

## Odisha seeks long-term solutions



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assistance to burden the Central Govt and would like to manage it through our resources to tide over the crisis.

"Sought assistance for long-term measures to make Odisha disaster resilient as we are frequented by such climate hazards every year. Highlighted Odisha's demand for disaster resilient power infrastructure and resilient coastal protection with

storm surge resilient embankments," he added.

Yaas, a severe cyclonic storm, had hit the eastern coast on Wednesday. While no major damages were reported from the state, four people were reportedly killed in incidents induced by the cyclone.

Over 6 lakh people were evacuated ahead of the storm, and as they returned, district administrations (Page-7)

Bhubaneswar : After Cyclone Yaas hit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday reviewed the post-cyclone situation and damages in Odisha. The Odisha government did not put forth any demand for monetary assistance in light of the damages but instead sought assistance for long-term measures to

mitigate the effects of future cyclones and climatic hazards - an annual phenomenon in the state.

After the meeting, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik tweeted, "As the country is at the peak of COVID19 pandemic, we have not sought any immediate financial

## Baitarani Flood Disrupts Road Communication In Keonjhar

Keonjhar : High Flood in the Baitarani river has disrupted road communication between Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts. Sources said the Keonjhar district had been experiencing incessant and heavy rainfall for the past 12 hours as of Thursday morning. As a result, Baitarani was flowing at a height of 3 feet over a bridge at Turumunga.



As a result, thousands of vehicles were stranded on both sides of the bridge on National Highway-49. In the Patana area, the river water has crossed the danger mark and touched the uppermost part of a vital bridge. Besides, floodwaters have inundated a bridge at Bhimapatana on (Page-7)

## Bengal Chief Secretary Recalled After PM-Mamata Meet Row



**Alapan Bandyopadhyay was recalled on a day a row broke out over a meet between PM and Mamata Banerjee**

Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay's tenure was extended for three months only four days ago, before Friday's order to recall him to the center came.

The center has asked Bengal to send Alapan Bandyopadhyay to the Department of Personnel and Training's office in Delhi by May 31 morning. The development comes hours after Mamta Banerjee skipped a meeting (Page-7)

New Delhi : The center has issued an order to recall West Bengal's top bureaucrat from the state on a day a row broke out over a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Bengal Chief

## Series of tests for Odisha



Bhubaneswar : The state administration has a tough task at hand because the COVID spread has not slowed down despite weeks of lockdown.

The Odisha government is in an unenviable position. As if battling the COVID-19 surge was not enough, it now has to deal with the aftermath of a cyclone that battered parts of the state on Wednesday.

More than half a million people had to be evacuated to cyclone shelters so that they could be protected from nature's fury. While it worked, Yaas has left in its trail scores of villages inundated by the tidal surge, with power and communication hit. As the government gets down to post-cyclone assessment and restoration work, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik undertook an aerial survey of the affected zones on

Thursday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi too as scheduled has to fly in to take stock of the situation on Friday.

Odisha has always been a favourite hunting ground for tropical cyclones. It was left in tatters when Fanipummelled the coastal districts in 1919. Last year, it had a close shave with Amphan. However, with Yaas, it has found itself between the proverbial devil and the deep sea. Post-cyclone reconstruction must be taken up, but the natural disaster has only exposed the people, administration, and large relief and rescue workforce to the virus risk across (Page-7)



# Rs 164 Crore For E-Hospital Management Information System



Bhubaneswar : To streamline and strengthen quality public health service delivery to the people of the State, the Odisha Health and Family Welfare Department is going to implement OeHMIS (Odisha e- Hospital Management Information System) in all Government Medical Colleges. The management system will also be implemented at Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer and Sishu Bhawan in Cuttack, Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar, 31 District Headquarters Hospitals, and 106 Urban primary health

centers (PHCs) of the State. "This digital technology-enabled solution which will boost public health core and administration is a part of 5T initiative of Government and also under the "Sustha Odisha-Sukhi Odisha" vision of the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik," said a government statement. The main objective of the project, as stated by the department is to streamline the treatment flow of the patients in the hospitals while allowing doctors and other staff to perform as per their peak ability in an optimized and efficient manner. It will also help in a

***To streamline and strengthen quality public health service delivery to the people of the State, the Odisha Health and Family Welfare Department is going to implement OeHMIS (Odisha e- Hospital Management Information System) in all Government Medical Colleges.***

decision support system of the hospital authorities for developing comprehensive health care policies. The project will cover various health services as patient registration, emergency registration, patient inquiry, patient billing, ADT (Bed Management), OPD with

order management, IPD management system, investigation of the lab, MRD, OT & Anaesthesia, laundry, BMED, diet kitchen, Transport, and CSSD. "Government has already earmarked 163.38 Crores for successful implementation of the project in the State. After functionalization of the project

in the designated hospitals, I am sure this will boost quality public health service and the overall administration of the hospital and optimum utilization of doctors, staff towards dispensing service delivery," the government statement added.

## Man Arrested For Selling 'Passes' In Bhubaneswar During Lockdown

Bhubaneswar : The Commissionerate Police on Tuesday arrested a man who was allegedly making fake passes and selling them to people who wanted to move around the city without any hassles during lockdown at a throwaway price.

The accused allegedly admitted to having prepared some passes and sold them to people for Rs 50 each. Many such fake passes have also been seized.

The alleged counterfeiter lives in the Damana area under the Chandrasekharpur police limits in the city, where he was carrying out such illegal



activities, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of officials from Chandrasekharpur police station carried out raids at the house and caught the accused red-handed when he was preparing the passes using logos and graphics of different companies. The police team arrested him and his questioning is on at the police station.

The accused allegedly admitted to having prepared some passes and sold them to people for Rs 50 each. Many such fake passes have also been seized, police said.

He will be produced before a local court today for remand, police sources said.

Notably, police had earlier allowed the movement of employees of private organizations on the production of Identity cards. Later, some violators were found misusing their company I-cards and move around the city without any genuine work.

Later, the police issued emergency passes to the employees of the various organization to facilitate hassle-free movement and check misuse of company identity cards.

The police had also launched an e-pass system yesterday to facilitate the smooth conduct of some social and cultural activities like marriage, death rituals, and thread ceremonies.

Even as the government has issued instructions to police to enforce the lockdown restrictions strictly to check the mounting trend of Covid-19 cases, some violators are giving open challenges to police administration in the Capital city by flouting the restrictions. This has also posed serious threats to public health and safety.

## COVID Management: Rs 10000 As Assistance To ASHA Workers

### ASHA Workers To Be Incentivised

Bhubaneswar : Following the announcement made by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to incentivize ASHA workers for effective management of COVID surveillance in rural areas, the Odisha government on Wednesday directed the district Collectors to provide Rs 10,000 as financial assistance to them under 'Swasthya Sahaya'.

In a letter issued by the Health and Family Welfare Department, ACS PK Mohapatra wrote that the money can be used for various activities towards COVID management and non-covid essential healthcare services in rural areas and urban slums.

"As per the announcement made by the Chief Minister, Odisha on May 17, 2021, it has been decided to provide one-time



assistance of Rs 10,000 each to ASHA workers 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," read the letter. The ASHA workers can utilize the assistance amount on any/all of the following heads:

- Purchase of bi-cycle (if not purchased earlier or damaged)
- Umbrella, torch, chappal, water bottle carry bag

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- Mask, sanitizer, soaps, gloves, face shield, thermal scanner, helmet
- Mini battery operated mike
- Conveyance (POL/repairing of the cycle)

Requesting to release the incentive amount of Rs 10000 to each ASHA out of available funds under in ZSS-Misc A/c which will be recouped after receipt of funds under Swasthya Sahay, the department urged the Collectors to pay the amount based on self-certification in

the prescribed format duly signed by ASHA, mentioning that she has utilized the assistance amount towards any/all of the above said purpose.

While attending an all-party meeting on COVID management on May 17, the Chief Minister had announced a three-month door-to-door COVID surveillance to be undertaken by ASHA workers in rural areas and urban slums for which they will be incentivized.

# Super inflation, income loss thaw India



**Prof. Shivaji Sarkar**

Former HOD in English journalism in IIMC, Delhi

Multiple Taxes, unemployment, a high 10.49 percent wholesale price index (WPI) rise and severe income losses are thawing the nation amid high covid19 deaths. The six-month high WPI figures in April would be straining the economy. The actual price rise at the retail level would be a minimum of 10.49 percent plus 4.29 percent CPI inflation, not less than 14.78 percent. The super inflation in 1974 was at 28.66 percent, and 16.94 percent in 1973. Those days purchasing power of the people had collapsed and protests marked the national scenario. It may not look serious but if income losses of 84 percent of the people are added it appears grim. As per a study of the Azim Premji University study, the pandemic has led to a worsening in quality of employment, with several salaried employees joining the ranks of precariously self-employed. The annual rate of inflation in April 2021, is high primarily because of rising in prices of crude petroleum, petrol, diesel, and manufactured products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year," the Commerce and Industry Ministry (CIM) said.

As the most rise in prices, fares, freight is due to the CIM stated factors, the economy is slowing down, indicating a lower GDP as well. It is being further complicated by rising joblessness at 8 percent in April amid the second covid19 wave from 7.4 percent in March

2021. A CMIE study - Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CPHS) - observes weekly unemployment rate touched 14.5 percent on May 15. The CMIE says that 84 percent household has suffered a decrease in monthly income and that more than one-fourth of the country's working-age population is unemployed. World Bank warns 70 percent of employment and about a third of GDP comes from the 'informal' workers. They are likely to lose their jobs or suffer severe income losses during covid19 lockdowns and they tend to be largely excluded from social safety nets. Informality has made eight lakh migrant workers move out of Delhi, according to the state government. Nonation, WB says, could have actual recovery unless these 'informal' people, particularly women, are taken care of.

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das says that manufacturing and services PMI along with inflation would continue the price pressure. It may aggravate because global prices continue to rise. Amid such a scenario it looks strange that RBI, itself in crisis, approves a dividend payout bonanza of Rs 99,122 crore for July 2020-March 2021. It is 73 percent higher than the entire previous year's Rs 57,126 crore. It is time for austerity not only in the

debilitated public sector units but also in its expenses on many real estate and cosmetic projects.

It also needs to review increasing the number of members of Parliament that would strain the nation's finances further. Their contribution has not been much in giving direction or putting on the leash the expenses. Most MPs just kowtow blindly, unlike the MPs of the 1950s and 1960s, the party policies for fear of losing their seats as per provisions of the anti-defection laws. Such laws need review for ensuring that MPs could function in the interest of the people they represent.

