

Vijayan sworn in as CM of Kerala for second time

20 ministers inducted in Cabinet

Thiruvananthapuram, May 20: CPI(M) veteran Pinarayi Vijayan, who led the Left Democratic Front (LDF) to an unprecedented consecutive victory in the April 6 assembly polls, on Thursday took oath as chief minister of Kerala for the second time along with 20 ministers.



Pinarayi Vijayan

Governor Arif Mohammed Khan administered the oath of office to 77-year-old Vijayan and ministers in a low-key function at the Central Stadium here, which was held completely in accordance with the Covid protocol.

Congratulating Vijayan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: "Congratulations to Shri @vijayanpinarayi Ji on taking oath as CM and commencing his second term in office."

Mr Vijayan was also greeted by new Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin who led the DMK-Congress alliance to a thumping win in the April 6 assembly polls.

"Best wishes to my brother @vijayanpinarayi on his swearing in as @CMOKerala and I hope that his determination and perseverance will lead to social equality, peace and prosperity for the people," Stalin said in a tweet.

It is the Marxist veteran's second stint in the top office.

While the chief minister

and 14 ministers took the oath and made solemn pledge, five took oath in the name of God.

Representative of the Indian National League in the CPI(M)-led ministry, Ahamed Devarkovil, took oath in the name of Allah.

The ceremony began after the governor reached the venue at 3.30 pm and concluded at 4.50 pm.

Ahead of the swearing-in of the LDF government, Vijayan and minister-designates paid tributes to the martyrs of Punnappara-Vayalar uprising, a working class movement that occurred in Alappuzha district during the 1940s.

It has been a years-long practice for the Communist ministers to pay floral tribute at the martyrs' column before the swearing-in of the Left government.

After taking oath, Vijayan reached his office at the state secretariat to take charge as chief minister.

He also chaired the first meeting of the cabinet later.

— PTI

Mother, son found dead at their house

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 20

Bodies of a mother-son duo was found lying at their house in northeast Delhi's Karawal Nagar on Thursday morning, police said. The deceased, Umlesh (56) and her son Ashok (29) stayed on the first floor and ran a general store on the ground floor of the house, they said.

The police said an information was received around 8 am. When the team reached the spot, body of the woman was found lying on the floor and blood was still oozing from her nose whereas her son's body was lying on the bed in the same room and froth was oozing from his nose, a senior police officer said.

"We have registered a case and shifted the bodies to mortuary for postmortem.

● **INVESTIGATION OF the case is under way but prima facie, it seems a murder by strangulation, yet without any conclusive evidence no conclusion can be drawn**

Investigation of the case is under way but prima facie, it seems a murder by strangulation, yet without any conclusive evidence no conclusion can be drawn," he said. Efforts are being made to find any clue about the accused persons and ascertain the motive of murder, he added.

The woman is survived by another son named Siddharth, aged 39, who lived opposite to her house. Her husband expired Shyam Sunder, was a retired employee of DDA and expired on April 29, police said.

IPS man charged for sexual assault on teen daughter of a fellow officer

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, MAY 20

The criminal investigation department of the Assam police has chargesheeted an IPS officer of 2012 batch of Assam-Meghalaya cadre for allegedly sexually assaulting the 13-year-old girl child of a colleague after a birthday party at his residence.

The chargesheet has been filed against Gaurav Upadhyay under IPC Sections 354 and 354A (assault or criminal force to outrage modesty, sexual harassment) and under the POCSO Act on March 31.

According to the chargesheet, the girl's mother, a senior police officer, had gone to Diphu, the headquarters of Karbi Anglong, along with her daughter and nine-year-old son in December 2019 to attend the birthday party of Upadhyay's son.

Around 2.30 am, Upadhyay dropped the three at a hotel where he had booked a suite for them. He allegedly touched the girl inappropriately on the pretext of showing her a video on his mobile phone in the sitting room of the suite while her brother and mother were in the bedroom. Upadhyay tried to kiss the girl, but she rushed to the bedroom and closed the door.

The mother filed a case on January 3, 2020, at a women police station in Guwahati before the case was transferred to the CID.

Centres for black fungus treatment soon: CM

Says Delhi to procure medicines for treatment from Central government

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MAY 20

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, on Thursday, said dedicated centres will be set up for the treatment of black fungus or mucormycosis cases at three city government-run hospitals.

He made the announcement after discussing the rise in black fungus cases with officials and specialists at a meeting.

"Three important decisions were taken at the meeting. Centres will be set up at Lok Nayak Jai



Arvind Kejriwal

Prakash Narayan Hospital, Guru Tegh Bahadur Hospital, and Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital for treatment of black fungus," the CM tweeted.

The drugs used in the

treatment of the fungal infection will be arranged in enough quantity and awareness will be created among people for prevention against the disease, he said.

"We have to stop the spread of the disease and give the best possible treatment to those suffering from it," he said in another tweet.

The Delhi government will also procure medicines for the treatment of the disease from the Central government.

Mr Kejriwal said, "Delhi is the capital of the coun-

try and people from outside also come here for treatment. We should have sufficient quantities of medicines to cater to everyone who is coming for the treatment of black fungus."

Meanwhile, the CM will take a call on lifting the lockdown in Delhi over the weekend after a discussion with lieutenant governor Anil Bajjal. The lockdown was declared last month as the Covid cases started an upward trend and reached numbers that left the healthcare system in shambles.

Nearly half of vaccination sites for 18+ may shut today: Atishi

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 20

AAP MLA Atishi on Thursday said nearly half of the vaccination sites for the 18-44 age group in Delhi are likely to be shut from Friday as the city has less than a day's stock of Covishield left.

The vaccination centres administering Covaxin to the people in the city have been shut for nearly a week, she said.

"We have less than a day's

stock of Covishield left for the 18-44 age group. There are 99 schools where 368 vaccination sites are there. Nearly 150 of these sites will have to close down from tomorrow owing to vaccine shortage," Atishi said while issuing the vaccination bulletin.

The national capital has two days of Covaxin and nine days of Covishield stock left for the 45 plus age group, healthcare workers and frontline workers, she said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE			
SRDEN/III/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against following tender bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.			
Tender No.	13-DRM-MB-21-22	Date	19.05.2021
Name of Work	Road Widening and Road Repair Tai Tanki to Block No. OHE-15 Malgadam Road & Misc. Works of Ind Entry at SPN in the section of SSE/W/SPN under ADEN/SPN.		
Tender Closing Date Time	15/06/2021 16:00		
Advertised Value (Rs.)	89,17,366.31		
Earnest Money (Rs.)	0.00		
Tender Doc. Cost (Rs.)	0.00		
Bidding Start Date	01.06.2021		
Validity of Offer (Days)	45 days		
Period of Completion	02 Months		
Tender No. 75-W/2/3/WA/Publication Dt.	19.05.2021		1078/2021
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE			

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE				
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-				
S.N.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	16210349	COMPLETE WINDOW ASSEMBLY WITH INNER.	490 NOS	14.06.21
02	16200376	HYDRAULIC MOTOR FOR 700 HP	27 NOS	15.06.21
03	16210387	MOTOR HYDRAULIC FOR VENT FAN ENGINE	31 NOS	16.06.21
04	02212511	LOW MAINTENANCE LEAD ACID BATTERIES 75 AH	96 SET	16.06.21
05	19210644	SET OF DAMPER FOR WAG-9H	10 SET	18.06.21
06	12211555	125 AMPERE 1000 VOLT HRC FUSES	583 SET	18.06.21
07	16200179	ELEMENT FILTER FOR EMD LOCO	1373 NOS	21.06.21
08	16210115	LEVELING VALVE	345 NOS	21.06.21
09	16213633	TAPERED ROLLER BEARING	139 SET	22.06.21
10	07211149	DOUBLE ACTING HYDRAULIC SHOCK ABSORBER	1624 NOS	23.06.21

Note:- 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.

Tender Notice No. 12/2021-2022 Dated : 20.05.2021 1083/21

NORTHERN RAILWAY Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement System)			
1.	Name of work with its location:	strengthening of top lateral bracing angles X-angles, gussets etc. and replacement of corroded rivets of Br. No. 974 UP at Kms 1241/18 to 1242/2 on SPN-MB section and replacement of badly corroded rivets & members i.e. Lateral bracing angles, Cross frames & Gusset plates of Br. No. 1258 DN on MB-SRE section under the jurisdiction of AXEN/BL/MB of MB Division.	
2.	Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 51,12,606.37	
3.	Completion period of the work	06 (Six) Months	
4.	Date & time for submission of tender & opening of tender	Up-to 15.00 hrs on 14.06.2021. Opening of tender after 15.00 hrs on same day.	
5.	Website particulars where complete details of Tender can be seen & downloaded.	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in	
Tender Notice No: 32-W-BR-974-1258-MB-21 Dated: 19.05.2021			1075/2021
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE			

SEARCH OF MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one boy, (depicted in the photo), **Namely:** Mohit Shukla @ Suraj Shukla, **S/o:** Smt. Suman Shukla, **R/o:** H.No. 1101/B, Gali No. 22, S.B.S. Colony, Karawal Nagar, Delhi, **Aged:** about 23 years, has been missing from his house since 05.01.2021. In this regard a case vide DD No. 1-A, Dated 05.01.2021, has been registered at P.S. Karawal Nagar, Delhi. His physical description is as under:

Height: 5'7" Feet, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Oval, **Built:** Thin, **Clothing:** Not Known.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing boy, may inform SHO, Karawal Nagar, Delhi at **E-mail:** cic@cbi.gov.in or **website :** <http://cbi.nic.in> or **Fax No.** 011-24368639, **Tele No. :** 011-24368638 or 24368641, **Extn.** 2101.

