

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
ANANTAPUR | MONDAY | 31 MAY 2021



## WEATHER

Max: 38.0°C  
Min: 21°C  
RH: 43%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.  
Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 38/21 °C

## ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Vaishakha Bahula Shashti till 1.09 am (Tuesday)  
Star: Sravanam till 4.06 pm  
Varjyam: 8.07 pm to 9.44 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 2.39 pm to 1.31 pm; 3.15 pm to 4.06 pm  
Rahukalam: 7.30 pm to 9 pm  
HIJRI CALENDAR  
Shawwal 18, 1442 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.08 am  
Zohar: 12.05 pm  
Asar: 4.11 pm  
Maghrib: 5.47 pm  
Isha: 7.02 pm  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.08 AM  
SUNSET TODAY 6.33 PM  
MOONSET 9.41 AM  
MOONRISE 11.17 PM

## COUNTER POINT



Stay home, stay safe from price rise!

## SHORT TAKES

### PSBs offer loan for Covid spend

**Mumbai:** Public sector banks on Sunday announced that they would be offering unsecured personal loans of upto ₹5 lakh to salaried, non-salaried as well as pensioners to meet the treatment cost for Covid 19 at a concessional rate besides announcing new loan schemes for hospitals/dispensaries, vaccine manufacturers, etc.

### Central Vista: HC to decide today

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court will decide on Monday whether to allow the continuation of the Central Vista project work during the prevailing Covid pandemic. A bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh, which had been hearing a plea for suspending the ongoing construction work during the Covid pandemic, has fixed May 31 for delivery of its judgement on it, the high court's cause list revealed on Saturday.

### More EPFO, ESIC sops for workers

**New Delhi:** The ministry of labour and employment on Sunday announced additional benefits for workers through social securities schemes run by the EPFO and the ESIC amid the Covid-19 pandemic. These benefits include pension for dependents of insured persons with Employees' State Insurance Corporation who died due to Covid-19 and hike in maximum sum assured under the group insurance scheme EDLI.

### Oppn contests Centre GST dues

**New Delhi:** The compensation amount promised by the Centre is estimated to be higher than the ₹1.58 lakh crore projected by the Centre, and a special session of the GST Council will be convened to discuss it, three Opposition-ruled states said. Finance ministers of Kerala, Punjab and Chhattisgarh said there was no consensus on the compensation requirement in 2021-22 in the May 28 GST Council meeting.

## WORLD | 5

UK PM marries Carrie Johnson

## SPORTS | 8

Cummins to skip IPL phase 2

## TABLOID

Is Covid-19 treatment based on trial and error?

## Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas followed for 7 yrs: Modi

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, MAY 30



As the BJP-led NDA government completed seven years in office amid India grappling with the second wave of the Covid-9 pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the nation followed the mantra of "sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas" and that "India now moves ahead not under the pressure of other countries but with its own convictions".

On a day the ruling BJP held welfare programmes across the country to mark the second anniversary of the NDA government's second term as "Sewa Divas", with party president J.P. Nadda flag-

ging off Covid relief material for Delhi, the Opposition parties claimed the Narendra Modi government had proved to be the "weakest government in the country in the last 73 years", saying that the government had given the country "unmeasurable pain" as it listed unemployment, petrol prices, inflation, the farmers issue and "mis-

management of the Covid crisis", among other issues, to attack the government.

Modi, asserting that India was "fighting Covid-19 with all its might", on Sunday spoke to a number of people ranging from those engaged in transporting medical oxygen to lab technicians, and said the nation's resolve to prevail over the virus was equal to the magnitude of the challenge it faces.

In his monthly "Mann ki Baat" radio address, Mr Modi noted that the nation also faced several natural disasters and said more lives were saved than in the past with the Centre, states and local administrations coming together to carry out relief and rescue operations.

## India sees 1.5L cases, 2nd Covid wave ebbs

BALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 30

The deadly second wave of Covid-19 appeared to be ebbing faster, with the country reporting a shade over 1.5 lakh new cases on Sunday. At 11.15 pm on Sunday, the number of daily new cases stood at 1,52,644, the crowdsourced covid19India.org reported. This is down from 1.65 lakh cases reported for Saturday by the Union health ministry on Sunday morning.

The number of dead also decreased from 3,460 on Saturday to 3,110.

However, the fall in cases and the plateauing of Covid-19 cases in India does not mean that the country can let its guard down as the situation continues to be of concern and challenge, the World Health Organization's regional director for South East Asia Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh has said.

She warned, "We can't predict the next surge," but went on to add saying

it can be prevented. Dr Singh was quoted by ANI as saying that the lesson from the second wave surge is one that "at no cost can we let our guard down. We must take Covid vaccine at the first available opportunity."

The second wave, Dr Singh added, put an immense burden on the already overwhelmed health services, and that another surge must be prevented.

The daily recoveries continued to outnumber the daily new cases for the 18th day in a row with 2,35,844 recoveries registered in the 24 hours between Saturday and Sunday nights. The recoveries stood at some 78,000 more than the new cases.

Despite the overall fall in cases, several states continued to report on Sunday new Coronavirus infections in high numbers with 28,864 cases reported from Tamil Nadu, followed by 20,378 from Karnataka, 19,894 from Kerala, and 18,600 from Maharashtra.

## 12 CR VACCINE DOSES TO BE READY IN JUNE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 30

India on Sunday registered 1.65 lakh new cases — its lowest count in 46 days. The active caseload has further dipped to 21.14 lakh and the daily recoveries continue to outnumber the new cases for the 17th consecutive day. Deaths, however, continue to be high — with 3,460 fatalities in the last 24 hours.

Several major cities have started witnessing a significant dip in cases.

The Centre on Sunday said that nearly 12 crore anti Covid-19 vaccine doses will be made available to the states and UTs in June, which is 50 per cent more than what they got in May, to boost the nearly halted vaccination drive.

The health ministry said states were informed about the availability of vaccines for June and a delivery schedule will also be shared with them.

## WB top official may not report to Centre without state's nod

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, MAY 30

Speculation is rife that West Bengal chief secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay may not visit New Delhi on Monday, which is also the date of his retirement, to report to the Centre despite its direction for his deputation as the Mamata Banerjee government has not relieved him yet from his present post in the state.

The state's top bureaucrat, who got a three-month extension last week

from the Narendra Modi government after a request from the Trinamul Congress government for his efficiency in handling the Covid-19 pandemic, has been asked to report at 10 am on Monday at North Block, at the department of personnel and training under the ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions which is headed by the PM himself.

The order was sent under the provisions of Rule 6(1) of the Indian Administrative Service (Cadre) Rules 1954 on May

28 evening, hours after the 1987 batch IAS officer accompanied the CM in skipping the PM's review meeting on Cyclone Yaas in West Midnapore.

While the Centre has not acted on the CM's request to withdraw its order, the state government has also taken a firm stand by not issuing Mr Bandyopadhyay any order for his release, which is essential for all bureaucrats in the all-India service cadres to go for a Central deputation from their places of posting in the state.

## Almost every house got state benefits, says CM

On 2nd anniversary, Jagan says 94.5% poll vows were kept

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 30

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that out of 1,64,68,591 households in the state, 1,41,52,386 households were benefited by any one of the schemes of his government.

The Chief Minister on Sunday released a letter titled 'Rendo Yeta Ichhina mataka pedda peeta,' (Second year too, promise to promises made) and a document 'Maliyedu - Jagananna Thodu, Jagannanna Manifesto 2019' on the occasion of completion of two years of governance.

The Chief Minister said two documents would be shared with every household through volunteers. One is a letter written to the women in a family which would have details of schemes benefited by the family and the other includes details of the election manifesto promises that were fulfilled in the last two years of governance.

The Chief Minister said he considered the election manifesto as 'Bible, Quran and Gita' and worked to fulfill every promise in it.

He expressed satisfaction at the performance of his government in the last two years.

He said an amount of ₹95,528 crore was directly transferred to the accounts of people through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes and another ₹37,197 crore aid was extended indirectly through other various schemes such as YSR Aarogyasri, Jagannanna Thodu, Gorumudha, YSR Sampoorana Poshana etc., totalling ₹1.31 lakh crore.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy speaks after releasing two documents — 'Word Given in the Second Year is a Large Plateau' and 'Maliyedu - Jagannanna Thodu, Jagannanna Manifesto 2019' on the occasion of his government's second anniversary at the camp office in Tadepalli in Vijayawada on Sunday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

## REPORT CARD

● Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said an amount of ₹95,528 crore was directly transferred to the accounts of people through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes.

● He said ₹37,197 crore aid was extended indirectly through other various schemes such as YSR Aarogyasri, Jagannanna Thodu, Gorumudha, YSR Sampoorana Poshana, etc.

● Jagan said women were the beneficiaries of 66 per cent of the welfare schemes and all these details would be shared with every household through volunteers.

He said a total of ₹1.3 lakh crore was spent transparently, without giving any scope for corruption. Even scheme was

delivered right at the doorstep of beneficiaries.

The Chief Minister also said that all the schemes were successfully imple-

## Dousing fire



Smoke billowing from the Singapore-registered container ship MV X-Press Pearl, which has been burning for the eleventh consecutive day as vessels try to douse off the fire, in the sea off Colombo Harbour in Sri Lanka.

— AFP

## MONSOON KEEPS KERALA WAITING FOR 2 MORE DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 30

The onset of southwest monsoon might be delayed by another four days. The IMD has set a new date June 4 for the event, which heralds the rainy season in India.

As per the latest meteorological indications, the south westerly winds could strengthen further gradually from June 1 onwards, resulting in a likely enhancement in rainfall activity over Kerala. Hence, the southwest monsoons are likely to set in over Kerala on June 3.

■ Page 2: Rain forecast for 75% of weather stations

## STOCK | TAKING

People weigh Jagan's two-year rule; Supporters give credit to Navaratnal, DBT

## YSJaganAneNenu trends on social media

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC  
TIRUPATI, MAY 30

With the Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government completing two years in office on Sunday, all social media platforms are abuzz with talk on the highs and lows of his rule, evaluating how effective his administration has so far been.

It was on May 30, 2019 that the YSRC government took charge after its landslide victory in the general elections. Two years on, there is a mixed reaction in the social media — while

the majority is lauding his style of governance, the remaining rues neglect of development and capital city issues.

The Twitter hashtag #2YearsForYSJaganAneNenu went on rage. As per reports, it has been retweeted by a million people in less than two-and-a-half hours after it was created. "Some things in life are worth waiting for. Even GOD must have felt that @ysjagan journey should be an inspiration & his destination should be phenomenal with unprecedented victory. 2014 to

● The supporters of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy started a social media trend with hashtag #2YearsForYSJaganAneNenu.

● It was soon joined by YSRC leaders and others. As per reports, this hashtag was tweeted by 10 lakh people in less than two and a half hours.

● Apart from the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes, other welfare schemes for farmers and weavers, lawyers, also received appreciation from the public on social media forums.

mandate vachunte (means: if he got mandate in 2014), we may not experience these high amazing moments #2YearsForYSJaganAneNenu," tweeted Dr Praneeth Elia, a pediatrician, at his handle @Dr.PraneethK.

The 'Navaratnal' welfare schemes and a slew of other popular schemes of Jagan and how they consolidated his vote-bank and

fetching him a good mileage in local elections has occupied the top spot. Apart from the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes, other welfare schemes for farmers and weavers, lawyers, etc., also received appreciation from the public on social media forums.

In contrast, some hashtags like #JaganDestroyed APin2Years and #2YearsOf JaganFailures also went viral on twitter on the same day.

There was a social media outpour against DBT schemes, as many netizens opined that the alleged

indiscriminate borrowing by the state government to implement its welfare schemes has damaged the state treasury.

While some are hailing the DBT schemes, many more are pointing to the alleged negligence of industrial and infrastructure development. It may be noted that the government has come up with industrial policies and promised to provide a lot of incentives to the sector, but no major industries or new infrastructure projects have come up in the state in the last two years.

## JET-LOAD DOCUS SENT TO DEPORT CHOKSI: ANTIGUA

New Delhi/Saint John's, May 30: India has sent a private jet loaded with documents for deportation of fugitive diamantaire Mehul Choksi from Dominica where he is said to have gone with his girlfriend on a romantic escapade from his sanctuary in neighbouring Antigua only to be arrested. Qatar Airways private jet flew from Delhi to Dominica on Friday carrying documents needed for deportation of Choksi who is wanted in ₹13,500 crore-bank loan fraud case, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne told a local radio station.

— PTI



## SHORT TAKES

RAIN FORECAST  
FOR 75% OF  
STATIONS

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier, it was predicted that the monsoons would set in over Kerala on May 31.

Director of IMD, Amaravati, Stella S said the rainfall activity should be in more than 75 per cent of the weather stations in Kerala for declaring the onset of monsoons. Along with other factors like wind direction, wind speed, and quantum of outgoing long wave radiations over specific areas in the equatorial Arabian Sea, the main criterion remains the rainfall over the designated stations.

CHRISTIANS SEEK  
AIDING OF ALL  
SECTIONSDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 30

The Christian fraternity praised the dedication of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy towards fulfilling the election promises by implementing welfare schemes in the two years and sought aiding all sections of society in the next three years.

PHOTO-SHOOT  
TURNS TRAGIC,  
3 DROWNDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 30

A photo-shoot led to drowning of three youngsters in a water body in Vizag Agency on Sunday. The police are still searching for the missing bodies.

Agency police said a group of 10 friends from different places went to the waterfalls (Guddugummi) located near Olubedda village under Hukumpeta mandal in Vizag Agency for a photo-shoot and to swim in the water body.

While they were taking the photos, one youngster accidentally slipped into the waters. In an attempt to save him, two more ventured into the waters and they also went missing.

Two of the missing persons are Intermediate second year students while the third is a degree student. They were identified as Mori Niranjan, a native of Bakuru of Hukumpeta mandal, Vinod Kumar and Siva Nagendra Kumar, both from Sanyasampalem of Hukumpeta mandal.

Based on the information, the police rushed to the spot and launched a search operation. However, their efforts proved futile due to sunset.

Locals fear that the missing persons might have drowned. The police appealed to youngsters in the region to stay indoors during curfew timings and not to go for adventure events.

VACATION FOR  
UP TO SSC TILL  
JUNE 30DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 30

The summer vacations for Classes 1 to 10 functioning under all managements has been extended to June 30 in view of the Coronavirus crisis in the state.