The arrest and recent sedition case against a Telangana YSRCP Lok Sabha member KR Ramakrishna Raju, for criticizing the Jagan Mohan Reddy government publically over several issues, including handling of the

Covid19 crisis, for the past few months, is a stark example of how parties could be dictatorial and block democratic functioning. The inner-party democracy is necessary for the restoration of the nation's economic and social health. The country is avoiding discussing such criticality that leads to impasses. The recent farmers' stir against the three draconian laws is the result of the


'partyocracy'. The nation does not want to discuss their irrationality of multiple taxes and the woes of the people. Since economic concepts have been given a bye, the rulers are only concerned about the state revenues without pondering how it could improve if the people themselves were in distress. They are paying taxes on taxes - on old cars, multiple taxes on petrol, bank deposits, vaccine, coffin, Rs 25 per km road toll and also a GST on that, junking their cars and even on oxygen - that thankfully was undone Delhi high court, and irrational atrocities and penalties on masks and covid19 related issues. No political party discusses such police excesses. A senior political observer and journalist, Ajai Setia, comments that even in government "ministers don't know what is going on in their ministries".

The discriminations are not being discussed. The Serum Institute of India is stated to have made profits of Rs 59,000 crore (\$8.2 billion) in 2020 and Rs 85,000 crore (\$12.7 billion). Similarly, some selected corporate are making tons as edible oil, fruit, and gas prices are soaring apart from their international and national business. The concern of rising monopolies that are checked in the US through anti-trust laws remains missing. The

PSUs that are sustaining the nation are designed to become junks. In such a situation expectation that GDP and tax revenue would spur are not realistic. A hungry and unemployed country cannot sustain cosmetic expenses though there is stress on it as some are bestowed with large profits. The model has to be sustainable and the entire economic concept has to be approached afresh.

The second wave or spurt in cases of covid19 since April has not only caused loss of lives but has cast its shadows on growth prospects. A third wave has been warned. Downward revision of tax revenue and GDP projections are realities. The central government's gross tax revenue in Budget 2020-21 estimates was reduced by more than 20 percent in the 2021-22 Budget.

The government would be facing a heavy shortfall which is imprudently being tried to be made up through taxes on fuels, an impractical move.

The governance method has to change with the participation of even the opposition. The crisis is national and to surpass Bangladesh, the country has to take prudent drastic steps, prune expenses and not do politicking on issues of benevolence. One step would go through a long chain of changes. 



## Dharmendra Pradhan, Inaugurates Up-graded Health Infra at COVID Hospitals




Rourkela: The augmented COVID ICU with 100 ventilator facilities for treatment of COVID patients at the Ispat Post Graduate Institute (IPGI) and Super Specialty Hospital (SSH) of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant was dedicated by Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, on 20th May. The virtual inauguration event was also attended by Minister of State for

Steel Fagga Singh Kulaste, Health Minister Naba Kishore Das, MP from Sundargarh, Jua Oram, MLAs from the area, chairperson of SAIL Soma Mondal, and RSP CEO Dipak Chatteraj, senior officers of the Ministry of Steel and SAIL were present at the program. The Union Minister unveiled the e-plaque to mark the dedication of the new facilities. Deliberating on the humongous chal-

lenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic, Pradhan said, "Oxygen and ventilators being two most essential requirements in the fight against the pandemic in the 2nd wave, the augmented facilities will go a long way in providing effective treatment to the COVID patients and saving lives."


Applauding the efforts of the Steel Plant and its employees for supplying the needed Liquid Oxygen to different parts of the country Pradhan said, "RSP has been rendering a commendable service to the nation by rationalizing its production and consistently supplying on an average 350 to 400 tonnes of liquid oxygen each day all across the country. I congratulate every Rourkelite and the spirit of Rourkela

for maintaining the unique name and fame of Steel City even in the new eco-system by supplying around 10000 tonnes of Liquid Oxygen so far." The Minister also spoke about the preparedness being carried out on a war footing to further strengthen the COVID treatment facilities including the 500 bedded COVID hospital being set up at Sector-22 based on Gaseous Piped Oxygen and other facilities across the district. Emphasizing upon enhanced vaccination in the district, he urged all the Government agencies, PSUs, and Corporate Houses to work together to ensure adequate testing and cent percent vaccination of the people and showcase Sundargarh as a model district in the country. 

## Dalmia Cement donate Ambulance



Rajgangpur: City-based Dalmia Cement (Bharat) plant has donated an ambulance to Rajgangpur Government Hospital to transfer the Covid patients to different hospitals for better treatment. Pandemic Covid 19 is spreading in the Rajgangpur region rapidly. Keeping this in view Sundargarh Collector had advised the Dalmia Cement Management to provide an ambulance to the local government hospital which can be used for speedy

transfer of patients from rural areas to the hospital. Accepting the advice Dalmia Cement donated an ambulance to the hospital. The ambulance service will be in control of the Superintendent of Rajgangpur Government hospital. Apart from providing an ambulance for the benefit of the local population Dalmia Cement (Bharat) has undertaken an intensive sanitization program in the city's urban and adjacent rural areas. 


## NITR receives Rs. 1 crore from MSME



Rourkela: Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India has awarded a grant of Rs. 1 crore to the Foundation for Technology and Business Incubation (FTBI), NIT Rourkela for the establishment of The Livelihood Business Incubation Centre (LBI) under the ASPIRE scheme. LBI will be setup at FTBI, NITR to foster the holistic development of young entrepreneurs in the social and rural sectors of the region. The Livelihood Business Incubator (LBI) will be an interface to mobilize the

young talent, educate and train them in vocational and scientific applications of the vocation and generate livelihood synergistically with the demands of the economy of the place, with promotion and adoption of social business methods. The proposed LBI will focus on Science, technology, and innovation (STI) not only for livelihood development of local communities, improvement of the economic state of the region, generating economic benefits, but also for anticipating and responding to societal needs of the region. 

## RSP repeats single day LMO dispatch record for the 3rd time in a month


Rourkela: Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has been making undeterred efforts to support the healthcare system of the country by continuously supplying Liquid Medical Grade Oxygen (LMO). Employees working in the Oxygen making facilities of the plant are making relentless efforts to cater to the increased demand for life-saving gas. As a result of the unwavering efforts of the collective, RSP created a record single-day dispatch of LMO for the third time in a month on 17th May 2021 by sending 623.48 tonnes in 36 tankers. This included a consignment consisting of 4 tankers which were dispatched to Tamil Nadu by rail. Further, two no. of ISO tankers were loaded for the first time at RSP. Notably, earlier RSP had set records in a single-day despatch of LMO on 7th and 14th May by sending 474.16 tonnes and 499.16 tonnes respectively. Congratulating the Oxygen Plant collective, Mr. Dipak Chatteraj, CEO has said, "Team RSP is proud to serve the nation in the current challenging times." 

## Vaccination At Doorstep For Senior Citizens

A doorstep-Covid-19 vaccination drive for elderly persons was launched by the Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC). The service is being provided only to elderly persons who are bedridden and differently-abled in the city. The requirement shall be verified by doctors while the service would be provided as per schedule and division of area, the official added. Sanjeevani Rath vehicles are being used for doorstep Covid-19 vaccination. The vaccination van 'Sanjeevani Rath' was flagged off by the Rourkela MLA Sarada Prasad Nayak on 17th May. The van will vaccinate senior citizens, bed-ridden patients, and differently-abled persons at the doorstep. "To provide COVID vaccination at home to the bedridden and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) at Rourkela, we are ready to launch 'Sanjeevani Rath'," Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) had informed through a tweet a day earlier. Elderly, bed-ridden people and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) may call on 0661 251 0036 for assistance. They may also alternatively call on the District Helpline or Rourkela Covid-19 helpline numbers for getting the vaccination schedule. The vaccination van team will have a doctor, technician, and health worker. Rourkela Additional District Magistrate and Incident Commander for Covid-19 Aboli Sunil



Naravane and RMC Commissioner Dibyajyoti Parida were also present at the event.

"This is another attempt to speed up the vaccination drive in the State. The door-to-door vaccination initiative has been started for bed-ridden people, senior citizens, differently-abled, and those who cannot visit the vaccination centers. They can contact us over the helpline number following which a list will of the beneficiaries be prepared. Later, the 'Sanjeevani Rath' will visit them at their homes and vaccinate them with strict adherence to all the Covid-19 protocols," said RMC Commissioner Dibyajyoti Parida. "Initially, one vehicle has been rolled out for the purpose. The service will be strengthened as and when, vaccines will be available," he added. 



## Case registered against a woman administrator violating Covid protocols

Jagatsinghpur : Tirtol police has registered a case against a lady administrative officer who had violated Covid 19 protocols while attending a marriage held on May 21. Basing on a written complaint lodged by Sarpanch one SilaraniKhandual, police registered a case bearing number 196/23.05.2021 against the woman officer under section 188/269/270/34 IPC and section 3 ED Act and 51 disaster Management Act and an investigation is on, informed police headquarters states a press release.

The report said that a video goes viral and shared on various social media platforms exhibiting how Covid 19 protocols were violated in a marriage event held in Bilasa village under Jagannathpur Panchayat in Tirtol block last Friday. It was seen in the video that the marriage procession was proceeding violating norms stipulated holding marriage event during Covid 19 lockdowns and shutdowns.

A woman was found dancing with her male and female counterparts skipping conditions mentioned in marriage permission issued by police. While on investigation it was reported that the woman was none other than a woman administrative officer Bulbul Behera working as Tahasildar Sukinda under Jajpur district.

## Bapi Sarkhel's Trade union donates 6 Ambulances for Covid 19 usage

Jagatsinghpur : Paradeep - Erasama Industrial Development Council [PEIDC] a front line trade union functioning in Paradip port town, run by trade unionist BapiSarkhel, on Wednesday donated 6 ambulances to assist free transportation of Covid 19 infected patient to hospital from Paradip municipality, Kujanga, Rahama, Tirtol and Erasama blocks.

Moreover, PEIDC organization too have assigned 4 doctors giving free medical advice to the patient affecting with coronavirus infection, the medical aid seeking people are requested to contact with these medical surgeons through mobile numbers 9937138624 and 9556959684 and control room working round the clocks at Paradip, informed Sarkhel during the launching of ambulance service function held in Paradip on Wednesday.

A lot of us have been listening requests every day from people as urgent ambulance requirement, urgent oxygen requirement, need of Remedisivir injection and medicines when government machinery has failed to give them medical aids amid Covid 19 pandemic, it has become a part of our daily routines when we scroll social Medias every morning as we wake up. Taking stock of these urgencies of Covid 19 patients PEIDC donated 6 ambulances to meet the situation, Sarkhel said.

## Cyclone shelters become unsafe, need urgent maintenance and repairing



Jagatsinghpur : Two decades ago super cyclone 1999, perhaps as one of the most ravaging natural disasters that had experienced Jagatsinghpur district, resulted in huge loss of human lives, properties, houses, road communication systems, and many more.

