2 days. No import license is pending," Dr Paul said. Last month, the central government had fast-tracked approvals for Covid-19 vaccines cleared for use in the US, the UK, the European

Union and Japan. As the world's largest manufacturer of vaccines, India exported more than 65 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines under its "Vaccine Maitri" initiative but supplies have slowed to a trickle since March as domestic infection rates surged. Dr Paul said that the department of biotechnology, and other departments concerned, and the ministry of external affairs (MEA) have been in touch with vaccine manufacturers like Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. "They were officially asked if they'd like to send doses to or manufacture in India. The government told them that it will find



partners and assist them. They said that they are working in their own way and they would talk of vaccine availability in Q3, in 2021," said Dr Paul. "We are connected to them. I'm hopeful that they'll step forward to in-

crease availability in India," the NITI Aayog member said. The government official gave an update about the milestone achieved by India. "Nearly 18 crore doses of #COVID19 vaccine have been administered

in India. In the US, the number stands around 26 crores. So, India stand in the third position," said Dr Paul. He further said that 216 crore doses of vaccines will be manufactured in India between August and December. "There should be no doubt, vaccine will be available for all as we move forward," said Dr Paul. Many states have claimed shortage of Covid-19 vaccines and have either stalled or cut back on plans to vaccinate people in the age group of 18-44. Eleven states have so far opted for floating of global tenders to get Covid-19 vaccines.

2 BJP Bengal MLA Resigned

Kolkata, May 13: The number of MLAs of the Bharatiya Janata Party, which won 77 seats in the West Bengal Assembly Election, has been reduced to 75. BJP's two MPs Nishit Pramanik and Jagannath Sarkar (Jagannath Sarkar) have resigned from the post. Both have submitted their resignations to the speaker on Wednesday following the directions of the party high command. At the same time, the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) in the state has mocked the BJP's move. TMC says that BJP is trying to secure Lok Sabha

position through this. According to media reports, BJP believes that the need of both the members is more in the Parliament than in the state. Due to this, both the MPs have resigned from the post of MLA. It is special that Pramanik and Sarkar were among the 5 BJP MPs from whom the party had hoped for a big victory in the state. At the same time, after the violence erupted in the state after the elections, the central government had decided to give protection to the BJP MLAs. The TMC accused the Center of misusing taxpayers' money. The

BJP MP from Ranaghat in Nadia district and who won from Shantipur Assembly seat told NDTV, 'The results in Bengal did not go as expected. If BJP had formed the government, we would have got a different role. Now it is not so, Toparti said that we should remain MP and resign as MLA. That is why we are doing this. Certified as MP and the government has security at the center. Shubhendu Adhikari, who won from Nandigram seat against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, has also got Z-plus security.

UPSC Civil Service Prelims Date Postponed



New Delhi, May 13: In view of the increasing cases of corona, the UPSC has postponed the civil services pre-exam to be held on 27 June. Now this exam will be conducted on October 10. This exam was scheduled to be held on June 27, 2021. Now this exam will be held on 10 October 2021. There are 712 vacancies in UPSC Civil Services Exam this year and 110 vacancies in Indian Forest Service Examination. This exam will be conducted at various examination centers in the country. Please tell that last year also due to corona this test was affected. Last year too, the exam

had to be postponed. In 2020, the UPSC Civil Services Prelims exam was also postponed from 31 May to 4 October 2020. This exam takes place in three stages. After pre, mains and interviews, students are selected for the Indian Civil Service. Every year about 2 to 2.5 lakh students take part in the pre exam. About five times the number of seats are called for the mains. About one third of the students appearing in the Mains exam have the opportunity to appear in the interview. The final merit for civil services is done by combining the numbers of the mains and interviews.

Ajit Pawar Spends Rs 6 Crore On Social Media, BJP Slams Shiv Sena

Mumbai, May 13: The Maharashtra government has decided that it will spend 6 crore rupees for the financial year 2021-2022 on the social media of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. Actually, Uddhav Thackeray's government wants to make the information of Ajit Pawar and his department's work accessible to the general public. Not only this, the state government has decided that it will give the contract to an outside company. At the same time, this step of the government has given the opposition party BJP another opportunity to surround them. The BJP has alleged that in this second

wave of corona virus, on one hand, the government is crying out for lack of money for treatment, medicine and vaccine, on the other hand, to spend Rs 6 crores for the promotion of a minister. BJP spokesperson Ram



Kadam tweeted, 'Maharashtra government is going to spend 6 crores for the social media of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. What is the priority? Those who do not ask for money for vaccinations, will now spend crores for their own car.

Bharat Biotech's Covaxin approved for phase 2/3 trials on children

New Delhi, May 13: India's apex drug regulator has granted permission for conducting the phase II/III clinical trial of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin Covid-19 vaccine in the age group of 2 to 18 years, the Union Health Ministry said on Thursday. The trial will be conducted on 525 healthy volunteers. "The National Regulator of the country, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), after careful examination, has accepted the recommendation of Subject Expert Committee (SEC) and accorded permission to conduct the Phase II/III clinical trial of Covaxin (Covid vaccine) in the age group 2 to 18 years, to its manufacturer



Bharat Biotech Ltd on May 12," the ministry said. Hyderabad based Bharat Biotech had proposed to carry out the clinical trial in the age group of 2 to 18 years. In the trial, the vaccine will be given by intramuscular route in two doses at day 0 and day 28. As rapid regulatory response, the proposal was deliberated in Subject Expert Committee

(SEC) on Covid-19 meeting held on May 11. The Committee, after detailed deliberation, recommended for grant of permission to conduct proposed phase II/III clinical trial to certain conditions. Earlier the proposal was deliberated in the SEC meeting on February 24 and the firm was asked to submit a revised clinical trial protocol.

Vaccination Centres Inaugurated at P. N. Autonomous College, Khordha



(A.O. Bureau) Khordha, May 13: District Administration open vaccination centre at P. N. Autonomous College Khordha instead of District Head Quarter Hospital (DHH) Khordha. Who are yet to receive the second dose of covid-19 vaccine. Collector

Khordha Sanat Kumar Mohanty inaugurated the vaccine centre and said that now 45 plus age group citizens who have taken their first dose can take the second dose vaccine at vaccination centre. Chief District Medical Officer, Khordha, Dr. Viswaranjan Pati, Ex-

ecutive officer Khordha Municipality Sweta Padma D. Satpathy, DPM, NRHM, Gitanjali Dash, District Public Health Officer Prasanna Kumar Mohapatra, Assistant public Health officer Pradyumna Mishra were remain present on this occasions

98-year-old Woman Defeats Second Wave

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 13: Amidst the gloom caused by the second wave of Covid-19, a 98-year-old woman with co-morbidities has defeated the infection at the SUM Covid Hospital here spreading cheer all around.



Annappurna Biswal of the Chandrashekharpur area was detected with Covid-19 on May 5 after which the family members rushed her to the SUM Covid Hospital for treatment. After being treated by the doctors and nurses, Biswal who suffered from filaria, hyperten-

sion and diabetes responded to the medication and turned around within a week's time. "The dedicated care extended to my mother has helped her recover," her son Mr. Kulamani Biswal said. "We never thought she would recover after she was infected by Covid-19, but we are extremely happy with the treatment given to her," her grand daughter-in-law Ms. Rajashree Biswal said. The help desk set up in the hospital extended great support to the family during the difficult time, she said.

World Nursing Day Observed at OPTCL



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 13: World Nursing Day was observed at Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL) recently at its corporate office. On the eve of this occasion one felicitation ceremony was held by adhering to the Govt Covid guidelines where OPTCL felici-

tated the nurses of the Power Hospital for their outstanding selfless efforts towards Healthcare during this crucial juncture when the entire world is grappling with Covid. Sri Chandra Sekhar Pradhan, Sr. GM HRD and Anita Mahapatra, GM HRD and Dr. Rupalita Pattnaik, Medical Of-

ficer were present during the felicitation ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, the Sr. GM (HRD) Mr Pradhan said "We really appreciate the dedication and the contributions of our sister nurses towards the healthcare of our employees. This felicitation is just a token of recognition of their selfless efforts and we hope this will certainly motivate them to work with great vigor." Such felicitation has highly motivated and encouraged us. We have always got all necessary support from the management to render our duty" said Anjali Jena, Lady Nurse.

