

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | SUNDAY | 23 MAY 2021



WORLD | 7

Nepal House dissolved, poll in Nov.

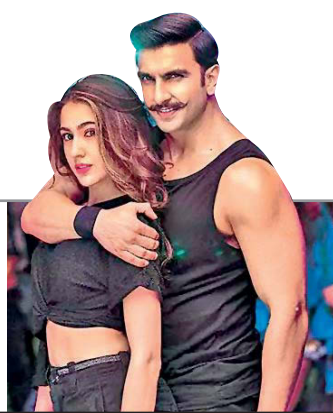


SPORTS | 8

Olympics on track: IOC chief

TABLOID

Women empowerment: Most wanted in cinema



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WEATHER

Max: 38.2°C
Min: 25.5°C
RH: 39%
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky. Thundershowers likely. Max/Min temp. 38/29°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
HUIRI CALENDAR
Shawwal 10,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.35 am
Zohar: 12.23 pm
Asar: 4.45 pm
Maghrib: 6.50 pm
Isha: 8.04 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.43 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.42 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 2.36 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 2.21 AM

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

TS names VCs for 10 varsities

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 22

Universities in Telangana state finally got Vice-Chancellors (VCs) after nearly two years. The state government on Saturday issued orders appointing VCs for 10 state universities. The orders were issued after Governor and Chancellor of Universities, Dr Tamilisel Soundararajan gave her nod on Saturday to the names referred by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao for approval.

Only one woman figures in the list of VCs. While six from OC category made it to the selection list, there are two from BCs and one each from SC and ST categories. The VCs of Osmania and Kakatiya universities belong to the BC communities, Satavahana University belong to the SC Mala community and Palamuru University to the ST community.

■ Page 2: Varsities did not have V-Cs for 2 years

THE NEW VCS

OU: Prof. D. Ravinder Yadav (BC)
Kakatiya University: Prof. T. Ramesh (BC)
Telangana University (Nizamabad): Prof. D. Ravinder (OC)
Dr B.R. Ambedkar Open University (Hyderabad): Prof. Sitarama Rao (OC)
Potti Srimulu Telugu University (Hyderabad): Prof. T. Kishan Rao (OC)
Palamuru University (Mahbubnagar): Prof. Laxmikanth Rathode (ST)
MG University (Nalgonda): Prof. Ch. Gopal Reddy (OC)
JNTU Hyderabad: Prof. Katta Narsimha Reddy, (OC)
Satavahana university, Karimnagar: Prof. Mallesham (SC Mala)
Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University: Kavita Daryani (OC)

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 — Lok Sabha MPs and the father and brother of Suvendu Adhikari, who defeated Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee from 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 TMC before switching sides to the BJP. The move to provide security cover to the duo 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. They will be protected by a personal security officer along with 11 armed policemen.

User charges at graveyards to be regulated

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 22

It took Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's admonishment for Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) officials to finally issue instructions to graveyards about collecting only the stipulated "user charges" from families for performing the last rites of their dead, whether the cause of death is Covid-19 or otherwise.

There have been numer-

ous complaints since March this year about crematoria collecting huge amounts, sometimes ranging from ₹80,000 to ₹1.2 lakh, for cremating those who die after contracting Coronavirus.

Families felt this was atrocious, particularly after they have already paid huge amounts to hospitals while trying to save their kin. Numerous complaints had been lodged through various platforms but GHMC officials remained oblivious to

what is happening. It all changed after the Chief Minister held a review meeting on Friday after visiting the MGM Hospital in Warangal. At the meet-

ing, he pulled up officials of GHMC, including commissioner Lokesh Kumar, as well as those of municipal administration and urban development (MA&UD) department over the state of affairs.

The Chief Minister instructed them to act immediately and regulate user charges at graveyards and crematoriums.

This led to a cascading effect, with GHMC zonal commissioners asked to inspect graveyards and crematoriums and ensure

that user charges are being collected as per norms. Zonal commissioners have carried out inspections and posed for a few pictures too at the crematoriums.

However, *Deccan Chronicle* has found that user charges at all major crematoriums and graveyards remained the same on Saturday too, with no relief to kin of the deceased.

■ Page 2: Action to be taken on those charging extra

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■ Page 2: Action to be taken on those charging extra

LOCKDOWN | TROUBLE

Bikes seized, many penalised ₹1,000 as police step up vigil; KTR steps in after protests

Cops stop food delivery execs, firms halt services

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 22

The attempts on Saturday by the city police to strictly enforce the lockdown resulted in sudden stoppage of services by food delivery agencies that said they were pulling their staff out of the streets because of police officials preventing them from taking their delivery routes.

Two major food delivery companies, Zomato and Swiggy, said they were suspending their services as police officials were stopping their staff at check posts. "This has caused a lot of inconvenience to people staying isolated because of Covid, or those needing other food delivery services," they said.

Meanwhile, customers of food delivery apps in certain parts of Hyderabad received in-app notifica-

tion that "as per mandate, all restaurants will remain closed from 2.45 pm to 6 am."