Both union and state governments had come forward obviating victim's woes as result different post-cyclone restoration works had undertaken across the district. There is no denying the fact post-cyclone restoration and rebuilding works had progressed up and down, few projects had been completed successfully, but lack of sincere follow-up measures by government agencies, have come to dire state draws criticism from public domain till date. The glaring instance anyone can find looking cyclone shelters and school buildings constructed aftermath super cyclone in Jagatsinghpur.

The report said that about all schools in the Jagatsinghpur district were either damaged or razed to the ground in the past devastating

super cyclone 1999 most of them have been rebuilt and repaired. Government agencies, several NGOs, and many public undertaking companies had undertaken such new construction and repair works as a result thousands of schools were repaired. but due to lack of yearly maintenance, most of the buildings bear dilapidated conditions and become unsafe for use.

Government authorities are unable to provide adequate funds over the yearly maintenance works, meanwhile, the donor NGOs, public companies after completing the construction have escaped from liability of looking after the structures after handing it over to the authorities.

Official reports indicate that nearly 801 OBB school buildings have been constructed in Jagatsinghpur district by spending about Rs 16 crore, followed by as many as 972 primary schools, 192 high schools have been constructed and repaired after the super cyclone. Besides under cyclone shelter cum school building scheme

Paradeep Port trust and Paradeep phosphates limited had undertaken to build 181 school buildings from the Prime minister Relief funds [PMRF] each costing Rs 3.50 Lakh including 30 buildings had built in 4 blocks by National project Construction Corporation under PMRF.

Under the chief minister relief fund, nearly 8 school buildings and cyclone shelters had been constructed for Rs 10 Lakh each. Moreover, the Maharashtra government who adopted Jagatsinghpur district after the super cyclone has constructed about 52 schools cum cyclone shelters by cost Rs 18 Lakh to 20 Lakh each

However, those public undertaking companies and NGOs had ventured to rebuild school buildings reported as Indian overseas Bank 3, TATA Relief 2, CASA 4, Reserve Bank of India 1, RK Mission 1, CMRF phase two 7, LOS 6, HUDCO 10, CYSD 3, RD department 7, Karnatak Govt 1, IRCS 2 and each building had cost Rs 15 Lakh to 20 Lakh. Furthermore, 17 school buildings had been newly constructed under the member of parliament local area development funds including all the primary school buildings affected by super cyclone had constructed under the SarvaSiksha Abhiyan [SSA] scheme. According to sources in many school cum

cyclone shelters even in a drizzle leads to seepage from the ceiling in some cyclone shelters poor quality of bricks, little cement had used led to substandard construction in some areas.

According to executive engineer, Jagatsinghpur R&B works department Nimain Charan Das that each building needs some yearly maintenance expenditure for its smooth longevity and it is described during the project estimate is being made, at least 2 percent can be allotted apart from the project cost for this purpose, in absence of yearly maintenance a building loses its durability, he informs.

However sources said that OSDMA has provided Rs 50,000 to each multipurpose cyclone shelter for maintenance through cyclone shelters have registered and functioning cyclone shelter management maintenance committee, for urgent repairing and maintenance cyclone shelters OSDMA has been sanctioning funds but sources informed that the financial assistance is insufficient. Moreover, district emergency officer Ajaya Mohanty informed that as many as 42 cyclone shelters in 6 blocks have received new faces after proper repairing recently after getting funds from SRC, few cyclone centers in dilapidated conditions would be repaired very soon, he assured

## 'Mo Paribar' holds a blood donation camp in J'spur

Jagatsinghpur : As the blood banks across the state are facing a severe shortage due to Covid 19 protocols lockdown as well as shut down the Mo Paribar wing of BJD Jagatsinghpur organized a blood donation camp on Thursday at Sai temple in Gopalsagar here. Jagatsinghpur MLA Prasanta Muduli inaugurated the camp accompanying another legislator and state Biju Janata



Dal youth wing president Devi Ranjan Tripathy, district BJD wing president Sambit Kumar Lenka, BJD leaders Dolagovinda Dash, Madhusudan Sahoo, Saroj Biswal, Prasanta Behera, and Hemanta Lenka. Jagatsinghpur town BJD committee president Priyabrata Mohapatra coordinated the event according to him as many as 28 units of blood were collected from the camp.



## Farmers turn mango entrepreneurs

Baripada : Realising that they were being exploited by private traders from outside State, the mango growers here mostly the tribals had then formed Mayurbhanj Fruits and Vegetable Farmers Producer Company to sell mango under the guidance of ORMAS from 2015. Since then the mango growers across the district are happy and taking care of mango trees and planting mango trees.

On Monday the Mayurbhanj Fruits and Vegetable Farmers Producer Company launched two outlets in the name of GaonAmbapasara one at Bangiriposi and another one at Baripada. Mayurbhanj Collector Vineet Bhardwaj inaugurated the Baripada outlet.



Biman Mal the Deputy CEO of ORMAS said that besides launching two outlets in Baripada and Bangiriposi the Mayurbhanj Fruits and Vegetable Farmers Producer Company (MFVFPC) have supplied more than 150 MT to outside the State like Bokaro in Jharkhand State, Banaras in Uttar Pradesh State, Bihar. Initially, Dasher, Amrapalli, Sundari, Gopal Bhog, Lengda, and Bombay Green earned Rs. 30 lakh onwards.

With more than 500 farmers members in the group that had earned Rs. 16 lakh by supplying 83 tonnes of mango to Mother Dairy at New Delhi, Bokaro Fruits and Vegetable Cooperative Society in Jharkhand. In 2016-17 about 650 farmers were under the group and the members had earned a profit of Rs.8.7 lakh from the mango trade.

Presently the member of the group has reached 1000 are from Bangiriposi, Suliapada, Moroda, Kuliana, Udala, Jashipur, Kusumi, Rairangpur, and Betnoti blocks.

The CEO said that the mango growers are directly selling to MFVFPC and the company has supplied to outside the State and some amounts are being sold in the Mayurbhanj market. No carbide is used to ripe the mango making it completely organic which has now more demand in the market.

## Farmers yet to get compensation for losing land due to rampant sand lifting

Baripada (SukantaSahu) : Excess and illegal sand lifting in Budhabalanga river bed triggered resentment among people of Badasahi tehsil in the Mayurbhanj district. The villagers of Arapata revenue village consist of Ward No-7, 8 and 9 of over the population of around 1000 had blamed to tehsildar of Badasahi who approved a lease to lift 2,900 cubic meters instead of 2,400 cubic meters to a leaseholder Pradeep Kumar Bindhani from 2016-17 for 5 years which completely violates mining rule, following which there was the erosion of the land at both sides of the river and consequently farmers lost their lands. The interesting story is the leaseholder does not pay the royalty to tehsil for approving the excess of 5 cubic meter sand mining which the government has lost crores of rupees of revenue. The officers from top to bottom are allegedly involved in the illegal sand mining racket.

The regular plying of dumpers, JCB and thousands of sand loading tractors round-the-clock is leading to damage a village road and it is not repaired by either contractor or by concerned department as there is mining provision that at least



25 percent from the royalty of sand mining of a year must be utilized for the development works of the village like repair of road and compensation given to the affected farmers in the locality.

Due to the nexus of officials and leaseholders, the tehsildar had approved the lease tender where 2,900 cum approved instead of 2400 cum that violated the mining rule and crore of rupees the revenue department is losing for excess and illegal lifting sand from the river bed. However, the leaseholder had no power to provide power of attorney to other persons to lift sand from the river bed beyond the mining rule. The excess sand lifting from the beds had affected farming activities, it is alleged that despite full knowledge of tehsildar and sub-collector no action was taken to check the rampant

illegal sand lifting from the river bed.

In case of emergency, no ambulance is reached to the village to take patients to the nearest hospital due to bad road conditions. "An ex-Sarpanch repeatedly brought the issue before tehsildar, BDO of Badasahi, sub-collector of Baripada and Collector to repair the village road at least being roughed by plying of sand loading vehicle but not a single officer is made any attempt to repair of the damaged road. Farmer Ranjan Kumar Patra said that 2 acres of his farming land are eroded by the river due to excess sand lifting by mafias and leaseholders. "I used to manage my family by farming on my land but now I am unable to both ends as no farming land is left me to do the farming activity." Another affected farmer Vimsen Naik ward no-9 said that the ex-MLA

of Badasahi Ganeswar Patra assuring the affected farmers to get compensation as their lands were affected and road repair will carry out from time to time if it will be turned to damage despite he is paying tax to tehsil.

When contacted Sanatan Bijuli the MLA of Badasahi said that he was sitting on a strike in front of Badasahi police station for five days and demanded a check of illegal sand mining but no step has been taken yet.

When contacted, Collector Vineet Bhardwaj said that he will order an inquiry into the matter. If the leaseholder will not pay the royalty of 500 cubic meters of sand will be charged to him to despite besides tehsildar had been ordered to provide compensation to victim farmers and necessary action would be taken against persons who rampantly lift sand at the river bed illegally.



# 'Covid took away many of our loved ones': Modi becomes emotional



*"The effect of the pandemic has been so vast that despite all efforts, numerous lives were lost," PM Modi said in a visibly emotional state.*

New Delhi : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday (May 21) got emotional while speaking about the lives lost due to COVID-19. "The effect of the pandemic has been so vast that despite all efforts, numerous lives were lost," the PM said in a visibly emotional state. Addressing the doctors

and paramedical staff of his Lok Sabha constituency Varanasi, PM Modi lauded their efforts in battling COVID-19. He said that it is "going to be a long fight" against the COVID-19 pandemic and stressed preparing to deal with black fungus infection. "You have contained the virus significantly but there

should be no complacency as it is going to be a long fight," he told the frontline health workers at a virtual conference. "In our ongoing fight against COVID-19, a new challenge of Black fungus has surfaced. We must focus on taking precaution and preparation to deal with it," the PM added.

**From Page-1**

## Odisha seeks...

have begun door-to-door surveys to monitor the Covid-19 situation. Personnel engaged in relief and restoration work will also be closely monitored. The collectors of Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Puri, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Angul, and Khurda have been asked to conduct Covid tests on everybody housed in cyclone shelters and government buildings if they show any symptoms.

## Baitarani Flood...

Patana-Keonjhar road, a diversion at Tangarpada, another diversion at Simulinala on Patana-Dhenkikot road and Sitapol bridge and Kanheinala bridge on Dhenkikot-Dumuria road. As a result, road communication to several panchayat areas has been disrupted.

Notably, the district had received heavy rainfall in the last two days under the influence of Cyclone Yaas, which had crossed the district on Wednesday afternoon and headed towards Jharkhand through Mayurbhanj district.

