

## WEATHER



Max: 35.0°C  
Min: 25.0°C  
RH: 81%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Rain.  
Max/Min temp.  
35/25 °C

## ASTROGUIDE

**Plava:** Uttarayana  
**Tithi:** Vaishakha Bahula Ekadasi till 6.19 am  
**Star:** Ashwini till 2.27 am (Monday)  
**Varjyam:** 9.57 pm to 11.45 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 5.01 pm to 5.53 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**HJRI CALENDAR**  
**Shawwal 24, 1442 AH**  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.10 am  
**Zohar:** 1.30 pm  
**Asar:** 5.15 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.39 pm  
**Isha:** 8.15 pm  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.33 AM**  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.38 PM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 2.43 PM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 4.09 AM**

## COUNTER POINT



Do you have black money to treat black fungus? Your bank account has nil balance after Covid treatment!

## SHORT TAKES

### Farmer leaders court arrest

**Tohana (Haryana):** Farmers leaders Rakesh Tikait and Gurnam Singh Chaduni along with scores of their associates on Saturday gathered at Sadar police station in Fatehabad here, demanding the release of fellow farmers. They also sought the registration of a case against local JJP MLA Devender Babi for allegedly hurling abuses against them.

## Twitter gets 'last notice' to comply

### Venkaiah, RSS brass 'blue tick' restored

**New Delhi, June 5:** The government on Saturday issued notice to Twitter, giving it one last chance to "immediately" comply with the new IT rules. The government warned that failure to adhere to the norms will lead to "unintended consequences" including the platform losing exemption from liability under the IT Act. The notice, however, did not mention a specific date to comply with the rules.

The ministry of electronics and information technology said that Twitter's refusal to comply with rules demonstrated the microblogging site's "lack of commitment and efforts towards providing a safe experience for the people of India on its platform".

"Despite being operational in India for over a decade, it is beyond belief that Twitter Inc has doggedly refused to create mechanism that will enable the people of India to resolve their issues on the platform in a timely and transparent manner and through fair processes, by India based, clearly identified resources," the ministry said.

Meanwhile, another row erupted when Twitter removed the 'blue tick' or the verification badge from the personal accounts of Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu and senior RSS functionaries, including sarsangchalak Mohan Bhagwat, only to restore it later on Saturday.

— PTI

## ₹1.02L-crore GST netted

**New Delhi, June 5:** GST tax collections remained above ₹1 lakh crore mark for the eighth straight month in May, indicating that the impact of the devastating second wave of Covid infections on the economy may have been limited. Tax collections on sale of goods and rendering of services in May at ₹1.02 lakh crore were 27 per cent lower than April 2021, but 65 per cent higher than May 2020 when the nation was under complete lockdown, impacting economic activity.

"The gross GST revenue collected in the month of May 2021 is ₹1,02,709 crore of which CGST is ₹17,592 crore, SGST is ₹22,653, IGST is ₹53,199 crore (including ₹26,002 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is ₹9,265 crore (including ₹868 crore collected on import of goods)," the finance ministry said in a statement.

— PTI

## Nadda gears up party for six-state elections

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Saturday met the party's national general secretaries and heads of various wings, including youth, SC, ST, women and farmers to review the Covid-19 welfare and relief works undertaken under 'Sewa hi Sangathan' campaign by the party across India to mark the seventh anniversary of the Narendra Modi government.

Feedback of various activities undertaken by the morchas was

discussed with the party leadership. After the meeting, Mr Nadda and national general secretary (organisation) B.L. Santhosh, it was learnt, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to apprise him about the initiatives of the party workers. Mr Nadda will meet state in-charges on Sunday.

With Assembly polls lined up in six states — Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Goa and Punjab — next year, the party leadership is likely to

seek feedback on state units' preparedness for elections

During the meeting, various organisational issues were discussed. Morcha heads gave a presentation on works undertaken by them. The party workers were asked to reach out to at least 1 lakh jhuggi clusters across India to help and assist people and families effected by the global pandemic.

INTRODUCING

**TATA TEA**

**Gold Carev**

GOODNESS<sup>#</sup> IN EVERY CUP

\* This is only a brand name and does not represent its true nature. Images are for illustration purpose.

## New panels to rein in pvt hosps

Move to ensure better services, check prices

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

In order to curb anomalies as well as ensure better healthcare services to the people in private hospitals, the Andhra Pradesh government intends to set up a 16-member state-level advisory committee with special chief secretary/principal secretary, health, as the ex-officio chairman. It will have 10 nominated members from stakeholder associations like IMA, Consumer Forum and others in the state.

The state government has issued an order recently to constitute the panel. It will have an additional secretary, law, deputy secretary, wo-

men development and child welfare, and deputy secretary, social welfare, as members and commissioner, health and family welfare, as the member-convenor. Among 10 nominated members, there will be two each will be deputed by Indian Medical Association and AP Nursing Homes Association, two eminent doctors, one from District Consumer Forum, a social activist, a health professional and a professional from women welfare. The term of office of all nominated members will be three years.

The YSRC government will implement the AP Allopathic Private Medical Care Es-

tablishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2002 as amended twice in 2006 for the first time since the bifurcation of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, to ensure accountability in the functioning of all private establishments rendering health care and services.

The state government faced a tough time during the outbreak of the first wave of Coronavirus pandemic as patients complained about a series of irregularities including overcharging for Covid care at the private hospitals, and so is the case in the second wave of the pandemic as well.

■ Page 2: District-level advisory panels soon

## 5+3+3+4 education pattern to replace 10+2 edu. system

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

The 10+2 education system will become history after the implementation of 5+3+3+4 education pattern under the new education policy (NEP) in Andhra Pradesh.

The state government gave approval to ONEP last year and is to implement the new system from this academic year. There will be three types of institutions in the new education system-Pre Primary Schools (PP1 and PP2), Foundational Schools (PPI, PP2, Preparatory Class I, Classes 1 and 2) and Secondary Schools (Classes 3 to 10/12). The government wanted NEP implementation and rolling out of Early Childhood Care and

### NO CANCELLING OF CLASS X AND INTER EXAMS, SAYS MINISTER

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KAKINADA, JUNE 5

The state government has no intention of cancelling Class 10 and Intermediate examinations and these have only been postponed, said education minister Adimulapu Suresh while participating in several programmes in East Godavari district on Saturday.

■ Page 2: AP to start CBSE in govt school

## State bags top two slots for seafood exports in 2020-21

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NELLORE, JUNE 5

Despite the Covid pandemic casting its shadow on business and trading activities, the seafood sector in Andhra Pradesh contributed 38.16 per cent of the total export revenue in the sector during the financial year 2020-21.

While the country exported 11,49,341 metric tonnes of marine products worth Rs 43,717.26 crore (\$ 5.96 billion), AP share was 2,89,655 MT worth Rs 16,683.11 crore. In terms of quantity, Vizag port share was 18.83 per cent and 28.28 per cent value-wise.

Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) officials said that Vizag port stood first in seafood export in terms of value. AP has also secured first place in the

export at all India level. Similarly, Krishnapatnam Port bagged the fourth place in the export of seafood products.

In a statement, K S Srinivas, the chairman of MPEDA, said India registered a contraction of 10.88 per cent in volume as compared to the previous year. USA, China and the European Union (EU) were the leading importers, while frozen shrimp retained its position as the major export item followed by frozen fish.

■ Page 2: Shrimp export played major role



## SHORT TAKES

GOVT WILL BEAR  
TREATMENT COST  
OF STATE DOC: CMDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced that the state government will bear the cost of treating Dr N. Bhaskar Rao, a government doctor, who has been battling for his life at Care Hospital in Gachibowli, Hyderabad.

Dr Bhaskar Rao, 38, had been working as medical officer at the primary health centre in Karamchedu of Prakasham district. He tested positive for Covid-19. His wife, Dr Bhagyalakshmi, 38, who had been working as assistant professor in Guntur Medical College also tested positive for Covid-19. Both of them had been admitted to Government General Hospital, Guntur, on April 30, and given Remdesivir injections.

As Dr Bhaskar Rao's condition worsened, he was shifted on May 9 to Yashoda Hospital at Somajiguda in Hyderabad. On May 10, he was put on ventilator and shifted to Care Hospital, Gachibowli. He was to be put on ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation) and lungs transplant, but could not afford the cost of ₹1.5 crore.

On getting to know the situation of the doctor from minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy directed officials to ensure that the doctor gets the best treatment for which the government will bear the cost.

Andhra Pradesh Doctors Association has thanked the CM for this gesture. Association general secretary Dr Pidakala Syamsundar said the Chief Minister's decision will prompt government doctors in the state to work with more dedication and commitment in the fight against Coronavirus pandemic.

RAJU URGES DELHI  
COPS TO ACT  
AGAINST AP-CIDDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

Giving a new twist to the case of his alleged ill-treatment by the AP-CID sleuths, YSRC rebel MP K. Raghu Ramakrishna Raju on Saturday lodged a complaint with the Delhi police against AP-CID Additional Director General P.V. Sunil Kumar. He urged them to inquire into the officer's unlawful acts and initiate a legal action.

The MP in his complaint to the Deputy Commissioner of Police, New Delhi Parliament Street, on Saturday stated that he was picked up and whisked away by the AP-CID sleuths from his residence in Hyderabad on May 14 at the behest of Sunil Kumar on frivolous charges. At the time of his arrest, the police took away his mobile phone with WhatsApp number 9000911111 and did not show it in records as a seized property and also failed to return it to him. He said he had already served a legal notice to the Additional DG on the issue on Friday.

Raghu Ramakrishna Raju said that on the night of May 14, the officer along with four others beat him up mercilessly and one of them sat on his chest and compelled him to disclose the PIN to unlock the mobile phone.

He added that in order to save his life, he disclosed it. He said the AP-CID did not issue any seizure memo and also failed to deposit the seized material from him before the jurisdictional court.

The MP stated that to his utter surprise, he received a tweet from former IAS officer P.V. Ramesh on his official twitter ID, stating that, "I am notifying this information in public interest. I and my family members have been receiving WhatsApp messages from an unlisted number 9000911111 purported to be from @RaghuRaju\_MP. The MP may respond."

The MP responded to the tweet, saying that, "Shri @RameshPV2010 My mobile was unofficially seized by CID police in AP on May 14th, the day of my arrest. Still, it is with them. I have issued legal notice yesterday to return it. Four days back blocked that SIM and obtained a new one. From May 14 to June 1, I have not sent any messages to anyone. I assure you that appropriate legal action would be initiated against Sunil Kumar and others if they misused in violation of rules."

Raghu Ramakrishna Raju said he realised that his mobile phone was being used for dubious reasons such as those to implicate him falsely in other frivolous cases to damage his reputation.



People are seen purchasing seafood in large numbers without maintaining physical distance at the Fishing Harbour in Visakhapatnam on Saturday.

— K. MURALI KRISHNA

Rare spike in Saturday  
biz for non-veg sellers

## Total lockdown on Sunday forces people to break habits

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 5

City markets swelled with customers buying red meat, chicken, fish and other poultry products on Saturday. This is unusual, as most people do not consume non-vegetarian on Saturdays, a habit that has been prevalent since decades.

Hitherto, only fast food centres, minority community, and some sections of the society bought non-vegetarian foods on Saturdays for consumption. But the total lockdown imposed by district administration on Sundays since last three weeks has forced people to break their decades-old habit of not purchasing

● **ONLY FAST** food centres, minority community, and some sections of the society bought non-vegetarian foods on Saturdays.

meat on Saturdays.

"In particular, mutton was never sold on Saturdays. But it is now on sale due to total curfew on Sunday," a retailer said.

"However, yet sticking to the tradition, most of them store the non-vegetarian foods in their fridges on Saturday only to consume them on Sundays," Broilers Producers Welfare Association of Andhra Pradesh president Thatraji Appa Rao told *Deccan Chronicle* on Saturday.

He disclosed that generally, 4-5 lakh birds are sold on Sundays. But since last three weeks, the same quantity of birds is being bought on Saturdays itself. Due to the demand, prices of broilers have also gone up. Skinless chicken that was selling for ₹130 per kg in April is now priced up to ₹200 per kg.

More than chicken and mutton markets, where human congregations are relatively less, fishing harbours are worrying district officials. "The very purpose of total lockdown on Sundays is defeated on Saturdays," pointed out fisheries joint director Phani Prakash.

He said on normal days 15 tonnes of fish is sold at

the fishing harbour. Now, it has come down to one tonne due to the fishing ban imposed till June 14. That is adding to the crowds at the harbour on Saturdays.

Officials maintain that ensuring Covid-19 protocol is very difficult in fish markets as brisk sales and bargaining take place continuously, with people jostling with each other to buy the best.

Expressing concern, the joint director feared difficult days are ahead when markets will open once fishing ban is lifted after June 14. Boats will again set sail on that day and tonnes of fish will land in the harbour from June 16 onwards, Phani Prakash added.

SHRIMP EXPORT  
PLAYED MAJOR  
ROLE

From page 1

In 2019-20, India exported 12,89,651 MT seafood worth ₹46,662.85 crore (US\$ 6.68 billion), marking a decline of 6.31 per cent in rupee terms and 10.81 per cent in dollar value in 2020-21.

"The pandemic drastically affected seafood exports during the first-half of the year, but it revived well in the last quarter of 2020-21.

Also, the aquaculture sector performed better during this fiscal by contributing 67.99 per cent of exported items in dollar terms and 46.45 per cent in quantity, which is 4.41 per cent and 2.48 per cent higher, respectively when compared to 2019-20," the chairman said.

According to Srinivasan, frozen shrimp contributed 51.36 per cent in quantity and 74.31 per cent of the total dollar earnings.

USA remained its largest importer (2,72,041 MT), followed by China (1,01,846 MT), EU (70,133 MT), Japan (40,502 MT), South East Asia (38,389 MT), and the Middle East (29,108 MT).

However, shrimp exports declined by 9.47 per cent in dollar value and 9.50 per cent in quantity.

The overall shrimp export was 5,90,275 MT worth \$4,426.19 million. The export of Vannamei (whiteleg) shrimp, which is widely cultured in Andhra Pradesh, decreased from 5,12,204 MT to 4,92,271 MT in 2020-21.