Later at night, minister K.T. Rama Rao said he would discuss the issue with the Director General of Police. Taking to Twitter, Rama Rao said he "received several complaints on the police stopping the food delivery services & others in distress. Will discuss with

Telangana DGP and resolve asap (sic)."

Following orders from Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to enforce a stricter lockdown, the city police began implementing the lockdown with more vigour on Saturday. Accordingly, the police increased the number of checkpoints across the city and were seen stopping food delivery executives.

Cyberabad police commissioner V.C. Sajjanar, responding to the viral videos of food delivery executives belonging to Swiggy and Zomato being stopped for checks and being roughed up by some policemen at various locations, said checking and verification was happening across the city and not just in Cyberabad limits. "We have come across several cases of misuse of

identity of food delivery services and hence carrying out verifications. The delivery executives are not being stopped. Once their details are verified, they are allowed to leave," he said.

"While the recent directive by the government allows Swiggy to operate as an essential service not just for our food deliveries but also Genie and other services, we have paused our operations due to the on-ground challenges on Saturday. We are prioritising the safety of delivery partners while we await clarity on this matter," a Swiggy spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, Zomato executives told the media that they were notified that the app would be in service till 4 pm on Saturday evening.

■ Page 2: Zomato: Unforeseen development



A large number of motorists stand in line to pay fine for violating lockdown orders near Parade Ground in Secunderabad on Saturday. Many of them were executives of food delivery companies.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

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 Information Technology 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. 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

Wrestler Sushil held

New Delhi, May 22: India's two-time Olympic medalist wrestler 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 arrest-

ed 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.

■ Report on Page 8

OTHER STORIES

ZOMATO:
UNFORESEEN
DEVELOPMENT

From Page 1

“Several delivery executives were stopped at checkpoints set up by the police as part of enforcing the lockdown. Their bikes were seized and many were fined ₹1,000. This was an unforeseen development since the government directive allowed food delivery as an essential service. We have paused our operations till we have clarity from the authorities, keeping in mind the safety of our delivery partners,” a spokesperson from Zomato said.

VARITIES DID
NOT HAVE VCs
FOR 2 YEARS

From Page 1

The universities have been functioning without VCs for nearly two years after they retired in July 2019 and the state government failing to take up appointments due to various reasons. The search committees constituted on the instructions of the Chief Minister undertook the process in tune with the UGC guidelines and recommended the names. “Though there was some delay due to the Corona pandemic, the names were finalised and sent to the Governor for approval. The Governor gave her assent to the appointments on Saturday,” said a release issued by the CMO.

CAPTAIN RAO HAS
THE FINANCIAL
STRENGTH

From Page 1

After the emergence of the TRS, Capt. Laxmikantha Rao twice represented Kamalapur constituency (now Huzurabad) as MLA and also served as a minister in the Congress coalition government of Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy between 2004 and 2005. After the formation of Telangana state, he made way for his son V. Sathish Kumar, who is now an MLA from the Huzurabad constituency. He is known to be ‘financially strong’ who runs a chain of engineering colleges such as KITS-Warangal, KITS-Singapuram, his native village in Karimnagar district, KITS-Ramtek (Maharashtra), Warangal Public School and Vijetha Public School in Hyderabad.

ACTION TO BE
TAKEN ON THOSE
CHARGING EXTRA

From Page 1

Commenting on the issue, a senior GHMC official, requesting anonymity, said government has fixed cremation rates as ₹8,000 for cremating a dead body on wooden pyre and ₹4,000 in case they are disposed of in electric crematoriums. User charges will be the same whether bodies are of Covid-19 or non-Covid-19 deceased. However, if the body is that of a Coronavirus patient, crematoria staff will have to follow the Covid-19 protocol of hand hygiene and using PPEs while handling bodies. The official said if managements of graveyards and crematoriums collect any additional charges, corporation officials would book criminal cases against such people.

Character’s lost,
everything’s lost!

Neta’s
Natter

When a senior-most official makes a tongue-in-cheek remark against a strong team of work-force 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!

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 commission. The Chief Minister 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 social media
sticks nose into
Chief Secy’s snack

One-upmanship
in the corridors
of power again

A popular jingle 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 getting it back. Explaining the theme of the jingle, the director said people, irrespective of age, feel like kids when they see food they like.

It could be such an irresistible temptation or deep hunger after having a marathon review on Covid-19, that chief secretary Somesh Kumar for a moment put his entire focus on biting a biscuit and savouring its taste at a recent press conference.

Social media which made a hue and cry about the chief secretary taking pleasure in eating the cookie forgot or ignored some facts. It is not the official's fault if the reporter is concerned about the increasing Covid deaths and bombarding him with questions, without waiting for him to finish his biscuit. Netizens felt the situation would have been better, had the same focus was put on Covid containment. Poor Somesh Kumar was trolled even for wiping off biscuit powder while live on camera. 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!

