# DECCAN 1010 CIC

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA **NELLORE | WEDNESDAY | 19 MAY 2021** 



**RH:** 67% Rainfall: Nill Forecast: clear.

temp. 38/29 ºC

### ASTROGUIDE

Plava; Uttarayana Tithi: Vaishakha Shuddha Saptami till 12.45 pm Star: Ashlesha till 3.42 pm Varjyam: 3.46 am to 5.23 am (Friday Durmuhurtam: 11.46 am to 12.38 pm Rahukalam: 12 pm to 1.30 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR** Shawwal 5,1442 AH **PRAYERS** (SHAHI MASJID) Fajar: 4.23 am **Zohar:** 12.06 pm

Asar: 4.37 pm Maghrib: 6.31 pm **Isha:** 7.50 pm **SUNSET TODAY 6.31 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.41 AM** MOONRISE TODAY 11.45 AM MOONSET TOMORROW 00.48 AM



The positive sign is, no complaints from the people about beds, vaccine, oxygen...

### **Dr Aggarwal** dies of Covid

New Delhi: Padma Shri awardee and eminent cardiologist Dr K.K. Aggarwal, who gained more prominence in recent months by posting informative videos about Covid-19 on social media, has died of the same disease, a statement posted on his Twitter handle said. Aggarwal, 62, was admitted to AIIMS here and was on ventilator support since last week, died at 11.30 pm.

Report on Page 4

### **Black fungus**

cases in MP

Bhopal: Surge in black fungus infection cases in Madhya Pradesh has sent alarm bells ringing in the state administration forcing the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government to launch microbiological surveillance in the hospitals. State medical education minister Vishwas Sarang told reporters that the government has launched a drive to detect black fungus infection cases.

Report on Page 4

### **EFFORTS ON TO** RAMP UP VAX **SUPPLY: MODI**

New Delhi, May 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that continuous efforts are being made to ramp up Covid-19 vaccine supply in a big way, asserting that attempts are on to provide states 15-day advance schedule of the inoculation programme as it will allow them to prepare accordingly. Interacting with state and district officials at a meeting, he described them as commanders" in the fight against Covid-19 and said localised containment zones, aggressive testing and sharing correct and complete information with people are weapons to defeat it. The meeting was attended by district magistrates from 46 districts

across nine states. People's convenience increases when information like bed availability for the sick or the vaccine availability are easily available, Modi said.

Report on Page 4

### NATION 4

3 TMC leaders 'fall ill' in jail, land in hospital



### SPORTS 8

**Renowned badminton** umpire Sudhakar no more

### **TABLOID**

'E-pass' to better health



Vol. 18 No. 313 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

## Miller, official nexus: Govt may lose ₹150cr

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

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC HYDERABAD, MAY 18

At a time when Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is struggling hard to mobilise every penny possible to fulfil his government's commitments to the poor, clandestine efforts are on to dole out undue financial benefits worth ₹150 crore to errant rice millers.

Some rice millers have been avoiding payment of tax arrears over the last few years after they were caught manipulating procedures. Inquiries by Deccan Chronicle revealed that the errant rice millers from the East and the West Godavari districts had struck a deal with a ruling party leader who dominates these two districts. Fearing that the CM might come to know of his involvement, he is said to

DC CORRESPONDENT

The state government on

Tuesday credited ₹119.88

crore to the accounts of 1,19,875 fishermen fami-

lies, extending a financial assistance of ₹10,000 to

each, for the consecutive

third year under YSR

Matsyakara Bharosa towards compensating the

off-season ban on marine

Speaking on the occa-

sion, Chief Minister Y.S.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said

that the programme, bene-

fiting about 1.19.875 fami-

lies, was taken up for the

uplift of fishermen who

were struggling for liveli-

od from mid-April to mid-

June. The scheme was ini-

tiated in 2019 increasing

the financial assistance

from ₹4,000 to ₹10,000, and

the state government so far spent around ₹332

Giving top priority to

the welfare of fishermen,

the Chief Minister said

crore on this scheme.

hood during the lean peri-

VIJAYAWADA, MAY 18



Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

FEARING THAT the CM might come to know of his involvement, a ruling party leader who dominates both the East and West Godavari districts is said to be operating through a senior tax offi-

be operating through a senior tax official. Ironically, the note circulated by Peeyush Ku-

THE CM lists various

for their welfare.