Taladanda Canal Road From Jobra To Birabati To Transform Traffic Movement In Cuttack City

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 13: The development plan of Taladanda Canal Road from Jobra To Birabati was reviewed. The project envisages the development of Canal Embankment Road of about 12 km connecting SCB Medical College and Hospital with Cuttack-Paradeep road. In the 1st Phase, the project from Jobra to Ranihat Chowk was completed. Now work is underway for the 2nd Phase from Ranihat Chowk to



Bhubaneswar – Cuttack NH. As of the 3rd Phase, the preparation of a detailed project report for work from NH to Birabati is on, the Works Department informed today. "The ongoing project will

transform traffic circulation inside Millennium City, Cuttack enabling a smoother and faster approach to SCB, the apex public health institution of Odisha. The focus is given to on-time work completion," the Department further stated.

Staff Of These Sectors Included Under FLWs Category In Odisha

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 13: The Odisha government today included staff more sectors under frontline workers (FLWs) category for Covid-19 vaccination. Employees who have been included under frontline workers category are as follows: • Forest Officials and Forest guards • Government Veterinary Doctors, Livestock Inspectors and Para-Veterinarians • Banking Staff/insurance Companies / NCPI • Payment system providers/Operators/vendors /cash logistic companies /cash intransit compa-



nies/ATM maintenance personnel Banking • Correspondence & Customer care Points • Railway Staff • Staff of DCPU, Staff of Childline (1098), Staff of 181

Helpline, Staff of One Stop Centres and all caregivers staff of child care institutions • Oxygen Plant employees • Filling station employees • Call Centre employees.

On May 6, 2021, the State Steering Committee meeting held under the Chairmanship of Odisha Chief Secretary, SC Mahapatra approved in-principle for

inclusion of employees of the additional sectors under the FLW category. The Health and Family Welfare Department's Additional Chief Secretary PK Mohapatra today wrote to the District Collectors, the Municipal Commissioners, CDMOs and PHOs in this regard. The letter further stated of staff of the sectors recently added under the FLW category will be vaccinated, once adequate vaccine supply is available in the State. The present priority of the State is to ensure second dose vaccination of due beneficiaries, the letter added.

Volunteers Deliver Oxygen To Covid Patients Through Bikes

(A.O. Bureau) Cuttack, May 13: Volunteers of 'Federation of Blood Donor Organisations of Odisha' (FBDOO) have taken it upon their shoulders to deliver oxygen to Covid-19 patients under home isolation in emergency situations as a life-saving measure using two-wheelers. Delivery of oxy-



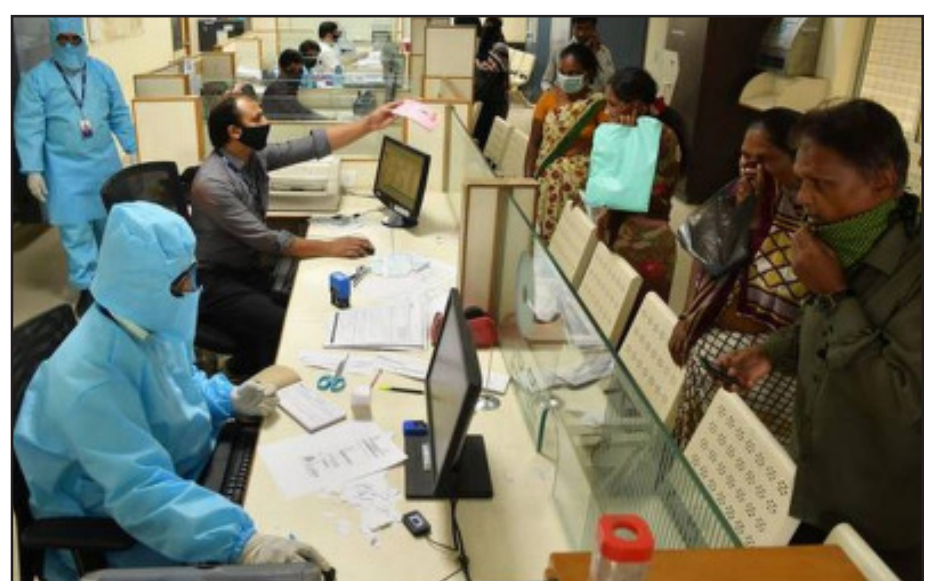
gen to needy Covid-19 patients in home isolation through two-

wheelers is both easier and time-saving as reaching houses using

four-wheelers through narrow lanes and bylanes located in congested areas of the city is difficult and time-consuming. "We are trying to reach oxygen to those whose oxygen saturation level has dipped and where it has been prescribed by the doctor. We are supplying them with oxygen for 24 hours as a life-saving

measure till they are shifted to a hospital," said Akshay Kumar Rout, a volunteer of FBDOO. Rout informed that those in need of oxygen can reach them through three toll-free numbers launched by FBDOO. He informed that the service is free of cost and is presently available in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, and Berhampur.

COVID19: Odisha Recognises Forest Officials, Bankers As Frontline Workers



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 13: Bringing much-needed respite for the forest officials and bankers, the Odisha government on Thursday included them in the Frontline Workers category. Bringing much-needed respite for the forest officials and bankers, the Odisha government on Thursday included them in the Frontline Workers category. The decision was taken in the State Steering Committee meeting which was held under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary of Odisha on May 6, 2021. The committee

accorded in-principle approval for inclusion of following categories of staff as frontline Workers (FLWs) for COVID-19 vaccination: - Forest Officials & Forest guards, banking staff, insurance companies, NCPI payment system providers/operators/vendors, cash logistic companies, cash-in-transit companies, ATM maintenance personnel, banking correspondence & customer care points. The State government has also accorded FLW status to railway, DCPU, Childline (1098), 181 helpline, One Stop Centres staff

and all caregiver staff of child care institutions, oxygen plant employees, fuel filling station employees and call centre employees. It was also approved to include the government veterinary doctors, livestock inspectors and para veterinarians as Frontline Workers for COVID-19 vaccination. It is worthwhile to state here that the government has asked States to ensure second dose of vaccination of due beneficiaries and above categories of the staff shall only be vaccinated once adequate vaccine supply is available in the State.

Will Close Medicine Stores If Not Acknowledged As COVID Warriors: Chemists' Association



(A.O. Bureau) Khordha, May 13: Chemists of Khordha district today warned that they would down their shutters in coming days if the state Government does not acknowledge them as COVID Warriors and vaccinate them on priority basis. At a presser, the Khordha District Chemists and Druggists Association

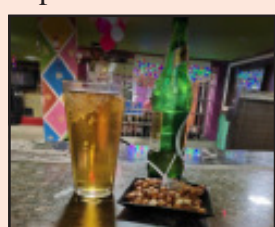
President Pragati Mohanty said medicine retailers have always been on the frontline proving seamless services to public, be it lockdown or shutdown. Over a hundred chemists and staff of medicine stores had succumbed to COVID-19 in the state in the first wave of the pandemic. The chemists have been

demanding COVID Warrior status for them since last year, but the state Government has not even given any kind of assurance in this regard, Mohanty lamented. "As the situation has worsened in the second wave, the state Government should recognize us as COVID Warriors and vaccinate us on priority basis," she added. The association warned that around 20,000 medicine stores in the state will shut their operation if the Government does not take any favourable decision in this regard within next 15 days.

Home Delivery Of Liquor Allowed During Lockdown

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 13: The Odisha Excise department today allowed home delivery of liquor during the lockdown period which has been in force in the State to prevent spread of coronavirus disease. The department further stated in a letter to the Excise Commissioner that power has been delegated to District Collectors to take appropriate decision on home delivery of liquor after considering the prevailing situation in their respective districts. The alcohol home delivery will be

done by liquor shops including OFF and ON shops as well as food aggregators during the lockdown period, the letter said. All depots of the Odisha



State Beverage Corporation Ltd (OSBC) will operate for wholesale trade between 6 AM to 2 PM during the lockdown period, it read. The 14-day state-wide lockdown came into effect from May 5.