S.H.O
P.S. Karawal Nagar, Delhi
Ph: 011-22932232



**Mohit Shukla
@ Suraj Shukla**

DP/519/NE/2021.

SEARCH OF KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one boy, (depicted in the photo), **Namely:** Raj Singh Raghav, **S/o:** Dilip Singh Raghav, **R/o:** H.No. A-508/3, Mishra Market, 4th Pusta, Kartar Nagar, New Usmanpur, Delhi **Aged:** about 17 years, has been kidnapped from his house since 27.03.2021. In this regard a case vide **FIR No. 150/21, u/s 363 IPC, Dated 30.03.2021**, has been lodged at **P.S. New Usmanpur, Delhi**. His physical description is as under:

Height: 5'4" Feet, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Medium, **Clothing:** Blue Colour T-Shirt, Grey Colour Jeans and Grey Colour Shoes in his feet.

Any person is having any information/clue about this kidnapped boy, may inform SHO, **PS New Usmanpur, Delhi** at **E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in** or **website : <http://cbi.nic.in>** or **Fax No. 011-24368639, Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641, Extn. 2101.**

S.H.O.
P.S. New Usmanpur, Delhi
Ph. 011-22172410, 22175468

DP/699/NE/2021.

👉 IMPORTANT NOTICE 👈

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that the East Coast Railway has decided to cancel/reduce the frequency of the following Rajdhani Special Trains due to low occupancy as per the following details:-

TEMPORARY CANCELLATION/REDUCTION IN THE FREQUENCY OF RAJDHANI SPECIAL TRAINS					
Train No. & Name	Running (via)	Existing days of run (from originating station)	Active days of run (from originating station)	Date(s) of Cancellation	Days of Cancellation
02823 Bhubaneswar - New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Tatanagar Jn	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri	Tuesday	21, 24, 27, 28 & 31.05.21	Mon, Thu, Fri
02824 New Delhi - Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Tatanagar Jn	Tue, Wed, Thu, Sat	Wednesday	22, 25, 27, 29.05.2021 & 01.06.2021	Tue, Thu, Sat
02825 Bhubaneswar - New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Adra Jn	Wednesday, Sunday	Sunday	26.05.2021	Wednesday
02826 New Delhi - Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Adra Jn	Monday, Friday	Monday	28.05.2021	Friday
02855 Bhubaneswar - New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Sambalpur City, Anara	Saturday	---	22.05.2021 & 29.05.2021	Saturday
02856 New Delhi - Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Sambalpur City, Anara	Sunday	---	23.05.2021 & 30.05.2021	Sunday

For any other information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

RailMadad Helpline No. 139
Visit RailMadad website:
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 & download Railmadad app.

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"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

Haryana Government to Protect Every Urban & Rural Area From Covid-19

Sh. Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

DURING HOME ISOLATION

- Maintain Distance with Family Members and Use Mask
- Wash Hands Frequently with Soap And Water or Use Sanitizer
- Regularly Monitor Your Body Temperature and Oxygen Level
- Follow Respiratory Etiquettes
- Keep in Touch with Your Doctor and Take Medicines as Prescribed
- Dispose off Tissue Paper etc. Properly After Use
- Contact Doctor Immediately if you have Difficulty in Breathing, High Grade Fever or Severe Cough for More Than Five Days

For prevention of corona in Rural areas

- For the Test of Covid-19, Door to Door Screening and Testing of Everyone by Multidisciplinary Teams
- Home Isolation Kits to Patients with Mild and Moderate Symptoms, Immediate Treatment to Patients with Severe Symptoms in Nearby Medical Centres
- Dharamshalas, Government Schools and Ayush Centres of Villages Set Up as Isolation Centres
- Arrangement of Oximeters, Steam Machines, Thermometers and Essential Medicines

S Sanitization **M** Mask **S** Social Distancing

Helpline For Assistance Regarding Covid-19
8558893911 (for Entire State) **1075** (Except Gurugram & Faridabad)

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana www.pharyana.gov.in @Cmohry @DiprHaryana



Chhattisgarh NYAY to Last Mile Continues

Farmers Get Agriculture Input Subsidy



Commemorating Martyrdom Day of
Former Prime Minister

Shri Rajiv Gandhi
on 21st May 2021



RAJIV GANDHI KISAN NYAY YOJANA

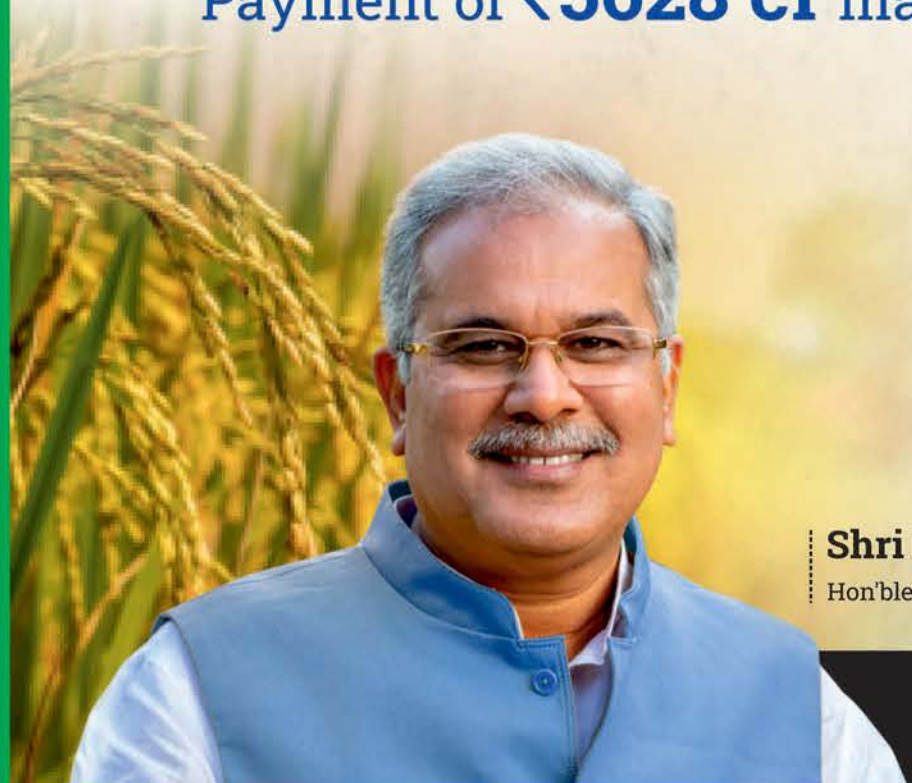
Direct Bank Transfer
of First Instalment of Input Subsidy

₹1500cr

to more than 22 lakh farmers

- ❖ For Kharif year 2020-21 input subsidy of ₹9000 per acre to paddy farmers, same rate to be applicable in coming years
- ❖ Farmers selling paddy at MSP this year will receive input subsidy of ₹10000 per acre for Kharif season 2020-21 if switching crops or planting trees
- ❖ For Kharif year 2021-22, besides paddy, farmers cultivating maize, soybean, kodo, kutki and arhar will receive input subsidy of ₹9000 per acre
- ❖ Kodo-Kutki support price raised and fixed at ₹3000 per quintal

Payment of ₹5628 cr made last year



Shri Bhupesh Baghel
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh



GODHAN NYAY YOJANA

Cow Dung Monetizing Scheme

Making Cattle Rearing Economically Profitable

Payment of ₹7.17cr

(for 15th march - 15th may 2021)

to cattle owners towards
cow dung procurement

Payment of ₹88.15 cr made so far

Smt. Sonia Gandhi Ji & Shri Rahul Gandhi Ji
(Hon'ble Members of Parliament)
To Grace the Occasion through Video Conferencing



Wear
Mask



Regularly wash
your hands with soap



Maintain
Physical distancing



Get
Vaccinated



SHORT TAKES

Cops beat woman without mask

Sagar, MP: A woman was allegedly beaten up and dragged by some police personnel on a road for not wearing a mask while going out to buy vegetables amid Covid-19 in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district. After a video of the incident, which took place on Monday in Rahli town, went viral, a police official said the woman allegedly hit a female cop first. The woman and her daughter were stopped by police around 11 am on Monday for not wearing masks. The police tried to take them away in a jeep to an open jail as punishment, but the duo resisted and allegedly hit a policewoman. In the video, some police personnel, including a female cop, were seen beating up the woman, pushing her down and dragging her by her hair. They were trying to shift her in the police jeep while she was resisting it and in the process, they thrashed her. — *PTI*

Bharat Biotech to ramp up production

New Delhi: Bharat Biotech on Thursday said it plans to produce additional 200 million (20 crore) doses of vaccine 'Covaxin' at its subsidiary's Gujarat-based facility, taking the overall production volume of the vaccine to about 1 billion (100 crore) dosages per annum. The Hyderabad-based firm said it will utilise the Ankleshwar-based production facility of its wholly-owned subsidiary Chiron Behring Vaccines to add another 200 million doses of Covaxin. The company plans to produce 200 million doses of Covaxin per annum in the GMP facilities that are already operational for the production of vaccines based on Inactivated Vero Cell Platform Technology, under stringent levels of GMP and biosafety." Bharat Biotech said. The Ankleshwar-based plant would start rolling out the much in demand vaccine from the fourth quarter of the year, it added. — *PTI*

67 more die of Covid-19 in J&K

Srinagar: Even as 67 more patients died of Covid-19 in Jammu and Kashmir in the past 24 hours, the authorities said the silver lining in the ostensibly gloomy situation is that over two lakh people who had contracted the virus have recovered completely over a period of time in the UT. Officials said that while 67 patients died of Covid-19 including 41 in Jammu region and remaining 26 in the Kashmir Valley, 4,169 new positive cases of the coronavirus in the UT since Wednesday evening.