BESIDES FUEL and

measures being taken up

power subsidies and acci-

dental death aid, efforts

are apace for aqua unive-

rsity, aqua labs and hubs,

new fishing harbours etc.,

said Jagan Mohan Reddy.

the government increased

fuel subsidy from ₹6 to ₹9 per litre which can be

redeemed instantly at 100

recognised petrol bunks

and also providing power

at a subsidised cost of

₹1.50 per unit to aqua

farmers, though it puts a

burden of ₹780 crore on

In case of accidental

death, the government enhanced ex gratia from

₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh to sup-

port the bereaved family

and so far 67 fishermen

families were provided

with an assistance of ₹6.7

Pg 2: ₹332.90cr earmarked

to set up 100 aqua hubs

the government annually.

₹120-cr Bharosa for

1.19L AP fishermen

mar, the Chief Commissi-oner of State Tax, to Rajat Bhargav, the Special Chief Secretary, Revenue, is self-explanatory a section of rice millers committed fraud, did not avail of the tax waiver scheme earlier by following the prescri-bed norms and declined to pay arrears during a special drive.

The Chief Commissioner also indicated that the government would lose heavily if the rice millers had their way. Yet, his depart-ment had been going soft on the rice millers instead of clamping down on them and collecting arrears, using the provisions of law. He mentioned in the letter that the government was the competent authority to waive off arrears from the rice millers.

Pg 2: Tax waiver for 2014 and 2015 cost AP ₹60 crore

### **CM UNVEILS POLICY TO BOOST OXYGEN CAPACITIES IN STATE**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 18

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday unveiled the AP Industrial Gases and Medical Oxygen Manu-facturing Policy 2021-22 to augment the oxygen manufacturing capacity to 700 metric tonnes from

the 360 tonnes at present. In the wake of an exponential rise in demand for medical oxygen in AP during the second wave of Covid-19 to the tune of 600-700 metric tonnes as against the state's capacity of 364 mt, the policy is aimed at realising relia bility and self-sufficiency in oxygen manufactur ing in the state. The policy prepared by the department of industries in consultation with the department of health and family welfare targets to set up a total of 50 PSA oxygen plants in both captive and non-captive modes.

Pg 2: Policy to be effective from April 15, 2021

## 390 missing from ONGC barges, search ops on

7 killed in Gujarat as Cyclone Tauktae batters parts of state

with agency inputs MUMBAI, MAY 18

The Search and Rescue (SAR) operations to locate and bring to safety the 390 missing persons off Mumbai coast in the Arabian Sea was on till late night on Tuesday. Till Tuesday evening the Indian Navy and Coast Guard had rescued 317 people on board two barges that went adrift. At least seven people were killed in Gujarat as Cyclone Tauktae battered parts of the state.

According to the Indian Navy, 180 persons were rescued from Barge P-305 off Bombay High.

This barge went adrift off Heera Oil Fields on Monday with 273 persons onboard due to the extremely severe Cyclone Tauktae.
Naval Ships Beas, Betwa and Teg had joined INS Kochi and Kolkata in the

search and rescue operations for Barge P-305, which sank 35 nautical miles from Mumbai (in the Mumbai Offshore Deve-lopment Area). SAR has also been augmented with P8I and naval helicopters, who continue to undertake aerial search of the area. Since the commencement of the SAR on Monday, 180 survivors have been rescued. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) stated that all drifted vessels, except *P*-305, are taken in control, and their crew is safe. Indian Navy and ONGC were actively engaged in rescuing the crew of vessel



Navy helicopter at INS Shikra in Mumbai, on Tuesday.

P-305. Apart from P-305, barge GALConstructor with 137 personnel on board, accommodation barge SS-3 with 196 personnel on board and the Sagar Bhushan oil rig with 101 personnel on board also went adrift in Cyclone Tauktae on Monday.

