

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

ANANTAPUR | SUNDAY | 23 MAY 2021

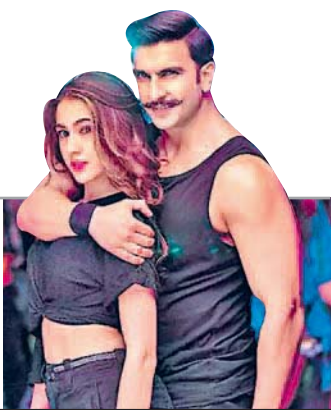


**WORLD | 7**  
**Nepal House dissolved, poll in Nov.**



**SPORTS | 8**  
**Olympics on track: IOC chief**

**TABLOID**  
**Women empowerment: Most wanted in cinema**



deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle

Vol. 22 No. 272 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

## WEATHER

Max: 36.0°C  
Min: 16°C  
RH: 67%  
Rainfall: Nil

**Forecast:** Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 36/16 °C

## ASTROGUIDE

**Plava:** Uttarayana  
**Tithi:** Vaishakha Shuddha Ekadasi till 6.41 am; then Vaishakha Shuddha Dwadasi till 3.37 am (Monday)  
**Star:** Hasta till 12.08 pm  
**Varjyam:** 7.21 pm to 8.47 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 4.57 pm to 5.48 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**HJRI CALENDAR**  
**Shawwal 10, 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 3.06 AM**  
**MOONRISE 4.37 PM**

## COUNTER POINT



Unused medicines? Don't throw them away... Let's try them on Covid patients!

## SHORT TAKES

### Music director Raamlaxman dead

**Mumbai:** Veteran music director Raamlaxman, best known for his work on Rajshri Productions' blockbuster movies — *Maine Pyar Kiya*, *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* and *Hum Saath Saath Hain* — died due to a cardiac arrest. He was 78. The composer, whose real name was Vijay Patil, passed away at his residence in Nagpur in the early hours of Saturday, his son Amar said.

■ Report on tabloid

### Class XII: Exams for big subjects

**New Delhi:** Conducting exams for only major subjects, planning them in two phases keeping in mind the Covid-19 situation in respective states or devising an internal assessment scheme — these are among the suggestions likely to be discussed at a high-level meeting on Sunday to decide the fate of pending class 12 board examination.

■ Another report inside

### Assam plans Bill to protect cows

**Guwahati:** Assam Governor Jagdish Mukhi on Saturday said the government is planning to introduce a cow protection bill in the next assembly session to ban transport of the animal outside the state. Addressing the first session of the 15th Assam Legislative Assembly, Mukhi said people revere and worship cows, considering it a sacred animal.

### IMA seeks action on Baba Ramdev

**New Delhi:** The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Saturday demanded that the Centre should take strict action against yoga guru Ramdev for allegedly misleading people by making "unlearned" comments and describing modern medicine as "stupid science", remarks which were denied as "false" by the Haridwar-based Patanjali Yogpeeth Trust.

■ Another report inside

## Aarogyasri boost for health in AP

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, MAY 22

The medical and health services have been improved largely in the past two years in Andhra Pradesh and people are getting treatment for Coronavirus pandemic due to the inclusion of Covid-19 in the Aarogyasri scheme.

According to officials, the government has cleared pending bills of ₹680 crore related to the earlier government and current bills of ₹2,398 crore helping Aarogyasri network hospitals to continuously render services to the public.

According to the medical and health department officials, under YSR Aarogyasri scheme, free treatments for 2,434 diseases including cancer are covered and more than 130 super-specialty hospitals in Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai have also been brought under the Aarogyasri network hospitals in the past

two years. About 95 per cent of the families in the state are benefiting from the scheme with the enhancement of income limit to ₹5 lakh. There are 45,611 beds in 621 hospitals in the state while 38,763 beds are occupied out of which 28,189 people are being treated under Aarogyasri. In all Covid hospitals, there are ,217 ICU beds, 22,756 non ICU oxygen beds, 16,638 non ICU non oxygen beds and 3,407 ventilators.

The Nadu-Nedu scheme in hospitals turned a boon towards modernisation of hospitals towards providing corporate medical services.

The government is working on 10,032 YSR Village Clinics, 560 Urban Health Clinics, 1,147 Primary Health Centres, 52 Area Hospitals and 191 Community Health Centres across the state for infrastructure development.

■ Page 2: 9,712 health staff posts filled

## Suvendu kin get Y-level security

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 22

In a move that could further escalate tension between Centre and West Bengal government, the Union home ministry has now decided to provide Y-category security cover to Sisir Kumar Adhikari and Dibyendu Adhikari, both are Lok Sabha MPs, and are father and brother of Suvendu Adhikari, who defeated Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram during the recent Assembly elections in Bengal.

The entire Adhikari family, which has considerable political influence, in the Nandigram region of West Bengal was earlier a part of the Trinamul Congress family before switching sides to the BJP. The move to provide security cover to Sisir Kumar Adhikari and Dibyendu Adhikari comes close on the heels of home ministry earlier providing Central security cover to all the newly elected 77 BJP legislators in West Bengal. The Adhikaris and most BJP MLAs now have a Y+ category security under the CRPF.

## Ayush team says it is not Ayurvedic medicine

PATHRI RAJASHEKAR | DC NELLORE, MAY 22

The Ayush department team studying the concoction prepared by Bonigi Anandaiah at Krishnapatnam and hawked as a cure for Covid-19 cannot be termed an Ayurvedic medicine.

They said that Ayush protocols and guidelines do not accept these preparations as Ayurvedic drugs. They felt that the preparations were similar to traditional local medicines, hinting that there is no need for any licence.

Speaking to this newspaper, Commissioner of Ayush and head of the team, Col. V. Ramulu, said that there are no harmful ingredients in the substance being given by Anandaiah, including the eye drops.

● **THEY SAID** that Ayush protocols and guidelines do not accept these preparations as Ayurvedic drugs. They felt that the preparations were similar to traditional local medicines, hinting that there is no need for any licence.

● **COMMISSIONER OF Ayush** and head of the team, Col. V. Ramulu, said that there are no harmful ingredients in the substance being given by Anandaiah, including the eye drops.

"Anandaiah prepared all them before us and the process is very simple for anyone to produce. Moreover, he is willing to share the formula with the public," he said.

The Ayush official said that Anandaiah has been

using herbs including locally available leaves such as neem, mango and jamun apart from honey, pepper, green camphor, nutmeg, black cumin, turmeric and cinnamon among many other items, "which we use daily for preparing food items."

In the eye drops, Anandaiah has been using pepper, mulla vankaya and honey, Col Ramulu noted. He said that the preparation cannot be prescribed for Covid-19 as the formula is one among hundreds of local remedies for different ailments. Citing an instance, he pointed to the popular Puttur treatment for broken bones.

Col Ramulu said they would submit a report to the government on their study. It is up to the government to take a decision, he added.

## TRAVEL | RESTRICTIONS

**Crisis hits revenues, incomes of shops, establishments that are dependent on air travel**

## Fewer passengers seen at airports across state

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, MAY 22

Footfalls have dipped at all airports with the Covid-19 spreading its tentacles and the governments scrambling to impose restrictions on travel and businesses.

In AP, Vijayawada International Airport used to operate 46 flights per day in pre-Covid times and it now barely operating eight to 12 flights to sectors like Hyderabad, Bengaluru and New Delhi. Travel bans

imposed on flights from India are only adding to the dwindling air traffic by the day.

The crisis has hit revenues of airports as well as income of shops and business establishments dependent on air travel. Though Airports Authority of India charges airlines for operation of flights annually, reduced operation of flights is denting its income as airlines pay charges, based on the services availed and not in advance.

It is learnt that financial constraints are adversely

impacting various development and maintenance works taken up by airports, such as extension of runways, development of aprons, tarmacs, renovation of terminal buildings and other on development of other amenities and facilities.

On how they are coping up with the Covid situation, Vijayawada airport director G. Madhusudhana Rao said, "We are providing all amenities to passengers to avoid any inconvenience even as the footfalls have come down due to

● **VIJAYAWADA AIRPORT** which used to operated 46 flights per day in pre-Covid times is barely operating 12 flights now

Covid at our airport and are strictly following all safety norms."

Tirupati airport used to operate 32 movements of flights in a day during pre-Covid times and at present it is able to operate only three to six services that too to Hyderabad only. Tirupati airport director S. Suresh said, "We are wit-

nessing a lot of cancellation of operation of flights by the airlines for want of patronage from the passengers due to Covid. Except for delay in taking up several developmental works, we ensure all safety precautions for operation of flights."

Rajahmundry airport which used to operate 22 movements of flights a day to sectors like Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati during per-Covid times is operating only six at present. However, it looks for-

ward to cater to choppers for oil companies as they are going to resume offshore exploration of oil and gas. In May, 2020, the airport witnessed footfalls of 681 passengers and in March, 2021, it went up to 26,277 but slid to 20,000 in April. Rajahmundry airport director Manoj Nayak said, "We are maintaining all safety norms and even prepared to operate medical ambulances. We may stop developmental works for the moment to resume them later given the situation."

V i s a k h a p a t n a m International Airport, which operated 794 flights with a passenger footfall of 79,727 in September 2020, witnessed a drastic fall as it just saw 20 flights with 1,214 passengers to domestic sectors like Delhi, Hyderabad, Raipur, Chennai, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kurnool and Port Blair on May 21. However, Covid relief is arriving by air at the airport. On Friday, the airport received 101 boxes of oxygen concentrators from Hyderabad.

## Cyclone Yaas to intensify



A policeman warns beach users of the impending cyclonic storm at Puri, Odisha, on Saturday. Cyclone Yaas is likely to intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm and cross the Odisha-West Bengal coast on May 26. It is expected to pack windspeeds of up to 160 kmph. Where exactly the cyclone would make its landfall is not yet known.

— PTI ■ Report on Page 3

## Remove posts on 'Indian variant', Centre orders SM

**New Delhi, May 22:** The government has asked social media companies to immediately remove any content on their platform which mentions or refers to the term 'Indian variant' of coronavirus, in a bid to curb spread of misinformation around Covid-19.

Digital platforms said they have received the latest advisory. On Friday, the IT ministry wrote to all social media platforms emphasising that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has not associated the term "Indian Variant" with the B.1.617 variant of the coronavirus in any of its reports.

A notice issued in this regard by the IT ministry states that a "false statement" is being circulated online that implies that an 'Indian variant' of coronavirus is spreading across the countries.

● **A NOTICE** issued by the IT ministry stated that a "false statement" is circulated online that implies that an 'Indian variant' of coronavirus is spreading abroad

The IT ministry said the matter has already been clarified by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on May 12, 2021 through a press statement. The social media platforms have been asked to "remove all the content that names, refers to, or implies 'Indian variant' of corona virus from your platform immediately."

Previously, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology had issued advisories regarding curbing of false news/misinformation concerning coronavirus on social media platforms.

— PTI

## Elephant in Chittoor district electrocuted

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MAY 22

The lone wild elephant which was creating havoc in the eastern parts of Chittoor district, was electrocuted at about 6 pm in the farm of one Chiranjeevi Naidu, located between Subba Naidu Kandriga and Govindappa Naidu Kandriga, of Narayanavanam mandal in Chittoor district.

According to Narayanavanam sub-inspector S. Hanumanthappa, the elephant had been found wandering around the villages for the last 15 days

and destroying crops. It reportedly was electrocuted when it came into contact with an electrical transformer after it ventured into a sugarcane field. The SI, apart from forest officers and a veterinary doctor of Narayanavanam examined the scene where the elephant was lying dead and held an inquiry with locals. Arrangements are being made to bury the elephant on Sunday morning, the SI said.

Meanwhile, villagers in Narayanam mandal blamed forest staff for not driving the elephant away despite their complaints.



## SHORT TAKES

## THIRD AP OXYGEN EXPRESS TRAIN REACHES GUNTUR

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 22

The Oxygen Express train bound for Andhra Pradesh with 40 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) in two container tankers from Durgapur in West Bengal reached Guntur on Saturday. This is the third among a series of Oxygen Express trains that will be carrying LMO to AP for saving lives of critical Coronavirus patients admitted in various hospitals of the state.

South Central Railways general manager Gajanan Mallia assured said that Indian Railways will continue to operate such Oxygen Express trains to meet oxygen requirements of various states throughout India. He informed that keeping in view the critical situation, all requests being received from states are being given utmost priority, so the LMO can be transported within the least possible time. He advised all SCR officers and staff to continuously monitor the movement of these trains and ensure that they reach their destinations within the shortest possible time.

Significantly, the distance of nearly 1,400 km between Durgapur and Guntur was covered maintaining an average speed of over 60 kmph.

SCR officials said this is the first time that LMO had been received from Durgapur in eastern India. The previous two rakes, which arrived at Guntur, had come from Kanalus in Gujarat in western part of the country.

## 9,712 HEALTH STAFF POSTS FILLED

From page 1

A total of 9,712 posts of doctors, nurses and medical staff have been filled to ensure that each hospital has the required number of staff.

A total of 16 new medical colleges at the rate of one in each Parliamentary constituency and nursing colleges affiliated to the medical colleges, three new cancer and two kidney specialty hospitals and 6 multi-specialty hospitals under ITDA are under construction. The government is taking steps to complete all the works in phases within three years and to ensure that only medicines with WHO / GMP standards are available in all government hospitals.

A total of 79, 08,945 people have been vaccinated so far under the state-wide vaccination drive in order of priority for building a Corona-free society. The state government is treating Covid patients in home isolation through telemedicine with 3,991 doctors along with 680 specialists.

The 108, 104 services, YSR Kanti Velugu, pensions to chronic patients, YSR Telemedicine, 104 call centre, YSR village clinics and family doctor concept by providing two PHCs in a mandal, two doctors and a 104 vehicle per PHC are the revolutionary services provided to people in the last two years.

## TD: WHY IS GOVT NOT PROCURING COVID VACCINE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 22

Telugu Desam MLA Gorantla Butchalah Chowdary on Saturday strongly objected to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy writing letters to the central government instead of taking proactive measures like purchasing vaccines to save the people from the Coronavirus epidemic. He asked why the government was not purchasing the vaccines when the private hospitals were able to do it. He alleged that from the beginning, the Jagan Reddy regime showed chronic negligence and eventually failed to provide the vaccines to the people, thus pushing the State into a grave health crisis.

The MLA termed as laughable CM's appeal not to give vaccines to private hospitals at a time when all other states were encouraging vaccination drive by even the private managements. He stated that Jagan Mohan Reddy was proving his inefficiency time and again by not taking action to correct the private hospitals and the letter to the centre were just a diversionary tactic.

He asked the CM to explain whether it would be of any use to write to the Centre without calling for tenders to purchase the vaccines.



Police show the Wall Clock to lockdown violators on Bandar Road in Vijayawada on Saturday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

## Corona control efforts get a fillip from Central funds

15th Finance Commission released ₹38.40 crore for 2020-21

NAGESWARA RAO  
BALLEDA | DC  
KADAPA MAY 22

While Coronavirus cases have become more prevalent in rural areas than in cities in recent days, panchayats faced a funding problem in curbing the spread of the infection in villages. However, Corona mitigation efforts are gaining momentum with the recent release of funds by the 15th Finance Commission. There, thus, is some relief for the panchayats in terms of funds availability.

For the financial year 2020-21, the 15th finance commission has released ₹38.40 crore. Of this, 70 per cent, meaning ₹26.88 crore, would go to panchayats and 15 per cent —

● **DISTRICT PANCHAYAT** officer Dhanireddy Prabhakar Reddy told *Deccan Chronicle* that ₹38.40 crore has been sanctioned by the 15th Finance Commission. The funds will be spent as per government directives.

or ₹5.76 crore each — has been released to Mandal Parishats and Zilla Parishat. Some 90 per cent of the funds is allocated on the basis of population and the remaining 10 per cent is allocated depending on the area. According to the 2011 Census, the district has a population of 19.53 lakhs.