‘Opp. CMs treated like puppets, not allowed to speak’

■ *Continued from Page 1*
humiliated. It happened one way. I think all the non-BJP-ruled states should form a team to lodge a protest against the BJP at the Centre." The TMC chief wondered: "Why is the PM feeling so insecure and scared? Why is he fleeing away? In his speech, he claimed that Covid-19 deaths are decreasing. Then why are so many deaths there? Why are bodies being thrown away in the river? Namami Gange has now become Mrityupuri Gange." Ms Banerjee also noted that her demand for the dispatch of three crore vaccines had not been met by the Centre. Lashing out at Ms Banerjee, Leader of the Opposition Shuvendu Adhikari tweeted: "Today, our respected CM @MamataOfficial has once again shown her total disinterest in administration. True to her style, she has politicised a meeting Hon'ble PM @narendramodi held with District Officials, where grassroots level practices to fight COVID-19 were being discussed." He also claimed: "5 out of the 7 District Officials who spoke today belonged to non-BJP ruled states of Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and AP. Cooperative federalism is the firm commitment of PM @narendramodi unlike CM @MamataOfficial who only believes in confrontational federalism. West Bengal's Covid numbers are miserable, but the Chief Minister wants to play politics. The @AITCofficial is still busy in gory victory dances and targeting opponents. It is better they get down to work because the great People of West Bengal are watching!"

■ Modi is not disturbed by death of crores of people: Patole
Maha Cong endorses Gadkari for PM

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, MAY 20

The Maharashtra Congress has demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should be replaced by the Union road transport minister Nitin Gadkari. Mr Modi is not disturbed by the death of crores of people due to coronavirus, said state Congress chief Nana Patole. "We feel that Nitin Gadkari should be made the prime minister of the country as Mr Modi just

does not bother about crores of people dying due to Covid-19 pandemic," he said. The Congress leader's statement came on the backdrop of the demand made by Maharashtra BJP head Chandrakant Patil, who said if the Lok Sabha elections were held today, his party under the leadership of Mr Modi will win 400 seats in the country. "If Mr Patil is saying that elections should be held, it means the BJP leaders and activists have realised that Modi has



Nitin Gadkari

failed as a prime minister. In fact, some BJP leaders have demanded that Modi should resign and Gadkari should be made the PM. Chandrakant Patil should

ask Modi to resign and hold elections. It will make clear what people have in their mind and who will get how many seats," said Mr Patole. The state Congress chief alleged that the Centre turned a blind eye towards the second wave of coronavirus in the country. "On the contrary it said the corona has been eradicated. We are facing the consequences of it as people have lost their lives and farmers have suffered losses due to the pandemic," Mr Patole added.

MHA plans NDRF unit to deal with pandemics

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 20

Learning from the experience of the devastation caused by corona, the home ministry plans to set up a highly specialised division within the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to deal "exclusively with pandemics." As of now the mandate given to NDRF allows it to deal with all "natural and manmade disasters" like cyclone, floods, earthquake, chemical or gas leakageetc. But now the MHA is planning to set up a high specialised unit within the NDRF which will also deal with pandemics like Corona. This will not only allow NDRF to have specialised medical teams but also the necessary infrastructure to set up health facilities at a short notice. Sources said they were examining the proposal and looking into the legality whether it will have to approach the Cabinet for the sanction or the new division can be set up through an executive order itself.

PM must give ₹1,500cr aid to Maha: Sena

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, MAY 20

A day after the Central government announced the relief package of ₹1,000 crore for immediate relief work in Gujarat, which has been hit hard by Cyclone Tauktae, the Shiv Sena on Thursday said that they are hopeful that Maharashtra will also be provided financial aid of ₹1,500 crore as Prime Minister Narendra Modi is aware of the losses in Maharashtra. Sharad Pawar led NCP asked as to why Maharashtra being given step motherly treatment by the Central government. Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said that Gujarat has suffered huge loss. The Central government has provided ₹1,000 crore to Gujarat, which is a part of this country. Therefore, there is no need to be upset about it.

Bengal, Odisha facing new cyclone ‘Yaas’ next week

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, MAY 20

Close on the heels of Cyclone Tauktae's strike on the western coast of the country, another cyclonic storm — "Yaas" — is now bound for the eastern coast and is likely to hit the states of Odisha and West Bengal next week. A year ago, the two states off the Bay of Bengal were devastated by cyclone Amphan on May 20, killing more than 90 people altogether while destroying properties amid Covid-19 pandemic. According to the India meteorological department on Thursday, "A low pressure area is very likely to form over North Andaman Sea and adjoining East Central Bay of Bengal around 22nd May, 2021. It is very likely to intensify into a cyclonic

storm by May 24. It is very likely to move North West wards and reach near Odisha-West Bengal coasts around May 26 morning." It added that the probability of cyclogenesis (formation of depression) during the next 96 hours (four days) is "moderate" which can be "high" in between 96-120 hours. West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee said, "We are preparing to tackle cyclone Yaas. Disasters have now become routine every year. All the district magistrates have been alerted. Besides alerts have been sounded in the Sundarbans and Digha coastal area. Our disaster management department is looking into it." The Northeast regional headquarters of the Indian Coast Guard, cov-

ering Odisha and West Bengal, stated that it "is closely monitoring the weather development and has initiated pre-emptive /preventive measures. Though fishing ban is enforced in the east coast of India, Coast Guard Dornier and Ships at sea are intimidating the fishermen operating close to coast and those at sea about likely formation of cyclonic storm over Odisha/West Bengal coast and directing these fishing boats to return back to harbour for safety." Additionally, radar stations of ICG in West Bengal and Odisha have also started transmitting weather warnings at regular intervals both in English and in vernacular language to alert merchant vessels and fishing boats operating at sea, it added.

Odisha govt preps for cyclonic storm ‘Yaas’

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, MAY 20

The Odisha government on Thursday said it had taken a slew of measures on a priority basis in view of the development of cyclonic storm "Yaas" in the Bay of Bengal. "The state government has put in place a slew of measures to face the possible situation during and after the cyclonic storm that is developing in the Bay of Bengal," the state revenue department said. Special relief commissioner Pradeep Kumar Jena asked all the departments concerned to ensure readiness with full preparedness of manpower and other resources for any exigency arising out of the storm that is likely to intensify into a cyclone from a low pressure between May 22 and May 25 before advancing towards Odisha-Bengal coast in northwest direc-

tion by May 26. Mr Kumar informed that the exact track and intensity of the cyclone was not yet clear as different weather forecasting models were suggesting different pictures. "As per the direction of chief minister Naveen Patnaik, a draft plan has been made to mobilise emergency rescue and disaster management troops like fire, Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force and National Disaster Response Force at strategic points but the final execution will be done as soon as we get clear information on the cyclone," the SRC said. The panchayati raj and water resources department has been asked to make necessary preparations to ensure an unhindered drinking water supply and plan to pre-position water tankers wherever necessary to help people during the aftermath of the cyclone.

37 deaths, 36 still missing

■ *Continued from Page 1*
Mumbai police has also announced a probe into barge P305 remaining in the area despite storm warnings. An ADR (accidental death report) was registered Wednesday in connection with the deaths. On Thursday morning the Coast Guard said another missing tug -- Sangeeta, with a crew of 10 -- had been located about 10 nautical miles west of Maharashtra's Tarapur. The Coast Guard found the ship and has provided food, water and medical support to the crew while it is being towed back. Another Navy ship, *INS Talwar*, was the "On Scene Coordinator" off Gujarat coast and assisted Support Station 3 (SS-3) and Drill Ship Sagar

Bhushan, which were being safely towed back to Mumbai by ONGC support vessels, an official said. The ministry of petroleum and natural gas announced a high-level inquiry into "lapses and gaps" in the system. It will probe the sequence of events leading to the ONGC support vessels left stranded by the cyclone, see whether warnings by the India Meteorological Department and other statutory authorities were acted upon or not, and if the SOP for securing vessels and disaster management was followed. According to barge's chief engineer Rahman Shaikh, everyone onboard could have been saved had many of the life rafts not had punctures and the captain had taken the cyclone

warnings seriously. Mr Shaikh has been admitted to Apollo Hospital in Tardeo with injuries on his knee. He stated that they had received the cyclone warning a week before it hit. Many other vessels in the vicinity left and he had told the captain, Balwinder Singh, that they must also leave for the harbour. However, the captain said that winds were not expected to be over 40 kmph and the cyclone would cross Mumbai in one or two hours. The Maharashtra Congress demanded the resignation of Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan on moral grounds over the death of 37 personnel on board the barge that sank in the Arabian Sea, and termed it as a "man made