Director of School Education Vadrevu Chinaveerabhadru issued the orders to this effect on Sunday.

Recently, the government postponed SSC exams which were scheduled from June 7. It would review the situation in July month.

According to the order, keeping in view the present situation and since the government decided to postpone the SSC examinations due to the second wave of Covid-19, the summer vacation for teachers and students of Classes I to X for all types schools is extended till June 30. The Director, SCERT, is requested to prepare a detailed academic calendar and the activities to be taken up through various means i.e., DD, radio, YouTube, personal contact through WhatsApp groups etc., for the online education for all classes from June 12 onwards. In case of SSC students, the headmasters concerned have to extend necessary academic support to the students from June 1 itself.

The Coronavirus infection has been gradually decreasing for the past few days in AP and medical experts are expecting the Covid-19 second wave to subside by June last week or July first week and, hence, the government will take a fresh decision about the schools reopening after reviewing the situation in the coming days.



YSRC leaders celebrate with CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy the completion of two years in office, at his camp office in Tadepalli on Sunday.

## YSRC: AP has seen 15 years' development in just 2 years

CM successful in assuring people that tomorrow would be even better

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 30

The YSR Congress affirmed on Sunday that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has fulfilled many dreams of the people in the last two years, which had been awaiting implementation in the AP region for the past 15 years.

The YSRC on Sunday celebrated its second anniversary of coming to power in the state. Government adviser on public affairs Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy hoisted the party flag, cut the cake and paid floral tributes to the late chief minister Y.S. Rajashekar Reddy at the party's central office in Tadepalli.

Addressing a press conference, Ramakrishna Reddy said the CM has fulfilled the aspirations of the people and brought about revolutionary changes in the state since 2019. He has been "working tirelessly for the welfare of the people".

Ramakrishna Reddy said the CM has overcome the financial constraints due to the state's bifurcation and the Corona pandemic.

The Chief Minister has set up village secretariats and completed several schemes within the stipulated time frame, extended the benefits to all the eligible. He has implemented schemes like the YSR Rythu Bharosa, crop insurance, input subsidy, interest free loans for farmers and also one for

## Gold standard set in AP governance, say leaders

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL, MAY 30

Marking the second anniversary of Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, the Kurnool unit of YSR Congress said 31 schemes have been granted to the district, touching upon all the sections of the society.

It was indeed an 'epoch-making victory' that has brought revolutionary changes in the governance, with the poorest of the poor being the target of people's welfare government, said B.Y. Ramaiah, a senior leader of YSRC. The last two years were a "golden rule" as money directly reached the accounts of the public. It is a Gold Standard, he said.

Panyam MLA Katsani Rambhupal Reddy said the major benefit to the district was declaring it as the Judicial Capital of the state.

The government earmarked 2,000 acres at

financially supporting women self-help groups.

Reddy said the CM has been successful in assuring people that tomorrow would be even better. "The

Jagannath Gattu on the outskirts of Kurnool for the purpose of developing a judicial complex with complete infrastructure. The MLA further said that bringing transparency in tenders, the Jagan Mohan Reddy government called for reverse tendering for the Vedavathi project, RDS, and Owk tunnel and conserved precious money.

Reddy said Kurnool airport has been named after Uyyalavada Narasimha Reddy, fulfilling the aspiration of the district. Taking the governance to the doorsteps of the people, the government opened 845 Sachivalayams where 545 services are provided to the public.

Health was accorded top priority by the government as ₹500 crore was sanctioned for improving infrastructure at Kurnool Government General Hospital. School buildings were also given a facelift under the Naadu-Nedu programme, the MLA added.

CM has revamped the education sector, ensuring better education. He will be laying the foundation stone for 14 medical colleges in the state tomorrow by online video-mode.

JAGAN WILL BE  
CM FOR ANOTHER  
40 YEARS: MLADC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, MAY 30

Kamalapuram legislator P. Ravindranath Reddy said that Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will be the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for another 40 years.

Leaders cut a cake at the district party office here on Sunday to mark the two years completion of the YSR Congress government.

Ravindranath Reddy said that Jagan Mohan Reddy was a young leader with a good vision and one who implemented welfare schemes as promised during the financial crisis due to the corona pandemic. He said that Jagan Mohan Reddy would be a competent administrator like his father.

YSRC activists and followers, under the leadership of Jagan Mohan Reddy, are striving for a better Andhra Pradesh," he said.

MLA DISTRIBUTES  
100 PUSH CARTS  
TO POOR PEOPLEDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, MAY 30

Marking the occasion of completion of two-year rule of the Jagan Mohan Reddy government, Srikalahasti MLA Biyyapu Madhusudhan Reddy distributed 100 pushcarts worth ₹10,000 each to poor vendors free of cost in his constituency on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA heaped praises on the Chief Minister for ruling the state effectively and providing welfare to all sections of people, despite several hardships in his way. "In order to mark Jagan's good governance and his commitment to serve the poor, today we have distributed nearly 100 pushcarts to poor vendors. This initiative helps in decentralising the vegetable and fruit stalls at the town market, where huge crowds are coming to purchase vegetables and fruits almost every day, during the curfew relaxation time," he said.

The MLA hoped that the vendors from market would cover every street in the town.

Jagan has been giving top priority to both welfare and development activities, he said.

Many orphans miss  
₹10L Covid aid: TDPATHRI RAJASEKHAR |  
DC  
NELLORE, MAY 30

While praising the government aid of ₹10 lakh each for the children who lost their parents to Covid as well as ₹15,000 toward funeral expenses to families of Covid victims, TD state spokesperson Anam Venkataramana Reddy said the benefit would have reached many children but for underreporting of Covid deaths by the government.

"Both the schemes are of no use to a majority of children who lost their parents to Covid as the government downplayed the real figures of Covid

deaths to showcase that they are containing the deadly virus," he alleged.

According to the TD leader, the district administration showed 302 Covid deaths between March and May this year, which means 3.3 deaths per day in the entire district, but the rush at graveyards contradicted the government figures. A grave injustice was done to the poor, as a result, he alleged.

Referring to the announcement of Prime Minister of ₹10 lakh deposit for orphaned kids, he took a dig at the state government for claiming it as its own scheme even while not recording all the deaths.

Covid rendering  
children orphansDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, MAY 30

Covid-19 virus played havoc with many families, snatching both parents of some children and rendering them orphans. In some cases, one of the parents is gone. If the deceased happens to be the breadwinner or mother, the future of the children would be bleak.

Officials identified 17 children who have become orphans by losing their both father and mother while 206 children lost either their mother or father. Covid-19 also belied the hopes and dreams of parents about their children.

The state government has announced ₹10 lakh to each orphan kid. The amount will be deposited in the name of the orphaned child when he or she attains age 25. The guardian can avail the interest money to educate and help shape the future of such kids.

Parents of an 11-year-old girl wanted to see her daughter as doctor. But, her father Vaddi Babji (lorry driver) and mother Achutha Kumari of Thimmapuram have died of Covid-19, leaving their daughter an orphan.

"I will look after my granddaughter till I am

alive," said Babji's father Vaddi Subba Rao. East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy told the girl that she would be a doctor and the government would help her get good education.

When relatives brought two boys, five-year-old and two-year-old, to the collectorate, even some of the officials were in tears. Their father Peruvuli Rajesh was working as a security guard in a paper mill at Rajamahendravaram. He had shifted his family to Kontha-muru village from Gokavaram for the education of his two sons. But he and his wife Rani died of Covid.

His brother P. Kumar Babu, a painter, is looking after the two kids. Muralidhar Reddy said that these two kids will be given ₹10 lakh each for their education and their future career.

Meanwhile, the women and child welfare department has issued an advisory to local officials to pay ₹500 for children under the sponsorship programme.

ICDS officer Venkat said the department is making all arrangements for the welfare of the orphans. ICDS is processing necessary documents of such kids and their parents for the aid scheme.

Confinement of  
Bonigi lamentedDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, MAY 30

Senior TD leader Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy lamented the confinement of Bonigi Anandaiah at a time when people have placed him on a highest pedestal, treating him like a god.

In a letter addressed to Anandaiah on Sunday, Somireddy said his name is echoing all over the country and people from all walks of life are hailing his concoction irrespective of political affiliations.

"People are feeling sad for constraining you under the pretext of security and it is unfortunate that they are denying freedom which is enjoyed even by the prisoners. In fact, the entire Krishnapatnam is behind you and they are ready to provide protection to you even if the government

fails to extend the security cover," he wrote.

The former minister said that there is a worry over his health among people after noticing the pressure being applied on him by some vested interests.

Somireddy said that keeping him in a private building, which is equipped with a huge kitchen, makes it seem, "your medicine will be distributed to people only after fulfilling the requirement of ruling party leaders, their followers, and officers. You will be freed only after the completion of this process."

Right from Vice President of India to district-level leaders, everyone is hailing Anandaiah but unfortunately Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is yet to open his mouth, Somireddy said in the letter.

## Jagan has committed 96 crimes in two years: TD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 30

TD state president K. Atchannaidu alleged that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had committed 96 crimes in his two-year rule. Releasing a booklet 'Rendellalo Vidhwamsam' (destruction in two years) here on Sunday, Atchannaidu said that after coming to power, Jagan Mohan Reddy began his rule with a destructive attitude unlike others. He started off by demolishing Praja Vedika and continues to demolish properties of

people who are critical of his government.

He said JCB, ACB and PCB became his tagline to take on the Opposition. He had taken over CID completely and had unleashed terror among Opposition leaders, he alleged.

He said that Reddy drove the state into a debt-trap of one lakh crore and each individual in the state now has ₹1 lakh debt on his head, he said.

"Had he allowed completion of Amaravati, the state would have acquired ₹2 lakh crore worth lands," the TD leader said. On Polavaram, Atcha-

naidu said that his leader N. Chandrababu Naidu had ensured sanction of ₹52,000 crore but Reddy succeeded in getting only ₹26,000 crore. In the name of reverse tendering, the CM allotted works to people known to him. His promise of completing the project by June 1 remains a distant dream.

Alleging that the CM was responsible for the death of construction workers, who were deprived of livelihood, Atchannaidu said during the TD rule, sand was sold for ₹1,500 for a tractor-load, which today costs ₹5,000.

## POSITIVE | NEWS

With 94 deaths in 24 hours, the toll has touched 10,832

## Covid cases continue to decrease in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 30

Coronavirus cases continue to decrease in Andhra Pradesh with 13,400 new Covid-19 infections registered in the past 24 hours on Sunday. With 94 deaths, the toll has touched 10,832. Earlier 20,000 to 22,000 new infections were reported across the 13 districts every day. The decrease is raising hopes of an early containment of the second wave.

As many as 21,133 persons recovered on Sunday,

taking the overall tally to 15,08,515. Of the total 16,85,142 cases, around 1,65,795 are active cases. The daily positivity rate of 84,232 samples tested on the previous day was 15.91 per cent, which is the lowest in the last one month. The overall positivity rate of the 1.91 crore samples tested so far is 8.79 per cent.

East Godavari reported the single day highest of 2,598 infections followed by Chittoor with 1,971, Anantapur 1,215, and Visakhapatnam 1,054



Police checks documents during curfew in Vizag.

while West Godavari reported 968 new infections. Krishna registered 858 new cases followed by Guntur 848, Prakasam 838,

Kurnool 712, Kadapa 701, Nellore 652, Srikakulam 623 and single day lowest cases of 362 registered in Vizianagaram district.

The highest single day deaths of 14 were registered in Chittoor district, followed by nine deaths each in Prakasam and West Godavari districts, eight each in Anantapur, East Godavari, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts. Six deaths each were reported in Krishna and Vizianagaram districts, five each in Kurnool and

Nellore districts and four each in Guntur and Kadapa districts.

East Godavari is on top with a total number of 2,23,713 Covid-19 cases followed by Chittoor with 1,89,806, Guntur 1,49,130, West Godavari 1,40,511, Anantapur 1,37,754, Visakhapatnam 1,36,621, Nellore 1,17,679, Kurnool 1,14,716, Srikakulam 1,08,753, Prakasam 1,06,761, Kadapa 94,410, Krishna 88,331 and the lowest of 74,062 was registered in Vizianagaram district.



## IN BRIEF

SHOW CAUSE  
NOTICES ISSUED TO  
FIVE PHC DOCTORSDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, MAY 30

Anantapur district administration has issued show cause notices to medical officers of five primary health centres (PHCs) for negligence in conducting fever surveys in villages under their respective areas for detecting Coronavirus cases.

The notices were issued on Sunday after collector Gandham Chandrudu, along with district medical and health officer Dr. Kameswara Prasad, found that the medical officers had committed lapses by failing to reach every door step for conducting the fever surveys. Further, they found that even people suffering from Covid-19 symptoms had not been checked.

Officers on whom notices have been served belong to Gummagatta, Kondapuram, Gudibanda, Gorantla and Avuladatta PHCs.

The collector also found that there were many duplicate entries in the surveys conducted by these PHCs. DMHO Kameswara Prasad said all duplicate names will be removed and a survey will be conducted in all areas that have been missed out.

● **THE NOTICES** were issued on Sunday after collector Gandham Chandrudu, along with district medical and health officer Dr. Kameswara Prasad, found that the medical officers had committed lapses by failing to reach every door step for conducting the fever surveys. Further, they found that even people suffering from Covid-19 symptoms had not been checked.

CHILD LABOURER  
LOSES HAND IN  
ACCIDENTDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, MAY 30

In a heart-rending incident, a 14-year-old child labourer suffered serious injuries and lost his right hand in an accident at a sponge iron crushing unit near Nemakal in between D. Hirehal and Bommanhal in Rayadurgam area in the district on Saturday evening. The incident came to light on Sunday.

The boy's hand had to be amputated at Bellary hospital in Karnataka where he was rushed with the badly crushed hand. It is learnt that the boy is a dalit and hails from D. Hirehal Mandal. His hand was caught in the machine and badly crushed. He also suffered injuries on other parts of the body. He was immediately shifted to a private hospital in Bellary, where a surgery was conducted and the hand was removed.

It was only three days ago that as part of the 'Operation Muskan', the officials conducted raids at various establishments and hazardous industries to curb the practice of employing child labour.

There are reports of large-scale use of child labour by the crushing units in Nemakal area in the district.