Joda-Barbil mining area has been disconnected from the rest of the state as a diversion on the Rimuli-Rajamunda section of the NH 520 was washed away leaving thousands of residents at Bileipadasurrounded amid floodwater. The mineral transport has been hit. Milk and newspapers couldn't reach the mining towns of Joda and Barbil. However, the construction agency of the highway Montecarlo managed to restore traffic within 48 hours working round the clock.

## Series of tests...

coastal districts. The state administration has a tough task at hand because the Covid spread has not slowed down despite almost a month of lockdown. Whereas most big states, barring Tamil Nadu, have registered a decline in the daily caseloads and positivity rates, Odisha has been moving on a plateau with no drop in sight. It is a reason for worry because the lockdown is going to end on June 1 without the desired outcome. The test positivity rate continues to be a strong 18 per cent despite the state reporting 10,000-plus cases and over 60,000 tests a day. As he pushes on with post-cyclone restoration work, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik would have to walk a tightrope. He could end the lockdown at the cost of potential increase in Covid spread, or extend it further at the expense of livelihood. For the champion of disaster management, it seems there is no end to the battery of tests.

## Bengal Chief ...

with PM Modi to assess the impact of Cyclone Yaas, choosing instead a quick 15-minute interaction with him at an airbase where his flight landed. She was to attend a cyclone damage review with PM Modi but left after handing him a report. The center alleged CM Banerjee kept PM Modi and governor Jagdeep Dhankhar waiting for half an hour.

The Trinamool Congress criticized the center's move to recall the top officer. "Has this ever happened since Independence? Forced central deputation of a Chief Secretary of a state. How much lower will Modi-Shah's BJP stoop? All because people of Bengal humiliated the duo and chose Mamata Banerjee with an overwhelming mandate," Trinamool MP Sukhendu Sekhar Ray said.

This is not the first time the center has recalled top bureaucrats from states to Delhi. Just before the assembly election in Bengal this year, three Indian Police Service (IPS) officers were recalled.

The Home Ministry is the cadre controlling authority for IPS officers, while the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), which gave the order today to recall the Bengal Chief Secretary, comes under the Prime Minister's Office or PMO.

If there is a disagreement between the center and state on the central deputation of an officer, the rules say "the matter shall be decided by the central government and the state government or state governments concerned shall give effect to the decision of the central government."

## Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolves parliament



Kathmandu : Nepal plunged into fresh political turmoil on Saturday as President Bidya Devi Bhandari, dissolved parliament and fixed general elections in November amid a worsening COVID-19 outbreak. The surprise announcement comes after a presidential statement said neither the caretaker Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, nor opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deubawas able to demonstrate a majority to form a new government by the Friday deadline set by Bhandari.

"The president has dissolved the House of Representatives and ordered the first phase of general elections on

November 12 and the second phase on November 19," a presidential statement issued after midnight said.

It said the decision was made on the recommendation of the cabinet headed by caretaker Prime Minister Oli, whose December 2020 dissolution of parliament sparked weeks of protests and was reversed by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional in February.

There was no immediate comment from political parties about the latest move.

Nepal is battling a deadly second wave of the pandemic and is reporting 8,207 new infections on average each day.

# A Bridge Too Far



Sirish C. Mohanty

After limited success in Bengal, BJP is bound to target Odisha to achieve its east coast goals

The Bjp's aspiration to set foot on the East coast looks like 'A Bridge too far.' The just-concluded Bengal polls become an indication of that. However, the saffron party had the luxury to become an ally of governance in Odisha for a short spell of five years from 1999 to 2004. In 2021, the BJP in full throttle moved to the Bengal fray but had to contend with a second spot. Another state is Tamil Nadu that has already slipped for another five years. Odisha and Andhra are the two states to come to the polls in 2024 along with the general elections. Hence, the BJP can't go with full vigour as it will be facing the general elections across the country. However, among these two

states, Odisha may be a preferred target for the BJP as it is now the main opposition after replacing Congress and it registers a visible presence across the state.

Therefore, the BJP may shift its focus to Odisha - where it has, however, failed three times to make a dent in the bastion of the Naveen Patnaik-led Biju Janata Dal (BJD) government in the last three general elections. There are several factors the BJP should not ignore, as to why the story in Odisha cannot be the same as that of West Bengal. In Bengal, the saffron party, despite not being able to prevent Mamata Banerjee's return to power, has considerably improved their presence, from 3 seats in the Assembly to 77. This is a colossal improvement, which has helped it become the main

opposition in Bengal, and the significance of its gains is also likely to weigh on the ruling TMC.

But here in Odisha, if Naveen Patnaik succeeds in camouflaging his government's drawbacks and highlighting his successes, then the BJP may again have to bank heavily on the Congress vote bank in the eastern state. As far as Odisha is concerned, its chief minister is well versed in the saffron ideology and not alien to the BJP's strategic prowess. During the 2014 general elections, Odisha witnessed a campaign by the BJP that was a blitzkrieg, with its principal strategist Amit Shah going hammer and tongs to unnerve the BJD. Shah's barb, that the Naveen Patnaik government is like a "burnt transformer and is required to be thrown into the Bay of Bengal,"

continues to echo in Odisha's political circles.

There is a marked difference, however, in how Naveen Patnaik and Mamata Banerjee react to barbs thrown at them by opposition parties in their respective states. Since the start of his political career 21 years ago, Naveen Patnaik has never reacted in a volatile manner nor has he used strong or melodramatic language. He barely reacted to Shah's "burnt transformer" jibe. Patnaik always turned a deaf ear to jeers and proved his detractors wrong by his developmental fact sheet. This is, however, not the case with Mamata Banerjee. Unlike Mamata Banerjee, Naveen Patnaik has always managed to stay poised and keep his cool.


A prolonged silence interspersed with occasional smiles through the windshield was the image of 76-year-old Naveen Patnaik, who undertook a bus journey of over five to six thousand kilometers during the 2019 general election campaigns, taking on the BJP headfirst. There is also no doubt that during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic,

Naveen Patnaik did much to contain the spread and prevent it from becoming uncontrollable, unlike many other states which crumbled even then. However, the second COVID wave has changed things a bit. The Odisha government's image currently has suffered a dent, with a 10 to 23 percent infection rate, and the death toll climbing. Naveen's extraordinary disaster management of the cyclone 'Yaas' will certainly compensate for the loss.

Seeking a mandate for the sixth consecutive terms may be difficult for Naveen Patnaik and several factors will come into play that the BJD must be cognisant of. Anti-incumbency is a major factor that should worry Naveen, and it remains to be seen if he has any other tactics in his political armor to counter the saffron surge in Odisha. What often worries political analysts is the absence of a succession plan in the BJD. But no turncoat from the BJD has been able to prove their worth without the 'Naveen tag'.

The BJP is likely to scratch some old wounds to ensure BJD's turning back to

the wall. The BJP must be practical according to its homework to claim the number of seats to win; in 2019 it declared to win 120 plus in Odisha, and in Bengal, in 2021 the claim was 200 plus which makes the public perception nothing but a laughing stock. Most importantly, the BJP has to cement the crack of factionalism in the state unit.

There are two things that the BJP in Odisha to note. First, it has refused to go full throttle against the BJD, as it did against the TMC in West Bengal. Instead, it has chosen to play footsie with the ruling party since the 2019 elections, inevitably inviting charges of 'foes in Bhubaneswar, friends in Delhi'. The party must realize that this 'running with the hare, hunting with the hounds' strategy is not going to take it anywhere. Second, it must stop banking on recruits from disenchanted leaders from other parties and build its organizational strength in the state, which alone would enable it to fight the well-oiled BJD organizational machinery and its super-efficient election management. 

## PM Modi's Special Concern For Odisha: Prompt & Proactive

Bhubaneswar: In his seven years of assuming the chair of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's visit to the State in the aftermath of a major disaster will be his third but it will probably go down as the one which demonstrates his soft corner for the State like none of his other predecessors had for the eastern Indian state of Odisha.

Even though the PM has toured the State on multiple occasions, experts

and common man alike recall that such attention towards the State, just a day after the very severe cyclonic storm Yaas ripped through the State causing massive destruction, shows the special place PM Modi has for Odisha and the people of the State.

It was in May last year when India was battling the first wave of Covid pandemic and no picture of any vaccine insight, when nature struck with super ferocity with a tropical


cyclone, probably the strongest the country's eastern coast had faced since two decades ago, the Prime Minister turned his attention fast towards Odisha where the storm had brushed along causing major damages before wreaking havoc in Bengal.

On Friday (May 28, 2021) too, he conducted an aerial survey of the cyclone Yaas-hit areas of the State and announced Rs 1000 crore financial assistance for immediate



relief activities. Besides, 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 and also appreciated the preparedness and disaster

management activities by the government of Odisha which resulted in minimal loss of lives. 



# Secularism; An Ado Of Squabbles



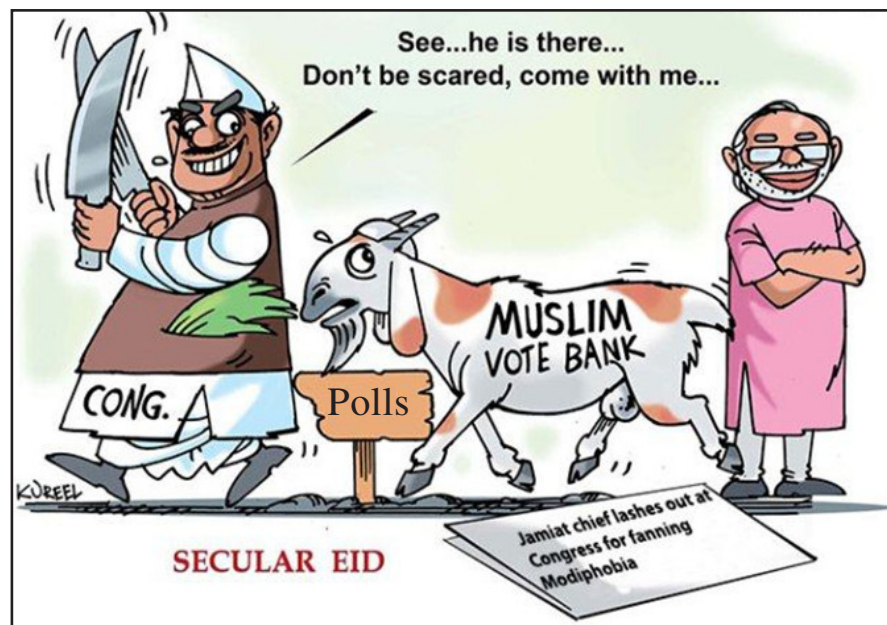
**Sirish C Mohanty**

During a debate about granting independence to India the then British PM Churchill said; "Power will go to the hands of rascals, rogues, freebooters; all Indian leaders will be of low calibre & men of straw. They will have sweet tongues and silly hearts. They will fight amongst themselves for power and India will be lost in political squabbles. A day would come when even air and water would be taxed in India." With the advent of political development in India, I can't but be forced to realize the justification of the jibe. In the just-concluded Bengal polls, the Left parties along with Congress allied with the Indian secular force, an outfit floated by Abbas Siddiqui, a Muslim cleric of Hooghly district's Furfura Sharif. The CPI (M) has contended that the fledgling party is different from fundamentalist communal forces. Hence, the alliance will strengthen the secular force to fight communal BJP.Waw!