Modi, Shah to reciprocate if Ulfa ready for talks: Himanta

■ *Continued from Page 1*
next three days. The editor claimed that Mr Barua was very happy that Assam has finally got a chief minister who is prepared to take responsibility for taking maximum benefit from oil companies for the welfare of the state's people. It is significant that the response of Ulfa-I chief came before the chief minister's press

conference was over. Mr Sarma told reporters that he was waiting for a detailed statement from the outlawed Ulfa-I chief that the recent unilateral ceasefire in the name of Covid was also an indication of his willingness to resolve the conflict through talks. On being asked about the response of the Central government, the chief minister

said, "If Ulfa chief expresses his willingness for talks, I am confident that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah would also reciprocate." Clarifying that the contribution of oil companies of the state was immense in the development of the state, Mr Sarma said, "Some people propagated that oil companies are

exploiting the natural resources of Assam -- it became a slogan for decades but no one ever tried to know the fact that state's economy is dependent on the contribution of taxes from outside the state. Even if we calculate the entire possible income from the oil sector, it can run the state only for three-four months. For the remaining months' expen-

Tainted cop Davinder sacked for terror links

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, MAY 20

Davinder Singh, the tainted Jammu and Kashmir police officer who had hit the headlines after his arrest with a senior Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander in January 2020 has been dismissed from services by the lieutenant governor of the Union Territory. Two Muslim school-teachers too have been fired over their alleged anti-national activities. Lieutenant-governor (L-G) Manoj Sinha has over the past few weeks sacked half a dozen government officials on such charges in what the officials say a renewed campaign to clean the administration of undesirable elements "in the interest of the security of the state". A government order issued on Thursday said that the L-G is satisfied



Davinder Singh

after considering the facts and circumstances of the case and on the basis of information available that the activities of Singh, who last served as deputy superintendent of police with the anti-hijacking squad at the Srinagar airport, are such as to warrant his dismissal from service. "The lieutenant-governor is satisfied under sub-clause (c) of the proviso to clause (2) of Article 311 of the Constitution of India that in the interest of the security of the state, it is not expedient to hold an

enquiry in the case of Davinder Singh. Accordingly, the lieutenant-governor hereby dismisses Davinder Singh from service, with immediate effect," the order reads. Singh, a resident of Tral area of southern Pulwama district, is facing charges under various anti-terror laws for helping militants, including Hizb's commander Syed Naveed Mushtaq alias Naveed Babu. The case is being investigated by the NIA which had on July 6 last year filed a chargesheet against him and six others for their alleged terror activities. The police officer, along with Naveed Babu and another militant Asif Ahmed Rather, was arrested while they were travelling to Jammu from the Valley in a Hyundai i20 owned and being driven by lawyer Irfan Shafi Mir in January 2020.

Sonia to PM: Make edu free for kids orphaned by Covid

New Delhi, May 20: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide free education in Navodaya Vidyalayas to children orphaned due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In her letter, Mrs Gandhi said the nation owes it to children to give them hope and provide them a robust future after their tragedy. "I am writing to request you to consider providing free education at the Navodaya Vidyalayas to children who have lost either both parents or an earning parent on account of the Covid-19 pandemic," the Congress chief said. The BJP, however, took a swipe at the Congress chief, saying her idea of looking after kids orphaned during the pandemic is "outdated and copied". "Several state governments are already



Sonia

doing it except perhaps those run by the Congress. Instead of writing to the PM, she should have written to Amarinder Singh and Ashok Gehlot," BJP IT cell head Amit Malviya said. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi shared the letter on Twitter and said it is high time the government of India listened to the suggestion. "Children are amongst the worst hit by Covid trauma, many having lost their parents to the dreadful situation. Congress president makes an important suggestion to safeguard their future and provide them free education at NVs (Navodaya Vidyalayas). It's high time Gol listened," he said in a tweet. — *PTI*

Punjab to give ₹1,500 per mth for orphan kids

Chandigarh, May 20: The Punjab government Thursday decided to provide ₹1,500 per month as social security pension and free education up to graduation to all those children orphaned in the pandemic, as well as families that have lost their breadwinning member, beginning July 1. Chief minister Amarinder Singh said his government will ensure free education in government institutions for such children as well as kids belonging to families that have lost their breadwinner to Covid, according to an official statement. Mr Singh said affected persons would also be eligible for ₹51,000 under the Ashirwad Scheme with effect from July 1 and would be entitled to free ration under the state smart ration card scheme. — *PTI*

Didi sees vendetta in Narada arrests

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, MAY 20

Describing the arrests of four heavyweight Narada sting bribery accused including two of her cabinet colleagues by the Central Bureau of Investigation, as a "deliberate political vendetta," West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday complained that they have been subjected to an "unlimited injustice." The Trinamul Congress supremo, who alongwith state law minister Moley Ghatak and party MP

Kalyan Banerjee has been made a party by the CBI in its petition to transfer the high-profile case outside the state, also expressed her anguish over no relief to the arrested quartet, now in the judicial custody, as the hearing of the case at the Calcutta High Court was not held due to "unavoidable circumstances." Ms Banerjee alleged, "I am not saying anything since the matter is sub-judice. But the injustice that has been meted out to them is unlimited. I will not make any comment on the court proceedings.

But beyond the court I, as a political person in government, will say it is a deliberate political vendetta." Praising the work of state housing minister Firhad Hakim, also the outgoing Kolkata Mayor, and state panchayat minister Subrata Mukherjee amid Covid-19 pandemic, the CM claimed, "Bobby works a lot with his full team on the street always. He was the one who received the trial vaccine, risking his life. Alongwith him and Subratada, others have been kept in confinement for days. I hope jus-

tice will prevail. Already three-four days have passed when Bobby and Subratada could not do their job. So I will have to check whether there is a pile-up of the dead bodies." Earlier the hearing in the case did not take place as the high court issued a notice stating, "Due to unavoidable circumstances, the First Division Bench will not assemble today." Following this, the four arrested leaders spent another night in judicial custody. Their matter is likely to come up for hearing on Friday.

‘Black fungus’ the new challenge

■ *Continued from Page 1*
"white fungus" — is reported to have been detected in Bihar. Meanwhile, interacting with state and district officials from across India on the Covid-19 situation via video conferencing on Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged them to devise new solutions and strategies to tackle mounting challenges, and specifically for rural areas, with cases rising outside the cities, to ensure rural India remains Covid-free. The officers briefed the PM on the improving situation in certain districts. On vaccine wastage, Mr Modi said wastage of a single vaccine means not being able to provide the necessary security to an individual. On Friday, the PM will interact with doctors,

paramedical staff and other frontline health workers of Varanasi and review the working of various Covid hospitals in his parliamentary constituency. The new challenge of black fungus comes as daily new Covid-19 cases have started showing a slight decline and for the fourth consecutive day less than three lakh cases were recorded. In the last 24 hours, 2.76 lakh fresh cases were detected from 20.44 lakh tests and daily recoveries -- 3.69 lakh -- outnumbered daily new cases for seventh consecutive day. The daily positivity rate of the country stands at 13.44 per cent, while the deaths in the past 24 hours were 3,874, which was 655 less than the previous day. "Things seem to be set-

ting and improving slightly but still we are in the midst of the second wave and strict vigil and control has to be kept. The districts which have a positivity rate of 10 per cent or more need stricter containment measures," said Dr Balram Bhargava, the head of ICMR. While cases may be reducing in cities where there is some awareness of testing, there seems to be a major outbreak in rural and peri-urban areas where lack of testing may be giving a faulty national picture. "Even as the second wave declines, my patients from rural areas have a different story to tell -- one of masses of people with fever, some dying, all without testing. Terribly worried that there is a Covid surge in rural India that is going largely

unchecked and undetected," tweeted Dr Arvinder Singh Soin of Gurgaon's Medanta Hospital. Dr Bhargava said states have been asked to deploy Rapid Antigen Tests in rural areas and only symptomatic negative RAT have to be followed by RT-PCR tests. The Centre has approved home testing RAT kits by Pune-based MyLab, which are priced at Rs 250. Dr Bhargava said more such kits will be out in the market in the coming days as India plans to take up testing from 22.55 lakhs to 40 lakhs per day. The country as of now has 2,553 RT-PCR testing centres. The home test kits are expected to bring down pressure on the RT-PCR testing centres that are all together checking about 12 lakh samples per day.

Sarma. Mr Sarma has also directed to immediately initiate the process of transition of dissolved Madrassas into general schools. He said that the previous BJP led government brought a law which converted all the government-run Madrassas into upper primary, high school and higher secondary schools.

THE ASIAN AGE

21 MAY 2021

Govt must act fast to beat Covid's spread in villages

The stringent lockdown declared in several states to contain the spread of coronavirus seems to be paying some dividend as is evidenced by the gradual decline of the daily caseload numbers, from a daily average of four lakh or above a week ago to below three lakh now. However, the daily death toll has shown no signs of easing; it hovers around 4,000 steadily for more than a week now.

It is in this background that we must see reports about the second wave targeting India's villages, as admitted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a meeting with state chief ministers a week ago. "I want to warn you about corona. The infection is spreading fast in villages," the Prime Minister has been quoted as telling the chief ministers. And all the anecdotal evidence available points to the fact that rural India is finding it difficult to cope with it as everything is in short supply; the bodies that floated on river Ganga was an indication of the crisis that has gripped the villages.

It is going to be a long and tough game to play the virus in rural settings as every single factor is in its favour. Compared with the urban settings, the rural areas lack a health infrastructure. Testing hesitancy, which is proving to be a major hurdle in the path of the health workers to identify the trouble spots, is on the rise in the villages due to many factors. The lack of awareness about the fatal nature of the infection and the trust in quacks and their home remedies are going to be major obstacles in the efforts to contain the pandemic in rural areas. Taking these factors together, the recent fall in numbers gives a realistic person very little reason to be optimistic about it.