● **THE BOY'S** hand had to be amputated at Bellary hospital in Karnataka where he was rushed with the badly crushed hand. It is learnt that the boy is a dalit and hails from D. Hirehal Mandal. His hand was caught in the machine and badly crushed. He also suffered injuries on other parts of the body. He was immediately shifted to a private hospital in Bellary where a surgery was conducted.

Two liquid oxygen  
plants to come up  
in Nellore, AtmakurDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, MAY 30

Industries and IT Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy along with Water Resources Minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav laid the foundation stone to a ₹1.20 crore estimated 1000 LPM (liters per minute) liquid oxygen plant at the GGH in Nellore on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, he said they are also establishing a liquid oxygen plant at an estimated cost of ₹1.55 crore in Atmakur.

The minister said that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has been monitoring the Covid-19 containment measures round the clock and taking steps to prevent the shortage of oxygen in the state and gear up to face the third wave effectively.

"As part of his vision, the production of Cryogenic tanks has been enhanced at VRCV Asia Pacific Pvt Ltd in Sri City to keep oxygen in reserve in all the hospitals across the state," Goutham Reddy explained.

Referring to their plans to increase medical facilities to the

● **REFERRING TO** their plans to increase medical facilities to the Covid patients, Goutham Reddy said that a 1,000-bedded hospital is being established under the auspice of RINL in Visakapatnam and 200 beds among them are made available to the patients from Sunday.

Covid patients, he said that a 1,000-bedded hospital is being established under the auspice of RINL in Visakapatnam and 200 beds among them are made available to the patients from Sunday. He claimed that AP is in the forefront with respect to vaccination and containment of Covid-19.

Speaking on the occasion Water Resources Minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav said CM proposed 64 oxygen plants in the state and four of them are coming up in Nellore district. Nellore rural legislator Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy, District Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu and Joint Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad were also present.

DEVELOPMENT, WELFARE LIKE  
2 EYES OF GOVT: PEDDIREDDYDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, MAY 30

Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy said that development and welfare are the two eyes for the state government headed by CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Speaking to reporters after garlanding the statue of former CM Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy at the Punganur town on Sunday, Peddireddy said that CM should be credited with implementing 96.8 per cent of the schemes listed in the election manifesto.

"In these two years of YSRC government's rule, we have provided government services to the people at their doorsteps and brought up village secretariats and the voluntary system that helped to achieve self-

governance for villages.

All welfare schemes are being implemented transparently without any middlemen and benefits are directly deposited to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries," he said.

He informed that the Chief Minister is putting his efforts to rejuvenate the lands on the western part of the district through Handri-Neeva canal and the works of three reservoirs allotted to the district will be completed within a year.

The minister praised the CM for introducing the innovative scheme of providing tap connection to every home in the state through the water grid scheme.

He said that the government has laid a special focus on infrastructure creation in all villages and towns across the state.

IRREGULARITIES ALLEGED IN  
CROP COVER PAYOUTDC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, MAY 30

AP Farmers Association district president A.V. Ramana and general secretary Gali Chandra on Sunday demanded that the state government hold an inquiry into the irregularities in grant of crop insurance to the farmers affected by the Nivar storm.

They told media persons here that the cyclone damaged paddy, groundnut, cotton, Bengal gram, black gram, banana, papaya, mango, sugarcane and guava crops in the district last year. Due to corruption in the payment of crop insurance compensation,

many farmers lost the benefits.

The average five-year yield was calculated at ₹20 to ₹30 per acre. They alleged that farmers and officials of the ruling party had been looting crores of rupees by showing APIIC lands and endowment lands as their own, without even planting crops.

The association also called for a meeting of all-party farmers unions on the 2021 kharif cultivation plan. AP Rythu Sangham district vice-presidents S. Shiva Shankar Reddy, T. Manohar Reddy, J a y a n n a, Ramanjaneyulu and others participated in the meeting.

## No social distancing



People in large numbers queue up in a line without maintaining physical distance outside a liquor shop to purchase liquor at Maddilapalem junction in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

Central minister opens  
RINL Covid Care Centre

The care centre will eventually have 1,000 beds for treatment

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 30

Union minister for steel Dharmendra Pradhan virtually inaugurated a jumbo Covid Care Centre at Gurajada Kalakshetram in RINL Vizag Steel Township of Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

Currently with 300 beds, the care centre will eventually have 1,000 beds for treatment of Coronavirus patients.

Delivering the keynote address, Dharmendra Pradhan lauded the efforts

of RINL in creating the facility. He also thanked AP government for extending all support in starting the jumbo Covid care facility.

Union minister of state for steel Fagga Singh Kulaste, who attended the ceremony, complimented RINL for providing timely relief to patients suffering from Covid-19, along with supply of liquid medical oxygen (LMO).

Several state ministers and local MPs attended the inauguration ceremony in virtual mode. They thanked

the Ministry of Steel for taking the initiative for supplying of LMO all over the country and for establishing Covid care facilities at RINL Vizag.

Earlier, in his welcome address, RINL chairman and managing director P. K. Rath thanked AP government and Ministry of Steel for providing all support in starting Phase-I of the 1000-bed jumbo facility. He said RINL is taking all necessary measures to combat Coronavirus pandemic.

Till date 15,000 of the RINL fraternity have been

vaccinated. He said that around 6,700 tonnes of LMO has been supplied till date by RINL to AP, Maharashtra and Karnataka during the second wave of Covid-19.

The Gurajada Kalakshetram complex is equipped with centralised air-conditioned Coronavirus wards, central oxygen supply with 300 jumbo oxygen back up cylinders, 20 oxygen concentrators and 10 CPAP machines. All beds have oxygen humidifiers with distilled water and flow meters.

## CM to lay stone for Penukonda college

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, MAY 30

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will lay the foundation stone for building a new medical college-hospital near Penukonda on Monday.

The college will come up on 50 acres of farmland

hitherto used for grazing of sheep on outskirts of Penukonda, which will come under Hindupur Lok Sabha constituency. The CM will lay the foundation in the virtual mode.

A sm of ₹475 crore have already been sanctioned for the medical college, which will serve all seven assem-

bly segments of the Hindupur LS seat.

Penukonda medical college is part of AP government's plan to have a medical college-cum-hospital in each of the Lok Sabha constituencies within the state.

Even as Hindupur MLA Nandamuri Balakrishna wanted the medical college

to be established in Hindupur, the government preferred Penukonda, as it would also be accessible to Madakasira, Gorantla and Penukonda areas.

Minister Shankar Narayana has expressed happiness over the foundation stone being laid for the medical college on Monday.

2 DIE DUE TO  
BLACK FUNGUSDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, MAY 30

Two persons died of black fungus infection at the Government General Hospital here.

With this, the death toll due to the deadly infection rose to 8. At present, there are 57 patients undergoing treatment at the GGH.

TTD CHAIRMAN Y.V. SUBBA REDDY  
CONSOLES SANNIDHI YADAVA FAMILYDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, MAY 30

TTD Chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy on Sunday called on and consoled the family members of the deceased Sannidhi Yadava Padmanabham, who succumbed to death on Saturday following cardiac arrest. Padmanabham was discharging duties as Sannidhi Yadava in Tirumala temple.

The TTD Chairman in his condolence message recalled the services of Padmanabham and said that he had the divine opportunity of opening the doors of Lord Venkateswara temple every day along with the first darshan for decades.

He said that TTD will extend full support to the family of the deceased Sannidhi Yadava.

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Adivasis seek higher land  
value, better R&R schemeDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, MAY 30

Adivasi Maha Sabha appealed to the state government to provide proper land acquisition compensation and R&R package settlements as per law to Krishnuniapalem village and first ward residents of Tuni Urban area under the Polavaram Project.

The Maha Sabha legal Advisor Ayinapurapu Suryanarayana said that the then Joint Collector A.

Mallikarjuna has acquired land acquisition process for the Polavaram Project Canal in Krishnuniapalem village in Gokavaram Mandal of East Godavari District.

However, the Joint Collector did not follow any new land acquisition law procedures and made gross injustice to the victims.

He said that at first ward in Tuni urban area, the land cost is ₹5,300 per square yard as per sub-registrar value and the govern-

ment has to pay double the payment of sub-registrar value. However, the Joint Collector fixed the compensation amount of only ₹700 per square yard and it is totally against the new land acquisition Act.

He requested the government to hold Grama Sabhas and pay the compensation as per law.

At the same time, the government should take action against the Joint Collector on charges of violating the law.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, MAY 30

The Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government will spend ₹14,000 crore on the development of agriculture sector in the next three years.

Disclosing this here on Sunday, agriculture minister Kurasala Kannababu said the government would set up warehouses, cold-storages, bulk-milk centres, custom hiring centres and other facilities in rural areas.

Speaking of the services rendered to the farm sector in the last two years, Kannababu said that already the government extended benefits to under various schemes such as Rythu Bharosa, crop

insurance, input subsidy and others. He said the CM would lay foundation stones for 16 medical colleges in the state on Monday and the colleges would produce thousands of doctors in future.

A fish landing centre would come up at Uppalanka in Kakinada rural Mandal. He said that in the past two years, the government released ₹1,25,000 crore to the beneficiaries under various welfare schemes, without allowing any room for corruption. He said that the government also introduced several schemes, thus becoming a role model for other states. As many as 31 lakh houses were sanctioned to the poor; out of which 15 lakh

were taken up in the first phase.

MLC Pandula Ravindra Babu said that due to the steps by the government during the Covid-19 pandemic, the people were being protected from the virus. The voluntary and secretariat system was rendering a great service in containing the virus spread. He said the CM was giving priority to education and medical and health sector by bringing about revolutionary changes.

Kakinada MP Vanga Gita said that Jagan Mohan Reddy was ruling the state, keeping in view the interests of all sections of people, and turning the state ideal for the other states.



## SHORT TAKES

## DELHI IDENTIFIES 32 KIDS ORPHANED DUE TO COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 30

The Delhi Commission For Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) has identified 32 children who were orphaned during the Covid-19 pandemic in the national capital.

Ten more children have been identified who have lost their single parent to the viral disease, DCPCR chairman Anurag Kundu said.

He said a survey was started earlier this month to trace children in similar distress. "Sixteen children have been identified who lost their parents during the second wave. We have been enquiring about them whether they require medical attention, rations, counselling, immunisation etc.," said DCPCR member Ranjana Prasad.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had on May 14 said the Delhi government will bear the cost of education and upbringing of children who were orphaned during the pandemic. The government has also planned to give ₹2,500 per month to such children, and a proposal is likely to be tabled before the Cabinet soon for approval, a senior official said.

## NAVY CONVERTS ITS CHOPPER INTO AIR AMBULANCE

Panaji, May 30: The Indian Navy has augmented its capacity to evacuate critical patients even in unfavourable weather conditions by fitting a medical intensive care unit (MICU) on-board an Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) at Goa's naval air station INS Hansa, an official said.

The MICU has been installed on-board ALH Mk-III from INAS 323 at INS Hansa by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), a naval spokesman said in a media statement issued here.

"With ALH Mk-III, an all-weather aircraft, being equipped with MICU, the Indian Navy can now undertake medical evacuation of critical patients by air even in unfavourable weather conditions," he said.

The MICU has two sets of defibrillators, multipara monitors, ventilator, oxygen support as well as infusion and syringe pumps, he added.

"It also has a suction system to clear secretions in the mouth or airway of the patient. The system can be operated on aircraft power supply and also has a battery back up of four hours," the spokesman said.

## MANY THINGS THAT HELP TO KICK THE BUTT

DR PAWAN GUPTA

Most often people quit tobacco only to relapse faster than they had quit. It leads them to frustration and loss of confidence. On this World No-Tobacco Day, we must understand how a person gets addicted to tobacco.

Most people take to smoking because of peer pressure or experimentation. But it, later on, leads to frustration and a desire to quit, mostly due to health reasons. The only wish is someone to help quit successfully.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) had recognised tobacco as a complex disease that needs treatment. All tobacco users will have some other disease. So it would be better to commit early to quit smoking.

So why do people find it so difficult to quit smoking? There are two main reasons. One, nicotine affects the brain causing physical dependence, leading to severe cravings. Two, it is the psychological misconception of tobacco users that they can quit with willpower alone.

For quitting smoking, one needs to have a proper assessment and grading of tobacco addiction, which will help a Certified Tobacco Cessation Specialist to finalise an appropriate treatment required. A tool — an Android app ICAN-CARE — is available to assess the willpower, addiction level and type of tobacco dependence of the person.

One can follow the ICAN-CARE 7Ds of quitting tobacco by drinking plenty of water, deep breathing exercise, delay, distract, diet, discuss and use drugs for comorbidities and symptom relief.

— The author is a director of surgical oncology at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Vaishali, Patparganj and Noida.

## CENTRAL VISTA WORK: HC VERDICT TODAY

New Delhi, May 30: The Delhi High Court will decide on Monday whether to allow the continuation of the Central Vista project work during the prevailing Covid pandemic.

A bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh, which had been hearing a plea for suspending the ongoing construction work during the Covid pandemic, has fixed May 31 for delivery of its judgement on it, the high court's cause list revealed on Saturday.

The court had reserved its judgement on May 17 on the joint plea by Anya Malhotra, a translator, and Sohail Hashmi, a historian and documentary filmmaker.

The two had contended in their plea that the project was not an essential activity and can be put on hold for time being. During the May 17 hearing, the Centre had termed the plea as a "facade" or a "disguise", aimed at stalling the project.

The petitioners on the other hand had contended they were only interested in the safety of workers at the site and citizens living in the area. — PTI



A medical worker inoculates a dose of Covid-19 vaccine to a beneficiary at a vaccination camp on the complex of Golden Temple in Amritsar on Sunday. — PTI

## NDRF gets nod for mini O2 plants

Home ministry finds sudden rise in oxygen demand, lack of transportation behind crisis

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 30

Taking serious note of the acute shortage of oxygen faced across the country during the lethal second wave of the Corona pandemic Union home ministry in a major initiative will soon allow the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to have their own "cryogenic oxygen containers and mini oxygen plants" that can be set up at any required location within a few hours.

The NDRF is a highly specialised nodal agency of the Government to deal with any natural or man made disaster. Home ministry sources said the government had taken the oxygen shortage in the county extremely seriously and was putting in place a robust mechanism to avoid a repeat of such a situation in future.

Officials claimed a detailed analysis of the oxygen shortage revealed that apart from the sudden increase in the demand the other main reason was transportation of oxygen. Officials added that there is no dearth of oxygen production in the country and the main problem was of transportation.