A top bureaucrat, also a close aide of a top politician, was very keen not only to protect the interests of his political bosses but also silence his colleagues. The bureaucrat gets severely offended if his subordinate posts any development in his respective department through any of the social media platforms. The official would just call for an emergency meeting early in the morning, make his colleague sit outside his office for at least five hours just to inform the bureaucrat to come on the next day at the same time.

● **THIS MADE** all bureaucrats in state to be very inactive in public platforms fearing the ire of the top official.

“sir was very angry about your social media post pertaining to a development in your department”. This made all bureaucrats in state to be very inactive in public platforms fearing the ire of the top official.

TRS leaders lure Etala followers

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 22

Finance minister T. Harish Rao and former MP B. Vinod Kumar have been successful in luring ousted health minister Etala Rajendar's followers in his native Kamalapur mandal to the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) fold.

Both the leaders held a meeting with mandal leaders and cadres in ministers' quarters in Hyderabad on Saturday and assured that the TRS leadership would stand by them.

Following this, the party's Kamalapur mandal leaders expressed support to the TRS and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and vowed to work under the leadership of the latter. They said development of Huzurabad constituency and implementation of welfare schemes would be possible only under the leadership of Chandrashekar Rao.

Kamalapur mandal parishad president T. Srikanth, primary agriculture cooperative society chairman P. Sampath Rao, Karimnagar DCCB director P. Krishna Prasad, mandal Rythu Bandhu president Srinivas, party senior leader Kumaraswamy were among those who vowed to continue in the TRS. They said they were working with the TRS since its inception in 2001 and would continue to work under the leadership of Chandrashekar Rao.

While minister Gangula Kamalakar is in constant touch with party leaders in Kamalapur, Veenavanka, Jammikunta, and Huzurabad under the name of ‘Operation Gangula’ in the district since Rajendar was dismissed from the Cabinet on May 2. Chandrashekar Rao has appointed Harish Rao and Vinod Kumar recently as

Tigers on prowl
deprive tribals
of livelihood

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS IDC
ADILABAD, MAY 22

Adivasis and non-tribal members living in the interior areas of undivided Adilabad district are afraid to venture into the deep forests for making a living due to the presence of tigers. The fear of tiger attacks is stopping them from going to collect beedi (tendu) leaves, the only occupation to make ends meet.

Forest officials asked the Adivasis not to venture into the deep. An Adivasi teenage cattle grazer was injured in a leopard attack in Pothaguda village in Adilabad Rural mandal on May 20. Tigers have been reportedly moving in the Kagaznagar forest division. It may be remembered that a tiger killed two persons last year in the district.

According to the forest officials, tigers are moving in the forests in Penchikalpet, Bejjur and Chinthalamanepalli mandals. Unlike in the past, many Adivasis are not showing interest in beedi leaves collection due to the fear of tiger attacks in these mandals.

Generally, Adivasis make a livelihood or get additional income on the collection of beedi leaves during the summer, sometimes venturing deep into the forests.

There were incidents of people unknowingly entering into the territory of tigers where they were taking rest under trees or in summer, the tigers also take rest near water bodies after quenching their thirst.

A leopard attacked an Adivasi youth Kumram Laxman of Pothaguda while he was grazing cattle in the forests near his village in the afternoon. The leopard pounced on him and caused injuries on his neck in Adilabad Rural mandal. However, his condition was stable after getting treatment.

Interestingly, Laxman's two pet dogs chased the leopard to some distance on seeing the animal attacking him. Subsequently, the leopard disappeared into the forests.

A village elder Vedma Ramu of Pothaguda said many Adivasis were not going for beedi leaves collection due to fear of animal attacks especially leopards and wild boars.

TRS leaders challenge PM
Modi to visit Covid ward

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, MAY 22

TRS leaders including Panchayat Raj minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao, Chief whip Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar, Warangal East MLA Nannapuneni Narendar, MLC Basvaraju Saraiha challenged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Covid-19 wards in states and extend assurance to the victims instead of shedding crocodile tears to gain their sympathy.

Addressing a media conference on Saturday, Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao questioned if any chief minister of BJP run states and central minister has ever stepped inside a Covid-19 ward.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi must take stock of ground realities by stepping out and visiting covid wards in various states, he demanded. “Mr Modi is the Prime Minister of the entire country and not just for Gujarat state,” he reminded.

Referring to the short supply of the Covid-19 vaccines to the state, he said the Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao has decided to procure the vaccines by calling the global tenders.

He said it is high time for the Centre to react and bail out the States that were facing catastrophic effects of Covid-19. The onus is on Centre to help the states reeling under economic crisis, Errabelli said.

He said that KCR's decision to construct a super-speciality hospital on the premises of Warangal central prison with immediate effect augurs well for the people in the erstwhile Warangal as well as neighbouring districts including Maharashtra. “The plans are afoot to complete the hospital in one year. The works will start in the 23 acres behind the prison.

As per the CM's decision, the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital (MGMH) will be turned into a modern mother and child health (MCH) centre,” the minister said.

Referring to the CM's visit to Covid-19 ward in MGMH on Friday, he said it not only lifted the morale of the coronavirus patients but also served an ultimatum that any complacency in the treatment would not be spared.