The government will have to quickly roll out a programme for the rural areas, and the lack of health infrastructure is going to be a major issue there. However, no challenge is insurmountable if there is political will. The government must consider the suggestion as it has little choice if it wants to save its massive rural population from falling victim to the virus.

The government must use all the tools available with it to convince the people into dropping their testing hesitancy and joining the governmental efforts. This is easier said than done but people following Covid protocol would be the most cost-effective and efficient line of defence against the pandemic. There are experts who warn of a more fatal third wave; but the government must find ways to manage the wolf which is already at the door.

The WhatsApp conundrum

The Indian government has told WhatsApp once again to withdraw its new privacy policy while giving it seven days to respond to the notice. India is taking this up as a serious issue that concerns its sovereign laws and it would be up to Facebook-WhatsApp to determine whether it needs its Indian presence. The problem is, of course, bigger for WhatsApp as some of its two billion users are leaving the app in droves because they are fed up with its ham-handed and obstinate handling of issues over sharing data with its principal Facebook, which is often described as the world's greediest data harvesting machine.

Any user of the Internet should know the minute he signs up for a free site like the messaging platform WhatsApp that his privacy has already been compromised. In Facebook's case, it stood exposed by rivals, including Apple, that it collects much more data — device ID, user ID and contact info — of a user than is really required for offering its secure messaging. Encryption of messages is still its best feature as all individual user's conversations are secure and no one has access to them unless they are leaked by other users in a group. However, the reason for collecting excessive data is hard to understand.

Being a free platform, WhatsApp was at liberty to base any advertising fed to the user on the basis of the data collected. But it was not free to share some data with Facebook, whose last quarter of 2020 revenues were upwards of \$28 billion. Facebook did clarify that its change of terms would only enable its business customers to communicate to WhatsApp users who allow access. A user can now turn off, in WA settings, access to anyone who is not on his/her contact list.

Facebook-WhatsApp's performance during this privacy storm was never transparent enough and it exacerbated the situation by warning users now to sign up under new terms or face cuts in access to full functionality. It is now up to users to decide whether to stay on or switch off and look for alternatives.

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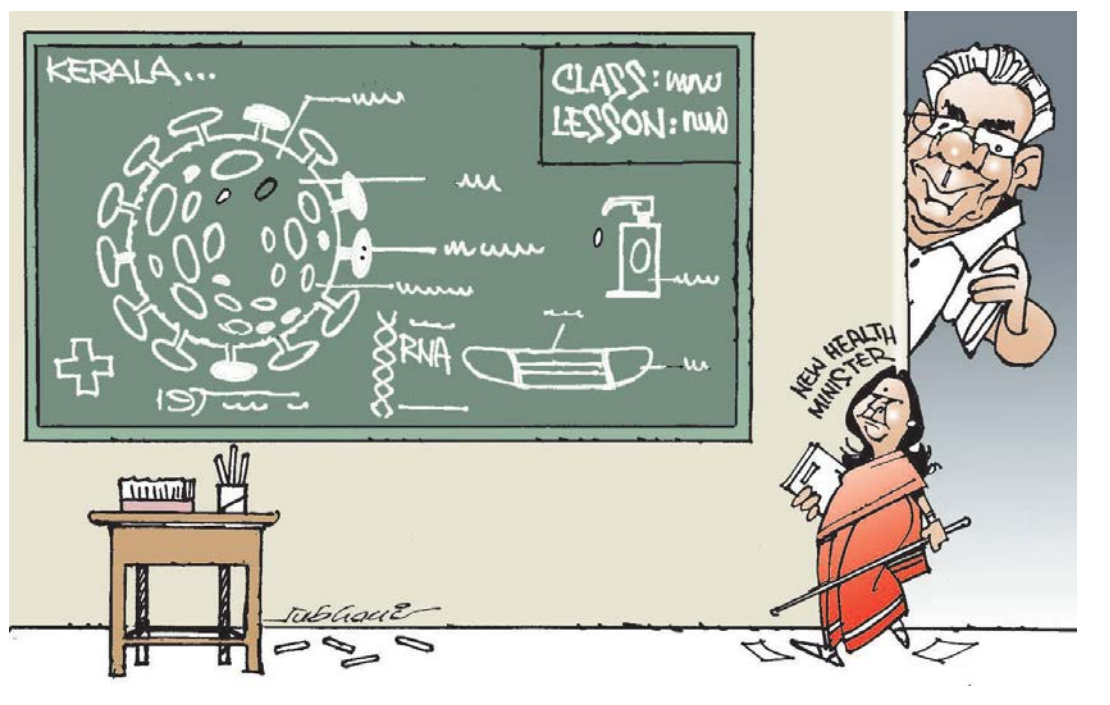
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Subhani



RSS & BJP: Is there a shift in the equation?



Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

Some recent observations on India's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic emanating from the highest levels of the RSS — praised by many as a selfless, nationalist outfit doing social service, and denounced as a "fascist" or "militarist" body by a range of critics — have left the country mystified. This is because the RSS is the inspiration behind the founding of the BJP.

The RSS can obfuscate — speak assertively, but also as a ventriloquist, when needed. It works in a bamboo curtain kind of inner culture. As with China's power pyramid, words coming out of the RSS's Nagpur headquarters lend themselves to multiple plausible meanings.

This is probably because the organisation was suppressed in certain periods like after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, but also because before the BJP's rise to power, it sought to play down its ambition that its creation should proceed to capture power.

Now that the BJP is at the pinnacle of political power and not any rival, the RSS should no longer have to deploy the artifice of stealth in negotiating relations with the holders of national power. But here lies the irony: though the BJP, the election-fighting instrument it created, is in power in New Delhi, the RSS still appears to be careful in the way it says things out loud. The reasons are up for speculation.

However, in the context of the Narendra Modi government's conspicuous failure to tackle Covid-19's second wave, as well as its striking failure to offer the country hope — with crematoriums and graveyards becoming increas-

ingly out of reach, oxygen, medicines and hospital beds running short, and hundreds of (presumably Hindu) corpses floating downstream from UP in the holy Ganga — RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's piercing words, although couched in calm delivery, may give the government cause for anxiety.

On May 15, winding up the "Positivity Unbound" lecture series sponsored by the RSS, Mr Bhagwat gave a pep talk on "collectively" facing the present "difficult" times, when there might be a death in every family one knows, and go into a fightback mode against the virus. But he also said: "The people, administration, government each got into *gallat*." In other words, they goofed up; they failed to gauge the situation and respond appropriately.

These may have been the words of an Opposition leader, except that they weren't. The RSS no doubt intends that the Modi government regain its composure and is ready to help. But perhaps there is also something else implied here: there is no immediate rush. But should there be a run on the bank, the RSS may prefer to be forearmed.

Some Assembly elections are due next year, including in Uttar Pradesh, the nation's biggest state where the BJP did far from well in the recent panchayat polls. If popular disenchantment surfaces in a big way in voting behaviour in the Assembly election early next year, UP, which sends up the largest contingent of BJP MPs, the RSS is unlikely to settle down to regard the situation with equanimity.

And the way to prepare for any eventuality may

be to start cultivating the ground from now to be able to guide key changes in the government's top tier if push came to shove. All of this must be done in good time and none of this can be spelt out. But it is hard to miss that a new particle now hangs in the air.

Through one policy disaster after another — demonetisation, GST rollout, the sapping farmers' agitation (which continues), the disconcerting unemployment graph, the RSS stood foursquare behind the government. But the Covid-19 disaster, with corpses floating down the holiest river for Hindus, is a different matter — indeed a different kind of matter.

In a recent newspaper article, a senior RSS figure, Ram Madhav, who until recently was a BJP general secretary, asked the "political leadership" — meaning the top government leadership — to show "a little more transparency, a little more engagement with the public, and a little more openness to constructive criticism and enlightened expert opinion from outside the government... After all, the lives of millions are at stake". It does seem the RSS is signalling that all is not well.

Wearing BJP colours, two RSS "pracharaks", or full-time volunteers dedicated to the spread of Hindu nationalism in a country of many religions and spiritual mores, have made it to the top. But Atal Behari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi had framed a very different relationship with the mother organisation, the RSS, upon becoming Prime Minister.

Mr Modi has been on the whole solicitous, his

BJP predecessor in office was more correct, rather than deferential. A part of the reason may have been that Vajpayee's government had to depend on a host of secular coalition partners for survival. Speculation still abounds on this issue, but it's evident the relationship between the BJP and RSS is not a carefully studied subject.

While well-known research studies exist on the RSS itself, the sociology of the organisation, its inner workings, and the way it seeks to articulate power in relation to the BJP (earlier Jan Sangh) and influence in Hindu society more generally, has not been adequately studied. The literature is mostly in the nature of self-serving propaganda, hagiography, or trenchant criticism from critics.

The Jan Sangh was created under the RSS's aegis in 1951, and the BJP in 1980. Both were the same thing in spirit. However, at no point did the Jan Sangh wield national power or become a mass party. The RSS, its creator, was the shadow that loomed over it. The spirit of the RSS is the fountainhead of the culture and organisation of the BJP too. But the BJP has become something of a mass party. It has secured power at the Centre for which it doesn't depend on allies. Therefore, its government and leadership may not be a pushover if the RSS showed displeasure.

On the other hand, the BJP can't fail to notice that it's the spread of the RSS itself in a communalised polity that ineluctably promoted the BJP's rise as a mass party. At every level of the party and government, the levers are in the hands of RSS personnel. It's evident that the RSS-BJP leadership is shot through with contradictions. What factors give one the upper hand and not the other, at a time when the BJP holds national power, is a complex subject and needs attention. Which entity will prevail is a matter of great interest to the entire country.

