



Kejriwal's remarks would not impact India-Singapore ties, says High Commissioner **2**



Niranjana Patnaik slams Odisha government over Covid death figures **3**



Erica Fernandez feels due to focus on Covid, many other issues are being overlooked **6**



Russian swimmer Kolesnikov lowers 50 back world record again **7**

## Government hikes subsidy on DAP fertiliser by 140%; farmers to get DAP at old rates



New Delhi, May 19: The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, according to a PMO statement. In a major pro-farmer decision, the Centre on Wednesday hiked the subsidy on DAP fertiliser by 140 per cent, costing the exchequer an additional Rs 14,775 crore, in a bid to ensure the soil nutrient is available to farmers at old rates despite a sharp rise in global prices. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, according to a PMO statement. After urea, Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP) is the most widely used fertiliser in the country. "A historic decision was taken to increase the subsidy for DAP fertiliser from Rs 500 per bag to Rs 1200 per bag, which is an increase of 140 per cent. ....With today's decision, farmers will continue to get a DAP bag for Rs 1200," the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. Despite the rise in international market prices

of DAP, it has been decided to continue selling it at the older price of Rs 1,200 per bag, it said. "The central government has decided to bear all the burden of price hike. The amount of subsidy per bag has never been increased so much at once," it added. Last year, the actual price of DAP was Rs 1,700 per bag, on which the central government was giving a subsidy of Rs 500. The companies were therefore selling the fertiliser to farmers for Rs 1,200 per bag, it added.

## Cyclone Yaas Brews In Bay Of Bengal: SRC Pradeep Jena Recovers From Covid, Back On Call Of Duty

Bhubaneswar: Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Pradeep Kumar Jena has recovered from COVID-19 and has joined office today. The SRC is back at work at a time when Odisha is preparing to face 'Yaas', a cyclonic storm that is likely to hit the coast on May 26. "I am back in office. Getting ready for cyclone which may form in the Bay of Bengal in next few days," he said. Soon after joining work post-recovery, Jena convened a pre-cyclone here today. Scientists of the Indian Meteorological Centre,

Bhubaneswar, senior officials of the National Disaster Response Force, Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force, Odisha Fire Service, and Odisha Police were present at the meeting chaired by Jena. The SRC will have another meeting with Collectors, Superintendents of Police, Additional District Magistrates, DEOs and Fire officers today evening to assess preparedness to face the cyclone Yaas, which is approaching Odisha and West Bengal coast. Following the first pre-cyclone meeting, the



SRC said, "By May 25, the low-pressure system is likely to intensify into a cyclone. However, till now, no forecast has been done about position, status and intensity of a cyclone which is likely to occur." However, according to the pre-assessment, if

the system intensifies into a cyclone, it would proceed north westwards and hit Odisha - West Bengal coast on May 26. These are still in a phase of assessment. Whether the cyclone would occur or not, nothing concrete has been relayed so far.

But based on a model and possibility, we convened a meeting with all preliminary information available. Jena urged mediapersons to report on this responsibly only based on facts from official sources as nothing has been ascertained so far. "I spoke with Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director General of IMD and Dr HR Biswas, Station Director, IMD Bhubaneswar and had a detailed discussion on the possible cyclone. We have instructed Collectors of all coastal districts to be prepared in advance," he added.

## Lockdown Extension In Odisha: MoBus Service To Remain Suspended

Bhubaneswar, May 19: With extension of COVID lockdown in Odisha, the MoBus service will remain suspended till further order, informed the Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) today. In view of staggering number of COVID cases in Odisha, the State



Government has extended the lockdown by two more weeks till June 1 to contain spread of infections in second wave of the pandemic. Entire 30 districts are under lockdown since May 5 following steep single-day spike in COVID cases in March last week.

## PM Modi undertakes aerial survey of Cyclone Tauktae affected areas in Gujarat

Ahmedabad, May 19: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today visited Gujarat to review the situation arising out of Cyclone Tauktae. The Prime Minister undertook an aerial survey of the cyclone affected areas in Una (Gir - Somnath), Jafrabad (Amreli), Mahua (Bhavnagar) in Gujarat & Diu. Thereafter, he chaired a meeting at Ahmedabad to review the relief and rehabilitation measures being undertaken in Gujarat & Diu. He announced a financial assistance of Rs. 1,000 crore, for immediate relief activities, to the State of Gujarat. Subsequently, Union Government will deploy an Inter-Ministerial Team to visit the state to assess the extent of damage in the State,



based on which further assistance will be given. Prime Minister assured the people of the State that the Union Government would closely work with the State Government at this difficult time, extend all possible assistance for restoration and rebuilding of the infrastructure in the affected areas. During his visit he also took stock of the situation relating to the Covid pandemic. The

state administration apprised the PM of the response measures being taken and the PM stressed the need to ensure that preventive measures should also be taken. He was accompanied by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and other officials during this visit to Gujarat. Prime Minister expressed his complete solidarity with all those who suffered due to the cyclone in dif-

ferent parts of India and expressed deep sorrow to the families who have lost their kin during the calamity. He announced an ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs. 50,000 to the seriously injured in the cyclone in the States of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and the UTs of Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

The Prime Minister said that the Centre is working closely with the affected state governments in the wake of the situation post the cyclone. Immediate financial assistance for these states would also be given after the respective state governments would share their assessments with the Centre. PM Modi said that we have to continue the focus towards more scientific studies relating to disaster management. He called for devoting more focus to enhancing intra-state coordination as well as using modern communication techniques to ensure quicker evacuation from the affected areas. He also called for immediate attention to be devoted to repairing the damaged houses and properties across affected areas.

## Orissa HC To Remain Closed In Wake Of Surge In Covid-19 Cases



Cuttack, May 19: Keeping in view an increase in Covid-19 cases, the Orissa High Court and its offices will remain closed from May 20 to 27, 2021. The Registrar General of the Orissa HC in an order stated the decision has been taken in the wake of rise in Covid-19 positive cases in Cuttack city. Several staff of the court have also tested positive for the coronavirus. The offices of the High Court

will resume functioning on May 28, 2021 as per the vacation roster. The order further mentioned the earlier notified dates of the Vacation Benches shall stand cancelled and instead, the Vacation Benches as notified, shall function on May 31, 2021, June 2, 2021 and June 4, 2021 during the remaining period of the Summer Vacation. In case listing of urgent cases on May 31, June 2 and June 4, mentioning must be

made only on the preceding working day before the Registrar (Judicial) and the Deputy Registrar (Judicial) as per the existing arrangement, the order added. During the period from May 20 to 27, 2021, only extremely urgent matters that cannot wait till May 31, 2021 for listing may be mentioned before the Registrar (Judicial) through email id: [chcmamms@gmail.com](mailto:chcmamms@gmail.com) between 11 AM and 12 Noon, by furnishing in advance by email a statement explaining the extreme urgency. It will then be placed before the Chief Justice for appropriate direction, the order read. Learned Advocates were requested to avoid mentioning routine matters during this period.

## ASHAs In Odisha To Get Rs 10,000 Assistance For Covid Management

Bhubaneswar, May 19: The Odisha Government today announced one-time assistance of Rs 10,000 to Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) under 'Swasthya Sahaya' to improve their functional efficiency for effective Covid

management and facilitating non-Covid essential healthcare services in rural areas and urban slums. Additional Chief Secretary Health & Family Welfare PK Mohapatra has written a letter to all Collectors, Municipal Commissioners and Chief

Medical Officer & Public Health Officers (CDM&PHOs)-cum-District Mission Directors in this regard. "I am to inform that as per the announcement made by the Chief Minister on May 17, it has been decided to provide one-time assistance of Rs 10,000 to each ASHA under



tance of Rs 10,000 to each ASHA under

Swasthya Sahaya (State Budget) to enable them to

undertake various activities for effective management of Covid and facilitating non-Covid essential healthcare services at the community level both in rural areas and urban slums," reads the letter. The letter says that ASHA may utilize the assistance

amount for purchase of bicycle if not purchased earlier or damaged; umbrella, torch, chappal, water bottle, carry bag; mask, sanitiser, soaps, gloves, face shield, thermal scanner, helmet; mini battery operated mike; and conveyance (POL/

repairing of cycle etc. The concerned officials have been requested to release the incentive amount of Rs 10,000 to each ASHA out of available funds under the ZSS-Misc A/c which will be recouped after receipt of funds under Swasthya Sahaya.

## AIIMS neurologist says black fungus cases cross 3-digit mark



New Delhi, May 19: More than 20 cases of black fungus are reported daily, said Prof Srivastava, adding that mucor wards have been made separately at AIIMS Trauma Centre and AIIMS Jhajjar. Amid the second wave of Covid-19, India is witnessing a rapid rise in the cases of black fungus, also called mucormycosis. The head of the neurology department of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi, Prof MV Padma Srivastava, on Wednesday said that the number of black fungus infections has crossed the 3-digit mark at the hospital and are increasing rapidly, reported the news agency ANI. More than 20 cases of black fungus are reported daily, said Prof Srivastava, adding that mucor wards have been made separately at AIIMS Trauma Centre and AIIMS Jhajjar, reported ANI. "The number of Black fungus cases is increasing rapidly. We've crossed the 3-digit mark. We've made mucor wards separately at AIIMS Trauma centre and AIIMS Jhajjar. We're getting over 20 cases of Black fungus daily," ANI quoted Prof Srivastava as saying. Sir Gangaram Hospital in New Delhi has recorded nearly 100 cases of black fungus since

May 7. Currently, 69 patients are admitted in the hospital with mucormycosis. The risk of contracting black fungus is very high because of the low immunity caused due to the use of steroids in the treatment of Covid-19 infections. Prof Srivastava warned that it is very important for Covid-19 patients with diabetes to strictly monitor and control their sugar. She also said that there should be rational use of steroids for the treatment. "The index of suspicion of contracting Black fungus is very high because of low immunity. If Covid happens to diabetic people, sugar should be strictly controlled and there should be rational use of steroids," she said. The Union health ministry listed—pain and redness around the eyes and/or nose, fever, headache, coughing, shortness of breath, vomit with blood, altered mental status—symptoms for the identification of the fungal infection. Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Bihar are some of the states that have reported black fungus cases so far. Due to the massive surge in mucormycosis infections in Rajasthan, the state government declared it an epidemic on Wednesday.