EDITORIAL

Together in it

No other issue in recent memory has overwhelmed the Indian public discourse as the COVID pandemic. The media is full of it, the social media clogged with it; it dominates all discussions, ranging from the most public to the most private. The political parties may have forgotten the last time they discussed an issue unrelated to the virus. It is the lone barometer to gauge the performance of the Government at the Centre or in the States. Voting in elections to the legislatures or civic bodies is influenced by it. Medical facilities, research centres and journals debate the very minutiae. But all the loquacity has so far not thrown up a cogent or coherent national plan to monitor and manage healthcare and force the second surge of COVID to dissipate. What precisely is the national discourse on the pandemic really about? If you exclude the routine, daily, near-monotonous notifications from the Health and Home Ministries, this is what the discourse is all about: Bickerings, complaints, allegations, charges, abuses, criticisms, one-upmanship, political brinkmanship, know-all rhetoric and the like. It is no longer the social media or the war-like debates on television channels that resonate; the institutions also have joined the chorus. The judiciary issues ultimatums to the Government, which retorts about misplaced activism. The Government, the ruling party and the Opposition are merely defending their turfs. There is no clarity about anything. The positivity rate in a State dips but nobody knows if it is on account of a peaking surge or reduced testing. The death rate lowers, but nobody knows if medical care is improving or the numbers are being fudged. Not enough vaccine is available for the 18-44 age group, but nobody knows if there is vaccine scarcity or diversion of vaccines to higher risk categories. The Health Minister cautions the States not to waste the doses and asks them to step up vaccination. The Government or the pharmaceutical industry has explained the bizarre situation where the vaccine has multiple price bands. Confusion is the result. For instance, the judiciary's focus on oxygen supplies that led to a spurt in the number of sources supplying it: The Indian Air Force is lifting cryogenic oxygen tankers from Agra to Jamnagar and from Gwalior to Ranchi. Japan is sending 200 oxygen concentrators to India. Several countries have already dispatched oxygen containers by land, air and sea. The Delhi Police made a case of hoarding of oxygen concentrators by a businessman who stocked the supply in a hotel he owned. Assuming that all this oxygen is already in India and the country is improving domestic production, why are the patients dying for lack of oxygen? There is no clarity on the large number of bodies found floating in the Ganges, even whether they are from Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. If nature takes its own course, the pandemic surge will no doubt taper down one day. Quality intervention is all about actively adopting a multi-nodal approach for a coordinated fight against the virus.

Pakistan's mess

There is something intrinsically wrong with Pakistan. Its economy is just sputtering and lagging behind its sibling India, and even Bangladesh. Quite clearly unable to keep pace with the changing times, Pakistan, unlike India and Bangladesh which share the umbilical cord with it, has remained static in terms of the economy. What then ails Pakistan's economy and why we here in India should be interested in it? As they say, you can choose your friends but not your neighbours. Like it or not, Pakistan is our neighbour and will remain so. A weak, disintegrating, unstable Pakistan would be a far bigger problem for us than it is now. So India has high stakes in the well-being of its western neighbour. Right now, Pakistan is an economic mess. It is borrowing too much and unable to push the stagnant industrial and service sectors. Its debt service ratio is unmanageable and the foreign direct investment (FDI) it receives is just not into the right sectors which can boost its exports. The rate of unemployment is significantly high in Pakistan. It must grow around seven per cent annually to absorb its youth. The high inflation rate is piling miseries on the poor. The industrial sector stagnates at around 20 per cent. Pakistan's exports have fallen from 15 per cent of the GDP in 2003 to around 10 per cent currently. The FDI aids growth but that too has fallen from 3.7 per cent of the GDP in 2007 to only one per cent now. It is thus inevitable that the high unemployment rate and poverty are going to push its youth wayward and it may not be good news even for India. What has led to this mess is no mystery either. Pakistan's ruling elite have mainly been Army personnel who were trained to fight but ended up managing business and making a mess of it, too. High corruption prevalence in contracts and unviable projects led to a situation that borrowed money could not be paid back. Its high dependence on the Chinese products and loans ruined its economy. It is almost at the brink of becoming a Chinese colony. The pandemic has worsened the situation. It is about time the world community took notice of Pakistan's plight and bailed it out. Else, there is a clear danger that the nuclear nation might implode, sinking its neighbours along. Imran Khan came with a lot of promise but soon found the rut to be so deep that he soon stopped making efforts to clean it. Unless the Pakistan establishment decides to leave its business to the businessmen and restricts it to its barracks, things are going to be difficult for Pakistan.

Decoding the Bengal election



Prafull Goradia

Earlier, Jinnah had asked Muhammad Sa'adullah, the Premier of Assam from 1939, to categorise the adivasis as animists and not Hindus. The latter would then become a minority and the Muslims a majority, at least marginally. The idea was to grab Assam for Pakistan. Gopinath Bordoloi saved Assam in the nick of time by rushing to Delhi and getting the Congress high command to intervene. Incidentally, the national anthems of both India and Bangladesh have been written by Gurudev Tagore. Nazrul Islam was a poet widely regarded as second only to Tagore. The traditional highway out of the Kolkata airport, called Dum Dum, was named the Nazrul Islam Avenue. The best Rabindra music singer nowadays is a Dhaka lady, Rezwana Choudhuri. She usually wears a sari and a red tika on her forehead, though without sindoor. Bangladesh's quarrel with the Pakistani western wing began in February 1948 when Jinnah declared Urdu as

Pakistan's only national language. Their love for the Bengali language was demonstrated virtually the next day by Dhaka University's students, who rioted on the streets for several days. From then on to the end of 1971 was a very unhappy time for the East Pakistanis who became Bangladeshis. Thereafter, whenever they thought of Pakistan, they were Bengalis, and not so much Bangladeshis. Their radio talks about akash patal. It is mostly when they feel envious of their Hindu counterparts that they turn to calling the same phenomenon asmaan zameen. They are Bengali first, Bangladeshis second and Muslims third. The majority of the people of West Bengal, more or less, shares this order of priority. The BJP, therefore, should consider its 77 seats in the recent elections as a great success and by no means a defeat. Do not forget that the BJP could hardly field a Bengali-speaking public figure to address big meetings. This mat-

ters a great deal to the Bengali. When I speak a few sentences in the language, the listener is delightedly surprised: "How nice is your Bengali!" Not because my grasp of the language is so good but because, having been brought up in Kolkata, I know that Bengali is first a melody and then a language. Many third-generation settlers do not realise this and the Bengali listener does not like his language being spoken without its lilt. In Gujarat, if any settler speaks in Gujarati, the reaction would often be why did he waste his energy learning the language? "We understand Hindi"! That is the infinite love in Bengal for its language. That apart, after Syama Prasad Mookerjee passed away in 1953, if I remember correctly, for two general elections up to four Hindu Mahasabha candidates won as MLAs in Bankura. Thereafter, the score was zero for every Hindu party. Haripada Bharati was a respected person but he could not become an MLA for years despite being the leader of the Jana Sangh. Approximately, one-third of West Bengal is the successor of refugees from East Pakistan and Bangladesh. But until 2011, they were supporters of the Left Front. Is this not strange? But true. The Communists had openly supported Partition and yet these people, who families had to flee as refugees, did not care. Given these difficulties, the BJP has done well going from three to 77 seats in five years. The TMC did very well. If a BJP member really thought that the party could get a majority, he was dreaming. Five years, of course, is a long time but time is like a perennial river which flows on, and opportunities are bound to offer themselves for the Opposition.