The district has 807 panchayats. For the last two months, due to the lack of governing bodies for the panchayats, the secretaries have taken money on loan for overseeing sanitation, installation of street lights and provision of drinking water facilities.

The panchayats' new governing bodies took charge on the third day of last month.

The funds received by the Zilla Parishads will now be used for the maintenance of community protective water schemes (CPWS) and general drinking water schemes. Money will be spent on drinking water management and water conservation works in panchayats in addition to breaking the Corona spread.

While the 14th Finance Commission funds were allocated to the panchayats, a major share of the amount was adjusted

against the electricity bills arrears. As a result, villages without funds under the Mandal and Zilla Parishads could not set up even a single drinking water borehole in their areas.

The 15th Finance Commission has allocated 30 per cent of the funds for these works.

District panchayat officer Dhanireddy Prabhakar Reddy told *Deccan Chronicle* that ₹38.40 crore has been sanctioned by the 15th Finance Commission. The funds will be spent as per government directives. Steps are being taken to release the funds sanctioned to the district to the Panchayats, Mandal Parishads and Zilla Parishad. The process would be completed soon.

## Rebel MP's release may take till Tuesday

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 22

Narsapur MP K. Raghu Ramakrishna Raju's release on bail, which has been granted by the Supreme Court, may be delayed till Tuesday or Wednesday as there are a lot of legal procedures to be adopted.

Though the apex court granted bail to Raju on Friday, as it remained closed for the weekend, the order has yet to reach the XI Additional Civil Junior Judge Court at Guntur in AP. Once it reaches the court, it will start the paperwork where the MP or his lawyers have to furnish a bail bond of ₹1 lakh and two sureties of like amount. Once it is done, the court will forward the release order of the MP Raju on bail to the district jail in Guntur.

Once all the procedural formalities are completed, the MP is supposed to append his signature on the bail bond to be released from the jail. The MP is to be brought to the jail for the purpose if he is healthy and fit enough to travel as at present he is in Military Hospital in Secunderabad, undergoing treatment after completion of medical examination under judicial custody.

If the MP is to be brought from Secunderabad to Guntur jail, it may take several hours of journey and in case he is unable to reach the jail for any reason, the jail authorities after completion of paperwork on his release order on bail will despatch the

## JAGAN UNDERMINING ALL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, PRACTICES, SAYS NAIDU

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 22

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday slammed the Jagan Mohan Reddy government for 'ill-treating' its own Lok Sabha member K. Raghu Ramakrishna Raju by filing a 'false sedition case' as part of its autocratic tactics to silence all dissenting voices in the state. He recalled how the whole country had watched when the Supreme Court made its landmark observations on the AP regime before giving bail to the 'YSRC rebel MP'.

Addressing a press conference, Naidu appealed to

all freedom-loving people to see and think how recklessly the AP Chief Minister had sabotaged all systems and institutions in the state. He stated that a sedition case and 'custodial ill-treatment' were the birthday gifts that Jagan Reddy had given to his own party MP. He further stated that the CM was perpetrating a maniacal regime only to derive sadistic pleasure at the cost of the suffering of common people, political opponents and the media.

He also flayed the Jagan regime, saying it mishandled the issue of Aandandaiah Ayurvedic cure at Krishnapatnam.

bail bond to the Military Hospital in Secunderabad by a registered post, asking them to get the MP's signature on the bail bond and release him if he is fit enough to go out, or to continue the treatment based on the need and at their discretion. Then, the hospital authorities have to send the signed bail bond of the MP back to the jail.

So, it takes at least two to three days for release of the MP on bail. Guntur district jail superintendent Hamsa Paul said, "We have not yet received any order from the XI Additional Civil Junior Judge Court to release the MP on bail so far. The procedure is that the SC order has to reach the court which in turn will forward it to us after taking

bail bond and sureties from the MP. Though the rule position is clear that the MP has to append his signature on bail bond before release from the jail, we have to take a decision on his health condition in consultation with Military Hospital authorities. Based on its advice, we will seek either his personal appearance or dispatch release order to the hospital by post so that the hospital authorities can release him directly. It may take two to three days to complete the whole exercise."

The MP was arrested by the AP-CID on charges of sedition and instigating communal violence and caste conflicts and as he moved the SC for bail, it granted conditional bail on Friday.

## SAVED | LIVES

Forest department established 11 hatcheries in Nellore district, employed 30 fishermen

## Protecting Olive Ridley turtles gives livelihood to fishermen

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR |  
DC  
NELLORE, MAY 22

The Olive Ridley conservation programme launched by the Andhra Pradesh forest department is not only protecting hatchlings from their natural enemies, it is also providing livelihood to fishermen in coastal areas of the state.

The department has

hired local fishermen on daily wages and is providing them materials for creating hatcheries across the coast. The job of these fishermen is to collect eggs from the Olive Ridley nests, relocate them to hatcheries and protect them over a period of 45-50 days till they hatch and baby Olive Ridley turtles get into the sea to start their life.

"As only one in 1,000 turtle hatchlings survives, the efforts of our department, in collaboration with TREE Foundation, is to enhance the survival rate of Olive Ridley hatchlings," said Y.V.K. Shanmukh Kumar, district forest officer of SPSP Nellore.

He said roping in local fishermen in conserving Olive Ridley turtles is pay-

ing rich dividends, apart from being an educating exercise for children belonging to the fishing community.

Shanmukh Kumar disclosed that Andhra Pradesh forest department is coordinating with Indian Coast Guard and Marine Police in dealing with trawlers that pose a threat to mother turtles during the arribada

## STORIES OF HOPE

## Untiring in service of frontline warriors

NAGABHUSHANAM  
HOSKOTE | DC  
ANANTAPUR, MAY 22

An ENT specialist Dr Md. Roohia is winning hearts for her selfless service to the frontline warriors by extending services to the Anantapur police directly and through a police helpline to the police personnel of all levels in Chittoor and Tirupati areas. She is the wife of Anantapur Two Town Circle Inspector Jakir Hussain.

Dr Roohia joined hands with her husband to serve meet the medical needs of the police ever since the outbreak of Covid-19 in the district last year. She heads a team rendering timely advice to the police in the Anantapur range i.e., Anantapur, Chittoor and Tirupati. These days she has intensified her efforts to help the cops keep the dreaded black fungus at bay.

The ENT specialist's services are the need of the hour for the frontline warrior cops who are on duty round-the-clock. With so many personnel either falling sick or succumbing to the virus, her responsibilities only grew over time. She even visits the families of the Covid affected if necessary. Service to the cops and their families takes most of her time, though she also works at a private hospital in Anantapur.

During the first wave, she participated even in swab collection drive for the police personnel at Anantapur headquarters and their families. So dedicated was she to her services that she did not give up serving the patients free of cost even during Ramzan. "Dr Roohia provided exemplary services to the police department in Anantapur," said SP Satya Esubabu, appreciating her services. Anantapur DIG Kranthi Rana Tata was all praise for her services to the personnel across the Anantapur range.

Her husband Inspector Jakir Hussain said she came forward voluntarily to be of any help to the cops as she was moved by the relentless services rendered by them. On his part, Hussain visits ICU wards to instill confidence among Covid-19 patients and even helps with the last rites of the Covid-19 victims.

## SONU SOOD PLANS 02 PLANTS AT KURNOOL, ATMAKUR

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC  
KURNOOL MAY 22

Film actor-turned-philanthropist Sonu Sood has announced that the first set of oxygen plants he is planning to install in hospitals will come up at Kurnool Government General Hospital (GGH) and District Hospital at Atmakur in Nellore district.

In a tweet, he said: "very happy to announce that the first set of my oxygen plants will be set up Kurnool Government Hospital and one at District hospital, Atmakur in Nellore district, in the month of June. This would be followed by setting more plants in the other needy states. Time to support rural India" (sic). He tagged the pictures of KGGH and Regional Eye Hospital in Kurnool.

District collector G. Veerapandian and KMC Commissioner D.K. Balaji had written letters to Sonu Sood, requesting him to consider Kurnool Hospital for his philanthropy.



II Town inspector Jakir Hussain's wife Dr Md. Roohia collects swab of a policeman. Jakir Hussain is also seen.

— DC

## Individuals, groups help Covid affected

VADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC  
KAKINADA, MAY 22

Good Samaritans and private organisations are coming forward to help the needy in getting treatment for Coronavirus. They are providing them oxygen cylinders, food, medicines and other requirements free of cost.

Marine engineer Lanke Sunil has formed a group called "Memunnamu" while another youth S. K. Satish of Konkuduru village in Bikkavole mandal has formed another group called "Nenunnanu". "Memunnamu" and "Nenunnanu" are both helping Covid-19 patients in their own ways.

Sunil said: "We have purchased eight oxygen cylinders costing ₹32,000 each and supplying them to patients based on their Aadhaar card. Once they return a cylinder, the same is being given to other needy patients. We want to purchase more oxygen cylinders to help additional patients," he said.

Satish, who is popular as Magic Satish, said he has launched a free food service under which thousands of food packets are being distributed to Coronavirus patients as well as the poor who are suffering due to the lockdown. Inspiring by his services, some people are providing him rice, vegetables and other commodities, which he is using for supplying free food.

There are also other peo-

● **WE PURCHASED 8 O2 cylinders costing ₹32,000 each and supplying them to patients based on their Aadhaar card, says Sunil.**

ple who are doing going out of their way in helping the virus-affected people. Suresh Chowdary of Kovvada village, along with three others from Kakinada and Ravulapalem, are also providing oxygen cylinders to patients free of cost.

Meanwhile, Paravasthu Satya Gopinath Das Seva Trust is providing ambulance and car services free of cost. Representative of the trust Lalith Kumar Jain said cars are being utilised to take Covid-19 patients to hospitals. Ambulances are being made available for free to transport dead bodies free of cost.

Patients can get the car and ambulance services by calling Lalith Kumar Jain (944109876), Pilladi Rudraiah (8639335791), Nallamilli Subba Rao (86393335713), Pradeep Yadav (9347893530) and Chintapalli Satish (8309067225 and 6301193841).

Abdul Salam Health and Education Foundation has donated ₹1 lakh to Rajamahendravaram MP M. Bharat to be used in assisting Coronavirus patients. Acure Health Care Private Limited has provided oxygen concentrators to the MP for treating those suffering from Covid-19.

## Aarti home to set up 2 O2 plants at Rims

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, MAY 22

Aarti Home, a non-governmental organisation, handed over 107 oxygen concentrators worth ₹58.85 lakh and 300 pulse oximeters to District Collector Chevuru Harikiran on Saturday. In addition, in the next two months, the NGO will set up two pressure swing absorption (PSA) oxygen plants with a capacity of 40 Nm3 at a cost of ₹2 crore at Government General Hospital (RIMS). These plants can supply oxygen to up to 250 Covid beds.

The representatives of the NGO said that they would make use of the IIT Madras alumni expertise for technical support and entrusted the construction and operation of the plants to Veera Tatva company. They said the NGO received around ₹2 crore donations from Synopsys, IIFL, IIT Madras alumni and Give India for the construction of the O2 plants.

On behalf of the people of the district, the Collector Harikiran thanked Aarti Home for volunteering to set up oxygen to the people of the district at a time when Covid situation was critical in the district.

He also thanked it for providing concentrators and oximeters.

Aarti Home founder-president Puchalapally Sandhyarani, secretaries Dr Putta Ballireddy, Durga Kumari, head master Obulesu and others were present.

● **The representatives of the NGO said that they would make use of the IIT Madras alumni expertise for technical support and entrusted the construction and operation of the plants to Veera Tatva company. They said the NGO received around ₹2 crore donations from Synopsys, IIFL, IIT Madras alumni and Give India for the construction of the O2 plants.**

On behalf of the people of the district, the Collector Harikiran thanked Aarti Home for volunteering to set up oxygen to the people of the district at a time when Covid situation was critical in the district.

He also thanked it for providing concentrators and oximeters.

Aarti Home founder-president Puchalapally Sandhyarani, secretaries Dr Putta Ballireddy, Durga Kumari, head master Obulesu and others were present.

Shanmukh Kumar said roughly 8,000 more hatchlings have been released into the sea this year compared to last year.





## IN BRIEF

SEVEN RELEASED  
FROM KADAPA  
CENTRAL PRISONDC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, MAY 22

Seven inmates have been released on temporary bail from Kadapa Central Jail on Saturday with government orders in the wake of the Covid-19 second wave boom in the district.

There are currently 653 inmates in Kadapa Central Jail. Of these, 509 were convicted and 129 were remand prisoners. Along with them were two foreign remand prisoners, Detune 13.

Central Prison Superintendent M. Ravikiran told this newspaper that four convict prisoners and three remand prisoners were being released from this prison on temporary bail over Covid containment and precautionary measures.

He said three of them were from Kadapa district, two from Prakasam district, one from Chittoor district and another from Bengaluru in Karnataka state.

10 REMDESIVIR  
INJECTIONS GIVEN  
AGAINST NORMSDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, MAY 22

A private hospital in Anantapur has injected 10 remdesivir vials into Covid-19 patient, though the norm is six injections. This despite the World Health Organisation removing remdesivir injections from the list of drugs for treating the Coronavirus due to side effects the steroid is causing.

The woman patient, who has been administered these remdesivir vials, is still critical at the hospital.

Further, 20 cases of mucormycosis (black fungus) have been reported from various parts of Anantapur district on Saturday. Of them, 11 patients are being treated in Government General Hospital, Anantapur, and three in Hindupur District Area Hospital.

Anantapur GGH superintendent Dr Venkateswar Rao said the hospital is making necessary arrangements to treat the patients black fungus. "Our ENT wing is treating these patients," he stated.

A social worker M. Srinvasulu, native of Madakasira, said a patient from Tanakal in Kadiri area is recovering after he has been provided timely treatment at a hospital in Bengaluru. The Anantapur Entrepreneurs Organisation has donated 50 oxygen concentrators, each worth of ₹1.03 lakh, to district collector Gandham Chandrudu on Saturday. The collector said the oxygen concentrators will be deployed at a temporary hospital set up in Sharada Nagar.

POLICE BUSTS LSD  
RACKET; 10 HELD,  
17 KG GANJA SEIZEDDC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL MAY 22

For the first time, Kurnool police seized Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) drug substance along with 17 kg Ganja and arrested 10 persons involved in peddling the contraband. The accused were procuring the prohibited substances from Giddalur and Tuni towns in the state and were targeting children in the district. On a tip-off, the police nabbed the culprits from a dilapidated building close to Nandyal checkpoint.

ASP (Special Enforcement Bureau) Gautami Sali said the LSD, a hallucinogenic drug, effects typically include altered thoughts, feelings, and awareness of one's surroundings. Many users have visual or auditory hallucinations. Dilated pupils, increased blood pressure, and increased body temperature are typical. Effects typically begin within half an hour and can last for up to 20 hours. It is used mainly as a recreational drug or for spiritual reasons.

The ASP said several children are falling prey to the LSD as it gives a high, and said the parents are advised to be aware of the substance and protect their children. She said LSD seized was in the form of stamps/blots which is consumed by the users as a sublingual or mixing in water.

Explaining the modus operandi of the gang, the ASP said that the accused were buying the LSD stamps/blots using Telegram app using a blotter daddy chatbot group.

For payments, they were using the Zebpay app to convert Indian currency into bitcoins and payments were made in bitcoins.