## Kejriwal's remarks would not impact India-Singapore ties, says High Commissioner

New Delhi, May 19: Simon Wong, Singapore High Commissioner to India, said on Wednesday that Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's recent comment regarding the new Covid variant reported in Singapore would have no impact on India-Singapore's efforts to fight Covid-19 "hand-in-hand". Wong also said that Singapore has continued to transport medical aid in a spirit of working together to combat the pandemic, which knows no political colour or boundary. "It (Delhi CM's remarks) would not impact our (India-Singapore) hand-in-hand fight against Covid. As witnessed yesterday

and today with transportation of medical aid, we're working together. Pandemic knows no boundary or political colour," ANI said quoting Wong. Arvind Kejriwal's remark on a new variant of Covid-19 found in Singapore and affecting children had set off a political storm. Arindam Bagchi, the ministry of external affairs spokesperson, said on Twitter that the Singapore government has registered a strong objection to Kejriwal's remarks. The Indian High Commissioner clarified that Kejriwal has no authority to make such remarks, a point reiterated by external affairs minister S Jaishankar. The High



Commissioner also said that the Singapore government had deliberated invoking their Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act to counter online misinformation but the Government of India's clarification had been satisfactory hence the Act was not invoked. "In Singapore, we have

Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA) to mitigate misinformation and we reserve the right to invoke POFMA on assertions made by CM (Delhi). However, we're satisfied with Gol's clarification," said Wong. As per World Health Organization's practice, a strain does not get geo-

graphical names, as the practice focuses only on the scientific aspects of combating a pandemic rather than pointing fingers at anyone. "The Singapore Government prefers to deal with viruses and its variants in scientific terms. We abide closely with WHO's recommendation of not giving the virus any geographical name. We focus more on the scientific aspect rather than to put a finger on anyone" he added. WHO had released a guideline in 2015 which advised against naming diseases, viruses or variants after the countries from which they originate as it could stigmatise the people living there.

## 'Covid will be easier than Israeli missiles': Gaza's fear of bomb beats virus

Gaza, May 19: In response to rocket fire from Gaza, Israeli strikes have pounded the crowded Palestinian enclave since May 10, killing at least 219 people, according to Gaza's health ministry. Like thousands of others in Gaza, Umm Jihad Ghabayin fled home with her children from Israeli bombardment without taking any essentials—let alone a facemask against the raging Covid-19 pan-



demic. In response to rocket fire from Gaza, Israeli strikes have pounded the crowded Palestinian enclave since May 10, killing at least 219 people, according to Gaza's health ministry. As entire tower blocks tumble, reduced to smoking rubble by bombs, the immediate danger of devastating air strikes has replaced for Gazans the less obvious -- but still deadly -- risk of Covid-19. "Of course

I'm afraid of catching coronavirus, but it will be easier (to cope with) than Israeli missiles," mother-of-six Ghabayin said. "Missiles kill us," one of her children added, aged eight, his feet covered in dust. Israeli air strikes have obliterated key infrastructure including water and electricity in Gaza, an impoverished and densely packed enclave home to some two million Palestinians.

## Karnataka govt announces Rs 1,250-crore Covid relief package for those affected by lockdown

Bengaluru, May 19: The Karnataka government has announced a Covid relief package of Rs 1,250 crore for farmers, auto and cab drivers, construction workers, artistes and various workers in the unorganised sector. This comes at a time when a lockdown is underway in the state to prevent the virus from spreading and opposition parties have been calling for relief measures for those whose livelihoods have been affected by the restrictions. On Wednesday, after chairing a high-level meeting with senior officials and cabinet ministers, Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa announced the relief package. "Our government had given financial packages to various sectors during the first wave of the pandemic last year. Now again, as the current restrictions due to the lockdown have affected the livelihood of farmers and



those in the unorganised sector, we are announcing a relief package of more than Rs 1,250 crore," Yediyurappa said. "We have done the best we can within the current financial limitations, and will consider if anything further needs to be done in the future," he added. The Chief Minister also said that a decision will be taken on whether the lockdown will be extended. The decision will be announced a couple of days before May 24, the date till when the current restrictions are

in effect. The state government had initially announced a 14-day "closedown" from April 27, but subsequently imposed a complete lockdown from May 10 to May 24. Yediyurappa said that for farmers, Rs 10,000 relief will be given to growers for per hectare loss. It will benefit about 20,000 farmers and may cost Rs 12.73 crore. For the losses suffered by fruit and vegetable growers, financial relief of Rs 10,000 per hectare will be given, limiting it to

one hectare. According to CM, this will benefit about 69,000 farmers and may cost Rs 69 crore. The state government has also announced relief packages of Rs 3,000 each for auto, taxi and maxi cab drivers who have licences and have registered, benefiting about 2.10 lakh people. This may cost Rs 63 crore, the government said. Yediyurappa further said Rs 3,000 each will be given to labourers who have registered with Karnataka Building And Other Construction

Workers Welfare Board, with the package costing Rs 494 crore. Embed Tweet: For workers in the unorganised sector like barbers, washermen, tailors, porters, ragpickers, potters, goldsmiths, mechanics, blacksmith, household workers, cobblers and others, Yediyurappa said Rs 2,000 each will be given to them, benefiting 3.04 lakh people and the total cost amounting to about Rs 60.89 crore. Roadside vendors, those registered under Aatma Nirbhar package, will be given Rs 2,000 each, he said, while adding that it will benefit about 2.20 lakh people and cost a total of Rs 44 crore. For the film and entertainment industrie, which have also been unaffected by ongoing lockdown, the artistes and art teams will be given Rs 3,000 each, benefiting 16,095 people and costing a total of Rs 4.82 crore.

## Black-marketing of remdesivir: 3 Gotri hospital staffers held

Vadodara, May 19: Posing as dummy patients, DCB officials nabbed the three accused identified as staff nurse Varsha Damor, Class IV employee Shailesh alias Ravi Prajapati and oxygen plant operator Sahil Darbar. The Vadodara Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) on Tuesday detained three employees, including a nurse, attached to the Gujarat Medical Education and Research Society (GMERS)-run Gotri Covid-19 hospital for allegedly black-marketing a vial of Remdesivir injection. According to the DCB release, the officials received a tip-off that the accused were looking to sell one vial of Remdesivir injection for Rs 15,000. Posing as dummy patients, DCB officials nabbed the three accused identified as staff nurse



Varsha Damor, Class IV employee Shailesh alias Ravi Prajapati and oxygen plant operator Sahil Darbar. The release said it was Sahil who came to the dummy buyers, selling the lone vial for Rs 15,000. On questioning, Sahil revealed that he had purchased the vial from Ravi for Rs 14,000 and was looking to make a profit of Rs 1,000. Ravi, in turn, named Varsha Damor, who had siphoned off the vial meant for a patient. Deputy Commissioner

of Police, DCB, Jaydeepsinh Jadeja, told this newspaper, "The nurse had retained a vial of Remdesivir injection from the medicines meant for a critical patient, who died before being administered the dose. We found that it is a genuine vial provided by the Gujarat Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (GMSCCL) to Gotri hospital as part of the quota of free Remdesivir injections meant for the government hospitals."

## Chhattisgarh: Three dead in firing on protest, villagers dig heels in at Sukma security camp

Silger, May 19: On Monday, three people were killed here and several injured as police opened fire on a group of tribals protesting against the CRPF camp that came up on May 12. Over the last four days, tribals from over 30 villages of Sukma and Bijapur have been protesting outside the camp. "We had been camping here for four days

and were running out of ration. So we thought we would hand over a memorandum against the camp, and maybe return a few days later if they still don't remove the camp," said Korsu Somaru, 65, one of the protesters. But now, with three of their own dead and many others injured, he said, they have decided to stay put. While the tribals

say security forces opened fire to bring an end to their protest, the latter alleged that Naxal cadres, in the garb of protesting villagers, were among those who attacked the Silger camp with stones and gunshots, forcing them to retaliate. "Our men returned the fire and managed to bring the situation under control," said Bastar IG P Sundarraj. Police detained



five people, including a woman, and have not handed over the bodies of

the three people killed, claiming they have not yet been identified. Villagers,

however, identified the dead as "protesters" Kawasi Waga, 37, from Chutwai; Korsu Bhima, 32, from Gundam; and Uika Murali, 22, from Timmapuram. Silger village, in Konta block of Sukma district, was once a bustling market for chironji seeds until, 20 years ago, Maoists demolished bridges and cut

off road access up to Jagargunda, another key marketplace. During the days of Salwa Judum, Maoists retreated to this zone, with their presence here second only to Abujmad in Narayanpur district, sources said. The camp, the first such outpost between Silger and Jagargunda, has been in the pipeline for years.

When it was finally set up on May 12, it sparked off protests from tribals of over 30 villages. Police, however, say the villagers were provoked by Naxals. The protest started small, with only the residents of Silger claiming the camp to be an illegal occupation of their land. But soon, it spread to nearby villages.

## Odisha logs 11,099 fresh COVID-19 cases, 21 more fatalities



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 19: Odisha's COVID-19 tally surged to 6,44,401 on Wednesday after 11,099 people tested positive, while 21 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 2,378, a health department official said. The coastal state now has 1,05,375 active cases, and 5,36,595 patients have recovered from the disease, including 10,242 since Tuesday, he said. Of the fresh cases, 6,214 infections were detected in quarantine centres. Khurda district, comprising state capital Bhubaneswar, reported

the highest number of 1,460 new cases, followed by Sundergarh (983), Cuttack (867), Angul (552) and Sambalpur (547). Taking to Twitter, the Health and Family Welfare Department said, "Regret to inform the demise of twenty one numbers of Covid positive patients while under treatment in hospitals." Kalahandi accounted for three deaths, while two each died in Khurda, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur and Sundergarh, the official said. Till date, a total of 53 other COVID-19 patients have also died

due to comorbidities, he said. Odisha has so far conducted over 1.10 crore sample tests, which included a record 60,510 on Tuesday. The positivity rate stands at 5.83 per cent. With the state continuing to report around 10,000 new COVID-19 cases daily, authorities on Tuesday extended the ongoing lockdown with stricter restrictions by two more weeks till June 1. The government has also constituted a state-level task force that will take initiatives to increase production and provisioning of medical oxygen.

