

In Covid review meet, PM calls for audit of installation, operation of ventilators provided to states



New Delhi, May 15: In a high-level meeting chaired to take stock of the Covid-19 situation in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday took note of reports about ventilators lying unutilised in some states and directed that an immediate audit of installation and operation of ventilators provided by

the Centre should be carried out. Modi also stressed on the need of localised containment strategies in areas where the positivity rate is high. "The Prime Minister added that refresher training for properly operating ventilators should be provided to healthcare workers if necessary," an official statement read. Dis-

cussed a number of issues during today's review meeting on COVID-19, including scaling up testing in areas with high TPR, preparing localised containment strategies, augmenting health capacities in rural areas and ramping up the speed of vaccination. <https://t.co/ysQmtDiZAQ> — Narendra Modi

(@narendramodi) May 15, 2021 Modi also asked officials to formulate a distribution plan for ensuring oxygen supply in rural areas, including providing oxygen concentrators. "The Prime Minister said that necessary training should be provided to health workers in the operation of such equipment, and power supply should be ensured for smooth operation of such medical devices," the statement added. Modi also stated that testing needs to be ramped up in areas recording high positivity rate. "States should be encouraged to report their numbers transparently without any pressure of high numbers showing adversely on their efforts.

PM asked for augmentation of healthcare resources in rural areas to focus on door-to-door testing and surveillance. He also spoke about empowering ASHA and Anganwadi workers with all necessary tools to help fight the pandemic," the statement informed. During the course of the meeting, the Prime Minister was informed that tests have gone up significantly across the country — from around 50 lakh tests per week in early March to around 1.3 crore tests per week now. Regarding vaccination, the Prime Minister asked officials to work closely with the state governments to speed-up inoculation drives across the country.

Odisha Forms High-Powered Advisory Committee To Tackle Possible Waves Of Covid

Bhubaneswar, May 15: Amid the raging second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, the Odisha government formed an advisory committee comprising of eminent scientists and doctors to suggest the government on measures tackling possible waves of coronavirus disease. Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra today informed the government has constituted the high-powered advisory committee under chairmanship of Dr Srinath Reddy. Some of the other members of the committee are Dr Devi Shetty and Dr Ramakanta Panda. The DMET, Odisha is the convener of the committee, Mahapatra added. The Chief Secretary further stated the advisory committee will suggest measures on universal vaccination as well. As reports are coming in suggesting that possible third wave of the Covid pandemic will affect youngsters especially children, the high-powered advisory committee will advise the government on ramping up hospital and infrastructure for them, Mahapatra added. He added acting as per the decision of the State Cabinet, the Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd on behalf of the Health and Family Welfare De-



partment floated a global tender for procurement of Covid vaccines. A total of 3.8 crore vaccines will be purchased through the global tender. The Chief Secretary further informed the pre-bid discussion will be held on May 19 and the interested companies can participate in the bidding process by May 28. The bid winner will supply the Covid vaccines in four months. The test positivity rate in 10 districts of the State is stagnant or declining, he added. He also said there are around 15,000 Covid patients admitted in the government Covid hospitals in the State. Of them 3,000 are in ICU and ventilator, the Chief Secretary added.

Naveen enquires health condition of Revenue Minister



Bhubaneswar, May 15: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik spoke to Director of AMRI Hospital today and enquired about the health condition of Revenue Minister Sudam Marndi who is undergoing treatment

there. Marndi was undergoing treatment at the private hospital after being tested positive for Covid-19. The CM asked the medical team to put their best possible efforts for early recovery of Marndi.

10,781 In 24 Hours: Odisha Sees Highest Single-Day Recovery From Covid-19



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 15: A record number of Covid patients recovered today in Odisha taking the recovered patients tally in the State to 5,02,455. As per the data provided by the Health and Family Welfare department, a total of 10,781 Covid patients have recovered and are being discharged today. A maximum of 1,605 Covid

patients recuperated in Khordha district followed by 1,186 from Sundargarh, 966 from Cuttack, 566 from Kalahandi, 557 from Angul, 530 from Bargarh, 458 from Sambalpur, 422 from Jharsuguda, 366 from Puri and 342 from Nabarangpur district. The data further mentioned 285 persons from Ganjam, 267 from

Nayagarh, 258 from Balangir, 257 from Mayurbhanj, 256 from Nuapada, 251 from Boudh, 218 from Koraput, 206 from Keonjhar, 177 from Jajpur, 163 from Dhenkanal, 157 from Bhadrak, 147 from Jagatsinghpur, 144 from Sonapur, 143 from Kendrapara and 131 from Rayagada district recovered from the Covid-19 disease. A total of 110 from Deogarh, 97 from Balasore, 91 from Gajapati, 76 from Kandhamal and 67 from Malkangiri district also recovered. The data added as many as 282 from State Pool recuperated as well.

Odisha cricketer Arabind ties nuptial knot with Kunmun

Cuttack, May 15: Frontline cricketer of Odisha team Arabind Singh tied the nuptial knot with Kunmun on Friday. Arabind took the hand of Kunmun in a ceremonial function organized at Cuttack amid Corona protocols. Samikshya Singh alias Kunmun is the eldest daughter of Prasant Kumar Singh and Snehalata Singh, natives of

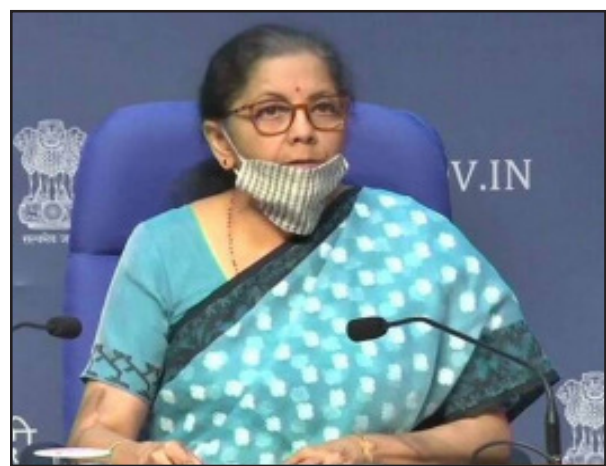


Golorahat village in Kendrapada. A handful guests and lawful superiors including Arabind's parents Ajay Kumar Singh and Jyotsnarani Singh blessed the newly wed couple.

GST Council to meet on May 28; compensation shortfall, rates on COVID essentials on agenda

New Delhi, May 15: The GST Council will meet on May 28 and is likely to discuss tax rates on COVID-related drugs, oxygen equipment and vaccines. The meeting among other things is also likely to discuss the compensation mechanism for states' GST revenue shortfall for the ongoing fiscal which began on April 1. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will chair the 43rd GST Council meeting via video conferencing on May 28, 2021. The meeting will be attended by MOS Shri @ianuragthakur besides Finance Ministers of States & UTs and Senior officers from Union Gov-

ernment & States, Office of Nirmala Sitharaman tweeted. Earlier this month, West Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra and Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal had demanded that a virtual GST Council meeting be held. The meeting of the Council is supposed to take place at least once every quarter of a financial year. However, the panel has not met since October 5 last year. Congress working president Sonia Gandhi had last month demanded that all life-saving drugs, equipment and instruments required to treat COVID-19 patients be exempted



from GST. Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress has also made a similar demand. Sitharaman had, however, ruled out exempting COVID vaccines, medicines and oxygen concentrators from GST saying such an exemption will make the lifesav-

ing items costlier for consumers as manufacturers will not be able to offset the taxes paid on inputs. Currently, domestic supplies and commercial imports of vaccines attract 5 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST), while COVID drugs and oxygen concentrators

attract 12 per cent levy. The Centre had last fiscal year released Rs 70,000 crore to states on account of GST compensation. This is over and above the Rs 1.10 lakh crore released to states under the special borrowing mechanism to compensate them for shortfall in the GST collection this financial year. As much as Rs 63,000 crore worth compensation is still due to be paid for 2020-21 fiscal year which ended March 31, 2021. The impact of second wave of the pandemic on GST revenue is likely to be taken into account in the forthcoming GST Council meeting on May 28.

Senior Citizens In Bhubaneswar To Get Pick-Up, Drop Facility For Vaccination

Bhubaneswar, May 15: With an aim to help senior citizens of Bhubaneswar visit Covid vaccination centres in the city, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation decided to start pick-up and drop facilities for them for vaccination. Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation Commissioner Sanjay Singh informed the pick-up and drop facilities will be provided to 60+, who are staying alone in the city, up to the vaccination centre. Once they dial 1929 round-the-clock call centre and provide the address along with a request for the pick-up and drop, the municipal corporation will make an arrangement

to ferry them up to the vaccination centre and drop them at their house after being vaccinated,

Once the senior citizens register themselves, the mobile sample collection unit will reach their door



Singh added. He also requested senior citizens to take the help of 1929 call center if they are unable to go to Covid testing center. From Monday onwards, senior citizens, who cannot visit a testing centre, can avail the facility of 1929 call centre.

steps and collect samples, the Municipal Commissioner added. Vaccination slot booking for drive-in vaccination facility will begin today in www.cowin.gov.in. The drive-in vaccination in the city will resume from Monday, he informed.