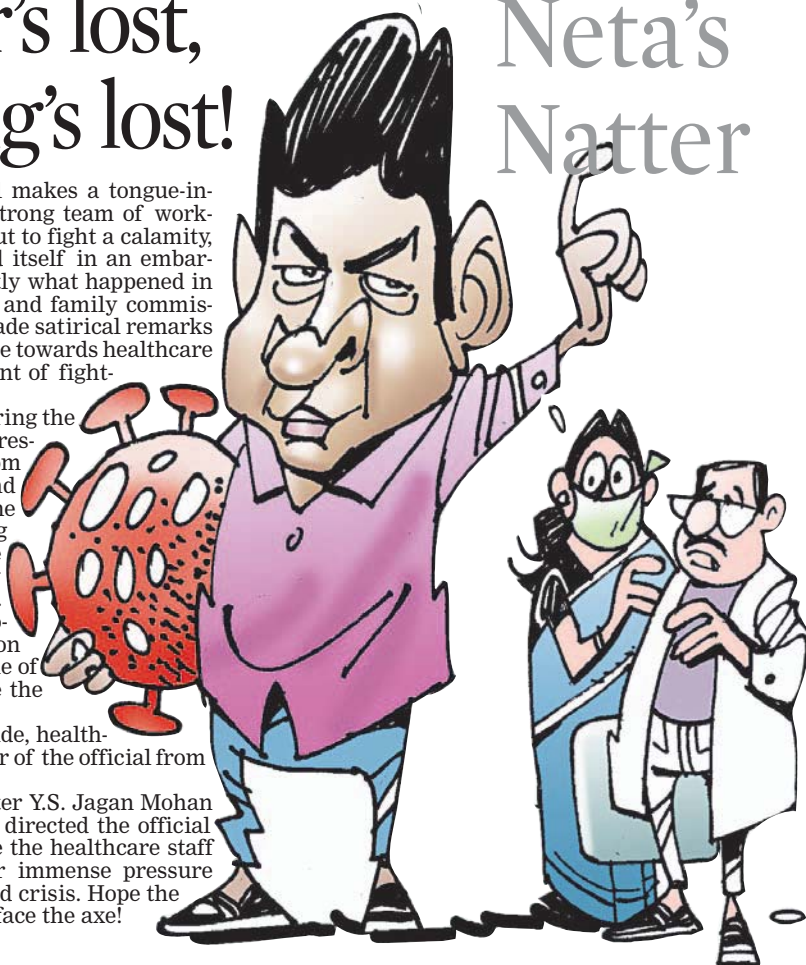
Character's lost,  
everything's lost!

When a senior-most official makes a tongue-in-cheek remark against a strong team of workforce that toil day in and day out to fight a calamity, the government is sure to find itself in an embarrassing situation. That is exactly what happened in Andhra Pradesh, when health and family commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar made satirical remarks and showed an offensive attitude towards healthcare workers who are in the forefront of fighting Covid-19 pandemic.

When the caseload peaked during the second wave, putting a lot of pressure on healthcare workers from district level to paramedics and to ANMs and Asha workers, the official pulled them up, calling them useless and narrating the story of a dog and a donkey reversing their nature of work. In fact, a series of apps he introduced created a lot of confusion among health workers and some of those apps even failed to serve the very purpose.

Vexed with his vitriolic attitude, healthcare workers demanded transfer of the official from the health department.

Sensing trouble, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy himself intervened and directed the official to maintain decency and cajole the healthcare staff as everyone is working under immense pressure during the unprecedented Covid crisis. Hope the official learns a lesson or may face the axe!

Neta's  
Natter

## Jobless youth now have a ray of hope

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao might have delayed filling up of vacant posts in the state, but when he finally picked up an efficient official - senior bureaucrat Janardhan Reddy - as chairman of the Public Service Commission, millions of jobless youths turned hopeful of a bright future.

A low-profile officer, Janardhan Reddy, who is currently heading the agriculture department, is a rare breed among babus with high integrity and down-to-earth approach. Public Service Commission plays a crucial role in holding examinations and inter-

views for aspirants of thousands of government posts. There were allegations of malpractices and bias in the past against some members of the commission. The Chief Minister

● A low-profile officer, Janardhan Reddy, who is currently heading the agriculture department, is a rare breed among babus with high integrity and down-to-earth approach.

who has grandiose plans of filling more than 50,000 government posts picked up Janardhan Reddy for the job. The bureaucrat served more in urban management in different posts and is known for reforms that helped improve public interface. His small idea of switching on and off streetlights right on time proved big help to power utilities and local bodies who could save hundreds of crores of rupees.

Wish the new chairman helps job aspirants in the state to realise their long-cherished dreams!

## When SM sticks nose into CS' snack

A popular jingle in a fruit jam commercial in the '90s shows middle-aged and old people expressing their love for fruit jam with their voices dubbed by kids. They fight among themselves, cry if someone takes it away and feel happy on returning it. Explaining the theme of the jingle, the director says people, irrespective of age, feel like a kid when they see food they like.

It could be such an irresistible temptation or deep hunger after having a marathon review on Covid containment operations, chief secretary Somesh Kumar for a moment put his entire focus on biting a biscuit and savouring its taste at a recent press conference.

The social media which made a hue and cry about the chief secretary taking pleasure in eating

the cookies forgot or ignored some facts. It is not the chief secretary's fault if the reporter is more concerned about increasing Covid deaths and bombarded him with questions without waiting for the former to finish his biscuit. Yet, the netizens felt that situation would have been much better, had the same focus was put on Covid containment. Poor Somesh was trolled

even for wiping biscuit powder from his mouth and nose unmindful of the press conference going live. The netizens and reporters questioned what message the chief secretary wanted to convey by making gestures like rubbing his nose at a time when the entire world of medical science attributed the spread of virus to touching nose, eyes or lips. What senseless nose-pokers!

Ayush team assesses  
Anandaiah's claimDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, MAY 22

A team of doctors, led by Ayush commissioner Col V. Ramulu, has been studying the safety, quality and efficacy of the concoctions being prepared by self-proclaimed Ayur-veda doctor Bonigi Anandaiah of Krishnapatnam village in SPSR Nellore district.

The 10-member team includes Ayurveda University principal, in-charge of Regional Ayurveda Research Institute, two Ayush doctors, an official from Drug Control Administration and local Ayush department doctors.

A senior official in the district said they had collected phone numbers of 500 Covid patients who used the preparations of Anandaiah to help take their reactions. The concoctions being examined include a preventive for the general public, three given for Covid positive patients apart from eye drops given to critical patients with oxygen problems.

At the instance of the team, Anandaiah prepared the concoctions before them in Nellore and gave details on the ingredients.

He also prepared eye-drops for lab examination as the samples sent to the Ayush lab in

Kotaiah unable  
to respond

FROM PAGE 1

Kotaiah was unable to respond when someone asked him as to why he credited Anandaiah's concoction for the increase in oxygen level when he left the hospital with a saturation level of 95 per cent.

In another video, his relatives sent to the higher officials of the district, he was found sitting in the backseat of his car. Reacting to a question by some hospital attendants, he said that his health improved after he took Krishnapatnam medicine.

However, he sounded very weak while uttering the words. Officials attributed his condition to post Covid weakness while adding that his oxygen saturation level was 98 and he was tested negative to Covid.

observed while expressing hope in positive results for all the tests. "If the medicines pass the safety, quality and efficacy tests, we can apply for GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) certification which will enable Anandaiah or anyone to produce and supply the same," the official informed. He added that they were trying to speed up the study process to obtain license for production. An eight-member team of experts from Delhi consisting of doctors and researchers picked up from ICMR and Ayush is coming to Nellore.

Cyclone forming  
in Bay of Bengal

## Landfall likely on May 25 night or next day

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 22

A low-pressure area set in over the East Central Bay of Bengal and the adjoining Andaman Sea, about 600 km off Visakhapatnam on Saturday.

A private weather forecaster, Skymet, said environmental conditions were favourable for its rapid growth after 24 hours. Equatorial flow, moderate vertical wind shear, and warm sea surface temperature of above 30°C support quick intensification of the system. Its overall potential to develop into a tropical cyclone Yaas in the next 48-60 hours is moderate to high.

The low pressure during the process of the organisation will shift northward and become more compact. The likely tropical cyclone Yaas, as named by Oman, will have a short life of merely 48 hours. The storm

NAVY, COAST GUARD  
PUT ON HIGH ALERTDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 22

The Indian Navy and Coast Guard has put its vessels and aircraft to undertake relief and rescue operations following brewing up of Cyclone Yaas off Andhra Pradesh coast.

A release from Eastern Naval Command said Indian Navy has been closely monitoring the movement of the cyclonic storm. Headquarters, Eastern Naval Command, and Naval Officers-in-Charge at West Bengal and Odisha area have carried out preparatory activities to combat the effects of Cyclone Yaas.

is expected to gather strength during this period to become severe and keep

moving northwest towards the Odisha and West Bengal coast.

The initial estimates indicate likely landfall on late night May 25 or morning hours of May 26. The timelines and intensity are not very precise at this moment and are subject to revision in the next 24 hours. Notwithstanding its wavering approach, preparation by both the states of Odisha and West Bengal need escalation to meet the challenge.

An IMD report said squally wind with speed reaching 40 to 50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph is likely along and off Andhra Pradesh coast till May 24. However, gale winds with speed reaching 60 to 70 kmph gusting up to 80 kmph are also likely along and off the AP coast on May 25 and May 26. The report also warned fishermen not to venture into the sea till the system crossed the coast on May 26.

VIZAG DOC SUSPENDED  
AFTER ASKING FOR  
PPE KITS DIESDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 22

Controversial and suspended medical officer from Narsipatnam Area Hospital Dr K. Sudhakar died due to cardiac arrest late on Thursday evening. The news came out late as the family members informed close friends.

He was 52 and survived by wife and two sons.

He was cremated on Friday. He recently contacted Covid-19.

Dr Sudhakar was suspended on April 8, allegedly for demanding PPE kits for medical staff at the Narsipatnam hospital. He was reportedly manhandled by the Vizag police following which the High Court asked CBI to probe his case.

● Dr Sudhakar was suspended on April 8, allegedly for demanding PPE kits for medical staff at the Narsipatnam hospital.

## CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE	PROPERTY	COMMERCIAL
PRIME PROPERTY for Sale. 3600 sq yards. Begumpet, located next to American Consulate. Excellent Vastu. Suitable for high end apartments / Corporate Offices. Brokers excuse. Contact 98496-09440 (W/2122/AT000165)	FLATS	MLA COLONY-ROAD no.12 Banjara-Hills perfect-Vaastu 3yr-Old Fully-Furnished 3000-sft. Fantastic-view 1-flat per-floor fully air-conditioned with-TV-Fridge-WIFI Washing-Machine complete-furniture 3.75cr 9 9 6 3 6 9 9 0 0 0 (W/2122/AT000161)
INDEPENDENT HOUSE: 280 Sq.yds, South Face (Veedhipotlu), Old House, 3 Rooms Slab+ 3 Rooms Penku, 30,000/- per Sq.yard, Beside Hayagreevachary Compound, Srinivasa Colony, Balasamudram, Hanmakonda, Warangal. Ph: 9949424759, 9989749355. (HYCL/2122/IC0007)	PLOTS	BANJARAHILLS 250 yards 300y 500y 600y, JubileeHills 200, navanirman nagar colony 390 yards South facing KBR park view 100% vastu, 500 East 600 East 717 East 1200East 1500West, jubilee hills Banjarahills independent houses/Residential plots & All Gated Community Villas 10Cr to 50Cr 9966991449, 9 3 9 4 0 2 2 4 4 9. (W/2122/AT000132)
KONDAPUR 200, 300, 500, 1000, Gachibowli Jayabheri 933 North-East. Kokapet 2400 & Gandipet 700, 1000. Narsingh Manchirevula 1200. Appa Junction Snehitahills 500, 1000. Manasahills 300 to 1300	EDUCATIONAL	CAREER/ENTRANCE COURSES
ONE-SITTING / Fast track : Graduations (All), Post Graduations (All), PG Diplomas, Polytechnic Diplomas, Secondary (10th) & Senior Secondary (12th), Provided Online results & Online verifications, Eligible for Private & Abroad. Ph:9912540011, 7 3 3 7 2 9 1 1 3 3, www.hyderc.com (A/2122/IC00006)	DISTANCE EDUCATION	NO ADVANCE Fee. Contact For: B.Tech./ Engineering Diplomas in-Mechanical Engineering/ Electrical/EEE/ IT/Electronics & Communication/ Information Technology/Civil/ Refrigeration/ Dairy Engineering/ Textile -from Government Universities/ Boards. ECA guidance - IQAS/WES available.
Institutes only. Students please no call. Admission Guidance. Engineering Education Service. Lucknow, Mumbai. Email:engg.educationservice99@yahoo.com Mob: 7753069493. (HYMM/2122/C01222)	EDUCATIONAL	DIRECT FINAL/ Regular Degree & P.G. Courses, Engineering, St.Mary's College ECIL & Secunderabad. Ph: 9182592333 / 9441541138. www.svesinstitute.com (W/2122/AT000159)
SHARES	EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY	Fortune PMS Services F&O Trading Minimum 10laks Returns 5-20% ROI P.M Equity Trading Minimum 5laks Returns 5-10% ROI P.M Whatsapp 9390712345 (W/2122/AT000166)
MATRIMONIAL	GROOM WANTED	MUSLIM
ANDHRA SM Parents invite alliance for Daughter 1994, 5.4, Fair, B.Tech, M.Tech (CSE) seeking BE/ M.Tech/ MS/MBA/ Doctor/ Medical Sector Boy working in Software/ Government Sector in Good position/ settled in Abroad from Andhra/ Rayalaseema/ Karnataka. Ph: 9966525669 / 9030855437. (S/2122/IC00012)	NOTICE	Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries while responding to advertisements in these columns. Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. does not vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers. The Printer, Publisher, Editor and Owner of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. shall not be held responsible / liable for any consequences, in case such claims are found to be false.



## IN BRIEF

**EDU MINISTRY MEET ON CBSE CLASS 12 TODAY**

New Delhi, May 22: The Ministry of Education (MoE) has called a crucial meeting on Sunday to decide on pending Class 12 board exams and subsequent entrance examinations that were postponed due to the second wave of Covid-19. Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said.

The high-level meeting will be chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani as well as Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar will be among those present. Education ministers and secretaries of all states and union territories have been asked to attend the meeting.

Pokhriyal also sought inputs from all the stakeholders students, parents, teachers and others through social media on Saturday.

"A high-level virtual meeting will be convened tomorrow (Sunday) with all states and union territories' education ministers, education secretaries and chairpersons of state examination boards and stakeholders to discuss the proposals for the conduct of exams for Class 12 and entrance examinations for professional courses," he said. "I recently held a meeting with the state education secretaries in this regard.

The consultative process will be further strengthened through the high-level meeting. This virtual meeting will take place at 11.30 am," he added.

**IMA WANTS CENTRE TO ACT AGAINST RAMDEV**

New Delhi, May 22: The Union health ministry should take action against yoga guru Ramdev as he has misled people by making "unlearned" statements against allopathy and defamed scientific medicine, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) said on Saturday.

The Resident Doctors' Associations of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Safdarjung Hospital too condemned Ramdev's statement and demanded "strictest steps" be taken against him.

Citing a video circulating on social media, the IMA said Ramdev has claimed that allopathy is a stupid science" and medicines such as remdesivir, faviflu, and other drugs approved by the Drugs Controller General of India have failed to treat Covid-19 patients.

Lakhs of patients have died after taking allopathic medicines", the association said quoting the yoga guru.