While all the 137 people on board the cargo barge GAL Constructor have been rescued, there is no word vet on the progress of rescue operations for the accommodation barge SS-3 and the Sagar Bhushan

tweeted, #CycloneTauktae #NationFirst Update on grounded barge GAL CONSTRUCTOR. Effective coordinated rescue operations resulted in saving all the 137 precious lives from the distressed barge. Rescue mission accomplished. We Protect."

In a statement the ONGC said, "Due to severe cyclonic storm, unfortunate incidents have occurred involving three construction barges of Afcons working on a project of ONGC in Western Offshore fields in the oil rig. Arabian Sea and one The Indian Coast Guard drilling rig of ONGC

deployed for exploration purpose. ONGC is taking all possible measures in coordination with ODAG (Offshore Advisory Group) and MRCC (Maritime Rescue Group) and Coordination Centre) to ensure the safety of personnel and vessels."

Search and Rescue Operation efforts were also in progress off the coast of Gujarat for three vessels — Support Station 3, Great Ship Aditi and Drill Ship Sagar Bhushan which are 15-20 nautical miles South East off the Gujarat coast (Pipavav), said the Indian Navy.

## AIIMS in state got ₹879 cr, TS hosp given only ₹24cr

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS I DC HYDERABAD, MAY 18

It is official. The Centre has made a meagre financial allocation to the All India Institute of Medical (AIMS). Sciences Bibinagar, located on the city outskirts, proving right the allegations of neglect of the state by the Narendra Modi-led gov-ernment levelled by the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) and the Congress

against their political rival, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Ever since the Centre announced AIIMS for several states after 2014, the facility in Telangana state has got just ₹23.85 crore. This is against the budgetary allocation of ₹1.028 crore and the Centre wanted to make the facility fully operational by 2022.

EVER SINCE the Centre announced AIIMS for several states, the facility in TS has got just ₹23.85 crore. This is against the allocation of ₹1.028 crore and the Centre wanted to make the facility fully operational by 2022.

According to details of 15new AIIMS under construction approved for establishment after 2014, obtained under Right To Information Act by Inaganti Ravi Kumar, an RTI activist, AIIMS, West Bengal, received the highest funding of ₹967 crore against ₹1,754 crore for obvious reasons. The AIIMS, Mangalagiri, in Andhra Pradesh, received ₹879 crore out of the allocated ₹1,618 crore.

The AIIMS established in other states which

received allocations considerable Maharashtra (₹945 crore), Punjab crore), Himachal Pradesh (₹858 crore), Assam (₹435 crore), Jharkhand (₹380 crore) and Jammu (₹370 crore).

The BJP leaders from Telangana state sought to defend the record, saying that higher allocations in other states were due to the requirement of construction of buildings whereas in Telangana state the AIIMS was located in buildings already constructed Institute Nizam's Medical Sciences by the Congress government in combined Andhra Pradesh.

Page 2: Harsh Vardhan had said no dearth of funds

### PINARAYI S-I-L **AMONG 11 NEW FACES IN KERALA**

Thiruvananthapuram, May 18: CPM veteran Pinarayi Vijayan was on Tuesday elected its Parliamentary Party Leader for a second term as Kerala Chief Minister but the omission of health minister K.K. Shailaja, who played a leading role in the state's fight against Covid-19, from the new Cabinet

created a flutter.
Vijayan's coalition government will have a fresh look with 11 new CPM members, including his son-in-law P.A. Mohammed national president of DYFI, in a reflection of the party's attempt to infuse fresh blood in the ministry.
The CPM will have 12

members including Vijayan. CPI and Kerala Congress (M), who are among the other constituents of the Left Democratic Front (LDF), also named new facesfour and one, respectively, to represent their parties in the Cabinet.

Vijayan's election comes days after he led the ruling LDF to a stupendous victory in the April 6 Assembly polls, where the alliance won 99 of the 140 seats.

Shailaja's However. non-inclusion led to a debate and many eyebrows were raised over the matter. Having won global accolades for her deft handling of the first wave of Covid-19 in Kerala which saw the country's first case in 2020, Shailaja's surprise omission drew instant comparisons with the late K.R. Gowri Amma, the firebrand Marxist once tipped to head Kerala but never did.