Tauktae may intensify into ‘very severe storm’, to cross Gujarat on May 18

New Delhi, May 15: Tauktae intensified very rapidly from a depression to a cyclone on Friday. Agencies are facing multiple challenges of maintaining Covid-19 protocol, evacuation efforts during a pandemic and the risks from Tauktae itself. Cyclone Tauktae (pronounced as Tau’Te) is likely to intensify into a ‘very severe cyclonic storm’ in the next 12 to 15 hours with a wind speed of 120 to 130 kmph gusting to 145 kmph, according to the India Meteorological Department. It is also expected to move north north-westwards and cross the Gujarat coast between Porbandar and Naliya as a very severe cyclonic storm around May 18 afternoon or evening. Tauktae intensified very rapidly from a depression to a cyclone on Friday. “The cyclone track is very similar to the 1998 Gujarat cyclone except that storm had crossed Kandla. We noticed rapid intensification of Tauktae because of various favourable atmospheric and oceanic parameters,” said Sunitha Devi, in charge, cyclones



at IMD. Independent experts said rapid intensification of cyclones over Arabian Sea is linked to a marked rise in sea surface temperatures due to climate change. “The frequency and intensity of cyclones in the Arabian Sea have increased in recent years. This is because of the rapid warming that has made the relatively cooler Arabian Sea (compared to the Bay of Bengal) a warm pool region that can actively support cyclone formation. Climate projections indicate that Arabian Sea will continue warming under increased carbon emissions, resulting in more intense cyclones in the future,” said Roxy Mathew Koll, a cli-

mate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology on Saturday. There were two more cyclones in the past with similar tracks according to OP Sreejith, scientist and head, Climate Monitoring and Prediction Group (CMPG) at IMD Pune. One in 1933 between May 13 to 19 and another in 1975 between May 20 to 21. The 1998 Gujarat cyclone had killed over 4,000 people. “Conditions are extremely favourable for its (Tauktae’s) rapid intensification. Ocean heat potential is above normal; sea surface temperatures are 1-2 degree C above normal. ... We should be prepared,” Sunitha Devi

had said on Thursday when a low pressure area had formed over the Arabian Sea. “Cyclone Tauktae has arrived at an already critical time when Covid-19 cases are very high, and communities are struggling in most of our western coastal states. As the cyclone moves alongside the entire coastline, it will trigger very heavy rainfall in a number of places, till it finally hits land in Gujarat on May 18, as per current forecasts. While cyclones carry an image of strong winds, we are most worried about flash floods that it can trigger, creating devastation in places already battling Covid-19. Pre-emptive moves such as evacuations need to be

carried out with great care, adhering to Covid-19 protocols such as social distancing and masking. We are ramping up our support to local communities to interpret the warnings in their own hyper-local contexts, and to take appropriate action. We are also pre-positioning our supply lines to extend relief support if required anywhere,” said Anshu Sharma, Co-founder, Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society. Over Devbhoomi Dwarka, Kutch, Porbandar, Junagarh, Gir Somnath and Jamnagar districts of Gujarat extensive damage is expected on May 18. There could be total destruction of thatched houses or extensive damage to kutcha houses; some damage to pucca houses; threat from flying objects; bending/uprooting of power and communication poles; major damage to kutcha and pucca roads; flooding of escape routes; minor disruption of railways; overhead power lines and signalling systems; widespread damage to salt pans and standing crops etc.

From Bengal to Kashmir: States that have extended Covid lockdown restrictions

New Delhi, May 15: With the novel coronavirus rapidly spreading across the country, most states have resorted to imposing or extending lockdowns and related restrictions to deal with the pandemic. On Saturday, West Bengal became the latest state to go under a lockdown, imposing curbs till May 30, to check the spread of the virus. The state government has announced a complete lockdown across the state for a fortnight from 6 am on Sunday, May 16 to 6 pm on May 30. It also imposed a night curfew, from 9 pm to 5 am, beginning Sunday night. Himachal Pradesh, too, has extended the coronavirus-induced curfew in the state till May 26. Here is a look at the states that have extended restrictions to curb the spread of the virus: Delhi: The national capital has been under lockdown since April 19 and it will continue till May 17. Maharashtra: Maharashtra’s lockdown-like restrictions have been extended till 7 am on June 1. The new restrictions include a mandatory negative RT-PCR test report for those entering the state and curbs on those arriving from places of “sensitive ori-

gins”, says an order issued by Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte on Wednesday. Uttar Pradesh: The Yogi Adityanath government, which had imposed a curfew across the state to curb the spread of the virus till May 10, has extended the duration till 7 am on May 24. This was the fifth such extension so far in the past few days. Jharkhand: The partial lockdown imposed in Jharkhand since April 22 had been extended till May

continue to remain shut. Jammu and Kashmir: The administration had extended the curfew in place across all 20 districts by a week. The curfew, which has been in force since April 29, will now run till May 24. Kerala: The Kerala government on Friday decided to extend the lockdown till May 23 as test positivity rate remained high across the state. More stringent containment measures were



27 with some additional restrictions. Movement of inter-state and intra-state buses were restricted while private vehicles are allowed to move only with e-passes issued by the district administration. Haryana: The state government has extended statewide lockdown with even more stringent curbs till May 17. Now, weddings and funerals can only be attended by a maximum 11 persons while liquor shops across the state will con-

also implemented in four districts – Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Malappuram – where Covid-19 cases have continued to rise. Chhattisgarh: The Chhattisgarh government has asked district administrations to extend the lockdown till May 31 to contain the surge of Covid-19 cases. The lockdown, in force in all 28 districts, was to end on Saturday midnight.

Corona Curfew Extended In Himachal Pradesh

Himachal, May 15: In Jayaram Thakur cabinet in Himachal Pradesh, taking a big decision, the Corona curfew has been extended till 26 May. Hard ware shops will open on Tuesday



and Friday, the government has appealed to postpone the wedding ceremony. Band Baja, Banquet Hall will remain closed. The government will provide free wood for the funeral of those who died from Corona. CM Jairam Thakur said after the cabinet meeting that the corona transition also increased in the

state by organizing weddings. In many places, around 150 people got infected in a wedding ceremony, if possible, people postpone weddings, where it is not possible, there

should not be more than 20 people involved. Urban Development Minister Suresh Bhardwaj told in a press conference that beds, oxygen and medicines are available in sufficient quantity for corona patients in hospitals in the state. Suresh Bhardwaj said that there is no situation of refilling of oxygen cylinders

in homes. The cabinet reviewed the increase in bed capacity in Parour, Solan, Mandi and Shimla. Corona is wreaking havoc in Himachal Pradesh. Now more than 50 patients are dying every day. On Friday, the state has recorded the highest number of 67 deaths so far. One month old girl is also among the dead. According to the information, a month old girl died from Corona in the capital Shimla. This girl was admitted in Shimla’s IGMC Hospital. It is being told that the girl was a victim of Theog. He was admitted to IGMC on 7 May and now died on 13 May. The child was found to have symptoms of Kovid pneumonia. The baby was also having trouble breathing due to nozzle blockage. He died in IGMC during treatment.

Misuse of steroids major cause behind mucormycosis infection: AIIMS chief

New Delhi, May 15: AIIMS director Dr. Randeep Guleria on Saturday warned that cases of mucormycosis infection, commonly known as the 'Black Fungus', are on the rise in the wake of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) among particularly susceptible patients. Misuse of steroids is a major cause behind this infection, he said, adding that patients who are diabetic or Covid-19 positive and are taking steroids have an increased chance of contracting the fungal infection. To prevent the mucormycosis infection, misuse of steroids must be stopped, said the director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi. Dr. Guleria added that such secondary infections, which include fungal and bacterial, are causing more mortality in recent days, even as Covid-19 cases keep



on increasing. It is thus all the more important to properly follow protocols of infection control practices at hospitals, he said. Where are mucormycosis spores found? Mucormycosis spores are found in soil, air, and even in food, said the AIIMS chief. In a new advisory over black fungus infection, the central government asked people to be extra careful regarding infection protocols since the mucormycosis fungus enters the body through a cut, scrape, burn, or

other types of skin trauma when the skin comes in contact with fungal spores in the environment. As such, a few of the conditions in which a Covid-19 patient might find themselves to be at an increased risk of the mucormycosis infection are: 1. If they are visiting dusty construction sites without masks. 2. If they are not wearing shoes, long trousers, long sleeve shirts, and gloves while handling soil (gardening), moss, or manure. 3. If they have experienced pro-

longed hospital or ICU stay. 4. If they are comorbid, have undergone organ transplant, or are suffering from cancer. 5. If they are not maintaining personal hygiene properly in general. Covid-19 patients need to be wary of steroid 'misuse' Dr. Randeep Guleria, AIIMS chief, said that the mucormycosis fungal spores are of low virulence and usually do not cause infection. There were very few cases before Covid-19, but a large number of cases are only being re-

ported in recent times due to the coronavirus disease infection, which affects immunity. Since steroids like dexamethasone also repress the immune system, it is necessary to be extra careful regarding its use, now more so than ever. "Overuse, misuse, and rampant use of steroids in Covid-19 patients cause black fungus, also known as mucormycosis," said Dr. Suresh Kumar, medical director of LNJP hospital in New Delhi. He said that steroid use must be reduced. "If given to patients with oxygen levels over 90, black fungus is a possible side-effect. Early diagnosis is critical. A CT scan of the face would detect this infection, after which antifungal drug amphotericin will be used for treatment," he said. "Quite often a patient dies due to black fungus (mucormycosis) instead of Covid-19," Dr. Suresh Kumar added.

No denial of vaccine, essential services for lack of Aadhaar, says UIDAI

New Delhi, May 15: A healthcare worker gives a dose of COVISHIELD, a coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine to a woman. The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on Saturday asserted that no one should be denied vaccine, medicine, hospitalisation or treatment just because they do not have an Aadhaar. The UIDAI made it

clear that Aadhaar should not be misused as an excuse for denial of any essential service. The statement assumes significance given the second severe wave of COVID-19 pandemic, which has swept through the nation. In a statement, the UIDAI said there is a well-established exception handling mechanism (EHM) for Aadhaar, and that it should be followed to ensure deliv-



ery of benefits and services in the absence of the 12-digit biometric ID. If a resident does not possess Aadhaar for some or the other reason, they must not be

denied essential services as per Aadhaar Act. “No one shall be denied vaccine, medicine, hospitalisation or treatment for want of Aadhaar,” UIDAI said

flagging certain reports which claimed that some essential services like hospitalisation, were being denied to the residents for want of Aadhaar. If one does not have Aadhaar or if Aadhaar online verification is not successful due to some reason, the concerned agency or department has to provide the service as per specific norms laid out in Aadhaar Act, 2016, it informed.

Govt, people became complacent after first wave: Mohan Bhagwat

Nagpur, May 15: “We are facing this situation because all of us – general public, Government and administration – became complacent after the first wave. Doctors were indicating but we became complacent. That’s why we’re facing this problem. Now there are talks of the third wave but we don’t have to fear but prepare ourselves,” said Bhagwat at a lecture series ‘Positivity Unlimited’. Calling the pandemic a “challenge



for humanity”, Bhagwat said India has to set an example for the world. “This (COVID-19 pandemic) is a challenge before humanity and India has to set an example. We have to

work as a team, without discussing merits and demerits. We can do it later. We can overcome this challenge by working as a team and speeding up our work,” he added.