On November 15, 1948, when the newly independent dominion of India was in the midst of a heated debate in the Constituent Assembly, on the nature of the Constitution, Prof K T Shah made an intervention demanding the inclusion of the word 'secular' in the preamble. "Sir, I beg to move, that in clause (1) of Article 1, after the words 'shall be a' the word 'Secular' be included. The amended article or clause shall read as follows: 'India shall be a Secular, Federalist, Socialist, Union of

States'," he said. In the ensuing discourse, while the members agreed on the nature of the Indian state adhering to secular principles, the word 'secular' was dropped from the preamble. Ambedkar and Nehru realized the problem in incorporating 'secular'. First-the Muslim personal law can't be included in the constitution once 'secular' is taken therein. But, it made an appearance though, about three decades later, when during the emergency the Indira Gandhi-led government included it in the document, as part of the 42nd Amendment of the constitution.

The word 'secular' is known to have originated in late medieval Europe. Secularism, the theory that governments ought to have no religious connection, nor indeed anything to do with matters of religious belief or ritual, is manifestly a Western intervention, specifically a product of the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment. The majority of the makers of modern India, shaped as they were, by European thoughts and practices, were ardent supporters of secularism as well. Foremost among them was the first prime minister of the country Jawaharlal Nehru. For him, having a secular state was a crucial mark of modernity. Ironically though, it was Nehru along with the chairman of the drafting committee of the constitution, B R Ambedkar, who were also most opposed to the idea of including the word 'secular' in the preamble of the constitution. A closer examination needed of the circumstances in which the constitution of India was produced, and later of the time in which the word 'secular', the mother of all political squabbles went on to be



included in the preamble.

When the preamble to the Constitution was discussed in the Constituent Assembly, the debate over the incorporation of secularism took up a large portion of time. All the members agreed, of course, on the necessity of establishing a secular state. Most shared an understanding of history in which the movement for the separation of religion and state was irrevocably a part of the project for the democratization of the latter. The connection between secularism and the effective functioning of democracy had been well established in Europe, and since India was to follow the ideals of democracy, secularism was deemed essential.

"I accepted this secularism in the sense that our State shall remain unconcerned with religion, and I thought that the secular State of partitioned India was the maximum of the generosity of a Hindu dominated territory for its non-Hindu population. I did not, of course, know what exactly this secularism meant and how far the State intends to cover the life and manners


of our people. To my mind, life cannot be compartmentalized and yet I reconciled myself to the new cry," said Lokanath Misra in the debate on December 6, 1948. "Do we really believe that religion can be divorced from life, or is it our belief that amid many religions we cannot decide which one to accept? If religion is beyond the ken of our State, let us clearly say so and delete all reference to rights relating to religion," he went on the state. Vice president of the drafting committee H C Mookherjee, on the other hand, stated that "are we really honest when we say that we are seeking to establish a secular state? If your idea is to have a secular state it follows inevitably that we cannot afford to recognize minorities based upon religion."

Nehru and Ambedkar were strongly committed to the ideal of secularism. "It is an ideal to be aimed at and every one of us whether we are Hindus or Muslims, Sikhs or Christians, whatever we are, none of us can say in his heart of hearts that he has no prejudice and no taint of communalism in his mind or

heart," said Nehru. Yet when it came to including 'secular' both were wary of its usage. Being aware of the development of the Constituent Assembly debates and of how the Constitution was being shaped, they knew fully well that secularism, in the truest meaning of the term, as it was meant to be understood at its place of origin, could not be applied in the Indian context. They understood that since 'Enlightenment Secularism', with its core principle of separation, founded on the Protestant conception of religion as essentially a private concern with which states had no legitimate business, was never going to work in a country where rulers and religious publics had been interacting from time immemorial, it was better not to use the term at all than to use it fraudulently. To follow secularism in its truest form, the State would be disallowed from making any kind of religious interventions, which included the reservation system, protection of the Muslim personal law, and the directive principle to

protect cows, all of which the Constitution went ahead with.

On June 26, 1975, prime minister Indira Gandhi proclaimed the state of Emergency and in the following two years, the prime minister was authorized to rule by decree. A series of Constitutional amendments were passed to prolong Mrs. Gandhi's rule. While the 38th amendment ensured that no judicial review of the Emergency could take place, the 39th amendment stated that the office of the prime minister could not be challenged by the Supreme Court, but only by a body constituted by the Parliament. The 42nd amendment came soon after. This 20 pages long detailed document gave unprecedented powers to the Parliament. Almost all parts of the Constitution, including the preamble, was changed with this amendment. Thereafter the description of India in the preamble was changed from a "sovereign, democratic republic" to a "sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic." The shocking consequence is the constitution becomes unrealistic and self-contradicting.

Soon after the emergency, and a short spell of Janata rule, the misuse of secularism starts multiplying until today. Shamefully nontought over the self-contradicting constitution making a fuss of the largest democracy in the world. As Churchill said "They will fight amongst themselves for power and India will be lost in political squabbles". Wasn't he far-sighted enough to read our politicians? 



# On Kejriwal's comment, Singapore says 'reserve right to invoke fake news law'



**High commissioner Wong said Singapore wants to put aside the "unfortunate chapter" caused by Kejriwal's remarks and focus on the shared fight against the pandemic.**

New Delhi : Singapore's high commissioner Simon Wong told a virtual news conference that his country was satisfied with the Indian government's clarification on Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's remarks about a new Covid-19 strain allegedly being detected in Singapore. Wong said the country reserves the right to invoke a domestic fake news law to prevent the spreading of misinformation.

High commissioner Wong said Singapore wants to put aside the "unfortunate chapter" caused by Kejriwal's remarks and focus on the shared fight against the pandemic. Referring to the law called Protection from

Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA), he added, "So, we reserve the right to invoke POFMA on some of the comments and assertions made by the honorable chief minister on this topic."

Kejriwal's remarks triggered a diplomatic spat on Wednesday, with the Southeast Asian country calling in the Indian envoy to object. Indian high commissioner P Kumaran clarified Kejriwal had "no competence" to comment on Covid-19 variants, external affairs ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said in a tweet. External affairs minister S Jaishankar described

Kejriwal's remarks as "irresponsible" and said the chief minister didn't speak for India. It is rare for the external affairs ministry to acknowledge that an Indian envoy has been called in by a foreign government to protest, and also to publicly criticize an elected Indian official. Hours after Kejriwal tweeted on Tuesday about the alleged new Covid-19 strain in Singapore and asked the Centre to immediately suspend flights from that country, Singapore's health ministry dismissed his assertions and said the variant prevalent in many Covid-19 cases in recent weeks was the "B.1.617.2 variant, which originated in India".

"Singapore Government called in our High Commissioner today to convey strong objection to Delhi CM's tweet on 'Singapore variant'. High Commissioner clarified that Delhi CM had no competence to pronounce on Covid variants or civil aviation policy," Bagchi tweeted. Jaishankar tweeted that Singapore and India are solid partners in the fight against Covid-19, and appreciated Singapore's role as a logistics hub and oxygen supplier. "However, irresponsible comments from those who should know better can damage long-standing partnerships. So, let me clarify - Delhi CM does not speak for India," he added.

Earlier on Wednesday, Singapore foreign minister Vivian Balakrishnan quoted Kejriwal's original tweet and wrote on Twitter: "Politicians should stick to facts! There is no 'Singapore variant'." Balakrishnan included in his

tweet a link to an article in the publication Nature with the headline "Coronavirus variants are spreading in India - what scientists know so far". The article said Covid-19 variants, including B.1.617, have been linked to the massive surge in infections in India in recent weeks.

Singapore's foreign ministry rejected "unfounded assertions" on social media by Kejriwal and expressed its disappointment "that a prominent political figure had failed to ascertain the facts before making such claims". These concerns were conveyed to the Indian envoy, the ministry said.

People familiar with developments said on condition of anonymity that the Singapore government reacted so strongly because Kejriwal's assertions had not gone down well with the public. Many people had taken umbrage at his remarks and publicly complained

about them, the people said.

The Singapore health ministry's statement of Tuesday cited Indian media reports quoting Kejriwal and said, "There is no truth whatsoever in the assertions found within the reports." The statement added, "There is no 'Singapore variant'. The strain that is prevalent in many of the Covid-19 cases in recent weeks is the B.1.617.2 variant, which originated in India. Phylogenetic testing has shown this B.1.617.2 variant to be associated with several clusters in Singapore."

Kejriwal had asked the Centre to immediately suspend flights from Singapore because the alleged new strain was suspected to affect children. Union aviation minister Hardeep Puri responded to Kejriwal's remarks by saying there were no regular flights between India and Singapore, except for a few under the Vande Bharat mission to repatriate Indian nationals.

## India loses ONGC Videsh Ltd-discovered Farzad-B gas field in Iran

New Delhi : India on Monday lost the ONGC Videsh Ltd-discovered Farzad-B gas field in the Persian Gulf after Iran awarded a contract for developing the giant gas field to a local company.

"The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has signed a contract worth USD 1.78 billion with Petropars Group for the development of Farzad B Gas Field in the Persian Gulf," the Iranian oil ministry's official news

service Shana reported. "The deal was signed on Monday, May 17, in a ceremony held in the presence of Iranian Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zangeneh in Tehran."

"The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has signed a contract worth USD 1.78 billion with Petropars Group for the development of Farzad B Gas Field in the Persian Gulf," the Iranian oil ministry's official news

**The field holds 23 trillion cubic feet of in-place gas reserves, of which about 60 percent is recoverable.**

service Shana reported. The field holds 23 trillion cubic feet of in-place gas reserves, of which about 60 percent is recoverable. It also holds gas condensates of about 5,000 barrels per billion cubic feet of gas. The buyback contract signed

on Monday envisages the daily production of 28 million cubic meters of sour gas over five years, Shana said. ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), the overseas investment arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), had in 2008 discovered a giant gas



field in the Farsi offshore exploration block. OVL and its partners had offered to invest up to \$11

billion for the development of the discovery, which was later named Farzad-B.



# The Pandemic rises Price, inflation touches double digits in April



New Delhi : India's wholesale price inflation galloped to double digits in April-an 11-year high-as pricing pressure built up due to rising oil and commodity prices, further aided by a low-base effect.