Of the total Vannamei shrimp exports in dollar value, 56.37 per cent was exported to the USA, China accounted for 15.13 per cent, EU 7.83 per cent, South East Asia 5.76 per cent, Japan 4.96 per cent and the Middle East 3.59 per cent.

District-level advisory  
committees soon

From page 1

Following a spate of complaints, the vigilance and enforcement authorities have booked 89 private hospitals and penalised 66 hospitals to the tune of ₹9.90 crore by June 3, indicating the enormity of violation of norms.

There are nearly 8,825 private medical care establishments under 11 categories including hospitals, diagnostic labs and others in the state at present. The upcoming state-level panel has to regulate them all, from registration to day-to-day functioning to implementation of acts, health schemes and directions

from the state government. The panel also will inspect the establishments and recommend penal action including suspension and even their registration based on intensity of violation of norms.

State health authorities say that once the government order is notified in the AP gazette, the state-level panel will be constituted and will become operational soon.

Similarly, the state government intends to set up district-level advisory committees shortly, with District Collector as its ex-officio chairman and the district medical and health officer as member-

## Teachers hope NEP will bring relief

From page 1

Children now studying Class III to V in the existing primary schools will move to the nearest UP school or high school.

If the strength is more than 150 in case of a UP school, it would be upgraded to a high school status. Schools with high enrollment and adequate infrastructure would be upgraded as secondary schools with 12th standard as junior colleges.

POWER | PLAY

## MLAs reportedly opposed several decisions taken by Gandham Chandrudu

## Political pressure suspected over collector's transfer

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 5

Even as Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy appreciated Anantapur district collector Gandham Chandrudu on Friday morning, the latter was transferred the same night, allegedly due to political pressure.

The Chief Minister had appreciated the collector for his efforts in establish-

ing a 500-bed Covid Care Hospital in just two weeks near Tadipatri in Anantapur district. District minister Shankar Narayana, MPs and MLAs were present on the occasion.

But the same day night, Chandrudu was transferred following orders issued by the state government transferring several IAS officers in the state.

A group of ruling party

representatives from the district had been mounting pressure on in-charge minister for the district

Botsha Satyanarayana, government advisors and also Chief Minister's Office to change the collector in Anantapur as he was "poor" in coordinating with them.

Anandaiah's concoction  
caught in political stormDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JUNE 5

Even as people are eagerly waiting for the herbal Coronavirus concoction of Anandaiah, Telugu Desam Party has kicked up a storm alleging that ruling YSR Congress leaders are promoting a website for supplying the medicine online to mint money in the process.

TD politiburo member Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy has specifically alleged that Sarvepalli MLA K. Govardhan Reddy has readied a website www.chilldeal.in to sell Anandaiah herbal mix online and amass wealth.

Addressing media on Saturday at the Telugu Desam office here along with party leaders, Chandramohan Reddy explained that the website had been purchased from Godaddy.com by Nellore-based software firm Sesritha Technology India Pvt. Ltd., whose owners are close associates of Govardhan Reddy.

He said the company had purchased the website on May 21 and started online sale of Anandaiah's concoction from May 31.

The website has been visible since 11 am on June 2 and the home page has the ruling party's emblem, along with photographs of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, ministers Mekapati Goutha Reddy and Alla Nani, legislator Kakani, apart from Anandaiah.

The TD politiburo member charged that Kakani and others have premeditated to cash in on the situation. They have mentioned the price of P, L, and F variety as ₹15, but actually, they are collecting ₹167 for each packet.

He disclosed that because of this, an internal dispute has started between Anandaiah's family and the legislator's group saying the website is unauthorised. These differences have led to Kakani announcing that neither the ruling party nor the government has anything to do with the herbal medicine, Chandramohan Reddy alleged.

The TD leader demanded that the state government book a suo motu case for preventing this kind of irregularities. Otherwise, he said, they would approach cyber-crime wing for taking action on the issue.

convenor. It will have 10 members including two each from IMA and AP Private Nursing Homes Association, two each from reputed NGOs dealing with health care, two from Zilla Samakhya and two from legal professionals and consumer organisations. The panels will have the same responsibilities as the state-level panel but at district level.

A senior health official said, "The state government is going to constitute advisory panels at state and district levels to keep tabs on all private medical establishments to ensure better health care and services to the people in the state."

but the same was absent and this could create problems in the future.

AP Teachers Federation leaders A. Sadasiva Rao and K. Venkateswara Rao feared that the merger of 3, 4 and 5 classes into high school within 3 km of radius could result in dropouts as poor families cannot afford transportation charges. Minister for education, Adimulapu Suresh said that the new pattern of education would be a boon to students.

It may be recalled that Dharmavaram MLA Kethireddy Venkatrami Reddy had scathingly attacked Chandrudu, holding him responsible for the tense situation in Chillavariipalli in Tadimarri mandal after the collector denied permission for organising decades old annual celebrations on the next day of Shivarathri in March. Police closed the temple

Kakani dares TD  
to prove chargesDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JUNE 5

Taking umbrage at the allegations of TD leader Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy, Sarvepalli legislator Kakani Govardhan Reddy came down heavily on him and dared him to prove his charges.

Speaking to media persons here on Saturday, the MLA denied any relations with Sesritha Technologies. Visibly angry with Somireddy for his allegation that he is floating a website for financial gains from Bonigi Anandaiah's herbal concoction, Govardhan Reddy said he is ready to hang himself in front of the public if any agency proves the charges.

Meanwhile, the promoter of Sesritha Technologies, K. Narmad Reddy, said they intend to help Anandaiah deliver his medicine across the country for the benefit of people without any profit motto. He said they would proceed legally against Somireddy for tarnishing their image.

YSRC GOVT CREATING HURDLES FOR  
ANANDAIAH, ALLEGES TD SAMBASIVADC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

Telugu Desam MLA Yeluri Sambasiva Rao on Saturday accused the YSR Congress government of creating 'needless hurdles' for Anandaiah's Covid-19 medicine under the pretext of Section 144 that is in force in Krishnapatnam.

Rao demanded the government to wake up from its delusions of permanent power and start initiating steps to protect people in this critical time. He further demanded all necessary permissions should be given to Anandaiah to make the medicine and have it distributed to every patient.

He wanted to know the rationale behind night permission to Anandaiah when there were frequent power-cuts at the place

ANANDAIAH BACKS  
KAKANI, PLEADS  
AGAINST POLITICSDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JUNE 5

Even as Somireddy and Kakani locked horns over the website for online distribution of herbal medicine, the inventor of the concoction, Anandaiah, categorically stated that Govardhan Reddy got nothing to do with the website. Alleging that Somireddy was magnifying the issue unnecessarily, he advised the senior Telugu Desam leader not to pull him into politics.

"Please give good suggestions for the benefit of people if you have any, but don't drag me into your political rivalries," Anandaiah said in a video message on Saturday. He said he was trying his best to prepare the medicine by Monday and distribute the same to all the districts.

where the medicines are made. He alleged that the Jagan Mohan Reddy regime had deliberately refused to give daytime permission with the ulterior motive of obstructing distribution of the medicine.

The TD leader said that instead of encouraging Anandaiah to give his ayurvedic medicine to as many people as possible, YSRC leaders were bent on politicising the issue, which, he said, was unfortunate.

Rao said that the state government was trying to claim credit without any decency and decorum. He alleged that in order to help the medical mafia, the government had harassed Anandaiah by shifting him to different secret locations in the name of providing security.

AP to implement CBSE  
syllabus in govt schools

From page 1

He, along with ministers K. Kannababu, P. Viswaroop and Ch. Venugopala Krishna, Kakinada MP Vanga Gita, Kakinada MLA D w a r a m p u d i Chandrasekhar Reddy, special chief secretary (education) Satish Chandra, and collector D. Muralidhar Reddy, unveiled a bronze statue of Dr B.R. Ambedkar at JNTUK premises here.

Suresh said that keeping in view the concerns of parents and health of teachers, the exams were postponed due to the Covid-19 second wave. It was expected that in July the intensity of the virus would come down and then the exams would be considered.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is of the view that the exams should be conducted to



Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

maintain educational standards and enable the students to fare well in competitive exams. Therefore, under any circumstances, the exams will not be cancelled. But all the protocols and guidelines will be followed and all steps taken to safeguard the health of students and teachers, Suresh assured.

The Minister also said that the education infrastructure would be strengthened in JNTUK, JNTU-A, SV University and Andhra University to enable them to compete for the top-10 ranks in the

National Institutes Framework. He said the state government was taking steps to introduce the CBSE syllabus in the state schools and a majority of the schools were being converted into English Medium schools.

He said that development and infrastructure facilities were being created in the state schools at a cost of ₹3,600 crore in the first phase of the Nadu-Nedu programme. In the second phase, around ₹4,000 crore would be spent for the purpose. JNTU-K Registrar Ch. Satyanarayana and others were present.

Earlier, the minister participated in the Haritha-Yuvatha programme along with Rajamahendravaram MP M. Bharat. He praised that Bharat was making efforts to protect the environment through the programme.

the behest of Venkatrami Reddy.

While such politics had been going on, many people's organisations appreciated the steps taken by the collector in fighting against Covid-19 immediately after he took charge in December 2019.

Politics is being suspected behind Chandrudu's transfer because he had served as Anantapur collector for only 18 months.



## SHORT TAKES

AP SEES FURTHER  
DIP IN COVID  
INFECTIONSDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

The state continues to see a dip in daily Covid cases. After reporting the highest caseload at 24,171 on May 16, AP registered 10,373 fresh Coronavirus infections and 80 deaths in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities in a health bulletin issued here on Saturday stated that out of 88,441 samples tested, 10,373 persons were found infected with the Coronavirus. Out of a total number of 1,97,08,031 samples tested so far in the state, 17,49,363 persons were found infected with the virus and of them, 16,09,879 were recovered while 1,28,108 are still active with the virus.

Among daily cases of Coronavirus infections, only four districts reported above 1,000, with East Godavari reporting highest at 1,880 followed by 1,729 in Chittoor.

GIRIJAN COOP  
GLOWS AMIDST  
GRIM SCENARIODC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 6

The Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) registered a good business even amidst the crippling Coronavirus crisis in the state.

Deputy Chief Minister and Tribal Welfare Minister Pamula Pushpa Srivani said GCC has been able to procure more tribal products this year than the last year, which helped it beat the recession and instead do more business. It was thus able to provide sustained financial support to the Girijans during these difficult times.

The Deputy CM said that GCC had done a business of ₹368 crore last year and this rose to ₹450 crore this year. GCC collects and sells forest products, especially honey, tamarind, shikakai, coffee, rajma, turmeric, cashew nuts and other agricultural products from the tribals.

The Minister explained that apart from operating petrol pumps and supermarkets, GCC was also involved in civil supply activities in tribal areas.

AGRITECH SECTOR  
OFFERS HUGE  
OPPORTUNITIESDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

Agriculture sector offers tremendous opportunities for technology intervention both to cut losses and enhance productivity of farming skills. Students should acquire latest technical know-how to grab the emerging opportunities, said speakers at a webinar held on 'Agritech Incubators — Scope and Opportunities for Students and Farmers' on Saturday by the Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences Department of Vignana University. Dr Ch. Srinivasa Rao, Director, ICAR-NAARM, Hyderabad, attending the webinar as the chief keynote speaker explained about latest technologies such as drones for field monitoring, water management, soil health monitoring, sensors and machines for routine operations, and also agriculture IoT and agri tech market.

SIGNIFICANCE OF  
DIGITAL EDUCATION  
EMPHASISEDDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

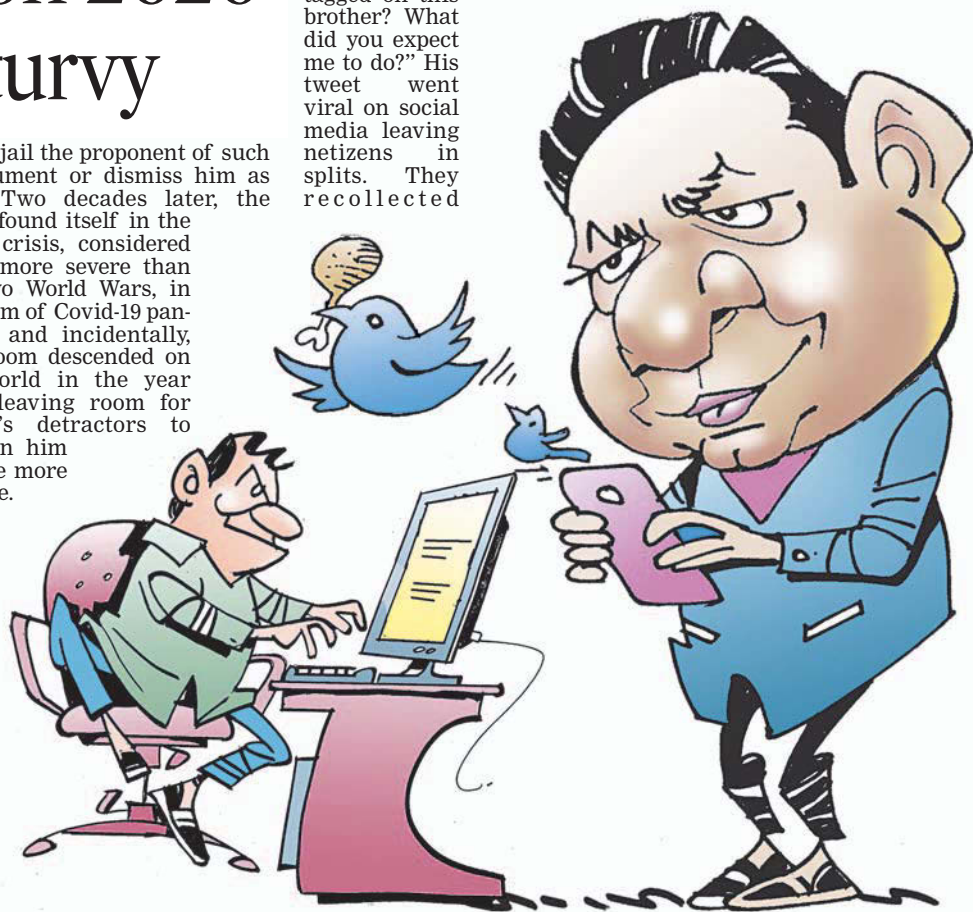
Digital education can reach students anywhere and help them acquire knowledge during the times of pandemic, according to Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). Addressing the tenth edition of the University Distinguished Lecture (UDL) Series, organised by SRM University-AP, Prof. Sahasrabudhe said digital education was a boon that made physical presence irrelevant in education. Speaking on 'Higher Education in India Post-Covid-19', he said in order to equip students with gadgets and internet connectivity, the Central government had undertaken a nationwide project under Bharat Net, Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, to connect every corner of India through the internet.