World Odisha Society Chairman Kishore Dwibedi's Mother Expired

Bhubaneswar, May 15
Chairman of World Odisha Society and Senior Journalist Kishore Dwibedi has lost his mother Smt Shrimantini Dwibedi. 86 years old Smt Dwibedi has been ailing for sometime. She breathed her last at 11.15 p.m. on Friday night at Dwibedi's ancestral home in village Bari of District Jajpur in Odisha. Smt Dwibedi's husband late Gokul Chandra Dwibedi has had earned name and fame as a well known educationist in Bari as well as in district Jajpur. Smt Shrimantini Dwibedi was a simple, soft spoken, affectionate, kind hearted, religious and benevolent human being. Born in an aristocratic muktia



family of village Rampur, smt Dwibedi has been an active promoter of art and culture and used to have passion for social service. Dwibedi Couple have Five Daughters and Three Sons. Eldest son Kishore Dwibedi is currently holding Chair-

manship of Journalists' Development Council of India and has been pursuing Journalism in Delhi since last four decades. Other two sons Kaminikanta and Shrikanta, daughters Sabitri Dash, Satyabhama Tripathy, Sushama Mishra,

Anupama Pati and Chandrama Sahu have been earning recognition in their respective professional pursuits. The last rites of Smt Dwibedi has been done in native village Bari on Saturday morning. In her death spell of mourning looming large on entire Bari areas, Journalists fraternity of Odisha, Non-resident Odias in Delhi and National Capital region and Odia diaspora across the Globe. The Dignitaries who condoled the demise of Smt Dwibedi include the Comptroller Auditor General of India Girish Chandra Murmu, Governor of Andhra Pradesh B i s w a b h u s h a n

Harichandan, Speaker of Odisha Assembly Dr. Surjya Narayan Patro, State Ministers Naba Das, Sushant Singh and Tusharkanti Behera, Former Union Ministers Srikant Jena, Jual Oram, PCC President Niranjana Patnaik, BJP State President Samir Mohanty, Former State Ministers K.V. Singhdeo and Prasad Harichandan, BJP's National Spokesperson Dr. Sambit Patra, Deputy Leader of opposition in Odisha Assembly Bishnu Sethi, MPs Prasanna Acharya, Ramesh Chandra Ratna, Suresh Pujari, Aparajita Sarangi, Sangita Singhdeo and Sasmit Patra.

Distribution of cooked and dried food by the Snow Charitable Trust in the Epidemic Corona

(A.O. Bureau)

Bhubaneswar, May 15: The epidemic is spreading day by day across the country and the state. "People are feeling insecure in order to get rid of it," he said. People have lost their livelihoods and their financial backbone has been shaken. "People are struggling to make ends meet, and the poor and the homeless are starving." Tushar Charitable Trust has extended a helping hand, recognizing the plight of the people. Led by social editor

Vivekananda Barik, editor of the trust, presidents Jitendra Kumar Jena, Shivir Kumar Parida, Sushmadei Mohapatra, Sangram Jena, Vikas Behera, Prabhati Barik, Manoj Mishra, Parmeshwar Das and Chandan Nayak Pramukh have been working in the capital since May 8. Food has been distributed. In addition, people are being provided with masks and sanitizers to protect them from coronation. Senior citizens of the capital have lauded the trust's move.



BJP Demand to Open More Covid-19 Testing Centre

(A.O. Bureau)

Khordha, May 15: The number of Covid infected people in Khordha District and the rate of the disease spread continues unabated. BJP Demand "If the number of patients increase more than what our health system can handle the situation will turn awful. We need to strictly follow the disease preventive measures to avoid such situation." Said BJP Krushak Morchha Vice-President Sriranjan Mangaraj. Sri Mangaraj write a letter to the Collector demand to open more Covid testing centre in each Gram panchayat

of Khordha District and Immediately activated all the TMC and quarantine centre to provide better treatment to the covid-19 affected peoples. The District Administration



and Police Authorities were not ensure strict observance of covid-19 Safety protocols in village levels, such as the mandatory wearing of masks, maintaining physical distancing etc. Public awareness through loudspeaker an-

nouncement is not to be made frequently in all market places, haat and other places. The demarcation of containment zone, which works at a more micro levels is likely to remain as long as the disease is spreading. The local Administration and in-charge officers of the containment zone not equipped to manage this effectively. That's the people suffering more and more inside the containment zone. Sri Mangaraj requested the Collector Khordha to interference the above matter and to ensure strict implementation of covid-19 Safety protocols to spike in the number of cases in Khordha district.

103rd Anniversary Celebrated of Swami Brahmananda

(A.O. Bureau)

Bhubaneswar, May 15: The 103rd birth anniversary of Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, the leader of the Gurukul movement in Odisha, the founder of 32 gurukul groups like Gurukul Bedavyas, the main preacher of Aryas Samaj in Odisha, has been celebrated across Odisha today. "Aryas Samaj, Odisha and Yuva Aryas Samaj, a state-level webinar jointly sponsored by Aryas Samaj, Odisha has been organized under the patronage of Dr. Aryakumar Gyanendra, President of Odisha. Inaugurating the program, Swami Aryabesh, the main president of the

Arya Samaj Shiromani Sangstha Sarbadeshi Arya Delegation, said that Swami Brahmananda Saraswati was the main proponent of the Sanskrit education and gurukul movement in Odisha from 1950 to 1955. Until his last breath, the people of Odisha will not forget his contribution to bringing the oppressed, oppressed, Girijan, Mala people of Odisha to the mainstream of society. "Joining as the keynote speaker was former Chancellor Prof. Dr. Harekrishna Shatapathi said that Sanskrit is not the language of any nation, as evidenced by Swami Brahmananda in Odisha.

Swami Adityabesh, one of the guests, said that Swamiji was a source of inspiration for the youth in Odisha. Swami

verse "Paropkaraya Swargaya". Distinguished educators Dr Badrinath Patnaik and Dr Saurendra Kumar



Jagannathananda called Swamiji a social reformer. Satyanarayana Acharya, a professor from Tirupati, described Swamiji as an activist. Prominent Sanskrit scholar Pandit Birendra Kumar Panda conducted the program and said that Swamiji was a symbolic symbol of the

described Mohapatra Swamiji as great men. Swamiji was a sincere devotee, said Prof. Buddhadeb Sadangi, a student at Gurukul Bedavyas Ashram. He was above condemnation and praise. Prabir Arya, President of Yuva Aryas Samaj, delivered the welcome address at

the beginning of the program and thanked Ramchandra Sahu, Trustee and Editor, Gurukul Bedavasar. The day-long program continued today. Swami Pranabanananda Saraswati, a senior Aryan monk, inaugurated the house-to-house sacrifice program at 9 am. The webinar, organized by the Vedic Gurukula Ashram Bedavas, was presided over by Acharya Dr Debabrata, the founding president of the ashram, and was coordinated by Pandit Umakanta Panda. Many members of the Arya Veer were sworn in to deal with the situation.

BMC Plans Hotel-Hospital Tie Up For Treatment Of Non-Critical Covid Patients

(A.O. Bureau)

Bhubaneswar, May 15: In a bid to free up more beds for critical Covid-19 patients at different Hospitals, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) is planning to rope in hotels for converting into Covid-19 facilities to treat patients with mild infection in the State Capital. Today, BMC Commissioner, Sanjay Kumar Singh chaired a virtual meeting in this regard which was attended by owners of major hotels and representatives of the hotel and restaurant association body along with private hospital authorities to discuss the plan in detail, a first-of-its-kind in the State, to discuss on Hospital-Hotel tie up arrangement for creation of isolation beds in hotel rooms with oxygen facility. The Commissioner



shared the idea of creation of isolation beds with oxygen facility for treatment of mild COVID positive cases (those can be managed on normal oxygen mask or nasal canula). All the Hotel Association Members appreciated the idea and requested the Commissioner for facilitating the tie up with the private hospi-

tals where their logistics including rooms/beds/house-keeping/Fooding/Sanitation facility can be leveraged with the expert medical services of the tied-up private hospitals for getting isolation treatment. In case the COVID positive patient needs more or special medical attention which cannot be managed at the hotel fa-

cility, then they can be transferred to the tied-up hospital. The BMC Commissioner has assured the hotel association members that the civic body will play the role of facilitator for the Hospital-Hotel tie-up. The representatives of private hospitals were encouraged to support this tie-up arrangement. While showing their interest for

such tie up arrangements, corporate hospital facility like Apollo Hospital informed that they already have such tie up arrangement with hotels like Lemon Tree and Ginger Hotels in other states which can be replicated here also. The Commissioner informed all that all interested hotel owners can approach the private hospitals of their choice for the tie up arrangement and intimate BMC of such arrangement. The Commissioner assured all that whatever coordination and facilitation as would be needed will be provided by the BMC in this regard. This will be, however, a purely paid facility, and patients have to pay as per their choice of properties selected as would be fixed by the tie-up agreement.

E-Permission Launched For Movement During Lockdown In Twin City

Bhubaneswar, May 15: In order to help employees of IT, ITes and private companies move in the twin city of Odisha during the lockdown and weekend shutdown imposed to prevent spread of Covid-19, the Police Commissionerate started e-permission for them. The IT, ITes and private companies that were allowed to function as per the guidelines issued by the Odisha government during ongoing lockdown and weekend shutdown restrictions can access a system developed to issue e-permission to their employees. Worth mentioning, there are restrictions on the percentage of employees who can be allowed to move during the lockdown. The e-permission can be generated by visiting the website <https://cp.erp.quocent.com/> Automatically a copy of the permission will reach to DCPs Offices and no need for further stamping/receipt acknowledgement. The system has been developed by Quocent Pvt. Ltd for the Police Commissionerate Bhubaneswar-Cuttack. Employees of the IT, ITes and private organisations



are required to carry the e-permission along with id card. In case the e-permission has not been generated, the organization can issue an authorization letter (a copy must be emailed to DCP Office) to its employees that they must carry along with the ID card while moving in the twin city and areas under the Police Commissionerate jurisdiction. Shop keepers, salesman, workers etc. who have been permitted as per the guidelines, can show identity card and a letter of employer or shop trading license or any document establishing that they are in permitted category.



Pradhan Urges Centre For 19 More PSA Medical Oxygen Plants In Odisha

(A.O. Bureau)

Bhubaneswar, May 15: Amid COVID-19 surge in second wave, Union Petroleum & Natural Gas Minister Dhamendra Pradhan urged Union Health Minister to set up more Pressure Swing Absorp-

tion (PSA) medical oxygen plants in Odisha. In a letter to Union Health & Family Welfare Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Pradhan sought 19 more PSA oxygen plants in 15 districts in addition to 21 oxygen plants being set up across various districts

of Odisha. Last month, Prime Minister accorded emergency approval for installation of 551 dedicated PSA medical oxygen plants in public health facilities across the country from PM Care Fund, in addition to the 162 PSA plants allocated earlier. As

per decision, 21 PSA plants are being set up across various districts of Odisha; 7 are being set up by DRDO, 7 by Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas and 7 by Govt of India, he wrote. However, in view of the wide spread impact of COVID-19

second wave in Odisha, more districts need to be covered and supported further, he wrote. He requested to the Union Health Ministry to set up additional 19 PSA medical oxygen plants in 15 districts as proposed by the State Government. The districts

included, Balasore (2), Balangir (2), Cuttack (1), Deogarh (1), Dhenkanal (1), Ganjam (2), Jagatsinghpur (1), Kendrapara (1), Khordha (1), Koraput (1), Mayurbhanj (2), Puri (1), Rayagada (1), Sambalpur (1) and Sonepur (1).