Data released by the commerce ministry on Monday showed wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation rose to 10.49% in April compared with a contraction of 1.7% during the same month a year ago. While food inflation rose by 4.92%, inflation for fuel and manufacturing items increased

to 20.94% and 9.01% respectively. Core inflation, excluding food and fuel prices, shot up to a record 8.4% in April. The global prices of many commodities have surged with the optimism generated by the covid-19 vaccine rollout and sharp economic revival in key commodity consumers such as the US and China, while landed costs were pushed up by the depreciation in the rupee.

In sharp contrast, retail inflation had eased to a three-month low of 4.29% in April-data released last week showed-as favorable base

- Wholesale price index-based inflation rose to 10.49% in April compared with 7.39% in the preceding month
- WPI inflation hit an 11-year high as pricing pressure built up due to rising oil and commodity prices, further helped by a low-base effect.

effects. However, going forward, retail inflation may also see upward pressure with rising input costs and supply-side disruptions. "Unlike last year, when producers benefited from reducing input cost pressures, this year they are likely to witness margin pressure with higher commodity cost. The sharp rise in core WPI inflation indicates a rise in cost-push pressures from wholesale prices to retail prices," IDFC Bank said in a research note released on Monday.

Aditi Nayar, chief economist at ICRA Ratings

said there is a growing divergence in terms of the global optimism related to the vaccine rollout, which is pushing up commodity prices and the weaker domestic sentiment engendered by the continuing impact of the second wave of covid-19 infections in India. "The likely trajectory of the WPI inflation supports our view that there is no space for rate cuts to support the faltering growth momentum, even as we expect the monetary stance to remain accommodative. We expect the headline WPI inflation to rise further to 13-13.5% in the

current month before commencing a downtrend, whereas the core-WPI inflation may continue to rise over the next three prints to a peak of around 10.5%," she added.

The central bank is expected to keep the policy rate unchanged and will certainly maintain an accommodative stance to ensure ample liquidity and keep long-term interest rates from rising, the Asian Development Bank said last month. "While inflation will stay within the target range, upward pressure on bond yields may come from the large fiscal deficit, the

government's aggressive borrowing program in FY21, and higher global bond yields. Large capital inflow poses a challenge to the central bank as it strives simultaneously to maintain price and exchange rate stability and set interest rates that facilitate economic recovery," it added. Escalating covid cases have overwhelmed India's health system, forcing many states to announce localized lockdowns which are expected to delay a strong recovery in domestic economic activity. Moody's Investors Service on Tuesday slashed its FY22 economic growth forecast for India to 9.3% from 13.7% estimated earlier, citing the negative impact of the second wave of coronavirus pandemic. S&P Global Ratings last week said it expects India's GDP growth at 9.8% under its moderate scenario and to 8.2% under the severe scenario based on when the current infection wave peaks.

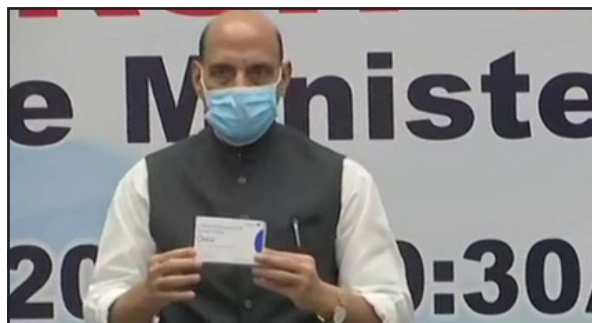
## DRDO's anti-COVID drug 2-DG to be available at all hospitals from June

- The drug was released on Monday by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan
- The first batch of anti-COVID drug 2-DG will be used in a limited manner. It will be used in AIIMS, Armed Forces Hospitals, DRDO hospitals, and any other places where the need arises

New Delhi : The anti-COVID drug 2-DG developed by DRDO will be made available to all the hospitals across the country from the first week of June, said DRDO Chairman G Satheesh Reddy, as quoted by news agency ANI. The first batch of the drug which was launched today will currently be available at AIIMS, Armed Forces Hospitals, DRDO hospitals, and other places in need.

Reddy noted, "The first batch of anti-COVID drug 2-DG will be used in a limited manner. It will be used in AIIMS, Armed Forces Hospitals, DRDO hospitals, and any other places where the need arises. From June onwards it will be made available to all hospitals."

He also said, "The production is underway and the second batch of the drug will come around last week of May. The regular production will take place from June onwards



commencing from the first week." He further mentioned, "In the second batch, the production span will be increased and from the first week of June it will be made available to all hospitals and other medical facilities in the country." "This is because the production time and the cycle of this is about a month. After approval from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), the industry is working hard but it will take a month to reach the normal production capacity," explained the DRDO chief.

How does the vaccine work? Explaining how the vaccine works, Reddy said, "It works directly on the cells infected with COVID and gets absorbed in them. It then stops the virus from multiplying and moving to other healthy cells. It also works on the immune system of the patient so that the person can recover speedily." "The person needs to take the vaccine twice a day for around five to seven days. It also depends upon the person's weight and doctor's prescription, he added.

## IAS body condemn Chhattisgarh collector for slapping man, CM transfers him

Raipur : The Indian Administrative Services (IAS) Association has condemned the behavior of Surajpur's collector a day after a video of the officer slapping a man for violation of Covid-19 norms in Chhattisgarh went viral on social media.

"The IAS Association strongly condemns the behavior of collector Surajpur, Chhattisgarh. It is unacceptable & against the basic tenets of service & civility. Civil servants must have empathy & provide a healing touch to society at all times, more so in these difficult times," the IAS Association tweeted on Sunday. IAS Association is an organization serving and retired members of the Indian Administrative Service.

Collector Ranbir Sharma slapped a man and threw his mobile phone to the ground and encouraged cops to beat him up with sticks. After the video of the incident went viral drawing condemnation of his actions, Sharma apologized on Saturday, while trying to

rationalize his conduct.

"Today a video is viral on social media in which I am shown slapping a man who was out during [the] lockdown. I sincerely

Sharma misbehaving with a young man has been brought to my attention by social media. This is extremely unfortunate and condemnable. No such incident shall be

### Surajpur collector Ranbir Sharma slapped a man and threw his mobile phone to the ground and encouraged cops to beat him up with sticks.

apologize for today's behavior. I never had any intention to disrespect or belittle the person in the video," Sharma said in a video statement before adding, "He was riding a bike and was speeding. The man also misbehaved with officials."

However, taking a strong exception to the incident, Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday transferred the officer and attached him to the state secretariat as a joint secretary. Gaurav Kumar Singh was appointed the new district collector of Surajpur in his place.

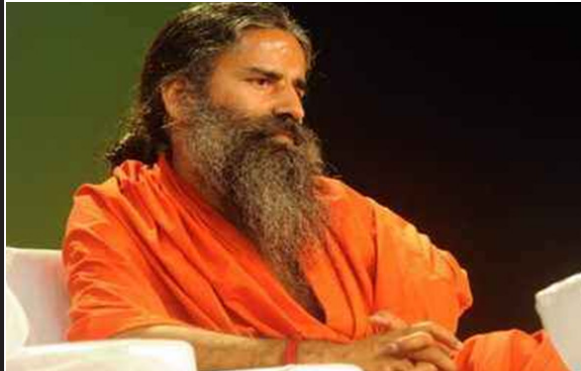
"An incident of Surajpur district collector Ranbir

tolerated in Chhattisgarh. Have given instructions to remove collector Ranbir Sharma with immediate effect," a rough translation of Baghel's tweet, posted in Hindi, read.

In a similar case of abuse of power seen last month, West Tripura District's collector Shailesh Kumar Yadav had to relinquish office following allegations that he was guilty of gross misconduct. On the night of April 26th in Agartala, Yadav stopped a marriage, being held in violation of Corona night curfew, insulted the bridegroom, and even slapped the priest.



# Arrest toh unka baap bhi nahi kar sakta : Ramdev



Haridwar : A video, which surfaced on social media on Wednesday, has yoga guru Ramdev challenging the authorities to arrest him. Earlier in the day, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to book the Yoga guru under sedition laws for questioning the efficacy of allopathic medicines and vaccines against Covid-19 disease.

In the 40 second video, Swami Ramdev is seen saying, "Khair arrest to unka koi baap bhi nahi karsakta Swami Ramdev ko... lekin ekshor macha raheyhai...ki arrest Swami Ramdev... kabhi

kuch chala detey hai...ki arrest Ramdev...Thug Ramdev...Kabimaha thug Ramdev... Kabi giraftaar Ramdev... chalate rahe hai..chalane do ('No one..in fact no one's father can arrest Swami Ramdev...but they are making noise... arrest Ramdev, Thug (con) Ramdev...They are following trends ...let them")

The war of words between the IMA and the yoga guru has escalated over the past couple of days with Ramdev raising 25 questions on the efficacy of modern medicine and the IMA Uttarakhand chapter threatening him with a Rs. 1000 crore defamation case. It all started with a video,

where Ramdev was seen calling allopathy a 'stupid science' and alleging that thousands of doctors had died despite taking the vaccine to prevent Covid-19 infection. He later retracted those comments following the IMA and Union health minister's objections.

Following Ramdev's continued questioning of modern medicine, the Delhi Medical Association filed a complaint against the yoga guru and IMA's Uttarakhand chapter has given him a fortnight to withdraw his remarks.

"Baba Ramdev does not know whatsoever regarding allopathy. Baseless opinion, allegations, and statements, as seen in videos surfacing in social media itself, points to his derogatory views about allopathy and doctors who are front line warriors," said IMA Uttarakhand secretary Dr Ajay Khanna.

Swami Shivanand Saraswati of MatriSadan ashram said it seems Ramdev has become an

arrogant person.

"If allopathy has no significance for him, then why Acharya Balakrishnan was taken to AIIMS Rishikesh two years back for food poisoning. He should prove first that Coronil is much better than allopathic medicine treatment then raise fingers on Covid-19 treatment and fatalities," said Swami ShivanandSaraswati.

Coronil is an ayurvedic immunity booster manufactured by Ramdev's firm Patanjali. Acharya Balakrishna is Ramdev's close aide and co-founder of the firm.

Former president of IMA's Haridwar chapter, Dr Sandhya Sharma said Ramdev should concentrate on jointly fighting the war against Covid-19.

"Allopathic doctors are working day-night for past 14 months in the fight against Covid-19 and so are Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Unani, or Siddha medical therapies," said Dr Sandhya Sharma.

## Bengal CM Writes To PM, President To Change Governor

Kolkata : West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to the President and Prime Minister demanding a change of Governor in the interest of "good governance " in the state. The letter comes immediately after the CBI arrested four Trinamool leaders, including two ministers, a former minister and a former Mayor in the Narada scam, on Monday.

Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar has been on an unusual offensive against the Mamata government after the ruling Trinamool Congress won a landslide in this summer's assembly polls. Banerjee's letters despatched on Tuesday alleges that Governor Dhankhar has been raking up an 'exaggerated version' of violence in West Bengal since the election.