"Adequate oxygen was available across various industrial plants in the country. But the main problem was that of transportation since highly specialised tankers are required for its transportation and not enough of them were available in the country. Now this problem would be resolved before the anticipated third wave which is likely to strike sometime in September or October," an official said.

## Cargo aircraft with oxygen cylinders land in Odisha

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, MAY 30

In a first in the country, a cargo aircraft from China carrying over 1,350 oxygen cylinders landed at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Odisha capital here on Sunday.

Informing about it, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's chief advisor Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) Chairman Asit Tripathy said the incident was first-of-its-kind for the country.

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), one of the largest steel makers of the world, delivered the cylinders to the Odisha government. The delivery of 1,350 oxy-

● **ARCELOMITTAL NIPPON** Steel India, one of the largest steel makers of the world, delivered the cylinders.

gen cylinders to the Odisha government was the first tranche of a consignment of 5,150 cylinders pledged by AM/NS India to be given as a part of its contribution to bring relief to victims of Covid-19 across the state.

Describing it as a step ahead in oxygen security, Tripathy said the Chief Minister had directed that no patient shall suffer due to lack of oxygen.

The state government is ensuring efficient distribution of oxygen cylinders to all medical institutions and developing reserves. In two months,

more than 14,000 additional oxygen cylinders were added. With today's import and further consignments, the situation will become better, the official said.

Sunday's consignment for the government of Odisha extends AM/NS India's support for Covid-19 to six states across India. It has been supporting relief work in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana.

The company has built a 250-bed Covid hospital in Gujarat which is now being expanded to 1,000 beds. It has been providing daily supply of 250 metric tonnes of liquid medical oxygen to destinations in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana.

## Maha: Lockdown now till June 15

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, MAY 30

With the Coronavirus cases on rise in rural areas of the state, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has announced a new drive 'Corona-Mukta Gao' (Corona-free village) in Maharashtra. If villages in the state become corona-free, the entire state will inevitably get rid of the virus, he said on Sunday.

The cases in Maharashtra state are on decline in recent days. However, while the Covid-19 pandemic in urban areas has seen a drop, the rural areas have witnessed a gradual rise. The new drive is aimed at bringing the cases in rural areas under control.

While announcing the corona-free village drive

in a virtual address, CM specially mentioned the villages in Ahmednagar and Solapur districts, which have managed to become free of pandemic. "People like Popatrao, Ruturaj Deshmukh, Komal Tai have made commendable efforts in eradicating Covid from their villages. If we fight the pandemic in a disciplined manner like them, we can also make villages in the state corona-free," he said.

The CM also extended the lockdown-like restrictions in the state till June 15.

However, the restrictions will not be uniform throughout the state, but they will vary in cities and districts according to the positivity rate and the availability of oxygen beds, he added.

## SII: Can supply 10 cr doses in June

New Delhi, May 30: Serum Institute of India (SII) has informed the government that it will be able to manufacture and supply nine to 10 crore doses of Covishield in June, official sources said on Sunday amid complaint by states about the shortage of anti-coronavirus vaccine jabs.

In a recent letter to Union home minister Amit Shah, SII said its employees have been working round the clock in spite of various challenges

because of the pandemic.

"We are pleased to inform that in the month of June we will be able to manufacture and supply nine to 10 crore doses of our Covishield vaccine to the country as compared to our production capacity of 6.5 crore doses in May," Prakash Kumar Singh, the director of government and regulatory affairs at SII, said in the letter.

Singh also thanked Shah for his "valuable guidance and continuous support" at various stages of their

endeavour to make India 'aatmanirbhar' (self-sufficient) in Covid-19 vaccines and making it available for the people of the country.

"Serum Institute of India has always been sincerely concerned about the protection of the citizens of our country and world at large from Covid-19. Under the leadership of our CEO, Adar C. Poonawalla, our team have been working relentlessly shoulder to shoulder with our government to fight the Covid-19 pandemic,"

he said in the letter.

"We assure you that with the support of the Government of India and under your kind guidance, we are trying our best by utilising all of our resources to increase our production capacity of Covishield in the coming month also." In early May, SII had communicated to the Centre that production of Covishield would be ramped up to 6.5 crore in June, seven crore in July and 10 crore each in August and September. — PTI

## STRANGE | FEARS

## Villagers afraid that swab strip used for test would infect them Tribals flee into forest to avoid virus test

Pithoragarh (Uttarakhand), May 30: Residents of a tribal village here ran to a nearby forest when a team of district health workers came to their doorsteps recently to test them for Covid-19.

Kuta Chaurani village is inhabited by Banrawats — an endangered tribe.

The shy tribals fled to the adjoining forest on getting information about the arrival of a Covid testing team in their village on Friday, Didihat SDM K.N. Goswami said on Sunday.

"While we could test residents of Aultari and Jamtari villages, those living in Kuta Chaurani fled to the forest, the SDM said.

The Banrawat community was declared a primitive tribe on the verge of extinction by the Government of India in 1967.

"Over 500 members of this highly endangered tribe are living in eight localities of Didihat sub division. We had sent our corona testing team to Aultari, Jamtari and Kuta Chaurani villages to test them. A total of 191 members of the community from Aultari and Jamtari came forward to undergo the test but residents of Kuta Chaurani fled to the forests to avoid tests," Goswami said.

"The villagers were afraid that the swab strip taken for the test would infect them," the SDM said.

Jagat Singh Singh Rajwar, an elderly member of the community from Kuta Chaurani village, said the swab tester could cause further infection to them.

● **THE ADMINISTRATION** has also been informed about the poor conditions in which the members of the endangered tribal community are forced to live with no work for them due to the Coronavirus lockdown, Sanju Pant, coordinator of Didihat youth society, said.

"We are ready to go for a health check, take medicines but do not agree to let the strip enter our body," Rajwar said.

According to the SDM, his team has persuaded some literate members of the community to create awareness among the locals about the necessity of the tests.

"We will make another attempt to test them in two-three days," Goswami

said. Sanju Pant, coordinator of Didihat youth society, said corona kits have been distributed among some members of the community after taking them into confidence.

The administration has also been informed about the poor conditions in which the members of the endangered tribal community are forced to live with no work for them due to the Coronavirus lockdown, Pant said.

"We have requested the administration to distribute consumer goods other than food material to the community members," he said.

The SDM said packets of spices, edible oil and other essential items besides food packets have been distributed among them for

free. According to Didihat youth society sources, the community is facing dire shortage of essential goods as there is no earning for them due to the lockdown.

"If their plight is not addressed, they might face hunger and death," Pant said.

SDM Didihat said he has written to the block development officer of Didihat and the district development officer of Pithoragarh to give members of the community work under the MGNRE-GA.

"We will not let the community face hunger. We maintain a vigil on them through our revenue officials lest they should face any shortage of food," he said. — PTI

## STAN SWAMY TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, MAY 30

Stan Swamy has reportedly tested positive for the Coronavirus infection after he was moved to a hospital. Swamy, who is in custody in connection with the 2018 Bhima Koregaon case, was moved to the private hospital following the directives given by the Bombay high court on Friday.

Swamy is amongst the 16 persons arrested in connection with the Elgar Parishad case. Soon after he was remanded to jail custody, he had to be shifted to the jail hospital and he has personally complained to the Bombay High Court that his health is continuously deteriorating since he has been shifted to jail.

He had stated before the court that he was able to walk, write, eat and do all of his work by himself, but with every passing day in hospital, he has become so weak that he needs help to do his day-to-day work.

According to one of Swamy's friends, his co-prisoners were assisting him to do his day-to-day work, the jail authorities should get all those tested who had come in contact with Swamy.

During hearing on his interim bail plea on health grounds before the high court he had told judges that he didn't want to get admitted to any hospital, however, later he agreed to go to hospital and at the directions of the Bombay HC he was shifted to Holy Family Hospital, where he has been found to be positive for Covid-19.

## LABOUR MINISTRY DECLARES MORE EPFO, ESIC SOPS

New Delhi, May 30: The ministry of labour and employment on Sunday announced additional benefits for workers through social security schemes run by the EPFO and the ESIC amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

These benefits include pension for dependents of insured persons with Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) who died due to Covid-19 and hike in maximum sum assured under the group insurance scheme Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme (EDLI), run by Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), to ₹7 lakh from ₹6 lakh.

"The ministry of labour and employment has announced additional benefits for workers through ESIC and EPFO schemes to address the fear and anxiety of workers about wellbeing of their family members due to increase in incidences of death due to Covid-19 pandemic," a ministry statement said.

Enhanced social security is sought to be provided to the workers without any additional cost to the employer, it added. — PTI

## Lockdown lifted partially in J&amp;K

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, MAY 30

The Jammu and Kashmir authorities have announced partial lifting of 'Corona curfew' in the Union Territory from Monday morning.

While 50 per cent shops and other businesses will be allowed to remain open on alternate days from Monday, the public transport can resume services with half passenger capacity.

However, a complete lockdown will remain in force at weekends — from Friday evenings to Monday mornings — till further orders. J&K's all twenty districts were brought under 'Corona curfew' from April 30 in view of an alarming

surge in Covid-19 deaths and fresh positive cases.

Also, the night curfew will remain in force in entire UT from 8 pm to 7 am next day.

"There shall be a complete 'Corona curfew' (during night time and weekends) with no movement of people except for permissible activities only at the time of curfew except essential and emergency services, movement, work and essential supplies shall remain exempted subject to production of wedding cards / ID cards, etc. and wholesalers, fruit and sabzi mandies may also remain open as necessary in a regulated manner to ensure provision of essential supplies", said an official order.



## SHORT TAKES

## ONE KILLED IN PLANE CRASH IN UTAH

**Eden, May 30:** One man died and another man suffered severe burns when their single-engine aircraft crashed Saturday morning near the Powder Mountain area near Eden in northern Utah, authorities said.

The National Transportation Safety Board said it is investigating the crash of the Cessna 172S.

It's not clear why the plane went down.

Authorities said the injured man was transported by air to the University of Utah burn center.

The plane had left Ogden's Hinkley Airport not long before the crash.

The crash resulted in a small fire, but officials say the crash site was cold and wet so the fire was quickly extinguished.

## PLANE CRASHES INTO LAKE, 7 BELIEVED DEAD

**Smyrna (US), May 30:** A small jet carrying seven people crashed into a Tennessee lake on Saturday, and authorities indicated that no one on board survived. The Cessna C501 crashed into Percy Priest Lake near Smyrna after taking off from a nearby airport about 11 am, the Federal Aviation Administration said in a statement. Rutherford County rescue crews were still at the scene of the crash late Saturday and planned to work through the night. Rutherford County Fire Rescue Capt. Joshua Sanders said at a news conference.

He indicated that there were no survivors. "Our efforts have transitioned from a rescue effort to that of a recovery effort. ... We are no longer ... looking for live victims at this point," Sanders said.

He said none of the names of the victims would be released until their families had been notified. Earlier Saturday, officials confirmed that at least one person had died in the crash.

## CHINESE CRAFT DOCKS WITH ORBITAL STATION

**Beijing, May 30:** An automated spacecraft docked with China's new space station carrying fuel and supplies for its future crew, the Chinese space agency announced.

Tianzhou-2 spacecraft reached the Tianhe station eight hours after blasting off from Hainan, an island in the South China Sea, China Manned Space said. It carried space suits, living supplies and equipment and fuel for the station.

Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony, is third and largest orbital station launched by China's increasingly ambition space programme. The station's core module was launched April 29. The space agency plans a total of 11 launches through the end of next year to deliver two more modules for the 70-ton station, supplies and a three-member crew.

China was criticised for allowing part of the rocket that launched the Tianhe to fall back to Earth uncontrolled. There was no indication about what would happen to the rocket from Saturday's launch.

Beijing doesn't participate in the International Space Station, largely due to US objections.

## TIGRAY WAR: ETHIOPIANS FLAY U.S. SANCTIONS

**Kampala, May 30:** Thousands of Ethiopians gathered in the nation's capital Sunday to protest outside pressure on the government over its brutal war in Tigray.

Protesters at the rally in Addis Ababa carried banners that criticised the United States and others in the international community who are voicing concern over atrocities in Tigray, where Ethiopian forces are hunting down the region's ousted and now-fugitive leaders.

Troops from neighbouring Eritrea are fighting in Tigray on the side of Ethiopian government forces, in defiance of international calls for their withdrawal.

But the protesters in Addis Ababa carried placards that said "Ethiopian young people denounce the western intervention."

Others said Ethiopia's sovereignty was at stake. The US said last week it has started restricting visas for government and military officials of Ethiopia and Eritrea, who are seen as undermining efforts to resolve the fighting in Tigray, home to an estimated 6 million of Ethiopia's 110 million people.



People on Boscombe beach, as the holiday weekend is expected to bring blue skies and widespread sunshine, in Boscombe, England, on Sunday. The holiday weekend and relaxation of Coronavirus restrictions has enabled many to visit the beach, as warm weather spreads across the region. — AP

## More US states ease rules as vax rates rise

Infections fall just in time for Memorial Day weekend

## Bolsonaro faces protests over pandemic handling

**Providence, May 30:** Just in time for Memorial Day weekend, more US cities and states are shrugging off lingering Covid-19 restrictions as vaccination rates rise and the number of infections falls.

Massachusetts lifted a mask requirement Saturday, a day after New Jersey dropped its mandate. In New York City and Chicago, officials reopened public beaches, though winds and cool temperatures kept crowds away.

"Welcome back, Chicago," Mayor Lori Lightfoot said in a video announcement. The lakefront is open.

Chicago's Navy Pier also reopened retail stores and restaurants, carnival rides, and tour boats and cruises after the pandemic forced months-long closures at the busy tourist destination.

It's one more sign of progress that reflects increasingly positive health data. On Saturday, Illinois' Department of Public Health reported 802 new confirmed and probable infections, the second-lowest one-day total in the last six months.

For businesses nationwide, the improving outlook and long holiday weekend offered a chance to welcome customers back to in-person shopping.

Midtown Scholar Bookstore in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, opened its doors to customers for the first time in nearly 14 months Friday. Masks are still required.

The business had switched to internet orders, sidewalk sales and virtual author events to survive the pandemic.

We had to get creative, we had to pivot, store manager Alex Brubaker said.