Another Covid wave, another year of economic uncertainty

Saugata Bhattacharya

In light of the second wave of the pandemic, we have revised downwards our GDP growth forecast for 2021-22 from our pre-second wave assessment of 11.8 per cent to 9.5-10.5 per cent now, depending on the severity and duration of the lockdowns. In comparison, the Union Budget had based its fiscal projections on a 14.4 per cent nominal GDP growth, implying a real growth of 10-10.5 per cent. This is an evolving target due to the uncertainty involved with individual statewide infection curves and the consequent policy responses involving lockdowns, restrictions and other measures, and is thus likely to be incrementally marked down. But a crucial input into the changing forecasts will be vaccine availability because of the confidence imparted for the progressive opening up of economic activities, and for boosting both sentiment and demand, especially for services. Note that a 1 per cent cut in growth shaves off almost Rs 2 lakh crore from potential income. Two aspects of our forecast are worth emphasising. The first advance estimates of growth will be based on extrapolations from a limited data set, available till October and November. A substantial part of the extrapolation exercise involves the financial results of corporates, which are declared quarterly. Broadly, a proxy for the nominal Gross Value Added (GVA) for the industry and services segments can be derived from the sum of operating profits and employee costs. Operating profits growth

of large and mid-size companies has been quite robust in 2020-21. It is only the later sequence of revisions that incorporate trends from larger databases, which capture the performance of smaller enterprises. We should note that there is an added element of uncertainty arising from the accounting treatment of subsidies, which is due to (the welcome) changes in the Union Budget reporting. Our growth estimate for the April-June quarter of 2021-22 is now reduced to 24 per cent from 34 per cent earlier. This is largely based on signals from multiple indicators of economic activity, which are indicative of the current economic momentum and recovery. These are inter alia a set of manufacturing, services, fiscal, financial, mobility, and employment metrics. Although many of these are not part of the formal GDP estimation process, they do point to presumptive trends in those economic variables which are. Axis Bank's Composite Leading Indicator had shown a strong uptick in March 2021. The fourth quarter (FY21) results are beginning to trickle in, and based on a small set of 150 non-financial companies, we find that sales have increased significantly. There is the base effect, but there are signs of recovering momentum. However, based on the limited signals available thus far for April and the first week of May, there has been a sharp drop in economic activity, back to levels tentatively consistent with economic activity

around May 2020, when we were exiting the first lockdown. These signals are led by the sharp drop in Google mobility indicators related to commerce, but a slowdown is also seen in FaSTAG payments and other signals, and a steep drop in vehicle registrations in early May. There's also a sharp drop in e-Way bills, as well as electricity consumption. CMIE data shows that the urban unemployment rate has risen to an average of 10.1 per cent in the last two weeks. Rural employment is still holding up, but some part of this at least is due to the ongoing harvesting season. However, manufacturing and services PMIs have printed high in April. These trends are likely to mildly deteriorate and then stabilise over the next months. The renewed restrictions have been impacting dominantly the large urban agglomerations in economically important states. For instance, of the five states that account for almost 50 per cent of India's GDP, three (Maharashtra, UP and Karnataka) are severely affected. Although Maharashtra is one of the most urbanised states, the lockdowns in the agglomerations of Bengaluru and the National Capital Region will also have large effects. There is now concern about the effects of infections spreading to smaller towns and rural areas. Second, there is anecdotal evidence now of disruptions in economic activities of smaller enterprises,

which form the vast majority of enterprises, let alone the informal sector. Channels' checks and reports of industry associations support this narrative. Various surveys have also indicated the large impact on lower-income families. Note that the lockdowns will be the second hit on the incomes of these households, amplifying the effects on demand revival of their already depleted savings. To get an approximate sense of the asymmetry in performance across larger, medium and smaller companies, we segmented a set of about 1,900 non-finance companies whose results are available for the third quarter of 2020-21 by sales (the largest with sales greater than Rs 250 crore in Q2, the smallest less than Rs 5 crore). The results are unsurprising. Sales growth follows an ordinal drop in magnitude as indeed do profits and employee expenses. This discrepancy is likely to be even more accentuated once data on smaller companies, particularly small and micro enterprises, become available over the next couple of years. In other words, the economic loss is likely to be larger than the initial formal GDP numbers will convey. Once the surge tapers and the lockdowns ease, the pace of recovery will depend on the ability of the Centre and state governments to spend. The loss of incomes will hopefully have a more muted impact on tax revenues. An accelerated rollout of vaccines will be crucial in boosting confidence, and will be the metric to monitor in calibrating GDP growth forecasts.

M/s. Chennai Radha Engineering Works (P) Ltd stretches its hand towards poor men



(A.O. Bureau) Paradip, May 13: M/s. Chennai Radha Engineering Works (P) Ltd working in Paradip Port Trust has stretches its hand towards poor men who lost their jobs during

lockdown / shutdown period of COVID-19 pandemic. Many times it done social welfare work. Recently on dt. 09th May 2021 food distributed among 100 residencies in Maa Santoshi Jarashram at

Paradip. In some other locations also food distributed to helpless and beggars in Paradip. Paradip site Resident Manager Mr. A Ramesh submitted hearty thanks to Management.

Balangir MCH gets centralised oxygen system

(A.O. Bureau) Balangir, May 13: Amid the rising oxygen crisis in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, the Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital's (BBMCH) centralised oxygen delivery system, which can provide oxygen directly to the patient's bed through a pipeline from the tank, has been made operational on Tuesday. This system will drastically reduce manpower requirement to regulate oxygen cylinders for patients. The plant, that is connected to all beds in the isolation ward and 30 ICU and ventilator beds, was inaugurated in the presence of Collector

Chanchal Rana along with Superintendent of the hospital Dr Mahendra Kumar Nayak and others senior doctors. In another development, 15 ventilators gathering dust in the hospital for long, were made operational after the intervention of Balangir MP Sangeeta Singhdeo during a review meeting earlier. Although the hospital had 25 ventilators, only 10 were functional. Keeping in mind the rising complications due to Covid infections, the ventilators were readied in record time and made functional on Tuesday. Meanwhile, Covid Hospital at KIMS campus in Rajib Nagar added 10 ICU beds to its existing 20 beds.

Health workers are struggling to find a way out of fear from covid

(A.O. Bureau) Kukudakhundi, May 13: As per the instructions of the Ganjam district collector one life is very precious to us. At that time grassroots level, Asha Anganwadi and ANM have re-engaged in the war against Covid. In a very high sun a head moment It simply came to our notice when ANM Tupti Sahu, who works in Ankushpur panchayat in Kukudakhundi



block, with his husband Santosh Sahu, a health worker specially

assigned for covid duty, and Ashadidi Sujata Mishra of the

area ankushpur village. Visiting Door-to-door screening is also making

people aware by singing the song in local language. On the one hand, there is such a tragedy that somewhere in the streets to street today, there is no such thing as a chestnut cry, and today there is no such thing as a fire in the crematorium. Under such circumstances, fulfilling one's responsibilities in the service mindset of such health workers is a new hope for humanity.

The New Justice of the Civil Court, Mr. Kamalakant joined



(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, May 13: Today, 13-01-2021,

extended a warm welcome to the Hon'ble Chief Justice, Mr.

Kamalakant Raut, who has actually made a new addition

to the Additional District Doura judge Court. The ceremony was graced by the Registrar and Assistant judge, Mr. Krishna Chandra Nayak, and the Court Manager, Mr. Pranab Kumar pradhan, with a bouquet of flowers. Dr. Ranjan Kumar Swain, one of the most distinguished professors and para-legal volunteers, welcomed and prayed to

God and wished him well. Mr. Kamalakant Raut, from Jagatsinghpur, has been working for three years as a Secretary in the District Legal Services Division, working for various development of people. ". All employees were present at the event and welcomed the Senior Civil Judge by observing COVID - 19 rules and refining the office.

Sunflowers make women self-sufficient, selfie points for locals

(A.O. Bureau) Padmagiri, May 13: Sunflower cultivation is making women self-sufficient in Malkangiri district. With the help of the Odisha Livelihoods Mission, women are now able to earn a living by cultivating sunflower flowers and others. Ten women from MV-84 village of Padmagiri panchayat under Malkangiri district headquarters block first formed a SHG group called Jai Sri Ram. The women, led by Kanika Majhi, CRP (CM), Odisha Livelihood Mission, then expressed in-



terest in growing sunflowers. These women have been cultivating sunflowers on their land and are now in the process of collecting seeds

from them. While there is a demand for sunflower seeds and oil in the market, the women's self-help group is trying to extract oil from the

seeds. This is the first time this year that women have farmed, and good crops have been harvested. So the profit will also be good

depending on the crop," said SHG President Aparna Biswas. This sunflower cultivation has made women self-sufficient and creates the illusion of a park for the locals. The women of the self-help group said many people were happy to take selfies near the farm because of its fascinating environment and scenic views. Aparna Biswas, president of the self-help group, opined that women today need to become self-sufficient by cultivating such sunflower flowers without sitting at home.