Ramdev should be prosecuted under the Epidemic Diseases Act as "untutored" statements are "a threat to the literate society of the country as well as to the poor people falling prey to him", the apex doctors' body said in a statement.

It alleged that Ramdev is trying to take advantage of the situation and create a sense of fear and frustration among the people at large.

He is doing this "so that he can sell his illegal and unapproved so-called medicines and make money at the cost of the public at large", the association said.

**NO JABS FOR 18-44 FROM TODAY IN DELHI**

New Delhi, May 22: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said Covid-19 vaccination centres for those in the 18-44 years age group are being closed in the national capital due to lack of doses and appealed to the Centre to provide more vaccines.

From Sunday, all vaccination centres for youths in Delhi will be closed as stocks have run out, he said in a press conference.

Delhi requires 80 lakh doses a month to vaccinate its youth. But it only received 16 lakh doses in May. The Centre has further decreased Delhi's quota in June to 8 lakh doses, Kejriwal said.

The national capital needs 2.5 crore doses to vaccinate all adults, he said, urging the Centre to raise the quota and supply to the city.

Kejriwal said that the speed of spread of the coronavirus has significantly slowed down in Delhi.

In the past 24 hours, around 2,200 cases were reported and the positivity rate is 3.5 per cent, he said.



Family members prepare to cremate a Covid-19 victim at the Nigambodh Ghat cremation ground in New Delhi on Saturday. - PTI

**Total lockdown in TN for a week starts tomorrow**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, MAY 22

No shops – it includes vegetable and grocery vendors too – will be allowed to open for one week from Monday, when the state will be under a total lockdown, permitting the continuation of just a handful of essential services and preventing people from stepping out of their homes.

However, to prepare the people for the lockdown and enable them to stock up on essential goods, all shops would be open till 9 pm on Saturday and from 6 am to 9 pm on Sunday, when outstation buses would also be operated, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced on Saturday through a statement.

Coming after the Chief Minister had a meeting with high level officers and medical experts, the statement said vegetables and fruits would be supplied through vehicles operated by the Horticulture Department in Chennai city. In the districts they would be supplied at the homes in association with the local bodies, it said.

Pharmacies, including that of indigenous medicine and veterinary sciences, would be open as usual and daily distribution of milk, water and newspapers be allowed during the total lockdown, the statement said.

Only essential departments in the Secretariat and district administrations will function, while banks, insurance companies and IT firms have been asked to allow their employees work from home. Malls too will not be allowed to open.

Restaurants, as usual, can provide takeaway service from 6 am to 10 am, 12 noon to 3 pm and 6 pm to 9 pm and e-commerce food delivery can also function only during those hours. Other e-commerce services would be allowed between 8 am to 6 pm. Rest of the services

● **IN ORDER** to enable people to stock up on essential goods, all shops would be open till 9 pm on Saturday and from 6 am to 9 pm on Sunday.

that have been allowed in the earlier relaxation to the lockdown like the functioning of petrol and diesel bunks and ATMs, transport of agricultural products and essential goods and inter-district travel for valid reasons like medical emergencies and deaths after e-registration would continue, the statement said.

Travel within the district for medical reasons will be allowed without e-registrations and the functioning of news and media offices and those industries that had already been given exemption like continuous process industries, those manufacturing essential commodities and medical equipment is permitted as usual.

Members of the public have been advised to strictly follow the Corona prevention norms like wearing of face masks, maintaining social distancing and using hand sanitizers.

The Chief Minister said that the government had taken the initiative to increase the oxygen beds and Corona Care Centres.

**Fresh cases continue to fall; 7 states under lens**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

Delhi for the second day in a row saw its positivity rate below 5 per cent with 2,260 fresh cases of Covid-19 detected in the last 24 hours.

The death figures too in the national capital show a decline with 182 fatalities in the last 24 hours.

The national figures too show a constant decline as 2.57 lakh fresh cases were detected and 4,194 fatalities recorded out of the 20.66 lakh tests conducted

in the last 24 hours.

"Pandemic is stabilising in a major part of the country. Positivity rate is going down and active cases are also coming down," said Dr. V.K. Paul, Member-Health, Niti Aayog.

This is the sixth consecutive day when the daily new cases remained under three lakhs and daily recoveries outnumbered fresh for ninth consecutive day.

Over 3.57 lakh people bounced back from the illness in last 24 hours.

India's daily positivity rate has declined to 12.45 per cent.

"There are only 7 states that are reporting more than 10,000 cases and 6 states with 5,000-10,000 cases, 6 states are reporting a high number of deaths. These are Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, UP, Punjab and Delhi. There are more than 93 districts where declining case positivity is being noted," said Mr Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in Union Health Ministry.

Agitated locals blocked a road and their protest ended late on Friday night after senior police officers, including ASP Shahi Shekhar Singh, assured the boy's family all help, an impartial probe, and handed over a copy of the FIR.

**MP reports white fungus infection**

State sees surge in black fungus cases also

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, MAY 22

After Bihar, Madhya Pradesh has reported the case of white fungus infection.

A 55-year-old man, who has recovered from Covid-19 earlier this month, was on Saturday detected to have contracted white fungus infection in the government-run Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Medical College and Hospital in Jabalpur.

"This was the first case of white fungus infection in Madhya Pradesh. The fungus was removed in a surgery and the patient is doing absolutely fine after the surgery", Dr Kavita Sachdev, head of the department, ENT, in the medical college hospital told this newspaper.

The case was diagnosed as Aspergillosis, commonly known as white fungus infection, after culture of the fungus in the virology lab of the college, she said.

She, however, said the white fungus infection detected in the patient was different from that found in four patients in Patna Medical College Hospital on May 19.

While it was a case of 'candidiasis' detected in four patients in Patna medical college hospital, it was a case of aspergillosis detected in the patient in the hospital in Jabalpur. According to her, candidiasis affects lungs and is said to be more lethal than black fungus infection, medically known as mucormycosis. But, aspergillosis affects paranasal sinuses (nasal cavity) and is said to be less lethal than black fungus infection.

According to the experts, black fungus infection spreads to lungs and other vital organs through blood and may prove fatal if there is delay in treatment.

White fungus infection remains localized for quite some time before spreading to other organs.

The 55-year-old man of Jabalpur, who contracted white fungus infection, had tested positive for coronavirus in April and was discharged from hospital in the first week of May following his recovery. He was admitted to

the hospital while he figured where to get him admitted since hospitals were not easily accessible.

Thankfully, in about 30 minutes, his nails started turning pink again. His hands and feet were warm, there was no numbness and sensation was back.

I thought of reporting it as AEFI. The real struggle began now. None of the helpline numbers given by

the government – 1075, 191, +911123978046, 0120-4473222 – were functional or reachable. There are no emails, no phone numbers of doctors available on any government site to report AEFI.

No provision on CoWin or Aarogya Setu app. I went back to the vaccination centre, a school, which was shut after 5 pm and got the number of the doctor on duty. He directed me to a Nodal Officer, who said he can only treat but has no role in recording AEFI.

Meanwhile, I had tagged ICMR, Union Health Ministry, Drugs Controller General of India, Serum Institute of India asking for contact details to report AEFI. There was no response. I also tagged Mr Adar Poonawala who heads SII to guide me to

report AEFI for his vaccine. He too has not responded so far.

Finally, I had to write in the group of health journalists after which my colleagues got active and with the intervention of some senior bureaucrats, I could manage to "report" AEFI of Covishield. This was four days of the AEFI.

After registering my AEFI report the district immunization officer called to take my son for a cardiological checkup. There was a fear of thrombosis. His ECG and blood tests were conducted, which thankfully were normal. But what if I had not made so much noise? What if he actually had thrombosis or some other severe side effect from Covishield?

I have been hearing horror stories of people dying of cardiac arrest or other complications after vaccination. Two days back my sanitation staff came to me saying she will not get her son vaccinated because someone died in her neighbourhood soon after the vaccine dose. And all such things go unreported. In my son's case the nodal official said he developed allergy to the vaccine. AEFI is exactly that. But we hate recording such data. If this is the condition in Delhi where educated are struggling, one can imagine what would be happening among general population in other areas.

It is important for the government to take AEFI tracking more seriously and aggressively as it is doing for vaccination.

**WB records first black fungus death**

Kolkata, May 22: A 32-year-old woman died of mucormycosis, commonly known as black fungus infection, becoming the first death due to the disease in West Bengal, a state health department official said on Saturday.

Shampa Chakraborty, a resident of the southern part of the city's Haridevpur area, was admitted to the Sambhunath Pandit Hospital with Covid-19. She was later diagnosed with mucormycosis, he said.

The patient, who was highly diabetic and was on insulin, died on Friday.

At present, five patients are undergoing treatment for the disease in the state and all of them are from neighbouring Bihar and Jharkhand, the official said adding, "We are constantly monitoring their condition."

Besides constituting an expert committee to deal with black fungus cases, the state health department has formulated an advisory, titled 'Mucormycosis - if uncar-

Netaji Subash Chandra Bose medical college hospital in Jabalpur last week when he complained of severe pain in his face.

Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh has witnessed a surge in cases of black fungus infection declared as epidemic in the state on Saturday.

"Madhya Pradesh has so far reported 610 black fungus infection cases", state health commissioner Akash Tripathy said.

The infection has claimed the lives of 31 people so far.

Indore has reported the highest number of 250 cases of black fungus infection in the state, followed by Bhopal where 190 such cases have been reported.

"The situation has worsened due to lack of awareness about the disease among the people particularly those who have recovered from Covid-19 as well as acute shortage of the anti-infection drug, Amphotericine-B", experts say.

"The situation of the patients is pathetic due to shortage of the drug", I.D. Chourasia, neurologist of government-run Hamidia hospital here said.

"The country faced shortage of Amphotericine-B injections due to sudden surge in cases of black fungus infection after May 4. We were till now dependent on import of the drug.

But, pharmaceutical companies in the country have started manufacturing the drug and normalcy in the supply of the injection will be restored in 15 days", Rajiv Singhal, secretary of All India organisations of chemists said.

According to the doctors, a patient suffering from black fungus infection needs administration of three doses of the anti-infection injection per day for 20 days for recovery.



A doctor treats a patient infected with the black fungus at the NSCB Medical College and Hospital in Jabalpur on Saturday. - PTI

**FIGHTING | COVID****The number of Adverse Effect From Immunisation cases put out may not be accurate****Reporting AEFI tough job, many may be going unreported**

VINEETA PANDEY | DC  
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

The Centre had recently released a report on the Adverse Effect From Immunisation (AEFI) detected from the people that have been vaccinated with Covishield.

The government has claimed that since the Covid-19 vaccination drive was initiated, over 23,000 adverse events were reported. Of these, 700 cases were reported to be serious and severe.

The AEFI Committee's in-depth case review of 498 serious and severe events found 26 cases to be potential thromboembolic (formation of a clot in a blood vessel that might also break loose and carried by the blood stream to plug another vessel) events fol-

lowing the administration of Covishield vaccine – with a reporting rate of 0.61 cases/ million doses.

However, in the absence of proper reporting mechanism and proactive approach of authorities to trace vaccinated people after they leave the vaccination site, such a claim may not be reflecting the true picture and full magnitude of the AEFI.

Here is a first hand experience of struggle to get AEFI recorded in the national capital. It took me five days to get the AEFI recorded for my 21-year-old son.

My son was vaccinated on May 13 at EDMC PS Trilokpur Site 1 (East Delhi) at around 11.15 am with Covishield. He stayed back for 30 minutes at the site to check for AEFI dur-

ing which he had no other problem other than pain in arm. Back home, he developed 101 degrees C fever at 6.30 pm and complained of very sharp shooting pain in vaccinated arm. I gave him Dolo 650 for fever, as advised by the doctors. He again had fever next morning. But it was the fever on the evening of May 14, that alarmed me. My son reported high fever and numbness in hand. His hand was getting cold and finger nails started turning blue.

A doctor-friend saw him through video call and checked his tongue, eyes, palm and hands. He said none of them were blue and only fingernails were getting blue. The doctor asked us to give lots of fluid to him and wait for some time before going to

● **IT HAS BEEN NOTICED THAT** None of the helpline numbers given by the government – 1075, 191, +911123978046, 0120-4473222 - are functional or reachable. There are no emails, phone numbers of doctors available on any government site to report AEFI.

the hospital while he figured where to get him admitted since hospitals were not easily accessible. Thankfully, in about 30 minutes, his nails started turning pink again. His hands and feet were warm, there was no numbness and sensation was back.

I thought of reporting it as AEFI. The real struggle began now. None of the helpline numbers given by

the government – 1075, 191, +911123978046, 0120-4473222 – were functional or reachable. There are no emails, no phone numbers of doctors available on any government site to report AEFI. No provision on CoWin or Aarogya Setu app. I went back to the vaccination centre, a school, which was shut after 5 pm and got the number of the doctor on duty. He directed me to a Nodal Officer, who said he can only treat but has no role in recording AEFI.

Meanwhile, I had tagged ICMR, Union Health Ministry, Drugs Controller General of India, Serum Institute of India asking for contact details to report AEFI. There was no response. I also tagged Mr Adar Poonawala who heads SII to guide me to





## IN BRIEF

## STATES GIVEN 19 OXYGEN PLANTS, SAYS CENTRE

New Delhi, May 22: Nineteen oxygen generation plants, 16,530 oxygen concentrators, 15,901 oxygen cylinders and about 6.6 lakh Remdesivir vials received as global aid have been delivered or dispatched to states and union territories since April 27, the Centre said on Saturday.

The Central government has been receiving international cooperation in the form of Covid-19 medical supplies and equipment since April 27 from different countries and organisations.

Through a streamlined and systematic mechanism, various ministries and departments have seamlessly collaborated under the 'whole of government' approach for expeditiously delivering incoming global aid to states and union territories, the Union Health Ministry said.

Cumulatively, 16,530 oxygen concentrators; 15,901 oxygen cylinders; 19 oxygen generation plants; 11,416 ventilators/BIPAP; 6.6 lakh Remdesivir vials have either been delivered or dispatched through road and air to states and union territories from April 27 to May 21, it said.

Effective and immediate allocation, and streamlined delivery to the recipient states/UTs and institutions is an ongoing exercise, the ministry said.

## BJP'S SONALI GUHA WANTS TO REJOIN TMC

Kolkata, May 22: Former TMC MLA Sonali Guha, who switched over to the BJP ahead of the elections, on Saturday wrote to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, apologising to her for leaving the party and urging her to take her back.

In the letter, which was shared by Guha on social media, she said that she left the party after being emotional. While the BJP described her overtures as a 'drama', the TMC said no decision has been made by the party on taking her back.

"I am writing this with a broken heart that I took the wrong decision of joining another party after being emotional. I could not get accustomed there," she said.

"The way a fish cannot stay out of the water, I will not be able to live without you, 'Didi'. I seek your forgiveness and if you don't forgive me, I won't be able to live. Please allow me to come back, and spend the rest of my life in your affection," she added.

Guha, a four-time MLA and once considered to be the 'shadow' of the chief minister, was among the slew of TMC leaders who switched over to the BJP ahead of the assembly elections. She was dropped from the TMC's candidates' list this time, following which she left the party after an emotional outburst on TV channels, and joined the BJP.

She did not fight the elections, but had said that she would work for strengthening the BJP's organisation.

When contacted, Guha said that she felt "unwanted" in the BJP.

## BJP LEADER HELD FOR POSTS AGAINST PAWAR

DC CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, MAY 22

The cyber cell of the Mumbai Police on Saturday arrested Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) Secretary Pradip Gavade for his 'objectionable posts' on social media against NCP president Sharad Pawar and his grandnephew Rohit Pawar on Twitter. However, the BJYM leader said that his arrest was politically motivated and he did not make any unparliamentary comment.