## Neta's Natter

Naidu's 'Vision 2020'  
turns topsy-turvy

As the famous Telugu saying "Rojulu bagonappudu taade paamai karichinatlu" goes, nothing seems to be going right for former chief minister and Telugu Desam president N. Chandrababu Naidu. The party got a severe beating in the 2019 Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh and the trend continued in the recent gram panchayat and urban local body elections. The party cadre was thoroughly demoralised following his call to boycott the zilla parishad elections. Now, it is time for old memories to haunt him and he has become a hot topic for trolling in social media. When international organisations started talking about a vision for 2020 in the late 1990s, Naidu picked up the phrase and went all out to champion it more than anyone in the country. He got a document prepared by an international consulting agency by spending crores of rupees and claimed that it was the greatest vision document though it received severe criticism. One of the famous observations was by a visiting foreign dignitary that people of his country would

either jail the proponent of such a document or dismiss him as mad. Two decades later, the world found itself in the worst crisis, considered to be more severe than the two World Wars, in the form of Covid-19 pandemic and incidentally, the gloom descended on the world in the year 2020, leaving room for Naidu's detractors to take on him for one more debacle.

KTR's chicken leg  
retort has Twitter  
guffawing

A shrewd politician and an ace performer, IT minister K.T. Rama Rao is also known for his huge sense of humour when it comes to his responses on social media platforms to many comments by all and sundry. Now, amid the Coronavirus pandemic and tough times due to the series of lockdowns, the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) working president keeps giving some hilarious moments to his followers on Twitter. Last week, a Twitter user complained to Rama Rao against the food delivery app Zomato for delivering him chicken biryani without 'extra masala and leg piece'. Rama Rao replied to him instantly, full of humour and sarcasm, saying "And why am I tagged on this brother? What did you expect me to do?" His tweet went viral on social media leaving netizens in splits. They recollected

Rama Rao's similar tweets made during the lockdown last year. A Twitter user asked Rama Rao, "Sir a sincere query: Any thoughts on opening barber shops or salons during lockdown? My wife is eager to try her hand on haircut and if that happens, I have a strong feeling I'll need to stay home even after the lockdown is lifted." Rama Rao replied, "Hey, when Virat Kohli could let his wife style his hair, why don't you?" Rama Rao's sister and MLC K. Kavitha swung in to add, "Annayya... Bhabhi ki kuda chance isthunnava" asking her brother if he was also giving chance his wife a chance to cut his hair, leaving netizens chuckling.



People queue up in a log line to collect food distributed by an NGO at King George Hospital in Visakhapatnam on Saturday.

—DC

Covid jab  
for all 45+  
in a month50% of targeted segment got  
their first dose of vaccineDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

The Andhra Pradesh government has targeted to administer Covid-19 jab to all those aged above 45 years in a month as it has so far covered with one dose nearly 50 per cent of the targeted 1.33 crore people in the state. Principal Secretary (Health) Anil Kumar Singhal told media persons here on Saturday that the state was having 1,33,07,889 people aged above 45 years and of them, 18.66 lakh were given both doses of the Covid jab, while 47.91 lakh were given only the first dose. He said that they had targeted to administer the jab to the remaining people in the above 45 years category in a month.

With regard to the spread of black fungus cases in the state, the official stated that so far 1,460 cases were identified. On the use of medical oxygen, he said that out of Centre's allotment of 590 metric tonnes per day, they used only 406 metric tonnes in the last 24 hours following a dip in the number of Covid cases.

He announced that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had decided to implement the hike in monthly stipend of ₹70,000 from ₹45,000 for the senior resident doctors from September 2020 onwards and added that PG final year medical students attending Covid duty would also get the hiked monthly stipend as they joined the duty after April 30.

## Two fitness freaks to head AP dist admin

In a minor reshuffle, the Andhra Pradesh government posted Tourism Development Corporation managing director Pravin Kumar as collector of Prakasam district. He earlier served as Visakhapatnam collector during the TD regime.

Leaving the administrative matters aside, Pravin, most likely, will give tough competition to the incumbent superintendent of police Siddharth Kaushal. A fit and good-looking Siddharth reminds us of a Bollywood hero particularly for his "filmi style" bike raids

with scores of policemen following him. Of course, he has been hogging the limelight not just for his looks but for playing Good Samaritan and launching innovative policing too. Pravin is also a fitness freak and a tough official who acts more by his choice rather

than the directions of political and administrative bosses. The two good-looking and fitness freaks may hopefully inspire the youth on staying fit and turn Prakasam, one of the worst Covid-hit districts initially, into a healthy district.

‘Plant trees for  
a better world’DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

Any hike in house/property tax in Vijayawada city will put an additional burden of ₹500 crore on the people already financially distressed by the Covid crisis. Demanding that the decision be withdrawn, CPM leaders on Saturday alleged that the YSR Congress government had assured the people not to hike the taxes. But, going back on its word, it now issued orders increasing house/property taxes, they fayed.

CPM state executive member Ch. Babu Rao alleged that the YSRC government which came to power by promising to provide good governance was now following the dictum of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP government in the name of reforms, which would prove disastrous to the people.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

Endowments minister Vellampalli Srinivas Rao said growing plants is the only way to protect environment and reverse climate change.

Speaking on the World Environment Day on Saturday, he urged people to plant trees on every occasion and take care of them till they grow up to be on their own.

On the occasion, the minister started the programme of planting 6,000 saplings, along with city mayor R a y a n a Bhagyalakshmi and Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) commissioner Prasanna Venkatesh. Srinivas Rao said majority of the

saplings being planted on the day have medicinal properties.

People must ensure the growth of these saplings, so that they come of use in the future.

The grown trees would help in bringing rain through the process of transpiration, thereby protecting the environment, he pointed out.

The minister asked people to spread awareness about planting trees among younger generations, so that environment protection could be strengthened.

Mayor Bhagyalakshmi pointed out that pollution has been increasing by the day. Planting trees will help in creating a pollution-free environment in coming days.

Youth urged to stand for  
protection of ecosystemDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 5

Chairperson of National Green Tribunal (NGT) Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel called upon the younger generations to stand for protection of ecosystem, earth system and human life while also maintaining constitutional values.

He was speaking after

inaugurating the World Environment Day-2021 celebrations at VIT-AP School of Law here on Saturday.

He said that this year the United Nations is celebrating the day by asking nations to pledge for 'restoration of ecosystem' and 'reimagining, recreate, restore'.

Justice Goel recalled the effective contribu-

tions of Supreme Court judges belonging to Andhra Pradesh, including Justice O. Chinappa Reddy, Justice Jagannath Rao and Justice Jeevan Reddy, to the principles of environmental law. He said that precautionary principles, polluter pay principles and even establishment of NGT were major contributions of the judges.

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Deputy Chief Engineer/TM/HQ,  
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## IN BRIEF

## NO PLUS TWO EXAMS IN TAMIL NADU

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JUN 5

Chief Minister M K Stalin announced that there would be no Plus Two examinations for the State Board this academic year but made it clear that the policy for admissions to colleges and universities would remain the same, demanding the cancellation of all national level entrance examinations, including NEET.

Admissions for higher studies in the state would be based on marks alone, Stalin said, adding that a committee would be formed to decide on the modus operandi to be followed to award marks for the students.

The committee, which would be headed by the State School Education Secretary and have the Vice Chancellor of Madras University and school heads as members, would present its report to the government, he said in a statement.

Stalin also said that he had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to cancel NEET and all other entrance examinations this year in view of the prevailing Coronavirus threat that forced the cancellation of the board examinations.

The decision taken on the basis of the report submitted by the State Minister for School Education Anbil Mahesh Poyamozhi on Saturday evening, took various issues relating to the conduct of examinations into account.

## HIMACHAL GOVT CANCELS CLASS 12 BOARD EXAMS

**Shimla, Jun 5:** The Himachal Pradesh government on Saturday cancelled the class 12 board examinations for 2020-21 and also extended the 'Corona curfew' till June 14, Education Minister Govind Singh Thakur said.

He said that the ongoing coronavirus curfew, which was to end on June 7, has now been extended till 6 am on June 14 with all the existing restrictions.

The decisions were taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur here.

The Cabinet decided to cancel 10+2 examinations for the year 2020-21 in line with the decision of Central government in this regard, he said.

He said that for calculating the awards for class 12 students, the HP Board of School Education would devise a formula taking a cue from the one being prepared by the CBSE, which had recently announced to cancel its class 12 exams due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In case some students are not satisfied with the results arrived at so, they would be allowed to appear in a special examination to be conducted once the situation is conducive for holding the exams, he added.

## TN FARMERS BURN COPIES OF 3 FARM LAWS

**Chennai June 5:** Members of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayi Sangam, a farmers body, on Saturday burned copies of the three farm laws introduced by the Centre a year ago, demanding their repeal.

The protests were held in various parts of the state with the farmers assembling in small groups wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing owing to the pandemic.

Recalling the year-long protest by farmers across the country and their sacrifices during the New Delhi stir, the Sangam's state general secretary P. Shanmugam urged Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin to take steps to pass a resolution against the farm laws in the Assembly.

Our Chief Minister wrote to the Union government recently seeking the withdrawal of the three farm laws for the welfare of the farming community. Stalin should pass a resolution against these legislations in the state Assembly soon, he said. At Tambaram, near here, 15 people led by Shanmugam gathered to burn copies of the laws.

The farmers have been protesting against the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation), Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.



Women queue up to collect fruits and ration distributed by Delhi BJP under its 'Sewa Hi Sangathan' programme in New Delhi on Saturday. - PTI

## Worst-hit Mumbai and Delhi start to unlock

## Delhi shops in markets, malls to open on an odd-even basis

VINEETA PANDEY | DC  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

With the Covid-19 situation gradually coming under control and daily positivity rate falling below five per cent, Delhi and Mumbai are all set to open gradually from Monday.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced on Saturday that markets will re-open and Metro services will resume from Monday, June 7, with conditions.

"Lockdown will continue with more relaxation in other activities. Shops in markets and malls to be opened on an odd-even basis from Monday. The standalone shops, however, will be allowed to open daily from 10 am to 8 pm. Home delivery through e-commerce platforms has also been okayed. Private offices will be allowed to function with 50 per cent staff," Mr Kejriwal said.

"In government offices, Group A staff will be allowed to function with 100 per cent capacity while Group B with 50 per cent staff," Mr Kejriwal said.

Essential items shops and chemists will remain open on all days. But restaurants, theatres, gymnasiums, swimming pools, water parks, salons, educational and coaching institutes, cinema halls, weekly markets will remain shut.

Domestic traders body CAIT on Saturday welcomed the Delhi government's decision to allow markets to open from



A health worker inoculates a dose of the Covid vaccine to a woman at a vaccination centre in Jammu on Saturday. - PTI

Monday but opposed the odd-even formula, claiming that it does not suit the business character of the city.

"The odd-even formula is never suited for the business character of Delhi because being the largest distribution centre of the country, Delhi has a totally different business format where one trader is dependent upon the other for procurement of goods and in many cases, both these format of trade will adopt different day for opening the shops due to the odd-even formula," said Praveen Khandelwal, secretary general, Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).

"It would have been better if the Delhi government would have adopted staggered timings between different markets of Delhi," he suggested. In its earlier letter to Lieutenant

Governor Anil Baijal and Kejriwal, the CAIT had suggested staggered timings for the wholesale markets - 10 am to 4 pm - and 12 pm to 7 pm for retail markets.

Maharashtra too announced a five-phased unlock plan under which cities and districts having positivity rate less than 5 per cent and oxygen beds occupancy less than 25 per cent - categorised as Level 1 - will see lifting of restrictions. Here all restaurants, malls, salons, movie theatres, shops can open.

Under Level 2, districts having less than 5 per cent positivity and oxygen beds occupancy of 25-40 per cent, can reopen shops but malls, restaurants, gymnasiums, salons etc will get partial relaxations.

Level 3 are districts with 5-10 per cent positivity rate and 40-60 per cent oxygen bed occupancy.

In Mumbai, which falls under Level 3, film shoots have been allowed and buses can operate at full capacity but with only sitting passengers.

Mumbai local trains, that remain overcrowded during peak hours, will be out of bounds for local passengers and only essential workers are permitted to use these trains.

In Maharashtra, districts having 10-20 per cent positivity rate more than 60 per cent occupancy rate will be under Level 4 and here no movement of people will be allowed on weekends and after 5 pm on weekdays. Level 5 will consist of districts with a positivity rate over 20 per cent and oxygen bed occupancy over 75 per cent. Here no movement of people will be allowed.

India on Saturday recorded lowest daily cases in nearly two months with 1.21 lakh cases in the last 24 hours.

The deaths - 3,380 - however, still remain high. Country's weekly positivity rate is currently at 6.89 per cent while the daily positivity rate was 5.78 per cent on Saturday. It has remained less than 10 per cent for 12 consecutive days now.

Delhi on Saturday had a positivity rate of 0.53 per cent with 414 fresh cases, and 60 deaths. Its hospital beds and patients dependent on oxygen have reduced drastically. However, Mr Kejriwal has set up a task force to prepare for a possible third wave.

## TN EXTENDS LOCKDOWN TILL JUNE 14

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

The Tamil Nadu government on Saturday decided to extend the total lockdown till June 14 while announcing some relaxations in districts other than Coimbatore, the Nilgiris, Tiruppur, Erode, Salem, Karur, Namakkal, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Mayiladuthurai.

More restrictions have been imposed in the 11 districts where the rate of Covid-19 infection has been high while Chennai and the other districts that have shown remarkable decline in the number of new cases will witness more activities from Monday, a release issued by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said.

However, shopping complexes, malls, tourist spots, cinemas and salons will remain shut, while standalone provision shops, groceries, fish and meat shops will be allowed to be opened between 6 am and 5 p.m. all over the state.

Pavement shops selling vegetables, fruits and flowers are allowed to function between 6 am and 5 p.m. Fish markets and slaughterhouses can conduct only wholesale trade. The district administrations would make arrangements to open more wholesale markets to maintain physical distancing. Government offices would work with 30 per cent attendance.