## Police rescue elderly woman harassed by son



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 19: Odisha Police on Tuesday came to the rescue of a 76-year-old woman who was allegedly being harassed by her son. Surjyanarayan Acharya reportedly attempted to strangulate his mother Shakuntala earlier in the day following which she ran away from her house at Lachmanpalli village within Aska police limits fearing for her life. Acharya then locked the

house and left his mother outside. "My son attempted to strangulate me but I managed to flee the spot. He is an alcoholic and has been frequently harassing me for money," Shakuntala told TNIE. The elderly woman said she was harassed by Acharya last year after the pandemic broke out and the police had let him off after issuing him a warning. After Shakuntala's daughter Tina, who stays in Navi Mumbai, came to

know about her mother's ordeal, she attempted to contact Ganjam district administration on social media seeking help for her mother. IG (Ops) Amitabh Thakur was alerted about the woman's plight and he directed the local police to immediately look into the matter. The local police under the supervision of Ganjam SP Brijesh Kumar Rai then reached Shakuntala's house and broke open the door in the presence of a Magistrate. Acharya was found lying on the floor in an inebriated state and was shifted to a hospital. A case has been registered under Sections 294, 323, 341 and 506 of IPC, said a police officer.

## Why insult the warrior? Attacks on journalists in Puri, demand action

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 19: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has declared journalists a front-line warrior of Corona. However, he acknowledged that their numbers were not enough to defeat Local government. A working journalist has been attacked in Puri. It has demanded an investigation and firm action from the platform. "The MANCHA wants to know if the local administration is listening to the Chief Minister without respecting these fighters," said Lingaraj Sahoo. According to the information, these fighters

should be vaccinated as per the rules as per the rules. However, the local administration is neglecting various places while vaccinating journalists. The vaccine camp was lifted after only 970 journalists were vaccinated in the capital. Journalists between the ages of 18 and 44 were not vaccinated. The BMC has come to the forefront of the black market by providing vaccine coupons, while journalists have not received any coupons or vaccinations. BMC officials do not pick up the phone. The government has 6944 names on health



insurance, but many journalists are not on the list. The capital has more than 80 newspapers daily, at least in other languages, includ-

ing Oriya and English. Many foreign media, web channel representatives live in the capital and journalists. No one even came to the

Bhubaneswar vaccination center due to the high workload. In addition, many journalists have taken the first vaccine to the hospital. However, only three days after the camp collapsed, 970 journalists were vaccinated. Many more journalists are being vaccinated. Authorities opposed the protest with all available police forces, special services and the army. The Chief Minister, the Chief Secretary to Government, the Chief Minister's Personal Secretary, the Health Secretary, the Adviser to the Media Department have demanded that the issue be addressed.

## Niranjan Patnaik slams Odisha government over Covid death figures



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 19: President of Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) Niranjan Patnaik on Tuesday hit out at the State government for suppressing figures of deaths due to Covid-19 across the State. Referring to a news published in TNIE on May 16, Patnaik said the figure released by the government said only 22 people died on May 14, but actually 60 bodies were cremated at Satya Nagar crematorium in the Capital city alone. Patnaik said the government recorded only 395 deaths in the second wave which will be six people daily, but data collected

from the ground zero, from the registers of crematoriums, the total number of dead bodies cremated in different crematoriums of the State is approximately 2,000. Patnaik asked if the number of deaths is so low then why the government is expanding the crematoriums at Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and also working to have new crematorium along with the existing one. He demanded that the government should come out with truth and not hide the actual situation by suppressing facts. The government figure of around daily 20 deaths is far from the truth, he added.

## Drive-In Covid Vaccination, Doorstep Vaccination Not Allowed: Odisha Govt

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 19: As different municipal corporations and district administrations in Odisha launched drive-in Covid vaccination and doorstep vaccination facilities for elderly people and differently-abled, the Health and Family Welfare Depart-

ment today directed them to desist from such activities. Additional Chief Secretary of Health and Family Welfare Department, PK Mohapatra in a letter to District Collectors, Municipal Commissioners, CDMOs and PHOs stated drive-in or door-

step vaccination is not allowed as per the Covid-19 Operational guidelines issued by the Government of India. Mohapatra further mentioned, "In drive-in / door step strategies, it will be difficult to manage Adverse Effects Following Immunization (AEFI), if it occurs, and



room and have adequate facility to manage AEFI, Mohapatra stated. Beneficiaries who receive the Covid vaccine are required to be observed for at least 30 minutes after vaccination for AEFI (if any). Worth mentioning, several municipal corporations including Bhubaneswar

there is also high likelihood of vaccine wastage." The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare guideline clearly states that vaccination sessions shall be conducted in places with adequate space for waiting area, vaccination room and observation

Municipal Corporation, Cuttack Municipal Corporation, Berhampur Municipal Corporation and Rourkela Municipal Corporation and district administrations launched either drive-in vaccination or doorstep vaccination facilities recently.

## RPF Arrests Three Persons For Theft Of Railway Property

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 19: Railway Protection Force (RPF) have arrested three persons from Rail Vihar in connection with theft of Railway property. On getting information from residents and as per the footage from CCTV surveillance system, Crime Investigation Branch (CIB) of RPF & Headquarters RPF Reserve Company arrested these persons and recovered Railway property. Three persons including a receiver who was also available outside of Rail Vihar

were arrested with unlawful possession of Railway property and AC copper wire which were stolen from Rail Vihar colony in the night of 17th May, 2021. They confessed their guilt of committing theft of AC copper wire from Rail Vihar houses earlier. All are residents of nearby Salia Sahi and well acquainted with Rail Vihar colony. They were forwarded to Mancheswar RPF post for further legal action. Information has also been given to Chandrshekharpur Police Station in this connection.

## Six More Puri Servitors Engaged In Chariot Construction Work Infected With COVID-19

(A.O. Bureau) Puri, May 19: Six more servitors engaged in construction work of chariots for upcoming Ratha Jatra in Puri tested positive for COVID-19. Two Maharana servitors of Nandighosha Ratha (chariot of Lord Jagannath) among six were diagnosed with the deadly virus. With this, the number of servitors in Puri infected with COVID increased to



186, of which 3 have succumbed to the virus,

130 have been recovered and 53 are under

treatment, a source in Shree Jagannath

Temple Administration (SJTA), Puri, said. The chariot construction work began on May 15, which marked the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya. Meanwhile, the vaccination of servitors in 18-44 age group is underway ahead of the annual Ratha Jatra scheduled on July 12. The SJTA has set the target to cover 4,300 servitors in 18-44 age group during the drive in 15 days.

## BMC starts doorstep swab collection of expectant mothers

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 19: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has started collecting swab samples from expectant mothers for COVID-19 test at their doorstep in Bhubaneswar. The BMC team has collected swab samples of



four pregnant women for RT-PCR test, who had booked their appointment by calling on 1929 Call Centre yesterday. The swab samples were collected from two expectant mothers in South-East Zone, and one each from South-West and North Zone of the Civic

Body. One woman, Pushpita Roy (33), who is a healthcare worker, expressed her pleasure and thanked the BMC team for the service. Worth mentioning here that, people can book their appointment by calling on 1929 between 8 am and 11 am to avail this facility.

## Odisha Exempts Toll Tax For Vehicles Carrying Medical Oxygen

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 19: In order to facilitate smooth supply of medical oxygen, Odisha Government today ordered exemption of toll tax for vehicles carrying the same. Accordingly, tax will not be collected from vehicles carrying medical oxygen in tankers or cylinders at all toll plazas under state Government. The order will remain in force till July 30, 2021. "The de-

cision was taken keeping in view the current pandemic situation and to facilitate smooth supply of medical oxygen to different hospitals and COVID Care Centres (CVCs) in the state," said a senior official. Earlier on May 8, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways had exempted the user fee for vehicles carrying Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) at toll plazas across National Highways (NHs).

## EDITORIAL

## Missing childhood

As Corona's second wave ebbs, people are already worried about the third one which, as per experts, is going to be tough on children. The third wave or not, kids across the country are going through a rough phase in their life. For over a year, they are locked inside their homes, having little excess to their playgrounds and friends. Almost all the places these kids loved to hang out are out of bounds. This is bad for their physical and mental health. The online classrooms may have saved their year but it is taking the toll on their eyes and daily routines. Their physical and mental health is at risk. As digital platforms are the only medium at their disposal, many children have got addicted to it. Many parents report noticeable behavioural changes in children, which surely is a grave concern. They are doing everything on it, except studying. The free access to internet has its own perils. Experts feel that exposure to digital media has caused several disorders. Children are showing addiction, aggressive behaviour, anxiety, attention and concentration issues, and depression. These disorders are not generally associated with young children. What worries most parents is if online education is the only alternative. They feel if their child is learning through online classes, what would have they learned at school? Going to school and meeting other children and teachers is valuable learning in itself. It instills a sense of social bonhomie and disciplines them. A child's growth is not only about the studies but various other curricular activities, which are absent these days. The teacher can have a better understanding of the child's progress on the school premises. Many children tend to take online lessons rather easy. They chat or play games while the class goes on and the teacher can't do anything about it. Many children are losing interest in studies. Even when the schools reopen, it would not be the same life for our children. They would have to relearn to wake up early, get ready, and have breakfast before the school bus arrives. They have almost forgotten outdoor games and how they intermingled with their friends. Corona is not only claiming lives, it is ruining the lives of the next generation. A scare has seeped deep into their minds. The children's childhood is at stake and nobody knows when they will be able to reclaim it.

