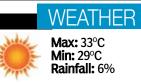
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THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | FRIDAY 21 | MAY 2021



ASTROGUIDE

Pilava: Vaikasi 7 Tithi: Navami Star: Pooram Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon Yamagandam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm **PRAYERS**

Fajar: 4.28 am Luhar: 12.10 pm **Asar:** 3.23 pm Maghrib: 6.27 pm Isha: 7.43 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.29 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.42 AM MOONRISE TODAY 1.36 PM MOONSET TOMORROW 2.56 AM

CORONA C*UNT

2,60,22,499

(+2,50,960) (+3,955) 2,91,112

covid19india.org

(+35,579)

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

TN: 17,34,804 19,131

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

16,59,54,760 34,38,690

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 219

worldometers.info

Twitter starts verification process for 'blue tick'

San Francisco: Twitter will start rolling out its verification application process from Thursday after which approved user accounts can sport the 'blue verified badge'. Twitter had paused its public verification programme a few years ago. However, last year, Twitter said it would re-launch the account verification process in 2021.

Biden to sign anti-Asian hate crimes bill

Washington: United States President Joe Biden has announced that he will sign the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act on Thursday, paving the way for the legislation to stop hate crimes against Asian Americans that have occurred since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Biden announced his decision on a Twitter post, saying that 'hate has no place' in the country. 'Hate has no place in America - and I look forward to making that clear this afternoon by signing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act into law,' he



Our kids are having enough milk... they are using only our urine and dung!

STATE | 4 One more leader bids adieu to Kamal



EU finalizes Pfizer deal for 1.8 billion vax doses

WORLD | 7

SPORT | 8 Dravid to coach India on SL tour



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Record data on Covid-19 among youngsters: Modi

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

■ Be better prepared for future, PM tells officials

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, MAY 20

In the backdrop of reports that a third wave of the pandemic Covid-19 could affect the youth and children more, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday directed offi-cials to record the spread of coronavirus infection and its seriousness among the youth and children.

The Prime Minister, in his interaction with district magistrates and field officials, said there are concerns about the infection spreading among the young generation due to mutations in the virus and asked officials to analyse the statistics in their districts. They will have to be better prepared for the

future, he said.

There have been reports that the virus may hit the young generation, a demography which has so far not been affected hard as the adult population with people in the older age bracket being seen more susceptible.

Cautioning that that the challenge posed by Covid-19 will remain as long it is present even at a "minor scale" in the country, Mr Modi told officials to work to ensure that people continue to follow Covid-appropriate behav-

The challenge remains as long as the infection is

Why Modi feels so insecure: Didi

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MAY 20

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday directly accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of barring her and other chief ministers from speaking up for their demands on Covid-19 pandemic at a virtual meeting he chaired.

This was also the first the Trinamul Congress supremo came face to face with Mr Modi officially after her party came to power for the third consecutive time in the state by defeating the BJP in the assembly elec-

present even at a minor scale, he said.
Asking officials to analyse data separately

for urban and rural regions besides those for tier 2 and 3 cities, Modi said it will help them pre-pare their strategy accord-

The officials, who interacted with Modi via videoconferencing, were from Harvana, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Kerala, Odisha. Puducherry,

Tearing into Mr Modi, Ms Banerjee alleged, "Ten chief ministers including me were present with some district magistrates there. We however did not allow the DMs from our state to attend it since a CM, if present, gets the priority over them. In a

federal structure, though the CMs were invited, they were not allowed to speak of their public demands. They were made to sit like puppets and bonded labourers. Only the PM kept talking all through without giving us a chance even. It was just a casual and superflop meeting."

Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. He had spoken to a group of field officials on Tuesday too.

Speaking on the vaccination programme, the Prime Minister said sug-gestions from states and other stake-holders have been incorporated and that the Union Health Ministry is informing states about the availability of jabs for 15 days



People wait for their turn as vaccination for people aged between 18 and 44 was

MUCORMYCOSIS IS A NOTIFIABLE **DISEASE IN TN**

T. SUDHEESH | DC CHENNAI, MAY 20

The state government on Thursday mucormycosis or black fungus infection as a notifiable disease under the Public Health Act to help halt its spread among Covid-19 patients.

Health secretary J. Radhakrishnan said the step is aimed at giving maximum attention to treatment of the infected patients. "With the disease being declared a notifiable disease, the hospital authorities are legally bound to inform the health department on the cases reported in their establishments," the health secretary said. "It will help the 10-member committee constituted to manage mucormycosis spread assess the situa-

STALIN LAUNCHES VACCINATION FOR 18-44 AGE GROUP

tion effectively."

Tirupur, May 20: The free of cost Covid-19 inoculation drive for beneficiaries in the 18 to 44 age bracket was inaugurated here on Thursday by Chief Minister M.K.

The vaccination exercise began at the Netaji Apparel Park here which has a 12,000 strong workemployees would be administered the jabs, an official release said adding Mr Stalin gave away certificates to bene-

ficiaries.

In the first phase of vaccination for this group, Mr Stalin ordered vaccinating high-risk category people and industrial workers, the release said. All efforts were being made to procure 3.5 crore vaccine doses through global bids and 1.5 crore under a system of allocation to states for vaccination of those under 45

Aerosols can travel up to 10 metres

New Delhi, May 20: Nasal droplets fall within 2 metres from a Covid-19 infected person and the aerosols can travel in air up to 10 metres, the office of the principal scientific adviser tom the Union government said on Thursday, adding that proper ventilation can decrease the risk of transmission.

In its advisory "Stop the Transmission, Crush the Pandemic—Masks, Distance, Sanitation and Ventilation to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2

virus'", the office of the PSA noted that "well-ventilated spaces play a cru-cial role in diluting the Covid-19 viral load of infected air and help in decreasing the risk of transmission from one infected

person to the other".

"Saliva and nasal discharge in the form of droplets and aerosols carry the virus from one person to another. Larger size droplets fall to the ground and on surfaces, and smaller aerosol particles are carried in the air

to greater distances," the advisory said. In closed un-ventilated

indoor spaces, droplets and aerosols become quickly concentrated and greatly increase the risk of transmission to people in

the area, it said.
"Droplets fall within 2 metres from an infected person and aerosols can be carried in the air up to 10 metres," it said.

The earlier protocol was to maintain six feet (1.8 metres) distance to prevent the spread of the

novel coronavirus infection. There have been instances of people taking to social media to express their anguish that they were infected despite not coming in contact with

outsiders.
Earlier this year, a study done by the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad and the Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTech), Chandigarh (IMTech), found that the infection can be transiently air-

Summer surprise



Chennai was in for a summer surprise as there was a heavy spell of convective rain on Thursday evening. It was so heavy in some parts of the city that it led to water logging

CM asks President to free all 7 convicts in Rajiv case

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 20

A day after sanctioning one month parole for A.G. Perarivalan, one of the seven convicts languishing in prison in connection with the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday urged President Ram Nath Kovind to

release all the seven. In a letter to the President on Thursday, Mr Stalin said Perarivalan, S. Nalini, Murugan, Santhan, Jayakumar, Robert chandran had been "undergoing agony of imprisonment for about three



parties had sought the remission of the remaining term in the life sentences that the seven persons were now undergoing and had wanted their immediate release, Mr Stalin said, adding that it was also the will of the people of the state.

Recounting the developments in the issue, Mr Stalin explained that tho-

ernment had recommended the release of the seven persons to the Governor on September 9, 2018, it was not done citing the pendency of investigation by the Multi-Disciplinary Monitoring Agency (MD-MA) of the CBI as the rea-

Later, despite the Centre and the CBI clarifying in the Supreme Court that there was no connection between the MDMA's probe into the Rajiv Gandhi assassination and remitting the life sentence the convicts, the Governor referred the matter to the President, saying that he was the competent authority. **P2**

Educate Covid orphans: Sonia

New Delhi, May 20: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide free education in Navodaya Vidyalayas to children orphaned due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In her letter, Ms Gandhi said the nation owes it to children to give them hope and provide them a robust future after their

"I am writing to request you to consider providing free education at the Navodaya Vidyalayas to children who have lost either both parents or an earning parent on account of the Covid-19 pandemic," the Congress chief ic," the Congress chief said. "I feel that as a nation, we owe it to them to give them hope for a robust future after the unimaginable tragedy that has befallen them."
The BJP, however, took

a swipe at the Congress chief, saying her idea of looking after kids orphaned during the pandemic is "outdated and copied".

"Several state governments are already doing it.

ments are already doing it except perhaps those run by the Congress. Instead of writing to the PM, she should have written to Amarinder Singh and

COVID CASELOAD, **ACTIVE CASES**, **DEATHS DROP**

New Delhi, May 20: With 2,76,110 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, India's tally of Covid-19 cases climbed to 2,57,72,440 while the daily deaths were recorded below 4,000 after four days, taking the toll to 2,87,122, according to the Union Health Ministry updated data Thursday.

A total of 3,874 fatalities due to Covid-19 were registered in a span of 24 hours. The active cases have further reduced to 31,29,878, comprising 12.14 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 86.74 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

Ashok Gehlot," BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi shared Ms gandsaid it is high time the government of India listened to the suggestion.

CAN BE FILED TILL SEPTEMBER 30 New Delhi, May 20: The

I-T RETURNS

government Thursday extended the due date of filing income tax returns for 2020-21 for individuals by two months till September 30. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has also extended the ITR filing deadline for compa-

nies by a month till November 30.

As per the income tax law, for individuals whose accounts are not required to be audited who usually file their income tax return using ITR-1 or ITR-4 forms the deadline to file ITR is July 31. The deadline for taxpayers, like companies or firms, whose accounts are required to be audited is October 31. In a circular, the CBDT said an extension of time limits is being given for certain tax compliances "to pro-vide relief to taxpayers in view of the severe pandemic". Also, the deadline for issuing Form 16 by employers to employees has been extended by a month till July 15.

PINARAYI, 20 **MINISTERS TAKE OATH IN KERALA**

Thiruvananthapuram, May 20: CPM veteran Pinarayi Vijayan, who led the Left Democratic Front (LDF) to an unprecedented consecutive victory in the April 6 assembly polls, was on Thursday sworn in as chief minister of Kerala

for the secind term.