Match box industries can function with 50 per cent workers but should follow the standard operating procedure.

## Lockdown in Odisha leaves over 7L jobless

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 5

Over 7 lakh people in Odisha have lost their jobs since the lockdown was re-imposed on May 5 to cut the rapid transmission of coronavirus.

As per the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE) latest data, the unemployment rate in Odisha was merely around 2 per cent (1.9 per cent) in April. However, by May-end, following the enforcement of the lockdown, it shot up to 7 per cent.

Among the list of 28 states, Odisha has been among the top-5 states where the rate of unemployment has posted a sharp rise vis-a-vis the previous month.

Due to this sharp rise in the rate of unemployment in May, an estimate reveals that in the last month (May) a whopping over 10.09 lakh had no jobs at hand as against mere 2.76 lakh in April.

Significantly, such a blow to job creation has come at a time when during the first quarter of the year that ended in April, the number of unemployed in the state had increased by nearly 1.24 lakh vis-a-vis the previous quarter of September-December 2020.

Historically seen, Odisha always recorded a double-digit unemployment rate in the age group of 15 to 24 years. The rates in the beginning of 2020 stood at 12.62 per cent in the age group of 15 to 19 years and 18.09 per cent in the age group

● IT HAS BEEN observed that the districts that had a higher share in Odisha's employment chart had been the worst hit by the second Covid-19 wave.

of 20-24 years. However, when cut to January to April 2021, the unemployment rate had shot up sharply to 35.46 per cent and 14.91 per cent, respectively, in the same age groups.

An analysis of the district-wise data nails the prime cause. It has been observed that the districts that had a higher share in Odisha's employment chart had been the worst hit by the second Covid-19 wave. Cities like Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and industrial districts like Sundergarh and Jharsuguda that provide employment in the range of 2.5-4.9 lakh were the worst hit in the second wave surge in the state, leading to the loss of jobs.

Meanwhile, the Covid-19 single-day cases continue to log above 7,000 cases a month now and the daily death toll has remained above 30 for over two weeks.

On Saturday, the state recorded 7,395 new cases and 40 deaths.

With this, the positive tally in the state surged to 8,06,094 while the total number of deaths in the pandemic shot up to 2,952.

Of the fresh cases detected across 30 districts in the state on Sunday, a total of 4,169 cases were reported from quarantine centers, while the rest 3,226 were local transmission cases.

## Not many takers for tests, jabs in rural India

**Kalwa, June 5:** When health worker Neelam Kumari knocks on doors in villages the occupants sometimes run out the back, terrified that she wants to vaccinate them against Covid-19.

With India's devastating recent virus surge easing in cities, the deadly pandemic is ravaging the vast poverty-stricken rural hinterland. But here, ignorance and fear rule.

"A lot of people in my village don't want to take the vaccine. They fear that they will die if they take it," Kumari told AFP in Dhathra, a collection of two-storey buildings in Haryana with buffaloes wandering the streets.

"One of the villagers was so angry that he beat up a (health) worker who was trying to convince him to take the vaccine."

Just 15 per cent of people in rural areas, compared with 30 per cent in towns and cities, have received at least one vaccine dose so far - even though two-thirds of cases are being reported in the countryside, according to an analysis in a newspaper.

Rumours are shared online or spread through messaging apps like WhatsApp. Fears that 5G causes Covid-19 led to mobile towers being attacked in Haryana.

"People do not even step forward for testing as they think the government will declare them Covid-positive even if they are not," Shobeb Ali, a doctor in Miyaganj village in Uttar Pradesh, told AFP.

This fear pervades despite the sight of bodies dumped in rivers and hundreds of shallow graves suggesting that Covid is raging in hinterland where 70 per cent of the population lives.

In Nuran Khara village in Haryana, residents are reluctant to get inoculated even though they said many households reported having fever - and dozens of people dying.

"Even after opening up a vaccine centre here, nobody is ready to take it," villager Rajesh Kumar, 45, told AFP.

"I won't take the vaccine because it has many side effects. People get sick after getting vaccines."

- AFP

## HEALTH | SCARE

## A lioness in Tamil Nadu died of coronavirus while nine others in the pride tested positive at Vandalur

## All felines in Ranchi Zoo put to mandatory Covid test

**Ranchi, Jun 5:** All 21 felines in Jharkhand's Ranchi Zoo - right from 1.3 years tiger cubs to 14-year-old Mallik - are undergoing Covid-19 test to rule out chances of infection in the wake of death of tiger Shiva down with fever for three days, an official said Saturday.

The decision for mandatory Covid test of felines was taken amid coronavirus scare though 10-year old tiger Shiva, who died Thursday night tested negative in RAT but results of RT-PCR are awaited.

Shiva, suffering from high fever since Tuesday, had left eating and had barely touched the chicken soup offered during the sickness before it succumbed to death.

"We have 21 lions, tigers

and leopards left at Bhagwan Birsa Biological Park, Ormanjhi, Ranchi after Shiva died on Thursday night. To rule out even the remote possibility of Covid-19 virus among felines, we have decided that all will undergo mandatory coronavirus tests.

"So far swabs could be taken of 11 animals as it is a bit difficult to obtain their swabs given their ferocious nature," Zoo Director YK Das told PTI.

Zoo at present houses nine tigers between the age of 1.3 years to 14 years. There are three tiger cub siblings of 1.3 years age.

In addition, the animals going for RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction) test include four lions - two asi-

atic and two hybrid, Zoo officials said.

Also, there are eight leopards including one black panther that are undergoing Covid-19 tests.

The Zoo director said that initially 21 felines of Schedule 1 category protected animals under Wildlife Act are undergoing Covid-19 tests and if need be more animals will be included in the list.

He said that so far coronavirus cases have been detected only in categories like lions and tigers but as a precautionary measure, leopards have also been included.

The death of tiger Shiva in state capital Ranchi's Zoo has created fear.

On June 4 a lioness 'Neela' in Tamil Nadu died of coronavirus while nine others in the pride tested

● THE DECISION for mandatory Covid test of felines was taken amid coronavirus scare though 10-year old tiger Shiva, who died Thursday night tested negative in RAT but results of RT-PCR are awaited.

positive for the infection at Arignar Anna Zoological Park at Vandalur.

In May, eight Asiatic lions at a zoo in Hyderabad tested positive for Covid-19 making it the first such case in the country.

Days after reports of the first such case emerged in Hyderabad, a lion at the Etawah Safari Park in Uttar Pradesh had tested positive while another was suspected to have contracted the contagion.

At Ranchi, Shiva's swab

for RT-PCR has been dispatched to IVRI (Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly) to assess if it was infected with coronavirus, officials said.

The big cat's blood test and examination by veterinary experts suggested liver and kidney infection while a four-member veterinary team conducted its post-mortem.

The feline was brought to Ranchi from Bengaluru's Bannerghatta Biological Park in November 2014, officials said.

The Director said that the zoo has been closed but as a precautionary measure all the staff including keepers have undergone Covid-19 tests in addition to all precautions for sanitisation etc.

A high alert was sounded

here after eight Asiatic lions at Hyderabad Park were found infected for the virus.

Officials said after Covid-19 outbreak sanitisation of the park and enclosures are carried out on a daily basis while staff and animal keepers use protective gears in addition to fogging, sanitisation and lime spraying.

Special precautions are being taken for big cats, the officials said, adding footwash with a solution of potassium permanganate is required for the keepers before entering the cages.

Bhagwan Birsa Biological Park, Ranchi, popularly known as Bhagwan Birsa Zoo, Ranchi claims to be one of the most beautiful and progressive zoos in India, having 104 hectare of area of

mildly undulating topography with natural dry deciduous Sal forests & water bodies in and around it.

The park is situated on both the sides of National Highway 33, at about 20 kms from the Ranchi.

The zoo houses about 1,500 wild animals and birds representing 83 different species.

The major breeding species are Himalayan black bear, sloth bear, leopard cat, Royal Bengal tiger, jungle cat, jackal, fox, striped hyena, spotted deer, barking deer, sambar, nilgai, black buck, Indian gaur, hippopotamus, Ganges gharial, emu, ostrich, Indian peafowl and different species of pheasants.

It has an annual footfall of about 8 lakh.

- PTI



SHORT TAKES

ABOUT 100 KILLED IN BURKINA FASO

**Ouagadougou, June 5:** Around 100 civilians were killed in the deadliest attack in Burkina Faso since jihadist violence erupted in the country in 2015, security and local sources said Saturday.

The attack occurred during the night of Friday to Saturday when “armed individuals staged an incursion” into the northern town of Solhan, a security source said. “The toll, which is still provisional, is about about 100 dead, men and woman of different ages”, the source said.

FREE OPPN FIGURE CHAMORRO, U.S. TO NICARAGUA

**Managua, June 5:** The US State Department on Friday called on Nicaragua to free opposition figure Cristiana Chamorro, who is being held incommunicado at her home after her laptops and cell-phones were taken away.

Chamorro is a potential presidential candidate in the November 7 elections and the daughter of former President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. Her detention is the latest in a series of moves by President Daniel Ortega that his critics say are to prevent candidates from running against him.

On Tuesday, the government charged her with money laundering involving alleged financial irregularities related to the Violeta Barrios de Chamorro Foundation for Reconciliation and Democracy.

CYBERCRIME: LATVIAN WOMAN CHARGED IN U.S

**Washington, June 5:** A Latvian woman has been charged with developing malicious software used by a cybercrime digital network that infected computers worldwide and looted bank accounts of millions of dollars, the Justice Department said Friday.

Alla Witte is charged as part of a 47-count indictment with participating in a cybercrime organisation known as the Trickbot Group, which authorities say operated in Russia and several other countries.

The group is accused of infecting millions of computers worldwide with malicious software that targeted hospitals, schools, governments, businesses and other entities.

Witte, who authorities say previously lived in Suriname, was arrested in Miami.

ASEAN ENVOYS MEET MYANMAR JUNTA LEADER

**Bangkok, June 5:** Representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations met with Myanmar's junta leader on Friday, six weeks after an emergency regional summit on the coup in the country drew promises of progress toward a solution but produced no tangible results.

State broadcaster MRTV showed Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing meeting with Brunei Second Foreign Minister Erywan Yusof and Asean Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi, but provided only a broad outline of their discussions.

Earlier this week, an Indonesian diplomat said the delegation's purpose was to seek Myanmar's nod of an Asean special envoy for the crisis, who is yet to be named. He said the choice involved both sides, making progress slow. The meeting received a cool response from Myanmar's opposition shadow government.

CLASH WITH PKK REBELS KILLS 5 IRAQI KURD TROOPS

**Arbil, Iraq, June 5:** Five Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga troops were killed Saturday in a clash with fighters of Turkey's outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a senior Iraqi Kurdish official said. The PKK maintains rear-bases in northern Iraq which have come under renewed assault by Turkish forces since April.

Two peshmerga troops were also wounded in Saturday's clash in the Mount Matin district of Dohuk province, said Serbest Lazkin, deputy minister for peshmerga affairs in Iraqi Kurdistan's autonomous regional government.

The PKK's agenda has often put it at odds with Iraq's autonomous Kurdish government, which has sought to maintain good ties with Ankara. The peshmerga affairs ministry has called on “everyone to respect the borders of Kurdistan and to refrain from endangering its security and stability.”

JOBS REPORT BOLSTERS GOVT SPENDING: BIDEN

**Washington, June 5:** President Joe Biden portrayed the May jobs report as a jumping off point for more spending on infrastructure and education to keep growth going — essentially an argument for his agenda. But the employment numbers issued Friday also hinted at the possible limits of how much government aid can be pumped into the world's largest economy.

“We're on the right track,” Biden said.

“Our plan is working. And we're not going to let up now. We're going to continue to move on. I'm extremely optimistic.”

The May jobs report showed the complexity of restarting the economy after a pandemic shutdown and the mixed signals that can result when an unprecedented surge of government spending flows through the economy.

— AP

Bosnian church razed



Bosnian authorities have demolished a Serbian Orthodox church illegally built on the land owned by a Bosniak woman in Konjic Polje, the village next to Srebrenica in Bosnia, on Saturday, after a 20-year-long legal battle that reached the European Court of Human Rights.

— AP

G7 FMs pledge 15% global corporate tax

Hope to reach final deal at the July gathering of G20 group

**London, June 5:** Finance ministers from wealthy G7 nations on Saturday pledged to commit to a global minimum corporate tax of at least 15 percent, rallying behind a US-backed plan.

“We... commit to a global minimum tax of at least 15 percent on a country by country basis,” said a statement at the conclusion of their London meeting.

The G7 hopes to reach a final agreement at the July gathering of the expanded G20 finance ministers group, it added.

“I'm delighted to announce that G7 finance ministers... have reached a historic agreement to reform the global tax system,” said British finance minister Rishi Sunak, who chaired the two days of talks held in person after an easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

The landmark move is aimed at getting multinationals — especially tech giants — to pay more into government coffers, which have been severely hit during the pandemic.

The talks have prepared the ground for a broader summit of G7 leaders in Cornwall, southwest England, starting Friday.

US President Joe Biden is set to attend next week's summit on his first foreign tour since taking office in January, while later Saturday US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen will hold a press conference following the G7 meeting.

Germany, US laud wealthy nations' tax commitment

**Berlin, June 5:** German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz and US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on Saturday hailed a G7 commitment for a minimum global corporate tax of 15 percent as “very good news for justice and fiscal solidarity.”

“Enterprises can no longer shy away from their fiscal obligations by cunningly transferring their

**GLOBAL MINIMUM** tax would end the race-to-the-bottom in corporate taxation.

**JANET YELLEN,** US Treasury Secretary

profits to countries with opaque tax structures,” he said, calling the move “bad news for tax havens.” Yellen on Saturday hailed

an “unprecedented commitment” by the G7 wealthy nations to achieve a global minimum corporate tax rate of at least 15 percent. “That global minimum tax would end the race-to-the-bottom in corporate taxation,” she said in a statement after the other G7 nations backed US President Joe Biden's plan to get tech giants in particular to pay more.