She was, however, made party whip. -PTI

#### THE MP will be under tal in judicial custody till medical care at the hospifurther orders to be issued tal in judicial custody till

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 18

A medical board comprised medical examination on Narsapur MP K. Raghu Ramakrishna Raju in the presence of judicial officer Dr D. Nagarjun at Army Hospital in Secunderabad on Monday night.

According to a release from Army Hospital on Tuesday, the MP was taken to the hospital in the night on May 17 and was

KAKINADA, MAY 18

While vaccines continue to

be in short supply, another

issue is worrying people a lot: registration for their

Many people find it diffi-

cult to get registered and find a slot. Even though

first dose was taken, in

some cases, it was not reg-

istered due to technical

When these people try for

"After waiting for hours

in queues, many people are

is not shown as

the second dose, it is not being registered as the first

problems.

administered.

further orders by the SC.

Tests held for Raju at Army hosp

admitted after procedural formalities. Later, a medical examination was done by the medical board on him in the presence of judicial officer nominated by the Chief Justice of Telangana High Court during the night and the entire procedure was

videographed. The MP will be under

pointed as their names

were not registered in the

first dose. My mother faced

a lot of hurdles in getting

the second dose of vaccine.

At last, she got it as the

first dose for the second time," said N. Ananda Rao

He said that there was

The district administra-

tion has now introduced a

token system for second

dose exercise. Officials col-

registration

also confusion where and

of Ramanaiahpet.

should be done.

for the second dose.

medical care at the hospiby the Supreme Court. All activities are being taken up under the strict Covid-19 protocol.

Meanwhile, as the apex court directed to consider the presence of MP Raju in the Army Hospital as judicial custody, no visitor is being allowed to meet him. The medical board is to submit its report in a sealed cover to the apex court on May 21.

LOCKDOWN | EFFECT | With first dose not registered due to technical issues, many miss out on the 2nd Portal glitches hold up 2nd vax dose for many

People wait for Covid test in East Godavari.

lected Aadhaar numbers of dose even though they took people through volunteers But, some people are registered due to glitches. tion.

being denied the second People are urging that the officials find alternatives the first jab, as it was not to facilitate their vaccina-

THOSE WHO have got the first dose meanwhile worry the time interval for second dose may lapse

THOUGH THE token system is introduced, many are still to receive them through volunteers and village secretariats.

MANDAL PARISHAD Development Officers say they are issuing tokens keeping stocks in view.

Meanwhile, those who have got the first dose are worrying that the time interval for getting the sec-

Though the token system is introduced, many are still to receive them through volunteers and village secretariats. Mandal parishad development officers (MPDOs) issuing the tokens said that they were issuing tokens keeping in view the stocks at hand.

When the problem was taken to the notice of district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy, he said that steps would be taken to address the problem.

He said the vaccination system was streamlined and everyone would get



### SHORT TAKES TD NO TO BUDGET **MEET, TO HOLD MOCK ASSEMBLY**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA/VISAKHAPAT-NAM, MAY 18

Telugu Desam has decided to boycott the single-day budget session of Assembly on May 20 in protest against the unilateral, undemocratic and illogical decisions of the Jagan Mohan Reddy govern-

The decision to boycott the budget session was taken at the Telugu Desam Legislature Party (TDLP) meeting presided over by TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Disclosing this at a press conference, TD state president K. Atchannaidu and former Finance Minister Yanamala Ramakrishnudu said the TDLP would run a parallel mock assembly simultaneously with the AP Assembly session in order to expose the failures and misdeeds of the Jagan Mohan Reddy regime all through.

Atchannaidu said the central government and most other state governments were taking opposition parties along with them in the fight against the epidemic. But, the AP CM did not care to respect the opposition and did not hold an all-party meeting even once. The Tamil Nadu regime took the opinions of the opposition leaders to confront the flood situation, whereas, the AP CM only remained advanced to the confront the state of the confront the state of the confront the flood situation, whereas, the AP CM only remained advanced to the confront to the c adamant and proved his ineffi-ciency repeatedly by failing to save the people's lives. He deplored that the failure

of the government resulted in the deaths of over 109 Covid patients due to lack of oxygen

supply at a critical time.
Ramakrishnudu said that the YSRC government came out with the one-day session only out of a constitutional obligation but not to consult and hold a meaningful discussion with the Opposition party. He opined that the ruling party would use Governor's address in the Assembly to sing paeans of the Chief Minister and his shallow decisions but not to present facts about the state economy. He said that even if the TD attended the session, the CM and his Ministers would not give any chance to them to speak in the House.