Three people have been arrested at by Sadar PS



Kukudakhundi, May 13: Three of the two cases have been arrested by the Sadar police today. In the first case, however, Sanjay sethi 24-year youth from Kumarpur village in Baghalati panchayat, had an affair with a woman from Nua Anantai village. He was later

and mental abuse and filed a case under IPC U / C-366/376 (2) (n) 417/323/294/506 IPC in Case No. 144. Another case there Babula Sahu of Kukudakhundi and Pratap Sahu of Nimkhundi were arrested and remanded in custody under Cases Nos.

case. Intellectuals and the public have reacted positively to the fact that since the joining of Mr. Mahendra Sahu as the new IIC at the Sadar police station, patrolling has been tightened and the law and order situation has improved significantly.

Sambalpur DHH to get PSA oxygen plant

(A.O. Bureau) Sambalpur, May 13: A Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen generator plant will come up at Sambalpur within a month to address the oxygen requirement of the Covid-

oxygen generation plants at different locations across the country including seven in Odisha to facilitate captive oxygen generation facilities at hospitals for supply of medical-grade oxygen. The PSA oxy-

pipeline or compressed to fill cylinders. The Covid-19 hospital on the premises of DHH has 200 beds including 50 general beds, 65 ICU beds and 85 High-Dependency Units (HCU) beds. At present, the hospital uses at least 300 jumbo cylinders every day to cater to all the patients. With the operation of the PSA oxygen generator plant, the hospital will get adequate supply of oxygen and dependence on other facilities will decrease. Sambalpur District Medical Officer (DMO) Alekh Mohapatra said currently, the DHH has around 400 jumbo oxygen cylinders which are refilled from three oxygen plants in Sambalpur and Jharsuguda. To meet the oxygen requirement of Covid hospital, the cylinders are sent for refilling continuously.



19 hospital on the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) premises. Being set up by the Indian Oil Corporation Limited, it will have the capacity to generate 960 litres per minute. Earlier on April 25, the Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had announced that the PSU will set up medical

gen generator plant coming up at the Sambalpur DHH is one among the seven proposed plants. The PSA plant employs a technology that absorbs nitrogen from ambient air to concentrate oxygen for supply to hospitals. The oxygen generated can be supplied straight to the site of use either through a dedicated

The villagers locked the panchayat office demanding the expulsion of the sarpanch



(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, May 13:

Villagers and ward members of 14 vil-

lages have locked up the vejangiwada

panchayat office demanding the expulsion of the sarpanch. Vejangiwada villagers and ward members have been demanding a no-confidence motion for the past one month due to the sarpanch Yamuna Madi's reckless actions. The villagers gave a complaint letter to BDO Kalimela and

District magistrate but still no action has been taken. Efforts are being made Until the Sarpanch Yamuna Madi is expelled and the construction of the Panchayat office will not be rebuilt in the old place, the villagers said, adding that the lockdown movement will continue in the Panchayat office.

Atharbanki fish market to remain shut for a week

(A.O. Bureau) Paradip, May 13: Soon after 10 fish traders tested positive for Covid-19 and one succumbed on Tuesday, Paradip-based Kartikeswar Fish Traders Association has voluntarily called for a week-long shutdown of the Baliplot fish market at Atharbanki, from May 12 to 19. The fish market caters to demands of various places

across Odisha and neighbouring West Bengal. As fish trade involves movement of large number of people, voluntary shutdown comes as a welcome development for locals who are in panic mode. Commenting on the decision, secretary of Kartikeswar Fish Trader Association Prakash Jena said the shutdown is in the best interests of the local



fishermen communities as a lot of them are getting infected of late. On the other hand, the BJP has demanded Paradip municipality to organise

camp for doorstep Covid testing in each of its wards. Local party leaders led by president of BJP urban unit in Paradip Subrat Kumar Pradhan, submit-

ted a memorandum to ADM Kanhu Charan Dhir in this regard. Apart from health camps, the party demanded identification of burial ground for bodies of Covid patients and cremation as per guidelines, proper sanitation of each ward and timely treatment of those infected. Paradip Municipality currently has 300 active cases.

Neha-Rohanpreet describe life without each other: 'Like a body without soul'

Sonu Sood Helped Harbhajan Singh

Mumbai, May 13: Singer couple Neha Kakkar and Rohanpreet Singh on Thursday described their life without each other. While Neha compared her life without her husband 'living without my music', Rohanpreet said it would be like a 'body without soul'. The couple gushed about each other by sharing a video montage made by a fan account featuring their happy moments. Neha said, "PYAR! #KhadTainuMainDassa will be all Yours from 18th May @rohanpreetsingh Life



without You is like living without My Music." Reacting to the post, fans dropped their love in the comments section. A fan wrote, "Loveee is in the air..." Another said, "#very

beautiful sir n mam @nehakakkar." A third commented, "How romantic." The couple celebrated their six-month anniversary in April. Sharing a post, she said, "Every Single Day He Wins My Heart. He makes me fall in love with myself even more.. Everyday! He says he loves me more than I love him but I wanna say I love him a lil more! Hehe.. @rohanpreetsingh You're Genuinely The Best Husband Ever!! I'm really lucky!! Happy 6 Months My Lifeeyyyy!!!! #NehuPreet." Rohanpreet, on his Instagram profile, shared



(A.O. Bureau) Mumbai, May 13: The havoc of Corona Virus has caused panic all over the country. In such a difficult time, the common and special are all upset. People are worried about medicines, injections, beds and

Remedesivir Injection. Sonu Sood helped him and Bhajji thanked him on social media. Bollywood actor Sonu Sood is constantly working to help people. Cricketer Harbhajan Singh also sought help from Sonu Sood on Twitter. He asked for this help for a patient in Karnataka. Harbhajan Singh had tweeted that 'I Remdacivir injection is needed. The name of the hospital is Basappa and it is located in Karnataka. After seeing his tweet, Sonu Sood reacted, 'Bhajji, the injection will reach.'

Oxygen movie review: Mélanie Laurent shines in Netflix's fast-paced, thought-provoking thriller



New Delhi, May 13: Oxygen, a new French thriller film directed by Alexandre Aja, is set almost wholly inside a cryogenic pod. Aja, who also directed 2019's gripping horror thriller Crawl, seems to have come a long way since the days of Mirrors and Piranha 3D. His rise as an original filmmaker with a unique voice and style is testament to the fact that we can improve our craft. A woman wakes up in a cryogenic pod not much

bigger than a coffin. It looks medical in nature, leading her to think she must be sick and under some sort of treatment. But why can't she remember what's happened to her? Why she cannot remember even who she is? Is it memory loss? She does get flashes of seemingly unconnected memories, but little else. A person (she? or somebody else?) being wheeled to an ICU in a hospital corridor, a smiling man, and mice trying to find

their way through a labyrinth. As she struggles to find the answers, the warning voice of AI regularly apprises her about the rapidly dwindling oxygen level. Oxygen cannot be called original in any sense of the word. It collects parts that are familiar to us from other movies but builds a product that is original and exciting. The pacing never lets up, except in moments when a new realisation, more terrifying than what came before, dawns upon the woman. In such cases, it pauses for effect, forcing the viewer to take it all in. Overall, Oxygen is a blisteringly fast-paced and entertaining thriller that plays with genre conventions to keep the viewer on their toes. Rare enough for the genre, it is intellectually stimulating as well.