— AFP

British FM hails historic tax deal

**London, June 5:** Britain's finance minister Rishi Sunak on Saturday hailed a “historic agreement” by G7 finance ministers meeting in London to commit to a global minimum corporate tax of at least 15 percent. “I'm delighted to announce that G7 finance ministers today after years of discussions have reached a historic agreement to reform the global tax system to make it fit for the global digital age,” Sunak said in a video statement.

— AFP

FB WELCOMES G7 MOVE ON TAX

**London, June 5:** Facebook welcomes a G7 pledge to commit to a global minimum corporate tax rate despite the social media giant risking paying more, its vice president of global affairs said Saturday. “We welcome the important progress,” Nick Clegg tweeted after the agreement by the G7 group of wealthy nations.

— AFP

‘Tank Man’ photo vanishes from Bing search engine

**San Francisco, June 5:** Searches for the famous Tiananmen Square “Tank Man” protest photo came up empty on Microsoft search engine Bing on Friday, raising censorship concerns on the anniversary of the deadly crackdown. The award-winning photo from 1989 was not served up in image or video searches using Bing even outside China, a country known for strictly controlling what is available online.

“This is due to an accidental human error and we are actively working to resolve this,” a Microsoft spokesman said in response to an AFP inquiry prompted by US press reports. Meanwhile, searches for Tank Man using Google, which has some 92 percent of the global market for online queries according to Statcounter, turned up an assortment of pictures along with the iconic one by photographer Charlie Cole and others. Google search is not offered in China, where censors have purged Tank Man from the internet. Baidu is the dominant search engine in China.

— AFP



Candlelights lit in the windows of the Consulate General of the US in Hong Kong, Friday, to mark the 32nd anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown in Beijing. A member of the committee that organises Hong Kong's annual candlelight vigil for the victims of the crackdown was arrested early Friday.

— AP

Tiananmen candles: China blasts US, EU

**Hong Kong, June 5:** China on Saturday berated the US and EU consulates in Hong Kong for displaying candles to commemorate the June 4 Tiananmen crackdown, slamming it as a “clumsy political show.” Candles were seen lit in the windows of the US consulate building, which is next to the residence

of Hong Kong's Beijing-appointed leader Carrie Lam, and the European Union's office. “Any attempt to exploit Hong Kong to carry out infiltration or sabotage activities against the mainland ... is absolutely intolerable,” a spokesperson for the Hong Kong office of China's foreign ministry said.

— AFP

FATF APG retains Pak on ‘enhanced follow-up’ status

**Islamabad, June 5:** The Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering has retained Pakistan, on “enhanced follow-up” status for outstanding requirements, and Islamabad will continue to report back to it on the country's progress to strengthen its implementation of anti-money laundering and combating financing terror measures, according to a media report on Saturday.

Pakistan was put on the grey list by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in June 2018 and the country has been struggling to come out of it. The Asia Pacific Group (APG) is a regional affiliate of the FATF. The second Follow-Up Report (FUR) on Mutual Evaluation of Pakistan released by the APG also downgraded the country on one criteria. The report said Pakistan was re-rated to ‘compliant’ status on five counts and on 15 others to ‘largely compliant’ and on yet another count to ‘partially compliant’.

money laundering and combating financing terror (AML/CFT) measures,” the APG said.

Pakistan submitted its third progress report in February 2021 which is yet to be evaluated. “Overall, Pakistan has made notable progress in addressing the technical compliance deficiencies identified in its Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) and has been re-rated on 22 recommendations,” the APG added.

In the first FUR of February last year, Pakistan's progress was largely found unchanged — non-compliant on four counts, partially compliant on 25 counts and largely compliant on nine recommendations. Since then, the government worked aggressively and improved its effectiveness on the AML/CFT system.

Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar, who is also head of the task force on FATF, welcomed the re-rating, saying the results proved the sincerity along with resolve of the government in complying with the FATF requirements. FATF's Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) of jurisdictions is assessed in two domains — technical compliance or legal instruments (40 FATF recommendations) and demonstration of effectiveness (11 immediate outcomes). Pakistan's MER was adopted in October 2019 in which the country was rated compliant and largely compliant in 10 out of 40 recommendations. After adoption of MER, Pakistan was placed under post-observation period by the FATF, which expired in February this year. During the said period, Pakistan carried out major legal reforms with the enactment of 14 federal laws and three provincial laws.

— PTI

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— PTI

NIGERIA SUSPENDS TWITTER AS PREZ TWEET DELETED

**Lagos, June 5:** Nigeria's government said Friday it was suspending Twitter indefinitely in Africa's most populous nation, a day after the company deleted a controversial tweet President Muhammadu Buhari made about a secessionist movement.

It was not immediately clear when the suspension would go into effect as users could still access Twitter. Many said they would use VPNs to maintain access to the platform. Others mocked the government for using the platform to announce the action. “You're using Twitter to suspend Twitter? Are you not mad?” one user tweeted.

— AP

Zawahiri in Af-Pak border area, alive but too frail: UN

**United Nations, June 5:** A significant part of the Al-Qaeda leadership resides in the Afghanistan and Pakistan border region, including the group's elusive leader Aiman al-Zawahiri, who is probably alive but too frail to be featured in propaganda, according to a United Nations report.

The report, issued on Friday, said that large numbers of Al-Qaeda fighters and other foreign extremist elements aligned with the Taliban are located in various parts of Afghanistan. Member states reported that a significant part of Al-Qaeda leadership remains based in the border

region of Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the core is joined by and works closely with Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, the twelfth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team said.

Al-Qaeda leader Aiman Muhammad Rabi al-Zawahiri, is believed to be located somewhere in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Previous reports of his death due to ill health have not been confirmed. “One member state reports that he is probably alive but too frail to be featured in propaganda, the report said, without identifying the country.

It said Al-Qaeda's strategy in the near term is assessed as maintaining its traditional safe haven in Afghanistan for the Al-Qaeda core leadership. The Monitoring Team noted assessments that have suggested a longer-term Al-Qaeda core strategy of “strategic patience for a period of time before it would seek to plan attacks against international targets again”.

This scenario is untested against stated Taliban commitments to prohibit such activities.

Al-Qaeda is reported to number in the range of several dozen to 500 persons.

— PTI

Calif. assault weapon ban overturned

**Los Angeles June 5:** A US judge overturned California's three-decade-old ban on assault weapons Friday in a move swiftly condemned by the state's governor Gavin Newsom as gun-related homicides surge across America.

In a 94-page decision, federal Judge Roger T. Benitez described California's assault weapons ban — in place in 1989 — as unconstitutional and defended the right of Americans to own semi-automatic rifles.

“Like the Swiss Army

Knife, the popular AR-15 rifle is a perfect combination of home defence weapon and homeland defence equipment,” he wrote.

“Guns and ammunition in the hands of criminals, tyrants and terrorists are dangerous; guns in the hands of lawabiding responsible citizens are better,” he argued.

Benitez said he would give the state 30 days to appeal the decision, which Governor Newsom said posed a “direct threat to public safety” and which he vowed to challenge.

“We're not backing down from this fight, and we'll continue pushing for common sense gun laws that will save lives,” he said in a statement.

The decision comes as gun violence surges across the United States — and just over a week after a disgruntled, heavily-armed California public transit worker shot and killed nine people.

A search this week of the shooter's home — which was set ablaze shortly

before the attack — turned up 12 guns, around 22,000 rounds of ammunition and suspected Molotov cocktails. Mass shootings have also taken place in Florida, Indiana, California, Colorado and Georgia, in a surge in violence that President Joe Biden has branded an “epidemic.”

The US Supreme Court is also due to hear a challenge backed by the gun lobby to a New York law that restricts the carrying of firearms outside the home.

— AFP

CRYPTO | HOTSPOT

It was moved out of LA due to Covid curbs

Miami hosts huge bitcoin event

**Miami, June 5:** Thousands of people have descended on Miami for a massive two-day bitcoin conference that opened Friday — a sign that the US city, in the midst of a tech boom, is hoping to become the next cryptocurrency hub. “I don't think there's anything more important in my lifetime to work on” than bitcoin, given the flexibility it offers, billionaire entrepreneur Jack Dorsey, the co-founder of Twitter and payments firm Square, told a crowd

ed auditorium.

“We don't need the financial institutions that we have today. We have one that is thriving, that is sound, that is owned by the community, that is driven by the community,” said Dorsey, one of the keynote speakers at Bitcoin 2021.

Dorsey tweeted Friday that Square was considering making a hardware wallet for safely storing bitcoin. With 12,000 participants and all speaker sessions sold out, the Bitcoin

2021 trade show features exhibits from crypto mining companies, crypto traders and bitcoin exchange networks.

The conference was originally scheduled to take place in Los Angeles, but was moved due to tougher Coronavirus restrictions in California.

The line to get into the Mana Convention Center in Miami's trendy Wynwood neighborhood wrapped around the building. Everyone was in high spirits and there were no face

masks to be seen.

Beyond Dorsey, two of the other speakers were Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss, twin Harvard classmates of Mark Zuckerberg who sued him over claims he stole the idea for Facebook from them, and now run cryptocurrency exchange Gemini.

“We think bitcoin is gold 2.0,” Tyler said at a panel discussion. “When we get to Mars, what is the currency going to be in Mars? Dollars? No. Bitcoin.”

— AFP



## DECCAN Chronicle

6 JUNE 2021



Shashi Warriar

Off the beaten track

## The joys, perils and disasters of cooking

Some years ago, my wife and I shifted to our present house near the beach. It's some distance from Mangalore city, and we had trouble finding domestic help from the day we moved in here: we had to fend for ourselves, and we began to share household chores. As a result, I started learning to cook, something I'd put off for a quarter-century. I have since learned to fend for myself, and even enjoy cooking sometimes, to the extent that my wife can take a month-long holiday, leaving me to take care of the house and our pets.

But this is the story of why I put off learning to cook.

The year was 1989, the place Melbourne. I was unmarried, and had a small flat a few hundred metres from the beach, and, being a programmer, worked from home. That meant, unfortunately, that I also ate at home. Given a kitchen, I could produce only tea (bags please), coffee (instant), boiled eggs, and, after I learned to use a knife without cutting off a finger or two, rudimentary salads.

I struck up an acquaintanceship with a neighbour, a Greek called George. Over the weeks, he became my friend, guide, and confidant. And so, when I confessed to him a month after we met that I often missed spicy Indian food, he told me of the only Indian restaurant he knew: one in Flinders Street run by ISKCON. I had lunch there next afternoon, and discovered that its food was Indian but bland, being intended for Australian palates.

George then took me to a suburb called Dingley, and a warehouse full of foods from all over the subcontinent. So I stocked up on rice and spices from Punjab and coconut oil from Sri Lanka and papad — pappadam, actually — from Kerala. And, one day shortly after, decided to try my hand at cooking lunch. Being a lover of pappadam in all forms, I thought I'd start with deep-frying some.

I'd never done it before, but I'd seen my mother at it often. She used to heat oil in a wok, drop a pappadam into the oil, wait for it to cook, and fish it out with what was called in Malayalam a pappadam-stick, a stiff wire with a point at one end and a bulb-shaped wooden handle at the other.

I didn't have a pappadam-stick, but a barbecue skewer instead, a stiff wire with a point at one end and a ring at the other. The first pappadam came out fine, and as I ate it I dropped the next in the oil, and then the next. Just when I was done with the third, though, the phone rang, and I went to answer it, leaving the skewer in the oil.

I came back to the kitchen after a twenty-minute chat with a client, thinking I'd continue with the pappadams, and picked up the skewer, burning my finger and thumb. With a loud yell of pain, I dropped the skewer on my foot, and, naturally, let out another, louder yell. So when George, who heard the second yell, came running to investigate, he found me nursing small burns on my finger and thumb, and a three-inch-long one on my right foot. The burns on the hand were minor, but the one on the foot looked nasty: nasty enough for George to insist that I went to a doctor.

The doctor, who, like all doctors, had no qualms about prying into the private lives of his patients, asked how I got the burn. When I told him, he managed to disguise his laughter as a cough. But when I was leaving, he grinned, telling me that I'd made his day.

A few weeks later, I felt a strong urge to eat meat, cooked Indian-style. I called up a Malayali friend, got a recipe and some recommendations on what kind of meat to buy at the supermarket: go for the best, and since it lasts in the freezer, buy a large cut. That evening, I bought a two-kilo chunk of meat along with my regular groceries. George popped in to invite me home as I was putting away my purchases, so I put the meat in the freezer and went over to his place.

Next morning I took the meat out, thinking I'd cut off a bit to cook for lunch: my Malayali friend had instructed not to thaw meat out and put it back in the freezer without cooking it, and I didn't have a cooking pot big enough to hold all the meat I'd bought. That was when I discovered how hard frozen meat gets. None of the knives in the kitchen made the slightest impression on it. By now it had become a matter of honour (how could a frozen lump of meat get the better of *me*?) so I cleaned a chisel and tried to hammer a little lump off the big lump. The handle broke at the third blow. I considered borrowing George's chainsaw to cut it but gave up the idea because George was out.

That left me no choice. I thawed out the whole lump of meat and cooked it in two rounds. Both rounds tasted terrible. I ate all of it because, like I said, it had become a matter of honour. And, honour intact, I decided to give up cooking, a decision I reversed only a quarter-century afterwards. Now that I'm old and my honour is in tatters anyway, here's some advice for bachelors: learn to cook. It's a useful skill, and if you're willing to forgive yourself a few mistakes, it can be a lot of fun.

And when you buy a large lump of meat, cut it up before you put it in the freezer!

*Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.*

Subhani



## Acche Din: No one ever said it would be this hard



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

The NDA/BJP government's seven years tenure has been underpinned by a hodgepodge of grandiloquent pronouncements. If one were to obtusely believe the NDA/BJP then India has eradicated the scourge of a parallel economy post demonetisation. Is now "Atmanirbhar" courtesy a new wave of production by the domestic industries that has put an end to excessive foreign dependence. All the "wolf warriors" of the Chinese have been exterminated and the war against the Covid-19 pandemic was won in January 2021 itself in Davos.

### ECONOMY

The Indian economy has tanked to its worst performing levels. Even pre-pandemic growth had halved to four per cent in 2019-20. In 2013-14, the size of the Indian economy was 1.86 trillion dollars. In 2020-21 it stands at 1.85 trillion dollars. By way of comparison China is a 16.64 trillion economy. All the fundamentals namely savings, consumption investment and employment are severely stressed. The unemployment rate is at a 45-year high. Per capita income is expected to dip by an unprecedented 5.4 per cent, from 1.34 lakh in the previous year to 1.27 lakh in the current year. The Cumulative Fiscal Deficit of the Union government for 2019-20/21 is 33.55 lakh crores. With seven of the largest PSUs being valued below par and put on the chopping block, the government now plans to sell the family silver to bridge an unparalleled deficit budget.