Uttam slams TRS govt for
Covid crisis in Telangana

DC CORRESPONDENT
HUZURNAGAR, MAY 22

TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Saturday criticised that the incompetent rule of the TRS government had created panic among the people about the Covid-19 pandemic and led to the health care crisis in the state.

Addressing the media, he said Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao was focusing on hospitals and Covid-19 patients one year and three months after the onset of pandemic in the country. He said that there was a big mismatch between the number of positive cases and deaths being announced by the government and what was happening on the ground. Uttam Kumar Reddy said that Covid-19 treatment should be provided free in private hospitals to all the 80 lakh BPL families and they should also be provided with free ambulance services. He said no steps have been taken to provide free treatment in private hospitals even though they have submitted a memorandum to the Governor.

The TPCC chief said that the state government had been covering up its inefficiency and was even avoid-

STORIES OF HOPE

Sharing is caring for this young couple

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 22

Moved by the plight of the poor and the underprivileged during the second wave of pandemic, a young man and his pregnant wife are busy cooking and distributing food among the hungry.

For the past one month, this couple has been serving free home cooked meals to people affected by Covid in the city at 14 different locations, under the banner of Helpingspot Org.

They got the idea of serving people around them at Miyapur in April when Bhargav and his four-month pregnant wife Uma decided to start cooking at home for their neighbours and family. They started spreading the word going door-to-door at Miyapur, and within a week, they started getting 40-50 calls per day asking for meals.



With the help of friends, and a little investment, Bharghav and Uma have built an organisation by renting a kitchen and getting volunteers to prepare and deliver lunch. — DC

With the help of a few friends, and a little investment, they built the organisation by renting a kitchen and getting some volunteers to prepare and deliver lunch and supper free of cost.

“My friend and teammate B. Sai Chandu has been helping us deliver food and find volunteers from day

one. We are now serving 700 meals per day and have till now served more than 12,000 meals in the last one month. The idea is always to help people in need during the unprecedented difficult times. While I go out with volunteers to deliver food to doorsteps, my wife cooks as well as supervises the kitchen staff,” Bhargav said.

“So far, it has cost us over ₹43,400 per day to prepare and deliver these meals. We give rice, dal, veggies and curd in the care package,” he added.

The Helping Spot organisation is active at 14 different locations in the city, including Miyapur, Chandanagar, Allwyn Crossroads, Hafeezpet, Kondapur, Kukatpally, KPHB, Nizampet, Hyderabad, Shamirpet, Thumugunta, Babaguda, Ameenpur, Bearamguda, and can be reached on 8886686000.

OTHER STORIES



Prof. Dr. Thatikonda Ramesh

PROF RAMESH APPOINTED AS KU VICE-CHANCELLOR

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, MAY 22

Senior professor in Sociology and MSW department, Dr. Thatikonda Ramesh has been appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of the Kakatiya University. He would continue in the position for three years.

The regular VC's appointment comes almost two years after the previous VC R Sayanna completed his term on July 24, 2019. Senior IAS officer B Janardhan Reddy has served as the in-charge VC to date.

Prof. Ramesh hails from a humble family in the Govindarajulagutta area in Warangal.

He completed his primary education in the Govindarajulagutta Ratham Badi and secondary education in the Mahububia School. He went on to pursue intermediate in the Government junior college in Hanamkonda and then degree in the SKDE Degree College in Sirpur Kaghaznagar.

Later, he joined the Osmania University in Hyderabad where he achieved PG, M Phil and PhD degrees in Sociology. He also completed doctoral research on the Gonds in the Adilabad district.

He was appointed as an ad-hoc professor during the year 1991 and became a permanent faculty in 1992. He was promoted to Professor in 2009.

During his time at the KU, he served as the head of the sociology department, the planning commission, social sciences, Project officer of NSS, vice-principal and FAC principal of University arts and science college.

He is currently holding the position of dean, academic, sociology and MSW department.

So far he guided four students in M Phil and six in PhD. Another 10 are currently pursuing PhD under his guidance.

Ramesh published several research papers in his field. He attended two international seminars and also received the best international paper presentation award.

Born on December 10 in 1962, he was brought up by his father, Ramaliah, who used to work in the now-defunct Azamjahi mills and his mother Lakshamma who was a beedi worker.

His wife Bhavana is a housewife and his son Chethan Rohit completed education and took up a job.

● **DURING PROF. Dr. Thatikonda Ramesh time at the KU, he served as the head of the sociology department, the planning commission, social sciences, Project officer of NSS, vice-principal and FAC principal of University arts and science college.**

● **PROF. DR Ramesh is currently holding the position of dean, academic, sociology and MSW department.**

People told to cooperate by following lockdown norms

On seeing heavy rush, collector orders shifting of roadside shops

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, MAY 22

District collector K. Shashanka, police commissioner V. B. Kamalasan Reddy, municipal commissioner V. Kranthi and city mayor Y. Sunil Rao, accompanied by officials, visited several areas of Karimnagar city on Saturday to observe problems being faced by people during lockdown relaxation hours of 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Observing the heavy rush of people at the main vegetable market near Venkateshwara temple, Ganj, Tower circle, Rythu Bazaar and Rajiv Chowk areas, the collector ordered removal of temporary shops on roadsides, as they are causing congestion and overcrowding, which increases the risk of Coronavirus spreading. He asked municipal and marketing officials to identify an alternate place where vendors from surrounding villages could sell their vegetables, instead of on roadsides. Mutton and chicken markets will be moved to the newly constructed place in Rythu Bazaar.