EDITORIAL

High and dry

Herd immunity is one thing; India needs to do a lot more to protect its people from the pandemic. The COVID-19 vaccination drive in India appears to be wafting in the air with a mind of its own. Never an easy task, what with a billion people to be vaccinated in time to avoid a third surge of the virus, the exercise is taking time even to take off. Whether it is owing to gigantic nature of the task at hand or the scattered nature of the vaccination management plan, one is not sure. The bare facts of the case, if the pandemic is to be brought under control at the very least by the end of this year, are before us. Scientists believe a minimum of 70 per cent of the population needs to be vaccinated for the herd immunity to set in. In India, that means the immunity can be achieved if nearly 94 crore people receive both doses of the vaccine. At two doses each, that calls for 188-odd crore doses. That is a tall order. Even if one were to scale down the vaccination to one dose under the assumption that it is better to give at least half protection to all than complete protection to only a few, even then, just under a 100 crore doses are needed. Where to get the doses from? How long will it take to acquire them? How long will it take to complete the vaccination process? If, at the end, it is only one dose that is given, an identical task stares at the country for giving the second dose. Bear in mind that all this is for vaccinating only 70 per cent of the population. That means just about a third of the population will be left high and dry unless they largely constitute children who are yet to come under the purview of vaccination. The Serum Institute of India has said it will be in a position to produce 10 crore doses a month after July. One can assume that Bharat Biotech can produce anywhere between five and six crore doses a month after July. Zydus Cadila and Dr Reddy's Labs will be able to pitch in with three-odd crore doses a month. That can stretch the total figure of available doses per month close to 20 crore by August 2021 or thereabouts. That leaves five months till December to complete the task of giving around 100 crore doses. There are reports that are not so confident; they contend that the task may actually take over two or even three years. In any case, assuming the exercise ends by December, a population of 94-odd crore will receive one effective dose or half of them will get two doses each, as the case may be. The result is there for all to see: It is simply impossible to achieve herd immunity before the end of 2021 unless 188 crore doses are available at once and an unprecedented, organised, synchronised, national campaign is undertaken to complete the process in five months. The question to the Centre goes abegging: Where is the plan?

Hogwash

Amid the raging contagion, a handful of politicians are providing comic relief to citizens, albeit unintentionally. Chandler Muriel Bing of the Friends fame said in the series: "I'm not great at advice. But can I interest you in a sarcastic comment?" Something similar in the nature of an emotion has ostensibly stirred Uttarakhand's former Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat. The BJP leader, no less adept at stoking controversy as the incumbent Tirath Singh Rawat, has now taken to bat for the accursed Novel Coronavirus because, as it would appear, everybody is only hurling doses of vituperation at the poor pathogen. Choosing to look at it "from a philosophical angle", Rawat said that the virus is a "living organism which has a right to live". In the same vein, he warned the human species that despite considering ourselves to be the most intelligent on the planet and out to eliminate the virus, the killer is sensible enough to keep mutating itself. Slipping into some sense midway, he also clarified, to his credit, that people need to outpace the virus to stay safe. So far, so good! By that logic, do we need to go and offer ourselves to a tiger just because it has a life and the right to life? If the virus has the right to live, as an organism, all of us don't? And, as most of us would agree, the new-age politicians are nothing less than pernicious viruses. But do they really need to open their trap and prove it? As the old saying goes, it is better to keep your mouth shut and let the world think that you are a fool, rather than open it and remove all doubts! The unusual observation, as must have been the desired outcome of the former Chief Minister, went viral at a time when the entire country is battling a killer second wave of COVID-19. A Twitter user sarcastically said: "This virus organism should be given shelter in the Central Vista." Another said: "Shri Rawat should invite the virus home, feed it well and stay with it for at least 14 days." All done and dusted, the statement just goes on to show how devoid of empathy are our political leaders who, in spite of seeing the mass scale of devastation in terms of life, employment and business opportunities, can't keep themselves away from courting a headline-worth-of controversy. As Chandler said, one more time: "Handle? I can handle it. Handle is my middle name. Well, actually it's the middle part of my first name."

The endgame in Afghanistan



Hiranmay Karlekar

the Afghan National Security and Defence Forces (ANDSF), the support they continue to receive from the US and its NATO allies. As to the first, despite serious problems of desertion and unwillingness to enlist, the Afghan National Army (ANA), the land warfare arm of the ANDSF, has emerged a battle-hardened force capable of confronting the Taliban and other terrorist organisations it faces. Its commando and special forces units have been particularly successful. Against this, the harsh fact is that the Taliban have expanded their control over huge tracts of Afghanistan's countryside and some cities, besides inflicting a number of heavy defeats on the Afghan troops. At least some of the reverses the latter suffered the beginning of 2020 are attributable to the Trump administration's atrocious policies. These included asking the Government forces early in 2020 to go on the defensive in the interest of its peace negotiations with the Taliban, and arm-twisting it into agreeing to the Taliban

demand of releasing 5,000 of their fighters in Afghan jails as a pre-condition for talks. Many of the released fighters have gone back to combat despite the Taliban's promise that they would not do so. The Taliban, however, began gaining ground even before the Trump Administration's policies and pressures hampered the ANDSF's operations. Also, while the capabilities of the Afghan troops have improved, a big question mark hangs against the future availability of effective air support, which has played an important role in many of the ANA's successful operations. According to one estimate, 80 to 90 per cent of the air support to it is now provided by the fledgling Afghan Air Force (AAF). The AAF, however, has been supported by the massive air power of the US. Also, international contractors, now doing the bulk of the maintenance work on its planes and helicopters, will depart with the American troops.

This will seriously affect its operational capabilities. This underlines the importance of continued American aid. On July 7, 2012, Hillary Clinton, then US Secretary of State, announced in Kabul that President Obama had designated Afghanistan as a major non-NATO ally of the US. The questions are: How much and of what kind? Apart from military hardware, there is a need for funds. Countering a blend of insurgency and terrorism is a very expressive business. The US has provided over \$86 billion as security assistance to Afghanistan between financial years 2002 and 2019. Since 2014, it has been providing between five and six billion dollars per year to fund the ANDSF. How much and what form of assistance will Washington provide Afghanistan after the withdrawal of its troops? Clearly, the military outcome in Afghanistan hangs in the balance. So does the fate of Afghanistan. All indications are that the Taliban have every intention to re-impose the medieval, authoritarian theocratic system that had reduced Afghanistan to a cleric-administered prison. As Ahmed Rashid wrote in Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, edicts of the Taliban's Department of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice "had changed the lifestyles of Kabul's once easy-going population and forced Afghan women to disappear from public view". India needs to watch out. As the diversion to Kandahar of the Indian Airlines hijacked Flight IC-814 in December 1999 showed, the Taliban were actively promoting terrorism against it by Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Do we have a coherent policy to meet the challenge?

Oxygen Shortage - Realor MANMADE!

General Public are confused seeing the oxygen cylinder's recovery from Black Marketers at various places in India through different media houses. In this lock down situation how cum this crimes are possible in such a large scale without knowledge and share of local administration! Now, people are living in an era of danger and helplessness, which has happened never before. Let us analyse in micro level during COVID -19 lockdown periods while demand of oxygen graph is touching peak, why is India facing an oxygen shortage? Medical oxygen in India has been in severe shortage as the country grapples with a deadly second wave of the pandemic. But bureaucratic hurdles are delaying delivery of the critical resource to those in need. The dire shortage of medical oxygen has turned out to be a major challenge in many parts of India. The exponential surge in India's coronavirus infections over the past few weeks has swamped the health care system, seen patients dying in ambulances and parking lots outside hospitals and overwhelmed crematoriums. It has also drained supplies of medical oxygen, which is vital for those who have been infected. Twenty-four people died in one hospital overnight on last Sunday in the southern state of Karnataka after the hospital ran out of oxygen, according to press reports and sources, though the district administration denied that shortages had caused the deaths. Another 12 people died on the day before



Saturday in the capital, New Delhi, after a hospital ran out of oxygen. Several hospitals sent out desperate appeals for oxygen on social media on Sunday night, with deliveries arriving only in the nick of time. One children's clinic in Delhi raised the alarm on Twitter over a shortage of oxygen that has reportedly left around 25 to 30 newborns and children at risk. Most of the citizen feels that the situation is due to lack of communication and there is no centralized coordination federal system of democracy here in India now. Oxygen therapy is crucial for severe COVID patients with hypoxemia - when oxygen levels in the blood are too low. Experts say India is producing enough oxygen, at just over 7,000 tons a day. Most is for industrial use but can be diverted for medical purposes. The Indian government has now directed most of the country's supply of industrially produced oxygen toward the health care

system. Amid high demand, suppliers have been ramping up capacity to be able to produce more than 9,000 tons of medical oxygen by mid-May. However, most oxygen producers are based in India's east, while the soaring demand has been in cities in the western and northern parts of the country. An appropriate Supply and Distribution system need to be established to control the acute shortage. It is completely haphazard and red tape has held back timely deliveries. This is an extraordinary situation and all government agencies must rise to the occasion. The harsh reality is that the supply so far has been unable to meet the exponentially rising demand. The Indian Air Force has also been airlifting oxygen from military bases. All the foreign aids have started reaching India but still the ground reality is not changed much. Nevertheless, the country lacks enough transport

and storage capacity. Liquid oxygen at very low temperatures has to be transported in cryogenic tankers to distributors, which then convert it into gas for filling cylinders. But India is short of cryogenic tankers. There are only a finite number of oxygen tankers and cylinders around. So, the logistics of refilling them and bringing them to the destination is a severe bottleneck. The oxygen shortage has been a huge problem not only in cities, but also in small towns and villages where the health infrastructure is already extremely weak. On Sunday, the US delivered the third of six aid shipments, including 1,000 oxygen cylinders. The UK donated more than 400 oxygen concentrators, and France sent eight oxygen generators, each of which can serve 250 hospitalized patients. Singapore has also sent a cargo with loaded oxygen cylinders. A German military aircraft with 120 ventilators also reached India on Saturday, and officials said plans were being made for additional flights with more supplies. While the emergency aid could save lives, it seems not to have reached those who are gasping for oxygen. Amid sharp and widespread criticism of the Modi government's handling of the health crisis, The Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court had a big say on the handling of covid19 situation inside the country but still the urgent and important thing is that immediately the stockyard of all black marketers should be cleared for the public, so that public shouldn't feel it's manmade.