Governor Mohammed administered the oath of office to Mr Vijayan and 20 of his cabinet colleagues in a low-key function at the Central Stadium here, which was held completely in adherence with the Covid pro-

Navy confirms death of 37 on board barge; rescue ops to continue The barge sank 35 nautical

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MAY 20

The Indian Navy on Thursday confirmed the death of 37 personnel onboard barge P305 with the recovery of their bodies. Barge P305 went adrift and sank in the Arabian Sea off Mumbai coast during Cyclone Tauktae and search operation for at least 36 missing personnel is still on. A total of 188 of the 261 onboard have already been rescued by Indian Navy and miles off Mumbai as Cyclone Tauktae battered India's west coast. P305 was amongst the four barges that suffered during the cyclone. The other three were Gal Constructor and Support Station-3 deployed by the engineering firm Afcons for its ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas

Corporation) contract. "In one of the most challenging SAR Ops in the aftermath

#CycloneTauktae, 325 survivors have been rescued & 37 #BNV recovered off Mumbai & Gujarat Coasts. Vigorous SAR efforts continue for the missing crew of Barge P305 which sank off Mumbai with five IN ships, aircraft and helos deployed," the Indian Navy spokesperson tweeted on

Thursday. The Navy is leading a massive, round-the-clock rescue effort that includes several of its ships, P-81 reconnaissance aircraft and Sea King helicopters, as well as Coast Guard and ONGC vessels, to detect survivors from the

sunken barge and other vessels stranded or affected by the storm.

Indian Navy Commodore Ajay Jha said the Navy on launched a fresh aerial search and rescue mission, deploying helicopters and Naval ships through the night, to trace any movement in the dark waters to look for survivors. According to him the search operations would continue for another three

morning

days at least. The Directorate General

of Shipping had already ordered an investigation into the deaths. Now the Mumbai Police has also announced a probe into barge P305 remaining in the area despite storm warnings. An ADR (accidental death report) was registered Wednesday in connection with the deaths.

On Thursday morning the Coast Guard said another missing tug -- Sangeeta, with a crew of 10 -- had been located about 10 nautical miles west of Maharashtra's



Indian Navy rescues 137 crew of GAL Constructor which ran aground off Mumbai.

OTHER STORIES

CM urges Prez to release Rajiv convicts from jail

From P1

The Chief Minister also recalled how the death sentence of Nalini was commuted under Article 161 of the Constitution and referred to the Supreme Court commuting the life sentences of three others. Now that the seven persons

have undergone incarceration for three decades and in the context of the courts recognising the need to decongest prisons, Mr Stalin urged the President to accept the recommendation of the state government and release all of them from jail.

State receives one lakh doses of **Covishield**

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 20

Tamil Nadu on Thursday received one lakh doses of Covishield. These one lakh doses of Covishield, that arrived from Mumbai in nine parcels via Indigo Airlines flight on Thursday evening at Chennai the airport is to be administered to the people to safeguard them

against Covid-19 The State government ordered more of the life-saving vaccines for the state, as the second wave of coronavirus is spreading fast, these vaccines arrived here. Health department officials received the vaccine and it was taken to the vaccine storage Centre at the DMS complex in

TN gets consignment of medical oxygen from Odisha

Coimbatore, May 20: Tamil Nadu received its 10th consignment of medical oxygen on Thursday by rail from Odisha, amid the COVID-19 surge in the

southern state.

An Oxygen Express train carrying 29.24 metric tonnes of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) arrived at Madukkarai Railway station near here from Rourkela

in Odisha, a railway division release said. Tamil Nadu has received 584.45 MT of oxygen, delivered

through 11 trains, so far. In its fight against the pandemic, Indian Railways helps in transporting the life saving gas to various states to provide treatment to Covid patients.

So far, the Railways has delivered nearly 12,630 MT of LMO in more than 775 tankers to different states across the country which includes Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Kajastnan, Manaras htra, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. — *PTI*

Scheme to ramp up hosp infra with donations in Pondy

Puducherry, May 20: A scheme envisaging liberal contributions from philanthropists and enterprises to ramp up infrastructure in hospitals to better fight the fast spreading COVID-19 pandemic in the union territory was launched here on Thursday by Lt Governor Tamilisai

Soundararajan. The 'Uyir Kaatru' (breath of life) scheme aimed at the donors playing a pro-active role to contain the virus that would help the affected recover faster, she said.

The Lt Governor said the Union Territory was now in a 'very difficult predicament' with the spike in the number of cases and was leaving no stone unturned to check the spread.

She sad private hospitals were also augmenting oxygen beds in their premises to cater to the needs of the patients.

emerging as the

state with the maxi-

mum number of active cases

of Covid-19 in the country, it is time the government pulled out all the stops to

ramp up vaccination in the



HR&CE minister P.K. Sekar Babu and Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner Gagandeep Singh Bedi inspect corona care centre in a school at Kolathur on

Kanchi vegetable market temporarily shifted

P.A JEBARAJ | DC

The bus bays and platforms at the Kanchi-puram bus stand were converted into stalls for the vegetable vendors from Thursday.

social distancing among wake of the situation arising out of the coronavirus

Social distancing is one of the many measures which can help people avoid catching the highly contagious virus

The vendors, who had shopped at Kanchipuram Rajaji Market, shifted to the bus stand to ensure

The district administration had taken efforts to decongest the vegetable markets in the city as a utbreak. precautionary measure Social distancing is one against the spread of

COVID-19 and allotted space at the bus stand for the vegetable traders.

According to the sources, retail selling of fruits, vegetables and flowers has been completely banned at the bus stand. Only wholesale selling of vegetables will be permitted permitted in the Kanchipuram bus stand. The public (retail buyers) cannot visit the market in person. Kanchipuram Collector Maheshwari Ravikumar inspected the arrangement

Dean denies black fungus death in T'kudi hospital

DC CORRESPONDENT THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 20

The widespread news that Mucormycosis (black fungus) claimed its first casualty in the state at Kovilpatti in Thoothukudi district was denied by Dr. Revathy Balan, dean, Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital (TMCH), who said the deceased, Soundarrajan,58, died of

Welder Soundarrajan of Kovilpatti, who was diag-nosed positive for Covid-19, was admitted at a pri-vate hospital in Kovilpatti on May 10.

According According to Soundarajan's son Vijayaraj, his father underwent treatment at the private hospital for seven days and complained of puffy and watery eyes. Suspecting it to be Mucormycosis, Soundarrajan was referred to TMCH on May 17 where he succumbed 17, where he succumbed

around 2.30 am on May 20. As the RT-PCR test result came negative for Soundarrajan a day before his death, his family members and relatives believed that Soundarrajan died of Mucormycosis, which is allegedly affecting patients who recovered from Corona.

The doctors who treated Soundarrajan at TMCH said the cause of his death was Covid and not black

TN seeks 5K anti-fungal vials from Centre

From P1

He said the state government has requested the Centre for the allocation of 5,000 vials of anti-funof 5,000 vials of anti-fungal injection Amphotericin B. "With this we will be able to deal with the disease," he said.

The health secretary said there was no need to penja about the info

panic about the infection."There are only nine cases identified in the state so far, out of which six cases are old and three patients are diabetic," he said. "This is not a new disease, and is curable. We have found that a lot of misinformation is doing the rounds on social media. People are requested not to believe in such fake information.

Apart from Tamil Nadu, the Telangana government also declared Black Fungus a notifiable disease under Epidemic Diseases Act 1897 on Thursday. All government and pri-

"Referred to TMCH from a private hospital in a critical state, Soundarrajan had more than 80% lung infection," said Dr Revathy Balan, who added that though the RT-PCR

follow the guidelines for screening, diagnosis and management of black fungus issued by the Union ministry of health and family welfare (MoHFW) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). "This fungal infection is leading to prolonged morbidity and mortality amongst Covid-19 patients,"

said Lav Agarwal, joint secretary, MoHFW in a letter to the states. The treatment of this fungal infection requires a multi-disciplinary approach by a team of doctors consisting of eye surgeons, ENT specialists, general surgeon, neurosurgeon and dental maxillofacial surgeon, among others, and administra-tion of Amphotericin-B injection as an antifungal medicine.

Dr. S. Soundari, head of medical services, Dr Agarwal Eye Hospital,

test result was negative. the CT-scan report indicated high lung infection and that caused the death.

According to the senior ophthalmologist

vate health facilities shall Chennai, said mucormycosis infection affecting eyes can be treated using medicines or through sur-

gery.
"Medical professionals treating Covid patients must avoid or reduce the use of steroid and immunomodulating drugs," she said.

Considering the strong and growing Covid-19-eye connection, people should come forward to use gog-gles and facial protection while following other standard Covid-19 appropriate behaviours, she said. "However, our immunity is our best defence against all infections. Hence, make no compromise on good food and sleep. Staying hydrated, exercising regularly and cultivating a stress-free mind are all important. Those with diabetic conditions need to keep an eye on their blood glucose

Kumarasamy, the sinus-CT result showed no fungal filament involvement. "Bacterial conjunctivitis may be the reason for the swollen watery eyes," said the ophthalmologist.

Result of Covid test should be declared expeditiously: HC

J. STALIN | DC CHENNAI, MAY 20

The Madras high court has said every endeavour should be made by the testing centres in the state to declare the results as expeditiously as possible so that a person who is affected by the Corona virus can immediately quarantine himself if he is asymptomatic and the further spread may be arrested.

The first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy gave the directive response to the complaints that some of the test results are being announced on a day-after or several days-after basis. It was also complained that if a person finds that he has tested positive four days back, he would have been a super-spreader in the interregnum.

Passing further interim orders on a suo motu proceedings and a batch of PILs, the bench said the figures furnished by both the State of Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of by the Centre when the Puducherry reveal that matter is taken up next on

Tender for

toor dal

cancelled

after scam

charges



the increased despite number of positive cases, the rate of increase has fallen over the last seven days or so. In addition, there has been an augmentation of facilities and, by and large, those affected by the virus were receiving some form of treatment, which could, however, be better, the bench added.

The bench said the central government has filed a report, but there was no indication of the allocation of any drugs or vaccine in the near future or of any plan which was in place. "It is hoped that a more detailed report as to a centralised plan of action to deal with the emergency would be filed

The bench said as to the

supply of oxygen, the repot of the Health secretary reveals that the daily 100 MT allotment from the eastern corridor has not been delivered on a regular basis. However, there were oxygen generators and concentrators which have been pressed into service and the supply of liquid oxygen was restricted for use of patients who were in critical care. There has to be an increase in the oxygen to both the State and the Union Territory. Puducherry says that its daily demand may go up to 65 MTthough the supply at present was adequate and manageable. Indeed, previous orders have recroded that the State may require 800 MT of oxygen on a daily basis. It was hoped that by now the Centre would have augmented the supply of oxygen so as to ensure equitable distribution and enhanced supply to all States and Union Territories, including these two, the bench added.

He said while the wholesale

rate of toor dal is less than Rs 100 per kg, Christys group Rasi Nutri Foods and soci-

eties such as NACOF and

Kendriya Bhandar, acting as

frontals of Christy group, quoted more than Rs 143 kg in

the tender opened on May 5.