Bandra Cyber Cell Police arrested Mr Gavade from his Pune residence on Saturday morning. A case has been registered against him under sections 295A, 500 and 505/2 of the IPC as well as IT Act 67.

On Friday, May 21, Mr Gavade in a live chat with his followers said he was expecting a reaction from the state government after he filed a case against 54 people associated with the ruling parties in the state some 8 to 10 days ago. According to him, he has been targeted because he dared to question NCP leaders for their disparaging posts.

The BJP has called the arrest politically motivated and accused the police of acting at the behest of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government. Mr Gavade alleged a political conspiracy behind the arrest.

## BODO TRIBAL LEADER NAMED SPEAKER OF ASSAM HOUSE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI, MAY 22

In what may be called the beginning of inclusive politics in Assam, ruling BJP nominated and elected 50-year-old Bodo tribal leader Biswajit Daimary as 21st speaker of Assam Legislative Assembly.

Mr Daimary, son of a farmer and a mahout, who washed glasses in a tea stall to help the family in his school days has come a long way by starting his career as a student leader and being one of the architects of peace in Western Assam, the Bodo heartland.

Mr Daimary, himself a trained elephant mahout, wanted to become a teacher from an early age, thus he joined the Assam Rashtrabhasha Prasara Samiti in Class-V and appeared for Hindi examination passing Visharad when he was in Class IX only.

A former MLA from 2001 to 2006, Mr Daimary represented the state in parliament as a BPF Rajya Sabha MP from 2008 to 2014 and then from 2014 to 2020 and was re-elected as BJP MP in the upper house in 2021.

He resigned from Rajya Sabha to contest the assembly election on a BJP ticket from Paneri, which he won.

Even political opponent of Mr Daimary and former chief of Bodoland Territorial Council Hagrama Mohilary while welcoming the decision of his appointment, thanked the BJP government for honouring a tribal legislator. He in a social media post said, "Profound thanks to chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for honouring a tribal legislator Biswajit Daimary as the speaker of Assam Legislative Assembly, the first Bodo in this dignified stature. Looking forward to more un-discriminating initiatives by the government for the welfare of Tribal."

On his unanimous election as the speaker of the House, Mr Daimary thanked everyone and said, "I believe I will be able to give a strong and positive message from the House to the people of Assam. All the MLAs will be able to speak their mind here. I will give equal chances to everyone."



Rescuers ready their gear for rescue and relief operations as a low-pressure area in the North Andaman seas that may intensify into a cyclone heads towards Odisha and West Bengal, on Saturday. - PTI

## Yaas to hit WB-Odisha coast on Wed evening

Cyclonic storm to hit with wind speed of 120-160 kmph; location of the landfall not yet known; states get ready

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, MAY 22

The cyclonic circulation formed over the Bay of Bengal on Saturday developed over east-central Bay of Bengal. It will intensify into a depression on Sunday morning and then move towards north and northwestwards. On Monday, it is very likely to develop into a cyclonic storm. Subsequently, the cyclonic storm will move northwestwards and reach Odisha-West Bengal Coast around May 26 evening (Wednesday) as a very severe cyclonic storm, India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasted on Saturday.

The very severe cyclonic storm which has been named 'Yaas' will hit the coast with a wind speed of 120-160 kilometre per hour (kmph) gusting up to 185 kmph and heavy down-

● **THE STATE** government is in touch with the Coast Guard personnel patrolling in the deep sea to ensure that no fishing boat remained in the sea

● **THE RAILWAYS** has cancelled 74 trains passing through East Coast Railway jurisdiction

pours, the IMD said.

According to IMD director general Dr Mrutyunjaya Mohapatra, the exact location of the landfall of 'Yaas' was not yet known and the weather agency was examining the course of the cyclone.

"The severe cyclonic storm will pass through Odisha-West Bengal coast on Wednesday morning and we are studying the course of the cyclone to ascertain the exact location where it is most likely to make its landfall," said Dr Mohapatra.

Under the impact of the low-pressure, some parts of coastal Odisha on Saturday experienced light to moderate rainfall. Heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to occur in most of the places in the state after May Tuesday, the IMD predicted, adding, rainfall intensity is likely to go up further in next few days with intensification of the system.

The fishermen have been advised to remain away from venturing into the deep Central Bay of Bengal between May 23 and May 27 as the sea condition would remain very rough during the period.

Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik who reviewed the cyclone preparedness on Saturday directed secretaries of all departments concerned and the collectors coastal districts to remain in readiness to address the situation.

A review meeting

chaired by chief secretary Suresh Mohapatra was held on Friday in presence of Special Relief Commissioner P.K. Jena, director general of state police, Shri Abhay, Odisha Fire Services DG and top officers of various departments.

Mr Mohapatra said preparatory measures for the evacuation of affected people, cyclone shelter management and post-cyclone restoration were in full swing.

Five teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) from the third battalion at Mundali in Cuttack which were deputed to Gujarat have been brought back and kept in readiness for deployment.

The Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force and fire services personnel have also been kept ready for action in the areas likely to be hit by the cyclone.

## Barge deaths: Pradhan should quit, says Sena

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, MAY 22

After Congress and NCP, the Shiv Sena too has demanded the resignation of Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan holding him responsible for deaths of people on board barge P305 that sank off the Mumbai coast during the cyclone Tauktae.

"People were left to drown in Mumbai Sea and this act amounts to culpable homicide. The Tauktae cyclone cannot be held responsible for this. But who remained asleep despite getting the cyclone warning are criminals," said the Sena in an editorial in its mouthpiece *Saamana* on Saturday.

Barge P-305, which housed personnel engaged in maintenance work of an offshore oil drilling platform of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC), sank on Monday evening during the cyclone. The official death toll in the tragedy has reached 60.

However, the Sena said that 75 workers have died, of which 49 bodies have been found and 26 are still missing.

The Uddhav Thackeray-led party slammed Mr Pradhan saying he was conspicuous by his absence during the tragedy.

"Will Dharmendra Pradhan quit owning moral responsibility for the death of innocent people? Do petroleum minister, ONGC chairman, its board of directors have any responsibility or not?" it asked.

It was a case of culpable homicide as ONGC did not take the cyclone

● **BARGE P-305**, which housed personnel engaged in maintenance work of an offshore oil drilling platform of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC), sank on Monday evening during the cyclone.

● **THE** toll in the tragedy has reached 60.

warnings seriously and recall the 700 workers on the barge. The callous approach of ONGC administration is surprising. Hence a culpable homicide case should be filed against it for its negligence, the Sena said.

Had the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard not launched search and rescue operations, all the 700 people would have drowned in the sea. These workers may be employees of a private company, but they were doing oil rigging for ONGC. Hence, it was the duty of the ONGC administration to protect them, said the Sena, which heads the MVA Government in Maharashtra.

Earlier, the Congress and NCP – the other two constituents of the MVA – had demanded the resignation of Mr Pradhan holding him responsible for the mishap.

However, the BJP alleged that the MVA is politicising the issue only to protect Acon's Infrastructure, which had chartered the barge. Party leader Ashish Shelar demanded that Acon's be charged with culpable homicide. He alleged the state government and the police are trying to shield owners of the firm.

## Abducted ONGC employee set free by ULFA(I)

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, MAY 22

In what has brightened the prospect of engaging the elusive Ulfa-I commander-in-chief Paresh Baruah in peace-process, the outlawed Ulfa-I honouring the appeal of Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma released abducted ONGC employee Ritul Saikia at Longwa village in Mon district of Nagaland at about 7am on Saturday.

Confirming the release of the abducted employee, security sources said, "A team of Assam Rifles personnel escorted Ritul Saikia and handed him over to Assam Police. He will be reaching his family at his home (Borhola in Sivasagar district) by this evening."

In a brief interview to the media waiting at the Assam-Nagaland border, Mr Saikia said, "I am fit and healthy but a little tired, after walking for three days."

Mr Saikia and two other ONGC employees were abducted by Ulfa-I rebels on April 21 from a rig site at Lakwa in Charaideo district.

Assam Police and security forces rescued the other two persons following an encounter in Mon district of Nagaland three days later, but the militants got away along with Mr Saikia in their captivity.

The Ulfa-I chief initially denied having Mr Saikia in its captivity but later admitted holding him captive in one of their hideouts in Myanmar bordering Nagaland.

The Ulfa-I agreed to release the abducted ONGC employees on Thursday after the chief minister who visited the family of abducted ONGC employee made an appeal to Baruah to release Mr Saikia to create a congenial atmosphere for a peace process to start.

The Ulfa-I chief soon after the chief minister's appeal responded positively and in fact while the chief minister was making this appeal in a press conference, the Ulfa-I chief called up media houses and said that the abducted ONGC employee would reach his home healthy and safe within the next three days.

## Forcible conversion by marriage to invite imprisonment of three to five years in Guj

Ahmedabad, May 22: Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat has given his assent to an amendment Bill, which provides for a prison sentence of up to ten years for fraudulent or forcible conversion by marriage, a state minister said on Saturday.

The Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which was passed by the state Legislative Assembly on April 1 this year, has been approved by the governor along with seven other

Bills, state Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Bhupendrasinh Chudasama said in a statement.

With this, the governor has approved all the 15 Bills that were passed during the budget session of the Assembly as he had earlier cleared seven other bills, he added.

As per the amended Freedom of Religion Bill, a forcible "conversion by marriage, or by getting a person married, or by aiding a person to get married" shall invite impris-

● **WITH THIS**, the governor has approved all the 15 Bills that were passed during the budget session of the Assembly.

onment of three to five years and a fine of up to ₹2 lakh.

If the victim is a minor, woman, Dalit or tribal, the offender may be punished with a jail term of four to seven years and a fine of not less than ₹3 lakh. If an organisation violates the law, the person in charge can be sentenced to mini-

mum of three years and maximum of ten years in jail.

During a poll rally in Vadodara on February 14 this year, state Chief Minister Vijay Rupani had said his government would bring a strict law against "love jihad" in the state.

We are going to bring a law against love jihad in the Assembly. Such activities being done in the name of love jihad will not be tolerated. The BJP government will bring strict laws against love jihad in

the coming days," he had announced.

Before Gujarat, BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh had also enacted similar laws banning "fraudulent" conversions through marriage.

Other bills that were approved by the governor include Gujarat Professional Medical Education Colleges or Institutions (Regulation of Admission and Fixation of Fees) (Amendment) Bill; Gujarat Panchayats (Amendment) Bill.

## NEW FACE

The 56-year-old replaces Chennithala who has also been re-elected as MLA

## Cong's Satheesan to be LoP in Kerala Assembly

Thiruvananthapuram, May 22: After suffering a mauling in the Assembly election from Pinarayi Vijayan-led LDF in Kerala, the Congress on Saturday appointed five-time MLA V.D. Satheesan as new Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly.

The party's high command's decision nominating the 56-year-old Satheesan as new opposition leader was announced by KPCC president M u l l a p p a l l y Ramachandran here.

He replaced senior leader Ramesh Chennithala, who was also re-elected as MLA from his seat Haripad in Alappuzha

district. Satheesan, elected from Paravur Assembly seat in Ernakulam district, will lead a 41-member Congress-led UDF in the state Assembly against the CPI(M)-led LDF, which retained power in the recent Assembly polls by winning 99 seats, bucking the trend of alternating between two coalitions.

"The AICC has nominated Satheesan as the leader of the party's parliamentary party in Kerala assembly."

"The KPCC wishes him all success," Ramachandran told reporters.

According to Congress sources, the decision to

make a generational change in the parliamentary party was taken considering the severe drubbing of the party-led UDF in the Assembly polls led by party veterans including former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, Chennithala and Ramachandran.

The young leaders of the party, particularly a section from the youth congress, conducted a campaign seeking removal of the old guard from the party's state leadership to make it relevant in state politics.

Senior party leader Mallikarjun Kharge and V. Vaidyalingam had visited

the state seeking the opinion of the MLAs and MPs on who should be entrusted with the post of Leader of Opposition for the next five years.

The old guard of the party in the state including Chandy had argued for the continuation of Chennithala in the post.

The pressure from the veterans delayed the decision in the selection of the new Leader of Opposition, the sources said.

Finally, the high command took a tough decision to infuse fresh blood into the system, nominating Satheesan to the key post.



Senior Congress MLA K. Babu (L) felicitates V.D. Satheesan at a press meet in Kochi on Saturday. - PTI

## PILOT, KILLED IN MIG-21 CRASH, CREMATED

Baghpat (UP), May 22: The last rites of IAF fighter pilot Abhinav Choudhary, killed in a MiG-21 crash in Moga district of Punjab, were performed with full military honours at his ancestral village Puser with people bidding a final farewell to the braveheart with moist eyes.

The funeral pyre of 28-year-old Squadron Leader Choudhary was lit by his uncle Sube Singh who cried inconsolably along with the pilot's father and other family members amidst the raising of slogans like *Bharat Mata ki Jai*.



## DECCAN Chronicle

23 MAY 2021



Shailaja Khanna

Off the beaten track

## Old-world musicians need a helping hand

**E**ight-year-old Partho struggles to overcome sleep as he is gently woken up as usual at 5 am to start his daily practice of vocal scales for 30 minutes. Up and down, concentrating hard to get the correct pitch, it's a chore he completes, as he has been told time and time again that he is blessed to have inherited the family music genes. His mother, lying in bed, listens resentfully; her baby practising to prepare for a professional career in music seems a total waste of time. Her husband, acknowledged as one of the finest harmonium players in the country hasn't had a paid concert in months. Once, an eagerly sought after accompanist whose concert diary was booked 20 days in a month, Anirban (name changed) has had to break four precious saved FDs to keep the family stove lit. Hospitalisation of his sister due to Covid complications added to the already stretched budget. Things don't look to be improving in the near future, with predictions of a Third Wave destroying the hope that in 2021 his life would "normalise".

Twenty-three-year-old Intiaz lives in a small house, shared with eight other family members, behind the Jama Masjid area in old Delhi. He has trained for 18 years to be a singer. His uncle was a very erudite vocalist; with over 100 disciples. All his life he had heard his uncle say, music is a sacred art, handed down to us through the generations, whose ultimate goal is "ruh ko maalik se jorjna". To "connect" to a Raga, and to achieve the correct usage of notes, one needs to withdraw from the outside world and to go inwards, introspect, constantly repeat and practise, then finally, the Raga emerges. It takes a long time; one must be single minded. Today, with no expectation of any concerts or income, Intiaz queries "we are told today, use technology to connect to a new audience; you can reach the whole world! But where did we have the time to acquire these skills, useful to a performer of today? Like handling technology, knowing how to record oneself, public relations... we were told to stay away from all this and to focus on the music. Concerts would follow; organisations are there whose job is to showcase your talent. Become worthy of them. *Bas hamme to ye sikhaaya gaya tha...*" he trails off.



Girija Devi singing in the intimate baithak style at Sankat Mochan temple, Banaras. — RAKESH SINHA

Things are no better for the established, seasoned performers. A disconsolate senior vocalist shared, "Right now, teaching online classes is how most of us spend our time. But it's a compromise. Our traditions are not meant to be passed on like this. It's distorting the whole point of it all. Learning music, you need the eye contact to see the Guru's expressions, to copy the exact nuance. Hearing it through a device is not the same. Yet, I need to ensure that the training continues, the students continue their practice; one can't let long gaps come in, and they need to connect at least weekly with me. I really pray this doesn't last long."