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Corona enters the Banda Valley, considered to be the child of nature



(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, May 15: Twelve people infected by corona of the Banda community have been identified in the Banda valley in Malkangiri district. In less than three days, a joint effort by the district administration and the Utkal Journalists' Association to distribute and prevent coronary disease was carried out with a Corona awareness chariot. Now they are dependent on the weekly haats in the

neighboring district as livelihoods in their area have been cut off during the Lockdown. The market is crowded with Andhra people. They are thought to be infected due to the effects of the Andhra virus. Of the 12 members of the Banda tribe, four have recovered and returned home, and eight are being treated at home isolation. 8 people from Andrahall panchayat in Banda valley and four from Mudulipada

panchayat came out positive. However, the Banda tribe has succeeded in defeating the Carna epidemic. It was not possible to reach the Banda tribe during the first wave of corona last year, but this time due to the Andhra Strain. Therefore, the district administration has given more importance to this and launched various awareness programs to make the Banda tribe free from Carna and make a living.

Sumanta the man with Red Ribbon, Kabisuriya Blood Donor Team



(A.O. Bureau) Ganjam, May 15: Blood is life, and when a patient or their relative needs a unit of blood, a name comes to mind. Sumanth Kumar Charchi, a young guy from Ganjam District a small town Kabisuriyanagar. Sumanta is the youngest son of his mother Basanti Devi and father Praful Kumar Charchi. As a student leader, he gained a reputation in his past life. In 2009, however, the law was reversed in a motorcycle accident. It is true that he was seriously injured in the accident but God's grace recovered after a long treatment, but he turned out to be paralyzed forever. Her sensitive veins in the body were so badly damaged in the accident that after much treatment his legs and arms were no longer as active as before. In the meantime, Sumant has been hired as a teacher in an elementary government school to the best of

his ability. As a well-mannered and caring teacher, Sumant is well known figure today. Gudiali Harijan Sahi Primary School, Kabisuriyanagar Block, is Sumanta's work place today. But even today, when he got some time he engage himself for people's services or making youth organizations, he take one of his friend with him and discuss organizational and federal concerns with young people. When the first wave of the corona came, people were running out of blood, and he started taking some friends they properly use the technology and social media. Blood-borne patients are more likely to receive blood transfusions through the organization. Today, wherever there is a need for blood in any district or out of state besides Odisha, the members of the organization take the lead and donate blood to save the lives of patients. It may

seem like an easy task, but it's the only reflection of Sumanta's lifelong struggle. Sumanth even today says that his close friends Poonal Deep Jena, Balmiki Bisoyi, Suryakant Samal, Chandan Jena, Ratnakar Siya, Surjakanta Samal, Tatwamasi Parida, Kedarnath Sahu, Srikanta Maharana, Muna, Santosh Gouda, Suchitra Nand, Atul, his two brother Sushant Kumar Church and Prashant Kumar Church along with his family along with two sister-in-law Hena Baliar Singh and Sanghamitra Charchi all supports and moral helps inspired him for doing such as novel job. Today, the organization has created a new era for the soil of Kabisuriyanagar, and today the organization, built under this name, can save the lives of so many people with such a mankind service mindset, and the region's intellectuals, social activists and locals are also looking forward to the bright future of the organization. Now a days Sumanta is also known as the man with a red ribbon in Ganjam district as well as South Odisha today.

Farmers' Day and the holy Akshay Tiritiya are celebrated

(A.O. Bureau) Paradip, May 15: The land looser farmer's association Paradip has been observed the holy Akshaya Tiritiya and the Farmers' Day. Mr. Chinmay Das, President of the Farmers' Union, presided over the function on Saturday morning, May 15, at the Union Office premises at Zero Point. Mr. Ranjan Kumar Palai, General Secretary, East India Oil Refinery Workers' Union, Mr.

Abhiram Samal, President, Oil Refinery Address Workers' Cooperative Society, Mr. Niranjana Samal, Editor, Dhruva Samal, Sarat Samal, Trinath Bishwal were present as distinguished guests. The invited guests paid tributes to Kujang Gandhi Narayan Birbar Samanta in the photo and lit incense lamps and wished the immortal soul of the late Gaur Mohan Sahu, the founding president of



the Paradip Port land looser farmer's Association. Mr. Mihir Kant Sahu, Secretary, Krishak Sangha, offered his thanks. The

shutdown rule continued during the second wave of covid 19 this year, so Mr. Santosh Kumar Patnaik, president of the union and a prominent

labor leader, did not attend. The annual farmers' meeting was canceled. The Akshay trititiya festival was celebrated amidst the Covid guidelines

Gochalan, arrested by Bajrang activists, rescued 4 cows and detained 2 others

Niali-""Niali-14/5- Peace Committee Fu, re-grazing, Bajrang activists arrested, 4 cows rescued, 2 detained. Bajrang activists staged an illegal smuggling of cattle and groceries in the Adanga slum of Niali police station. A peace committee was formed with the help of the district police administration and local Murbi, and a decision was taken to stop the illegal activities, the businessman said in writing. A few days after the incident, the herd was caught again. There has been intense dissatisfaction among Gopremi



and Bajrang activists oversuch illegal herding in defiance of the peace committee's decision. According to reports, Bajrang activists confiscated the vehicle at the Kumbharkul junction of Niali Sithalo Road at around 3 pm today after receiving news from

a herd of cattle from the Adhanga slum of Niali police station. The Tata AC rescued four cows being driven. Two people involved in the smuggling were detained and reported to police. Kasarda police arrived at the spot and took the Tata AC OR

02-AP 4372 vehicle to the spot and brought the two accused Azaruddin Saha and Samad Saha to the police station for investigation. Devikandal Dipanchal Bajrang Dal's meeting center chief Ashutosh Patnaik, co-ordinator

Santosh Mallick, Cuttack district Devsena education secretary Kabalya Sabutha, Niali Bajrang Dal coordinator Biswajit Jena and Cuttack district Bajrang Dal security chief Sandip Sethi were among those arrested.

DGP Abhay at the Odisha border Motu, reviewed the Mao situation in Malkangiri

(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, May 15: Mr Abhay, the director general of police, reached at the end of the MalKangiri district. He reviewed the situation with senior police and BSF officials. Malkangiri: Abhay, director general of police, Odisha reached the end of the district. DGP Abhay, along with intelligence chief RK Sharma and Praveen Kumar arrived at the motu police station

helipad. After reaching the tri state border, the DGP first inaugurated the new police outpost at MV 88. Later, the MV 88 held a closed-door meeting at the BSF camp. In addition, senior police and BSF officials reviewed the Maoists and inspected security at the main entrance of motu. later turned around and took photos at the sangam point Mugi point at Motu.



Sanakhemundi Admin and Police Distributing the seized food among the people's



(A.O. Bureau) Ganjam, May 15: The government continues to restrictions on corona infections. While the limit of only 50 people are allowed to participate in the marriage outdoor party, some people's cooked kitchen and feast for a large number of people in the absence of the administration. A similar feast was being held at Ostajagannathpur in Patapur area of Sankhemundi block

while Sankhemundi Tehsildar Dr. Srinivasa Behera, along with BDO Gayatri Dutt Nayak, Patpur IIC Sabyasachi Mall, reached the spot where the party was being cooked. There, they saw a banquet for more than 500 people. The organizers confiscated food items while finishing the banquet. Often it comes down to destroying that cooked food. At that time, with the help of the Sankhemundi administration and the po-

lice, a vehicle was hired and the cooked food was distributed to the villagers. Such activities by the Sankhemundi administration and the police were highly praised in the local area. He encouraged ordinary people as well to take part in solving this great task: "One of the things you and other people can do is keep up the pressure. There are going to be some difficult decisions for government.

Food packages for needy served by Surendra Maharana

(A.O. Bureau) Berhampur, May 15: Surendra Maharana, a former corporate social worker in Ward 31 of Berhampur city, does not miss any opportunity to get closer to the people. He always likes to stand by people in the joys and sorrows of the people. Whenever a disaster strikes, he will stand up first. Now that the second wave of Covid has



reached its peak across the state, many people are losing their livelihoods due to lockdowns and many are in dire straits.

Surendra Maharana has reached out to them in such a difficult situation. More than 50 families in Ward 31 of Berhampur have been

provided with dry food along with daily necessities. Livelihoods are completely cut off today in order to save lives from Corona is basic priority. Locals have praised the efforts of people to stand up to the people at this time. "Today, 50 families will be assisted," he said. He encouraged ordinary people as well to take part in solving this great task. One of the

things you and other people can do is keep up the pressure, there are going to be some difficult decisions for government. It's going to be a very difficult time for us in the future. Everywhere you look today, the tide of protectionist sentiment is flowing. Mr. Maharana called on the administration to fully cooperate and continue to raise awareness among the people.

COVID Vaccination At Doorstep In This Odisha City From May 17



(A.O. Bureau) Berhampur, May 15: In a first, the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) will start

COVID vaccination at doorstep for senior citizens in the Silk City of Odisha. The vaccination at doorstep for senior citi-

zens will begin from May 17 (Monday), informed Ganjam district administration today. The civic body has launched a series of initiatives for citizens in Berhampur city amid COVID pandemic. Recently, a drive 'Rajaswa Rath' has been rolled out in Berhampur with a purpose to ensure various revenue services to beneficiaries at doorstep during the lockdown.