It said the whole exercise is to project a ' highly inflated version' of the law and order situation in West Bengal, overlooking the fact that the incidents happened when the control of administration was " not in our hands." "The



situation is now under full control and the administration is busy fighting Covid, it said.

The letter also pointed out that Dhankhar was "crossing all limits" by raising the law and order issue during the swearing-in ceremony and tweeting about it in the public domain. It said the Governor is trying to 'destabilize the functioning of the government ' at the time when the need of the hour was focused on efforts to control the Covid pandemic.

Trinamool Congress sources said the party was considering a resolution passed by the legislative assembly demanding the removal of the Governor. The Governor has been at daggers drawn with the Trinamool government ever since he took charge.

" He is trying to build up a narrative of a severe breakdown of law and order with malafide motive of destabilizing an elected government, " alleged Trinamool MP Saugata Roy.

But Raj Bhavan sources rubbished the Trinamool charges. One said the Governor was a lawyer by training and was " totally conscious of this powers and responsibilities. " " He had raised valid concerns over breakdown of law and order. He had cleared the CBI to prosecute the politicians involved in the Narada scam," the Raj Bhavan source said.

## BJP names 'author' of Congress 'toolkit'

New Delhi : Congress hit back and accused Sambit Patra of using metadata to name the author of a real document to claim that she also authored the fake documents. It reiterated the document on Central Vista was genuine, but the BJP concocted the other one on Covid-19 to defame the Congress

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Sambit Patra on Wednesday named Saumya Varma as the author of the toolkit, a social media campaign playbook, that his party said on Tuesday was prepared by the Congress to

defame Prime Minister Narendra Modi and to build a biased narrative over the Indian government's handling of the second wave of Covid-19, and the Central Vista Project.

Congress accused Patra of naming the author of a real document (from its metadata) to claim that she also authored the fake documents. It reiterated that the document on Central Vista was genuine, but that the BJP had concocted the other one on Covid-19 to defame the Congress.

"...We made a research note on Central Vista for the



party It's genuine and fact-based. I tweeted yesterday [Tuesday] that the 'Covid-19 toolkit' is forged and is a 'Made in BJP' product. Patra is showing metadata/author of a real document and attributing it to a fake," said Rajeev Gowda, the head of Congress's Research Department.

Congress leaders said Varma is part of the Congress's Research Cell and that she is not a worker or a member of the party but one of the many professionals engaged by it. She draws a monthly salary from the party, they added. "After 2019, the research team was truncated just as many other branches of the Congress. Varma and few others are running the research team," one Congress leader said on condition of anonymity.

The party refused to give her contact details. Gowda said: "You question me. Do not question my

staff."

BJP leaders on Tuesday cited and shared a document circulating on social media. The document was on the letterhead of the All India Congress Committee's Research Department. Congress has said this letterhead is forged. The document asked its readers to tarnish Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image and "erode his popularity". It suggested using phrases such as "Indian strain" and "Modi strain" for the variants of Covid-19 that were first detected in the country. The document also

spoke about briefing foreign journalists over India's mismanagement of the second wave of the pandemic.

The Congress maintained the document on Covid is fake and has been concocted and lodged a complaint of forgery and cybercrime with the Delhi Police. It said in its complaint, filed by Gowda that BJP president JP Nadda, spokesperson Sambit Patra, and Union minister Smriti Irani, among others, "shared forged" documents on Twitter. Has The Police Registered A Complaint?



# Cities where public transit is free



Whether to ease congestion, reduce air pollution, or help citizens save money, a good number of cities all over the world have chosen to implement free transport services or make their whole public transport network free to use. Here are the cities where you can get around without paying a penny!

## Compiègne, France

The forward-looking town of Compiègne made its transport network free to use in 1975. The system is not funded by taxing residents, but rather by all Compiègne companies with over eleven workers. They pay a tax calculated according to how many people they employ.

## Tallinn, Estonia

In 2013, Tallinn, Estonia, became the first capital to make public transport free, and the experiment has been considered a great success. Tens of thousands of Estonians chose to register as residents of the city to benefit from the system, generating around 38 million additional euros (CA\$60 million) in local taxes.

## Luxembourg (countrywide!)

While many cities across the globe have decided to offer free public transport to residents, all Luxembourgers have benefited from this service since February 29, 2020 - a world first! Environmental concerns played a key role in the country's decision to prioritize free public transportation.

## Chambly, Canada

In 2012, the suburb of Chambly as well as other municipalities in Montréal's South Shore decided to offer free public transport to residents. As well as helping to reduce congestion on the road network, this initiative reduced greenhouse gas emissions, helped attract new residents, and encouraged residents to buy

local.

## Cascais, Portugal

At the start of last year, Cascais became the first Portuguese city to offer free transport to residents, workers, and students. The 12 million euro bill (CA\$19 million) for this project was mainly financed by parking fees.

## Skuodas, Lithuania

On a mission to reduce car traffic and air pollution, the city of Skuodas rolled out a free public transport initiative for residents and visitors in 2015. The local bus network was underused at the time, and the municipality also hoped to make this mode of transport more popular.

## Wroclaw, Poland

In 2014, the town of Wroclaw made its public transport network free to use. Since then,

as long as the designated bike space is free. The bus travels around the island several times a day and even runs off-season.

## Akureyri, Iceland

Since 2007, the local bus network in the Icelandic town of Akureyri has been free to use, and a large number of residents have since gotten a taste for traveling by bus! The Iceland Review reported in 2008 that in February 2007, the number of bus users had increased by 78%.

## Avesta, Sweden

For eight years now, the town of Avesta has run a free public transport network. The decision was made primarily to promote a greener way of getting around. Since becoming free of charge, network use has increased by 200%.

## Perth, Australia

In the city of Perth, bus use is free within a certain zone. To benefit from the service, users must begin or end their journey within this zone. If not, passengers have to pay for their whole journey.

## Ovacik, Turkey

When Fatih Mehmet Maçoğlu was elected mayor of Ovacik in 2014, he had grand plans for his village. One was to make public transport free, which he managed during his

in West Yorkshire County.

## Clemson, USA

In South Carolina, Clemson University, the cities of Clemson, Central, Pendleton, and Seneca as well as the South Carolina Department of Transport and the federal government have come together to fund free bus service, the Clemson Area Transit, more commonly known as the CAT Bus. The service was created in 1996 and runs over eight routes.

## Manises, Spain

Since 2004, the municipality of Manises has run a free urban bus service. The experiment was so successful three years in that the service was extended to neighboring municipalities. With this extension, the free bus now covers a distance of 22 km (14 miles).

## Mariehamn, Finland

In the autonomous province of Åland, Finland, the Mariehamn municipality offers free public transport to residents and visitors. The service was set up in 2000 and is managed by the company RödeOrn.

## Monte Carmelo, Brazil

Over the past couple of decades, lots of towns and cities throughout the world have



the service has grown in popularity. One of the two service providers was forced to use bigger buses on two of its routes. The transport system is paid for by the municipality.

## Aero, Denmark

On the Danish island of Aero, both residents and travelers can get around by bus free of charge. Cyclists can even take their bicycles with them,

term, and another was to set up a farming cooperative that would create 250 jobs.

## Dewsbury, UK

Since 2009, residents in Dewsbury have been able to use the FreeTownBus, a free bus service that stops at the station and the main shopping areas. The FreeTownBus, also called the FreeCityBus, is also offered in other cities and towns

rolled out free public transport systems. In Monte Carmelo, however, the service dates from much earlier. Since 1994, residents have not had to pay to use the town's buses. Costs are covered by the municipality.

When India will awake to reduce pollution and get included in the list of cities giving free rides?

## China's bid for Indo-Pacific foothold backfires in Samoa

New Delhi : China's bid to expand its influence in the Indo-Pacific has taken a hit, with Samoa, a strategically located nation in the South Pacific, signaling that it would not go ahead with a Chinese port development project. Samoa's new Prime Minister, Fiamē Naomi Mataafa, whose election was upheld by the country's Supreme Court has told Reuters news agency that she intended to shelve a \$100 million Beijing-backed port development project.

The Chinese intended to construct a wharf in Vaiusu Bay—a move that was fully backed by long-serving leader Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, who lost his parliamentary majority during the April elections. Mataafa's decision is significant as it feeds into the China-US rivalry in the Indo-Pacific, a vast region of the Indian and the Pacific oceans linked by the strategic Malacca Straits.

The Samoan Islands are in contention because they are located roughly halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand, in the Polynesian region of the Pacific Ocean. Any rival Chinese military presence here can threaten some of the



key shipping lanes of the area. After World War-2, the US has been the most dominant player in the Pacific.

Given the brewing rivalry, the former U.S. National Security Advisor Robert C. O'Brien had last October signaled that Washington intended to carry out a feasibility study of basing US Coast Guard vessels in American Samoa, part of US territory southeast of mainland Samoa.

"The United States promotes a free and open Indo-Pacific region where like-minded nations uphold the international rules-based order," O'Brien's office had said in a press statement then. The US fears that after building a port in Samoa and elsewhere in the region, including Kiribati, the Chinese can send their paramilitary forces in the guise of fishing vessels, as has been done by Beijing in the South China Sea. Chinese "fishing vessels" a front for its paramilitary have regularly harassed fishermen in contested waters, with Japan in the East China Sea as well as Vietnam and the Philippines in the South China Sea.

O'Brien had told Honolulu Civil Beat, that China's People's Maritime Militia—a paramilitary force of military-trained fishermen who occasionally work on behalf of the Chinese Navy, conducting surveillance and other operations are a major concern among the US and its allies. The former US official said that warning signals that China may leverage its experience in Asian waters in the South Pacific as well. He said that a suspicious - and aggressive - fleet of Chinese fishing vessels had clashed with the Ecuadorian Coast Guard last summer. "It's just like a marauding band of fishing trawlers that come through and strip fish and then dumps garbage and plastic all over the ocean," O'Brien said of China's sea militia, as quoted by the Samoa News website.

The US sensitivities to the Chinese moves in the South Pacific have heightened after reports that the Chinese are eyeing a World War-II vintage military airstrip, which is 3,000 kilometers southwest of Hawaii, in Kiribati. The location is not far from busy commercial shipping lanes running from the US to Australia and New Zealand. Samoa's newly elected Prime Minister also signaled that her country was conscious about avoiding a Chinese debt trap, which Beijing can leverage for its political gains. "The level of indebtedness of our government to the government of China was a pressing issue for voters," said Mataafa, the country's first woman prime minister.