After completion of lockdown relaxation hours, officials inspected the areas of Telangana Chowk, Kamaan, bus stand, Court Chowrasta, Mancherla Chowrasta and Karkhangadda areas through LED screens in the Mobile Command Control Vehicle.

Speaking on the occasion, Shashanka appreciated the police department for striving hard in implementing the lockdown. He asked people to cooperate with district administration by following the lockdown rules and not venturing out needlessly.

The collector asked those with any symptoms to visit the nearest testing centre and act as



Karimnagar district collector, K. Shashanka and Police Commissioner V.B. Kamalasan Reddy along with other officials inspect the vegetable markets in Karimnagar on Saturday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

Safety norms go for toss in Nizamabad, officials aghast

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, MAY 22

Despite the severity of Corona infections in the second wave, there is no stopping people from coming out in large numbers and crowding during the relaxation time.

Gandhi Chowk, Nehru park, Rashtrapati road, bus stand, Bodhan road, Big Bazaar, weekly market and other busy centres in Nizamabad witnessed huge crowds during 6 am to 10 am. People came out to buy essential commodities, vegetables, people. They mingled without following any Covid appropriate protocols, much to the chagrin of the lockdown enforcement agencies.

Social distancing norm was utterly neglected with markets seeing

heavy rush of buyers. Traffic jams were witnessed at Devi Road chowrasta, Nikhil Sai cross roads, Phulung, collectorate, weekly market and other junctions in the city. Super markets and other shops opened by 6 am, but downed shutters before 9.30 am. Following strict instructions from higher-ups, police patrolling vehicles and officials directed shop owners to close shops early.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, K. Sudhakar, a private employee, said it looked as though a festival season was on at Gandhi Chowk on Saturday. Huge gatherings people would definitely be super spreaders of Covid-19 virus, he opined. Earlier, police did not restrict people's

movement till 11 am and it benefitted all, he said. People were well-aware of the ill-effect of Covid-19, and dared not roam on roads unnecessarily, he explained.

Meanwhile, District Collector C. Narayana Reddy, Commissioner of Police Kartikeya, Municipal Commissioner Jitesh V Patil, Additional Collector Chandrasekhar visited various markets in Nizamabad on Saturday. They noticed a huge rush in markets and planned for alternative arrangements.

Later, speaking at a review meeting, the Collector said that alternative vegetable markets would be set up in the city to avoid crowds during the lockdown relaxation period.

market committee chairperson Aluka Anitha and former mayor Ravinder Singh were among those present.

Adilabad MLA, provides ₹2 lakh insurance cover to media persons

Adilabad: TRS MLA Jogu Ramanna is probably the first MLA in the state who is providing ₹2 lakh health insurance cover for one year to the media persons of his constituency and a medical kit in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many reporters and videographers fall victim to the Covid as front-line wor-

riers in the state.

It is also said that Jogu Ramanna is going to provide free services of three oxygen concentrators to the needy in the constituency.

Jogu Ramanna will handover ₹2 lakh health insurance documents or bonds and a medical kit to nearly 110 media persons including reporters, photograp-

hers, videographers working for various media organisations in Adilabad Assembly Constituency on Sunday.

Jogu Ramanna has paid the medical insurance premium with his personal money keeping in mind the safety and security of the media persons working in the Adilabad region.

SCs, STs NOT BEING PAID FOR NREGS WORK: NAGARAM SARPANCH

Karimnagar: Sarpanch Boodidha Mallesh of Nagaram village in Mant-hani mandal of Peddapalli district on Saturday alleged that officials are discriminating against people belonging to scheduled castes and tribes while sanctioning amounts for works done under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

In his representation submitted to the scheme's project director Sridhar, Mallesh sought immediate payment of NREGS' wages to SC and ST workers, who have not been paid since last two months.

Several people with poor economic backgrounds, who have returned to their villages after the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, have been facing considerable hardships. To make ends meet, they are working on projects being implemented under NREGS.

However, payments to them are not timely. Mallesh charged that that though officials have deposited amounts into bank accounts of workers belonging to BC and OC categories for works done under NREGS, no such payment has been made to people of SC and ST categories since the last two months. The sarpanch asked officials to stop such discrimination and release the amounts immediately.