It has now become clear how completely hollow all the tall claims of Atmanirbhar were. India now ignominiously depends on foreign assistance to surmount health emergencies. We have even accepted food aid from Kenya. One can but help recall that even in the wake of a cataclysmic tsunami in 2004 Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh refused to accept any

foreign relief.

### INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Erosion of institutional integrity has been the hallmark of the NDA/BJP government. From the CBI and the Election Commission to the Reserve Bank of India and even the higher judiciary, all face a crisis of credibility further widening the state-citizen trust deficit. The worst sufferer of this has been the temple of Indian democracy — India's Parliament. No Indian Prime Minister has ignored Parliament so contemptuously as Prime Minister Modi has.

In order to circumvent Parliament, the NDA/BJP government has often followed the ordinance route. In its seven years the current government has pushed more ordinances than any other government in a five-year term since 1952. Even the number of bills that have been referred to parliamentary committees have shrunk dramatically with zero bills being recommended in 2020. If that was not enough, government found egregious ways of further undermining the remit of Parliament by "classifying" key pieces of legislation as money bills.

All this while the government wallows in quantifying parliament productivity by passing several bills in a single day. What value do these quantifications hold when the essence of democracy, i.e. serious deliberations discussions and questioning of the government on key issues has been severely proscribed.

### SOCIAL COHESION

During the seven years in power the NDA/BJP government has turned the idea of India on its head. This government does not believe in the founding values of the Indian state and has used all means necessary to create a majoritarian ethos.

It started with an assault on the freedom to eat, to dress as you like, to think, to express and most importantly the freedom to live

your life without fear or intimidation. With extortionate amount of money being funnelled into building false storylines fundamental freedoms have been systematically subverted.

The anti-CAA protests showed that a small but determined group can speak truth to power. The Prime Minister's silence on the subsequent Delhi Riots was deafening. When the three farm laws pushed agriculture into the free market without even an iota of concern for the small and marginal farmer the world is witness to the largest and longest peaceful agitation by the farmers.

Throughout the past seven years the government has used all means necessary to rupture the federal structure of the country. A total of nine state governments have been brought down by the BJP using unethical means. By destabilising states ruled by Opposition parties the BJP has time and again demonstrated contempt for the people's mandate. States have been left to fend for themselves in times of national crises. The recent vaccination fiasco being a striking example.

For the Modi government it is cooperative federalism on paper and a non-operative federalism in reality.

### INTERNAL SECURITY

This government had projected itself to be a strong decision-making government, which would accord national security number one priority. But in terms of action the nation has not seen anything substantive. The Naga Accord, is in the doldrums and one knows if it exists or has vanished.

Left-wing extremism has grown by leaps and bounds. Maoism and militancy, besides claiming lives of our jawans is also eating into the finances of the country. Mob lynchings and anti-religious conversion laws have attacked the very fundamental of the rights of citizens. Even the abrogation of Article 370 has had little positive impact on Jammu

**The worst sufferer of this has been India's Parliament. No Indian Prime Minister has ignored Parliament so contemptuously as Prime Minister Modi has.**

& Kashmir whilst institutionalising a sense of alienation and fear. Overall the government struggled to come to terms with domestic insurgencies, modernising the military and deterring potential threats from Pakistan and China.

### EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The NDA/BJP government's cynical use of foreign policy as an exercise in personal brand building has had catastrophic consequences for the nation. At the time of writing this article the Chinese haven't vacated illegally occupied Indian territory in Eastern Ladakh. Any hope of return to status quo ante seems beyond the capacity of the current dispensation now that India has given up its tactical advantage on the Kailash heights. The spirits of Wuhan and Mamallapuram are long dead — a consequence of foreign policy becoming individual centric and being run in an ad-hoc manner rather than based on any strategic coherence.

The government's dealing with Pakistan in the last seven years has been characterised by U-turns, flip-flops and somersaults. This has precluded any possibility of a nuanced engagement with Islamabad. With India's rankings across several global indices falling severely, the MEA has gone over the top with the narrative of "interference in the internal democratic processes", conveniently overlooking that our head of the government had once canvassed for Donald Trump "abki baar Trump sarkar".

It is evident that the NDA government has failed in maintaining a balance between the United States, Russia, China and the European Union with foreign policy focussing on Modi first and India later.

The last seven years has unfortunately been a cacophony of mendacities. The NDA/BJP government has failed the people of India. The fantasy of "Acche Din" stands eviscerated. Today this country is humming an old Hindi melody albeit under its breath — *Koi Laut De Mera Beeta Hua Din*.

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

## LETTERS

### HOSPITAL RATES

The nation is indebted to doctors for the yeoman service being rendered to Covid-19 patients sometimes putting their own lives at risk. The public anger against doctors is misplaced (*Hospital refunds money to patient, testing time for people as labs fleece Covid hit, DC, June 5*).

**Udatha Rama Chandra Rao**  
Yeleswaram, East Godavari

### ETALA SAGA

Etala Rajendar's exit from the TRS was on the cards ever since the land-grab scam got exposed. The former leader who fell from grace is now calling Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and Co. all names. Strangely, in retaliation the TRS leaders are also making wild allegations against Rajendar, forgetting the fact that they are in power since 2014.

**Govardhana Myneedu**  
Vijayawada

### SAD DEMISE

It is very sad to read the demise of the champion of Telugu short stories, recipient of Kendra Sahitya Academy Award, Kalipatnam Rama Rao in Srikakulam (*Literary luminary 'KaRa Mastaru' dies at 97, DC, June 5*). His thought-provoking stories had always reflected complex human relations in life. His brainchild, Kathanilayam library, the one-stop centre for Telugu stories, is a standing testimony to his contribution.

**Dr C. Ghanshyam**  
Visakhapatnam

### FUEL PRICES

People are absolutely wary of fuel prices (*Petrol crosses ₹100-mark across the state, except Vizag, DC, June 5*). During Covid-19 days, they have understood the Centre's myopia in dealing with their daily problems. Be exodus of guest workers or non-availability of Covid beds, oxygen or disposal of dead bodies, the government is least bothered about petrol prices.

**K. Nehru Patnaik**  
Visakhapatnam

### GRADING CLASS XII

The government could consider best of Class XI marks and average of Class X and XI marks when grading Class XII students. In schools or junior colleges where online classes and periodic internal assessments did take place, 50 per cent weightage can be given to internal assessment scores and 50 per cent to the earlier option. Those who are not satisfied with these two options can be given the choice to appear in a proctored online assessment at home or physical assessment.

**Narendra Agrawal**  
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

### Bail petition for Thakur rejected

HYDERABAD, JUNE 5.

The Sixth City Magistrate, Mr. Y. Venkateswara Rao, today rejected the bail application of Thakur V. Hari Prasad, Honorary Secretary of A.P. Welfare Fund, who was arrested and remanded to judicial custody for 15 days.

The bail application of Diwakar Shetty, joint secretary of Kanna Natya Ranga, who was also arrested and remanded to judicial custody for 15 days, was also rejected.

Thakur Hari Prasad was arrested on June 2 on charges of cheating misappropriation and falsification of accounts and remanded to judicial custody yesterday.

Arieh Kovler



## Naftali Bennett: The millionaire who might be Israel's next PM

In April 2019, Naftali Bennett received an unpleasant surprise. As the votes were counted in Israel's general election, it became clear that his New Right party had not passed the 3.25 per cent electoral threshold needed to stay in the Knesset, Israel's parliament. Mr Bennett lost his seat, his new party failed and his political career seemed over.

Two years, three more elections and a global pandemic later, Mr Bennett is on the verge of ending Benjamin Netanyahu's 12-year rule. Barring a spectacular reversal, he may become Israel's Prime Minister. He has found himself in the right place at the right time, heading (though not leading) an eclectic coalition of parties from the left, right and centre. He will be forming a national unity government with Yair Lapid, leader of the centrist Yesh Atid party. Mr Netanyahu was once Mr Bennett's mentor and patron; now he's about to be replaced by him.

Born in Haifa to American immi-

grant parents, Mr Bennett, 49, grew up in an observant Jewish household. He wears a kippah, a Jewish skullcap, which stays on his bald head as if by magic. In its 73-year history, Israel has never had an observant Jew as PM.

Mr Bennett was a member of an elite IDF Special Forces unit. In his time in the Maglan Reconnaissance Unit 212, he served behind enemy lines in the 1996 escalation between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon known as "Operation Grapes of Wrath", hunting Hezbollah teams firing rockets into Israel. After military service, Mr Bennett went into tech and became a multimillionaire when his venture was acquired by a security company.

In a sense, Mr Bennett represents the modern Israeli dream: launch a startup after your military service, build it up and get a big "exit" when the company is bought. The usual next step would be to become a serial entrepreneur or venture capitalist. Mr Bennett chose a different path. He became chief of staff to

then Opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

The two were once close. Mr Bennett's autobiography has a chapter praising Mr Netanyahu — but he departed suddenly in 2008. Persistent rumours claimed he had a dramatic falling-out with Mr Netanyahu's influential wife, Sara. The precise details, however, were always kept private.

During his time with Mr Netanyahu, Bennett made his most enduring political alliance with the young right-winger Ayelet Shaked, who served as Mr Netanyahu's office director from 2006 to 2008. They made an unlikely pair: a moderately religious man and secular woman. But they shared a vision of a younger, fresher right-wing politics that could bridge the secular-religious divide that permeates Israeli society.

They also both saw themselves as future PMs. Together, they quit Mr Netanyahu's Likud and took over Israel's moribund National Religious

party, rebranding it as "Jewish Home".

One of Mr Bennett's more eye-catching policies was the "Bennett Plan" for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It involved annexing the majority of the West Bank, including all Israeli settlements, leaving the Palestinian towns in permanent limbo. His plan was attacked by the Israeli left and was also controversial on the right as it wasn't full annexation. Donald Trump's 2020 peace plan was very similar to the Bennett Plan.

When the 2013 polling day came, he flopped. This was pattern for Mr Bennett: high expectations and a strong showing in opinion polls, followed by disappointing results.

In the years that followed, Mr Bennett and Mr Netanyahu clashed during various coalition governments. Eventually, when a new election was called in 2019, Mr Bennett and Ms Shaked quit Jewish Home to form a right-wing secular-religious party

called New Right, positioned right of Likud.

Mr Bennett insisted lead this rainbow coalition of nationalists, left-wingers and Arabs. Mr Lapid agreed to allow Mr Bennett to be PM for two years. After that, Mr Lapid in theory will replace Mr Bennett. But Mr Lapid is wise enough to know two years is a lifetime in politics, specially Israeli politics. Still, who knows for sure if this government will ever really take charge? The pressure placed on Mr Bennett and his colleagues by Mr Netanyahu and his supporters is immense. There are protests at his home chanting "traitor", even death threats. If it comes to power, the coalition will be Israel's broadest so far. It will have just a one-seat majority in the Knesset.

Mr Bennett could be in the Prime Minister's chair within days. The question is for how long.

*By arrangement with the Spectator*



SHORT TAKES

### FLOODS AND MUDSLIDES KILL 6 IN SRI LANKA

Colombo, June 5: Flash floods and mudslides triggered by heavy rains in Sri Lanka have killed at least six people and left five missing, while more than 5,000 are displaced, officials said Saturday.

Rains have been pounding six districts of the Indian Ocean island nation since Thursday night, and many houses, paddy fields and roads have been inundated, blocking traffic.

Four people died in floods while another two lost their lives in mudslides, according to the government's Disaster Management Center. Another five people are missing in floods and mudslides.

A mound of earth crashed onto a house and buried four members of the same family.

### FLIGHT DIVERTED DUE TO UNRULY PASSENGER

Albuquerque, June 5: A flight from Los Angeles to Nashville was diverted to New Mexico on Friday afternoon after a passenger tried to break into the cockpit, Delta Air Lines said.

The unruly man made the unsuccessful attempt on the locked cockpit aboard Delta Air Lines Flight 386 but other passengers and crew managed to detain him, the airline said.

Video taken aboard the plane shows the zip-tied and shoeless man surrounded by passengers and crew members as he repeats over and over again: "Stop this plane!" He finally was picked up and hauled to the back of the plane, which was diverted to Albuquerque International Support.

### BIDEN AIMS TO RESTORE SPECIES PROTECTIONS

Washington, June 5: The Biden administration said Friday it is cancelling or reviewing a host of actions by the Trump administration to roll back protections for endangered or threatened species, with a goal of strengthening a landmark law while addressing climate change.

The reviews by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service are aimed at five Endangered Species Act regulations finalized by the Trump administration, including critical habitat designations and rules defining the scope of federal actions on endangered species.

The Fish and Wildlife Service also said it will reinstate the so-called blanket rule, which mandates additional protections for species that are newly classified as threatened.

### BOMB-SNIFFING RAT RETIRES IN CAMBODIA

Phnom Penh, June 5: A giant African pouched rat called Magawa who spent years sniffing out landmines in the Cambodian countryside has stopped working and will enjoy a well-earned retirement eating bananas and peanuts, his employers said. Magawa, originally from Tanzania, was trained by the Belgian charity APOPO which says the rodent helped clear mines from 225,000 square metres of land in his five-year career, the equivalent of 42 football pitches.

But after detecting 71 landmines and 38 items of unexploded ordnance "he is getting a bit tired", Michael Heiman, the charity's programme manager in Cambodia, said on Saturday. "The best thing to do is to retire him."

### MEXICO MINE COLLAPSE LEAVES SEVEN TRAPPED

Mzquiz, Mexico, June 5: Rescuers were trying Friday to free seven mine workers trapped after an accident in a coal-producing region in northern Mexico, authorities said.

Initial investigations suggest the collapse was due to a flood at the mine in the municipality of Muzquiz, the state of Coahuila's labor department said.

"Some people who were working were trapped inside the mine," it said in a statement.

Police and civil protection authorities were at the scene for the rescue effort, it added.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he had sent personnel from the security, labour and civil protection ministries to the area.