## Watch it!

The irrational use of plasma therapy could raise the possibility of more virulent strains. The Government has dropped plasma therapy on COVID patients from the list of clinical management guidelines which earlier allowed its off-label use in the initial days of the disease. The reason given is that it is ineffective in reducing the severity of the disease or the chances of death. The decision to remove it from the guidelines comes in the backdrop of some scientists warning against the arbitrary use of plasma therapy. Indian vaccinologist Gagandeep Kang and others, in a signed letter, said the irrational and non-scientific use of plasma therapy could raise the possibility of more virulent strains developing. The Government has already come out with scientific explanations why the Remdesivir medication and the use of Ivermectin are also not advisable for use on the COVID patients. If at all Remdesivir is to be used, it should be used in extremely critical cases and, even then, strictly under medical supervision, give between the first and seventh days of the onset of the disease to reduce its severity and not prescribed thereafter. However, there is no ban against its use under any condition and it is this loophole that has led to its mass use. The British and American guidelines discount any efficacy of Remdesivir on mortality of patients or the need for mechanical ventilation. The use of Ivermectin and paracetamol depends on the immunity level and other patient-specific conditions and, along with Azithromycin, should not be taken without doctor's advice. Ivermectin's manufacturer, Merck, stated that they found no meaningful evidence for efficacy against COVID. Along with Remdesivir, originally meant to treat Ebola, these are 'repurposed' drugs, essentially made for some other infection but not repurposed to treat COVID-19. With this, the three key elements of Covid "treatment", popularised on social media and believed to be God's gift to patients, are rendered useless. There are hardly any patients whose relatives have not given him or her any or all of the three products in the hope that they will get better. There are reports of people obtaining print outs of ready-made COVID prescriptions, available on the social media, and buying them in bulk and literally hoarding them for use in case anyone contracts the disease. The use of these products spiralled out of control, leading to its scarcity in hundreds of cities and towns of the country, as hospital beds, oxygenated beds and oxygen concentrators and cylinders became scarce. In nearly the majority of the cases, doctors are scarcely consulted before taking a medicine. The doctors themselves, so much under pressure, have been at their wit's end trying to explain to the impatient relatives the relative merits and de-merits of these drugs. After over 1.5 crore positive cases since COVID struck us, and nearly two lakh deaths, we are still grappling with the fundamentals of clinical management and drug protocols. That shows how disoriented the national COVID management plan is.

## Nepal needs to quell the mess

Though not highly popular, and ironic, Oli looks better poised to form a Government. And the Himalayan State needs one. The five most powerful and, according to a study of the Nepalese media, easily the most despised Prime Minister Nepal has ever had among the 43 who made it, was sworn in for the third time as a minority Government's Prime Minister on May 14. Oli had defiantly dissolved the House in December and ordered elections for April-May when the Supreme Court restored the House in February, describing his actions as unconstitutional. Instead of resigning on moral grounds, Oli typically refused to do so in the face of massive criticism and revulsion while a full House sat between March 7 and April 19, twiddling their thumbs, and was prorogued a second time. Against the might of five former Prime Ministers—SB Deuba, Prachanda, Madhav Nepal, Jhalanath Khanal and Baburam Bhattarai—and the entire Opposition, Oli sailed through the no-confidence vote on May 10 with dissidents within his party and outside, not daring to change the status quo. In this high-stakes political stage show, the Mahanta-Thakur and Rajendra Mahato faction of the Janata Samajwadi Nepal with 15 lawmakers could have been kingmakers providing Oli the magic number of 136 parliamentarians and with independents to comfortably form a majority Government. The Oli swearing in of a minority Government was made justiciable on grounds of erroneous swearing-in by a pliant president, Bidya Devi Bhandari, when Oli skipped the oath "I solemnly



Ashok K Mehta

and sincerely pledge". Seven Ministers sworn in a second time had ceased to be lawmakers when Oli lost his confidence vote, since non-lawmakers can be Ministers only once. Another constitutional hassle is about former Maoist and Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa contesting a National Assembly seat. Oli has shown that, like a cat, he has nine lives and will, before June 15, prove his majority in the House. The greatest quirk of Nepalese politics has just played out—a Left Government that was destined to rule with a two-thirds majority for a full term was crippled by the ego and the lust for power of two ambitious politicians—Oli and Prachanda. A Nepali Times survey and Himal Media public opinion poll blamed both for putting democracy at risk. A national survey showed 65.5 per cent Nepalese do not trust political leaders, of which 44.9 per cent did not trust Oli. Oli, nurtured by India, was once New Delhi's blue-eyed boy. After the 2015 economic blockade, he switched

sides enthusing China's rise in Nepal till his political domination in the party was seriously challenged from within the party. Oli made a tactical tilt towards India last year despite the shrewd counter-maneuvrings of Chinese Ambassador Hou Yanqui. Oli's biggest challenge is managing his most visible spectacular failure—Covid19 pandemic. His letter to The Guardian and interview with the CNN are riddled with factual inaccuracies on the actual state of the pandemic, which is interwoven with the catastrophic spike in India's second wave. Oli's conspicuous lack of governance was exposed during the last one year that included corruption in the acquisition of medical equipment and the Government misleading people that COVID was viral influenza, whose cure was drinking turmeric laced warm water. Instead of building health infrastructure, the Government invested in building view towers, idols of Hindu gods and god-

esses and telling the people that Lord Pashupati will take care of them. Oli has picked up Hindutva as his main agenda for the next election, claiming that Chitwan in Nepal is the real birthplace of Ram. He is playing the devout Hindu, visiting Pashupati temple; the same Oli who once said that the only God was Karl Marx though he did not believe in one. Nepal needs a strong and stable Government to face the twin challenges of the pandemic and misgovernance. Oli has prioritised his political survival over the existential threat of COVID-19 just when India's capacity for assistance has exhausted and New Delhi has sent out an SOS for oxygen, ventilators and other medical equipment. This is an opportunity for Beijing whose Foreign Minister Wang Yi has conducted at least three virtual meetings of the Saarc countries, excluding Maldives, Bhutan and India, on COVID-19 assistance. China has donated 8,00,000 doses of its vaccine to Nepal, which has signed a contract of 2 million doses with the Serum Institute of India, of which only 1 million have been delivered. Engulfed by the pandemic, these are ugly times and made worse by an inept Government whose focus is on regime extension, not defeating the once-in-a-century scourge. By June 15, either the contours of a majority Oli Government should be in sight or a coalition Government of the Opposition parties, failing which the House will be dissolved and fresh elections ordered when 20 months are still left in the life of this House. A majority and stable Government is imperative to fight COVID-19, not any elections, for the time being. Ironically, Oli looks better poised to form a Government.

## Congress is playing politics during a national crisis

The entire government machinery is mobilised to respond to the crisis. But the Congress party is playing "tool-kit" politics. In all my years of actively following and commenting on political and policy issues, I have never been as disenchanted with the politicking as I have been in the last few weeks. Admittedly, politics is a cynical and ruthless business. But even by that yardstick, what has transpired, and at a time when the nation is waging a war against a pandemic, is so disgusting, so callous, so immoral, that it has no parallels. Consider some of the acts. An abiding feature of Indian society is that people come together as one in any crisis and help each other as much as they can. No matter what their social or financial status, the spirit of looking out for each other is a uniquely Indian trait. As the Covid-19 pandemic raged, people again came together as one to help others in need. This time they had an institutional instrument to pool in their resources — the PM CARES fund. The fund has the credibility of the Prime Minister's office as well as the personal capital of Narendra Modi, a person whom the people of the nation have blessed twice with an overwhelming mandate. Yet, an entire ecosystem mobilised itself to create discord against this noble venture, seed doubts among the people about its working, and shame anyone who donated to help a fellow Indian in need. An already sanctioned infrastructure project in central Delhi, which is providing



Akhilesh Mishra

jobs to thousands of semi-skilled and unskilled poor workers, has become an object of a sustained misinformation and malicious campaign. In a pandemic situation, when a large portion of economic activity is depressed due to lockdowns and other containment measures, what could be the motivation of national and international "experts" in wanting to shut down infrastructure projects that provide livelihood to the poor? Artificial shortages of hospital beds, medical oxygen and critical medicines were reported from Delhi in particular, and many other metros in general. A hitherto unknown politician suddenly pops up and is projected as some sort of super-government who can meet the urgent appeals of help in all geographies of India, much faster than any government. Journalists of a particular leaning publicise all such requests for help as also the politician delivering like a superman. The central government, meanwhile, proposes an oxygen audit in Delhi, and as if miraculously, Delhi becomes

an oxygen surplus state, and proposes to supply oxygen to other states and all the urgent requests for help on social media also dry up. In Bangalore, a bed hoarding scam is unearthed. The Kumbh is one of the most revered gatherings for the Hindu society. In fact, for centuries it has transcended from being a religious occasion to become a cultural symbol of all of India. The timing of the Kumbh is decided not by governments but by saints and seers and that has happened for millennia. The Kumbh festivities, which were already curtailed from the traditional four months to just one month, were further shortened the moment cases started rising. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel postponed an already announced lockdown just to accommodate the festivities and gatherings related to Easter. The Kumbh takes place every 12 years, the revered Easter every year. Yet, the Kumbh became an occasion to shame India and Indians in general and Hindus in particular. But all this

pales in comparison to what happened next. A new mutant of the Covid virus was discovered. The WHO specifically forbids any geographic identification of mutants and only identifies them by their scientific term. However, all those who cried xenophobia when the original Covid virus was referred to as the Wuhan or Chinese virus were gleefully calling the B.1.617 variant the "Indian variant". Some even referred to it as the "Modi variant". Is the Modi hate so overpowering that everything else pales in comparison? If it means maligning and shaming India then is that par for course? As the media reports an alleged Congress toolkit, it boggles the mind that all this may have been part of a plan. The purposeful and coordinated incitement in January against the vaccine developed in India. A Congress state government stopping vaccination in February, even letting vaccines rot. Ventilators mobilised through PM CARES lying unused in Congress-ruled states since stigmatising PM CARES is more important than saving lives? The BJP in Opposition stood in unison with the country and the then leadership in times of war in 1965 and 1971. What is the Congress doing now? People in my country are suffering. The entire government machinery is mobilised to respond to the crisis. But the Congress party is playing "tool-kit" politics. It is sickening beyond comparison. Not even a film script writer could come up with something so evil. We, the people of India, deserve better. We need our own toolkit which forever consigns this "tool-kit" politics to the black pages of history.



Tulsikshetra Charitable Trust Odisha, Corona Awareness Message through Photos

## Bar association Demand's Reopen Ahaar Center's at BAM

(A.O. Bureau) Berhampur, May 19: The Ganjam district administration has closed all Ahaar centers in the city of Brahmapur as per the Odisha government's directive to extend the state of the corona epidemic. As a result, it is difficult to eat two ideal meals a day for the poor, whether for the needy daily labour categories or for those traveling to the MKCG in Berhampur. A letter of demand has been issued by the Ganjam



Bar Association to the Sub -Collector of Berhampur today for

the opening of all food centers in the city. In each case, the people

have, for the first time, been offered a chance to vote. He called for

the immediate reopen of the new Berhampur MKCG and the railway station's Ahaar center, as required by the Covid guideline. Ganjam Bar Association President Janardhan Subuddhi, Secretary Pradeep Kumar Behera Vice-president Bhagirathi Rao, Joint-secretary Sudhir Kumar Patra, Asit Sabat, Tapas Sahu, Sudhir Mishra, Nalini Devadarshi and Senior lawyer Deepak Patnaik were present on the occasion.