DC IMPACT

OFFICIALS CONDUCT RAIDS ON SHOPS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, MAY 22

To prevent skyrocketing of essential commodities prices, the officials conducted raids in Nizamabad and booked 15 cases against errant traders. In response to a news item published in Deccan Chronicle on May 16, the civil

supplies, marketing, legal metrology, food inspector and dairy development officials conducted raids on shops. The officials noticed higher prices in shops and registered 15 cases. They also imposed a ₹15,000 fine on traders. Additional collector Chandrasekhar monitored the raids on shops.

TPCC demands action against MLA for violating Covid norms

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, MAY 22

TRS Choppandandi MLA Sunke Ravi Shankar was conducting mass programmes by violating the Covid-19 guidelines issued by the government, alleged the official spokesperson of Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Medipally Satyam on Saturday.

Satyam alleged that when the Coronavirus was spreading at an alarming rate, killing thousands of people, instead of looking after the welfare of the people, Ravi Shankar was holding mass meetings for namesake and risking the lives of people.

Recently, the MLA held a mass gathering for distribution of Kalyana Lakshmi and Chief Minister Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques to the beneficiaries for the sake of publicity without following physical distance.



Choppandandi MLA, Sunke Ravi Shankar held a mass gathering recently to distribute Kalyana Lakshmi and CMRF cheque in Choppandandi mandal of Karimnagar district.

Sathyam alleged that without focusing on the public health and taking precautionary steps for preventing the spread of Coronavirus, Ravi Shankar was indirectly contributing to spreading the deadly virus by asking all beneficiaries and public representatives to gather at one place for distribution of the Kalyana Laxmi and CMRF cheques.

"While the cheques can be distributed to the beneficiaries thro-

ugh respective people's representatives of that particular area or through the officials, what is the need to hold a mass gathering in the present situation?" he questioned. "It is the responsibility of the officials to treat public representatives equally with people in following the Covid guidelines issued by the government and they must take immediate action against them if they violate the rules, he demanded.

Fear stalks people settled around RFCL

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, MAY 22

People of villages surrounding Ramagundam Fertiliser and Chemicals Limited (RFCL) are tense over frequent leakage of gas from its ammonia plant since past few days. Last week, three workers had fallen ill when gas leaked from the plant located at Ramagundam in Peddapalli district.

RFCL had been renovated at a cost of Rs. 6,120.5 crore for manufacturing 12.5 metric tonnes of urea annually. The plant started trial runs from February 28, with part of the urea produced donated to Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala and rest released into the market through National Fertilisers Limited.

RFCL stores around 3,000 tonnes of ammonia for producing urea.

The plant has, however, been facing technical glitches, leading to stoppage of production on a number of occasions. With issues remaining unresolved, officials shut the plant in March this year for comprehensive repairs. They started trial runs again from May 17.

Ammonia, however, is continuing to leak from pipelines, affecting people living in surrounding areas of Veerlapally, Lakshmiapur, Yelkapally, Vetal Nagar, Shanthi Nagar, Tilak Nagar, Gowthami Nagar, Sanjay Gandhi Nagar and Chaitanyapuri Colony. Residents are worried and complaining that they are being

forced to breathe ammonia-laden polluted air.

RFCL union president Ambati Naresh alleges plant officials have not adhered to standards while constructing the ammonia plant. As a result, there are frequent leakages through pipelines, affecting plant workers and people living in areas around the plant.

District Industries Department's deputy inspection officer Gangadhar Reddy says while laying pipelines, officials should have fixed double valves at certain points and not single valves. This is causing the leakage. He maintained that RFCL management should have a system of warning people in surrounding villages whenever there is a gas leakage. People must also be taught

about precautions they must take during such times.

Leaders of surrounding villages have submitted a memorandum to the area Pollution Control Board engineer K. Ravidas demanding that immediate action be taken against RFCL for its lapses.

When contacted, RFCL officials maintain that the plant is in primary stages of production and technical issues are common. They will be taken care of before mainstreaming of the plant, officials clarified.

However, union president Naresh has demanded that Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers appoint a High Power Technical Committee to prevent incidents of gas leakages at RFCL.

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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, favilfu, 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.

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.

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

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 emergencies 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.

BOY DIES AFTER BEING BEATEN FOR VIOLATING U.P. 'CURFEW'

Unnao, May 22: Two police constables and a homeguard have been charged with the murder of a 17-year-old vegetable seller who was caught for violating the 'corona curfew' and allegedly beaten mercilessly, first outside his home and then inside a police station, officials said on Saturday.

The incident, which took place in Unnao district's Bangarmau area on Friday, led to angry protests from locals who relented after senior police officers assured the boy's family of an impartial probe, they said.

The constables and the homeguard have been booked under Indian Penal Code section 302 (murder), they said.

Constables Vijay Chodhury and Simavat have been suspended and homeguard Satyaprakash has been sacked, police said.

The incident had taken place on Friday in the Bhatpuri locality in Unnao district's Bangarmau when the boy was selling vegetables outside his house.

The boy's family alleged that he was caught by a constable for allegedly violating the 'corona curfew' and thrashed with a stick.

He was later taken to a police station, where he was again thrashed following which his condition deteriorated and he was rushed to the Community Health Centre, where he was declared dead, the family alleged.

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.