"We are watching and in coordination with municipal and state authorities," he tweeted.

"We hope that the rescue is favorable for the families and for everyone."

# UK's highest daily cases in 60 days

The govt says it is considering options around a planned end to the lockdown on June 21

London, June 5: The United Kingdom government on Saturday said it is considering "options" around a planned end to lockdown on June 21 after the country recorded the highest number of daily Covid-19 cases in just over two months.

The UK recorded a further 6,238 Coronavirus cases on Friday as England's R number, or the rate of infection, continues to rise and the latest government numbers also show another 11 Covid-19 related deaths. "Of course officials are drawing up other options but we are still expecting to be in a place to go ahead on June 21," a UK government figure told *Sky News*.

Options under discussion are said to include retaining the wearing of masks in certain settings and continuing the work from home advice, even as the hospitality sector opens up. However, the government maintains that there is "nothing in the data" to suggest ending lockdown should be delayed.

The number of Covid-19 cases in the country is now at its highest since March 25, when 6,397 were recorded, and the spike is largely down to the Delta variant — or the highly transmissible B.1.617.2 variant of concern (VOC) first detected in India. UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock said that a rise of cases was to be expected as the country came out of lockdown.

"We always expected cases to rise as the country was opened up, the critical thing is the impact on the number of people who end up in hospital for any given number of cases," said Hancock. "That link has been broken by the vaccine, but it hasn't been completely severed yet. That's one of the things that we're watching very carefully, and it's too early to say what the decision will be ahead of June 21, but we'll make sure people know in good time," he said.

The National Health Service (NHS) said it has seen a huge jump in the number of people coming forward for a Covid jab since launching its plan to tackle vaccine hesitancy. There has been an increase of more than a fifth among adults under 45 who would definitely get their vaccine according to



Afghan doctors check a Covid-19 patient's files at the Afghan-Japan Communicable Disease Hospital in Kabul, on Sunday. Afghanistan is battling a third wave of infections, while health officials plead for vaccines, expressing deep frustration at the inequities of the global vaccine distribution. — AP

## US, India, China account for 60% of vax distributed globally: WHO

United Nations, June 5: Of the two billion Covid-19 vaccine doses distributed globally till now, about 60 per cent have gone to just three countries — the US, India and China, a senior adviser at the World Health Organisation said.

Senior Advisor to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Bruce Aylward made the comments at a press briefing on Friday.

This week, we will see over two billion doses we will probably pass the two billion doses landmark in terms of the number of doses of the vaccines and new Covid vaccines that have actually been developed. These have been distributed now in over 212 countries, Aylward said.

If we look at that two billion doses, over 75 per cent of it has gone to just 10 countries. And in fact three countries — China, the US and India — account for about 60 per cent of those doses, he said.

He said while COVAX has played an important role in distributing the Covid-19 doses to 127 countries and getting several countries to start their vaccination drives, the challenge is in the access to the vaccines.

He said the 60 per cent of the two billion doses that have gone to China, India and the US are all domestically procured and used.

Aylward noted that at the other end of the spectrum, only about 0.5 per cent of doses globally have gone to the lowest income countries that account for about 10 per cent of the world's population.

And even if we look at the lower middle income countries, it's only fractionally higher than that in terms of the coverage that we're getting. So we're increasingly seeing a two-track recovery and rollout of the vaccines, he said.

While there is high vaccine coverage deep into the high risk populations and younger populations in high income countries, we are still struggling to get sufficient product just

to be able to vaccinate the health care workers, older populations in low income countries who are really the key to getting out of the health, societal and economic crisis that we are in the midst of.

Aylward said about 80 million doses have been distributed through COVAX so far and the global alliance for equitable vaccine distribution is about 200 million doses behind where it should be due to the disruption in COVAX supplies as a result of the devastating second wave in India.

The problem now is the supplies are being interrupted.

## Germany removes Italy, Czech from risk area list

Berlin, June 5: Germany is removing Italy, the Czech Republic and much of Austria from its list of "risk areas", meaning most remaining travel restrictions will ease.

The change of status announced by Germany's disease control centre, the Robert Koch Institute, takes effect on Sunday.

Austria is being removed with the exception of its two westernmost provinces, Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

● AUSTRIA IS being removed with the exception of its two western-most provinces, Tyrol and Vorarlberg. Some parts of Croatia and of Switzerland, including Zurich and Basel, are also dropped.

Some parts of Croatia and of Switzerland, including Zurich and Basel, are also dropped.

Countries classified as "virus variant areas" — Germany's highest risk category — must quarantine for 14 days.

Travel is restricted to German citizens and residents.

Britain remained the only European country in that category on the list published Friday.

It also includes India, Nepal, Brazil and the addition of Uruguay

a new study, which surveyed 16,610 people from a nationally representative sample. According to the findings, 63 per cent would definitely get the jab, with a further 21 per cent likely to accept.

Anyone aged 30 and above is now eligible for a vaccine and the NHS said more than half of people in their thirties have already been jabbed.

## Cruise ships back in Venice

Venice, June 5: The first cruise ship leaving Venice since the pandemic is set to depart Saturday amid protests by activists demanding that the ship be rerouted out the fragile lagoon, especially Giudecca Canal through the city's historic centre.

They say the enormous vessels — weighing over 90,000 tons and carrying thousands of passengers at a time — pose environmental and safety risks to the canal and the city. Another protest is also planned Saturday by pro-cruise activists whose jobs depend on having thousands of visitors flowing through one of Italy's top tourist destinations. Italian Premier Mario Draghi's government pledged this winter to get cruise ships out of the Venice lagoon, but it

will likely take years to reach that goal. The government says it is organizing bids for a viable alternative outside the lagoon, which should be posted any day now. Still, even an interim alternative route to the Giudecca Canal won't be ready until next year, Italy's Ministry for Infrastructure and Sustainable Mobility told The Associated Press in an email. "Meanwhile, in 2022, as a temporary solution, a certain number of ships can dock in Marghera, relieving the traffic through Venice," the ministry said. Marghera, an industrial port west of Venice that is still within the lagoon, will require lengthening existing piers to accommodate larger vessels as well as dredging a canal on the approach, cruise

## 2L vax from India in use: UN

United Nations, June 5: The 200,000 Covid-19 vaccines gifted by India for all UN peacekeepers are "already being put to use" and a number of these Blue Helmets have already been vaccinated, spokesperson for UN chief Antonio Guterres has said.

"The Indian Government...had offered us...200,000 doses...And a number of peacekeepers are already, as far as I know, being vaccinated," Stephanie Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, told reporters at the daily press briefing Friday in response to a question on vaccination of UN peacekeepers. "So, on the Indian vaccines, those,

which I think were... AstraZeneca, those were 200,000. They're already being put to use," he said.

India, one of the largest troop-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions, gifted 200,000 doses of Covid-19 vaccines for UN peacekeepers across all UN missions. As of March 31 this year, there are 87,889 personnel serving in 12 peacekeeping operations around the world. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had announced in February that India will gift vaccine doses for UN peacekeepers. "Keeping in mind the UN Peacekeepers who operate in such difficult circumstances, we would like

to announce today a gift of 200,000 doses for them," Jaishankar had said while addressing the UN Security Council open debate on the implementation of resolution 2532 (2020) on the cessation of hostilities in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Quoting the *Bhagavad Gita*, Jaishankar had said "Do your work with the welfare of others always in mind."

The 200,000 doses essentially meant that it would be possible to administer the required double doses of Covid vaccines to all UN peacekeepers across missions.

The AstraZeneca vaccines had left Mumbai via

### GOP: OPENING TO REVIVE FAUCI ATTACKS IN EMAIL TROVE

Washington, June 5: Dr Anthony Fauci has been a political lightning rod since the early days of the pandemic, lionised by the left as a beacon of truth in an administration that badly mismanaged the pandemic and villainised by the right as a misguided, spotlight-seeking bureaucrat seeking to undermine former President Donald Trump.

But with the release of a trove of Fauci's emails this week, Republicans' attacks on the nation's top government infectious-diseases expert have gone into overdrive. On conservative news channels, Fauci — who now serves as President Joe Biden's pandemic adviser — has been pilloried as a liar who misled the American people about the origins of the deadly Covid-19 to protect the Chinese government.

### U.S.' \$57MN AID TO TREAT TB IN SEVEN NATIONS

Washington, June 5: The United States on Friday announced a \$57 million aid for efforts against tuberculosis in seven high-burden countries, including India. Other countries for which the aid is being given are Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Africa, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

Designed in collaboration with partner governments, the initiative will provide a foundation to the high-burden countries to recover the ground lost due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a media release said. In the 23 countries where the US Agency for International Development (USAID) focuses, one million fewer people had access to tuberculosis (TB) diagnosis and treatment in 2020 than in 2019 due to Covid-19 and measures to control it.

The USAID said alongside Covid-19, TB is the leading infectious disease killer, particularly in low and middle-income countries, sickening 10 million people and taking 1.4 million lives every year.

### INDIA, CHINA CAN SOLVE THEIR OWN ISSUES: PUTIN

St. Petersburg, June 5: Asserting that both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping are "very responsible" leaders, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday said they both are capable of solving Sino-India issues, and cautioned against any interference from "extra-regional power" in the process. With Russia publicly critical of the Quad, the four-nation grouping of India, the US, Japan and Australia, Putin also said that though it was not up to Moscow to assess how any nation should participate in an initiative and to what extent they should build their relations with other countries but no partnership should be aimed at making friends against anyone.

The Russian President's remarks, in response to a question on Moscow's view on Quad as well as India's participation in the grouping, were a veiled reference to the Chinese claim that the grouping is to contain Beijing's influence in the strategic Indo-Pacific region.

He also asserted that there were no "contradictions" in Russia's partnership with India and the ties between Moscow and Beijing.

"Yes, I do know that there are some issues related to India China relations but there are always a lot of issues between neighbouring countries but I know the attitude of both the Prime Minister of India and also the President of China. These are very responsible people and they earnestly treat one another with utmost respect and I believe that they will always arrive at a solution to any issue that they might face.

### SARKOZY PROBE: 'PAPARAZZI QUEEN' IN FRANCE CHARGED

Paris, June 5: A major figure in France's paparazzi world has been charged with witness tampering in a case involving former President Nicolas Sarkozy, her lawyer said Saturday.

Mimi Marchand, who runs the BestImage agency, had also been charged with criminal association, said lawyer Caroline Toby.

"She firmly denies the charges against her," she added.

Marchand was arrested on Thursday along with several other suspects on the orders of magistrates investigating alleged corruption by Sarkozy, who has been accused of taking money from former Libyan dictator Moamer Kadhafi. Sarkozy denies the charges.

Francois de Labarre, a journalist from Paris Match who was also arrested Thursday, was released without charge later the same day.

Marchand and de Labarre were instrumental in organising an interview in November with one of the main witnesses against Sarkozy, Ziad Takieddine, in which he withdrew his allegations against the former head of state.

## Crunch vote for Israel coalition

Jerusalem, June 5: The speaker of the Israeli parliament will formally notify lawmakers Monday of the opposition's announcement of a coalition to unseat veteran premier Benjamin Netanyahu, his office said.

The notification will set in motion preparations for a confidence vote in the new government, which will now likely be held on Wednesday or the following Monday, Israeli media said.

The late Friday announcement by speaker Yariv

Levin, a close Netanyahu ally, allays fears their right-wing Likud party could find procedural ways to block the formation of the motley coalition that would end Netanyahu's 12 consecutive years in office.

On paper, the coalition announced by opposition leader Yair Lapid just minutes before a midnight Wednesday deadline, should command a slender majority in the confidence vote.





## SHORT TAKES

## Footballer Thapa tests +ve in Doha

**New Delhi:** India midfielder Anirudh Thapa has tested positive for Covid-19 and is under quarantine in a separate room in the team hotel in Doha.

Thapa tested positive on Wednesday, a day before India lost 0-1 to Asian champions Qatar in their joint World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers in Doha. "Yes, Thapa tested positive and he is isolated (from other team members)," All India Football Federation (AIFF) general secretary Kushal Das said. The 23-year-old Chennaiyin FC player will be tested again for the virus in a few days. He has played more than 20 matches for India.

India are already out of contention for a World Cup berth but remain in the reckoning for the 2023 Asian Cup. — PTI

## Docs say Milkha stable and better

**Chandigarh:** Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh, who is battling Covid-19 in the ICU of PGIMER here, is stable and his condition is "better than yesterday," the hospital said on Saturday. The 91-year-old, who is being closely monitored by a team of three doctors, is still on oxygen support. "On the basis of all the medical parameters today, that is June 5, his condition has been observed better than yesterday," Prof Ashok Kumar, official spokesperson of PGIMER, said in a statement. The top hospital had on Friday said that Milkha was "better and more stable". Milkha's family also issued a statement through a spokesperson that the iconic athlete "is stable and doing well, but still on oxygen." "Please ignore the rumours floating around. It's false news," the spokesperson said. — PTI

## Indian-origin girl shines at US Open

**San Francisco:** Megha Ganne, an American teen amateur with Indian parentage, continued to hold the spotlight with an even par round on the second day to sail into the weekend rounds in tied-third place at the US Women's Open golf here. The 17-year-old Ganne, who came into the Major after battling through a 3-for-1 play-offs in the qualifiers last month, had three birdies and three pars. She also had three bogeys in the last seven holes on 12th, 15th and 18th at The Olympic Club. Yuka Saso of the Philippines took the 36-hole lead with rounds of 69-67 and if she wins on Sunday, she will be of the same exact age as the tournament's youngest all-time champion Inbee Park. Park was 19 years, 11 months and 17 days old when she captured this title 13 years ago. — PTI

## Ex-umpire persists with racism claims

**London:** Former English umpire John Holder has hit out at England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) over the latter's statement that he and his colleague Ismail Dawood have withdrawn their claim of institutional racism. Holder accused the ECB of being "disingenuous" and "misleading" following their racial discrimination claim. The duo had announced their intention to sue the ECB in December after alleging that their careers as umpires had been affected by institutional racism. "Our case against the ECB has been beaten on a legal technicality. I haven't withdrawn any of the claims I made," Holder said. "The tone of the ECB's statement would give the uninvolved reader the impression that we have accepted their version of events and backed down. This is not the case at all." — PTI

## LA Clippers force game 7 vs Dallas

**Los Angeles:** Kawhi Leonard tied his postseason career high with 45 points as the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Dallas Mavericks 104-97 on Friday to stave off elimination and force game seven in their Western Conference NBA series. The Clippers kept their season alive by winning in front of an almost full house at Dallas' American Airlines Center, marking the first time in NBA history that the road team has won the first six games in a best-of-seven series. Game seven is Sunday at Staples Center arena in downtown Los Angeles where the Mavericks have won three games. "I didn't want to go home," said Leonard of facing elimination in front of 18,300 Dallas fans in the first-round of the playoffs. — AFP

## CZECH POUNCE

## Krejčíková of Czech Republic stuns 5th seed Svitolina

**Paris, June 5:** Novak Djokovic moved effortlessly into the French Open fourth round for the 12th successive year on Saturday, setting up an intriguing duel against Italian teenager Lorenzo Musetti. In women's, Elina Svitolina (fifth seed) went down to Barbora Krejčíková of Czech Republic.