Madhuri Dixit: The Bollywood superstar who changed the rules of the game

New Delhi, May 15: When Anupam Kher revealed in 2015 that Madhuri Dixit was given a higher remuneration than Salman Khan in Hum Aapke Hain Koun, barely anyone was surprised. By 1994, Madhuri was already a superstar, a self-made icon who was arguably among one of the biggest success stories of Bollywood. She was 27 and had already delivered blockbusters like Tezaab, Ram Laxman, Tridev, Parinda, Dil, Saajan, Beta, and Khalnayak. Madhuri was the reigning queen of box office and everything she touched turned to gold. It was Rajshri Productions that introduced Madhuri in Bollywood with Abodh (1984) at the age of 17. Though the film was panned, she got noticed. After some forgettable movies, Tezaab happened. And there she was, like a female Pied Piper, leading an entire generation to the tunes of "Ek Do Teen". She breathed life into Nisha, the heart and soul of HAHK too, just the way she did for innocent Pooja in Saajan

and the spirited Suru/Saraswati in Beta. In 2000, Madhuri won the title of Actress of the Millennium. Guinness Book of Records Millennium version even named her as the highest paid Indian actress. What exactly was it about Madhuri that made her the numero uno star? Madhuri came when another diva, Sridevi was ruling Bollywood in the 1980s. Even after four decades, fans are divided into Team Sridevi and Team Madhuri. The fact remains that she did replace Bollywood's Chandni in the 1990s. Even the Khans, whose



star was on the rise in the days, understood her power. Aamir and Madhuri were equals in Dil, not just onscreen, but off it too. Shah Rukh Khan romanced her with the same intensity as she reciprocated in Dil Toh Pagal Hai. And HAHK was the last film Salman did opposite an actress who suited his age! Seen closely, that was a time when female actors were meant to adorn the screen, shed tears, dance around with the hero and shout "bachao" at the villain's den. Madhuri made her choices clear. Most of her films had her playing strong characters, who weren't ready to budge. They were aggressive, tough, stubborn, bold and took their charge of their life, women who we hadn't seen on our screens. When she wrecked vengeance on

Vijay (SRK) in Anjaam, it was no love story. She became a warrior against her male-dominated village and the oppression in Mrityudand. She took unconventional decisions in Gulaab Gang and Aaja Nachle. Many would say Madhuri Dixit just got lucky to be at the right place at the right time. I would disagree. She's a complete package of talent, onscreen presence, a radiant smile, chemistry with her co-actors, and delivers a near-perfect act in almost every genre. Many also point that Madhuri could never match Sridevi's comic timing, but she compensated that with her dancing prowess, something no actress has come even close to, till now (not even Aishwarya Rai in "Dola Re"). And can we not call her songs, the spine of her films? A major share in the success of Madhuri can be given to her iconic numbers, and her mentor, late choreographer Saroj Khan. Upon the latter's demise last year, Madhuri said, "Saroj ji was part of my journey since the beginning."

RGV says he was bothered by Kangana calling Urmila a 'soft porn star'



Mumbai, May 15: Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma admitted to being bothered by Kangana Ranaut's barbs against Urmila Matondkar. Last year, Kangana called Urmila a 'soft porn star' who is 'not known for her acting, for sure'. However, RGV upheld the right to freedom of expression. RGV has worked with Urmila in several films such as Rangeela, Satya and Bhoot, which are considered among her best performances. In an interview with Bollywood Bubble, when asked about Kangana's comments about Urmila, RGV said, "The whole point of social media, I feel, is that people express opinions. Sometimes, they use language which could be very offensive, but that is the whole point of freedom of speech. If it doesn't offend somebody, why do you need freedom? I would like to believe that it is in distaste and in the context of my personal feelings about Urmila,

about her performance, about whatever she said. Now, that is Kangana's viewpoint, so I didn't say anything about Kangana saying it. As a director, I gave my feeling about how versatile an actor Urmila is." After Kangana's attack on Urmila, RGV had tweeted, "Not wanting to get into slanging matches with anyone, I believe that @UrmilaMatondkar has more than proved her versatile talent in enacting such diversely complex roles as in RANGEELA, SATYA, KAUN, BHOOT, EK HASEENA THI etc." On being asked if he was bothered by Kangana's comments, given his close relationship with Urmila, RGV said, "Yes, it bothers me, but what I am saying is that freedom of speech is fundamentally about that. If it doesn't bother somebody, what is the point of speaking? When you say you need freedom of speech, it is only when it offends somebody."

Ankita Lokhande To Marry Vicky Jain Soon



Mumbai, May 15: Actress Ankita Lokhande, who entered Bollywood from TV, is away from both of these days from cinema. she remains in the headlines for their relationship with Vicky Jain. Ankita, who was in a relationship with Vicky Jain after a breakup with Sushant Singh Rajput, is now all set for marriage. Recently, he talked about his marriage. She herself revealed

that soon she is going to be a bride. 'Pavitra Rishta' fame Ankita Lokhande has been in a relationship with Vicky Jain for quite some time. These fans want to know when the two will get married. Recently, he had a special conversation with 'Bollywood Bubble'. He told that love is a necessity for me. Just like I need food, in the same way love is also needed in my life.

Coronavirus: Here's how to avoid sun damage after months in lockdown

London, May 15: After a winter of lockdown and with coronavirus restrictions beginning to lift

in the UK. Skin damage caused by the sun is associated with both skin cancer and premature



across the UK, many will be hoping for good weather this summer. Restrictions on foreign travel have meant that more people plan to stay within the UK for their summer holidays than ever before. This shift, along with our social lives increasingly being based outside, makes it particularly important that people don't underestimate the risks posed by the sun

ageing of the skin. The culprit in both cases is ultraviolet radiation (UV). Invisible to human eyes, although it can be seen by many animals, including reindeer, UV sits just beyond the purple end of the visible light spectrum. One reason that it is so harmful is that its energy can be absorbed by our cells' DNA, causing it to become damaged. If the cell isn't able to repair

this DNA damage, this can lead to genetic changes, or mutations, which in turn can cause cancer. Because of their location on the surface of the body, skin cells are the main target for UV damage. The body does have some protection against these harmful effects. Molecular mechanisms within our cells are able to detect and repair the DNA damage before it can cause mutation. When skin cells detect DNA damage, they activate alarm signals that get passed on to pigment-producing cells to tell them to start producing more pigment to help protect against further damage. It's the production of this pigment, melanin, that causes a suntan. A tan is therefore a sign that your skin has been damaged.

'It's the role that chooses you'

Mumbai, May 15: Madirakshi Mundle, who plays Parvati in SET'S Vighnaharta Ganesh, tells the attraction of playing mythological characters, challenges faced and how acting happened to her. How did you come on board Vighnaharta Ganesh?

I had just concluded work for another project in late 2020 after the lockdown was lifted. That is when I got a call from the casting team at Contiloe Pictures stating that the makers of Vighnaharta Ganesh wanting to know if I was interested in playing the role of Goddess Parvati. I screen tested and the team promptly brought me on board as Goddess Parvati. It is a deeply fortunate turn of events since Lord Ganesha is my favourite deity. I do believe that such a character chooses you and

Lakshmi and now Parvati, is there a lesson that you learnt while playing such strong characters?

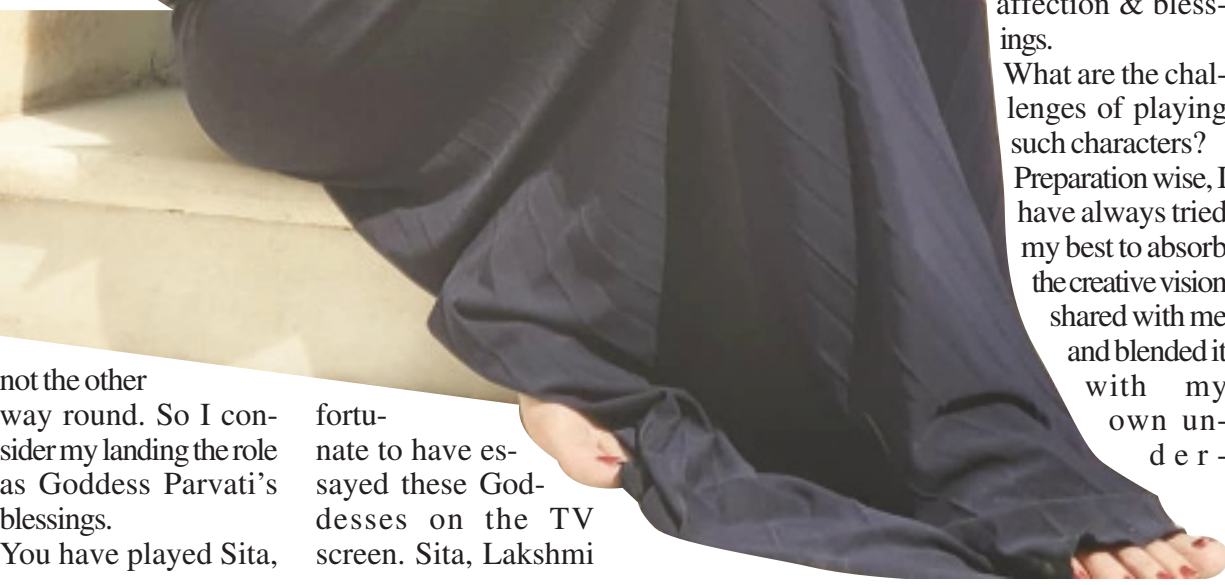
First of all, I feel extremely

and Parvati are all Goddesses from our epics whose stories of virtue, ennobling qualities, benevolence and deep intrinsic strength we have all grown up with and have deep reverence for. They are often and commonly invoked as role models in everyday discourse. I have said this before; people are attached to them & they are deeply integral to our culture and mythology. So the audience's feelings towards them are of paramount importance when I essay such

a role. Plus people have a certain image that they attach with such a character, in their minds. Is it hard to play a mythological character? Yes it is. What happens in the process of essaying any mythological character is you have the tremendous challenge to bring an image inside the audience's minds and hearts to life. The audience knows and understands and therefore anticipates in a sense what they see when it comes to characters from mythology. Obviously they are also emotionally attached when it comes to their favourite deities. The costumes, sets, lighting & backdrops are therefore very elaborate since the genre demands grandeur. I also think the dialogues are definitely amongst the toughest you'll hear in the medium given they are in chaste Hindi. Emoting with all this to convey a look and feel that the audience will respond and relate to is by no means easy. It, however, is definitely rewarding when the audience responds to these efforts with their wholehearted affection & blessings.