The difference would have

resulted in a loss of almost Rs

80 to Rs 100 crores to the

exchequer.

May 24, 2021", the bench ver lining in such regard was in the announcement made by BHEL that it was going to start the production of oxygen at its two units in the State. It was hoped that the process was expedited. The State also reports that the technical glitch that occurred at Sterlite Unit in Thoothukudi has been taken care of and a supply in excess of 6 MT of oxy gen was made to the Thoothukudi government hospital in the last couple of days, the bench added.

> report filed by the State indicates the commencement of the vaccination drive for the 18-plus age group today. However, it does not appear that there may be sufficient doses of vaccine available. Suggestions have been made for looking into the Sputnik vaccine which has been successfully tested and the single-dose version thereof. Some of the intervenors have also referred to the protection given by the two doses of vaccine already administered or in the process of being administered to cover not even a period of

The bench said the sil-

sought cancellation of the tender and modification of conditions of all future tenders to break the Christy cartel and action against offi-

a year.

ration card holders was also fixed. "We have appealed to the government to blacklist the Christy group and also file criminal cases against all

He also claimed to have evidence of how the tender for corona relief kit for 2.11 crore

Thursday evening.
Though it was a hot day till around 5 pm, the sky turned overcast, leading those involved in the scam' he added.

> light showers in some areas till Saturday.

Officials of the meteorological department said a brewing weather system over the North Andaman Sea as well as east-central Bay of Bengal influenced thunderstorms over the state. A low pressure likely to form by Saturday would intensify and become a cyclonic storm

A biker and a cyclist ride in incessant rain that lashed Chennai and its surrounding areas on Thursday evening.

<<<<

A water-logged Kamaraj Salai under Pallavaram flvover.

Shower pours as big relief to Chennaiites

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 20

In a big relief to residents, heavy rains lashed several parts of the city on

to a sudden spell of pouring for over an hour. According to the weather experts, the city, which is grappling with soaring mercury for several weeks, may experience

The city weather stations including Nungambakkam and Meenambakkam had recorded a day temperature of around 37 degree Celsius.

Two flights delayed at Chennai airport due to bad weather

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 20

Two flights were delayed at the Chennai domestic airport on Thursday evening due to rains and thunder-

Chennaiites on Thursday evening saw mild rains in several parts of the city, accompanied by thunderstorms and lighting. According to the airport sources, an Indigo airlines flight that was scheduled to depart from here to Madurai at 4: 20 pm and another 4: 45 pm Indigo flight to Bengaluru were both delayed to take off due to the bad weather condition. The flights took -off an hour later, sources said. Similarly, a Chennai-bound Tuticorin flight was unable to land on time at the Chennai Airport. The aircraft that was to land by 5.05 pm, descended here after 30 minutes. A thunderstorm is more likely to delay your take-off or landing than it is to cause turbulence at cruising altitude or cause the aircraft difficulty during its climb or descent.

by May 24 and reach the likely to get light rains till Odisha-West Bengal coast by May 26. Thursday's thunderstorm was caused due to a convective activity resulting in coastal areas and Puducherry

the weekend. Apart from Chennai. palayam in Kallakurichi district registered 10 cm rain during the past 24

In the complaints filed on May 17 and 18, the NGO had the toor dal tender. The exchequer would have lost a Address vax hesitancy, ramp up vaccination

ities surfaced.

DC correspondent Chennai, May 20

The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation on Thursday cancelled the ten-

der for procurement of 20,000

metric tonnes of toor dal

after allegations of irregular-

Jayaram Venkatesan, con-

venor of Arappor Iyakkam,

an NGO fighting corruption,

welcomed the cancellation of



B. Vijayalakshmi

Viewpoint

7 ith Tamil Nadu state. Health authorities are struggling to allay fears of residents and combat rumours that trigger vaccine hesitancy in the state. Fighting misinformation on vaccines continues to be a challenging task and it has

to be managed with facts and in a systematic manner, say Efforts must be made to spread awareness, sensitise residents and remove any fears regarding side-effects of the vaccine. Information blitzkrieg on vaccination will lead to course-correction in people's behaviour.

The Greater Chennai Corporation is trying numerous ways to speed up the vaccination process. Fever surveillance workers have been visiting houses and apartments to collect data on the number of people yet to be vaccinated. The civic body has opened bulk vaccination registra-tion for residents' welfare associations, big companies, communi-Residents' welfare associa-

tions also have been working with the civic body to organise special vaccination camps in their places and help senior citizens and others above 45 years take their first/second doses.

Such special vaccination camps organised in residential areas including the suburbs, and in gated communi-

free vaccination as people don't have to worry about travelling to get vacci-With vaccination for 18 years and above opened in the state, the civic body must expand vaccination drives

ties and apartments have

evoked good response. The

move has ensured hassle-

and inoculate the maximum number of people every day. Addressing vaccine hesitancy, ensuring steady vax supplies and speeding up vaccination will help in flattening Covid second wave curve in

Chhattisgarh **NYAY to Last Mile Continues**

Farmers Get Agriculture Input Subsidy



Commemorating Martydom Day of Former Prime Minister

Shri Rajiv Gandhi on 21st May 2021



RAJIV GANDHI KISAN NYAY YOJANA

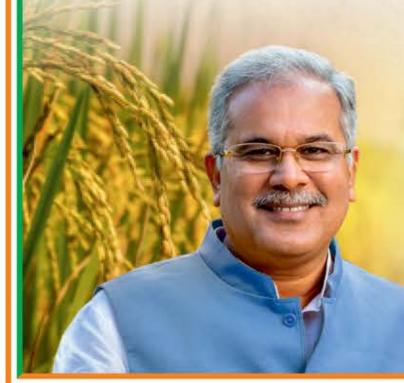
Direct Bank Transfer of First Instalment of Input Subsidy

₹1500cr

to more than 22 lakh farmers

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

Payment of ₹5628 CT made last year



Shri Bhupesh Baghel Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh



GODHAN NYAY YOJANA

Cow Dung Monetizing Scheme

Making Cattle Rearing Economically Profitable

Payment of

₹7.17cr

(for 15th march - 15th may 2021)

to cattle owners towards cow dung procurement

Payment of ₹88.15 cr made so far

Smt. Sonia Gandhi Ji & Shri Rahul Gandhi Ji

(Hon'ble Members of Parliament)

To Grace the Occasion through Video Conferencing

















Ponmudi picks flaws in varsity textbook

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR I DC CHENNAL MAY 20

Is the DMK against religions? No, this is not a question raised to the electorate by one of its rival parties in the hustings but stated without ambiguity in a textbook of the Tamil Nadu Open University, which students of MA Political Science have been learning so far.

On page 144 of the textbook prescribed for first year students, a passage lists the DMK and the Communist parties as political parties that were against religions,

pointed out K. Ponmudi, minister for higher education on Thursday

Ponmudi, who has a doctorate in political science, told the media at the Secretariat that the reference in the textbook was factually incorrect and that students should not be taught such wrong things. Apart from that, the lesson

says that the political parties convert their anti-religious views into vote banks and that they support minorities blindly. Also the lesson says that the parties turn a blind eye to problems created by Muslims Objecting to all these refer-

ences, the minister for higher education, under whom comes the government-run university, said departmental

in the textbook. The government would also find out if more such mischievous views had been incorporated in the other textbooks taught in the government universities and take appropriate action, he said. A committee would also be formed to rectify all those mistakes and also act against

those responsible for the

action would be taken against

those responsible for insert-

ing such erroneous remarks

One more leader bids adieu to Kamal

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 20

Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) general secretary . K. Kumaravel resigned from the primary membership of the party on Thursday, blaming party founder Kamal Haasan for debacle in the Assembly elections and for

seeking to promote himself. Though various candidates who contested the Assembly election as candidates of MNM quit the party one after the other in the last few days citing personal reasons, Kumaravel hit the nail on Kamal squarely putting the blame on him for the party missing an opportunity to sit in the Opposition benches of the Assembly.

Apart from the former President Mahendran, who started the exodus from the party in the aftermath of the party's rout in the elections, and a few others, most of the leaders or can-didates did not point their

fingers at Kamal for their

quitting the party.

Kumaravel, who left the party in 2019 to rejoin in again, however, said that the popularity of the MNM was growing in November-December, particularly after the party regained the 'Battery Torch' election symbol and actor Rajinikanth made it clear that he was not entering

But Kamal blew up everything by listening to his wrong advisors who misguided him and by focusing on winning a single seat.

A state secretary of MNM, S A Ponnusamy, blamed those however, trooping out by alleging that they had not joined the party mid-way to serve the people. He asked what those complaining about autocracy and self-promotion did to develop the

"How many villages did they visit and how many flags did they hoist?," asked Ponnusamy, who heads the milk agents association.

Kamal, on his part, was silent on the resignation and greeted Kerala Chief Minister Pinayari Vijayan for taking oath for the second time. He said he was proud of him and that he had spoken to him.



celebrate 50th birthday

B. RAVICHANDRAN I DC OOTY, MAY 20

and Vijay, the Kumki twins at the elephant camp Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR), celebrated their 50th birthday on Thursday. However, the golden jubilee birthday was a silent affair due to

Sujay and Vijay are the oldest surviving Kumki twins in the country. The twins are the pride of MTR as they are a rare and unique attraction in the elephant camp.

the pandemic.

Their mother Devaki, which was a captive jumbo at the MTR long ago, delivered these twin calves on 20-5-1971 at the elephant camp. Sujay, which is almost an hour senior to Vijay, is known for its expertise in Kumki works and has served in various places, including the "Operation Malai"

mission at Tiruvannamalai in 2013

which was Asia's biggest stray wild elephant capturing mission then.

Sujay and Vijay are very strong and intelligent in Kumki works include elephant safari, jungle patrolling anti-depredation and works. They are also adept in learning commands from their mahouts and acting to mands perfection. Strong and brave, they used to wear capricorns and lead the jumbo parade during the elephant puja at the camp

as part of Chaturthi. While both have shown their prowess in capturing wild rogue jumbos such as Chinnathambi. Vinavakan and Shanker in the recent past, Sujay was sent to Sadivayal elephant camp in Coimbatore in 2015 to lend its expertise there for a couple of years. There it lost one of its tusks while fighting a

MLA urges NLC CMD to give jobs to kin of Covid-19 victims

DC CORRESPONDENT CUDDALORE, MAY 20

DMK MLA Saba Rajendran has requested the public sector Neyveli Lignite Corporation of Limited to appoint the family members of its staff who succumbed to Covid-19 as employees in NLCIL. In a letter sent to the

NLCIL chairman and mandirector Thursday, Rajendran stated, "you are aware that the second wave of Covid-19 has been causing a catas-

trophe in the county and Coronavirus. the Tamil Nadu government under the leadership of Chief Minister M. K. Stalin has adopted several strategic actions to curb

the spread of the virus" The Neyveli MLA said "I am happy to know that the NLCIL has swung into action to safeguard the precious life of our employees from the onslaught of the dangerous virus'

"It is learnt that during pandemic period around 20 employees from

the sudden death of the breadwinner of the family, their dependents became orphans and their future became dark", he

errors, he said.