— AP

## PM TO UPDATE SINGAPOREANS ON VIRUS FIGHT

**Singapore, May 30:** Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Sunday he will share his government's plan on how to combat the Covid-19 pandemic while slowly reopening the country for business in a speech to be broadcast on Monday.

The prime minister said the Covid-19 restrictions were working and the government was taking strict measures to keep Singaporeans safe from the deadly virus.

"Thank you for staying home and complying with the guidelines," said Prime Minister Lee while announcing his address to the nation in a Facebook post on Sunday.

— PTI

**Rio De Janeiro, May 30:** Tens of thousands of people in Brazil staged another day of protest against President Jair Bolsonaro, in particular for his chaotic handling of the pandemic, which has claimed more than 461,000 lives here. In downtown Rio de Janeiro, some 10,000 people wearing masks marched through the streets, with some chanting "Bolsonaro genocide" or "Go away Bolsovirus."

Similar rallies were held in other major cities, the

latest in a wave of anger against Bolsonaro that began months ago. After the United States, Brazil has the world's second highest Coronavirus death toll.

At the outset of the pandemic, the far right Bolsonaro dismissed Covid-19 as "a little flu" and as the death toll has risen steadily he has gone on to infuriate people in other ways, opposing stay-at-home measures and masks, touting ineffective medications, refusing offers of vaccines, and failing to anticipate oxygen shortages that left patients to suffocate.

One of the themes of the rally Saturday was how many lives might have been saved if the Bolsonaro government had started Brazil's vaccination drive earlier. The drive is going slowly and has sputtered frequently for lack of supplies.

"We must stop this government. We must say 'enough is enough,'" businessman Omar Silveira said at the Rio rally.

— AFP

## Vax mandates: US hospital sued

**Houston, May 30:** A hospital in the US has been sued by over 100 staffers for turning them into Covid-19 vaccine "guinea pigs" by mandating them to get the shot. The plaintiffs filed suit against Houston Methodist Hospital Friday, the latest group of workers to challenge mandatory inoculations at essential workplaces.

Attorney Jared Woodfill said he is representing 117 workers. The lawsuit states that for the first time in US history, an employer is forcing its employees to be vaccinated "with an experimental Covid-19 mRNA gene modification injection" or be fired.

The lawsuit cited that

the US Food and Drug Administration issued its first emergency use authorisation for Covid-19 in December 2020, but the vaccines are awaiting full FDA approval and licensing, which will likely take months for the agency to review additional data.

The complaint cited that forcing employees to get the vaccine violates Nuremberg Code, a medical ethics code that bans forced medical experiments and mandates voluntary consent. "Methodist Hospital is forcing its employees to be human 'guinea pigs' as a condition for continued employment," the lawsuit states.

— PTI

## Italy extends entry ban for Indians

**Rome, May 30:** Italy extended Sunday an entry ban for people coming from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, as a continued precaution against the more transmissible Indian variant of the novel Coronavirus.

The ban, which does not apply to Italian citizens, was introduced in late April and was due to

expire on Sunday. It was prolonged until June 21, a spokesman for Italian Health Minister Roberto Speranza said in a statement.

The B.1.617 variant of the Coronavirus was first detected in India last year and has been blamed for much of a devastating Covid-19 wave that has battered South Asian

nations in recent weeks.

This week, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said the variant has officially spread to 53 territories, and has been linked to seven other territories by unofficial sources, taking the total to 60.

In an interview with AFP, WHO regional director for Europe Hans Kluge said the increased conta-

giousness of the new variants of the Coronavirus, including the Indian one, was one of his main worries. "We know for example that the B.1617 (Indian variant) is more transmissible than the B.117 (British variant), which already was more transmissible than the previous strain," the Belgian doctor said.

— AFP

## Call for action, inclusion at Seoul climate summit

**Seoul, May 30:** World leaders on Sunday called for more action and inclusion of all countries in the global drive towards a cleaner and greener planet at a climate summit hosted virtually by South Korea. Climate change is a major threat to global growth, with perils ranging from declines in crop yields, extreme weather that devastates tourist economies, disease outbreaks and other catastrophes that would sap productivity.

South Korea — which recently announced plans to cut finance for international coal projects — is seeking a bigger role in the global initiative to go green. "South Korea will play a responsible role as a bridging nation between developing and advanced nations," said President Moon Jae-in as he opened the 2021 Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030, or P4G, summit.

The two-day summit is the second of its kind following the inaugural meeting held in Copenhagen in 2018, and is focused on public-private partnerships, especially in develop-

ing countries. Advanced nations have laid out ambitious emissions-cutting goals in recent months, as well as plans to ultimately go carbon neutral by 2050.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on the countries to phase out their dependence on fossil fuels, warning climate change is threatening people's lives and the economy as much as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earlier this month Germany tightened its targets to reduce CO2 emissions — including a 65 percent cut in emissions by 2030 — after a landmark ruling by the country's top court declared a flagship climate protection law "insufficient".

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said coun-

tries must now deliver on their green pledges.

"It's a great start, but let's not pat ourselves on the back just yet because our planet and our people need more," he said.

"We need governments that will not just make promises on climate and nature but match those words with deeds."

World leaders committed under the 2015 Paris accord to keeping the global temperature increase to under two degrees Celsius — and ideally closer to 1.5°C — by 2050.

Yet many of the largest emitters have so far failed to keep up their commitments and countries have not even agreed on a unified rulebook governing how the Paris agreement works in practice.

The UN says that emissions must fall nearly eight percent annually to keep 1.5C in play — equivalent to the emissions saved during the pandemic every single year through 2030.

World leaders also stressed the importance of making sure that poorer countries are not left out in the global initiative to go green.

— AFP

## CHINA FRICTION IN MORRISON ARDERN TALKS

**Christchurch, May 30:** Growing friction with China and how to reopen borders after the pandemic will likely be among the topics discussed by the leaders of Australia and New Zealand in their first face-to-face meeting since the Coronavirus outbreak began.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison arrived in the tourist resort of Queenstown for an overnight visit Sunday. He greeted his New Zealand counterpart Jacinda Ardern with a traditional Maori hongi, in which the pair pressed noses together. Morrison is the first major world leader to visit New Zealand since both countries shut their borders last year to contain the virus.

The neighbouring countries opened a quarantine-free travel bubble last month, although a recent outbreak of the virus in Melbourne has prompted New Zealand to suspend the travel bubble with Victoria state.

Morrison's visit came as New Zealand was dealing with extensive flooding in the Canterbury region following heavy rains. Video footage showed one farmer being rescued by helicopter from a raging river, while other swelling rivers threatened to flood thousands of homes.

— AP

## INDIAN GETS 10-YEAR UAE GOLDEN VISA

**Dubai, May 30:** An Indian student has received the UAE's coveted 10-year Golden Visa, which is mostly reserved for prominent global personalities, for her merit and excellent academic credentials, according to a media report.

Tasneem Aslam from Kerala received the Golden Visa in the exceptional student category and is allowed to stay in the country till 2031, *Khaleej Times* reported.

The UAE government in 2019 implemented a new system for long-term residence visas, enabling foreigners to live, work and study in the UAE without the need of a national sponsor. These golden visas are issued for five or 10 years and will be renewed automatically.

This is one of the best moments in my life. I feel privileged to achieve this and I am thankful to Almighty Allah. My parents support has been enormous, and Insha Allah I hope to sponsor them in near future, Tasneem said.

Tasneem studied Islamic Sharia from Al Qasimi University in Sharjah and topped her class with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.94 on 4.

— PTI

## RECENT | EXCAVATIONS

In Nov., archaeologists had announced the discovery of 100 coffins

## Egypt bets on ancient finds to revive tourism

**Cairo, May 30:** Workers dig and ferry wheelbarrows laden with sand to open a new shaft at a bustling archaeological site outside of Cairo, while a handful of Egyptian archaeologists supervise from garden chairs.

The dig is at the foot of the Step Pyramid of Djoser, arguably the world's oldest pyramid, and is one of many recent excavations that are yielding troves of ancient artifacts from the country's largest archaeological site.

As some European coun-

tries re-open to international tourists, Egypt has already been trying for months to attract them to its archaeological sites and museums.

Officials are betting that the new ancient discoveries will set it apart on the mid- and post-pandemic tourism market. They need visitors to come back in force to inject cash into the tourism industry, a pillar of the economy.

But like countries elsewhere, Egypt continues to battle the Coronavirus, and is struggling to get its

people vaccinated. The country has, up until now, received only 5 million vaccines for its population of 100 million people, according to its Health Ministry. In early May, the government announced that one million people had been vaccinated, though that number is believed to be higher now.

In the meantime, authorities have kept the publicity machine running, focused on the new discoveries. In November, archaeologists announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient

coffins dating back to the Pharaonic Late Period and Greco-Ptolemaic era, along with 40 gilded statues found 2,500 years after they were first buried.

That came a month after the discovery of 57 other coffins at the same site, the necropolis of Saqqara that includes the step pyramid.

Saqqara is a treasure, said Tourism and Antiquities Minister Khaled el-Anany while announcing the November discovery, estimating that only 1% of what the site contains has

been unearthed so far.

Our problem now is that we don't know how we can possibly wow the world after this, he said.

If they don't, it certainly won't be for lack of trying.

In April, Zahi Hawass, Egypt's best-known archaeologist, announced the discovery of a 3,000-year-old lost city in southern Luxor, complete with mud brick houses, artifacts and tools from pharaonic times. It dates back to Amenhotep III of the 18th dynasty, whose reign (1390-1353 B.C.) is considered a golden

era for ancient Egypt.

That discovery was followed by a made-for-TV parade celebrating the transport of 22 of the country's prized royal mummies from central Cairo to their new resting place in a massive facility farther south in the capital, the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization.

The Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh is now home to an archaeological museum, as is Cairo's International Airport, both opened in recent months.

— AP



## DECCAN Chronicle

31 MAY 2021

### Centre petty in a needless confrontation with Bengal

The manner in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "review meeting" — or, really speaking, so-called review meeting, in light of everything that's transpired since — concerning the devastation caused by the cyclone Yaas with West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee was conducted, it would seem the idea was not so much to discuss cyclone-related damage in the middle of the second wave of Covid but to provoke a fresh round of confrontation between the Centre and the state.

In the three weeks since the state Assembly election result became known, and Ms Banerjee led her party to a record victory, in the process trouncing the BJP which had hoped to form government, not a day has passed without the exchange of bitterness and acrimony between the Centre and the state and the BJP and the Trinamul Congress.

Regrettably, governor Jagdeep Dhankhar has taken it upon himself to be at the centre of these activities in ways that suggest he values his party association more than the neutrality his constitutional duties cast on him. He had been invited to the "review" meeting at the Kalaikunda air base, along with a clutch of BJP leaders, including the leader of the Opposition in the Assembly.

This is far from usual. In the event, the CM did well not to have any part in any of this. That would have set a dreadful precedent. A meeting between the PM and a CM ought to be just that, the presence of senior aides apart; else it would always be a crowd commandeered by the Union government. The governor decidedly has no role to play in such a meeting. Nor do Opposition party leaders since this was not billed as an all-party meeting.

The CM, therefore, met the PM at the airbase, handed him an estimate of financial requirements to repair the damage caused by the cyclone, and with the PM's "permission" proceeded to her next meeting along the damaged coastal belt. Nevertheless, through the BJP's propaganda network, which alas includes sections of the impressionable media, it has been given out that the CM "skipped" the meeting called by the PM to review the damage.

Ms Banerjee is a very combative street politician and is known to give as good as she gets. This does not always make a pretty picture. However, events initiated by the Centre after her party's recent electoral triumph suggest that her actions have been reactive, not pro-active. It is ironical that a PM who skipped talking about "federalism" after taking office and insisted on calling it "cooperative federalism" should be the presiding deity when ugly fracas plays out on daily basis in relation to a state in which his party has been firmly placed on the electoral mat.

Perhaps nothing shows this more graphically than the way the Centre chose to deal with the chief secretary, Alapan Bandopadhyay. He was asked to report for duty at the Centre on the last day of his service as an IAS officer. Ironically, only four days before he was to superannuate, at the state's request, the Centre had granted him an extension of three months in service (as against the six sought). This has been widely viewed as an act of infinitesimal smallness — a part of the act of continuing jousting against a state with whose CM the Centre is at odds.

### 2 yrs of Modi 2.0: Little to celebrate

The conspicuous absence of celebrations around the completion of two years of the NDA-2 regime betrays how tumultuous they have proved to be. There are many reasons why this period was far from memorable from among the seven years of Narendra Modi rule since 2014. Waves of a rampant pandemic, which have tested the capacity to govern in over 200 nations, have had less to do with why the last two years have been particularly filled with turmoil in India.

The biggest mandate in democratic India's history in 35 years since 1984 was squandered by the regime giving primacy to a Hindutva agenda, beginning with the abrogation of Article 370 in the "taming" of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. The pursuit of an amended citizenship bill promising to give citizenship to all refugees except Muslims tore the fabric of a pluralistic democracy asunder leading to communal riots in New Delhi. The seeming foreign policy gains from the showmanship of the "Howdy Trump" and "Howdy Modi", besides the positive vibes generated by the banning of the triple talaq had all but evaporated.

While the verdict in the sticky dispute over the Ayodhya shrines, courtesy of an obliging judiciary, was welcomed with the enthusiasm reserved for the resolution of any historical disagreement, there was a ruthless persistence in a divisive agenda, which seemed to be driven by the itch to settle scores more than repaying the people who voted again for the BJP over the combined opposition. In prioritising a blatantly political agenda, from Kashmir to Lakshadweep and Puducherry, even the new farm laws became suspect, triggering a long running agitation.

In promoting electoral aims above governance, which was largely left to bureaucrats even during the pandemic, the ruling party lost the perception battle, too. Image management and a retributory stance against the public media run by Big Tech are seen now like a pushback by a federal regime fast losing its popularity, also reflected by poll verdicts in many prominent states. The second Covid-19 wave has simply added to the image of a faltering Centre and the ruling party, which now has less than three years to undo the post-2019 damage.