What are the challenges of playing such characters? Preparation wise, I have always tried my best to absorb the creative vision shared with me and blended it with my own understanding

standing of these characters from the stories I've heard & discovered growing up. Preparation always helps and I always try to put in my own effort by reading up or listening time permitting. I have striven to portray the qualities these Goddesses are identified with by our audience through my craft. The audience's love, affection and blessings have been a strong source of motivation to me for all of them. How did acting happen to you? Quite by accident! I have actually worked for several years as a professional interior designer with commercial and residential projects. I frankly wasn't looking to get into acting but I have endorsed Jewellery & Traditional wear alongside my work as an Interior Designer. Funnily, for over six months I kept not showing up for the screen test for my debut show on TV. When I finally showed up for the screen test, things just took off. We were on floor for my TV debut in under a week after that at Ramoji Rao Film City. Are there any other projects in the pipeline? Well, I keep getting calls for projects and a few discussions are underway for TV as well as OTT projects. Covid restrictions have led to shooting locations being moved across the country and so I am taking my time to finalise. I hope at this time everyone stays home and safe with their loved ones and takes care in these difficult times. I genuinely hope that we all emerge swiftly and stronger from this pandemic.



not the other way round. So I consider my landing the role as Goddess Parvati's blessings. You have played Sita,

fortunate to have essayed these Goddesses on the TV screen. Sita, Lakshmi

'He is someone I'll always remember': Paine hails Kohli as world's best batsman

New Delhi, May 15: Tim Paine may have stirred the pot with his controversial comments on the Indian cricket team, but that doesn't take anything from his admiration for its captain Virat Kohli. Under Kohli, India registered their maiden Test series win in Australia – during the 2018/19 Border-Gavaskar Trophy, winning it 2-1 – with Paine being at Australia's helm. Paine called Kohli the best batsman in the world and said he'll always remember the India skipper, especially for sharing a feud with him during the 2018/19 tour. "For Virat Kohli, I've said many times, he seems the type of player you would love to have on your team. He is competitive, he is the best batsman in the world. He is challenging to play against and he can get under your skin because he is so good and he is so competitive. But yeah, for me from

where I came from, sharing a feud with him four years ago, He is certainly someone I will always remember," Paine said on the 'Gilly and Goss' podcast. Kohli and Paine had several verbal go's at each other. During the second Test between India and Australia at Perth of the 2018/19 series, Kohli and Paine's verbal exchange was caught on the stump microphone. Kohli celebrated few of the wickets of Australian team more enthusiastically, and Paine felt it was time to give it back to the India captain. "He had given send-offs to a few of our players. I sort of just had enough and thought you also have to stand up for yourself and your teammates and that was one of the reasons I thought, 'no, I'm the captain, it's my turn, I have to stand up and show him we're here for the fight'," Paine had said in Amazon's docu-drama 'The Test'



ICC Hall of Famer 'angered' over BCCI's decision regarding Veda Krishnamurthy

New Delhi, May 15: Indian middle-order batter Veda Krishnamurthy has been going through a tough period in her life. She was struck with twin tragedies in her family as she lost her elder sister Vatsala Shivakumar to COVID-19, two weeks after her mother succumbed to the dreaded virus. India has been facing a deadly second wave of Covid-19 with daily cases being over 3 lakh for the past two weeks. Veda wasn't included in the Test and ODI squads for India's tour of England, which takes place next month. However, an ICC Hall of Famer isn't happy with BCCI's response to Krishnamurthy's non-selection. Former Australian women's team captain Lisa Sthalekar expressed anger over BCCI's decision to neither check on Veda after the twin tragedies in her family nor communicate to the bereaved India cricketer its decision



to not consider her for the upcoming tour of England. "Whilst not selecting Veda for the upcoming series may be justified from their point of view, what angers me the most is that as a contracted player she has not received any communication from BCCI, just to even check how she is coping," Sthalekar said in a note on her Twitter handle. She added, "A true association should deeply care about the players that play the game... not focus solely on just the game at any cost. So disappointed." Bengal's

wicketkeeper-batsman Shreevats Goswami, who has also had stints in the Indian Premier League (IPL) besides representing the country in the U-19 level, backed Sthalekar. The 28-year-old Bengaluru-based Veda recently paid an emotional tribute to her sister and mother, who succumbed to the virus in a span of two weeks. The all-rounder, who has been helping others through her social media by amplifying their requests for aid, has represented India in 48 ODIs and 76 T20s.

Sthalekar, the first player to achieve the double of 1000 runs and 100 wickets in women's One-Day Internationals, felt the time has come for a player association for the Indian women's team. "As a past player the ACA (Australian Cricketers' Association) have reached out daily to see how we are and provided all kinds of services. If there was a need for a player association in (India) surely it is now." The 41-year-old Sthalekar, now a commentator, said being looked after has be-

come more important at the moment, with the pandemic wreaking havoc across the world. "The stress, anxiety, fear and grief that many players have experienced through this pandemic will take its toll on them as individuals and inadvertently affect the game," Sthalekar signed off. Goswami said state cricket associations in India don't care about their players. "I don't think cricket Associations caring about their players are even thought by the management in India, Mental health & communicating with players on drawing a future guide for their players doesn't even cross their mind, I can say this for domestic cricket," Goswami tweeted. India is reeling under a devastating second wave of the pandemic with cases rising by over three lakh everyday and the crisis has been compounded by a shortage of some crucial medicines and oxygen supplies.

Delhi court issues non-bailable warrant against wrestler Sushil Kumar

New Delhi, May 15: A Delhi court on Saturday issued non-bailable warrants against two-time Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar and nine others in connection with the murder of a 23-year-old former junior national wrestling champion, Sagar Rana. The Delhi Police had earlier issued a look-out-circular (LoC) against the wrestler. It is learnt that the Delhi Police have also decided to announce a reward for Sushil Kumar's arrest. The police said they moved an application before the court to issue the NBW against Kumar and they approved of their application. "We also sent a letter to the Delhi government, informing that their official, Sushil Kumar, and his associate, Ajay Kumar, who is a physical education teacher, have been named by the victims. Departmental action should be taken against



him," a senior police officer said. "After registering an FIR, we served notice to him, but he switched off his phone and has been untraceable since. We also conducted raids at his friends' residences and now have decided to announce a reward for information leading to his arrest and a file has been placed before senior officers," police sources said. Sagar Rana was beaten to death during a brawl at the

Chhatrasal Stadium parking area. After the incident, an FIR of murder, abduction and criminal conspiracy was registered against Kumar. Additional DCP (North-West district) Dr Gurqibal Singh Sidhu had said, "We have recorded statements of all the victims and they all named Sushil Kumar. We are conducting raids to nab him." The victims in their statements have also alleged that Kumar and his associates

abducted Sagar from his house in Model Town to teach him a lesson for bad mouthing him in front of other wrestlers, police said. On May 4, Sagar Rana, who had competed in the 97-kg Greco-Roman category, was beaten to death in a clash involving two groups. Rana was a former junior national champion and is part of the senior national camp. "We have found during investigation that a quarrel had allegedly taken place between Sushil Kumar, Ajay, Prince Dalal, Sonu, Sagar, Amit and others in the parking area of the stadium," Sidhu said. Police recorded the statements of all the victims during which they said that Sagar and some of his friends, including injured Sonu Mahal, who is a close associate of gangster Kala Jathedi, were staying in a house linked to Sushil near the sta-

dium. "They had been asked to vacate recently and were removed from the house forcefully. Sushil later came to know that Sagar had started bad mouthing him in the Chhatrasal Stadium in front of other wrestlers and also threatened him of dire consequences," a senior police officer said. Police said that during the investigation, they also found a recorded video of the incident from the mobile phone of accused Prince Dalal, in which faces of all the attackers can be seen. "Dalal was arrested from the spot and we seized his cellphone, two double barrel guns along with seven live cartridges of 12 bore from his possession. After investigation, we have found that the guns were registered in the name of one resident of Ashoda village in Haryana's Jhajjar," police sources said.

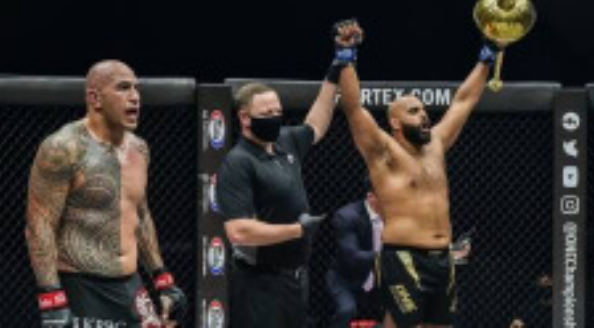
"I Am Ready To Play Test Cricket" Bhubaneswar Kumar



New Delhi, May 15: Fast bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar has not been selected in the Indian tour of England (England tour). On this tour, Team India will first play the final of the World Test Championship against New Zealand. After this there will be a series of five Tests against England. Meanwhile, news came that Bhubaneswar himself does not want to play Test cricket. But now Bhubaneswar has denied these things himself. Bhuvneshwar Kumar wrote on social media, "There are many reports about me that I do not want to play Test cricket. But I want to

clarify that I have always prepared myself for selection for all three formats and will continue to do so. I suggest not to write your assumptions based on the sources. Earlier there were reports that Bhubaneswar no longer wants to play in long format. They have no enthusiasm to play Test cricket. He now wants to shift his focus from Test to limited overs cricket. In limited overs cricket, he is happy with bowling less and in Test cricket, he is not getting the long spell anymore. For all these reasons, he has decided to keep himself away from the long format.

Arjan Bhullar becomes first Indian-origin fighter to win world title at top-level MMA event



New Delhi, May 15: Arjan Bhullar became the first Indian-origin fighter to win a world title in a top-level MMA promotion when he beat Brandon Vera to become the heavy-weight world champion at the Singapore-based One Championship. Arjan Bhullar ???? becomes the FIRST Indian Mixed Martial Arts World Champion, stopping Brandon Vera with second-round strikes!

@TheOneASB #ONEDangal #WeAreONE #ONEChampionship pic.twitter.com/e6gblkjshC — ONE Championship (@ONEChampionship) May 15, 2021 By defeating Vera, Bhullar ended the Filipino-American's five-year championship-winning run. Bhullar completely dominated in the second round of the fight. "It's the first time in my

entire career that I felt gassed in the first round," Vera said in the postmatch interview. "I'm in shape, we've been training, we've been working with the best people in the world. This is new for me." A former wrestler, Bhullar had won the Commonwealth games gold medal in New Delhi back in 2010 and in 2012 in London he became the first Indian-origin freestyle wrestler to represent Canada at the Olympics. After his wrestling career, when he won his UFC debut against Luis Enrigue Barbosa de Oliveira in UFC 215, he had become the first Indian origin fighter to win a UFC fight.

'We will talk:' Jurgen Klopp unfazed by Sadio Mane's handshake snub

New Delhi, May 15: Add an upset player to Jürgen Klopp's list of team problems as Liverpool scrambles for a Champions League qualification spot. The Liverpool manager said Friday that he plans to talk with Sadio Mane after the Senegal winger declined to shake his hand as they left the field following Liverpool's 4-2 win over Manchester United at Old Trafford on Thursday. Klopp had opted not to start Mane in what was a vital match for Liverpool to gain ground for a top-four finish in the Premier League. Mane was brought on as a sub-

stitute in the second half. Mane's scoring pace is off this season but he had netted twice in the previous three games. He shook his head and kept walking when Klopp reached out to him. "Do you want these things happening? No. But it's not the first time in my life and I'm afraid to say it will probably not be the last time," the German manager said at a news conference ahead of Sunday's game at relegated West Bromwich Albion. "We will talk about it, and then it will be sorted." Klopp went with a front three of Diogo Jota on the left — in Mane's usual



spot — Roberto Firmino in the middle and Mohamed Salah on the right. After the match, Klopp told Sky that he had made a late decision in training on Wednesday to go with Jota but that he had no time to explain the decision to Mane, which he said he would normally do.