"These families require care and compassion at this crucial juncture. Hence, I request CMD to pay a reasonable amount as ex-gratia and consider providing employment opportunities to the dependents of deceased employees, as a special

CM will decide on school edu commissioner's powers: Min

R. VALAYAPATHY I DC TIRUCHY, MAY 20

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will decide on the removal of the director of school education post and the powers to be entrusted with the commissioner of school education, a newly-created post, according to school education minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi.

Mahesh Poyyamozhi, accompanied by city corporation commissioner

Sivasubramanian, corporation chief engineer Amudhavalli and Tiruchy East MLA Inigo Irudayaraj, inspected the con-

minal at Tiruchy on Thursday. He told reporters that orders have been issued for early completion of phase-II construc-tion. As many as 26 city buses will halt for three minutes and proceed through this new city bus terminal.

Newly-constructed 53 shops will be allocated to the shop owners who are running shops in the old bus terminal as per the direction of the Madurai bench of the Madras high court, he added.

Earlier, the minister inspected the government headquarters hospital at Manapparai

Jothimani. He said 75 Covid patients are undergoing treatment there. He said the government had a "Tholai Nokku" approach to meet the third wave of Covid-19 in an effective manner by intensifying preventive measures and equipping all infrastructures.

The minister also inspected

the compost yard in 36 acres at Ariyamangalam and said 1,500 tonnes of garbage are segregated there every year. This drill will be completed in 6 to 7 years. Thereafter a decision will be taken on shifting the compost yard to some other



Domestic Violence Act highly misused, says

DC CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 20

The Madras high court has observed, "Now-a-days, initiation of proceedings under the Domestic Violence Act, which is a self contained Code has become common. Though the object of enactment is to protect the genuine victims of domestic violence, irrespective of genders, it is being highly

Justice S. Vaidyanathan made the observation while dismissing a petition from a wife, which sought a direction to the authorities to

OUICK CROSSWORD

dispose of her representation, which sought to with-hold the pensionary and other retirement benefits of her husband.

The case of the petitioner was that her husband drove her and her children out of her matrimonial home and since then, she has been staying in her brother's his properties so as to defeat house. She has filed a comher legal claims. Though plaint under the provisions of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act against her husband for monetary amount, in addition to a petition for divorce and her husband has been taking all steps to dispose of

her legal claims. Though her husband was to retire on June 30, 2020, she made a representation November 23, 2020 to the Assistant Director of Statistics.Since there was no response, she filed the present petition, she added.

Making the above enable the lady to get observation, the judge said snapped once and for all her the object of the Act was that the victim lady should be enabled by law to live in the matrimonial family atmosphere in huband/in-laws house and it was not the intention of

the said enactment to

relationship with her husband or the husband's " Finding that there is no

substance in the case of the petitioner, the petition is dismissed as devoid of mer-

COFFEE-BREA

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam Aries: Spend quality time with your beloved



some. Do not overspend. Think hard before investing in risky enterprises. **Faurus:** Do not share secrets or secretive agreements with anyone. Do not make

today. Exciting job offers are on the cards for



Gemini: Your love life may suffer. Present your ideas with confidence. Spend time with the person you love. You may receive some rewards from a deal of the past.

Cancer: Your logical approach to life will

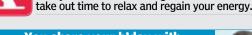
advice of people who have experience.



benefit you. If you have some potential ideas, execute them. You will be supported by family and friends in your new projects. Leo: You will find members of the opposite gender very appealing. You will need to delegate work to able subordinates in



order to complete it in due time. Virgo: People will be drawn towards you because of your creativity and intelligence. Relationships with your clients will strengthen. You need to



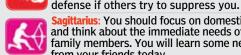
You share your b'day with Mohanlal Viswanathan is an Indian actor, Producer, Playback singer, Television host and Distributor who predominantly works in Malayalam cinema.



who will help you improve your career goals. Your hard hour will bring you outstanding gains in the long run. corpio: Rest, proper diet and a little exercise will be important for you to regain

your strength and spirits. Speak in your

ibra: You should try to meet people

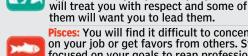


and think about the immediate needs of your family members. You will learn some new skills from your friends today. Capricorn: Some memories or unresolved issues will come to the surface bringing you lot of ten-

tarius: You should focus on domestic issues



sion and stress. You must deal with these problems with proper advice and seek help if needed. quarius: You will be eager to talk about your plans with others. Your ideas will appeal to a majority of the people. Many



them will want you to lead them. Pisces: You will find it difficult to concentrate on your job or get favors from others. Stay focused on your goals to reap professional benefits. Practice yoga for mental as well as physical gains.



bridge

PHILLIP **ALDER PLAY THE** CARD KNOWN exception occurs in a no-trump contract when declarer has the ace-king in hand; then, he **TO BE HELD** should win trick one with the

We have been studying declarer's problems at trick one. Another critical factor is playing the right card. The simplest rule to remember is for declarer to win -- or try to win -- a trick in his hand with the top of touching cards. The most common

example of playing the right card. Against South's six-spade contract, West leads the heart queen: two, ace, ... ? What should declarer do? The bidding was short and spectacular. After two passes, East decided that it was unlikely his side had a slam So, in the hope of silencing the opponents, he opened four hearts. South, though, had one of the strongest hands ever Seeing 12 tricks, he jumped to six spades. (As a side issue,



12 10

Across 1.Benumbed (8) 6. Submerge (4)

7. Inlaid design (6)

9. Dark (5) 11. Creature (5)

12. Form (5) 13. Reinforcing bar (5) 16. Walk idly, slowly (6) 18. Strong sexual desire (4)

19. Refuses to comply (8)

Word Mine

Н

NAR

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

CEA

1. Used birds (anag) (9) 2. Quash (5) 3. Give a title (4)

4. Lineage (7) 5. Garland (3)

8. Ponders deeply (9) 10. Hindered (7) 14. Stir into action (5) 15. Tidings (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 6. Chronicles, 8. Awash, 10. Lunge, 13. Complicated, 14. Tokyo, 17. Pecan, 19.

Down: 1. Whoa, 2. Moth, 3. Mill, 4. Plan, 5. Ascending, 7. Narcotics, 9. Soppy, 11. Usage, 12. Fix, 15. Kind, 16. Omit, 17.

jumble REETX LYATL **PMHEAR** SCMATO WHEN BASE PUTT PALONED

note that most tournament players do not treat a four-no-trump overcall as Blackwood, asking for aces. The bid shows Now East might try to cash the diamond ace. He shouldn't because presumably South wouldn't have jumped to six a big minor two-suiter, a version of the Unusual No-trump.)
The secret is to play the card
you are known to hold. Here, if off two cashing aces. However, he might. But if declarer plays the heart jack at West had the king and queen of hearts, he would have led the king, the top of touching honors. So, East knows that trick one, even a soporific East

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will find the right return of a





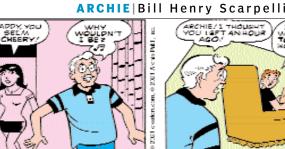




THE WIZARD OF ID|Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE|Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman







WELL, I GUESS IT'S SAFE TO FELL HER ABOUT THE CARD GAME

BLONDIE Dean Young and John Marshall









TARZAN|Edgar Rice Burroughs

















South started with the hear

king. He must play that card

SHORT TAKES

POLICE THRASH WOMAN FOR NOT WEARING MASK

Sagar, May 20: A woman was allegedly beaten up and dragged by some police personnel on a road for not wearing a mask while going out to buy vegetables amid the Covid-19 pandemic in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district. After a video of the incident,

which took place on Monday in Rahli town, went viral, a police official said the woman allegedly hit a female cop first.

The woman and her daughter were stopped by police around 11 am on Monday for not wear-

The police tried to take them away in a jeep to an open jail as punishment, but the duo resis-ted and allegedly hit a police-

In the video, some police personnel, including a female cop, were seen beating up the woman, pushing her down and dragging her by her hair. They were trying to shift her

in the police jeep while she was resisting it and in the was resisting it and in the process, they thrashed her. However, Rahli's sub-divisional officer of police Kamal Singh said the "video showed only half of the incident".

"The woman hit a female cop first and the latter had bruises on her face of an injury caused by nails," he said.

ONE DETAINED FOR REMDESIVIR **BLACK MARKETING**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MAY 20

Driver of spouse of a minister in the Shivraj Singh Chouhan was on Thursday detained in Indore for interrogation in connection with the alleged black marketing of life saving drug Remdesivir.

Govind Singh Rajput, driver of wife of state irrigation minister Tulsi Silawat was picked up by police in Indore for interrogation after Punit Agrawal, driver of a local gov-ernment doctor, dragged him

Govind was, however, let off after interrogation.
"Govind denied his role in

the black marketing of the life saving injection. The driver said he had procured two Remdesivir injections from Punit after he tested positive for coronavirus.

"He, however, did not use the injections since he had recovered from Covid-19 and returned the two injections to Punit", a senior police officer of Indore told this newspaper unwilling to be quoted in the interest of investigation in the "We may call him again for interrogation if needed", indicated. Earlier on Monday, Punit, driver of local government doctor Poornima Gadria, was 'caught red handed' by police while selling Remdesivir injections at inflated prices in Indore.

Interestingly, Punit told the reporters in Indore while being produced in the local court on Tuesday that he had procured Remdesivir injections from Govind.

SONIA URGES MODI TO HELP OUT COVID ORPHANS

New Delhi, May 20: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide free education in Navodaya Vidyalayas to children orphaned due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In her letter, Sonia Gandhi said the nation owes it to children to give them hope and provide them a robust future after their tragedy.

"I am writing to request you to consider providing free education at the Navodava Vidyalayas to children who have lost either both parents or an earning parent on account of the Covid-19 pan-demic," the Congress chief

said.
"I feel that as a nation, we owe it to them to give them hope for a robust future after the unimaginable tragedy that has befallen them," Sonia

Gandhi said. The BJP, however, took a swipe at the Congress chief, saying her idea of looking after kids orphaned during the pandemic is "outdated and

copied". "Several state governments are already doing it except perhaps those run by the Congress. Instead of writing to the PM, she should have written to Amarinder Singh and Ashok Gehlot," BJP IT department head Amit Amit Malviya said. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi shared the letter on Twitter.