## The man behind the renovation of the KKD block is Gadadhar Patra

(A.O. Bureau) Kukudakhandi, May 19: Green grass carpets are a colorful variety of colorful flowers. People on the road are also forced to wait for hours. This scene is not in any park. This is what is possible in the premises of the Kukudakhandi Block office. At the time of the outbreak of the corona epidemic in Ganjam, Mr. Patra's joining as the Kukudakhandi Block



Development Officer was a blessing for the entire Block. Mr. Patra was also commended for providing insurance money to two corona

warriors in the Kukudakhandi block, along with resolving various government tasks that had been lying dormant in the block

office of many helpless panchayat committee members for days. In the meantime, the BDO Mr. Patra's decision to change the environment

of the Panchayat Samiti office has changed its environment. The public, people's representatives and top officials who come to the block for various functions seem to be very happy to see the green environment. He urge the all block staffs cooperation in this work in the coming days," said Group Development Officer. Mr. Patra, adding that such work would set an example for other blocks.

## Ten people have been arrested in connection with the killings

(A.O. Bureau) Rengali, May 19: 10 girders, sticks, bricks, stones and stones were seized in the murder of Biren Kumar of Meher Pada, Bombay, Meher Pada, in a land dispute in Bombaloi under the Thekuli police station in the Rengali block of Sambalpur district. Police in riot gear stormed a rally on Wednesday, removing hundreds of

protesters by truck. At around 1.00 pm on Tuesday, some people came and discussed the land case against Biren Kumar, 48, of Bomaloi Meherpada. The talks later escalated into a heated argument, with Biren being beaten with sticks, bricks and stones. Burla was rushed to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead at the scene. Bricks and stones

were scattered at the scene. The Khelash Meher, Bhavani Meher, Akul Meher, Amrit Meher, Drupad Meher, Manoj Meher, Manbhangi Meher, Ghan Meher, Ganesh Meher, Raheel Meher, Raheel Meher, Raheel Meher Gohri Meher has been arrested and taken to court. Police are searching for others involved in the killings.

## Alipur Sarpanch Manoj save a life by his pharma skill



(A.O. Bureau) Aska, May 19: The Sarpanch himself is engaged in public service because of he is a pharmacist and the public service. He said he would continue to work for the complete release of corona in the

panchayat. Ajay Kumar Patra, a health worker, had his health deteriorated and his oxygen level had dropped to 52Pulse rate. As the sarpanch himself was a pharmacist, he was the first to arrange for immediate treatment and in-

crease the level of oxygen. With the gradual rise in oxygen levels, he now seems to be able to breathe normally. Sarpanch Manoj Kumar Nahak has been monitoring the patient for 4 days. Manoj has been lauded in the intelligentsia, starting with the local police administration for his courageous actions and duties. The novel service minded nature of sarpanch Manoj's efforts widely praised by the villagers and commonly in public. The fight against covid and health issue's bravely faced.

## Naxalite supporters attack, CRPF camp kills three

(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, May 19: Malkangiri: Villagers attacked a newly established CRPF camp in Silger, known as Maogad in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh, bordering Malkangiri district, killing three Naxalite supporters. According to Bastar IG Police P. ??Sundararaja, villagers in the area had been protesting since the new CRPF camp was set up in Silger, following the incident. The Naxals arrived at the camp with the villagers and raided the camp in the presence of the villagers. The Javanese also retaliated. There was a long exchange of gunfire. It is unknown at this time what he will do after leaving the post. The bomber struck shortly after noon in front of a police station, killing 3 of protesters and wounding dozens more. The government has since set up a CRPF camp here. In last April 3 by the attack of Maoist 22 police personnel died.



## Family loses three members to Covid-19 in 22 days



(A.O. Bureau) Bhawanipatna, May 19: The raging Covid-19 has not just devastated families and left children orphaned but also resulted in loss of financial and social support for those in grief. In a gap of 22 days, a family of Seaulbunth village in Kalahandi district lost three of its male members to the deadly coronavirus. The family's traumatic experience began when 41-year-old school teacher

Akura Sahu - the elder son - was tested positive for the virus in mid-April. He was put under home isolation. On April 22, he was shifted to a Covid facility in Visakhapatnam after his condition deteriorated. He, however, could not make it to the hospital and succumbed mid-way. Subsequently, his 65-year-old father and 38-year-old brother started showing symptoms. While his

brother passed away 11 days later, Sahu's symptomatic father succumbed on May 11, leaving behind three women and four minors who are now staring at uncertainty. The three men were the family's breadwinners. While the Sahu family has lost its financial support, the wife of the deceased school teacher, who is an anganwadi worker, is now looking forward to joining her duty to overcome the financial crisis that she fears may arise in the near future. Although the family is in pain and anxiety, she said that life has to move on. "I will join work immediately after my father-in-law's death rituals are over", she added.

## Migrants head back home ahead of monsoon in Odisha



(A.O. Bureau) Nuapada, May 19: Prior to the arrival of monsoon, a large number of villagers who had migrated to other states to work in brick-kilns have started returning to the district. On Tuesday, 119 migrant labourers re-

turned to Nuapada and were sent for home isolation in their respective villages by the district administration. Earlier in the morning, a bus carrying 69 migrant labourers from Uttar Pradesh dropped them off near Khariar Road border.

Of them, five labourers belong to one family from Chhattisgarh and the rest are from villages under Nuapada Sadar block. All the migrants were tested for Covid-19 through rapid antigen test kits. Nuapada Tehsildar Debendra Rout said, since one member of the Chhattisgarh family tested positive, all five were sent back to the neighboring state. The remaining 64 migrants were tested negative and sent back to their villages in autorickshaws and buses.

## Shortage, change in schedule hit jab drive in Sundargarh district

(A.O. Bureau) Rourkela, May 19: Amid inadequate stock of Covid-19 vaccines, inoculation of people over 45 years of age has been hit and vaccination for 18+ age group in three urban pockets of Sundargarh district is yet to start. Making things worse for both the staff associated with vaccination and people is the frequent changes being made to the inoculation schedule. As of now, vaccination of the 18-44 age group is underway through eight centres in Rourkela. Vaccination of above 45 years age group is being done across the district as per vaccine availability. Vaccination of 18+ age group in Rourkela city started from



May 11. While it is being carried out thrice a week, people above 45 years of age are allowed to take a second dose on the remaining three days. On Monday many people reached the Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) vaccination centre for a second dose but they returned after being informed that the duration

of the second jab has been extended by 84 days. They resented for not being given prior information. Similar scenes were witnessed at the Sundargarh District Headquarters Hospital (SDHH). Sundargarh MLA Kusum Tete said the Covid-19 vaccination drive has become chaotic and bulk of the vaccina-

tion indents are being diverted to Rourkela. Stating that every adult person of the district has equal right over the vaccine, Tete resented exclusion of the Sundargarh town for 18-44 years age group, while those over 45 years continue to face harassment in getting first or the second dose. Social activist

Kunal Gourav claimed that while Birmipur town bordering Jharkhand has been ignored by Odisha, the Jharkhand government is able to vaccinate people in its nondescript Baunsjor village. Those associated with the vaccination programme said frequent change in guidelines and experimentation has turned a roadblock in formulating new schedules and maintaining coordination. At Rourkela under the new schedule, on one day the morning session is fixed for 18-44 age group and afternoon session is for 45 years age group, but the next day it is reversed. So far about 2.99 lakh doses have been administered in the district.

## In demand for workers' salaries The coal mine is losed

(A.O. Bureau) Rengali, May 19: The Bir Surendra Sai Workers' Union (NLC), which is mining 2-3 coal mines in Khinda Panchayat, Rengali Block, Samwalpur District, has closed the coal mine completely from 6.00 am on Wednesday, demanding payment of wages to the local workers. Continues. The NLC and Adani have a number of contractors, and the local workers who work for them are

not paid well every month. Local workers have not been directly employed by the NLC or the Adani company after the loss of their land and houses. The contractors were not paid properly, the B.S. The union has called for a boycott of the coal mine. "As of press time, there is no solution, and the strike will continue until the issue is resolved," said Babulu Raut, the union's executive president.

## Samantha Akkineni's luxurious Hyderabad home



Hyderabad, May 19: Samantha Akkineni is set to make her digital debut with *The Family Man 2*. Ahead of the new season, here's a quick tour of her house via her Instagram posts. Samantha Akkineni is a popular name among South cinema viewers. Having starred in numerous hit movies in Tamil and Telugu, Samantha is all set to take on the digital space with *The Family Man* season 2. The star is married to Telugu actor Naga Chaitanya and resides in Hyderabad with

him. The couple shares two pet dogs, Hash Akkineni and Drogo Akkineni. The actor has shared several pictures from her house in Hyderabad, giving fans a sneak peek into her home. Samantha is often photographed unwinding and performing yoga beside an in-house pool. She has also set up a vertical kitchen garden in which she grows numerous vegetables and uses them in her everyday cooking. Samantha has also shared glimpses of her all-white bedroom. The room is well-

lit and ample space to move around and even meditate. The couple's kitchen is a modern space with brown cupboards surrounding a cooking platform. On Samantha's birthday last year, Chaitanya was seen baking a cake for her. In her upcoming season of *The Family Man*, Samantha plays the role of Raji, a Sri Lankan Tamilian. She is the new nemesis of Manoj Bajpayee's character Srikant Tiwari. The trailer was released on Wednesday, giving a tease of her character. Creators Raj and DK, in a statement, praised Samantha. "The wait will finally be over on 4 June as Srikant Tiwari will return with a thrilling storyline, and 'danger really has a new face' — Samantha Akkineni, who has done a tremendous job, along with the always-fantastic ensemble cast. We are confident we have carved out an exciting season for you all, despite having to work through the pandemic. Hopefully, the new season will be worth the wait," they said.