- PTI

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

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-

ed for - may turn fatal', for the common people.

The advisory mentioned warning signs of the disease such as pain and redness around eyes or nose, fever, headache, coughing and shortness of breath along with vomiting blood and 'altered mental status' - general changes in brain function like confusion, amnesia, loss of alertness and disorientation.

Those having health conditions such as uncontrolled diabetes, suppression of immune system by steroids, prolonged stay in Intensive Care Unit, comorbidities post-transplant and malignancy are prone to be attacked by the fungal disease, it said.

The advisory pointed out that nasal blockage or congestion, one-sided facial pain, numbness, blackish discoloration over bridge of nose or palate, toothache, loosening of teeth, blurred vision along with chest pain and worsening of respiratory symptoms are suspected signs of being infected by mucormycosis. - PTI

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 Trilokpuri 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. 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

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 hor-

ror 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.

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 legislature. 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 undiscriminating 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 into low pressure 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 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 Tautkae 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 Afcorns Infrastructure, which had chartered the barge. Party leader Ashish Shelar demanded that Afcorns 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 brighten 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 Saikai 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.

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 Pusar 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*.



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

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.

- PTI

DECCAN
Chronicle

23 MAY 2021



Shailaja Khanna

Off the beaten track

Old-world musicians
need a helping hand

Eight-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 Imtiaz 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 jorna". 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, Imtiaz 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."

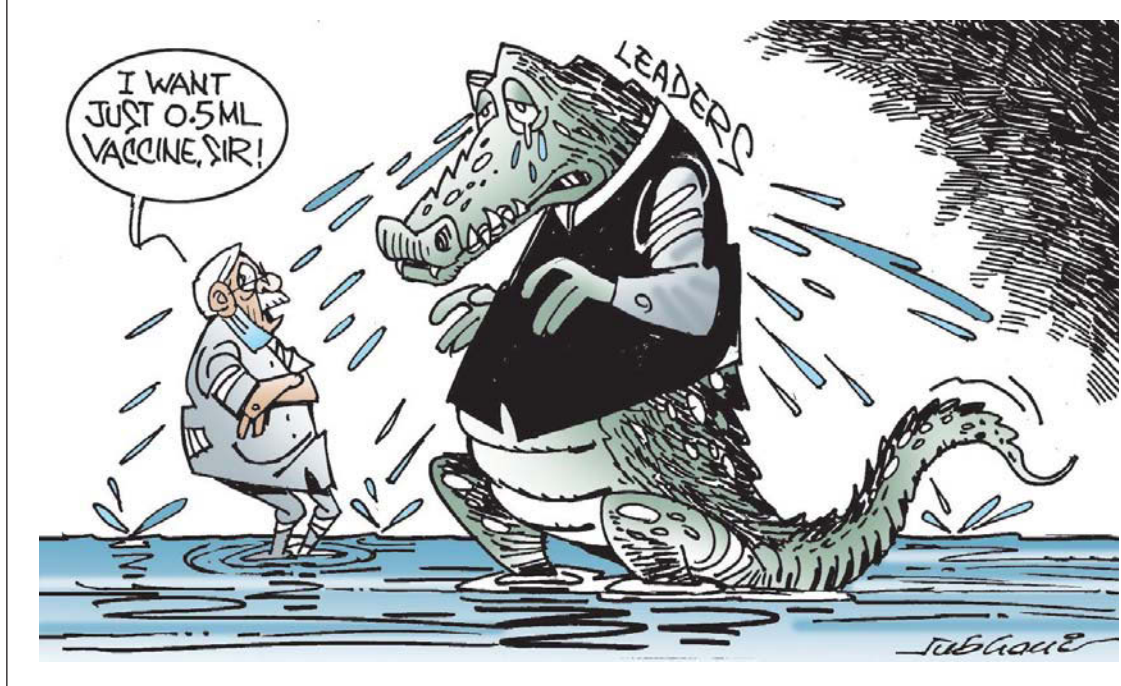
But some of the problems in the world of the arts are self-inflicted, and not linked only to the present crisis. A senior sarod exponent said, "My generation has not tried to create a new audience; or even nurture an existing audience, specially in the smaller towns and cities. The classical arts are 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 artistes 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 Sajan 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 pair 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

Subhani



War of the chips



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

One 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.

focused 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 per cent 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

GOOD BANTER

I enjoyed the Twitter conversation between KTR and Tharoor and had to refer the dictionary (*When KTR, Tharoor's persiflage brings jocundity, DC, May 22*). They were so spontaneous and hilarious especially when KTR said, "Devudaaa..... had to pull out a dictionary & Tharoorosaurus to comprehend,"!

Jyothi David Raj
Hyderabad

HC DIRECTION

It is surprising to note that the honorable High Court had to point out that an officer could not understand the order of the apex court in simple English stating that the elections should be completed in 4 weeks (*Issue fresh notification for rural polls: AP HC, DC, May 22*). The officer should resign or attend a crash course in developing her English comprehension.