Mass cremation of Covid-19 victims at a crematorium set up on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Thursday.

Vaccine will be available for all by December: Nadda

India conducts 20.55 lakh Covid-19 tests in single day

Jaipur, May 19: BJP president J P Nadda said on Wednesday the coronavirus vaccine will be available for all in the

country by December:

He also accused the
Congress of spreading
anarchy at the time of the

Nadda was reviewing the COVID-19 situation in Rajasthan in a virtual interaction with BJP state president Satish Poonia and party MPs from the state, a party statement said.

Nadda said the prime minister had warned the chief ministers of the states in March itself and asked them to be prepared for the second wave of coronavirus.

Navy confirms death of 37 onboard barge

SHAHAB ANSARI I DC

The Indian Navy on Thursday confirmed the death of 37 personnel onboard barge P305 with the recovery of their bod-Barge P305 went adrift and sank in the Arabian Sea off Mumbai coast during Cyclone Tauktae and search operation for at least 36 missing personnel is still on. A total of 188 of the 261 onboard have already been rescued by Indian Navy and Coast Guard.

The barge sank 35 nautical miles off Mumbai as Cyclone Tauktae battered India's west coast.P305 was amongst the four barges that suffered during the cyclone.

Abducted ONGC employee to be released by Ulfa-I

MANOJ ANAND I DC **GUWAHATI, MAY 20**

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said that if Ulfa-I chief Paresh Baruah comes out with a formal proposal for peace talks, he was confident that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah would reciprocate it positively.

the first time in just nine months, which have been administered to 18 crore Indians so far. By the end of December, the vaccine will be available to all and its calendar has been set," he

"India developed two indigenous vaccines for

Nadda said the Modi gov-ernment at the Center has ensured the availability and supply of oxygen and medicines to all the states. He said that real face of the Congress has been exposes after revelation of

its tool kit". Even at the time of the pandemic, the Congress is trying to spread anarchy in the country and is working to destroy the morale of the people by spreading

New Delhi on Thursday

evening refused to react to

media reports that quoted

Singapore's High Commi-

ssioner to India Simon

Wong as saying that his

country reserves the right

to invoke its anti-misinfor-

mation law POFMA

(Protection from Online

Falsehoods and Manipul-

ation Act) against Delhi

Chief Minister Arvind

Kejriwal for his recent

confusion among them, he alleged.

Besides Poonia, Union ministers Arjunram Meghwal, Gajendra Singh She-khawat, Kailash Chaudha-ry, MPs P P Chaudhary, Narendra Kumar, Manoj Rajoria, Jaskaur Meena, Swami Sumedhanand and Ranjita Koli joined the

meeting.
More than 20.55 lakh COVID-19 tests were conducted in a span of 24 hours, the highest-ever conducted in a single day in India, while the daily positivity rate stands at 13.44 per cent, the Union Health Ministry said on

Cumulatively, 20,55,010 tests were conducted on Wednesday in the country.

and that illghts

Singapore to India should

the Singapore High Comm-

issioner's comment, MEA

Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said his ministry

"does not have anything to

add" other than the state-

ments already issued by

the MEA earlier on Wednesday on the entire

Indian media reports

controversy.

stopped. Asked about

Pofma against Kejriwal: India

mum on Singapore media reports

irom

India's daily COVID-19 recoveries outnumbered the daily new cases for the seventh consecutive day. A total of 3,69,077 patients recuperated in a span of 24 hours as against 2,76,110 infections being reported during the same period,

the ministry said. India's cumulative recoveries have reached 2,23,55,440. Besides India recorded less than 3 lakh new cases for four consecu-

tive days now. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Hayana reported 77.17 per cent of the 2,76,110 new cases registered in a span of 24

comments that had alleged there was a Singapore "Prominent political office variant of the Covid virus holders must have a comments that had alleged quoted Mr. Wong as saying, "Prominent political office holders must have a comments that had alleged quoted Mr. Wong as saying, "Wednesday summoned India's High Commission-er there and lodged a

responsibility not to propa

gate falsehoods. ... In Sin-

gapore, we have Protection

from Online Falsehoods &

(POFMA). It is meant to

mitigate the spread of mis-

information, so we reserve

the right to invoke POFMA

on some of the comments

and assertions made by the

honorable chief minister

Singapore had on

Manipulation

on this topic"

Tamil Nadu has reported the highest daily new cases at 34,875, followed by Karnataka with 34,281 new

The ministry said India's total active cases have decreased to 31,29,878 with being registered in the total cases.

Andhra Pradesh, Rajas-than, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh cumulatively account for 69.23 per cent of India's total active cases. The National Mortality Rate currently stands at 1.11 per cent, the ministry said —PTI

strong protest against

recent tweet by the Delhi

Chief Minister that clai-

med there was a Singapore

variant of the Coronavirus

that was harmful to chil-

dren, following which the

Indian High Commissio-

promptly

Singapore authorities that the Delhi Chief Minister

had "no competence to pro-

nounce on Covid variants

Tender Type

or civil aviation policy".

total active caseload in a day. It now comprises 12.14 per cent of the country's Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu,

NDRF to set up unit to deal with pandemics

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 20

Learning from the experience of the devastation caused by Corona, Home Ministry plans to set up a highly specialised Division within the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to deal "exclusively with pandemics."

As of now the mandate given to NDRF allows it to deal with all "natural and manmade disasters" like cyclone, floods, earthquake, chemical or earthquake, chemical or gas leakage, building col-lapse etc. The NDRF is a highly specialised force and has been fully trained and equipped to deal with such disasters.

But now the Home Ministry is planning to set up a high specialised unit within the NDRF which will also deal with pandemics like Corona or other diseases. This will not only allow NDRF to have spcialised medical teams but also the necessary infrastructure to set up health facilities at a short notice.

Home Ministry sources said they were examin-ing the proposal right now and looking into the legality whether it will have to approach the Union cabinet for the sanction or the new Division can be set up through an executive

Senior officials said the devastation caused by Corona's second wave

has also been a huge learning curve for Central agencies. Shortage of oxygen, critical medicine, ventilator and hospital beds had led to a massive health crisis across the country as Corona cases registered a massive surge during the second wave.

So what the Home Ministry now plans is to put in place what's is being described as a "modern and professional unit" that can deal with all health related pandemic in future.

Even now both central para-military forces and defence forces had worked over time in setting up temporary hospitals and health car facilities, transporting oxygen and other essential items. But now the government proposes to have a dedicated agency which will anticipate, prepare and provide all necessary assistance during the such health

Senior Ministry officials argued that NDRF is an extremely competent agency with tremendous experience of dealing with natural or manmade disasters. Now with additional resources in terms manpower and equipment, the Force will be able to handle these health cri-Ministry has started working in that direction, officials said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY INVITATION OF TENDERS THROUGH

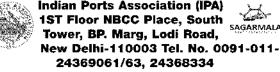
E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEM

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for

S.N.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	82211026A	Inj. Pertuzumab 420 mg	40 Nos	08.06.2021
02	82212397B	Inj. Denosumab 120mg	243 Nos	08.06.2021
03	83211140	Inj. TDM-1 100 mg	69 Non	08.06.2021
04	82211027	Inj. Cetuzimab 100 mg	530 Nos	08.06.2021

NOTE -1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details





Organization Advertisement/IPGL. Last date of receipt of application is

15 days from date of publications of advertisement (Including date of the

IPA/GAD/IPGL-MD/2020

Recruitment Dated: 20.05.2021 IPA on behalf of Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways invites appl cations for the post of Managing Director in India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) Eligibility criteria and other conditions may be seen on IPA web site http://www.ipa.nic.in under the head What's New/Ports/Othe

Chief Administrative Officer

Davp:37203/11/0001/2122

Bidding System

Period of Completion

1073/2021

Demand for dispatch of vaccine not met by Centre: Mamata

She claimed, "We were astonished at the bulldozing of the federal structure by an arrogant PM as if martial law has been imposed in the country. felt insulted and humiliated. It happened one way. I think all the non-BJP ruled states should form a team to lodge a protest against the BJP at the Centre.

The TMC chief wondered, "Why is the PM feeling so insecure and



deaths are decreasing. scared? Why is he fleeing Then why are so many away? In his speech, he deaths there? Why are bodies being thrown away in the river? Namami Gange has now become Mrityupuri Gange.'

Ms Banerjee also pointed out that her demand for the dispatch of three crore vaccines was not met by the Centre. According to her, even if she gets the doses now, her govern-ment would complete the drive in the next three months.

Ms Banerjee later wrote a letter to Mr Modi to send more vaccines to the state for the central government employees working

FIGHTING I COVID 'People should follow Covid protocols'

3rd wave possible if vaccination drive not ramped up: Scientist

New Delhi, May 20: If Sutra Model which uses the vaccination drive mathematics to project against coronavirus is COVID-19 appropriatebehaviour is not maintained, there is a possibility of a third wave of the pandemic in 6-8 months, said M Vidyasagar, a sci-

entist involved in the

mathematics to project the trajectory of COVID-

He, however, stressed the Sutra Model has not predicted any third wave and it is working on it. The Indian Institutes of Technology-Hyderabad vaccination has to be professor cited a paper by ramped up and COVID-19

Italian researchers on infected people with decreasing antibodies, which give some sort of immunity, in six months. "If the antibodies are lost, then there is a chance of immunity going down. In this case,

must be practiced. If not then there is a possibility "We are also adding the

aspects of immunity and vaccination in our model for our future forecasts,

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE Sr. DEN-HQ/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titted

tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date- 15.06.2021 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. In place of Earnest money deposit, "Bid Security Declaration" is to be submitted of prescribed format as available in document section on the portal

Tendering Section

	Date of Uploading Tenders		Bid Starting Date	Bld Closing Date/Time	
19.05.2021		05.2021	01.06.2021	15.06.2021/15:00 Hrs	
No.	Tender No.		Details of Tender		
		Ordinary repair & maintenance as well as new works, additions & alterations to existing structures and emergent works in Zone no 1 (2021-22) all Service Buildings and Staff Quarters, level crossing, bridges etc. from BTI (excluding) to FZR (excluding) on BTI-FZR section and from KKP (including) FKA (excluding) to FZR (excluding) on BTI-FZR section and from KKP (including) FKA)			

Advertised Value (Rs.) Validity of Offer 2,00,27,417.67/-Similar nature of work - Any civil work other than track work 21-2021-22- Ordinary repair & maintenance as well as new works, additions & alterations to existing structures and

bridges etc. from Talwandi (including) to Firozpur (including) on LDH-FZR section in the se SSE/W/FZR under ADEN-I/FZR.				
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion	
	3,00,44,455.59/-	45 Days	12 Manths	

22-2021-22- Ordinary repair & maintenance as well as new works, additions & alterations to existing structures and ADEN-1-FZR emergent works in Zone no 3 (2021-22) all Service Buildings and Staff Quarters, level crossing. bridges etc. from LDH (excluding) to Talwandi (excluding) on LDH-FZR section in the section of SSE/W/JGN under ADEN-I/FZR

Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
1,00,08,500.34/-	45 Days	12 Months
Similar nature of work - Any civil wo	rk other than track work.	

Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
emergent works in Zone no 1 (20)	21-22) all Service Buildings a	elterations to existing structures and nd Staff Quarters from Dina nagar a-Qadian section in the section of

80,07.643.41/-45 Days 12 Months Similar nature of work - Any civil work other than track work

Note 1:- Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender

Tender Notice No.- 770-W/169/ WA/1/FZR/20,21,22 & 23/2021-22/DRM/FZR Date:- 19.05.2021



Chronicle

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

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

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

a programme for the lack of health infrastructure is going to be a major issue there. However, no challenge is insurmountable if there is political will.

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

The government will have to quickly roll

out a programme for the rural areas, and the lack of health infrastructure is going to be a major issue there. However, no challenge is insurmountable if there is political will. Top US public health expert on Covid-19 and former director of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, Anthony Fauci, is on record saying India must put to use all its national resources, including the military, to fight and stop the virus spread. He has even gone on to suggest that the government make use of the services of the armed forces to get medical facilities available for its suffering population by building field hospitals. The government must consider the suggestion as it has little choice if it wants to save its massive rural population from

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

The WhatsApp conundrum

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

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

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

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

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER

K. SUDHAKAR

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at Chennai: SP 3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai 600032. Phones: (044) 22254747,

ZZZZ34748
Coimbatore: 77 Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore 641009. Phone: (0422) 2231255, 2231256
Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad 500 003. Phone: (040) 27803930-4. Fax: (040)

27805256.

Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Ft. Road, Koramangala, Bangalore-560095. Ph: 08043460500; Fax: 080-22960551/52/55

Visakhapatnam: Survey No. 1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017. Phones: (0891) 2552333/2552334, Fax (0891) 2755285

Vijayawada: No. C 3 & 4, Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.). Phones: (0866) 2555284/ 2555287, Fax (0866) 2555234

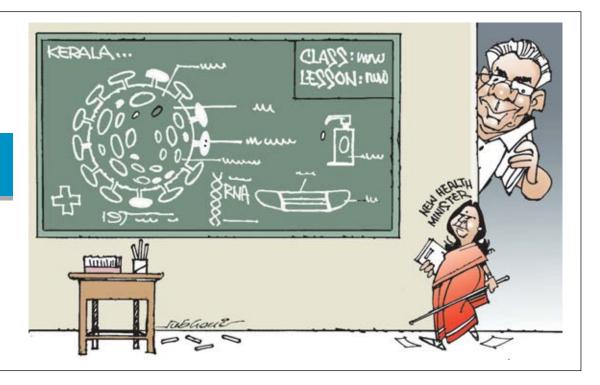
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Fax: 08554-276904
Nellore: Survey No. 527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemudugunta Panchayat, Nellore. Phone: (0861) 2348581/82, Telefax (0861) 2348580
Karimnagar: Survey No. 1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar 505 001.
Phone: (0878) 2228908; Telefax (0878) 2220433
Kochi: No. 3-B, 3rd Floor, DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavanthara Road, Ernakulam, Phys. 0484 4303408

Kozhikode: No 6/1002 E, First Floor City Mall, Opp. YMCA Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001 Fax : 0495 4019018

Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph Press Thycaud post, Cotton Hills, Thiruvananthapuram-14, Ph. 0471-2735105/6/7, Fax: 0471-4016112 Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08ss

Subhani



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



Anand K. Sahay

anxiety.

Far & Near

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

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

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

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

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

ingly out of reach, oxygen, medicines and hospital beds running short, and hundreds of (pre-sumably Hindu) corpses floating downstream from UP in the holy downstream Ganga — RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's pierc-ing words, although couched in calm deliv-RSS chief ery, may give the gov-ernment cause for

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

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

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

And the way to prepare for any eventuality may

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

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

ent kind of matter. In a recent newspaper article, a senior RSS figure, Ram Madhav, who until recently was a BJP general secretary, asked the "political leader-ship" — meaning the top government leadership
— to show "a little more transparency, a little more engagement with the public, and a little more openness to constructive criticism and enlightened expert opinion from outside the government... After all, the lives of millions are at stake". It does seem the RSS is signalling that all

is not well. Wearing BJP colours, two RSS "pracharaks", or full-time volunteers dedicated to the spread of Hindu nationalism in a country of many religions and spiritual mores, have made it to the top. But Atal Behari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi had framed a very different relationship with the mother organisation, the RSS, upon becoming Minister.

Mr Modi has been on the whole solicitous, his

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

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

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

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

On the other hand, the

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

WORKING WOMEN'S WOES

First and foremost is women's sense of selfworth, which goes a long way in building confidence among women of this generation. Women are not caged parrots as in the olden days and they are free to go around and achieve things in various fields with confidence and conviction. Women rule the roost in the offices, companies and at the same time make our dream come true in our household as well. Women are confident and they will work and achieve targets in the stipulated time. But in the present-day pandemic situation, the position is changing and the will to work for women is diminishing slowly and steadily. To tackle the realities of workplace bias, business leaders need to embrace an innovative proven approach.

Accelerating gender equality matters now more than ever, with the pandemic hitting women harder. It's time to act — failure to do so would threaten to push the gender equality timeline by more than 50 years.

M.R. Jayanthy, Coimbatore

MISUSE OF CBI

The arrest of leaders who were recently sworn in as state cabinet ministers and belonging to ruling Trinamool Congress party in West Bengal in the five-vear-old Narada sting operation case by CBI has raised the political heat in the state, besides casting a shadow on the credibility of the country's premier investigation agency. It is nobody's case that the arrested leaders who were purportedly caught on camera accepting and negotiating bribes in a sting operation can go unpunished. However, the fact that several erst-while TMC leaders who switched loyalties to BJP before the recently held state assembly polls but stand as accused in the same case has not yet been arrested by CBI goes to prove that it acts in partisan manner and at the behest of its political masters at the Centre. Using CBI to settle scores with opposition ruled states does not augur well for our federal structure.

M.Jeyaram, Sholavandan



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the wake of the horrendous Holocaust, the biggest global powers found Israeli exceptionalism acceptable. The consequences for the land's indigenous inhabitants were barely taken into consideration. The plethora of potential risks involved in entity in the Arab world were mainly ignored. The ethnic cleansing of 1948 elicited no Western opposition: there was no alarm over certain Nazi tendencies being echoed by their victims.

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

By arrangement with Dawn











E FINANCIAL

Chronicle

quick BITES

INDICATO	RS	%
Sensex	49,564.86	-0.68
Nifty 50	14,906.00	-0.83
S&P 500*	4,161.83	1.12
Dollar (₹)	73.10	0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.23	0.39
Euro (₹)	89.09	0.28
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,994▲237	0.49
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	65.37	-1.94
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.968	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.642	-0.041
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

Bosch Q4 net jumps six-fold to ₹482 crore

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

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■₹250 kit to give result in 15 minutes Covid home test kit to

hit market next week

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, MAY 20

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

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

This test at home will take just two minutes and results will be available in 15 minutes flat," Sujeet Jain, director at Mylab

Jain, director at Mylab Discovery Solutions, told Financial Chronicle. "The CoviSelf test kit will be priced Rs 250 inclu-sive of taxes," Jain said, adding that the firm was ready to produce 10 lakh test kits every day and the production would be ramped up to 15 lakh units daily within 15 days.

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

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

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



advised to click a picture of

the test strip after complet-

"This easy-to-use test combines with Myab's AI-

powered mobile app so that a user can know his/her positive status,

submit the result to ICMR

directly for traceability, and know what to do next in either case of result,"

Data transmitted by the

phone will be centrally

captured in a secure server

that is connected to the ICMR's Covid-19 testing portal, where all data will

Experts say these home-

based tests are useful

when a runaway infection

developed countries such

as US and UK. Since these

tests have high specificity,

it can be used at places where positivity rate is high so as to be able to

detect cases early. Positive

cases through RAT are mostly true positives," Dr

G.C. Khilnani, former head, pulmonology depart-

ment at AIIMS, Delhi, said.

These tests are used in

be eventually stored.

pattern is observed.

Jain said.

ing the test procedure.

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

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

Meanwhile, the ICMR said only symptomatic individuals and immediate contacts of people who have tested positive in lab-oratory-conducted tests should use this kit.
"Indiscriminate testing is not advised," the top medical body said while issuing detailed guidelines on

the kit's use. "All symptomatic individuals who test negative by RAT should get them-selves immediately tested RT-PCR," the ICMR

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

New Delhi, May 20:

that takes over the bad assets of lenders and undertakes resolution. The size of each of these NPA accounts is over Rs 500 crore and the banks have identified about 70-80 such accounts to be

Finance Nirmala Sitharaman in the Budget 2021-22

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

Banks are likely to trans-**SANGEETHA G** fer about 80 large NPA CHENNAI, MAY 20 accounts for resolution to the National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL), expected to cryptocurrencies and a be operational soon. subdued dollar index will NARCL is the name coined for the bad bank

announced in the Budget 2021-22. A bad bank refers to a financial institution fresh highs. "Cryptocurrency is nei-

transferred to the proposed bad bank, sources said. NPAs of over Rs 2 lakh crore could move out of the books of the banks to the bad bank. minister

announced that the high level of provisioning by public sector banks of their stressed assets calls for measures to clean up the bank books. -PTI

fall, dollar weakness

Gold to gain from crypto

The fall in the value of

be supportive of gold. Once the speculative money starts moving from cryptocurrencies to gold, the yellow metal prices are likely to touch

ther a currency nor an asset class. But we have seen enormous amounts of speculative money going into them in the past one year as Bitcoin value moved up from \$8,000 to \$60,000 levels. Single day drop of 40 per cent has made investors realise that cryptocurrency movement has been just speculation," said Ajay Kedia, MD, Kedia Commodities.

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

gishness in gold in the past few months despite

strong fundamentals.