But some of the problems in the world of the arts are self-inflicted, and not linked only to the present crisis. A senior sarod exponent said, "My generation has not tried to create a new audience; or even nurture an existing audience, specially in the smaller towns and cities. The classical arts are meant for a niche audience; they can never be for mass entertainment. But exposure to the music of masters results in acquiring a taste for the art, which then needs to be fuelled by periodic concerts. That's how, in the past, we have had great centres of music like Banaras, Patna, Lucknow, Tanjore. Nowadays, only needy artists, who may not be great performers, agree to perform in places where the fees are not good enough. Over the last 30 years, this has affected the audience size, which has really shrunk. Many major music festivals are free as only a limited handful of artists have the drawing power to sell tickets. A handful of popular artists have slowly, steadily, hiked up their fees over the years, even though they are aware that the tickets sales don't justify their fees."

The passing away of several senior musicians due to the virus is another cause of depression in the community. Sixty-four-year-old Pt Sajjan Mishra, younger of the famed Mishra duo, rues the unexpected passing away of his elder brother Rajan Mishra due to Covid complications. "It's been 54 years since we have sung together; I can't imagine the concert stage without him. He went so fast; *jab tak soch paayen, sab kuch khatam ho gaya tha. Hamne 2-3 din bahut haath pairr maare*. We tried so many hospitals — Medanta, Fortis... by the time we were offered a ventilator bed at AIIMS, it was too late, he had had a heart attack in the morning and it was considered dangerous to move him. It's God's will; the new DRDO 750-bed hospital in Banaras is named after him, but he is no more. In our country we really need to focus on and spend on education and healthcare; other things can wait."

Who knows what the future holds? An economic recovery would surely help, but perhaps the solution lies in encouraging a shift to new mores — from those mindless do's and don'ts that go against the grain of initiative and artistic freedom, and keep away younger audiences.

Shailaja Khanna writes on music, musicians and matters of music



Gautam Moorthy

## An 'out of the box' solution to end Israel, Palestine row

**A**s the entire world heaved a sigh of relief, even if with fingers crossed, as the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire came into effect at 2 am local time on Friday, May 21, ending the devastating 11-day conflict that saw over 240 fatalities, most of them civilian, the question uppermost on everyone's mind is if this respite is ensure a permanent truce and an end to the conflict. The conundrum and the antagonism that led to this dispute is the unshakeable belief by both the Israelis and the Palestinians that they are the rightful owners of the land for which they are fighting.

Without going deeply into the genesis of the dispute, it is worth recollecting that much headway has been made on the path to peace, keeping in mind the situation in 1948. Starting with the first Camp David Accord in 1978 between Israel and Egypt, which resulted in Egypt granting full recognition to the State of Israel in return for the Sinai Peninsula, to the Abraham Accords of 2020, much water has flown under the bridge. In between, the Oslo Accord of 1993, leading to the much-publicised Camp

David Accord of 1993, promised a two-state solution which at the last minute failed mainly as Israel refused the right to return of all displaced Palestinians.

With most Arab countries grudgingly accepting the existence of the State of Israel (with back-channel diplomacy active to get Saudi Arabia too on board), the main parties in the dispute, besides Israelis and Palestinians, are the Iranians. Iran is implacably hostile to Israel and to a large extent to Saudi Arabia as well. Iran is known to fund and support Hamas in the same way as it funds and supports Hezbollah in Lebanon. Violence has been the rule rather than the exception since the first "intifada" of 1987, with brief lulls in between. Therefore, is there any possible solution to end this never-ending cycle of violence? There possibly is, and it is perhaps as "out of the box" as it can get.

Briefly, before the 1967 war, the West Bank was a part of the Kingdom of Jordan from 1948 onwards. Jordan eventually relinquished all claims on the West Bank in 1988 and even deprived the Palestinians of their

Jordanian citizenship. The Gaza Strip has had a more convoluted history and was occupied by Egypt till 1967, when it was captured along with the Sinai Peninsula by Israel. Subsequently, as a result of the Israel-Egypt peace accord, Egypt relinquished all claims on Gaza, agreed to keep the Sinai Peninsula demilitarised and created a small buffer zone between it and the southern border of Gaza. In 1994, as a result of the Oslo Accords, Gaza came under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Since 2007, however, it has been completely under control of Hamas, which views the Palestinian Authority, now called Fatah, with contempt and is implacably opposed to it. In 2005, Israel withdrew unilaterally from Gaza: its military as well as its settlements. After ousting Fatah, Hamas took complete control of the territory in 2007.

The situation today is that the Palestinians remain hopeful of regaining the West Bank without Israeli settlements, and of a restoration of peace in the Gaza Strip, with the ultimate aim of the establishment of a full-fledged independent

Palestinian state. For this to happen, with of course Israel's grudging acceptance, a new paradigm needs to evolve. Having the same belligerents talking to each other again through well-meaning intermediaries is not going to yield any new result. All that will come of it will be more of the same.

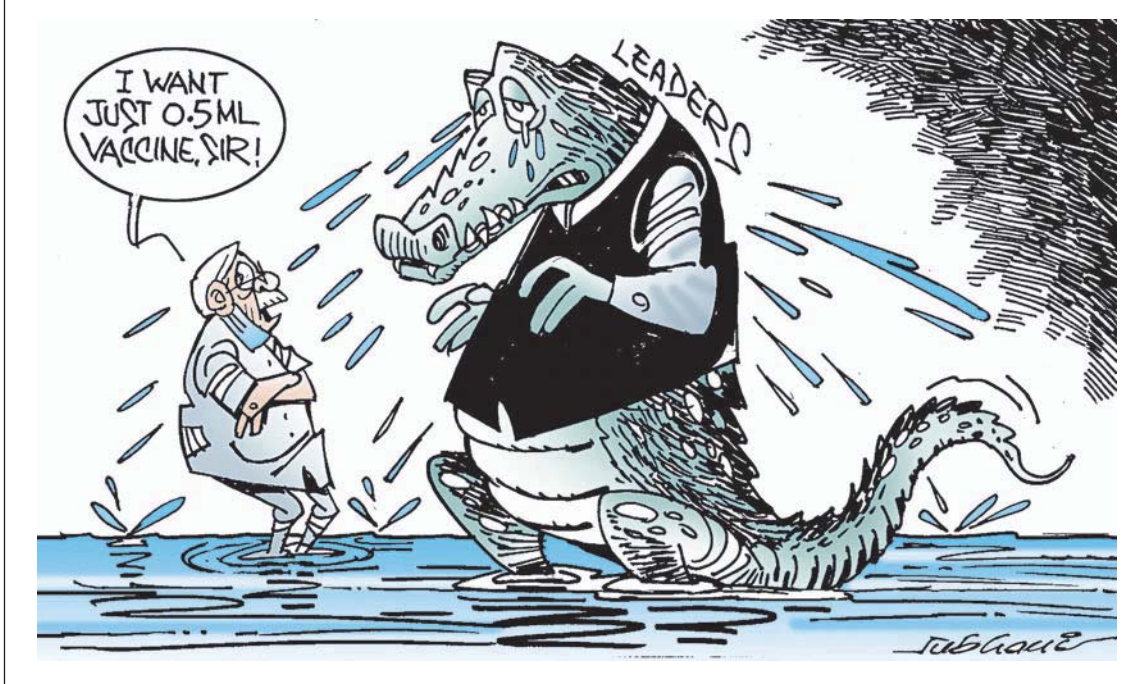
Hence, as a forerunner to any eventual Palestinian state, given the current impasse, and to forestall any further bloodshed, there exists a strong case for Jordan to reclaim the West Bank and for Egypt to reclaim the Gaza Strip, of course with Palestinian consent. Both Jordan and Egypt have good diplomatic relations with Israel. Both have the trust of the Palestinians. If they are sovereign owners of the land, their locus standi improves vastly compared to them being just honest brokers. Their ownership and control of the territories will bestow upon them the necessary authority to deal with Israel on equal terms and not as mere supplicants, as is happening now with Fatah. Once these lands become their sovereign territories, the issue of settlements on the West Bank can be taken up in due

course. It must be reiterated that Israel has to withdraw all its settlements in Gaza. The issue of settlements in the West Bank is not set in stone. In this way, Hamas can be defanged on the Gaza Strip.

Such a proposal, it is felt, would have the backing of all Arab countries. Iran too can be brought on board. Without Iran's support, Hamas cannot be the disruptive force that it is today. Subsequently, after peace is established, both Jordan and Egypt can relinquish their claims on the West Bank and Gaza respectively to pave the way for the establishment of a full-fledged sovereign Palestinian state. This idea may seem hare-brained at first. It is however predicated on the fact that the belligerents want a just and durable peace with an end to violence and the desire for wanting peace is not as hare-brained as remaining in a perpetual state of conflict and suffering.

The writer is a retired lieutenant-general and a former member of the Armed Forces Tribunal and a former director-general of ordnance services

Subhani



## War of the chips



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

**O**ne of the less analyzed reasons for the Chinese aggression in Eastern Ladakh since the April of 2020 is access to fresh water sources. Though there has been some discussion and dissection of this train of thinking in the rarefied echelons of strategic policy deliberations the issue has never really travelled into wider setting of public dialogues. It has something to do with semiconductors or the ubiquitous chip that powers our daily existence.

A chip or microchip is a semiconductor wafer usually manufactured from silicon that combines an assortment of electronic circuits, incorporating resistors, transistors, capacitors and diodes that interlock to perform a required task. A single integrated circuit can comprise of thousands to millions of such electronic circuits contingent upon the computing power required.

Semiconductors rule the world today. Optimising and producing speedier, thinner and more formidable semiconductors will be seminal in defining the outcome of numerous economic and geopolitical conflicts of our times. As it has been prophesized by Steve Bank the mentor of the Lean Start up movement "to get hold of the semiconductors may be the 21st century equivalent of getting hold of the oil supply in the 20th century". This is the strategic resource that all emerging and great powers of the world are in a race to both secure and control.

The omnipotent and captivatingly nomenclatured Silicon Shield is what safeguards Taiwan. The Taiwan Semi Conductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) is the world's largest third party chip manufacturer. It exercises dominance to the extent of 55 per cent if not more over the global market share insofar it pertains to

the production of microchips. These semiconductors do not just power cellphones and laptops, they are central to the functioning of virtually everything from automobiles to weapon systems.

The factum that TSMC produces the microchips that run the electronics of the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II stealth multi-role combat aircraft, the latest jewel of the US Air Force, is a sterling example of the extent of strategic importance of the both the resource and its supply chain. Were the semiconductor industry of Taiwan to collapse it would not only constitute a national security threat to the US but also for the entire hub and spoke security architecture crafted by the United States globally. That is how the Silicon Shield of Taiwan is in itself a weapon of deterrence for Taiwan, especially against an ever expansionist China in the 21st century.

Both the US and China are trying to be autonomous when it comes to manufacturing of semiconductor chips. If the US were for some reason be deprived of access to the foundries of Taiwan, the US defence and consumer electronics industries would be set back at least half a decade if not more.

As China is investing heavily in setting up its own chip foundries, it could become the world leader in this technology in the next decade or so. That's why, one of the early decisions made by the Biden administration was an executive order, promulgated in early 2021, to address both chip shortage and the gaps in its supply chain to the US. This deficiency is critical for the US as its global share in chip manufacturing stands at just 12 per cent. A large part of the US government's sanctions against Huawei are singularly

**The semiconductor industry requires two key resources sand and fresh water... Chinese water systems like the Yangtze, Huang Ho and Mekong rivers are full of effluents. That is how Kashmir, Aksai Chin and Ladakh became crucial for China.**

focussed on inhibiting the company's access to the world's most modern chip manufacturing technology — Taiwan's TSMC.

China had the foresight that its initial success as the world's low-cost factory was going to run its course and other countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh, to name a few, would soon occupy that space. As a result, China needed to build more advanced and sophisticated products to be on par with the United States. However, most of these products required custom chips — and China lacks the domestic manufacturing capability to produce them. China uses 61 per cent of the world's chips in products for both its domestic and export markets, importing around \$310 billion worth in 2018 alone. China was quick enough to appreciate that its incapacity to fabricate these sophisticated chips could well turn out to be the proverbial chink in its armour.

Beijing has always had mega motivations to build its own homegrown capacity. A total of 1.4 trillion dollars have been earmarked in the 2021 budget alone for the development of the semiconductor industry. By 2025 the objective being that 70 percent of chips used in China would be Made in China under the National Integrated Circuit Plan. Over 70 projects have been commenced utilising capital outlays in the past few years alone. Chinese semiconductor industry has gone from making zero to 16 per cent of the world's chips.

But how does all of this mesh with the larger geopolitical conflicts between India and China? There is a growing realisa-

tion that the battle between the US and China to acquire leadership in semiconductor manufacturing is going to divide the world into microchip manufacturing haves and have not's. That is where India fits into the Chinese plans. The semiconductor industry requires two key resources sand and fresh water. They are the basic raw materials. 10,000 litres of fresh water is needed to manufacture one 30-cm silicon wafer.

China's Achilles heel is this availability of fresh water. Key Chinese water systems like the Yangtze, Huang Ho and Mekong rivers are full of effluents. That is how Kashmir, Aksai Chin and Ladakh became crucial for China. The Taklamakan desert (located in Aksai Chin) not only provides abundant sand but huge reservoirs of fresh water from Himalayan rivers and glaciers. The Shaksam valley alone is home to 242 glaciers that can serve as the grand reservoir of fresh water for Chinese chip manufacturing. It, therefore, becomes imperative to view the Sino-Indian standoff through this technological lens also.

From 2011 onwards the UPA government had made chip manufacturing a priority. In September 2013 two consortiums, including IBM and ST Microelectronics, had proposed building semiconductor wafer plants in India with an outlay of USD 8 billion. However the proposals died after the NDA/BJP government assumed office in 2014. Finally in the June of 2020 the government finally announced a Performance Linked Incentive for Promotion of Electronic Components and Semiconductors and Electronics Manufacturing Clusters. However, as it is with the current dispensation, it is always a case of too little too late.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari.

## LETTERS

### NEW CORPORATIONS

The purpose of the corporations seems to be "for the development of forward communities" (AP forms three corporations, DC, May 21). The question is why the government must discriminate people on the basis of caste and community? Can they not take care of the development of all people in the state as one community, based on their economic status?

K Sarath Chandra Babu  
Visakhapatnam

### CONDITIONAL BAIL

Time and again people of this country are witnessing a mockery of justice. While the rich and the highly connected manage their way out of any judicial predicament, the common man bears the brunt of the "law" as there are none to bat for him/her. Suspended YSRC MP Raju's is a fit case that went through high drama and ended up in conditional bail. Would the court grant bail like that to a common man accused of sedition? In any case, it is for the state government now to prove that it is not giving up the case and ensure it goes through all the procedures for conviction of the accused.

Govardhana Myneedu  
Vijayawada

### FULL LOCKDOWN

In neighbouring states where there are fewer Covid-19 cases, more care is being taken. In AP when there are more cases, less care is being taken and people are negligent. Partial lockdown has not showed any impact on people. During the relaxation period, people are breaking Covid-19 rules and spreading cases. This week Covid-19 cases are neither rising nor falling but have stayed stable. After 12 noon, vehicles are plying while police remain spectators. AP must impose 10 days complete lockdown.

D. Ravikumar  
Visakhapatnam

### LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIP

It's unfortunate and intriguing too (*Live-in ties: courts confused?*, DC, May 22). It's nothing but interpretation of law that is the culprit. Live-in relationships can't be treated at par with the married ones despite its legal sanction, till they tie the knot. Nevertheless, any citizen, including live-in partners, are entitled to seek protection by filing FIR against tormentors.

K. Nehru Patnaik  
Visakhapatnam

## 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

### Ghaffar Khan offers to mediate: Bangla crisis

NEW DELHI, MAY 22. Pakhtoon leader Khan Abdul Ghaffar Kahn had offered to mediate for a peaceful settlement of the conflict between East Bengal and West Pakistan Military junta failed to respond positively to the offer.