The spirit of the RSS is the fountainhead of the culture and organisation of the BJP too. But the BJP has become something of a mass party.

LETTERS

WELCOME SUNIL

Captain Sunil Chhetri making a return to the Indian football squad after recovering from Covid-19 must gladden the hearts of his many fans and admirers. The team leaves for Doha for the three matches of the joint 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup Qualifiers. Chhetri had missed the two international friendlies against the UAE in late March. India is already out of the reckoning for a World Cup berth but is still in contention for the 2023 Asian Cup in China.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

BIASED MODI

THE PRIME MINISTER needs to be reminded that he is not only the leader of Gujarat but that of India. His aerial survey of damages caused by the cyclone and the promise of ₹1,000 crores aid cannot be faulted. But why limit it only to Gujarat when neighbouring Maharashtra has also suffered? He could have well conducted an aerial survey there. Such bias must be avoided.

Anthony Henriques
Mumbai

MINISTERS NOT VIPs

ONE FAILS TO understand why ministers and MLAs get free and unlimited medical care. As our political servants they should get nothing more than what we, their masters, are entitled to. There is no reason why there should be VIP rooms reserved for them at government hospitals. Like all other citizens, they should stand in queue and shell out money from their deep pockets for medicines and services.

Aires Rodrigues
Ribander, Goa

THIN-SKINNED TAMILS

THERE IS NEEDLESS controversy over the portrayal of LTTE in the second season of the Amazon Prime series, Family Man, due to release on the channel. It will coincide with the Tamil genocide remembrance week. Unfortunately, Tamil champions are worried that the LTTE has been portrayed crudely in the show because some members of the audience have interpreted the blackened faces of the actors playing the guerrillas in a racist light instead of understanding it as camouflage.

Priyanka Mathur
Noida

Mahir Ali



Killings don't end; but America's love affair with Israel is slowly withering

Well before he plucked up the courage to timorously call for a ceasefire, Joe Biden has been echoing the mantra recited by a long line of his predecessors: Israel has the right to defend itself. That discredited framework glosses over pertinent questions, such as: does that entail the right to slaughter children, including infants? Ignoring the scale of the carnage in Gaza, the predictable riposte would be: well, Israeli children have also been killed, and remain at risk. Besides, Hamas invited the retaliation.

That's not an absurd argument. Hamas could not possibly have been unaware that its largely ineffective rockets would elicit a brutal response. And Israeli kids obviously have as much right to safety as Palestinian children.

But that is not how the moral calculus operates in that part of the world. Much of the mainstream Western media has no qualms about implying some kind of equivalence between the supposed combatants. Notwithstan-

ding the extreme imbalance of military power, there's a kind of unacknowledged truth in there: if Hamas can be framed as a terrorist organisation, the Israeli state qualifies for that accolade many times over.

That is borne out by its behaviour both historically and in the present instance, where the ratio of casualties is already roughly 1:20, and destined to grow even more disproportionate. All too often, the crude missiles lobbed by Hamas and its allies land in the desert. Sometimes they pose a hazard for Palestinians. Israel claims that 90pc of the rest are intercepted by its Iron Dome defences. That's worth bearing in mind when reading about thousands of Hamas rockets heading into Israel.

Yes, they are 'indiscriminate'. The Israel Defence Forces, on the other hand, are extremely discriminating in aiming their attacks. Hospitals, schools and towers housing media offices all fall in the category of military targets. If entire families are slaughtered in the process, that's always 'inadvertent'.

As a senator in 1988, Biden declared that if Israel did not exist, America would have been obliged to invent it as a means of defending US interests in the Middle East. For 'interests', read 'oil'. The significance of that fossil fuel has been diminishing in recent years, but the ardency of the fossilised fools remains intact.

Biden faces a somewhat tougher task in this context than most of his Democratic predecessors. The Democratic establishment's hitherto more or less unconditional allegiance to Israel is no longer going unquestioned. Most Democratic senators, including several prominent Jews, were calling for a ceasefire long before the president chimed in, after his administration resisted efforts to produce a UN Security Council statement. Of course, Israel is in no way obliged to heed such requests, regardless of their source, because it knows there will be no price to pay. Key UNSC resolutions have remained unheeded.

It's unlikely the UN could make much difference, but the US can.

Apart from the dogged moral support it proffers, the nearly \$4 billion it unconditionally provides every year offers substantial scope for leverage. That subsidy feeds directly into the client state's fascist tendencies.

That grotesque US-Israel love affair now faces a threat, with a growing number of American Jews wearying of the Zionist project, particularly its manifestations under Benjamin Netanyahu's reign. Netanyahu, though, is merely a symptom of the problem which has been writ large since the days of David Ben-Gurion. The Zionist project wasn't incompatible with 19th-century European imperialism, but something of an anachronism in the postwar 20th century, when the broad trend was towards liberation rather than colonialism.

In the wake of the horrendous Holocaust, the biggest global powers found Israeli exceptionalism acceptable. The consequences for the land's indigenous inhabitants were barely taken into consideration. The plethora of potential risks involved in implanting a mainly European-run

entity in the Arab world were mainly ignored. The ethnic cleansing of 1948 elicited no Western opposition: there was no alarm over certain Nazi tendencies being echoed by their victims.

The Arab world too has frequently faltered in its (often foolish) response to Israeli power. Lately, much of it has abandoned the pretence of caring for the plight of dispossessed Palestinians. Last weekend, the hashtag "Palestine is not my cause" reportedly circulated in the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait. It never was, frankly, but one must be grateful to the over-privileged Gulf Arabs for admitting as much. Israel, on the other hand, will never admit that it encouraged the Muslim Brotherhood precursors of Hamas and Islamic Jihad to set up shop in the occupied territories as a counterweight to the broadly secular Fatah. The project was a success: where would Netanyahu and his ilk be today without Hamas? As for how long this dance of death can be sustained, the answer is still blowing in the wind.

By arrangement with Dawn

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	49,564.86	-0.68
Nifty 50	14,906.00	-0.83
S&P 500*	4,161.83	1.12
Dollar (₹)	73.10	0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.23	0.39
Euro (₹)	89.09	0.28
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,994.237	0.49
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	65.37	-1.94
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.968	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.642	-0.041

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Sugar exports subsidy cut to ₹4,000/ tonne

The Centre slashed subsidy on sugar exports from Rs 6,000 per tonne to Rs 4,000 per tonne with immediate effect in view of firm global prices. For the ongoing 2020-21 marketing year (Oct.-Sept.), the government had fixed a subsidy of Rs 6,000 per tonne to facilitate exports. Sugar mills were mandated to export 6 million tonne of sugar in the current year. So far, 5.7 million tonne of sugar has been contracted for export.

Bosch Q4 net jumps six-fold to ₹482 crore



Auto component major Bosch posted a six-fold increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 482 crore for the fourth quarter, from Rs 81 crore a year ago, driven by robust sales. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 3,218 crore from Rs 2,237 crore. For FY21, Bosch reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 481 crore against Rs 650 crore in 2019-20. Revenue from operations stood at Rs 9,716 crore as compared with Rs 9,842 crore in FY20.

Mindtree to buy L&T's Nxt Digital Business

Mindtree said it will acquire the Nxt Digital Business from Larsen and Toubro for Rs 198 crore, a move that will enable the mid-sized IT firm to capture opportunities in the IoT and Industry 4.0 space. The total consideration for the deal was "Rs 198 crore including earnouts.", Mindtree said in a filing. L&T is the promoter/holding company of Mindtree with a 61.03 per cent stake in the Bengaluru-based company.

Nucleus Software gets Bank of Sydney contract

Nucleus Software, a provider of lending and transaction banking products, said Bank of Sydney has chosen its lending solution, FinnOne Neo, to accelerate its digital lending transformation strategy. Bank of Sydney wanted a sophisticated lending solution to automate and digitize the origination processes for mortgages and credit cards. With FinnOne Neo, Bank of Sydney will be able to launch new products faster, it said.

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₹250 kit to give result in 15 minutes Covid home test kit to hit market next week

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, MAY 20

A Pune-based research laboratory's indigenously developed self-use rapid antigen test (RAT) kit called CoviSelf, which enables Covid-19 test at home for as little as Rs 250, would be available across pharmacies from next week.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the nodal body in the fight against the tricky virus, on Wednesday officially approved the test kit, India's first such.

"This test at home will take just two minutes and results will be available in 15 minutes flat," Sujeev Jain, director at Mylab Discovery Solutions, told Financial Chronicle.

"The CoviSelf test kit will be priced Rs 250 inclusive of 'taxes,' Jain said, adding that the firm was ready to produce 10 lakh test kits every day and the production would be ramped up to 15 lakh units daily within 15 days.

He said the kits would be available by the end of next week in more than seven lakh pharmacies and the company's online pharmacy partners across India.

"After meeting the needs of our country, we will also export the kits," he said, adding that about 40 scientists and technicians had worked on the project for about five-six months top develop the kit.

Jain said the firm had spent over Rs 150 crore on the product in capex and on operating expenses.



"This test is for self-use. If you test positive via this there is no need for RT-PCR test, as per ICMR. Any adult can use this kit by reading our manual," he explained.

The kit has been designed in a way that it is extremely simple to use and it is not a biohazard. There is a disposal bag that comes along for safely disposing off the items after use.