However, now the trend

shall see a reversal and

this has been evident from the gold price move-

ment in the past few ses-

"Gold prices in the

international markets

have gained by around 11

per cent while on the MCX futures it has

gained by around 10 per

cent between March 8

AVP-research, non-agri

Prathamesh

May 19," said hamesh Mallya,

commodities and currencies, Angel Broking.
Analysts at JPMorgan Chase too have found

that large institutional investors are dumping bitcoin in favour of gold. The bank in January had predicted that bitcoin conceivably become an alternative to gold, hitting \$146,000 in

the long term.

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

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

FY21 ITR filing deadline extended till Sept. 30

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

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

As per the income tax law, individuals whose accounts are not required to be audited and who usually file their income tax return using ITR-1 or ITR-4 forms the deadline to file ITR is July 31. The deadline for taxpayers, like companies or firms, whose accounts are required to be

audited is October 31.
In a circular, the CBDT said an extension of time limits is being given for certain tax compliances "to provide relief to taxpayers in view of the severe pan-

Also, the deadline for issuing Form 16 by employ-ers to employees has been extended by a month till July 15, 2021, the CBDT

The due date for filing the tax audit report and transfer pricing certificate has been extended by a month till October 31 and November 30, respectively. For filing belated or revised return of income, the due date is now

January 31, 2022. Besides, the deadline for financial institutions to furnish the Statement of Financial Transaction (SFT) report has been extended till June 30, from

May 31, 2021. Also, the Income Tax Department is expected to launch a new e-filing web portal for taxpayers, which they use to file routine ITRs and perform other tax-related works, early next month, officials said.

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

SHORT TAKES **BANDITS KILL 11 IN NORTHERN**

Kano, May 20: Gunmen on Wednesday killed 11 people in two attacks in Nigeria's Kaduna state, the government said, in the latest violence in an area wracked by cattle rustlings and kidnapping.
In the first attack early Wedn-

esday, the gunmen known locally as bandits, invaded Ungwan Gaida village in Chikun district, killing eight people, said state internal security commissioner Samuel Aruwan.

"Eight residents have been confirmed killed in this attack", his statement said, adding that a church and "several houses" were burnt.

Aruwan said on the same day three herders were killed by bandits who attacked Marraban Jos village.

KEY ARREST IN BID TO ASSASSINATE MALDIVES EX-PREZ

Male, May 20: Police arrested a key suspect in the attempted assassination of Maldives expresident Mohamed Nasheed officials said Thursday as the well-known climate change campaigner recovered in a German hospital.

The unidentified man, reportedly a known Islamist extremist and the fourth person to be arrested, parked the motorcycle rigged with a bomb that exploded in Male on May 6, police sources said.

Nasheed, 54, who famously held an underwater cabinet meeting to highlight the dangers of rising sea levels for his low-lying nation, was flown to Germany last week following 16 hours of emergency surgery

A ball bearing in the bomb missed his heart by a centimetre (0.4 inches), and shrapnel was removed from his lungs, liver and limbs. He now appears to be on the mend, posting photos on social media of himself walking outside the medical facility in Germany and tucking into a Sri Lankan meal sent by Colombo's envoy in Berlin. There has been no claim of responsibility for the attack, but his Maldivian Democratic Party has said religious extremists and political interests could be involved.

Vaccines stop variants but overseas travel unsafe: WHO

Agency's Europe director: Pockets of increasing transmission can spread

Copenhagen, May 20: Progress against the Coronavirus pandemic remains "fragile" and international travel should be avoided, a World Health Organisation director warned Thursday, while stressing that authorised vaccines work against all variants of concern.

"Right now, in the face of a continued threat and new uncertainty, we need to continue to exercise caution, and rethink or avoid international trav-WHO's European director Hans Kluge said, before adding that "pockets of increasing transmission" on the continent

could quickly spread. The so-called Indian variant, which might be more transmissible, has now been identified in at least 26 of the 53 countries in the WHO Europe region, Kluge said during his weekly press confer-ence. But he said that authorised vaccines are effective against the new

"All Covid-19 virus variants that have emerged so far do respond to the available, approved vaccines," Kluge said, adding that all Covid-19 variants can be controlled with the same public health and social measures used

until now. In the WHO's Europe region, which covers part of central Asia, the weekly number of new cases fell by 60 percent in a month, from 1.7 million in mid-April to 685,000 last week. -AFP

Navalny

improves:

health

Nurse who cared for Boris quits, criticises UK govt

London, May 20: A nurse on the line and we have who cared for UK Prime worked so incredibly Minister Boris Johnson in intensive care when he contracted Covid-19 has resigned, criticising the government's handling of the deadly pandemic and saving that nurses were not getting the "respect" and "pay" they deserve.

Jenny McGee, originally from New Zealand, said the pandemic that has claimed over 120,000 lives in the UK, has proved the toughest year in her career. "We have put ourselves

hard, and there's a lot of talk about how we're all heroes and all that sort of stuff. But at the same time, I'm just not sure if I can do it. I don't know how much more I've got to give to the NHS (National Health Service)," she said in a Channel 4 documentary titled 'The Year

Britain Stopped'. "We're not getting the respect and pay that we deserve. I'm just sick of it. So I've handed in my resignation," She was quoted as saying in the *BBC* programme. The government has proposed 1 per cent pay rise for NHS staff this year. McGee also told the programme, which will be broadcast on May 24, that "a lot of nurses" felt the government "hadn't led very effectively" and that there had been "indeci-siveness" and "so many mixed messages". The infection has so far infected 4,468,366 people and claimed 127,956 lives in

EU finalizes Pfizer deal for 1.8 billion vax doses

Brussels, May 20: The European Union's executive arm on Thursday finalised a third vaccine contract with Pfizer and BioNTech through 2023 for an additional 1.8 billion doses of their CovidD-19 shot. The European commission said the deal, which was agreed on behalf of all 27 EU countries earlier this month, will allow the

buying of 900 million

doses of the current shots

Moscow, May 20: Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny has recovered

after he ended a 24-day

hunger strike last month

demanding adequate medical treatment, a top

aide and the head of

Russia's prison service

Navalny, President Vlad-

said Thursday.

and of a serum adapted to the virus variants, with an option to purchase an extra 900 million shots.

The signature of the agreement comes less than a week before a court hearing in Brussels pitting the Commission against the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, which is accused by the EU of failing to deliver the promised number of doses of its own vaccine.

> imir Putin's best known domestic critic, is serving two-and-a-half years in a penal colony outside Moscow on old fraud charges he says are politically motivated. The 44-yearold opposition figure went on hunger strike at the end of March demanding proper treatment behind

The Commission said that the deal with Pfizer-BioNTech stipulates that the production of doses must be based in the EU and that essential components are sourced from the region. "From the start of the supply in 2022, the delivery to the EU is guaranteed," the EU said. AstraZeneca's contract with the EU foresaw an initial 300 million doses.

bars for severe back pain and numbness in his limbs. He ended the protest on April 23 after receiving treatment at a civilian hospital.

His last public appearance was by video link in court during an appeal hearing at the end of April, where he appeared

PROVIDING VAX TO 40 AFRICAN STATES: CHINA

Beijing, May 20: China said Thursday it is pro-viding Covid-19 vaccines to nearly 40 African countries, describing its actions as purely altruistic in an apparent intensification of what has been described as "vac-

cine diplomacy". The vaccines were donated or sold at "favourable prices", Foreign Ministry official Wu Peng told reporters. Wu compared China's outreach to the actions of "some countries that have said they have to wait for their own people to finish the vaccination before they could supply the vaccines to foreign countries," in an apparent dig at the United States.

"We believe that it is, of course, necessary to ensure that the Chinese people get vaccinated as soon as possible, but for other countries in need, we also try our best to provide vaccine help," said Wu, who is director of the ministry's Africa department. While the US has been accused by some of hoarding vaccines, President Joe Biden on Monday pledged to share an additional 20 million vaccine doses in the coming six weeks.

thin and said he had start ed eating a couple spoonfuls of porridge a day.

On Thursday, news agency TASS quoted the head Russia's Federal Prison Service. Alexander Kalashnikov, as saying that Navalny "has recovered, more or

Seven beheaded in Guatemala prison clashes

Guatemala City, May 20: At least seven inmates were killed, most of them beheaded, in clashes between rival gangs at a prison in western Guate-mala on Wednesday, officials said.

Hundreds of police have been deployed to restore order at the Cantel prison, which houses inmates from both the Mara Salvatrucha gang and their sworn enemies, the

"Preliminarily, the death of seven inmates is known," the Ministry of the Interior (Interior) said in a statement, describing the situation as a "riot".

The figure was confirmed by the Prosecutor's Office, whose staff managed to gain access to the prison, located 205 kilometres (125 miles) west of the capital.

A spokesman for the National Civil Police, Jorge Aguilar, earlier said that the violence was caused by a confrontation between two gangs, and that at least six prisoners had been beheaded. Authorities suspect one of have been deployed to restore order at the Cantel prison, which houses inmates from both the Mara Salvatrucha gang and their sworn enemies, the Barrio 18.

HUNDREDS OF police

the gangs attacked the other in retaliation for an incident that took place several days ago, Aguilar added. Gang violence and riots are common at the Cantel prison, which has been condemned by

human rights groups for its grim conditions. Built to house five hundred inmates, it is currently home to over four times that number, police said. Guatemala's feared and violent gangs are known for their extortion rackets, in which they force businesspeople and bus operators to pay them protection money or face

execution. Gangs are responsible for nearly half of the 3,500 violent deaths a year in Guatemala — one of the highest death rates on

Apple CEO Cook to testify today

will take the witness stand this Friday in a high-stakes courtroom battle over the lucrative commissions the iPhone maker has been raking in from its mobile app store.
The timing of Cook's highly anticipated testimony was confirmed Wednesday when a federal judge granted Apple's reque-

st to allow the 60-year-old

executive to be the first

witness sworn in Friday

morning during a trial

that has been unfolding in

San Ramon (US), May an Oakland, California, 20: Apple CEO Tim Cook courtroom since the beginning of this month. The trial revolves arou

nd an antitrust lawsuit

filed last year by Epic Games, the maker of the popular video game Fortnite. Epic is trying prove that commissions ranging from 15 per cent to 30 per cent on transactions in apps installed on iPhones, iPads and iPods are part of a monopoly that Apple has created around a fortress blocking other payment options on its mobile devices

SHORT TAKES

Legendary Milkha Singh is Covid +ve

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

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

"A couple of our helpers earlier tested positive and so all the family members did the tests. Only I returned positive on Wednesday and I am surprised," Milkha said. "I am fine and there is no fever

or cough. My doctor told me I will be alright in three-four days. I did jogging just yesterday. I am in high spirits," he added.