World number one Djokovic, the champion in Paris in 2016 and chasing a 19th Grand Slam title, brushed aside 93rd-ranked Ricardas Berankis of Lithuania 6-1, 6-4, 6-1.

Djokovic is bidding to be the first man in more than half a century to win all four majors on multiple occasions.

## DJOKOVIC TO MEET TEEN SENSATION

Next up for the Serb is 19-year-old Musetti after the 76th-ranked Italian fired 50 winners past compatriot Marco Cecchinato in a 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 victory. He becomes just the sixth man since 2000 to make the fourth round of a Slam on debut.

"I have practised with Novak so I know a little bit about his game. There will be more tension, but it's what I have been working for since childhood," said Musetti.

"I really like how he plays. He's got a lot of fire-power from both forehand and backhand," Djokovic said ahead of a first meeting with Musetti.

Fellow Italian teen Jannik Sinner, a quarter-finalist in 2020, also made it to the second week, easing past Sweden's Mikael Ymer 6-1, 7-5, 6-3.

## NADAL IN FOURTH ROUND FOR 16TH TIME

Defending champion Rafael Nadal reached the fourth round for the 16th time with his third win of 2021 over Britain's Cameron Norrie.



Czech Republic's Barbora Krejčíková serves to Ukraine's Elina Svitolina during their third round match of the French Open at Roland Garros in Paris on Saturday. Krejčíková won 6-3, 6-2.

— AFP

Nadal, chasing a 14th Roland Garros title and record-setting 21st Grand Slam, won 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 and goes on to face Italian teenager Jannik Sinner for a place in the last eight.

The third-seeded Spaniard, who now has a record in Paris of 103 wins against just two losses since his 2005 debut, defeated Sinner in the quarter-finals at last year's tournament.

## ONLY THREE TOP-10 WOMEN LEFT

Krejčíková of the Czech Republic reached the last 16 for the second successive year with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over three-time quarter-finalist Svitolina (fifth seed).

World number 33 Krejčíková goes on to face former US Open champion Sloane Stephens for a place in the quarter-finals.

"I am super happy, most of my shots were amazing," said the Czech who is on an eight-match winning streak after capturing a maiden singles title in Strasbourg last week.

Stephens, the 2018 runner-up in Paris, defeated Czech 18th seed Karolina Muchova 6-3, 7-5.

Fourth seed Sofia Kenin, the runner-up in 2020 and the highest seed left, came back to beat fellow American Jessica Pegula 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

The top three seeds, Ashleigh Barty, Naomi Osaka and Aryna Sabalenka all failed to get

beyond the third round.

In all, only four of the top 10 made the third round, the fewest in 20 years.

Serena Williams, seeded seventh, plays her last 16 match on Sunday.

Eighth seed and defending champion Iga Swiatek has made the third round for the loss of just seven games. — AFP

## THE RESULTS

**Men's singles third round:** Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Ricardas Berankis (LTU) 6-1, 6-4, 6-1; Rafael Nadal (ESP x3) bt Cameron Norrie (GBR) 6-3, 6-3, 6-3; Lorenzo Musetti (ITA) bt Marco Cecchinato (ITA) 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3; Jannik Sinner (ITA x18) bt Mikael

Ymer (SWE) 6-1, 7-5, 6-3; Diego Schwartzman (ARG x10) bt Philipp Kohlschreiber (GER) 6-4, 6-2, 6-1; Jan-Lennard Struff (GER) bt Carlos Alcaraz (ESP) 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), 6-2.

**Women's singles third round:** Ons Jabeur (TUN x25) bt Magda Linette (POL) 3-6, 6-0, 6-1; Sloane Stephens (USA) bt Karolina Muchova (CZE x18) 6-3, 7-5; Barbora Krejčíková (CZE) bt Elina Svitolina (UKR x5) 6-3, 6-2; Sofia Kenin (USA x4) bt Jessica Pegula (USA x28) 4-6, 6-1, 6-4; Marta Kostyuk (UKR) bt Varvara Gracheva (RUS) 6-1, 6-2; Iga Swiatek (POL x8) bt Anett Kontaveit (EST x30) 7-6 (7/4), 6-0.

## Samba boys on a roll

**Porto Alegre (Brazil), June 5:** Star forward Neymar scored a retaken penalty as Brazil maintained their perfect start to South American World Cup qualifying with a 2-0 win over Ecuador on Friday.

Richardson had given Brazil the lead on 64 minutes and Neymar sealed the win deep into injury time, but only after another VAR farce.

Referee Alexis Herrera initially gave a free-kick against Gabriel Jesus after contact between him and Angelo Preciado in the Ecuador area five minutes from time.

But after an interminable four-minute VAR review, he changed his mind and awarded a penalty.

Neymar stuttered in his run-up but Ecuador goalkeeper Alexander Dominguez wasn't fooled and easily saved his weak shot. Ecuador were then down the other end attacking when Herrera blew his whistle and brought the game back for encroachment by Dominguez.

Neymar retook the penalty and this time sent Dominguez the wrong way. The slapstick ending could not mask a deserved victory for Brazil, who now top the qualification table by four points from unbeaten Argentina, with Ecuador third, two points further back. Predictably, Brazil dominated the early possession with 75 per cent of the ball in the first quarter of an hour.

But it wasn't until 20 minutes that they first threatened with Richardson millimeters away from turning home a whipped inswinging Neymar freekick.

Moments later Richardson played Gabriel in on goal but Dominguez was out quickly to smother his poked effort.



Brazil's Neymar (right) celebrates with Lucas Paqueta after scoring his team's second goal against Ecuador during a World Cup qualifying match at Beira-Rio stadium in Porto Alegre. Brazil won 2-0.

— AP

Ecuador were their usual physical selves but showed little of the attacking verve that had seen them score 13 goals in their previous three matches.

Brazil thought they'd gone in front three minutes before the break when Gabriel converted a right wing cross from Danilo but Ecuador were saved by a narrow offside call. A minute later Dominguez had to scoop

behind a rasping long-range drive from Neymar. Ecuadoran chances were few and far between, with fullback Preciado blazing over from 20 yards on 58 minutes.

Brazil coach Tite had seen enough and brought on forward Gabriel Jesus for defensive midfielder Fred, who was making his first appearance for the Selecao since 2018.

The switch paid instant dividends. After

Dominguez saved low to his right from Neymar, he was poorly beaten on 64 minutes at his near post by a shot from Richardson.

It was one-way traffic and Marquinhos headed over the bar before Dominguez made partial amends for his earlier clanger, saving low to his right to deny Gabriel Jesus and then blocking a shot from Gabriel with his foot. — AFP

## ITALY CRUISE PAST CZECH IN WARM-UP

**Bologna, June 5:** A week before they kick off Euro 2020 in Rome, Italy crushed the Czech Republic 4-0 in Bologna on Friday, keeping an eighth straight clean sheet.

Ciro Immobile, Nicolo Barella, Lorenzo Insigne and Domenico Berardi all scored for the hosts who will open the Euro against Turkey next Friday.

In the absence of Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Marco Verratti, who is nursing an injured knee, Jorginho, a Champions League winner with Chelsea, and Barella quickly set the tempo for Italy. Italy's strikers Lorenzo Insigne and

Ciro Immobile wasted early chances, before Immobile of Lazio broke the deadlock in the 3rd minute. — AFP

## SPAIN AND PORTUGAL IN DULL DRAW

**Madrid, June 5:** Spain and Portugal drew 0-0 in a friendly warm up for the European Championship in a friendly at the Metropolitano in Madrid on Friday.

The match was both an occasion to officially launch the two nations launching a joint bid to host the 2030 World Cup and the hosts to test out a new-look defence.

Cristiano Ronaldo had a frustrating night on his first game in Madrid since leaving Real in 2018 and came close to scoring twice and set up a good chance Diogo Jota filed to take advantage of.

Backed up by Joao Felix, Ronaldo was largely neutralised by Barcelona pair Sergio Busquets and Thiago Alcantara in a tight home midfield in front of a remodelled defence. — AFP

## WORLD | T20

## Cup to be shifted to UAE &amp; Muscat

**New Delhi, June 5:** The marquee T20 World Cup in October-November is set to be shifted to the UAE and Muscat (Oman) with the BCCI having internally intimated the ICC to go ahead with its preparation due to a tricky Covid-19 situation in India.

While the UAE was always the first back-up option, Oman's capital Muscat has been added as the fourth venue, apart from Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, for the tournament that will start in the last week of October.

"Yes, the BCCI, during the ICC board meeting, has formally asked for a four-week window to take a final call but, internally, they have said that they would like to keep the hosting rights and wouldn't mind the tournament being held in UAE and Oman," a senior board official, privy to ICC board developments, said.

He said that Muscat has been zeroed in specifically for the preliminary rounds of the 16-team competition, which will also allow the three UAE grounds to get sufficient time to freshen up after 31 IPL games.

"If IPL finishes by October 10, then the UAE leg of World T20 can start off in November which would give three weeks' time to the pitches to be spruced up for the global event. In the meanwhile, the first week can be held

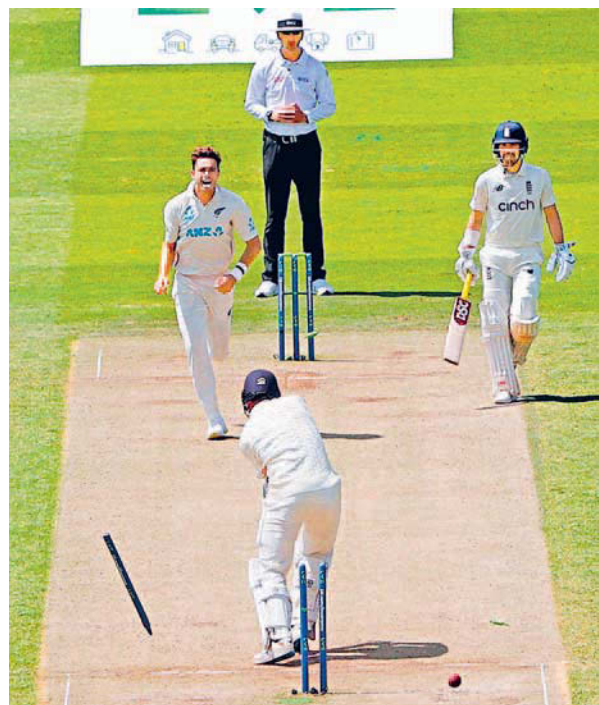
● While the UAE was always the first back-up option, Oman's capital Muscat has been added as the fourth venue, apart from Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, for the tournament that will start in the last week of October.

in Oman," he said.

A majority of the ICC board members believe that India is trying to bide time as they take stock of the situation at a time when it is very difficult to predict how things pan out in October-November.

"If you think about it practically, India is now reporting around 120,000 plus cases which is close to one third of what was being reported at the end of April and start of this month.

"But sitting on June 28, if you say "yes" to holding the World T20 in India, how can you predict the health situation in October if there is a third wave," the seasoned official asked. The second question is if the BCCI is wary of resuming the eight-team IPL in September in India, how can it hold a 16-team event in the country within a month's time. — PTI



New Zealand pacer Tim Southee celebrates after dismissing England's James Bracey for a duck on the fourth day of the first Test at Lord's on Saturday. — AFP

## Southee's six-for puts Kiwis on top

**London, June 5:** Rory Burns hit a gutsy century to help England recover from a collapse on the fourth day of the first Test against New Zealand at Lord's on Saturday.

England were in danger of following-on but Burns' 132 meant they avoided that embarrassment, although a total of 275 all out was still 103 adrift of New Zealand's first-innings 378 that featured debutant opener Devon Conway's remarkable 200.

Veteran paceman Tim Southee led New Zealand's attack with 6-43 in 25.1 overs to secure yet another place on the Lord's honours board after his 10-wicket haul in 2013.

But the Black Caps would have been in an even stronger position had they not reprieved Burns on 77

and 88 in the first of this two-match series.

Burns was still nine runs shy of his third Test century when he was joined by last man James Anderson.

But their entertaining stand of 52 delayed the tea interval before Southee had Burns, in sight of batting for the whole innings, caught behind to end a stay of nearly eight hours that saw the Surrey left-handed opener face 297 balls including 16 fours and a six. Anderson's presence encouraged Burns, 91 not out when joined by the No 11, to go for his shots, including an extravagant slog-swept six off left-arm quick Neil Wagner. — AFP

**BRIEF SCORES (DAY 4, AT TEA)**  
New Zealand 378 vs England 275 in 101.1 overs (Rory Burns 132, Joe Root 42, Ollie Robinson 42, Tim Southee 6/43).

## LECLERC CLAIMS POLE IN CRASH-LADEN QUALIFYING

**Bake, June 5:** Ferrari's Charles Leclerc claimed pole for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix after a crash-laden, red-flagged qualifying session in Baku on Saturday.

Mercedes' world champion Lewis Hamilton will start alongside Leclerc, who is looking for quick redemption after taking pole in Monaco only to retire from the race when his car broke down on the warm-up lap.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen leads Hamilton by four points in the drivers' championship after winning in Monaco last time out, and is on the second row of Sunday's race with the Alpha Tauri of Pierre Gasly for company.

Q3 was halted with a minute remaining when Gasly's teammate, Japanese rookie Yuki Tsunoda, crashed at turn three, with Carlos Sainz in the following Ferrari taking quick avoiding action, locking his wheels and smashing into a safety barrier. — AFP