Jota scored in the 34th minute, Firmino netted twice, and Salah added the fourth as Liverpool closed the gap to fourth-place Chelsea to four points, and the Reds have a game in hand. Klopp, whose team has been slowed by injuries this season, insisted he's not both-

ered by the snub. "If somebody shows me five million times respect and one time not, what is then more important? The world is in a situation where you then make this one time bigger than necessary," he said. As a player, "what I did out of emotion, it was insane — and I'm a completely normal guy," Klopp said. "Football is an emotional game and everybody expects from us that we control our emotions always, and that doesn't work out always." Liverpool is at Burnley on Wednesday and ends its season by hosting Crystal Palace on May 23.

NALCO stands in solidarity with people of Odisha in the fight against Covid : Extends support for operationalisation of Covid Healthcare facilities at Angul & Koraput



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 15: Moved by the second wave of the COVID pandemic, National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO), a Navratna CPSE under the Ministry of Mines, Govt. of India is leaving no stone unturned to stand in solidarity with the people of Odisha, in the fight against COVID-19. Deeply concerned by the surge in the number of cases and sufferings of people, NALCO is now sup-

porting the 70-bedded Covid Centre at Saheed Laxman Naik Medical College at Koraput to make it fully operational. Similarly, NALCO is supporting a 66-bedded Covid healthcare facility at ESI Hospital, Banarpal, Angul by bearing the cost of the total operation and maintenance of the facility. The latest initiative by the Company will provide a safety net to the people residing in Angul and Koraput districts, where the Company's

operating units are located. Furthermore, NALCO has also consented to strengthen the supply of the life-saving Oxygen by providing DG sets to State Govt. for uninterrupted power supply in oxygen units. Lending a helping hand to the affected people and extending support to tackle the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the Company has developed full-fledged infrastructure in the 200-bedded Covid Hospital in Nabarangpur, apart

from running the two exclusive Covid Centres at NALCO's Hospitals in Angul & Damanjodi. CMD, NALCO Shri Sridhar Patra said, "As a responsible Corporate citizen, NALCO collective has always stood with the people of Odisha in difficult times and now we are reaffirming our commitment in mitigating the disaster caused by the pandemic in whatever way it is possible." In order to strengthen the

Vaccination drive in the state, NALCO has provided a refrigerated truck having a capacity 25,70,000 vaccine (doses) to state immunization cell for safe transportation of vaccines across Odisha. Also, the Company has extended support to the State Health Department for procurement of Ventilator Ambulances at a cost of 1.16 crores. The Company has also been carrying out vaccination drives at sites & extensive sanitization drives at offices, townships, and peripheral areas apart from distribution of dry ration, masks and sanitisers to the Covid Warriors & people in need. At this unprecedented hour of crisis, NALCO is committed to extend the support and strengthen the efforts of Govt. of India and the Govt. of Odisha in the fight against the deadly virus.

85 per cent of COVID cases from 10 states: Health Ministry



New Delhi, May 15: Ten states account for 85 per cent of the total novel coronavirus cases in the country, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday. The ministry said 11 states have over one lakh active COVID-19 cases while eight have active cases between 50,000

and one lakh. Twenty-four states have a COVID-19 positivity rate of more than 15 per cent, it said. India in a day recorded 3,26,098 COVID-19 cases that took the tally to 2,43,72,907, while 3,890 new fatalities pushed the death toll to 2,66,207, according to

Union Health Ministry data updated on Saturday. The active cases have reduced to 36,73,802 and comprise 15.07 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 83.83 per cent, it stated.

New cases fall below 10,000 in Delhi, first time since April 10

New Delhi, May 15: With the lockdown in place for close to four weeks, Covid cases in Delhi have finally started to dip, with 8,506 cases being recorded on Friday. This is the first time since April 10 that cases dropped below 10,000 in the city. A total of 68,575 people were tested and 12.40% of them were found to be positive — which is the lowest positivity rate in a month. Over 50,000 of these were RT-PCR tests. Over 14,000 people were reported recovered on Friday. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said this was "good news" and was possible because of the cooperation from people, but cautioned against any laxity. "If we become careless again and stop following social distancing norms and guidelines, cases can increase again. We are making arrangements for more oxygen beds, are buying oxygen cylinders and are setting up new ICU beds. If cases increase again, we should be prepared. But please continue to observe Covid-appropriate behaviour. We have seen

very tough times in the past month," he said. Delhi was among the worst-hit in the country in April, seeing the highest daily cases and deaths of all cities. On April 20, it saw over 28,000 Covid cases, while daily death toll crossed 450 at one point. A definite downward trend in cases started a week ago, when the positivity rate started declining. While the number

of tests done on Thursday (reported on Friday) were lower than the average 75,000 tests being done daily, the positivity rate also remained low. "The dip in the positivity rate, and hence the number of cases, seems to suggest that Delhi is past its peak. The high in Delhi started close to a month after it was seen in Mumbai, and now the decline is following a similar pattern. The next two

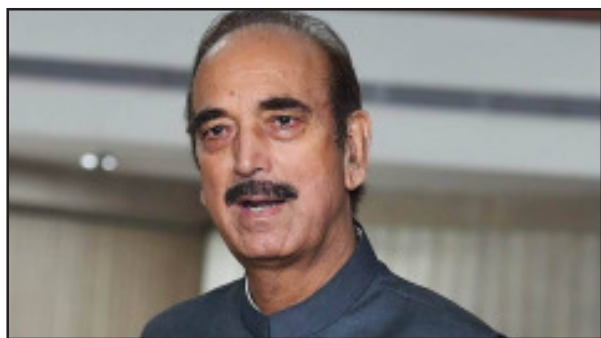


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oxygen shortage has been resolved for now — the Delhi government wrote to the Centre Thursday asking that it not be given more than 590 metric tonnes of oxygen a day and that the extra supplies be diverted to states that need it more — the crisis of beds is not over yet. While there are over 6,000 vacant oxygen beds in different hospitals, the number of vacant ICU beds is 277.

Ghulam Nabi Azad writes to PM, suggests measures to fight against COVID-19

New Delhi, May 15: Former Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad Saturday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Health Minister Harsh Vardhan asking them to make sure that Bharat Biotech, the manufacturer of Covaxin, share the technology with all the WHO prequalified pharmaceutical companies in India so that vaccine production can be augmented. Azad pointed out that there were 21 major vaccine manufacturing pharmaceutical companies in India with state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities compliant to bio-safety norms. He said seven of them including the Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech reportedly are WHO pre-qualified manufacturers and suppliers. "While it is understood that the



Covishield vaccine is being produced by SII under patent licensing arrangement with AstraZeneca and Dr Reddy's Lab has lately been licensed to manufacture the Sputnik vaccine, we can surely augment the production of domestically developed Covaxin. I believe the Department of Biotechnology and ICMR have supported the development of the vaccine now being produced by Bharat Biotech." "It may be worthwhile to have them share the technology with, if not all, the re-

maining WHO pre-qualified pharmaceutical companies. This will immediately increase the production of Covaxin manifold thereby instantly improving vaccination coverage," he wrote. The Government has already announced financial support to four firms including Bharat Biotech International and state-owned PSUs. Haffkine Biopharmaceutical Corporation Ltd, Indian Immunologicals Ltd and Bharat Immunologicals and Biologicals Ltd to ramp up production of Covaxin. Azad also asked

the Government to consider re-hiring recently retired nursing and pharmaceutical staff for six months to one year on payment of the last drawn pay minus pension for the vaccination drive. "They could be given some additional honorarium to undertake this in a mission mode in the aspirational districts or other targeted areas. This may help us in surging our skilled human resource in a short period of time to significantly increase the number of vaccination sites and population-based coverage," he said. He also asked the Government to ramp up oxygen production. "Many PSA oxygen plants have been installed in the country, many are in the pipeline and several more have now been sanctioned. These must be installed utilizing the various agen-

cies at the disposal of the government expeditiously and certainly within the specified period. Nations across the world and development agencies have stepped forward in this time of need with oxygen and oxygen equipment. These must be distributed proportionately and with a sense of urgency to reach the end use points," he said. Azad also asked the Government to rope in micro and small scale enterprises, entrepreneurs, NGOs and CSOs to manufacture prefabricated beds. "Pre-fabricated beds can be manufactured quickly by our medium scale enterprises to enable the setting up of field hospitals and vaccination sites. Utilising our available technologies and capacities, we should be able to significantly upgrade our field infrastructure with a fortnight to a month," he added.

HRAO writes PM to patronize hotel and hospitality industry in Odisha

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 15: The Hotel and Restaurant Association Odisha (HRAO) has appealed the Prime Minister for de-

veloping world class hotel and Hospitality industry in the state. HRAO Chairperson JK Mohanty has written a letter to Narendra Modi

in this connection. According to it, hotel and hospitality industry in the world have suffered a lot due to Covid pandemic. Accordingly, the hoteliers fear. As a result, hotel industry in the state is going through crisis. On the other hand, Odisha has got a wide scope for hotel industry for its enchanting tourist spots and industrial domain. Tourist resources across the state could fetch a good revenue if they are developed to world class standard. Thus, he has requested the PM to create favourable infrastructure in Odisha. Apart from it, Mohanty has requested the PM to grant one year moratorium and reduced rate of interest for the Covid hit business. Similarly, he has urged to extend the loan repayment dateline up to 2024 instead of 2022.



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DGP Abhay Reviews Anti-Naxal Operation In Malkangiri

(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, May 15: Odisha DGP Abhay today visited Motu in the Swabhimani Anchal of Malkangiri district and took stock of the anti-Naxal operations in the area. The DGP was accompanied by Director, Intelligence, RK Sharma, and IG of Police, (Personnel), S Praveen Kumar. He inau-



gured a new police outpost at MV-88 and later conducted a review meeting with the officials at the

BSF Camp. Following it, he held a discussion with Police and Senior BSF officials regarding the anti-

Maoists operation and inspected the border security arrangements. The DGP also reviewed the ar-

rangements made for migrants returning to the State and held a discussion with all government employees.

Drunk man kills wife in Balangir; detained

(A.O. Bureau) Katanaji, May 15: Aman allegedly killed his wife following a quarrel under Bangomunda police limits in Balangir district late on Friday night. The deceased has

been identified as Pushpa and the accused has been identified as Kailash Satnam. According to police sources, a heated argument ensued between the couple over some issue, the quarrel broke out after the victim had re-



buked the accused for committing nuisance in a drunken state. In a fit of rage, Kailash attacked Pushpa, killing her on the spot. On being informed, the police reached the spot and detained the accused person.