B.K. Satyanarayana
Hyderabad

LOCKDOWN

I would like to inform the CM that lockdown is not the solution (*CM calls for strict lockdown in state, DC, May 22*). The government should first send team of doctors on a door-to-door checkup of people because many are afraid of going to hospital due to rush of patients. It should also release accurate data of Covid cases as they are only taking into consideration government hospital data.

Ehsan Raza
Hyderabad

POOR COORDINATION

Poor coordination was clearly exposed during the second wave of Covid-19. Somewhere down the line, complacency sneaked in resulting in insufficient oxygen beds for ICUs, vaccines were exported instead of giving it to all age groups in India, Assembly elections were held as if there was no scope of delaying them, IPL was held without public and the worst of all pilgrims who went to Kumbh mela had the last pilgrimage in their life and infected many people by travelling to other states.

Milind G. Kulkarni
Hyderabad

EXEMPT SENIORS

I request the Government of India to exempt senior citizens who are not in service to be spared from even filing of income tax returns (*New tax e-filing site from June 7, DC, May 21*).

Dr Shankar Chatterjee
Hyderabad50 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.

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 ordinance services

Gautam
MoorthyAn 'out of the
box' solution
to end Israel,
Palestine row

As 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

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 QUAKES

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

the Opposition parties staked separate claims for the formation of a new government by submitting letters of support from lawmakers to the President. Prime Minister Oli had reached the President's Office Shital Niwas and presented his list, a couple of minutes ahead of the Opposition leaders.

Oli was the first to declare that he had the support of 153 lawmakers of the House of Representatives, citing that he does not have adequate support to go through another floor test.

The letter he submitted had his signature along with the signatures of Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal chair Mahanta Thakur and the party's parliamentary party leader Rajendra Mahato. Likewise, Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba along with other leaders of the Opposition alliance reached Shital Niwas with signatures of 149 lawmakers including 27 lawmakers from the Khanal-Nepal faction of the CPN-UML.

— PTI

ent 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 Israelis 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

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: IMF

IMF 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

With strong and coordinated action now and with little in terms of financing relative to the outsized benefits the world can durably exit this unprecedented health and economic crisis, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said in her address to the G20 Health Summit.

For some time, we have

been warning of dangerous divergence of economic fortunes.

It will only worsen as the gap widens between wealthy countries that have access to vaccines and poor countries that do not, she said.

First, vaccinating of at least 40 per cent of the global population by end-2021 and at least 60 per cent by the first half of 2022. Second, insuring against downside risks such as new variants that may necessitate booster shots. Third, managing the interim period where vaccine supply is limited.

— PTI

Berlin: Quarantine for all from the UK

Berlin, May 22: Germany will require people arriving from the UK from Sunday onward to go into quarantine for 14 days.

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 consequences 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

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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

First-ever powered flight by Nasa's Perseverance on Mars

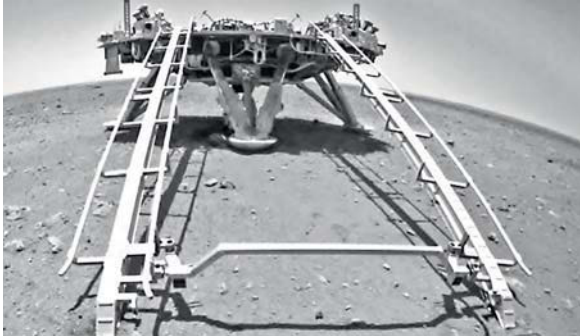
China's rover roaming the Red Planet

beamed back its first photos of the surface a few days later. The Mars probe and rover are expected to spend around three months taking photos, harvesting geographical data, and collecting and analysing rock samples. The six-wheeled, solar-powered, 2400-kilogramme Zhurong is named after a Chinese mythical fire god.

China has now sent astronauts into space, powered probes to the Moon and landed a rover on Mars — the most prestigious of all prizes in the competition

for dominion of space. The US and Russia are the only other countries to have reached Mars, and only the former has operated a rover on the surface. Several US, Russian and European attempts to land rovers on Mars have failed in the past.

In February, US space agency Nasa landed its rover Perseverance, which has been exploring the planet. The rover launched a small robotic helicopter on Mars which was the first-ever powered flight on another planet. — 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

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 & 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 an 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.

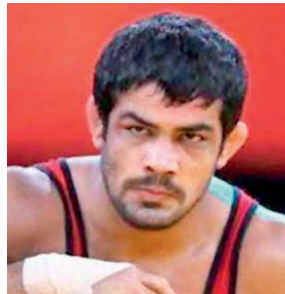
"Kumar has been arrested near Jalandhar. His associate Ajay Kumar, accused in the case, has also been arrested," a source told a news agency.

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

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.

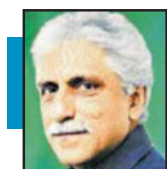
Simeone has now won two La Liga titles, a Copa del Rey and a Supercopa Espana in a decade in charge, as well as two Europa League successes and two UEFA Super Cups. Atletico have been title favourites for much of the season, leading the league table since

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

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.

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 depended 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.