# Bahuguna, the man who taught India to 'hug' trees dies at 94

**"We have become butchers of nature": SunderlalBahuguna used to tell**

**Sunderlal Bahuguna was India's best-known environmental activist**



**Women joined the Chipko movement in large numbers**

SunderlalBahuguna, who died of Covid-19 on May 20 aged 94, was known the world over as the man who taught Indians to hug trees to protect the environment. He was one of the main leaders of the Chipko movement in northern India in the 1970s. In Hindi, chipko means "hugging".

Heeding calls by Bahuguna and fellow activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt, men and women in the Himalayas embraced and chained themselves to trees to stop loggers from cutting them down. It was a powerful symbol that conveyed, 'Our bodies before our trees'. It also became a movement that brought to the world's

attention the devastation wrought by the environmental crisis in the world's highest mountains.

A devastating flood in Uttarakhand in 1970 had come as a rude awakening for villagers. They woke up to the "tenuous links between deforestation, landslides, and floods". Three years later, Bahuguna and fellow activists began embracing trees. Young men took an oath in blood to protect nature. Very soon, women in the Himalayas became an integral part of the movement too, embracing trees and tying rakhis - a symbolic red thread tied around a brother's wrist during the festival of RakshaBandhan - onto the

bark of trees. They walked in the snow and took away tools from loggers to stop felling.

Bahuguna, who grew up in the Himalayas, connected the dots well. He wrote that deforestation led to the erosion of fertile land and pushed the men out of the villages to look for jobs in cities. This left women to "bear all the responsibilities of collecting fodder, firewood, and water, apart from farming". Not surprisingly, the Chipko movement became an important milestone in the fight to secure women's rights.

Over the years, Bahuguna, with his flowing beard and trademark

bandana, went from strength to strength. College students and women joined him in greater numbers. They staged peaceful demonstrations, hugged trees, and went on fasts. It yielded results: a fast in 1981 led to a 15-year ban on commercial felling of trees in Uttarakhand. Two years later, he marched 4,000km (2,500 miles) in the Himalayas to draw attention to environmental degradation. The indefatigable campaigner never stops lecturing, railing against the collusion of forest officials and private contractors in decimating forests.

When former prime minister Indira Gandhi was

be cut, I'm all for it." Despite the changing times, the symbolism of Bahuguna's movement lives on. In 2017, activists in Mumbai hugged trees to protect more than 3,000 of them from being axed to make way for a metro railway facility.

Bahuguna was a charismatic ascetic, a spartan man of Gandhian principles. He lived in a small ashram, denounced violence, and was essentially non-political. He believed in self-reliance and not in "so much foreign trade". He despised materialism. To become energy secure in a "non-violent and permanent society", he said, India needed to produce biogas

less energy, he suggested.

Born in 1927 in Tehri district in what is now Uttarakhand, Bahuguna grew up surrounded by sal, oak, and fir trees and sweeping pasture lands. Bahuguna was found not seeking conflict or controversy, but an easy-going, gentle, and soft-spoken man, who had made the "early link between the cutting of trees and drying up of the springs in the Himalayas". During his travels in the region, Baruah found the mountain springs were drying up and people walking long distances to fetch water. He says he understood that the campaigner's activism came from his own lived




**Bahuguna and his wife, Vimla, participated in many tree-hugging campaigns**

asked about Bahuguna's movement, she said: "Well, frankly, I don't know all the aims of the movement. But if it is that trees should not

from human waste, harvest solar and wind energy, and hydropower from the run of the river. Improve machines so they consume

experience.

SunderlalBahuguna will be remembered as a man of the earth, who strove all his life to save it. 



# An Age-by-Age Guide to Set Discipline Consequences for Kids



The pandemic covid-19 has brought about a sea of changes in our day-to-day life. Has restricted our visits to the clubs, markets, parks, and our social get-togethers have been severely hit. We're being forced to stay at home, have to spend time with children. Why not we use our time with children setting discipline consequences in an interesting way acceptable to them. This article aims to help you to get out of boredom while inducing the children to discipline.

Disciplining children is never fun. At what age should you start taking away technology? At what age is time out no longer effective? This is an age-by-age guide to appropriate consequences for children. Disciplining children is never fun for you, or your child. There are so many questions surrounding the topic of discipline, such as: At what age should you start taking away technology? Or at what age is time-out no longer effective? Experts chime in.

## Stress Consequences

Emphasize the use of consequences over punishment. says a licensed

marriage and family therapist in Bellevue, WA. "They're related concepts but with a different purpose."

Punishments make children feel bad, or worse yet, suffer. "While punishments may 'work,' to interrupt a behavior short term, they have potentially negative long-term effects including causing children to feel bad about who they are (which also makes them more likely to act out again), as well as creating an adversarial relationship between parents and child."

## Choosing Consequences

Part of an adult's job is to help children face the consequences of their behavior, explains Arquette. "I tell the kids who come to see me that they choose their consequences by their behavior. For example, if they refuse to clean up the toys at the end of the session, the next time they come they won't be able to use those toys. They can ensure using the toys again by putting them away when I ask."

Also, natural consequences work best to promote learning. Arquette elaborates: "If the natural

consequences get the child's attention and generate insight and remorse, there is no need to add logical consequences." Logical consequences work best when they're consistent, firm, logical, and fair; wait until you are calm to impose consequences to avoid overreacting and avoid power struggles.

Examples of Appropriate Consequences for Kids by Age

### Infants

**Consequences/ punishments are not appropriate for infants.**

### Toddlers (3 years)

Change the tone of your voice (a loud, deep "no" is usually enough); redirect them towards another activity/toy/etc, or give a time out (the number of minutes should be equal to the child's age). "Put them in a location away from everyone and everything else going on; however, if they won't stay in that spot, just ignore them and don't worry - the most important aspect of a timeout is breaking the cycle of the behavior, not where they spend it," says Arquette. "Offering choices can help avoid many behavioral problems - try giving two

options that are equally acceptable to you (for example, "do you want to put on your coat first, or your shoes?")."

### Preschoolers (4-5 years)

Use the same consequences you did in their toddler years, says Arquette, in addition to taking away toys or privileges for a short time. "For example, if your child is fighting over a toy, then put the toy in timeout for 20 minutes. Invoke the consequence as soon as possible after the misbehavior; if too much time passes between the behavior and the consequence, kids at this age won't make the connection." Counting (from 3-10) is also effective with kids this age to get them to do or stop doing things.

### School-Age Kids and

values. For older kids, losing time with friends or electronics can be powerful motivators."

Whenever possible, let natural consequences play out - if your child refuses to eat their dinner, let them experience the long wait until breakfast. "Expression of disappointment or disapproval of a parent also can serve as a consequence."

### Teens (13-18)

According to Arquette, ask yourself: "What matters the most to your teen? Those privileges or special items will be the most impactful to lose." For example, if your child uses their cellphone after bedtime, they might lose it for the next day.

Try to talk things out afterward to get to the root of the problem, explains

cooperation down the line."

### Focus on the Good

It's so easy to 'steam' when you're frustrated with your child. However, warns Arquette, parents can inadvertently reinforce poor behavior choices in children of all ages, by paying too much attention to it. "Try instead to catch your child doing good behaviors before the bad behavior has a chance to start." Thus, reinforce good behaviors with specific praise, such as "It's so helpful when you make your bed without a reminder, now we have more time to play."

Be careful not to taint the praise, which is when good behavior is highlighted, but a negative remark is added and takes away the good feeling typically fostered by praise, such as "It's so helpful




### Tweens (6-12)

Use the consequences you did for younger kids, although you will likely have to extend the length of time for continued effectiveness. Says Arquette: "The loss of privileges or items are more effective when they're something your child

Arquette, and help your child understand how thoughts and feelings connect with behavior. "Teens can often be relied upon to give input on house rules and what should happen if they're violated. Giving them a voice may help in maintaining their

when you make your bed without a reminder, I don't understand why you can't do this every day."

### Rewards

Offering small rewards for the behaviors you want to see helps children develop internal motivation so that eventually they do the behaviors on their own. 



# Radhe

## High on brawn, baddies, and brutal action



confrontation scenes between Salman and Ranveer that follow, are an absolute treat. The action (by Myeonghaeng and Anbariv) is raw, brutal, and stylish with quite a lot of bloodshed.

However, there are way too many distractions along the way. Leading among them is the film's heroine Disha Patani. She is the perfect eye-candy and adds plenty of glamour to the scenes, but her track is counter-productive to the story. The

naivety of her character gives her little scope to perform and also dilutes the gravity of the subject at hand. All urgency comes to a grinding halt when it's song and dance time with her grooving to some peppy beats in songs that are very inopportunely placed. Among them, the title track (by Sajid-Wajid) and Dil De Diya featuring Jacqueline Fernandez (by Himesh Reshammiya) stand out. The background score (by Sanchit

nior cop. Ranveer Hooda is slick and savage in his act and makes every minute on screen, count. There are many other villains in this pack of baddies, who just end up being loud and over-the-top. There is an attempt to infuse comedy - through dialogues and situations -- in this hardcore action film, but it doesn't always work. For its scale, 'Radhe...' has the elements that merit a big-screen experience but given the current

**STORY:** As Mumbai's youth are falling prey to rampant drug abuse, suspended cop Radhe (Salman Khan) is recalled for a clean-up mission. But Radhe is up against a dangerous new outlaw Rana (Ranveer Hooda), who will stop at nothing to rule the city.

**REVIEW:** Set entirely in Mumbai, 'Radhe Your Most Wanted Bhai' is a Salman Khan actioner that doesn't try to be anything else, ever. Radhe is an encounter specialist with 97 encounters and 23 transfers to his credit, in the last 10 years. Now, as the city is in the grip of a dreaded drug mafia, it's time for Radhe to make a comeback and kick some butt. But between beating up the bad guys and saving lives, Radhe also finds time to flirt with his boss'

sister Diya (Disha Patani). For such a typical big-ticket Bollywood pot-boiler, most of what Radhe features is on expected lines. For such films, the battle is always about striking a balance between falling for the clichés and offering some novelty, whilst keeping the entertainment quotient high.

Director Prabhu Deva, of course, gives into many such temptations that potentially derail the narrative, but thanks to the relentless action and a formidable villain, the film remains watchable, in parts. While it begins with a high-impact scene where the bad guy is bashing up another crook, a series of



and Ankit Balhara) is loud but adds to the impact where needed.

Prabhu Deva relies heavily on Salman's star-power, style, and swag to drive the narrative and it works when our leading man is packing a punch. But beyond the action, we are left with filmy dialogues, his lackluster chemistry with Disha Patani, and humorless exchanges with Jackie Shroff, who plays Salman's superior as a se-

COVID crisis in India, all Bhai fans most would have to make do with watching this EID release on a small screen. We're not sure if this is the most wanted Bhai film, but if you're an action fan, there is enough ammo to keep you invested. That apart, 'Radhe...' has some seeti maar moments (the face-off between the good and the evil) and some moves and grooves that will make Salman Khan fans cheer him on, yet again.

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