Meanwhile, the ICMR said only symptomatic individuals and immediate contacts of people who have tested positive in laboratory-conducted tests should use this kit.

"Indiscriminate testing is not advised," the top medical body said while issuing detailed guidelines on the kit's use.

"All symptomatic individuals who test negative by RAT should get themselves immediately tested by RT-PCR," the ICMR said.

The testing will be monitored using Mylab's mobile phone application, through which users are

advised to click a picture of the test strip after completing the test procedure.

"This easy-to-use test combines with Myab's AI-powered mobile app so that a user can know his/her positive status, submit the result to ICMR directly for traceability, and know what to do next in either case of result," Jain said.

Data transmitted by the phone will be centrally captured in a secure server that is connected to the ICMR's Covid-19 testing portal, where all data will be eventually stored.

Experts say these home-based tests are useful when a runaway infection pattern is observed.

"These tests are used in developed countries such as US and UK. Since these tests have high specificity, it can be used at places where positivity rate is high so as to be able to detect cases early. Positive cases through RAT are mostly true positives," Dr G.C. Khilnani, former head, pulmonology department at AIIMS, Delhi, said.

HOME LOAN MARKET GROWS 9.6%

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 20

The home loan market grew 9.6 per cent in the December 2020 quarter over the year-ago period despite the pandemic impact.

With a 9.6 per cent growth, the home loan market made a recovery towards pre-Covid December 2019 level, when the growth was 10.4 per cent. Active housing loan borrowers' base as of December 2020 stood higher than pre-pandemic levels in December 2019, with a yearly growth of nearly 5 per cent, as per the data from CRIF High Mark.

The affordable housing segment constituted 60 per cent of the market by value and nearly 90 per cent by volume. Tier- II and III geographies witnessed a higher annual growth rate in home loan book compared to metros, with a large part of the growth coming in from the affordable and mid-market segment.

Visakhapatnam and Coimbatore were among the top 10 cities, having the largest yearly growth of over 10 per cent.

BANKS MAY SHIFT ABOUT 80 LARGE NPA A/Cs TO NARCL

New Delhi, May 20: Banks are likely to transfer about 80 large NPA accounts for resolution to the National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL), expected to be operational soon.

NARCL is the name coined for the bad bank announced in the Budget 2021-22. A bad bank refers to a financial institution that takes over the bad assets of lenders and undertakes resolution.

The size of each of these NPA accounts is over Rs 500 crore and the banks have identified about 70-80 such accounts to be transferred to the proposed bad bank, sources said. NPAs of over Rs 2 lakh crore could move out of the books of the banks to the bad bank.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Budget 2021-22 announced that the high level of provisioning by public sector banks of their stressed assets calls for measures to clean up the bank books.

— PTI

FY21 ITR filing deadline extended till Sept. 30

New Delhi, May 20: The government on Thursday extended the due date of filing income tax returns for 2020-21 for individuals by two months till September 30.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has also extended the ITR filing deadline for companies by a month till November 30.

As per the income tax law, for individuals whose accounts are not required to be audited and who usually file their income tax

Gold to gain from crypto fall, dollar weakness

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 20

The fall in the value of cryptocurrencies and a subdued dollar index will be supportive of gold. Once the speculative money starts moving from cryptocurrencies to gold, the yellow metal prices are likely to touch fresh highs.

"Cryptocurrency is neither a currency nor an asset class. But we have seen enormous amounts of speculative money going into them in the past one year as Bitcoin value moved up from \$8,000 to \$60,000 levels. Single day drop of 40 per cent has made investors realise that cryptocurrancy movement has been just speculation," said Ajay Kedia, MD, Kedia Commodities.

According to him, the movement of speculative money into cryptocurrancies had led to slug-



gishness in gold in the past few months despite strong fundamentals. However, now the trend shall see a reversal and this has been evident from the gold price movement in the past few sessions.

"Gold prices in the international markets have gained by around 11 per cent while on the MCX futures it has gained by around 10 per cent between March 8 and May 19," said Prathamesh Mallya, AVP-research, non-agri-

commodities and currencies, Angel Broking.

Analysts at JPMorgan Chase too have found that large institutional investors are dumping bitcoin in favour of gold. The bank in January had predicted that bitcoin could conceivably become an alternative to gold, hitting \$146,000 in the long term.

The fall in the value of the dollar in recent weeks also increased optimism in gold prices. The dollar index on May 19 came down to 89, lowest level in a year.

Mallya expects gold prices to move higher towards Rs 51,000 per 10 gm mark in a month. According to Kedia, it will take at least a month's time for the speculative money to move into gold. Once this happens, international prices can move towards \$2,100 per ounce in a couple of months.

return using ITR-1 or ITR-4 forms the deadline to file ITR is July 31. The deadline for taxpayers, like companies or firms, whose accounts are required to be audited is October 31.

In a circular, the CBDT said an extension of time limits is being given for certain tax compliances "to provide relief to taxpayers in view of the severe pandemic".

Also, the deadline for issuing Form 16 by employers to employees has been

extended by a month till July 15, 2021, the CBDT said.

The due date for filing the tax audit report and transfer pricing certificate has been extended by a month till October 31 and November 30, respectively.

For filing belated or revised return of income, the due date is now January 31, 2022.

Besides, the deadline for financial institutions to furnish the Statement of Financial Transaction

(SFT) report has been extended till June 30, from May 31, 2021.

Also, the Income Tax Department is expected to launch a new e-filing web portal for taxpayers, which they use to file routine ITRs and perform other tax-related works, early next month, officials said.

The existing web portal will be shut for six days between June 1 and 6. The officials said the new portal will be made more user-friendly.

DBS HAS FUNDS TO BUY CITI INDIA UNIT: BERNSTEIN

CHANYAPORN CHANJAROEN MAY 20

DBS Group Holdings Ltd has sufficient capital to bid for Citigroup Inc's consumer assets in India valued at \$82.7 billion (\$2 billion) without needing to raise additional funds, Sanford C. Bernstein & Co analysts said.

It's a case of "either go big or go home" for DBS to further expand in India where the Singapore-based bank also acquired Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd in November, Bernstein analysts led by Kevin Kwek wrote in a report on Thursday. DBS chief executive officer Piyush Gupta last month said he is interested in the US bank's assets that are for sale in the South Asian country, as well as in China, Taiwan and Indonesia.

A takeover of Citi's India unit would be DBS's largest acquisition since 2001, when the Singapore firm spent \$5.4 billion buying the Hong Kong unit formerly known as Dao Heng Bank Group Ltd. Among the US bank's assets for sale, India stands out as "the crown jewel," Kwek wrote. Its credit card and wealth business would be attractive to any bidder given the country's economic growth rate and population size, he added.

DBS has pledged to make more income outside its home turf, where the bank derived 70 per cent of its \$84.7 billion profit in 2020.

DBS remains very disciplined on acquisitions and wouldn't be drawn into any "bidding frenzy," Gupta said April 30 when asked about his interest in Citi's asset sale.

Citi plans to exit retail banking in 13 markets across Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, as part of a strategy by CEO Jane Fraser, who took over in March.

In April, DBS said it would pay \$81.1 billion for a 13 per cent chunk in China's Shenzhen Rural Commercial Bank Corp., and Gupta has indicated an interest to raise the size of that stake.

— Bloomberg

BADGE | OF HONOUR | Verification application to appear in Account Settings tab

Twitter starts verification for blue tick

New Delhi, May 20: Twitter will start rolling out its verification application process from Thursday after which approved user accounts can sport the 'blue verified badge'.

Twitter had paused its public verification programme a few years ago. However, last year, Twitter said it would re-launch the account verification process in 2021.

On Thursday, Twitter highlighted that it has also started automatically removing the verified badge from those accounts that no longer meet the updated criteria.

We're excited to share that starting today, we'll begin rolling out our new verification application process and reviewing

public applications for verification on Twitter. Today's application rollout marks the next milestone in our plans to give more transparency, credibility, and clarity to verification on Twitter, Twitter said in a blog.

Verified accounts that repeatedly violate the Twitter Rules are subject to have the blue badge removed, it added.

The microblogging platform said over the past several months, it has been working to bring clarity to the verification eligibility criteria and has launched a new policy shaped by public feedback.

Twitter highlighted that it has also started enforcing that policy by automatically removing the veri-



fied badge from accounts that no longer meet the updated criteria for verification, such as those that are inactive or incomplete.

The coveted 'blue badge' is one of the ways Twitter helps people distinguish the authenticity of accounts that are of high public interest, and gives Twitter users more context about who they're hav-

ing conversations with.

With today's application launch, we're also introducing new guidelines for verified accounts on Twitter. These verification guidelines are intended to encourage healthy conversations for the betterment of the Twitter community overall, the US-based company said.

To qualify for verification, users must belong to one of the six categories—government; companies/brands/organisations; news organisations and journalists; entertainment; sports and gaming; and activists/organisers/other influential individuals.

Twitter pointed out that it is planning to introduce more categories later this

year, such as those for scientists, academics, and religious leaders.

It said users must also provide a profile name, a profile image, and either a confirmed email address or phone number. The account must also be active within the last six months and have a record of adherence to the Twitter Rules.

Over the next few weeks, everyone on Twitter will start to see the new verification application directly in the Account Settings tab, Twitter said, adding that once the application is submitted, users will get an emailed response. If the application is approved, users will see the blue badge automatically on their profile.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

Legendary Milkha Singh is Covid +ve

New Delhi: Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh has tested positive for Covid-19 and is in isolation at his Chandigarh residence.