FIR filed against TMKOC actor Munmun Dutta for using casteist slur in video

Mumbai, May 13: An FIR has been registered against Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah actor Munmun Dutta. A Dalit activist has filed a complain after she used a casteist slur in a YouTube video. Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah actor Munmun Dutta has landed in legal trouble. An FIR against the television star has been registered in Hissar, Haryana, for using a casteist slur in a recent video. Earlier this week, Munmun faced criticism after she used casteist slur in a makeup video. A section of the fans expressed their outrage against the actor for using the slur on social media. The hashtag '#ArrestMunmunDutta' also started to trend. It has now been reported that Dalit rights activist Rajat Kalsan has registered a complaint against her. According to India Today, the FIR was filed under section 3(1) (u) of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Rajat Kalsan, a lawyer, shared a copy of the FIR on Twitter. On May 10, Munmun issued an apology, blaming the 'language barrier' as the reason for her error of judgement. "It was never said with the intent to insult, intimidate, humiliate or hurt anyone's

feelings. Because of my language barrier, I was genuinely misinformed about the meaning of the word. Once I was made aware of its meaning I immediately took the part down. I have utmost respect for every single person from every caste, creed or gender and acknowledge their immense contribution to our Society or nation," she wrote on Instagram. "I sincerely would like to apologize to every single person who has been unintentionally hurt by the usage of the word and sincerely regret for the same," she added. Munmun began her career as a model before making her television debut in Hum Sab Baraati Hai. She became widely popular after she appeared on the show Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah where she plays the role of Babita.



Tamannaah Bhatia on why she chose November Story as her digital debut

New Delhi, May 13: Actor Tamannaah Bhatia is all set to make her digital debut with crime thriller November Story, which releases on May 20. Ahead of it, in an interview, she spoke about her own choices as a web content consumer and why she chose November Story to make her debut in the web space. As a web consumer, Tamannaah said she has a "short attention span", something which helped her stay attuned to the needs and expectations of the audiences. And it was the engaging script of the upcoming Tamil crime thriller November Story that attracted her towards the seven-episode series. "Pre-Covid, I was listening to (the scripts of) a lot of web shows because I was interested in exploring the web space. But I'm not your typical web consumer because I have a very short attention span. "If I'm watching a series, I'll either shut it in 15 minutes or finish the whole thing. It helps my work as well because it should be able to hold my attention as a viewer before I can make anyone else go through it," Tamannaah told PTI in a telephonic interview from Mumbai. In the Disney Hotstar VIP November Story show, the 31-year-old actor plays Anuradha, an ethical hacker. After she finds her crime novelist-father Ganesan (G M Kumar), who has Alzheimer's, with the dead body of a woman in their abandoned house, Anuradha claims his innocence and embarks on a journey to unveil the truth. Tamannaah, who has predominantly appeared in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi films like the Baahubali series, Paiyaa and the remake of 1983's Himmatwala, describes her character as an "authentic" girl next door. "In my movies, I have had the good fortune of playing the girl next door but not really in an authentic way. I have often played a little

more glamorous version. "Anuradha is that everyday Chennai girl who can be your neighbour. Ordinary people when put in extraordinary situations can really do things that are beyond their imagination. So this is one of those characters." There are two things that matter in the web space, she said. "Firstly, you have to connect with the protagonist. You should want the people to go through with you on that journey. Secondly, you have to be intrigued about what's going to happen next. "For us content creators, we need to make sure that you want to watch the next episode. You need to get hooked on to the characters or the narrative, otherwise people will lose track very soon." While the Mumbai-born actor said she was not an avid fan of the whodunnit formula, she believed crime stories work well for the

digital space, courtesy Vikatan Group. Tamannaah said she was on board right from the moment the director narrated the story to her. "When Ram came along, I didn't know what to expect because he had not done any work before. But he was the writer of this web show and Anand Vikatan produced it, we had Disney Hotstar already on board. I was just hearing Ram talk and thought I had seen three episodes. I felt like I wanted to know what's going to happen next," she recalled. Given the severity of the second coronavirus wave in the country, the actor said the OTT (over-the-top) is "probably our only medium" to watch content. "After the first wave had hit, people were still going to the theatres. Telugu cinema was seeing a

normal once again for people to go back to the theatres. "But, in the meanwhile, the atmosphere is so grim that you really need content that takes you into a world, something that even mentally it insinuates to think (about something else than what's going on)" she added. Besides November Story, Tamannaah has a string of films, including That Is Mahalakshmi, the Telugu remake of 2014's Hindi hit Queen, sports drama Seetimaarr (Telugu), and Bole Chudiyan in Hindi, lined up for release. While she was not averse to her projects releasing on OTT, the actor said it was a business decision that needs to be made by the producers and distributors. Tamannaah, however, emphasised that it was best for the content to release on the web because it "tends to become stale" after a point of time. "Some content is relevant to the present situation, two years later it might not be relevant anymore. Content will be time bound, people will create it and put it out. We will not be able to hold on to it for too long." The actor, who has completed 16 years in cinema, said she has been on a "quest of re-inventing" herself for quite some time. "I'm really changing myself as a performer. I'm trying to move away from what I've done before, not because I'm not happy with what it was, but because I have already done that. I also want to give my audience the content that is more universal," she said. Tamannaah said she is happy that November Story is a valuable addition to her filmography.



India retain top spot in ICC Test Team rankings after annual update



Dubai, May 13: India remained the number one Test side after the annual update of the ICC team rankings, released on Thursday. India head the table with a rating of 121 having accumulated 2914 points from 24 matches. Virat Kohli's men are closely followed by their World Test Championship final op-

ponents, New Zealand, with a rating of 120. The Kiwis have garnered 2166 points from 18 Tests. England (109 rating) have climbed a place to third at the expense of Australia (108 rating), down to fourth now. Pakistan (94) are fifth, while West Indies (84) have jumped two places to sixth. South

Africa (80) and Sri Lanka (78) have dropped a rung each to seventh and eighth positions respectively, followed by Bangladesh (46) and Zimbabwe (35). India and New Zealand will square off in the inaugural World Test Championship final at Southampton's Ageas Bowl from June 18 to 22.

Paine hints at giving up captaincy if Australia win Ashes, backs Smith to "get the job again"

Melbourne, May 13: Australian Test captain Tim Paine has hinted at stepping down from the position if his team manages to defeat England in the Ashes series this year and backed former skipper Steve Smith to succeed him. The 36-year-old Paine has been under intense scrutiny after Australia were beaten 1-2 by an injury-ravaged India in a home Test series earlier this season. Paine said that debacle was partly because his team got distracted by India's "niggling". Smith was Australia's captain before being forced to step down in 2018 owing to his role in the ball-tampering scandal. "Obviously I don't make that decision but the time I played with Steve as captain he was excellent. Certainly tactically he is as good as you get," Paine was quoted as saying by news.Com.Au. "He's

probably a bit like me when I was at the start of my captaincy journey in Tasmania - he was thrown into a very big role at a very, very young age and he probably wasn't quite ready for it. "But by the time I came in he was growing into that role and getting better and better. Then obviously (in) South Africa events happened and he's not doing it anymore. But yeah I would support him getting that job again," he added, Paine also hinted that he might step down from captaincy if Australia can beat England in the Ashes later this year. "At least another six Tests," he said referring to the one-off Test against Afghanistan and the five-Test Ashes at home. "If I feel like the time is right and we've beaten the Poms 5-0, what a way to go out. But it might be a tight series and we might be chasing 300 on

the last day and I'm 100 not out and hit the winning runs - and then I might go again." Talking about the India series, which put him under tremendous pressure as captain, Paine said, "...They're very good at niggling you and trying to distract you with stuff that doesn't really matter and there were times in that series where we fell for that." "The classic example was when they said they weren't going to the Gabba so we didn't know where we were going. They're very good at creating these sideshows and we took our eye off the ball," he added. He was referring to unverified reports which claimed that the visiting side did not want to play the Brisbane Test. The media reports relied on source-based information to make the assertion. India, however, went to Gabba and



scripted a record chase of 328 with 19 balls remaining on the final day

for a thrilling three-wicket win, which also sealed the series.