## Erica Fernandez feels due to focus on Covid, many other issues are being overlooked

New Delhi, May 19: From mental health of kids and care of pets, the actor feels a number of subjects need attention. She's been conducting Insta live sessions and connecting her fans and experts answering many questions. Everyone is doing their bit for Covid relief in their own way—many with money, time, or using their social media influence. Erica Fernandez's endeavour is to help alleviate concerns and fears of her fans. She started doing live Instagram live sessions with a variety of experts, while answering questions sent by her followers, giving them clarity. "People need to find and watch stuff that is beneficial for them instead of Covid updates which negatively affects them. The constant bombardment of negative news plays on your mind. So, I wanted to use the social media platform and reach out to my followers, to do something for them. People are scared and holding back as they are not sure about what to do or what to ask and wondering who to ask. These fol-



lowers have been with me every step of the way and it's time I did something to help them too," shares Fernandez. She has connected with a doctor working in a Covid ward in a city hospital, a mental health expert, a gynaecologist on questions about period and vaccines, a dermatologist and a chef. Next up, she will talk to a fitness expert, pediatricians, a vet, a spiritual guru etc. The idea behind the live sessions is to give

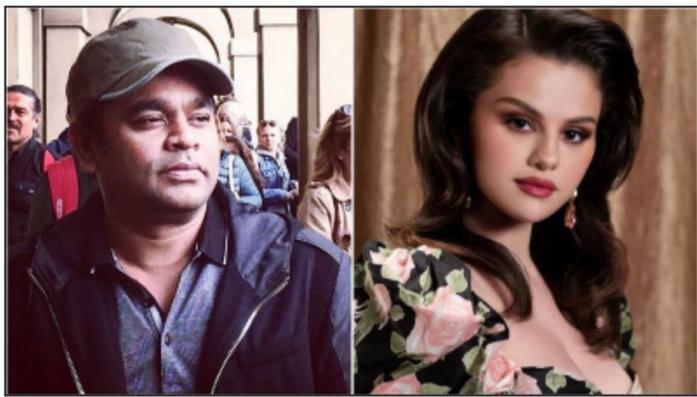
people access to experts and answers to their questions, clarifying myths as well. "Everyone had so many questions and had heard so many stories about Covid and other issues. We all needed answers and talking to professionals from different sectors is helping many out there. I keep identities hidden, so everyone feels comfortable asking any kind of question. Moreover, I also feel due to the pandemic and Covid-19,

which is consuming us, there are so many things we are overlooking in society, especially kids and pets. That's why I am not limiting sessions to just Covid but many other topics," she says. Kids were not affected in the first wave but they are in the second and now they say, the third wave will affect them more than before, says Fernandez. She adds, "We have to take care of them, their mental and physical well being and

same goes for pets. People feed biscuits to stray dogs, but maida and sugar is harmful for them. People think at least we are doing something for them. Give them food without salt or sugar or masala, even rice and khichdi is fine. Abandoning animals is another issue. Pets are not just to play with or loved for their cuteness or a toy. Pets are a responsibility which one has to be ready for. They are like newborn kids who will never grow."

## How AR Rahman responded when Lilly Singh said Selena Gomez wants to work with him

New Delhi, May 19: Mozart of Madras aka Oscar and Grammy-winning composer AR Rahman is on a promotion spree to talk about his latest production venture 99 Songs. Rahman has also penned the story of this unique, musical love story. During his latest interview with popular YouTuber, talk show host and actor Lilly Singh, the latter asked him about his music and the fact that so many big names from the international music scene want to collaborate with him. "In 2020, Selena Gomez said in an inter-



view that she wants to work with you, did you know that?" Lilly asked Rahman. A smiling Rahman responded, "I keep seeing all this stuff, but I think people are just confused, 'where is my

management? Did Selena Gomez call you? Taylor Swift and Madonna, all these people talking about me, but then I never get to meet them because I am on the other

side of the world." The pair then went on to discuss Rahman's one-of-a-kind fashion sense. The host wondered where he gets his style from, to which the composer replied, saying he just does

what he wants to do, and doesn't necessarily follow any rules of the game. "Oh my god, it is truly perfection. Where do you get this from? Do you have a stylist or are you into it?" asked Lilly. "Actually, after a while you don't care. You just think you are going to do this stuff," Rahman said as he laughed heartily. 99 Songs released last month in theatres in India. Recently, Rahman announced that the movie will be available to stream on an OTT platform soon. The name of the streaming service is yet to be revealed.

## Band, baaja, baraat and a runaway lugaai

New Delhi, May 19: After Aspirants, actor Naveen Kasturia is ready to break the internet with MX Player's latest comedy, *Runaway Lugaai*, which premieres on the OTT platform on May 18, 2021. After sparking his way through *Aspirants*, actor Naveen Kasturia is back with a bang, well literally, as he delivers yet another top-notch performance in MX Player's latest comedy series, *Runaway Lugaai*. The multifaceted actor has come a long way from the role of Abhilash, a UPSC aspirant struggling to crack one of India's most coveted examinations. In *Runaway Lugaai*, he plays the part of Rajnikant Sinha aka Rajni, a judge in a district court in Bihar, whose bride flees shortly after tying the knot, spoiling his starry-eyed dreams of happily ever after. The feisty young bride, Bulbul Sinha (played by Ruhi Singh), is free-spirited and 'modern', a bit of a misfit in the traditional Sinha family that he hails from. What ensues is a humorous saga of Rajni launching a manhunt for his runaway bride. The MX Original series explores what happens when your pyaar suddenly goes faraar. Talking about his latest avatar, Kasturia said: "I find characters like Rajni every endearing. At the first glance, he comes across as a lovelorn fool with an infectious enthusiasm towards his marriage and his devotion to Bulbul shines through. There comes a phase in everyone's life when you are so lovestruck that you

can't think straight." "I personally believe that it takes one thing to change your mindset and shake you out of the rut you're stuck in to become a go-getter. In Rajni's case, it is his journey to find his runaway lugaai that makes him break the mold and emerge stronger than before," he further said. Directed by Avinash Das, the 10-episode comedy will surely have you in splits. The chase for missing Bulbul has everyone on their

or her husband. She is one of those characters that you can really fall in love with or grow to hate but can't be ignored," said actor Ruhi Singh. She added: "I wanted to play this character with authenticity and full honesty and I've really tried to do the same. She's a dreamer and a fighter, fighting for her freedom and fighting against the old ways of society in a very light-hearted way. So, it's very much like a comedy of errors, but with a mes-



toes. The comedy of errors that ensues has a frantic MLA Sinha, who needs to save his reputation at all costs, overzealous cops who must crack the case to save their jobs and the nosy media looking for a breakthrough story. But, all of them are outsmarted by young Bulbul. "Bulbul is a character that was very exciting to play, mainly because I believe I'm breaking stereotypes when playing Bulbul. She is definitely exaggerated, but I believe that she signifies free spirit and an independent woman who is, in her way, fighting patriarchy and refuses to give the reins of her life to anybody, be it her father

sage." The series is a welcome reprieve from the flood of crime thrillers that are doing the rounds on OTT platforms these days. The gripping plot keeps you thoroughly entertained and the actors have played their part with élan. Apart from Kasturia, Sanjay Mishra enthralls audiences with yet another noteworthy performance, as he gets into the character of MLA Sinha, a quintessential Bihar politician. *Runaway Lugaai* premieres on MX Player on May 18, 2021, and the good news is that all the 10 episodes will stream for free! So, get set to join Rajni and Bulbul in their latest adventure!

## Alcohol may have immediate effect on atrial fibrillation risk, says study

New Delhi, May 19: Alcohol appears to have an immediate- or near-immediate effect on heart rhythm, significantly increasing the chance that an episode of atrial fibrillation (AFib) will occur, according to new data presented by the researchers at American College of Cardiology. The data revealed that just one glass of wine, beer or other alcoholic beverage was associated with twofold greater odds of an episode of AFib occurring within the next four hours. Among people having two or more drinks in one sitting, there was a more than threefold higher chance of experiencing AFib. Using an alcohol sensor placed on participants' ankles, which passively monitored alcohol intake, the investigators found that every 0.1 per cent increase in inferred blood al-



cohol concentration over the previous 12 hours was associated with an approximate 40 per cent higher odds of an AFib episode. Evidence from those sensors also demonstrated that the total alcohol concentration overtime also predicted the chance AFib would occur. "Alcohol is the most commonly consumed drug in the world, and there is still a lot we don't understand about what it does to our bodies and, in particular, our hearts," said Gregory M.

Marcus, MD, cardiologist and professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, and the study's lead author. AFib also results in costly use of health care services, including visits to the emergency department, hospitalizations and procedures each year. Over time, AFib can lead to heart failure, stroke and dementia if untreated. Researchers enrolled 100 patients with paroxysmal or intermittent AFib, which tends to go away within a

short period of time (unlike chronic AFib). Patients in the study were 64 years old on average; the majority were white (85 per cent) or male (80 per cent). Past medical history, medications and lifestyle habits were assessed through chart reviews and patient interviews. Each participant was fitted with a wearable heart monitor that continuously tracked their heart rhythm and an ankle sensor to objectively detect when more than two to three drinks were consumed on a given occasion. Participants were asked to press a button on the heart monitor each time they had an alcoholic drink. Fingerstick blood tests measuring alcohol consumption in the previous few weeks were also used to corroborate self-reported drinking events. Because

researchers used repeated measurements from the same individual, they served as their own control over time. Overall, more than half (56) had an episode of AFib during the four-week study. "Patients have been telling us that alcohol is a trigger for AFib for a long time, but it's been hard, if not impossible, to study because there is a critical temporal relationship that requires a real-time assessment of alcohol intake and heart rhythm," Marcus said. This is the first study to objectively demonstrate and quantify the real-time relationship between alcohol consumption and AFib episodes. While this study was limited to people with intermittent AFib, it's reasonable to extrapolate the fact that in many people alcohol may be the main trigger for an initial episode.

## Russian swimmer Kolesnikov lowers 50 back world record again



Budapest, May 19: For the second consecutive day, Russian swimmer Kliment Kolesnikov improved his own world record in the 50-meter backstroke. The 20-year-old Kolesnikov clocked 23.80 seconds to win the gold medal at the European Champion-

ships on Tuesday. That was 0.13 faster than his previous record set in the semifinals a day earlier, when he became the first man to break the 24-seconds mark. He first set the record of 24.00 at the last Euros in Glasgow three years ago. The 50 back is not an Olympic event.