This was revealed in a recent statement issued by Badshah Khan in Kabul a copy of which was available here today.

Badshah Khan conveyed to Pakistan's Consul at Jalalabad in Afghanistan that he was prepared to offer his services for mediation for a peaceful solution between Banga Bandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and the Pakistan Government.



## SHORT TAKES

OZ ACADEMIC TO  
FACE SPYING  
TRIAL IN CHINA

**Sydney, May 22:** Chinese-born Australian academic and author Yang Jun will go on trial in China on espionage charges next week, after spending more than two years in detention, Canberra's foreign minister has confirmed. Yang is one of two high-profile Australians detained in China on spying allegations amid escalating tensions between Canberra and Beijing. The trial for Yang, who also goes by his pen name Yang Hengjun, will begin on Thursday, Australia's Foreign Minister Marise Payne said.

"Despite repeated requests by Australian officials, Chinese authorities have not provided any explanation or evidence for the charges facing Dr Yang," Payne said.

THREE KILLED, 27  
HURT IN SERIES  
OF CHINA QUAKE

**Beijing, May 22:** At least 3 people were killed and 27 others injured after a series of earthquakes that jolted Yangbi Yi Autonomous County in China's Yunnan Province on Friday, local authorities said. The quake was felt in all 12 counties and cities of the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, with Yangbi being the worst hit, Yang Guozong, the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) chief of the prefecture, said.

Two deaths were reported in Yangbi county and one in Yongping County. Three people were severely injured and 24 others had minor injuries, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. About 72,317 residents in 20,192 households were affected by the quakes.

CHINA'S 'FATHER  
OF HYBRID  
RICE' DIES

**Shanghai, May 22:** An agronomist hailed as a Chinese national hero for helping develop hybrid rice and easing hunger for millions worldwide died on Saturday at the age of 90, state-run Xinhua news agency said.

Yuan Longping, known in China as the "father of hybrid rice", is credited with cultivating the world's first high-yield hybrid rice strain in 1973.

Yuan died in a hospital in Changsha, capital of Hunan province, Xinhua said. It said he had suffered from an unspecified illness.

Hybrid rice, which can yield 20 percent above conventional varieties according to experts, was subsequently widely planted in China.

FIVE STABBED IN  
AMSTERDAM,  
SUSPECT NABBED

**Amsterdam, May 22:** One person was killed and four injured in a stabbing late Friday night in Amsterdam and police said they arrested a suspect nearby. Four victims were taken to a hospital for treatment, police said. Their condition was not immediately known. There was no immediate word on the possible motive.

We have arrested a suspect. We are investigating what exactly happened and why, Amsterdam Police spokeswoman Marijke Stor said.

The stabbings happened in a neighborhood with many bars and restaurants, but they were closed at the time of the incident because of Coronavirus lockdown restrictions.

Further details were not immediately available.

'THAT '70s SHOW'  
ACTOR MASTERSON  
FACES RAPE TRIAL

**Los Angeles, May 22:** US actor and Scientologist Danny Masterson must stand trial for the alleged rape of three women at his home in the Hollywood Hills, a Los Angeles judge ruled Friday.

"That '70s Show" star Masterson denies the accusations made by the women, who were previously also members of the secretive California-based group and said they did not come forward earlier for fear of reprisals from its hierarchy.

"I found all three witnesses to be credible and the evidence sufficient to support the charges," said Judge Charlaime Olmedo, ordering Masterson to be formally arraigned on June 7 and to hand over his passport by that time.

Masterson, 45, allegedly raped the women, all in their twenties at the time, "by force or fear" in separate incidents between 2001 and 2003.

He faces a maximum sentence of 45 years to life in prison if convicted on all charges. He is currently free on \$3.3 million bail.

Nepal President  
dissolves Parl

Bhandari announces mid-term polls in Nov.

Oppn for legal,  
political steps

**Kathmandu, May 22:** Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari has dissolved the House of Representatives and announced mid-term polls on November 12 and 19 after she determined that both embattled Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and the Opposition alliance were not in a position to form a government. Bhandari's announcement came after Prime Minister Oli recommended dissolution of the 275-member House following an emergency midnight Cabinet meeting.

A press statement issued by the Office of President said the Parliament was dissolved and dates of mid-term polls were announced in line with Article 76 (7) of the Constitution of Nepal. The council of ministers has recommended conducting the first phase of the poll on November 12 and the second phase on November 19.

The move followed a notice from the Office of the President which said that it could appoint neither K.P. Sharma Oli, the incumbent prime minister, nor Sher Bahadur Deuba, Nepali Congress president, as claims made by both to form a new government were insufficient.

With four lawmakers in the 275-member House of Representatives dismissed by their party after they chose to be part of another party, a prime ministerial candidate requires support of at least 136 lawmakers in Parliament to form a new government. Interestingly, both Oli and Deuba had claimed the support of some lawmakers, whose names were included in the list of both of them, according to Nepalese media reports. This is the second time President Bhandari has dissolved Parliament on the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli following a political crisis.

Last year on December 20, President Bhandari had dissolved Parliament but later it was reinstated by the Supreme Court in February. Nepal's political crisis had taken a dramatic turn on Friday as Prime Minister Oli and

The leaders of Nepal's Opposition alliance on Saturday decided to take all legal and political means to counter Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and President Bidya Devi Bhandari's "unconstitutional and undemocratic" move of dissolving the House of Representatives.

President Bhandari on Saturday dissolved the House of Representatives and announced mid-term polls on November 12 and 19 after she determined that both embattled Prime Minister Oli and the Opposition alliance's candidate Sher Bahadur Deuba were not in a position to form a government.

Bhandari's announcement

came after PM Oli recommended the dissolution of the 275-member House following an emergency midnight Cabinet meeting. In a joint statement issued at the end of a meeting called to discuss the matter, the Opposition leaders expressed their commitment to unitedly defend the constitutional rights of Nepali citizens achieved at the end of years of political struggle.

They appealed to all political and civil forces to condemn and stand against the Oli-Bhandari duo's regressive, autocratic intentions. They condemned their move as "unconstitutional, undemocratic and arbitrary."

— PTI

ENSURE FAIR,  
FRAUD-FREE  
POLLS: OLI

**Kathmandu, May 22:** Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli on Saturday asked the Election Commission to initiate necessary preparations for the upcoming elections for the dissolved House of Representatives and ensure fair and fraud-free polls in November.

In a meeting with the commissioners of the poll body, Oli said that the parliamentary elections were inevitable.

The prime minister directed the election commission to expedite its preparations to hold the election on the stipulated dates," according to Surya Thapa, a press aide to Oli.

CPN-UML Chief Whip Vishal Bhattarai said Oli stressed for holding a fair and fraud-free election, according to *The Rising Nepal*. — PTI

Biden: Two-state  
solution to conflict

**Washington, May 22:** US President Joe Biden has said that there is no shift in the commitment of his administration towards the security of Israel but insisted a two-state solution that includes a state for Palestinians remains the only answer to that conflict.

Biden's comment comes a day a ceasefire was announced between Israel and Hamas negotiated by Egypt following a 11-day war that caused a lot of casualties and infrastructure damage in Gaza.

"There is no shift in my commitment, the commitment to the security of Israel, period," Biden told reporters at a joint news conference along with the visiting South Korean President Moon-Jae-In. "No shift, not at all, but I tell you what there is a shift in. The shift is that we still need a two-state solution. It is the only answer. What I'm convinced of is that we can now move, as

I did even before I was able to negotiate — well, I shouldn't — before the ceasefire was negotiated," he said. Biden said his administration is going to make sure that the US is going to provide for security in the West Bank.

"We renewed the security commitment, as well as economic commitment to the people on the West Bank," he said. In his call with the Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, he said he indicated to the Israeli it was very important that they stop in Jerusalem this intercommunal fighting. "It has to end. I'm prepared to put together a major package with other nations who share our view to rebuild the homes and without providing Hamas the opportunity to rebuild their weapons systems, rebuild the Gaza. They need to help, and I'm committed to get that done," he said. — PTI

## SPACE | MISSION

## China's rover roaming the Red Planet

**Shanghai, May 22:** China's Mars rover drove from its landing platform and began exploring the surface on Saturday, state-run Xinhua news agency said, making the country only the second nation to land and operate a rover on the Red Planet. The launch last July of the Tianwen-1 Mars probe, which carried the Zhurong rover, marked a major milestone in China's space programme.

Tianwen-1 touched down on a vast northern lava plain known as the Utopia Planitia a week ago and

## Ready to sail



Britains Queen Elizabeth II meets military personnel during her visit to the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth in Portsmouth, England on Saturday, ahead of its maiden operational deployment to the Philippine Sea. The aircraft carrier will embark on her first operational deployment on Sunday, leading the UK Carrier Strike Group in engagements with 40 nations, including India, Japan, Republic of Korea and Singapore. — AFP

Covid crisis in India a sign that  
worst may be yet to come: IMFIMF proposes  
\$50 bn vax plan

**Washington, May 22:** Observing that the ongoing "catastrophic" second wave of Covid-19 in India is a sign that the worst may be yet to come, the IMF has said that the situation in the country is a warning of the possible events in low- and middle-income nations that have seemingly escaped the pandemic till now.

A report co-authored by International Monetary Fund (IMF) economist Ruchir Agarwal and its Chief Economist Gita Gopinath said that under the business-as-usual scenario, the vaccine coverage in India is expected to remain under 35 per cent of the population in 2021.

The second wave in India, following a terrible wave in Brazil, is a sign the worst may be yet to come in the developing world, it said. While India's health system held up fairly well in the first wave, this time its health system is so overwhelmed that many people are dying because of a lack of oxygen, hospital beds, and medical care, it said.

"India is a warning of possible events in other low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) that so far have seemingly escaped the pandemic, including in Africa, it said.

For India, the report said, current bilateral purchases of vaccine plus coverage from COVAX will cover about 25 per cent of its population by the first half of 2022.

To get to 60 per cent coverage, India will need to immediately place sufficient vaccine orders of about 1 billion doses through contracts.

— PTI

quences under current rules. From Sunday, airlines and others will only be able to transport German citizens and residents from Britain.

Under rules, all people arriving from "virus variant areas" — which also include India itself and Brazil — must spend 14 days in quarantine at home after their arrival. They cannot cut that period short by testing negative. People arriving from "risk areas" can avoid a 10-day quarantine. — AP

The decision is a response to the spread of a Coronavirus variant first detected in India. Friday's announcement by the Robert Koch Institute, Germany's national disease control centre, that Britain is being classified as a "virus variant area" comes a week after it went back on a list of "risk areas," which has few conse-

quences under current rules. From Sunday, airlines and others will only be able to transport German citizens and residents from Britain.

Under rules, all people arriving from "virus variant areas" — which also include India itself and Brazil — must spend 14 days in quarantine at home after their arrival. They cannot cut that period short by testing negative. People arriving from "risk areas" can avoid a 10-day quarantine. — AP

The decision is a response to the spread of a Coronavirus variant first detected in India. Friday's announcement by the Robert Koch Institute, Germany's national disease control centre, that Britain is being classified as a "virus variant area" comes a week after it went back on a list of "risk areas," which has few conse-

quences under current rules. From Sunday, airlines and others will only be able to transport German citizens and residents from Britain.

Under rules, all people arriving from "virus variant areas" — which also include India itself and Brazil — must spend 14 days in quarantine at home after their arrival. They cannot cut that period short by testing negative. People arriving from "risk areas" can avoid a 10-day quarantine. — AP

The decision is a response to the spread of a Coronavirus variant first detected in India. Friday's announcement by the Robert Koch Institute, Germany's national disease control centre, that Britain is being classified as a "virus variant area" comes a week after it went back on a list of "risk areas," which has few conse-

quences under current rules. From Sunday, airlines and others will only be able to transport German citizens and residents from Britain. Under rules, all people arriving from "virus variant areas" — which also include India itself and Brazil — must spend 14 days in quarantine at home after their arrival. They cannot cut that period short by testing negative. People arriving from "risk areas" can avoid a 10-day quarantine. — AP

## Diana interview: Ex-BBC head quits

**London, May 22:** Tony Hall, who was director of BBC news and current affairs at the time of the public broadcaster's explosive 1995 interview with Princess Diana, resigned Saturday as board chairman of Britain's National Gallery. Hall, who subsequently rose to the top job at the BBC, was heavily criticised in a report this week for a botched inquiry into how journalist Martin Bashir obtained the blockbuster interview. In a statement, the 70-

year-old said his continued presence at the gallery would be a "distraction to an institution I care deeply about". "As I said two days ago, I am very sorry for the events of 25 years ago and I believe leadership means taking responsibility," said Hall, who served as the BBC's director-general from 2013 until 2020. John Kingman, the deputy chair of the National Gallery's board of trustees, will assume Hall's role for the time being.

He said the gallery is "extremely sorry" to lose Hall but that "we entirely understand and respect his decision".

The 126-page report by retired Judge John Dyson, published Thursday, found the internal BBC investigation had covered up "deceitful behaviour" by Bashir, who was little-known as a journalist when he interviewed Diana. The BBC also has faced questions about why Bashir was rehired in 2016 as the broadcaster's religious affairs correspondent.

Diana's sons, Princes William and Harry, have excoriated the BBC since the report's publication, saying there was a direct link between the 1995 interview and their mother's death in a traffic accident two years later. In the interview, Diana said her marriage to Prince Charles had failed because he was still in love with former lover Camilla Parker Bowles, whom Charles would go on to marry a decade later.

— AP

The 126-page report by retired Judge John Dyson, published Thursday, found the internal BBC investigation had covered up "deceitful behaviour" by Bashir, who was little-known as a journalist when he interviewed Diana. The BBC also has faced questions about why Bashir was rehired in 2016 as the broadcaster's religious affairs correspondent.

He said the gallery is "extremely sorry" to lose Hall but that "we entirely understand and respect his decision".

The 126-page report by retired Judge John Dyson, published Thursday, found the internal BBC investigation had covered up "deceitful behaviour" by Bashir, who was little-known as a journalist when he interviewed Diana. The BBC also has faced questions about why Bashir was rehired in 2016 as the broadcaster's religious affairs correspondent.

He said the gallery is "extremely sorry" to lose Hall but that "we entirely understand and respect his decision".

The 126-page report by retired Judge John Dyson, published Thursday, found the internal BBC investigation had covered up "deceitful behaviour" by Bashir, who was little-known as a journalist when he interviewed Diana. The BBC also has faced questions about why Bashir was rehired in 2016 as the broadcaster's religious affairs correspondent.

He said the gallery is "extremely sorry" to lose Hall but that "we entirely understand and respect his decision".

The 126-page report by retired Judge John Dyson, published Thursday, found the internal BBC investigation had covered up "deceitful behaviour" by Bashir, who was little-known as a journalist when he interviewed Diana. The BBC also has faced questions about why Bashir was rehired in 2016 as the broadcaster's religious affairs correspondent.

Kent, Auschwitz  
survivor, dies

**Berlin, May 22:** International Auschwitz Committee President Roman Kent, who survived the horrors of the Nazi death camp as a teenager, has died in New York after a short illness, his organisation announced Friday.

In late 1939, after Nazi Germany invaded Poland, members of his Kniker family were sent to a ghetto, where Roman's father died of malnutrition in 1943.

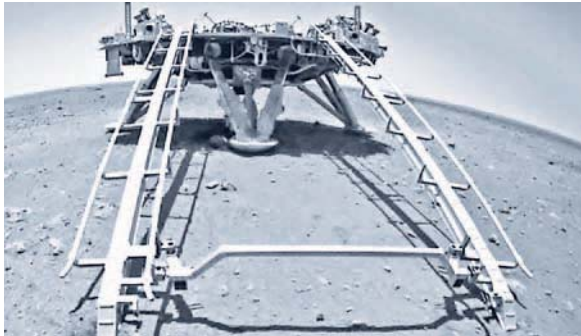
The rest of the family were sent to the

Auschwitz-Birkenau camp in 1944 where Roman was separated from his mother and sisters.