Controversy brews over transgender weightlifter set to create history at Tokyo Olympics

New Delhi, May 13: Laurel Hubbard is set to create history at the Tokyo Olympics this year by being the first transgender athlete to be participating in the Games. However, this has sharply divided opinion between those who see it as a step forward for trans athletes and those who say that Hubbard benefits from an unfair advantage. The New Zealand Olympic Committee said in a statement last week that Laurel Hubbard is one of the weightlifters who are likely to be allocated a spot for the Olympics. "The NZOC can confirm that revised International Federation (IF) qualification systems are very likely to see a number of New Zealand weightlifters, including Commonwealth Games transgender athlete Laurel Hubbard, allocated an IF quota spot for Tokyo 2020," the NZOC said in a state-

ment. The 43-year-old Hubbard previously competed in men's weightlifting before transitioning to a woman in 2013. 'Fairness and equality' However, Hubbard's historic feat has not been appreciated by all. Former Olympic weightlifter Tracey Lambrechts has claimed female athletes are being told to "be quiet" when they complain about the fairness of Laurel Hubbard competing in women's competitions. She told TVNZ: "I'm quite disappointed for the female athlete who will lose out on that spot. We're all about equality for women in sport but right now that equality is being taken away from us. I've had female weightlifters come up to me and say, 'what do we do? This isn't fair, what do we do?' Unfortunately, there's nothing we can do because every time we voice it we get told to



be quiet." Opposition to Hubbard's participation in women's weightlifting is not new. Australia's weightlifting federation had complained about Hubbard during the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi had said of Hubbard in 2019:

"Whichever way you look at it, he's a man." British television presenter Piers Morgan also targeted Hubbard last year. "This is insane. Women's rights to basic fairness & equality are getting destroyed at the altar of political correctness," Morgan had tweeted. The Interna-

tional Olympic Committee issued guidelines in 2015 allowing any transgender athlete to compete as a woman provided their testosterone levels are below 10 nanomoles per litre for at least 12 months before their first competition. The international weightlifting federation follows this guideline, thus paving way for Hubbard's participation in women's weightlifting. In an interview after finishing second in the world championships in 2017, Hubbard had said: "Even 10 years ago the world perhaps wasn't ready for an athlete like myself - and perhaps it is not ready now. But I got the sense at least that people were willing to consider me for these competitions and it seemed like the right time to put the boots on and hit the platform." The rescheduled Tokyo Olympics are due to start on 23rd July.

Muhammed Hanan, 17 year-old hurdler from Malappuram is World No. 3

Thiruvananthapuram, May 13: It is yet to sink in for Muhammed Hanan V. The 17-year-old Malappuram lad has suddenly become the toast of the Tanur town by entering the world rankings released by World Athletics this month. Hanan clocked 13.80s while winning the 110m hurdles gold in the boys' under-18 category in the South Zone Junior Athletics Championship at the Calicut University stadium on February 26. That timing is currently third best in the World as per the latest World ranking released by the World Athletics. What is remarkable is that Hanan hardly has any training on the synthetic track. The feeling is yet to sink and I can hardly believe that I'm in the top three of World rankings," Hanan gushed on Wednesday. South African athletes took the first two spots while a German and Jamaican

completed the top five. Sarthak Sadashiv and Shubam Singh are the two Indians who figure in the World rankings at 37th and 52nd places. Although it is the season ending World rankings that makes it worth it, an Indian athlete taking a

Hanan Hanan and his second brother Muhammed Ashik, a 400m hurdler and a medallist in state meets, train together with a couple of other boys from their locality. "At 18, a job with MRC will surely help me secure my



world No.3 is rare. "For Hanan it is not a small feat. If he maintains the ranking or better the position then it will be really big. These are early days of the season but one cannot deny him the credit for reaching World No.3 even if it is for some time," cautioned Ram Muralikrishnan, renowned athletics statistician. Muhammed

fledgling athletics career. I hope with the current support including that of my brother and personal physician Dr Reguprasad and Dhirkayush Fitness centre which allows me to do indoor exercises in their gym," said Hanan who wrested record gold after a gap of two years in state meet also held in mid-February this year at the same venue.

Champions League final moves to Porto from Istanbul with 12,000 fans

Istanbul, May 13: The all-English Champions League final will be held in Porto with 12,000 fans from Chelsea and Manchester City, UEFA confirmed Thursday. The May 29 showpiece was moved from Istanbul to the 50,000-capacity Estadio do Dragao due to England



imposing tougher pandemic travel restrictions on Turkey that would have prevented fans flying in. The initial alternative had been to use Wembley Stadium in London, but talks with the British government stalled on Monday over being able to secure quarantine waivers for the guests and broadcasters required by UEFA to attend the game. But Portugal is among the 12 territories that England is allowing people to return from without quarantine beginning next week. UEFA said 6,000 tickets to both Chelsea and City fans would go on sale on Thursday. "Fans have had to suffer more than twelve months without the ability to see their teams live and reaching a Champions League final is the pinnacle of club football," UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin said. "To deprive those supporters of the chance to see the match in person was not an option and I am delighted that this compromise has been found.

Shafali Verma, Radha Yadav set to make WBBL debuts

New Delhi, May 13: Indian batting sensation Shafali Verma is set to make her Women's Big Bash League debut with two-time champions Sydney Sixers later this year. The 17-year-old is expected to be joined by left-arm spinner Radha Yadav, who is currently in talks with the Sydney Sixers franchise. "Shafali's deal is done, it will be announced when the Women's Big Bash schedule is released," a BCCI source told PTI. "Radha is also in talks with the



Sydney Sixers," the source added. The teenager's father was also required to sign a consent form as Shafali is still a minor. Shefali joins the trio of T20 skipper

Harmanpreet Kaur (Sydney Thunder), opener Smriti Mandhana (Brisbane Heat) and all-rounder Veda Krishnamurthy (Hobart Hurricanes),

which has featured in the WBBL. The world number one batter in ICC women's T20I rankings will also be turning up for Birmingham Phoenix in

the inaugural edition of The Hundred — the 100-ball domestic competition of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) later this year. While The Hundred, which was postponed last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is scheduled to start on July 21, the WBBL is slated later in the year. The Hundred will be the first overseas T20 competition for Shafali, who has emerged as a powerful striker in world cricket with 617 runs at a strike rate of 148.31 in 22 international matches.

KIIT & KISS extend helping hand to the pandemic-hit

(A.O. Bureau)
Bhubaneswar, May 13: Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) and its sister institution Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), moved by the compassionate vision of its Founder, Prof. Achyuta Samanta, have always responded swiftly to reduce the suffering of people at the time of natural calamities. Right from the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic last year, it has been doing its bit to reach out to the worst-affected, touching the lives of patients, stranded migrant workers, people living in containment areas and even starving animals. As the country, including the State of Odisha, is reel-



ing under the tsunami of the second wave of the pandemic, KIIT and KISS have come forward again to provide relief to the needy. Odisha, along with most other states of the country, has reimposed lockdown to tide over the crisis. During the lockdown, KIIT and KISS have taken initia-

tives to provide cooked lunch to the poor and destitute people of 13 districts of Odisha. Dr. Achyuta Samanta, who also a Member of Parliament from Kandhamal, is personally supervising this work. The districts where the initiative has been started are: Koraput, Rayagada,

Malkangiri, Nabrangpur, Kalahandi, Balangir, Sambalpur, Sonepur, Sundargarh, Kendujhar, Mayurbhanj, Kandhamal, Boudh, Ganjam, and Gajapati. Staff members of the respective district have been engaged in the food distribution in these district headquarters with the support of district

administrations. Some staff of KIIT & KISS had requested Dr. Samanta to allow them to bear the cost of the cooked food. After permission from him, they are bearing the cost of the cooked food. Dr. Samanta also instructed his staff members to distribute cooked food in Bhubaneswar. KIIT & KISS are providing cooked food in lunch and dinner in Buddha Nagar Leprosy Colony, Mancheswar Jagannath Leprosy colony, Keharinagar Swapna Trust and Blind Association in Satyanagar. The food distribution was started from 5th May 2021 and will continue till 19th May, the last day of lockdown.