The 91-year-old, popularly known as Flying Sikh, is asymptomatic and claims to be in “high spirits”.

“A couple of our helpers earlier tested positive and so all the family members did the tests. Only I returned positive on Wednesday and I am surprised,” Milkha said.

“I am fine and there is no fever or cough. My doctor told me I will be alright in three-four days. I did jogging just yesterday. I am in high spirits,” he added.

None of the other family members, including Milkha's wife Nirmal Kaur, a former India volleyball captain, returned a positive test. — PTI

Shooting coach Monali dies at 44

New Delhi: In a big loss to the Indian shooting fraternity, coach and technical official Monali Gorhe died of mucormycosis on Thursday. She was 44 and is survived by her mother and a sister.

Monali was admitted to a hospital after being diagnosed with Covid-19 but was discharged, only to get re-admitted to treat mucormycosis.

Many people recovering from Covid-19 have of late been afflicted by black fungus — or mucormycosis — disease. It is a fungal infection that affects the nose, eye and sometimes the brain.

A few hours before her death, her father Manohar Gorhe too succumbed to Covid-19.

Monali was the coach of the pistol core group. She had also served as the national coach of the Sri Lankan shooting team. — PTI

Bhuvneshwar's dad passes away

New Delhi: India pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar's father, Kiran Pal Singh on Thursday died at his Meerut residence after battling liver cancer for the last eight months.

He was 63 and is survived by his wife Indresh Devi and son and daughter Bhuvneshwar and Rekha respectively.

According to *ESPNCricinfo*, Singh was first detected with the illness in September last year when Bhuvneshwar was playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad in UAE for the IPL. “It is understood that Bhuvneshwar's return from the IPL in UAE, where he was representing Sunrisers Hyderabad, was mainly due to his father's health condition,” the report said.

Singh was undergoing treatment, including chemotherapy, at the All Institute of Medical Science here after consulting doctors in the UK. — PTI

Archer doubtful for India series

London: England pacer Jofra Archer will undergo a surgery on his right elbow on Friday, which could effectively rule him out of the first part of the five-match Test series against visiting India beginning on August 4.

Archer is already out of the upcoming two-match Test series against New Zealand and this will be his second surgery after being operated upon on his right hand. “Jofra has been reviewed by a medical consultant in respect of his right elbow soreness. He will now proceed to surgery tomorrow,” the England and Wales Cricket Board said in a tweet. — PTI

Medical insurance for sportspersons

New Delhi: The government has decided to widen its medical insurance cover for sportspersons by increasing the number of beneficiary athletes and including contractual coaches and support staff from this year in the wake of the pandemic.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Thursday said that with this decision, the coverage would increase to more than 13,000 athletes, coaches and support staff.

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said the well-being of athletes, coaches and support staff are his ministry's priority. — PTI

REJUVENTUS

Dethroned as league champions, Juventus claw back to claim Italian Cup

Reggio Emilia (Italy), May 20: Dethroned league champions Juventus beat Atalanta 2-1 to win the Italian Cup for the 14th time on Wednesday as fans returned to the stadium for the first time in over a year.

Goals in either half from Dejan Kulusevski and Federico Chiesa gave coach Andrea Pirlo his second second trophy of the season after the Italian Super Cup, on the day he turned 42.

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini was denied a first trophy of his coaching career, and Atalanta's second trophy after the 1963 Coppa Italia.

It was a boost for Juventus who go into the final weekend of the season with their Champions League qualification going down to the wire after Inter Milan ended their nine-year league reign.

Gianluigi Buffon was in the Juventus goal for the final time in his career and the veteran keeper was solid on the night winning his sixth Coppa Italia 22 years after his

first with Parma.

The veteran pulled off a big save just after kick-off at the Mapei Stadium in Reggio Emilia.

Duvan Zapata had pulled back for Jose Luis Palomino with 43-year-old Buffon using his legs to stop the ball.

Despite the Bergamo side's early domination Juve made the breakthrough after half an hour. Cristiano Ronaldo went down but amid a scramble in front of goal Weston McKennie sent the ball across to Kulusevski who curled into the net.

But ten minutes later Ruslan Malinovskyi blasted in the equaliser.

Pierluigi Gollini denied Kulusevski a second just before the hour after good work from Chiesa.

Chiesa then clipped the post after latching onto a Ronaldo backheel flick. But the former Fiorentina forward made no mistake with quarter of an hour remaining after combining with Kulusevski to beat Gollini.

— AFP

MBAPPE DAZZLE AS PSG CROWNED WITH FRENCH CUP

Paris, May 20: Paris Saint-Germain have a domestic double in their sights after they won the French Cup by beating Monaco 2-0 in Wednesday's final at the Stade de France. Goals from Mauro Icardi and Kylian Mbappe won a largely uninspiring final for PSG who now go into the week-

end's final round of French league fixtures with 10th league title still a possibility. PSG have now won the French Cup six times in the last seven seasons having reached the final every year since 2015. It was also the second trophy of coach Mauricio Pochettino's managerial career. — AFP

Liverpool move into top 4, Spurs' Euro hopes dented

London, May 20: Liverpool set up a dramatic final-day battle to qualify for the Champions League with a vital 3-0 win at Burnley, while Tottenham's bid to reach the Europa League suffered a blow in a 2-1 defeat against Aston Villa on Wednesday.

Jurgen Klopp's side moved into fourth place in the Premier League thanks to goals from Roberto Firmino, Nathaniel Phillips and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain.

Liverpool are above fifth-placed Leicester on goal difference, with the Reds on +24 and the Foxes on +20.

If Liverpool win their final game at home to Crystal Palace on Sunday, they should finish in the top four and salvage a difficult campaign that saw them tamely surrender the title to Manchester City.

Leicester host Tottenham on Sunday, while Chelsea travel to Aston Villa. — AFP

Dravid to coach India on SL tour

New Delhi, May 20: National Cricket Academy chief and former India captain Rahul Dravid is set to be the head coach of the Indian white-ball squad that will tour Sri Lanka in July.

Dravid, who stopped travelling with the India 'A' and U-19 teams after taking over as NCA head in Bengaluru, will be the head coach of the second-string side in the absence of Ravi Shastri, who will be busy with the Test side in England at the same time.

“He will travel with the team to Sri Lanka in all likelihood,” a BCCI source said.

It was reported on May 17 that Dravid was being

considered for the assignment.

Bowling coach Paras Mhambrey will also be a part of the support staff.

India are expected to play three ODIs and as many T20s in Sri Lanka in July though the schedule has not been announced yet.

The squad will have plenty of fringe players and some established white-ball specialists.

Hardik Pandya, Shikhar Dhawan and Shreyas Iyer are in the running for captaincy.

It remains to be seen if Iyer recovers in time from his shoulder surgery to play in Sri Lanka.

— PTI

India not safe for T20 WC: Hussey

Sydney, May 20: Former Australia batsman Mike Hussey, who tested positive for Covid-19 in IPL's bio-bubble, has advocated moving this year's T20 World Cup from India to the UAE as he feels teams will be “nervous” to travel there because of the raging pandemic.

Batting coach Hussey was among three members of the Chennai Super Kings contingent who contracted the virus during the IPL, which had to be suspended after cases were detected in four teams.

“I think it's going to be very difficult in my view to play that tournament in India,” Hussey told *Fox Cricket* upon his return to Sydney.

Hussey had also spent two weeks isolating in India after testing positive for the virus in Delhi from where he was transported to Chennai in an air ambulance.

“We're talking about

eight teams in the IPL. I think there are probably similar number, maybe more teams coming in from overseas (for the T20 World Cup), there'd be more venues. As I said earlier, if they're playing in different cities, that is when the risk goes up.

“I think they'll have to look some pretty big contingency plans, perhaps looking at the UAE or somewhere like that that could host the World T20. I think there will be a lot of cricket boards around the world that'd be pretty nervous about going back to India for a cricket tournament,” said Hussey.

UAE has already emerged as the back up venue and the ICC is likely to take a call on the tournament on June 1. Talking about his ordeal in India, Hussey said he had symptoms but he never feared for his life. — PTI

PEREZ LEADS 1ST PRACTICE SESSION, HAMILTON FIFTH

Monaco, May 20: Red Bull driver Sergio Perez clocked the fastest time Thursday during the first practice session for the Monaco Grand Prix.

Perez had a best lap of 1 minute, 12.49 seconds on the sinewy 3.4-kilometre circuit that snakes around the picturesque Principality. Ferrari driver Carlos Sainz Jr. and Max Verstappen, Perez's teammate, were next.

AlphaTauri driver Pierre Gasly had the fourth fastest time. He was followed by F1 champion Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas.

Hamilton is 14 points ahead of Verstappen in the standings after they finished 1-2 in the first four races. Hamilton will be aiming for his 101st career pole position on Saturday and his 99th win on Sunday. — AP



Remembering

Sh. Rajiv Gandhi

on his

30th Death Anniversary

‘We are on the threshold of a mighty revolution... it is a revolution that will bring democracy to the doorsteps of crores of Indians.’

“With these words late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had ushered in the Panchayati Raj revolution in the country back in 1989, empowering millions of our people in villages. Today, as we pay tributes to him, we pledge to harness the power of the Panchayats in Punjab to fight the Covid pandemic that is fast spreading in our villages. That would be the most befitting tribute to the great leader, whose vision for India continues to steer our values and goals.”

Capt. Amarinder Singh
Chief Minister, Punjab



Department of Information & Public Relations, Punjab