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Subhani



## Flux in Centre-state ties with breakdown of trust



Sanjaya Baru

An outstanding address to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council by Tamil Nadu's finance minister P.T. Rajan, a contentious interaction between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and the questionable remarks by V.K. Paul, a member of the Niti Aayog, blaming state governments for the mess over the Covid vaccination strategy once again draw attention to the sorry state of Centre-state relations today. Mr Modi came to power in New Delhi in 2014 promising to adopt "cooperative federalism" as his watchword. Seven years into office he is reminding many people across India of the Indira Gandhi era when the Centre rode roughshod over the states.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent direct interaction with district magistrates, ignoring their chief ministers, was also a reminder of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's attempt to empower the district level bodies, funding them directly from New Delhi, by-passing state governments. The Indira-Rajiv era of unhappy Centre-state relations was challenged by several powerful chief ministers, including Jyoti Basu, N.T. Rama Rao and M. Karunanidhi. The Centre is a conceptual myth, declared NTR, who in the early 1980s emerged as a stout defender of the rights of state legislatures and state governments.

Seeking to retrieve the trust of provincial political leaders, Indira Gandhi appointed the Justice Sarkaria Commission on Centre-state relations in 1983. Every time that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had problems in dealing with state governments he would, in jest, recall NTR's assertion and remind himself of Justice Sarkaria's views.

In the quarter century from 1989 to 2014, successive PMs had managed Centre-state relations within a framework of consensual politics. Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao, Atal Behari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh maintained excellent personal, political and administrative relations with all the chief ministers, irrespective of their party political affiliation.

Against this background, it is disconcerting to hear the Tamil Nadu finance minister speak of "a deterioration of the 'relationship of trust' between the governments of the Union and the states". It was even more worrisome to see a photograph of a scheduled meeting between the PM and the West Bengal CM in which the PM was seated at the head of the table and the CM and other officials, including the Leader of the Opposition BJP in the state Assembly, were required to be seated along both sides of the table. In the event, Ms Banerjee chose not to attend the meeting.

During his first term in office, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh travelled to many state capitals to chair meetings with state CMs and their ministerial colleagues and officials, often accompanied by the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission and senior Central government officials. The seating arrangement always had the PM and his team seated across the table facing the CM and his/her colleagues. It was a gesture of respect that built trust. These meetings were meant to discuss the implementation of various Centrally funded projects at the state level. The Centre has the money, but it is the states that implement all the projects and programmes. A cooperative relationship between the two is essential for good governance in a quasi-federal administrative system like that of

India.

The "deterioration in the relationship of trust" that the Tamil Nadu finance minister spoke of contrasts with the environment of trust and mutual accommodation that former finance minister Arun Jaitley referred to when he addressed a special midnight session of Parliament launching the new GST system. The late Arun Jaitley paid handsome tribute to three state finance ministers affiliated to political parties that opposed the BJP — Thomas Isaac of Kerala, Haseeb Drabu of Jammu and Kashmir and Amit Mitra of West Bengal — for their cooperation and contribution to making the introduction of the GST possible. Jaitley's consensual style, which he learnt at the feet of Prime Minister Vajpayee, served the nation well.

Narendra Modi's imperious manner as Prime Minister contrasts with his attitude towards the Central government as the chief minister of Gujarat and his promise of pursuing "cooperative federalism". When Ms Banerjee objected over not being allowed to speak during the PM's interaction with district magistrates, BJP spokespersons chided her for speaking out of turn. This incident reminded me of what used to happen at New Delhi's Vigyan Bhavan during chief ministers' conferences during the first term of Dr Manmohan Singh. Mr Modi would step out of these meetings to address a group of select media people, summoned by the CM's staff, in the lobby of Vigyan Bhavan. Ms Banerjee may well have learnt from that example of how a CM could upstage a PM at a national conference.

Whatever the banter and the normal party political

**Narendra Modi's imperious manner as PM contrasts with his attitude towards the Central government as the chief minister of Gujarat and his promise of pursuing 'cooperative federalism'**

differences, the fact is that such interactions between the PM and CMs were usually cordial and businesslike during the tenures of consensual PMs like Narasimha Rao, Vajpayee and Dr Manmohan Singh. The current phase of discord and distrust must be brought to an end if India's political leadership as a whole has to deal with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and restore momentum to the economy.

Neither the management of the pandemic and the vaccination drive nor the challenge of fiscal stabilisation and restoration of growth momentum can be handled by the Central government alone. The citizen demands a rational and efficient vaccination programme, a humane and competent healthcare administration and revival of economic growth, employment opportunities and confidence in the medium-term prospects of the economy. The bizarre games of political one-upmanship, the consequent weakening of federal institutions and systems and the mutual blame game between politicians at the Centre and in the states does not serve the interests of the citizen and the nation.

India has lived through many crises and it has recovered speedily when the Centre and the states have shared a spirit of cooperative federalism. Any excessive politicisation of federal governance does no good to either pandemic management or economic revival, nor indeed to an overall improvement in the welfare of the citizen. A prolonged period of political grandstanding and continued tensions between the Centre and the states has already adversely impacted governance and economic development. In the event, the nation needs a renewed commitment to cooperative federalism as defined by the principles of the Constitution.

*The writer is an economist, a best-selling author and former adviser to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. His latest book is India's Power Elite: Class, Caste and a Cultural Revolution.*

#### LETTERS

##### YSRC'S 2-YEAR RULE

The two-year rule of the YSRC government could be rated as unique for two reasons. Firstly the establishment of village/ward secretariats ably assisted by over three lakh volunteers. Secondly, implementation of 94 per cent of the party's poll promises including the much appreciated Navartnalu. Though the government had to endure the pandemic for most of its rule, the socio-economic welfare schemes were not altered even when there was severe strain on the state's exchequer due to heavy borrowing.

**Govardhana Myneedu**  
Vijayawada

There is a jubilant mood among YSRC leaders and cadres as their government completes two years in power and enters the third year. No doubt its welfare schemes have benefited students, farmers and women. The problem is continuing the programmes to meet the expectations of the beneficiaries. The state is reeling under a deep financial crisis and is unable to get further loans. We need to see if the welfare schemes benefitted the state's development.

**P. Govardhana Rao**  
Kankipadu, Krishna district

If the YSRC government has spent ₹95,000 crore on weaker sections and beneficiaries, the other section of society is being made to starve. To uplift the party image by giving freebies, the state is being auctioned.

**Jagannath**  
Vishakapatnam

#### 50 YEARS AGO IN

### DECCAN Chronicle

#### Refugees nearing 4-million mark

CALCUTTA, MAY 30.

The number of Bangla Desh evacuees in West Bengal is fast nearing the four-million mark, according to State Relief Commissioner B.B. Mondal.

He said thousands of evacuees entered the border districts of 24 Parganas and Nadia today.

Mr. Mondal said because of the ceaseless influx the situation in the eight border districts had assumed "unmanageable proportions" and "unprecedented complexities" had arisen.

Mohan Guruswamy



## Tobacco India's top health crisis: Act now, or just go up in smoke!

The consumption of tobacco in all its forms — cigarettes, cheeroots, bidis, gutka and other forms of chewing tobacco — is our number one health challenge now.

According to the World Health Organisation, there are approximately 120 million smokers in India, and India is the home of 12 per cent of the world's smokers. More than 10 million die each year due to tobacco in India. According to the same study, 70 per cent of adult males in India smoke. Among adult females, the figure is much lower, at between 13-15 per cent. The total tax revenue derived from cigarettes and tobacco products is about ₹30,000 crores.

According to a study commissioned by the Government of India, the total economic costs attributable to all diseases related to tobacco consumption is over ₹104,000 crores.

In recent years, the cigarette business has been reporting a drop in consumption. But we do not know if there was a corresponding decrease in the incidence of cancer and other smoking induced ailments. The government, presumably under pressure from the rich and powerful cigarette industry, has not yet conducted a detailed study

of this and the consequential cost to the economy in spite of a specific request from the revenue department to enable it to evolve a scientific basis for cigarette taxation.

Whatever be the drop in stick sales, it is very evident that rupee sales and profits have not shown any decline. Industry bosses can, like the cigarette-smoking Dev Anand in the film Hum Dono did, continue to sing "barbadhon ka jashn manata chala gaya, har fikr ko dhuey mey udhata chala gaya!"

Objectively speaking, this is not a bad situation at all, and is proof that the government policy, whether deliberate or accidental, is still halfway good. For, as far as this industry goes, a good policy will ensure that the state gets more revenue, while the consumption keeps dropping each year. But this does not necessarily mean any good news on the health front, as dropouts may have switched to bidis? Nevertheless, the decline in consumption, attributed by the industry to higher excise duties in each of the previous few budgets, means the policy is in the right direction and that there is a case for further increasing the tariffs on cigarettes and bidis once again this year.

The cigarette industry will, no

doubt, argue now that it is not wise to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. In this case it is not a golden egg but a time bomb, as each cigarette smoked now implies a future medical cost. Very recently the US government negotiated a \$368 billion damages package from the US cigarette industry to pay for future health costs. As the finance minister's adviser, I had once recommended that the health ministry be asked to similarly estimate future health costs in India. It followed that excise duties should be determined with the idea of recovering these costs now. I also advised that raising excise duties each year is a win-win situation. If consumption drops, it means future savings.

It is not that the incidence of smoking is low in India if we take into consideration the widespread bidi habit. NCAER has estimated that 348 million people belong to households with an annual income of over ₹12,500. Logic suggests that the vast majority of cigarette and bidi smokers must come from this segment. This is, by any standards, a very high and dangerous figure. Another point of concern is that the US congressional investigations have revealed that cigarette companies rou-

tinely spiked tobacco with extra nicotine to intensify addiction. It is rumoured that similar practices are still widespread in India. There is, therefore, a case for pegging excise duties with nicotine content as well.

One reason suggested for the drop in stick sales in the first half is that smuggled cigarettes ate into the share of locally produced brands. Industry analysts estimate that a third of MNC production are for illegal exports. The port of Antwerp is the hub of the international cigarette smuggling business. Antwerp is to cigarettes what Dubai is to gold! The Indian cigarette industry estimates that smuggled international brand penetration now accounts for two per cent of the market and to some 30-40 per cent of the segment for king-size cigarettes.

Cigarettes are an easy target because they are in the organised sector. But the consumption of bidis and chewing tobacco is just as dangerous and these sectors are growing. Therefore, the danger to public health only keeps increasing. The unfortunate part of this is that the government actively supports and subsidises the increased production of tobacco. Tobacco farming makes a huge

footprint on our agriculture and now accounts for 4,95,000 hectares of the most fertile land. Apart from using up valuable agricultural land, tobacco farmers derive all the largesses the state and Central governments confer on them. Free water and free power are the more obvious ones. Then there is subsidised fertiliser and tax-free status for all farming. The government must review these policies. I would like to see tobacco farming taxed on an acreage basis to make it less profitable and for the government to recover all the unmerited subsidies that tobacco farmers encash.

This is easier said than done. The tobacco sector is a powerful vested interest. ITC and the other cigarette manufacturers are the top half of that pyramid. It is easy to take it on, but it's now time to take on the base.

*Today, May 31, is World No Tobacco Day*

*The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.*



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	51,422.88	0.60
Nifty 50	15,435.70	0.64
S&P 500*	4,204.11	0.08
Dollar (₹)	72.43	0.22
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.74	-0.24
Euro (₹)	88.28	0.23
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,910	205 0.42
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	69.78	0.46
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.003	0.27
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.599	-0.011

\* As of Friday/Saturday

FDI in software, hardware jumps 3-fold to \$26 bn

FDI in computer software and hardware jumped over threefold to \$26.14 billion during 2020-21, according to DPIIT data. The sector received \$7.67 bn FDI in 2019-20 and \$6.41 bn in 2018-19. The sector accounted for about 43 per cent in the total \$59.63 bn foreign inflows that India attracted in 2020-21. The technology space in India is growing significantly on the back of the rapid digitisation of businesses, Deloitte India's Rajat Wahi said.

Nepal's CG Corp in talks to buy listed India hotel



Nepal-based CG Corp Global is in advance talks to acquire a publicly listed hotel brand in India. The firm also plans to add 26 new managed hotel properties, expected to be operational in 2022. "We are in the process of acquiring a very well known brand of a listed hotel company," CG Corp global chairman Binod Chaudhary said. The firm operates 112 hotel properties with 6,013 rooms in 10 countries.

Burlington English readies IELTS coaching in India

With Covid-19 shifting the dynamics from traditional to online training methods, Burlington Group is focusing on its IELTS programme besides a range of other web-based English language learning solutions in India. Ratnesh Jha, CEO, Burlington Group South East Asia & India, an education conglomerate present in nearly 40 countries, says India is currently home to the largest number of IELTS test takers in the world.

470 infra projects show ₹4.38-L cr cost overrun

As many as 470 infrastructure projects, each worth Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overrun totalling more than Rs 4.38 lakh crore. Of the 1,737 such projects, 470 reported cost overrun and 525 were delayed. Total original cost of implementation of the 1,737 projects was Rs 22,33,409.53 crore and their completion cost is likely to be 26,71,440.77 crore, an overall cost overrun of 4,38,031.24 crore.



Five-year personal loans at easy rates Banks to offer ₹5L Covid loan

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MAY 30

Public sector banks on Sunday announced that they would be offering unsecured personal loans of upto Rs 5 lakh to salaried, non-salaried as well as pensioners to meet the treatment cost for Covid-19 at a concessional rate. The banks also announced new loan schemes for hospitals/dispensaries, vaccine manufacturers, oxygen and ventilator manufacturers and suppliers, importers of vaccines and Covid-related drugs logistics firms.

Loans extended under the above schemes would form part of the Covid loan book under the guidelines issued by the central bank this month and are under priority sector lending.

Addressing a joint press conference, State Bank of India (SBI) chairman Dinesh Khara, Indian Banks Association (IBA) chairman Rajkiran Rai and IBA chief executive Sunil Mehta announced various support measures and launch of three new loan products by all nationalised banks to mitigate the impact from the pandemic resurgence.

Khara said, "Individuals, including salaried, non-salaried and pensioners, can avail of unsecured personal loans from Rs 25,000 to Rs 5 lakh to meet Covid-19 treatment. The repayment tenure would be five years. SBI would charge interest of 8.5 per cent per annum while other banks



are free to decide their interest rate."

The PSBs have also offered to provide upto Rs 2 crore as healthcare business loan for setting up oxygen plant along with power backup system to existing hospitals, nursing homes under the government's Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS). The loan tenure is of five years. Capped at an interest rate of 7.5 per cent these loans are backed by 100 per cent guarantee cover of the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd (NCGTC) under ECLGS 4.0, which was announced by the government on Sunday. The third product is a business loan for healthcare facilities up to Rs 100 crore to setup/expand healthcare infrastructure and to manufacturers of healthcare products at a concessional rate.