Poor Patronisation: Four Express Special To Remain Cancelled Till May End

(A.O. Bureau)
Bhubaneswar, May 13: In view of poor patronisation in above trains and keeping in view the surge of Covid19 positive cases and to break the chain of infection, it has been decided to cancel four pairs of Express Special trains up to the end of May, 2021 from both the directions. 01. 02866/02865 Puri-LTT-Puri Weekly Special Express from Puri on 18th & 25th May and from LTT on 20th & 27th May, 2021 will remain cancelled. 02.

- Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT) bound trains from Puri & Bhubaneswar to remain cancelled.
- Cuddapah & Lingampalli bound Trains from Visakhapatnam to remain cancelled.

0 2 8 8 0 / 0 2 8 7 9 Visakhapatnam from Bhubaneswar-LTT- Bhubaneswar bi-weekly Special Express from Bhubaneswar on 17th, 20th, 24th & 27th May and from LTT on 19th, 22nd, 26th & 29th May, 2021 will remain cancelled. 03. 0 7 4 8 8 / 0 7 4 8 7 Visakhapatnam-Cuddapah-Visakhapatnam daily Express Special from 14th to 31st May and from Cuddapah from 15th to 1st June, 2021 will remain cancelled. 04. 0 2 8 3 1 / 0 2 8 3 2 Visakhapatnam-Lingampalli-Visakhapatnam daily Express Special from 14th to 31st May and from Lingampalli from 15th to 1st June, 2021 will remain cancelled.

Prof Upendra Chandra Biswal is no more



(A.O. Bureau)
New Delhi, May 13: Prof (Dr) Upendra Biswal, Former HOD In the Deptt of General Surgery At Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi Is No More. He became victim of COVID. Dr Biswal was a Noble Soul and a Fine Human Being who was Always

Helpful to All. His Body was Received and Cremated by Odia Maha Manch at Punjabi Bagh Crematorium Today. Unfortunately, His Son & Wife Are also In Hospital With COVID and in Serious Conditions. Prof Upendra Chandra Biswal, former HOD, general surgery Dr R M L Hospital,

New Delhi. After retirement from RML working as professor in North Delhi Municipal Corporation Medical College at Hindu Rao Hospital, retired few months back from there. A great surgeon by profession a honest and very helpful personality. a great leader among friends, left his friend circle a wide gap difficult to be filled up. He was borne and brought up in Salipur, schooling in Salipur school, Salipur college, medical education MBBS in MCGG Medical College, Berhampur in 1975 and MS in gen surgery at SCB Medical College, Cuttack in 1979. His father was a wellknown great mathematics teacher in Salipur high school.

Bengal Governor Dhankar shown black flags during visit to assess post-poll violence in Cooch Behar

(A.O. Bureau)
Cooch Behar, May 13: West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar was on Thursday shown black flags at Sitalkuchi, where four villagers died after firing by central forces during the elections, while "go back" slogans were raised at Dinhat during his visit to Cooch Behar district to meet people allegedly affected in post poll violence. Earlier in the day, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar who is on a controversial visit to assess post-poll violence in the district said he was shocked by incidents of attacks following the West Bengal assembly elections. "The country is facing a Covid crisis, and West Bengal is facing twin challenges of the pandemic and unpre-



cedented post-poll violence only (as) some people decided to vote as per their own choice," he said. The run up to the visit was marked by a war of words between the Governor and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with the chief minister writing a letter on Wednesday claiming the visit violated established

norms as it was being undertaken unilaterally without consultations with the state government. She also claimed the Governor was by-passing the state council of ministers and dictating directly to state officials, which was violative of the constitution. An agitated Dhankhar came out of his car at Dinhat and reprimanded police officials

for allegedly not acting to prevent slogan-shouting protesters, who numbered around 15 and had assembled with posters saying "BJP's governor go back". "I am shocked, this is total collapse of rule of law, I could never imagine such a thing could happen," he told reporters. Police officials

chased the protesters away from the spot. "I have seen fear in the eyes of people and they are afraid to go to the police station to file complaints," Dhankhar said about his interaction with people in post-poll hit villages. The Governor visited Mathabanga, Sitalkuchi, Sitai and Dinhat and talked to people who claimed to have suffered attacks at the hands of ruling Trinamool Congress supporters after election results were announced on May 2. Dhankhar, who visited several households at the four places, said "homes have been looted and even ornaments kept for girl's marriage, utensils and other items for 'shradh' were taken away."

Haryana to float global tender to buy Covid-19 vaccines: Manohar Lal Khattar

Chandigarh, May 13: The Haryana government on Thursday said it will float a global tender to procure Covid-19 vaccines for people of the state. The shots will be given to the people of Haryana free of cost. The vaccines, however, have to be cleared by Drugs Controller General of India for the state to buy it. Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said the tender shall be issued in a couple of days and the entire exercise of purchasing the vaccines will be completed in the next 10-14 days. "Irrespective of whatever amount of money the state government has to spend, we shall do it. The people of Haryana shall be given vaccines free of cost in all government hospitals," Khattar said. Khattar added that the tender shall be issued in a day or so and final modalities shall be finalised after picking suitable manufacturers. Earlier, Health Minister Anil Vij, too, had announced on Twitter that the state gov-



ernment will issue a global tender for the purchase of Covid-19 vaccines. Vij added that the vaccine shall be provided to people of the state free of cost. "There are 8-10 vaccine-manufacturing companies in the world. There will be a clause in the tender that the vaccine manufacturer will have to first get necessary approvals from Centre and only then shall we purchase it," Vij explained. He added, "Vaccination is extremely important to protect the people of the state against the virus and hence the government has

decided to bring in shots from across the globe." When asked as to whether they have placed any orders with Indian manufacturers, Vij said, "We have already ordered 66 lakh doses of Covishield and Covaxin. However, we want to arrange more vaccines so that every resident of Haryana is inoculated." Speaking on the oxygen situation in the state, Vij said, "There is also a need to review oxygen allocation. I have also taken up the matter with the Centre. While 700 MT oxygen is being given to Delhi for

85,000 active patients, only 258 MT oxygen is being given to Haryana that has more than 1 lakh active cases." "Strict action will be taken against the government doctors who ask patients to buy medicines from outside state hospitals. Some cases have come to the notice where private hospitals are charging more than the prescribed rate. All necessary medicines are available at government hospitals, but in some facilities, doctors are asking patients to get medicines from outside," he

added. Vij also informed that the health department has been to explore possibilities of administering vaccines to people at places other than hospitals. "It is basically to avoid crowds in hospitals," he added. The Health Minister said that farmers protesting at the borders of Delhi have refused to get inoculated. "It has been over 10 days that we have set up vaccination camps at Delhi's borders. Barely 1,800-1,900 people have received vaccines so far. Despite my several appeals, farmers are not getting themselves tested." The Chief Minister said that rapid antigen tests have been ramped up across the state to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. "This has been done for early detection of the infection. Also, we are soon going to open eight additional laboratories for Covid-19 testing in eight districts", Khattar added.

Bihar extends Covid-19 lockdown till May 25

New Delhi, May 13: The Bihar government on Thursday extended the ongoing Covid-19 lockdown across the state for 10 days till May 25 to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. "Reviewed the lockdown in Bihar with colleagues in the council of ministers and officials. The positive outcome of the lockdown is evident. Hence, a decision has been taken to extend the lockdown by another 10 days, from May 16 to 25," Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said in a tweet in Hindi. This comes a day after the state recorded 9,863 fresh Covid-19 cases and 74 related deaths. On May 4, the Crisis Management Group of the Bihar government decided to impose a lockdown in the state, from May

5-15, amid a rise in daily Covid-19 cases. In the first phase of the lockdown, all government and private offices were directed to be closed. Hospitals, medical labora-



tories, ambulance services and essential services such as civil defence, electric supply, water supply, fire services, veterinary work, postal and telecommunication etc. were allowed to function. Also, industrial and construction work, agricultural activities, e-

commerce, computer services were allowed to function, while grocery shops, retail shops dealing with fruits and vegetables were allowed to operate from 7am to 11am.

The Bihar government has already been on the receiving end after several bodies, decomposed, bloated and suspected to be of people who succumbed to Covid-19, were on Monday found floating in the river Ganga in Buxar.