## Oz bowlers deny knowing 2018 ball-tampering plot

Sydney, May 19: Australian bowlers, including top pacer Pat Cummins, on Tuesday asserted that they were unaware of the 2018 ball-tampering plot after being caught in a storm triggered by incident protagonist Cameron Bancroft's recent comments hinting at their involvement. Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc and Nathan Lyon, who were all part of the team during the ill-fated series against South Africa, issued a joint statement to claim innocence and call for an end to "rumour-mongering and innuendo". "We pride ourselves on our honesty. So it's been disappointing to see that our integrity has been questioned by some journalists and past players in recent days in regard to the Cape Town Test of 2018," the statement read. "...We feel compelled to put the key facts on the record again: We did not know a for-

ign substance was taken onto the field to alter the condition of the ball until we saw the images on the big screen at Newlands." Bancroft, in a recent interview, had claimed that team's bowlers could have been aware of the illegal plot. He has since backtracked from his statement after Cricket Australia offered a reinvestigation. The quartet added that both umpires officiating on the field — Nigel Llong and Richard Illingworth — had inspected the ball and did not see any damage. "The umpires during that Test match, Nigel Llong and Richard Illingworth, both very respected and experienced umpires, inspected the ball after the images surfaced on the TV coverage and did not change it because there was no sign of damage," they said. The four bowlers said they learned valuable lessons and it is time to move on from the issue.

## Fantastic challenge to play India: Kane on WTC final

London, May 19: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson is excited to face India in the World Test Championships (WTC) final next month as he considers show-downs against Virat Kohli's men to be a "fantastic challenge". India and New Zealand square-off in the final of the inaugural World Test Championships in Southampton from June 18. "When we play against India, it has always been a fantastic challenge and so it is really exciting to be playing against them," Williamson said in a video posted by the ICC on its Twitter handle. "It's really, really exciting to be involved in the final, obviously to win it would be that much better," said the 30-year-old considered one of the best current batsmen in the world. Talking about championship and how it progressed, Williamson said, "We saw the contests in the WTC has brought real excitement. "... The games were really tight such as in the India-Australia series and our series against Pakistan as well where you had to really fight hard to get the results, which is really great." New Zealand pacer Neil Wagner admitted India possess fast bowlers who can exploit the English conditions but said the wickets can change anytime and become flat also. "India has a lot of

quality fast bowlers who have done well in different conditions, they can swing (the ball) under overcast conditions but when the sun comes out it (wicket) is flat and nothing happens. "(English) Conditions can change throughout and so I am not getting carried away too much, trying to control the controllables." India batsman Hanuma Vihari, who is in England for a county stint with Warwickshire, said it would be a great feeling to play for his country in the WTC final. "I am excited but I would want to be in that moment and not to get too much carried away by the importance of the situation," he said. "But as a sportsman, to play for India in the final of inaugural World Test Championships is always a great feeling," said the 27-year-old batsman who is currently playing county cricket in England. The majority of the Kiwi players have reached the UK as they play a two-match series against England starting June 2 before the WTC final. The Indians are expected to reach here in the first week of June after a hard quarantine in Mumbai. Taylor confident: New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor said he is confident about overcoming a calf strain and becoming fit ahead of the two-Test series against hosts

England and the WTC final against India. New Zealand begin their campaign at Lord's when they take on England in the first Test from June 2. The 37-year-old Taylor is in the spotlight as the depend-

but when you're 37, there's a few more headlines, but it is what it is, and I'm comfortable with where I'm at," added Taylor. Taylor is relishing the opportunity to dominate in England, where, on his maiden

the infection now and is on his way back home, his national coach Gary Stead has revealed. Seifert represented Kolkata Knight Riders and tested positive for the virus on May 8. "I heard from Tim just a



able batsman recently suffered a calf strain during the Black Caps' training at their high-performance centre at Lincoln earlier this month. However, he allayed those fears on Monday, saying, "Obviously you don't want to have those little niggles and this (calf) niggle came about trying to get the hamstring right," said Taylor. "It's part and parcel of being an international cricketer," Taylor told cricinfo.com as he along with Tim Southee, BJ Watling and Neil Wagner depart for the UK on Monday. "More is made of it when you get older. If you get a calf or a hamstring injury at 32, nothing's made of it,

International assignment in 2008, he smashed an unbeaten 154 against the hosts in the Test at Manchester. "(A) hundred-odd Tests later, [England is] still a great place to play cricket — probably one of the best tours to go on. Obviously being in a bubble is going to be a bit strange. Thirteen years ago, fond memories of that tour and still to date one of the best innings I've played in Manchester in the second Test," he said. Seifert to fly home: New Zealand wicket-keeper batsman Tim Seifert, who contracted Covid-19 during the currently-suspended IPL in India, has tested negative for

little while ago. I think the really encouraging thing is he's tested negative and my understanding is he's on a flight out of India pretty quickly as well," Stead was quoted as saying by stuff.Co.Nz. "I don't know how long it's going to take him to get back to New Zealand or where he's heading via, but it's great news for Tim, that for a start his health is on the improve anyway, to the point where he's not testing positive anymore," added the head coach. As per the report, an NZ Cricket spokesperson also confirmed that Seifert had left India to begin his journey home.

## Hetmyer, Russell return to Windies T20 squad

St John's, May 19: Star players Andre Russell, Chris Gayle, and Shimron Hetmyer were on Tuesday named in West Indies' provi-

national home series against South Africa, Australia and Pakistan. Russell and Hetmyer last played in 2020 while Gayle was part of

tains the blend of experienced players with exciting young talent as the West Indies continue preparations in the build-up to the defence

ber-November. Sheldon Cottrell, Hetmyer, Russell, Oshane Thomas and Hayden Walsh Jr return alongside the majority of the squad who featured in the 2-1 T20I series victory against Sri Lanka. Kieron Pollard will lead the side. The provisional squad will quarantine and train in St Lucia ahead of the first T20I series against South Africa starting on June 26 at the Grenada National Cricket Stadium. The official squad will subsequently be selected and announced ahead of each Series. CWI's lead selector, Roger Harper, explained the thinking behind naming this squad. "The provi-

sional T20I squad was put together with all T20I home series matches against South Africa, Australia and Pakistan in mind. This gives us the opportunity to continue to build towards the upcoming World Cup and to determine our best squad and our ideal eleven." Squad: Kieron Pollard (Captain), Nicholas Pooran, Fabian Allen, Dwayne Bravo, Sheldon Cottrell, Fidel Edwards, Andre Fletcher, Chris Gayle, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Evin Lewis, Obec McCoy, Andre Russell, Lendl Simmons, Kevin Sinclair, Oshane Thomas, Hayden Walsh Jr.

## Nitish ready for Int'l cricket



Mumbai, May 19: After creating a space for himself in both the domestic circuit and the IPL, Delhi and Kolkata Knight Riders batsman Nitish Rana feels ready for International arena, hoping to get his "reward" when the Indian team is picked for July's tour of Sri Lanka. India, sans stars such Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, will be touring Sri Lanka for a white-ball series in July. "It is there at the back of my mind that my name should come (in the squad) and I am prepared for that because I feel my name would come," Nitish told PTI in an interview when asked whether he is hoping for a call-up. "If you pick and see my record for the last three years in white-ball — be it domestic or the IPL, I have performed well and I feel

that I will get the reward for it today or tomorrow. "And I feel I am ready for International cricket and I am waiting for that... like they say one call away... I am waiting for that call..." added the 27-year-old left-handed batsman, who also bowls off-break. Rana has scored 2,266 runs from 38 First-Class games, averaging over 40. India is set to travel to Sri Lanka for a T20 and ODI series and the team would comprise all white-ball specialists as the Test team would be playing in England at the same time. Rana, who scored 201 runs from seven matches in the currently-suspended IPL also reflected on the season. "To be very honest, from the last 3-4 years, it has been a pattern for me that I start the season well, in

mid-season, I have 2-3 flop innings and then at the end of the season I play 1-2 innings well. "So always, the total (runs) scored are in between 330-400," he said. According to Rana, his hunger to score runs used to vanish after three-four matches and the coaches advised him to watch that aspect. "I added many skills mentally in my game and normal life. I felt that in the last 2-3 years, I used to become very happy that I am performing well and it should continue, but the hunger to score runs used to finish. "...My coaches said a hungry Nitish Rana should stay alive, it will make you consistent," he elaborated. "It is not guaranteed that you will score runs in every match but the ratio improves."



sional 18-man squad for the back-to-back five-match T20 Inter-

the series against Sri Lanka in March. The expanded squad main-

of their ICC T20 World Cup title, to be held in India in Octo-

## Andujar spoils Federer's comeback party

Geneva, May 19: Roger Federer lost the first match of his comeback-proper on Tuesday as the Swiss tennis great tumbled out of the Geneva Open on his first outing in two months. Federer lost 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 in the second round to Spanish clay court specialist Pablo Andujar to wreck the 39-year-old's hopes of stringing

a run of matches together ahead of the French Open, Wimbledon and the Tokyo Olympics. Federer returned to the courts in March, having been out for more than a year following two knee surgeries, winning his first match in Doha before losing his second. He was hoping to find some form on the Geneva clay but tumbled at the

first hurdle. Federer seemed at ease in his movement but took a bit of time to get into his groove, getting only 40 percent of his first serves in during the first set, which he lost by overhitting a second serve. In the second set, Federer won his first service game to love then broke for a 2-1 lead. He began to show flashes of the old

magic, throwing in occasional backhand drop shots. He overhit his first set point but made no mistake with the second. Federer broke to go 2-1 up in the second set, drawing Andujar to the net and beating him with a backhand passing shot. Andujar broke back to make it 4-4 and held serve to leave Federer serving to stay in the

match. Andujar had two match points but Federer pulled it back to deuce before misfiring to hand his opponent victory. Federer shook his head as he walked to the net, while Andujar, 35, looked like he could not believe what he had pulled off, in what was remarkably their first match despite the Spaniard having turned professional in 2003.