The government has announced modifications to the ECLGS by enlarging the scheme's scope. The validity of ECLGS has been extended to September 30, 2021 and disbursement is permitted up to December 31, 2021. Similarly, to address the disruptions caused by the resurgence of Covid pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India on May 5 announced several measures, including a term liquidity facility of Rs 50,000 crore to Ease Access to Emergency Health Services (Covid Loan Book) such as resolution framework 2.0 for Covid related stressed assets of individuals, small businesses and MSMEs, re-assessment of working capital limits, etc.

While the economy had revived well from the beginning of fourth quarter of FY21, the pandemic's resurgence from April 21 has impacted the lives of individuals, and cash flows of businesses and MSMEs.

"In regard to Resolution framework 2.0, PSBs have formulated a templated approach for restructuring of loans," a release from SBI and IBA said.

When contacted, Paytm spokesperson declined to comment. It is likely to be one of the largest IPOs in India. Paytm shareholders include Alibaba's Ant Group (29.71 per cent), Softbank Vision Fund (19.63 per cent), Saif Partners (18.56 per cent) and Vijay Shekhar Sharma (14.67 per cent).

AGH Holding, T Rowe Price and Discovery Capital, Berkshire Hathaway hold less than 10 per cent stake. Paytm claims to be 30-50 per cent larger than mobile apps in the segment.

—PTI

PAYTM BOARD OKAYS ₹22K CR IPO IN Q3

PRASOON SRIVASTAVA NEW DELHI, MAY 27

Digital payments and financial services firm Paytm has received in-principle approval from the company's board to raise around Rs 22,000 crore through an initial public offering in the October-December quarter this year, according to an industry source.

The company is looking at an enterprise value of over Rs 2 lakh crore for the IPO, which is likely to be discussed at its board meeting scheduled for Friday.

"The board of directors of Paytm has given in-principle approval for the mega IPO planned to be launched in October-December quarter. The company expects to raise around Rs 21,000-Rs 22,000 crore from the IPO. This will also give some of the existing investors to offload some of their stake," the source told PTI.

The board meeting of the company was held on Friday.

When contacted, Paytm spokesperson declined to comment.

It is likely to be one of the largest IPOs in India.

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Paytm claims to be 30-50 per cent larger than mobile apps in the segment.

—PTI

ECLGS extended to aviation, scope widened

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MAY 30



The government on Sunday announced extending the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to the civil aviation sector that has been facing headwinds since the onset of the pandemic, besides expanding the scope of the scheme. It also extended the validity of the scheme till September 30, 2021 or till guarantees for an amount of Rs 3 lakh crore are issued. Disbursement under the scheme will be permitted up to December 31, 2021.

In a statement, the finance ministry said that on account of the disruptions caused by the second Covid-19 wave to businesses across various sectors of the economy, it has been decided to enlarge the scope of ECLGS.

In March, ECLGS 3.0 was introduced to cover business enterprises in hospitality, travel and tourism, leisure and sporting sectors.

The ministry has also removed the current ceiling of Rs 500 crore of loan outstanding for eligibility under ECLGS 3.0, subject to maximum additional ECLGS assistance to each borrower being limited to 40 per cent or Rs 200 crore, whichever is lower.

As per an official statement by the finance ministry, under ECLGS 4.0, 100 percent guarantee cover will be extended to loans of up to Rs 2 crore given to hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, medical colleges for setting up on-site oxygen generation plants. The interest rate has been capped at 7.5 per cent for

the same, which means the banks can offer loans at lower rates than this ceiling.

"Borrowers who are eligible for restructuring as per the RBI guidelines of May 5, 2021, and had availed loans under ECLGS 1.0 of overall tenure of four years comprising of repayment of interest only during the first 12 months with repayment of principal and interest in 36 months thereafter will now be able to avail a tenure of five years for their ECLGS loan i.e. repayment of interest only for the first 24 months with repayment of principal and interest in 36 months thereafter," the ministry said.

Also, the new scheme has made a provision of additional ECLGS assistance of up to 10 per cent of the outstanding as of February 29, 2020, to borrowers covered under ECLGS 1.0, in tandem with restructuring as per the RBI guidelines of May 5, 2021.

The revised operational guidelines are being issued by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd (NCGTC).

Addressing a joint press conference, State Bank of India chairman Dinesh Khara, Indian Banks Association chairman Rajkiran Rai and IBA CEO

Sunil Mehta said the new measures and loan products announced by the banks were aimed at mitigating the impact on the resurgence of the Covid pandemic.

To implement the expanded ECLGS measures, the public sector banks have put in place systems and processes for seamless implementation of RBI's Resolution Framework 2.0, they said.

Declining to comment on the likely number of resolution applications by the MSMEs this time, Rai said last time out of the 8.5 lakh eligible firms only 60,000 had availed of the facility.

Recently the government had announced collateral-free automatic loans worth Rs 3 lakh crore for micro, small and medium enterprises, out of which Rs 2.54 lakh have been sanctioned, IBA and SBI officials said, adding there was still headroom to lend another Rs 46,000 crore under this scheme.

To a question, Rai said the Covid second wave has impacted the collections of public sector banks in the month of May. "It is difficult to give numbers but can say that we faced difficulty in collections in the month of May and we are offering the available reconstructing scheme to customers," Rai said.

With 1,400 semiconductors in a car, chip-makers get upper hand

IAN KING & KEITH NAUGHTON MAY 30

A century after automakers showed the world the value of assembly-line manufacturing, a shortage of semiconductors is teaching the industry a painful new lesson in what it takes to build a car. For most of its history, the industry has relied on a distinct approach to buying car parts, procuring components from suppliers right at the moment they're needed. It's referred to as just-in-time manufacturing and is designed to streamline production and eliminate the costs of keeping warehouses stocked with parts waiting to be used.

But the shortcomings of that system were made starkly clear this year as the automakers confronted a dearth of the chips they need to build advanced functions into their vehicles, and found themselves near the bottom of chipmakers' customer lists because of their just-in-time

approach. That shortage is threatening to cut \$110 billion in sales from the industry, and forcing auto manufacturers to overhaul the way they get the electronic components that have become critical to car design.

"Customers need to change," said Hassane El-Khoury, chief executive officer of ON Semiconductor Corp, which gets more than a third of its revenue from the automotive market. "That just-in-time mindset doesn't work."

Semiconductor makers are demanding guaranteed, long-term orders rather than the short-term flexibility the carmakers are used to. The chipmakers' assertiveness, even under pressure from lawmakers, underscores the rebalancing of power from the companies whose logos are on the cars to those that provide the advanced technology that runs them.

As these components play a bigger role in everything from in-car entertainment to self-



driving functions, chip manufacturers say they're willing to invest in expanding production to head off a repeat of shortages that have forced the industry to mothball factories and furlough workers—if the carmakers give them orders that can't be cancelled and commit to long-term agreements.

"Why would I have invested a single dollar when my customer can cancel within 30 days and it takes me two years to build capacity?" El-Khoury asked.

There are signs the industry is listening. A week before, Ford Motor Company CEO Jim Farley indicated a new willingness to reverse decades of outsourcing for parts.

"As the industry changes, we have to in-

source now, just like we in-sourced powertrains in the '20s and '30s," said Farley, who has shut down half his factories.

Automakers can no longer "assume the dominance of an 800-pound gorilla" in negotiations with chip companies and battery makers, said Mark Wakefield, head of the auto practice at consultancy AlixPartners.

Pioneered by Toyota Motor Corp. in the 1960s, just-in-time strategy helped the industry organise a system for sourcing the 40,000 or so components that go into a modern vehicle, many of which can be made in a matter of days. But semiconductors—the heart of sensors, engine management and battery controllers, infotainment and eventually systems that will pilot vehicles—are created in a process that takes months.

Today's cars contain an average of 1,400 semiconductors—and that puts the chipmakers at an advantage.

—Bloomberg

Intrastate e-way bills see rise, interstate bills dip

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 30

While intrastate e-way bills continued to grow even in the pandemic year of FY21, interstate bills registered a decline. Textiles was the top sector generating e-way bills last fiscal.

At 37.55 crore, intrastate e-way bills registered a marginal growth of 1.65 per cent from 36.94 crore in FY20. However, the restrictions across state borders during the nation-wide lockdown and even during unlock phases interstate e-way bills saw a decline by 7 per cent from 25.94 crore in FY20 to 24.13 crore in FY21. Gujarat was the top state to produce the highest number of interstate e-way bills, while Maharashtra generated the highest intrastate bills, as per government data.

However, Karnataka was the top state to verify e-way bills followed by Gujarat and Kerala.

Textiles continued to be the top sector generating e-way bills even in FY21, but there was a decline of 21 per cent in the number of bills from 8.20 crore in

FY20 to 6.47 crore in FY21. In FY20, the sector had seen a growth of 15 per cent in e-way bill generation. Electrical machinery and equipment, machinery and mechanical appliances, iron and steel articles and automobiles were the other top e-way bill generating sectors. Among them, electrical machinery and equipment as well as machinery and mechanical appliances continued to register growth.

E-way bills meant for both exports and imports were down in line with the decline in overseas trade in FY21.

Bills for imports fell 15 per cent, while exports were down 4.7 per cent. About 98 per cent of the 61.68 crore e-way bills generated in FY21 were meant for road transport, while one per cent each used them for rail and air transport.

A large chunk of bills were meant for shorter distances. Around 44 per cent of the bills were generated for transporting goods for less than 100 km. Another 14 per cent for distance between 100 and 200 km.

SANITISERS WITH LEUKEMIA-CAUSING BENZENE IS LATEST WORRY



ANNA EDNEY MAY 30

Four decades ago, the US government used rarely deployed emergency powers to reduce workers' exposure to benzene, a chemical linked to a five-fold increased risk of leukemia. After a landmark study in 1977 highlighted its health risks, employers and manufacturers were forced to limit the industrial compound in their workplaces. Yet just within the past few months, elevated levels of benzene have appeared in some hand sanitisers, and last week, an analysis by an independent testing lab revealed its presence in some sunscreens and after-sun skin soothers.

While the amounts found in skin products have been relatively small—far less toxic than the doses that resulted in blood cancers and regulatory action—they're still spurring alarm from public health experts. Questions are being raised about how benzene was allowed into the common lotions, and how to keep it out.

"There's no such thing as a safe level of exposure, and that's especially true for children," said Philip Landrigan, director of the Global Public Health Program and Global Pollution Observatory at Boston College who has studied toxic chemicals and human health for 40 years. "Benzene actually causes DNA mutations, it's a potent carcinogen. Even a small dose can set in motion the chain of events that can lead to a cancer a few years later."

—Bloomberg





## SHORT TAKES

## Teen rider dies in Moto3 crash

**Florence:** Swiss motorcycle rider Jason Dupasquier has died following a crash during Moto3 qualifying for the Italian Grand Prix, the Careggi Hospital in Florence announced Sunday. He was 19. "Despite the best efforts of circuit medical staff and all those subsequently attending to the Swiss rider, the hospital has announced that Dupasquier has sadly succumbed to his injuries," MotoGP said in a statement. Dupasquier was involved in an accident with Ayumu Sasaki and Jeremy Alcoba toward the end of Saturday's session, which was immediately red-flagged. Meanwhile, Repsol Honda's Pol Espargaro took a 12th place finish in Mugello MotoGP. Yamaha's Fabio Quartararo won the race. After a promising start, star Honda rider Marc Marquez's race lasted just over a lap as he fell at turn three on lap two. — Agencies

## Diya-Swastika assured of medal

**New Delhi:** Young Indian paddlers Diya Chitale and Swastika Ghosh put up solid performances at the 2021 WTT Youth Star Contender in Tunisia as they confirmed a medal in the U-19 girls doubles besides advancing to the knockout stage of the singles category. The Maharashtra duo of Diya and Swastika, who received a bye in the opening round, registered convincing 11-5, 6-11, 11-9, 11-8 victory against the local favourite Fadwa Garci and Maram Zoghalmi in the last-8 match in Tunis, and secured at least a bronze medal with an entry into the semi-finals. The Indian pair will take on Czech Republic's Linda Zaderova and Croatia's Hana Arapovic in the last-four match. — PTI

## Milkha is back home, wife in ICU

**Chandigarh:** Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh was on Sunday discharged from a private hospital where he was getting treatment for Covid-19 infection even as he continues to be on oxygen support. While the 91-year-old Milkha was discharged in stable condition on the request of his family, his 82-year-old wife Nirmal Kaur had to be shifted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) on Saturday night due to increasing oxygen requirement. "On the request of the family, Mr Milkha Singh was discharged from the hospital today in a stable condition. He is on oxygen and nutritional support," the Fortis hospital, Mohali, said in its update. "Mrs Milkha Singh had to be shifted to the ICU last night due to increasing oxygen requirements. She continues to be stable." The hospital had earlier said that they were being treated for pneumonia. — PTI

## Iniyan wins chess World Cup qualifier

**Chennai:** Indian Grandmaster P. Iniyan on Sunday qualified for the FIDE World Cup, scheduled to be held in July, by winning the AICF World Cup qualifier online chess tournament. Iniyan and fellow GM from Tamil Nadu, D. Gukesh had finished on 12.5 points each after 17 rounds but the former took the top prize since he had emerged winner in the match between the two in round 14. Iniyan entered the final day with 10.5 points in his pocket and ahead of Gukesh by half a point. He defeated Ritwik Raja in the 15th round and Saravana Krishnan in the 16th before losing to Deep Sengupta. — PTI

## Giannis delivers for Milwaukee

**Washington:** Giannis Antetokounmpo managed his first NBA playoff triple double on Saturday and the Milwaukee Bucks defeated Miami 120-103 to sweep the Heat out of the post-season in the opening round. Antetokounmpo had 20 points, 12 rebounds and 15 assists to spark the Bucks, who were led by 25 points from center Brook Lopez and 22 more off the bench from Bryn Forbes while Khris Middleton added 20. — AFP

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Chelsea players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Champions League on Saturday. They beat Manchester City 1-0 in the final. — AP

## ROYAL BLUE

## Chelsea edge City to emerge kings of Europe

**Portugal, May 30:** Chelsea won the Champions League for the second time as a Kai Havertz goal secured a tense 1-0 victory over Manchester City in Saturday's final in Porto, shattering Pep Guardiola's dream of lifting the trophy for the third time. Havertz rounded Ederson to score three minutes before half-time at the Estadio do Dragao and the Chelsea players ran to celebrate with the German.