With his brother Leon, he was sent to other concentration camps before being liberated by US troops while on his way to Dachau at the age of 16.

The brothers emigrated to the United States after the war.

In 2011 Kent became the head of the International Auschwitz Committee. — AFP



In this image released by the China National Space Administration on Saturday, a landing platform and the surface of Mars are seen from a camera on the Chinese Mars rover Zhurong. — AP/PTI



## SHORT TAKES

## Batra elected FIH chief for 2nd term

**New Delhi:** Incumbent Narinder Batra of India was on Saturday re-elected as the International Hockey Federation (FIH) president for a second term after beating Marc Coudron of Belgium by a slender margin of just two votes during the world body's virtual 47th Congress. Considered the favourite from the beginning, Batra, who is the also the President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member, barely managed to pip Coudron, who is the chief of Belgium Hockey Federation and sits on the country's Olympic panel. Batra secured 63 votes as against his rival's 61 to emerge winner during the online voting process, in which 124 member associations participated. — PTI

## Tanwar tests +ve, dropped from team

**New Delhi:** South Asian Games gold-medallist Vinod Tanwar (49kg) has been withdrawn from the Indian men's boxing team for the Asian Championships in Dubai after he tested positive for Covid-19. Tanwar, who had travelled for a tournament in Russia's St. Petersburg last month, had gone home for a break after he came back to the country. The 23-year-old returned positive for the virus when he was tested in isolation on his return to Patiala earlier this week, ruling him out from what would have been his maiden appearance at the continental showpiece. "Vinod Tanwar's name was withdrawn from the squad as he was tested positive for Covid-19," the Boxing Federation of India said. — PTI

## 148 athletes get first dose of vax

**New Delhi:** As many as 148 athletes across all sports, including those who have qualified for the upcoming Tokyo Games, have already received their first dose of Covid-19 vaccination, according to the Indian Olympic Association. Out of these 148 athletes, 17 have got both the doses and 131 have received their first shot, IOA president Narinder Batra said. These 148 include potential athletes who can make it to the Tokyo Olympics which is opening on July 23. Besides this, 13 Tokyo Paralympic-bound athletes have got their first vaccine shot while two have received both doses. The Tokyo Paralympics opens on August 24. The total number of athletes (including para-athletes), who have got at least their first dose till May 20, is 163. — PTI

## India football team kick off training

**New Delhi:** All the players and support staff of the Indian football team have tested negative for Covid-19 after arrival in Qatar and have also started training ahead of the joint Qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup next month. The team, which arrived in Doha on Wednesday evening, was under compulsory quarantine and waiting for the results of their RT-PCR tests before starting their preparatory camp. "Yes, all the 28 players and support staff tested positive in the tests done after their arrival," All India Football Federation General Secretary Kushal Das said. The team, bolstered by the return of Sunil Chhetri, will have a preparatory camp inside a bio-bubble here before its first match on June 3 against hosts Qatar. — PTI

## Tsitsipas enters Lyon title clash

**Lyon:** World No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas came from a set down to beat Lorenzo Musetti 4-6, 6-3, 6-0 on Saturday and reach the final of the ATP event in Lyon. In Sunday's final, the 22-year-old Greek will face Britain's Cameron Norrie who raced past Karen Khachanov 6-1, 6-1 in the other semifinal. Norrie, 25, had already played on Saturday morning having beaten Arthur Rinderknech 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 in a quarterfinal suspended overnight with the last set still to play. — AFP

Printed and published from Anantapur by K.Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Deccan Chronicle Press, Bye-Pass Road, Tapovanam, Anantapur - 515004 RNI Registration No. APENG/1999/401 Editorial : 276068 Phones : 276904, 276905 Editor: Kaushik Mitter

## Never-ending Saha

Wriddhiman's journey comes full circle to be understudy again

**Kolkata, May 22:** It's a circle of life that has put Wriddhiman Saha in the same position that he was a decade back when he came to England in 2011 as skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni's understudy.

The script was repeated in 2014 with Saha seen dutifully carrying the bats, towels and drinks for his teammates and in 2021, he is again expected to watch Rishabh Pant's pyrotechnics from the dressing room, something that has solely missed from his style of batsmanship despite being decent at his craft.

"Obviously, there would be criticism when you don't do well. I always try to deliver the way I've learnt over the years," Saha said ahead of joining the team's bio-bubble in Mumbai on Monday. Despite being steady with the bat, somehow Saha's willow wielding hasn't exactly inspired the highest confidence.

"If people are saying my batting is not up there, maybe that's the case... But, I don't think I need to change anything — mental approach or technique. I just try to keep my focus and work hard," he said.

## IPL BUBBLE NOT FOOLPROOF: SAHA

Saha has indicated that the bio-bubble for IPL-14 was not as foolproof as the one in UAE last year, becoming the first India player to publicly question the tightness of the controlled environment.

"It's the job of the stakeholders to assess it, but the only thing I would say is that there was not a single individual during our training in UAE, not even a ground staff. Here there would be people, kids peeping from nearby walls. I don't want to comment much but we saw how the IPL went off smoothly in UAE," Saha said. — PTI



A file photo of India's wicket-keeper batsman Wriddhiman Saha.

## Varun still feels weak &amp; dizzy

**Chennai, May 22:** Kolkata Knight Riders spinner Varun Chakravarthy is still not fit for intense training after his recovery from Covid-19 as he is still feeling "weakness and dizziness".

Chakravarthy was the first player in IPL to test Covid-19 positive and within a couple of days, the tournament was suspended because of multiple cases inside the bio-bubble across franchises.

The 29-year-old Chakravarthy recovered on May 11 and is currently recuperating at his

**I'm now doing well and recovering at home. I still haven't been able to resume training full tilt because of post-Covid-19 symptoms. Although I don't have cough or fever, there is weakness and dizziness.**

— VARUN CHAKRAVARTHY  
Kolkata Knight Riders spinner

Chennai residence.

"I'm now doing well and recovering at home. I still haven't been able to resume training full tilt because of post-Covid-19 symptoms. Although I don't have cough or fever, there is weakness and dizziness," Chakravarthy told *ESPNCricinfo*.

"The loss of smell and

taste is still intermittent, but I'm confident of being able to resume training soon."

Having experienced the effect of the dreaded virus first hand, Chakravarthy's advice to all athletes is to give their bodies at least two weeks of complete rest after recovery before resuming

any training.

"The thing I've learnt and would like to tell other athletes and individuals recovering from Covid-19 is to give your body at least two weeks to fully recover after you test negative.

"Also, even after people test negative, my advice is for them to continue to mask up so that you keep others around you safe."

With India facing a health crisis after the second wave of the pandemic hit the country, it's a mental battle for anybody who tested positive for Covid-19. — PTI

## LECLERC TAKES POLE DESPITE CAR DAMAGE

**Monaco, May 22:** Charles Leclerc will start on pole for his home Monaco Grand Prix after setting the fastest time in qualifying on Saturday despite ending the session with crash-damage to his Ferrari.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen will set off alongside him on the front row of Formula One's iconic street race with world champion Lewis Hamilton in unfamiliar territory back on the fourth row.

Qualifying was red flagged at the end, depriving Hamilton and Verstappen of a late chance to better Leclerc's time with a flying lap.

With overtaking difficult on Monaco's tight and twisting circuit, Hamilton's chances of moving up to 99 grand prix wins look compromised.

After winning three out of four races this season the seven-time world champion leads Verstappen by 14 points in the drivers world championship.

Leclerc secured his eighth career pole but first at Monaco despite his big crash into a wall which ripped off his car's front wing. — AFP

## WRESTLER | MURDER CASE

## Sushil held in Punjab: Report

**New Delhi, May 22:** India's two-time Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar, who was on the run for over a fortnight for alleged links with the murder of former international wrestler Sagar Dhankar, was arrested by Delhi Police in Punjab on Saturday, according to a source.

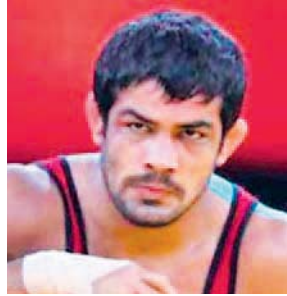
"Kumar has been arrested near Jalandhar. His associate Ajay Kumar, accused in the case, has also been arrested," a source told a news agency.

On May 18, Kumar had moved an anticipatory bail in New Delhi's Rohini court, but the court rejected his bail plea.

Last week, Delhi Police had announced a cash award of ₹1 lakh for feed-back on the celebrated wrestler who was absconding since May 4.

On May 4, two groups of wrestlers clashed with each other at Chhatrasal Stadium leading to the death of 23-year-old Dhankar due to injuries he sustained during the brawl.

The Delhi court had also



Sushil Kumar

issued a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against Kumar. Delhi Police issued a lookout notice for Kumar.

"A lookout notice has been issued for Kumar," Dr Guriqbal Singh Sidhu, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (North West Delhi) had said.

Kumar, employed with the Indian Railways, is posted as an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) at Chhatrasal Stadium, where the brawl allegedly took place.

Kumar won bronze in 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and silver in 2012 London Olympic Games in 66 kg category. — Agencies

## FIFA TO CONSIDER HOLDING WORLD CUP EVERY 2 YEARS

**Lausanne, May 22:** Fifa on Friday launched an overhaul of the international football calendar beyond 2024, saying it is open to "everything" including the organisation of a World Cup every two years, despite opposition from wily players and fears over a devalued product. The 71st Fifa Congress voted by a large majority to carry out "a feasibility study on the consequences of the organisation" of World Cups for men and women "every two years".

No deadline has been set for such a controversial reform to the sport's crown jewel, the main income generator for Fifa since its creation in 1928, and which has been contested every four years since 1930 for men and 1991 for women.

Fifa's football development chief Arsene Wenger suggested in March that the World Cup, the European Championship and other international tournaments be held every two years. It was an idea dubbed "unrealistic" by European Leagues, a body which groups 37 leagues and club associations in Europe. — AFP

## Games on track, insists IOC chief

**New Delhi, May 22:** International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach on Saturday asserted that the Tokyo Olympics will go on as scheduled despite opposition from the majority of Japanese population amid the raging Covid-19 pandemic.

The IOC president said hosting the Olympics, already postponed by a year in 2020 due to the unprecedented health crisis, will send a strong message that there is still "light at the end of the tunnel."

Bach made the statement during his address at the 47th International Hockey Federation (FIH) Congress held virtually.

"With Tokyo (Olympics) finally on the horizon, the final countdown has begun. During this difficult times, we need to send a strong message of resilience, unity and our diversity. Tokyo will show light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

Bach's remarks came close on the heels of IOC vice president John Coates' views that the Tokyo Games will go ahead even if the city is under a state of emergency due to the pandemic.

The IOC's stance under-



Thomas Bach

scores the challenges to host the Games in a Covid-hit world.

While most Japanese are not in favour of hosting the Games due to the strain it is expected to put on the country's medical infrastructure in the wake of the pandemic, the IOC remained adamant.

Bach exuded confidence that together with the local organisers, the IOC would be able to deliver a safe Games, which was postponed last year because of the pandemic.

"The safety and security of our everyone is utmost priority. But together with our Japanese colleagues we will have to ensure that our athletes came together and compete in a safe environment.

"Over 70 per cent athletes and officials have already been vaccinated and this number will grow with time," he said. — PTI

## Atletico are Spanish champions

**Madrid, May 22:** Atletico Madrid edged city rivals Real Madrid to the La Liga title in dramatic fashion after coming from behind to beat Real Valladolid 2-1 in the final game.

Diego Simeone's side trailed to Oscar Plano's strike but turned the match around in the second half through goals from Angel Correa and Luis Suarez.

Real scored twice late on to beat Villarreal 2-1 but

came up short as they needed Atletico to drop points. The results mean Atletico end the season on 86 points, two ahead of second-placed Madrid and seven above third-placed Barcelona.

It's the eleventh time that Atletico have been crowned champions of Spain, with just three of them coming in the last 40 years, in 1996, 2014 and now 2021.

It was a highly satisfactory triumph for Los

Colchoneros as they finished just two points ahead of defending champions Real, who end the season without silverware.

Someone has now won two La Liga titles, a Copa del Rey and a Supercopa Espana in a decade in charge, as well as two Europa League successes and two UEFA Super Cups. Atletico have been title favourites for much of the season, leading the league table since

December 5 when they went top with a 2-0 win, also over Valladolid.

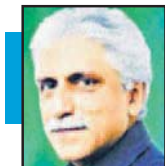
Barcelona — playing without skipper Lionel Messi, who was resting before the summer's Copa America — won 1-0 at Eibar through Antoine Griezmann's acrobatic strike and clinched third place ahead of Sevilla.

Julen Lopetegui's side play their final game on Sunday against Alaves but will finish fourth with a win. — Agencies



Atletico Madrid players celebrate winning the Spanish league title after beating Real Valladolid at Jose Zorrilla Stadium in Valladolid on Saturday. Atletico won 2-1 to aggregate 86 points, two more than Real Madrid. — AFP

## BCCI has its work cut out in scheduling IPL phase 2

Ayaz Memon  
Over The Top

Faced with a whopping ₹2,500 crore loss if IPL2021 is not completed, the BCCI is leaving no stone unturned to resume the suspended tournament. With barely seven months remaining in the year, which also includes the T20 World Cup in a packed international itinerary, all

avenues are being explored, including squeezing in the remaining half of the league in the English season.

According to former captain Michael Atherton writing in the London *Times*, the BCCI has been in talks with the England Cricket Board (ECB) to see if there is a window of

opportunity in the six-week gap between the World Test Championship final (India versus New Zealand, ending June 22) and the first India-England Test which starts on August 4.

After Atherton broke the story, the ECB put out a statement that there has been no official request from the BCCI for playing the IPL in England. But that seems to be a technicality, dictated by power-play in the upper echelons of the sport, and not a rebuttal that such move has indeed been made.

It is hardly likely that

BCCI, the richest and most influential cricket board, will risk a certified request at this stage for fear of it being spurned. The process has to begin with sending 'feelers' and seeing how the other party responds before taking the next step. What's amply clear is that informal talks between the BCCI and ECB have taken place.

With New Zealand already in England, many Kiwi players engaged in the IPL would be readily available if the tournament resumes in say July. Those from the Caribbean can also be dependent on.

Ditto South Africans. Along with English players who play in the League, this adds up to quite a number of overseas players that can be tapped.

The problem would of getting Aussie players — who make up quite a number — to travel across several seas to be in England, always a threat in these Covid times, though sources within the BCCI aver that this issue can be licked with some cajoling, as also the attraction for players — for money and limelight — of playing in the IPL.

How matters proceed

from here is dependent on several factors, not the least a complicated home season for England which could become the biggest stumbling block for IPL 2021 to be played in that country.

This is the inaugural season of 'The Hundred', a coveted tournament which the ECB would be loath to lose.

Unless the quid pro quo with the BCCI is hugely beneficial (e.g. allowing Indian players in The Hundred which would boost the brand equity of the tournament), the ECB is unlikely to make a major

shift in its current itinerary. Apart from The Hundred, remember, there's the Test series against India which is very lucrative for counties where the matches will be held.

Apart from these hassles, squeezing in the tournament in July has other issues. What happens, for instance, to India second-string team's projected tour of Sri Lanka for white ball series?

If players like Shikhar Dhawan, Bhuvneshwar, Kuleep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal are unavailable, this tour is kaput.