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

Shooting coach

Monali dies at 44

New Delhi: In a big loss to the Indian shooting fraternity, coach and technical official Monali Gorhe died of mucormycosis on Thursday. She was 44 and is survived by her mother and a sister. Monali was admitted to a hospital after being diagnosed with Covid-19 but was discharged, only to get re-admitted to treat mucormycosis. Many people recovering from

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

A few hours before her death, her father Manohar Gorhe too succumbed to Covid-19. Monali was the coach of the pistol core group. She had also served as the national coach of the Sri Lankan shooting team. — PTI

Bhuvneshwar's

dad passes away

New Delhi: India pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar's father, Kiran Pal Singh on Thursday died at his Meerut residence after battling liver cancer for the last eight months. He was 63 and is survived by his wife Indresh Devi and son and daughter Bhuvneshwar and Rekha respectively. According to *ESPNCricinfo*, Singh was first detected with the illness in September last year when Bhuvneshwar was playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad in UAE for the IPL. "It is understood that Bhuvneshwar's return from the IPL in UAE. where he was representing Sunrisers Hyderabad, was mainly due to his father's health condition," the report said. Singh was undergoing treatment, including chemotherapy, at the All Institute of Medical Science here after consulting doctors in the UK. - PTI

Archer doubtful

for India series

London: England pacer Jofra Archer will undergo a surgery on his right elbow on Friday which could effectively rule him out of the first part of the fivematch Test series against visiting India beginning on August 4. Archer is already out of the upcoming two-match Test series against New Zealand and this will be his second surgery after being operated upon on his right hand. "Jofra has been reviewed by a medical consultant in respect of his right elbow soreness. He will now proceed to surgery tomorrow," the **England and Wales Cricket** Board (ECB) said in a tweet.

Medical insurance

for sportspersons

New Delhi: The government has decided to widen its medical insurance cover for sportspersons by increasing the number of beneficiary athletes and including contractual coaches and support staff from this year in the wake of the pandemic. The Sports Authority of India on Thursday said that with this decision, the coverage would increase to more than 13,000 athletes, coaches and support staff. Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said the well-being of athletes, coaches and support staff are his ministry's priority. -PTI

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REJUVENTUS Dravid to coach India on SL tour

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

May 20: Dethroned league champions Juventus beat Atalanta 2-1 to win the Italian Cup for the 14th time on Wednesday as fans returned to the stadium for the first time in over a

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

Piero Gasperini denied a first trophy of his coaching career, and Atalanta's second trophy after the 1963 Coppa Italia. It was a boost for Juventus who go into the final weekend of the sea-

son with their Champions League qualification going down to the wire after Inter Milan ended their nine-year reign. Gianluigi Buffon was in the Juventus goal for the final time in his career and the veteran keeper was solid on the night winning his sixth Coppa Italia 22 years after his first with Parma.

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

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

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

But ten minutes later Ruslan Malinovskyi blasted in the equaliser. Pierluigi Gollini denied

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

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



Juventus' Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon (centre) holds the winners trophy as his teammates celebrate winning the final of the Italian Cup (Coppa Italia) match against Atalanta at the Citta del Tricolore stadium in Reggio

Liverpool move into top 4; Spurs' Euro hopes dented

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

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

Chamberlain. Liverpool are above fifth-placed Leicester on goal difference, with the Reds on +24 and the Foxes club. Oxlade-Chamberlain on +20. If Liverpool win lashed in Liverpool's

20: their final game at home to Crystal Palace on Sunday, they should finish in the top four and salvage a difficult campaign that saw them tamely surrentitle to City. der the Manchester Leicester host Tottenham on Sunday, while third-

placed Chelsea travel to Aston Villa. Firmino put Liverpool on course for their fourth consecutive victory with a clinical finish from Andy Robertson's 43rd minute cross. Phillips got the second goal in the 52nd minute with a header from Sadio Mane's cross for his first goal for the third in the 88th minute. Fifth and sixth place finishes secure a spot in next season's Europa League, seventh place brings entry into a play-off for the new Europa Conference League.

Tottenham will have to wait until their last game of the season to discover their European destiny.

A second defeat in their last three games left them in seventh place, level on points with eighth-placed Everton and three points behind sixth-placed West Ham.

They will have to beat Leicester and hope West Ham lose to Southampton to pip their London rivals on goal difference. — AFF

MBAPPE DAZZLES AS PSG CROWNED WITH FRENCH CUP

Paris, May 20: Paris Saint-Germain have a domestic double in their sights after they won the French Cup by beating Monaco Wednesday's final at the

Stade de France. Goals from Mauro Icardi and Kylian Mbappe won a largely uninspiring final for PSG who now go into the weekend's final round of French league fixtures with 10th league title still a possibility. PSG have now won the French Cup six times in the last seven seasons having reached the final every year since 2015. It was also the second trophy of coach Mauricio Pochettino's managerial career.



Paris Saint-Germain players celebrate with the trophy after winning the French Cup final match against Monaco at the Stade de France stadium in Saint Denis, North of Paris, on Wednesday. Paris Saint-Germain won 2-0.

INDIAN FOOTBALL TEAM AWAIT COVID TEST RESULTS AFTER REACHING DOHA

Doha, May 20: The Indian football team players underwent Covid-19 tests on arrival and are waiting for results before starting their preparatory camp ahead of the joint Qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup. The 28-member squad and support staff landed here on Wednesday night from

"The 28 players and the support staff are in compulsory quarantine till results of the conducted RT-PCR tests in Doha," the All India Football Federation said in a

"The squad will, thereafter, be allowed to kickoff their preparatory camp as part of their preparation for the

matches," it added. The team, bolstered by return of Sunil Chhetri, will have a preparatory camp inside a bio-bubble here before its first match on June 3 against hosts Qatar. The round of matches are being played in Doha in view of the pandemic which doesn't allow the original format of home and away matches. — PTI

PEREZ LEADS 1ST PRACTICE SESSION, HAMILTON FIFTH

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

Perez had a best lap of 1 minute, 12.49 seconds on the sinewy 3.4-kilometre circuit that snakes around the picturesque Principality. Ferrari driver Carlos Sainz Jr. and Max Verstappen, Perez's teammate, were next. AlphaTauri driver Pierre Gasly had the fourth fastest time. He was followed by F1 champion Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas.

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

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

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

"He will travel with the team to Sri Lanka in all likelihood," a BCCI source

It was reported on May 17 that Dravid was being considered for the assignment. Bowling coach Paras Mhambrey will also be a part the of the support

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

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



Rahul Dravid

Rahul Dravid will be the head coach of the second-string side for Sri Lanka tour in the absence of Ravi Shastri, who will be busy with the Test side in England at the same time.

ball specialists.

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

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

4,000 FANS TO BE ALLOWED FOR INDIA vs NZ WTC FINAL

Southampton, May 20: The World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand in Southampton will be held in the presence of 4000 spectators, Hampshire County Club head Rod Bransgrove has said.

The Covid-19 situation has improved in the UK and around 1500 people were allowed to watch the county game between Leicestershire and Hampshire at the

Ageas Bowl, which hosts the WTC final from June 18. We're staging a four-day county game from today and for the first time since September 2019 fans were allowed for a cricket match in England. The other county games of this round will begin tomorrow and those games too will see crowds," Rod Bransgrove, the

head of Hampshire County Club said. Bransgrove told the website that the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the ICC are permitting a crowd of "4000 people" in the eagerly-awaited clash. "I understand 50 per cent of the permitted crowds will be taken by the ICC for its sponsors and other stake holders and we will be selling the rest 2000 tickets. We have already received more than double applications from the fans," Bransgrove said.
"It is a high interest game and there is a good

demand for it," Bransgrove added.

The Indian team, currently quarantining in Mumbai for two weeks, depart for the UK on June 2.

India not safe for T20 WC: Hussey

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

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

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

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

lance.
"We're talking about eight teams in the IPL. I think there are probably similar number, maybe more teams coming in from overseas (for the T20 World Cup), there'd be more venues. As I said earI think it's going to be very difficult in my view to play that tournament in India. I think they'll have to look some pretty big contingency plans, perhaps looking at the **UAE** or somewhere like that that could host the World T20. MIKE HUSSEY

former Australia player

lier, if they're playing in different cities, that is when the risk goes up.

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

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

There's got to be much more to the ball-tampering story



Hemant Kenkre

Silly Point

ameron Bancroft wittingly or otherwise has etched his name in the annals of cricket history. The Australian opener who has yet to score 500 runs in 10 Test matches so far in his career, was caught by the television cameras trying to rough up one side of the

cricket ball in the third Test between the Aussies and South Africa in Cape Town in 2018. The sorry tale shook up Australian cricket with skipper Steve Smith and David Warner getting one year bans and Bancroft being out for nine months. Just when people thought the water had

flowed under the bridge Bancroft opened the can once again when, in an interview, he hinted that more players were aware of what's called 'sandpaper gate.' The interview pointed fingers at the bowlers who most former players believe were equally conscious that a foreign substitute (sandpaper) was being to tinker with the ball in the Test.

While Cricket Australia (CA) said that the incident was thoroughly investigated and they had reached out to Bancroft to see if he was willing to speak fur-

ther, many believe that whole affair was brushed under the carpet which, now was showing a bump on the far side. Former Aussie skippers Ian Chappell and Michael Clarke have stated that there had to be more people involved (than the punished trio), with Clarke questioning the integrity the bowlers saying: 'Can you imagine that ball being thrown back to the bowler and the bowler not

knowing about it?" Ball management, on the field of play, is as old as the game. Picking the seam

with a overgrown thumbnail to help movement or using foreign substitutes from bottle caps to strips laden with Vaseline is a been-there, done-that situation, if one peeks into the history of cricket.

The Aussie pack of bowlers in the Cape Town Test including Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins seem to have smoked the peace pipe with Bancroft. incident when

looked at from a practical cricketing perspective makes no sense. One cannot imagine a bowler playing at a serious level not

knowing if the ball has been played around with. The new episode in this saga brought back a memory which goes to show that not just the bowlers but even the batsmen can tell from the changing pattern of the ball.

As a schoolboy one was privy to an episode which involved Mansur Ali Khan, a.k.a. Tiger Pataudi. While playing against us (school-boys) in a Sunday friendly in 1974-75, Tiger showed us kids his remarkable knowledge and under-standing of the game. Getting out in the first

the former Indian skipper gently asked if the ball had been changed? No, said the vehement umpires and yes, said the bowler who had quietly replaced the ball during the break as he couldn't get a decent grip on the old one.

It was just the feel of the ball on his bat that prompted Tiger to raise a doubt. What the most iconic cricketer of that era could surmise in a minute with one good eye, international bowlers couldn't do at Newlands, Cape Town hard to believe!