Coach Thomas Tuchel, full of energy on the touchline just like his opposite number, punched the air in celebration, and later jumped with joy on the pitch after Chelsea held on for victory in the second half after City lost distraught skipper Kevin De Bruyne to injury.

The London club finished fourth in the Premier League, a huge 19 points behind champions City, but this, remarkably, was their third win over Guardiola's side in six weeks. They ended City's hopes of a domestic treble when they triumphed in the FA Cup semi-finals in April and delayed their title celebrations with victory in Manchester.

Now, in a final watched by a limited crowd of just over 14,000 fans who created a raucous atmosphere, they have denied City the first Champions League crown they and Guardiola so crave.

City had to wait 13 years after being taken over by

## CL WINNERS (SINCE 2010)

2010-11	Barcelona
2011-12	Chelsea
2012-13	Bayern Munich
2013-14	Real Madrid
2014-15	Barcelona
2015-16	Real Madrid
2016-17	Real Madrid
2017-18	Real Madrid
2018-19	Liverpool
2019-20	Bayern Munich
2020-21	Chelsea

**It was an incredibly tough fight. They were determined to win this. We wanted to be the stone in their shoe. The effort was huge. We overcame some difficult moments and had a fantastic attitude to defending**

— THOMAS TUCHEL, CHELSEA COACH

Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Mansour just to get to the Champions League final.

They are now the eighth consecutive team to lose in their first appearance at this stage. The same misfortune befell Qatar-owned Paris Saint-Germain last year as well as Tottenham Hotspur when they were beaten by Liverpool in the last all-English final in 2019.

"It is the first time we're here, we'll learn, we'll come back," Guardiola said.

"The players did everything, they wanted to do



Chelsea's Kai Havertz celebrates after scoring a goal against Manchester City in the Champions League final in Porto on Saturday. — AP

well, to win this competition, sometimes you perform well, sometimes not."

Chelsea also lost when they first got to the final, on penalties against Manchester United in Moscow in 2008.

They overcame the final hurdle by beating Bayern Munich in a shoot-out in 2012 and now they have their second European Cup to move level with Juventus, Benfica and Porto as well as another English side, Nottingham Forest.

Their transformation

into one of Europe's super clubs has been down to the riches of Roman Abramovich, their Russian oligarch owner who was in attendance in Portugal.

"It's such a special occasion. At this moment in time, we're the best team in the world. You can't take that away from us," said Mason Mount, who has been outstanding for the Stamford Bridge side this season.

Chelsea have been transformed since the appointment as coach in January of Tuchel. — AFP

## WORKED 15 YRS FOR THIS, SAYS HERO HAVERTZ

**Portugal, May 30:** German forward Kai Havertz said he had "worked 15 years" for the moment when he scored the goal that won the Champions League for Chelsea against Manchester City on Saturday.

Havertz's 42nd minute strike -- his first goal for the club in the Champions League -- gave Chelsea their second European crown nine years after they beat Bayern Munich to win their first.

"I don't know what to say, I waited a long time. I've worked 15 years for this moment, I am overwhelmed," 21-year-old Havertz told *BT Sport*.

Chelsea captain Cesar Azpilicueta hailed the young forward.

## COACH TUCHEL SET FOR NEW DEAL

Chelsea coach Thomas Tuchel is set to reap the rewards with a handsome new contract, although whether he will be allowed to put down roots in west London remains to be seen given how managerial cycles tend to go at Stamford Bridge.

"We have a strong bond, a strong group who can really defend and play and have answers on all questions in the game," Tuchel said.

"Once the celebrations are over and once we digest this experience, it is the moment to grow, to evolve, to learn from it and become better."

There is huge room for improvement in the EPL after Chelsea finished 19 points behind champions City. — AFP

## IPL PHASE 2 | IN UAE

## Pat to skip, other Aussies doubtful

**Sydney, May 30:** Kolkata Knight Riders pacer Pat Cummins is set to miss the UAE-leg of the IPL and Cricket Australia needs to make a call if it is prudent to let other Australian players compete in the League and spend more time in mentally tough bio-bubble.

The BCCI on Saturday approved IPL's resumption in September in the UAE. The organisers were forced to suspend the league earlier this month after multiple cases of Covid-19 were reported inside the bio-bubble. "Cummins, despite a multi-million dollar IPL contract, has already said he will not return to the T20 tournament this season," a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* said.

Cricket Australia will have to factor in the workload and bio-bubble fatigue ahead of the T20 World Cup, scheduled to take place in India in October-November.

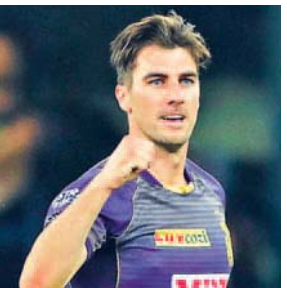
The Australian players had to serve a quarantine period upon their arrival back home via Maldives from India due to travel restrictions in the country in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

"CA will need to decide whether it's in the best mental health interests of its players to spend even more time in a bio-secure bubble," the report said.

"CA could decide the IPL will ensure players are fine-tuned for the World Cup, which could also be held in the UAE," the report added.

ECB's Director of Cricket Ashley Giles has already said due to a busy international schedule from June onwards, the English players are unlikely to be available for the remainder of the tournament.

Australia have a tour of West Indies scheduled from late June ahead of the T20 World Cup, followed by



Pat Cummins

a Test against Afghanistan and the Ashes series.

"The Australians could also have a short tour of Bangladesh in August but that has not been confirmed. However, the Bangladesh board is planning for five Twenty20 matches."

The currently-suspended IPL saw participation from over 40 Australian cricketers, support staff and broadcasters.

The IPL, which was held in the UAE last season, has 31 matches remaining.

## BCCI WANTS CPL TO BE ADVANCED

The BCCI is trying to convince Cricket West Indies to advance the start of the Caribbean Premier League by a week or 10 days to ensure a seamless bubble-to-bubble transfer of players for the IPL's resumption.

The CPL is scheduled to get underway from August 28 with the final to be played on September 19, while the remaining part of IPL is likely to be held from September 18 to October 10, not leaving the players with any time to settle down.

"We are in talks with Cricket West Indies. We are hoping that if CPL can be finished a few days in advance, it would help in bubble to bubble transfer of all players to Dubai and in time to complete the mandatory three-day quarantine," a BCCI source, privy to the development, said on Sunday. — PTI

## MITHALI MOVES ON FROM 2018 SPAT WITH POWAR

**New Delhi, May 30:** Personal likes or dislikes don't matter when one is playing for the country, India's Test and ODI captain Mithali Raj said on Sunday, insisting that she and head coach Ramesh Powar have "moved on" from a bitter past to take the team forward.

Mithali and Co. are currently quarantining in Mumbai ahead of the UK tour, which is expected to provide a big push to the team's preparations for the ODI World Cup in New Zealand early next year.

The full-fledged series comprising India's first Test in seven years will also be Powar's first assignment as head coach. The former India spinner returned to the role after being sacked following India's semifinal defeat in the 2018 World T20. Mithali was controversially dropped from that game and relations between the two went south with both accusing each other of unprofessional conduct.

"We can't be living in the past. I've played for so many years, I don't have an ego or I don't give attention to my personal likes and dislikes. And 21 years has been a long time for me to sort of, you know, go through many challenges," she said. — PTI

## Mary goes down in summit clash

**Dubai, May 30:** Six-time world champion M C Mary Kom (51kg) signed off with a silver medal in the Asian Boxing Championships after going down in an intense final against Nazym Kyzaibay of Kazakhstan here on Sunday. Mary Kom lost in a split 2-3 verdict. It was her seventh medal in the tournament, the first being a gold that came way back in the 2003 edition.

Up against an opponent 11 years younger to her, the 38-year-old made an impressive start and clinched the opening round comfortably by relying on her sharp counter-attacks.

The intensity picked up in the second round and both the boxers showed aggressive intent. The Kazakh drew level at this point with her jabs landing perfectly.

Mary Kom fought back in the final three minutes but that was not enough to get the judges' nod. "The Manipuri legend also won a prize money of \$5,000 for her campaign, while Kyzaibay was richer by \$10,000.

Kyzaibay is a two-time world champion and a six-time national champion.

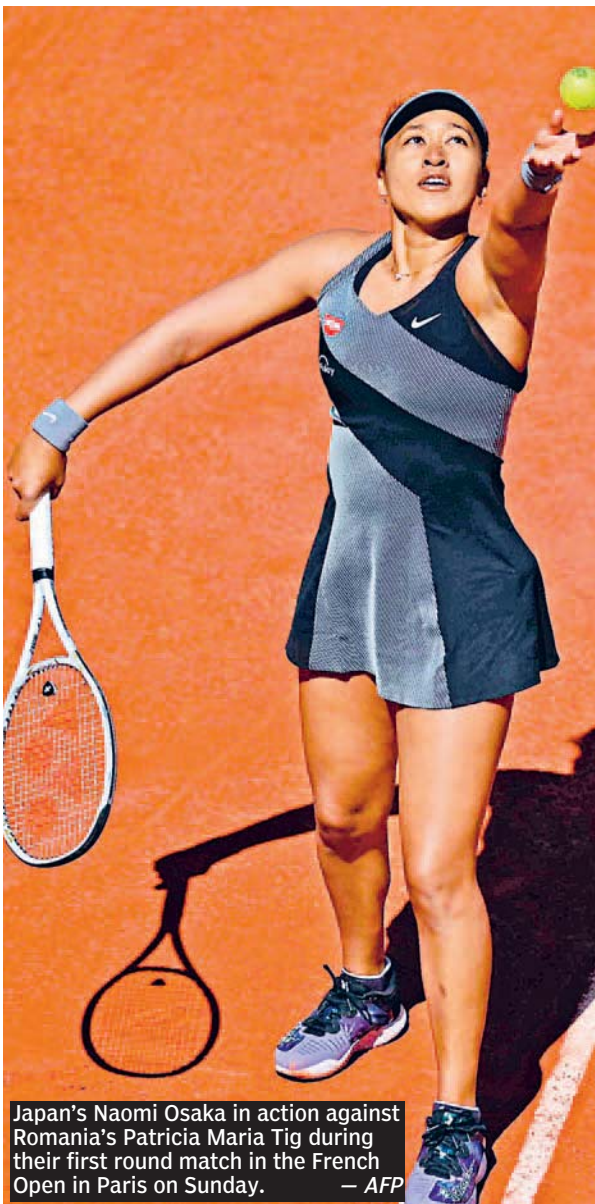
On Monday, Amit Panghal (52kg), Shiva Thapa (64kg) and Sanjeet (91kg) will fight it out in the men's finals.

Panghal will square off against reigning Olympic and world champion Shakhobidin Zoirvof of Uzbekistan. It will be a repeat of the 2019 world championship final in which the Indian had lost to settle for silver.

Thapa will be up against Mongolia's Baatarsukh Chinzorig, who is the Asian Games silver-medalist.

Sanjeet will take on Kazakh legend Vassiliy Levit, who is chasing his fourth gold at the continental showcase.

Eight other Indians — the Olympic-bound trio of Simranjit Kaur (60kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg), and Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), and Jaimee (57kg), Sakshi Chaudhary (64kg), Monika (48kg), Saweety (81kg) and Varinder Singh (60kg) — secured bronze medals after semifinal losses. — PTI



Japan's Naomi Osaka in action against Romania's Patricia Maria Tig during their first round match in the French Open in Paris on Sunday. — AFP

## Osaka lets racquet talk, Andujar shocks Thiem

**Paris, May 30:** World number two Naomi Osaka let her racquet do the talking at the French Open on Sunday, maintaining her media boycott but briefly telling a TV interviewer that her clay court game is "a work in progress".

Osaka opened the first day of action at Roland Garros with a 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) victory over Romanian world number 63 Patricia Maria Tig.

However, Osaka was threatened with disqualification from the French Open if she persists with her controversial media boycott, officials said.

"We have advised Naomi Osaka that should she continue to ignore her media obligations, she would be exposing herself to possible further code of conduct infringement consequences," said a statement from the four Grand Slam tournaments after issuing the world number two with a \$15,000 fine.

"As might be expected, repeat violations attract tougher sanctions including default from the tournament."

Meanwhile, fourth seed Dominic Thiem blew a two-set lead to be dumped out in the first round by Spanish veteran Pablo Andujar on Sunday.

The 35-year-old Andujar staged a remarkable comeback to defeat the two-time Roland Garros runner-up 4-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 after almost four-and-a-half hours on Court Philippe Chatrier.

It was the first time in his 17-year career that Andujar has come from two sets behind to win.

"It's a very special moment because I'm 35 and I don't know how long I'm going to play," said Andujar. "I had to believe to be able to get this result."

"It was very difficult, in the third set he wasn't quite as strong."

It is Thiem's first opening-round exit at Roland Garros and the first time he has failed

to reach at least the quarter-finals of the tournament since 2015. — AFP

## RESULTS (ROUND 1)

**Women:** Anhelina Kalinina (UKR) bt Angelique Kerber (GER x26) 6-2, 6-4; Elena Rybakina (KAZ x21) bt Elsa Jacquemot (FRA) 6-4, 6-1; Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (RUS x31) bt Christina McHale (USA) 6-4, 6-0; Danka Kovinic (MNE) bt Clara Burel (FRA) 6-3, 7-6 (10/8); Ana Bogdan (ROM) bt Elisabetta Cocciaretto (ITA) 6-1, 6-3; Naomi Osaka (JPN x2) bt Patricia Maria Tig (ROM) 6-4, 7-6 (7/4).

**Men:** Karen Khachanov (RUS x23) bt Jiri Vesely (CZE) 6-1, 6-2, 6-3; Henri Laaksonen (SUI) bt Yannick Hanfmann (GER) 6-1, 6-3, 4-6, 6-2; Roberto Bautista Agut (ESP x11) bt Mario Vilella Martinez (ESP) 6-4, 6-4, 6-2; Fabio Fognini (ITA x27) bt Gergoire Barrere (FRA) 6-4, 6-1, 6-4; Marton Fucsovics (HUN) bt Gilles Simon (FRA) 6-4, 6-1, 7-6 (7/5); Pablo Andujar (ESP) bt Dominic Thiem (AUT x4) 4-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.