## PPT receives 59 medical oxygen cylinders from Singapore



(A.O. Bureau) Paradip, May 19: Paradip Port Trust handled 24 medical oxygen cylinders (40-litre capacity each), along with 5 medical oxygen cylinder and oxygen regulator-humidifiers, brought in by MV Anna Maria from Singapore this evening for distribution among various state-run hospitals in Jagatsinghpur district. Dr. Kanhu Charan Dhir, ADM, Paradip has received the oxygen cylinders on behalf of Government of Odisha. Additionally, Paradip In-

ternational Cargo Terminal Private Limited (PCTPL) handled 30 medical oxygen cylinders (10-litre capacity each), sent by the shipping line Louis Dreyfus Company Freight Asia from Singapore in MV Glory Amsterdam for PPT Hospital. In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Steel Authority of India along with Paradip Customs have provided necessary assistance in this noble endeavour. This is the first time medical oxygen is being handled at PPT.

## Unsung Warriors Of ECoR In 2nd Wave Of Covid 19

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, May 19: Despite lockdown and second wave of coronavirus, Indian Railways has ensured uninterrupted supply of essential commodities throughout the country. Indian Railways carried food grains, fruits & vegetables, milk products, edible oil, sugar & salt, medical equipments & medicine, PPE Kits and other grocery items, etc., apart from petroleum products, coal, etc. Most importantly transportation of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) is now in priority for life saving of patients at different places of the country. Keeping in view the importance of LMO, food grains, and other essential commodities, East Coast Railway has taken it as a challenge for ensuring their continuous supply by transporting them swiftly to different des-

tinations. Commodities like coal, fertilizer and petroleum products have also been transported to various destinations of the country from its jurisdiction. The unsung warriors of East Coast Railway like Loco-Pilots, Asst. Loco-Pilots, Guards, Station Managers, Goods Clerks, AC attendants, Train Ticket Checking Staff including staff from safety categories like Signalling, Electrical, Mechanical, Engineering are working hard round the clock for ensuring supply of essential commodities to the people in different parts of the country. The unsung warriors from Health wing, Onboard Services and Security Department of East Coast Railway are directly dealing with public in the pandemic situation, even if they know the dangers of infection. Adequate steps have



been taken for safety of these warriors. They are involved in direct public dealing through awareness campaigns to maintain social distancing, to use face masks properly, sanitize their hands frequently and use of PPEs where ever necessary. In addition to their own duties, these warriors have been motivating people to be safe and to follow all protocols. Dhananjay Prasad, an AC attendant from Puri, explains that he is proud to be a part of Indian Railways and he is happy for it. Putting his own life into risk,

he is rendering his services in trains so that passengers can travel comfortably. Although we have a second wave of covid infection and trains being a closed space, he has taken it as a challenge to serve the Nation and help people to reach their destinations. When elaborating their experience in performing their duties and serving public through Railways during the pandemic COVID period, Train Superintendents of Bhubaneswar New-Delhi Rajdhani Special Trains Shri P. K. Nayak

& Kaushik Saha said that they feel proud to serve Indian Railways. Even, if there is danger of infection, they are taking all precautions as per directives. Cooperation from family members and co-workers encourages them to serve. In their opinion, duty comes First. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel have been performing their duties as a challenge to serve Indian Railways. In this pandemic time, they have become more vigilant. Recently, RPF personnel in Khurda Road helped an old lady passenger who had lost her husband during their travel in train. They rendered all necessary help like for deboarding the body from the compartment, arranging for post mortem with the help of State Police higher Officials. They even arranged for funeral of the dead body at crematorium.

## IndianOil Financial Performance FY 2020-21 (Standalone)

(A.O. Bureau) New Delhi, May 19: IndianOil reported Revenue from Operations of 5,14,890 crores for the year April - March 2021 as compared to 5,66,354 crores in corresponding Financial Year 2019-20. The Net Profit for the year ended 31st March 2021 is higher at 21,836 crores as compared to 1,313 crores during the previous year mainly on account of higher inventory gain and higher petro-

chemical margin during current year. The Revenue from Operations of IndianOil is 1,63,606 crores in Q4 2020-21 as compared to 1,39,005 crores in the corresponding quarter of FY 2019-20. The Net Profit for the fourth quarter of FY 2020-21 is 8,781 crores as compared to (5,185) crores in the corresponding quarter of FY 2019-20 which is due to higher inventory gain and higher petrochemical



margin during current quarter. The Board of Directors of the Corporation in its meeting held on 19th May, 2021 has declared a final dividend of 1.50 per equity share, (face value: 10/-

per equity share). IndianOil Chairman, Mr. S. M. Vaidya, said, "IndianOil sold 81.027 million tonnes of products, including exports, during the year April - March 2021. Our refining throughput for the FY 2020-21 was 62.351 million tonnes and the throughput of the Corporation's countrywide pipelines network was 76.019 million tonnes during the year. The gross refining margin (GRM) during

the year April - March 2021 was US\$ 5.64 per bbl as compared to US\$ 0.08 per bbl in previous financial year. For the fourth quarter of FY 2020-21, IndianOil's product sales volumes, including exports, was 22.591 million tonnes. The refining throughput was 17.592 million tonnes and the throughput of the Corporation's countrywide pipelines network was 21.849 million tonnes during the same period."

## UAIL donates oxygen lifeguards to Rayagada district administration

(A.O. Bureau) Tikiri, May 19: In its relentless efforts to fight against COVID-19, Utkal Alumina International Limited (UAIL), a unit of Hindalco Industries of Aditya Birla

Bibekananda Sharma, and CDMO Rayagada Dr. Artabandhu Naik. The event was graced by UAIL Unit HR Head Rakesh Pratap Singh, Head (CSR, CR & Sustainability) Dr.

ing on the occasion, Utkal Alumina Unit Head Mazhar Beig reiterated that UAIL is always committed towards the overall development of Rayagada District and community



Group, has donated 30 oxygen concentrators, 30 oxygen jumbo cylinders, 100 pulse oximeters, 100 thermometers and 12 thermal guns to the District Headquarters Hospital, Rayagada to safeguard the people of the district from the pandemic. These lifeguards were formally handed over by the UAIL Unit Head Mazhar Beig to the District Headquarters Hospital Rayagada in presence of Rayagada Collector Saroj Kumar Mishra, District Superintendent of Police (SP)

Lopamudra Priyadarshini, and many delegates from district administration and officials from UAIL. Laud- ing Utkal Alumina for such a noble initiative, the Rayagada Collector said that "this support of UAIL would certainly help us in fulfilling the demand of Oxygen and to safeguard the people of Rayagada from this pandemic." He expressed concern over the ongoing second surge in Covid-19 cases which has seen a rise in the demand for supplemental oxygen. Speak-

at large. He informed that the Company plans to distribute similar medical equipment to Kalahandi District Administration in the near future. As a responsible corporate citizen, UAIL is engaged in executing its CSR activities in peripheral villages in the area of education, healthcare, sustainable livelihood, and rural infrastructure; and addressing the issues of social concern. UAIL is engaged in 57 villages serving more than 30,000 populations in Odisha.

## Steel Plant Meets Country's Oxygen Requirements With Steel Production - Dharmendra Pradhan

- The launch of the 200-bed oxygen-coupled bed manufactured by the Isco Steel plant in Seljor on a virtual platform
- More than 300 beds will be available soon
- The coated care is provided by the cell to provide oxygen, drinking water and electrification
- Shell is advised to arrange testing facilities at the Covid Care Center in Bern



(A.O. Bureau) New Delhi, May 19: The country's steel mills are producing oxygen with steel production. "We are meeting the demand," Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Wednesday during a video conference from New Delhi to the

inauguration of the 200-bed oxygen-coated Covid Care Center at the Isco Steel Plant in Sell, Barnur, West Bengal. "Mr. Pradhan said that in the first phase, 200 beds have been set up at the 500-bed large Covid Care Center by Sell Isco Steel in Bern.

More than 300 beds will be available soon. "Gasoline, drinking water by the cell in this coveted care of Bum. "Electrification has been provided with supply. "This will benefit the locals of Barnur in West Bengal and the growing areas of West

Bengal. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for the establishment of a Covid Care Center near a gas-fired plant, while Cell's move is commendable. "On the occasion, Mr. Pradhan advised the Cell Management to arrange testing facilities at the Covid

Care Center in Bern and to take steps to train, test and treat at other steel plants as well. "The Union Minister lauded the steel industry, especially the SAIL, for supplying life-saving liquid oxygen, especially during the current epidemic, and working day and night. "Strengthen the covid countermeasures through the active leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the steps of all governments. "Mr. Pradhan is working at a steel plant for the sale. "He spoke in support of the US Alliance, but said that maintaining some independence was important.

## Dongria Kondhs undergo test, Khadias isolated in Odisha

(A.O. Bureau) Baripada, May 19: After much reluctance, Dongria Kondhs of Rayagada district agreed to undergo Covid-19 test on Tuesday. The local administration organised two testing camps at Parsali under Kalyansinghpur block and Bissamcuttack where 19 and 62 swab samples

were collected respectively. Test reports are awaited. A Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), Dongrias are spread across Bissamcuttack, Kalyansinghpur and Muniguda blocks. While infections have been reported from Bissamcuttack and

Kalyansinghpur, Dongrias in Muniguda are yet to be affected by Covid-19. Earlier on Monday, the tribals in Parsali village of Kalyansinghpur and Gandili village of Bissamcuttack block had refused to undergo tests citing various reasons. "The Niyam Raja will keep all of us safe from any disease",



said president of Niyamgiri Surakhya Manch (NSM),

Sakaka Ulaka. Meanwhile in Baripada, the local administration has

initiated awareness drives for the PVTGs about Covid-appropriate behaviour and need to get tested. In the last one week, 18 persons belonging to the Khadia PVTG community have tested positive for Covid-19. A week back, two Khadia tribals of Lalpani village

under Shamakhunta block visited Rangamatia CHC for a checkup after suffering from fever and cough. When this came to the notice of health officials, they tested another 40 people of the village and 16 of them were found infected, informed Dr Uttma Kumar Das, who led the testing team.

There are around 25 Khadia families in the village. All the infected persons are under home isolation and contract tracing is underway. It is suspected that the tribals might have come in contact with people at the Rangamatia weekly market leading to their Covid-19 infection.