To a query, he said that in the past, the YSRC boycotted the Assembly as a whole but now the TD was just boycotting the Chief Minister and his illogical decisions on the budget session.

 ATCHANNAIDU SAID the central govt and most other state govts were taking opposition parties along with them in the fight against the epidemic. But, the AP CM did not care to respect the opposition and did not hold an all-party meeting even once. Govt would only use the Budget address by Governor to sing paeans of CMs.

### **FAKE MESSAGE TURNS VIRAL ABOUT CURFEW TIMINGS**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 18

The Fact Check AP portal of the Andhra Pradesh government busted a fake information on Covid curfew timings that was circulating on WhatsApp and other social media platforms on Tuesday. It said there was a reduction in relaxation of curfew timings

The relaxation time would be reduced to between 6 am and 10 am from the present 6 am to 12 noon from May 20. It turned viral on social media platforms. Further, the message stated that AP is in second place in Coronavirus deaths. This was also untrue. AP is in the ninth place in Covid-19 deaths.

According to the portal, a malicious message was circulating on WhatsApp after the announcement of an extension in curfew in Andhra Pradesh. The message claimed that during the extended curfew period, the "relaxation time will be from 6 am to 10 am. The government affirmed that there is no change in the timings and the message was fake and untrue.

The government clarified that with 9,481 deaths, AP stands at ninth slot in the country in fatality rate, and the percentage of deaths is 0.7 per cent of the total cases, which ranked 26 in the country.

 ACCORDING TO the portal, a malicious message was circulating on WhatsApp after the announcement of an extension in curfew in Andhra



Fishermen felicitate Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy after he released the funds under the YSR Matsyakara Bharosa scheme at his camp office in Tadepalli on Tuesday. Minister S. Appalaraju (third from right), MP Mopidevi Venkata Ramana (second from right), Chief Secretary Adityanath Das (left), Special Chief Secretary (Agriculture) Poonam Malakondaiah and others are seen. — —BY ARRANGEMENT Adityanath Das (left), Special Chief Secretary (Agriculture) Poonam Malakondaiah and others are seen. —

## 31,662 fishermen in East, West Godavari dists get ₹31.65 crore

East Godavari collector said 30,213 fishermen families being extended ₹30.21 cr aid

**DC CORRESPONDENT** KAKINADA, MAY 18

As many as 31,662 fishermen families got ₹31.65 crore as compensation towards the losses they incur due to ban on fishing during the conser-vation period from April 15 to June 14. Each family was paid ₹10,000 in East and West Godavari districts. Chief Minister Y.S.
Jagan Mohan Reddy
extended the benefits under the YSR Fishermen Bharosa Scheme on Tuesday through a video

conference.
East Godavari collector
D. Muralidhar Reddy said
that 30,213 fishermen families including 84 OCs, 198 SCs and 11 STs were getting ₹30.21 crore aid. He said the government had already released ₹78 crore compensation to be given by Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation.

West Godavari collector Karthikeva Misra said that 1,449 families would get ₹1.44 crore in the district. Narasapuram MLA M. Prasada Raju handed over a cheque for the amount to the fisheries department officials.

Participating in video conference, a fisher-Barre Lakshmi Narasimha Raju of China Boddu Venkatayapalem in Tallarevu mandal praised the Jagan Mohan Reddy government for implementing the welfare schemes for the fishermen community. Expressing his happiness over getting

TD OPPOSES MOVE

**TO TURN TEMPLES** 

INTO COVID CENTRES

Telugu Desam has

objected to the govern-

ment move on turning

temples into Covid cen-

tres. TD state executive

secretary Buchi Ram

Prasad on Tuesday warned the Jagan

Mohan Reddy govern-

ment not to play with the sentiments of Hindus by

continuing its partial

attitude towards tem-

ples, archakas and devo-

Ram Prasad pointed out that in the temples,

there would be no toilet

facilities usually, hence,

it would not be possible

to provide required facil-

ities to the Covid patients. He further

deplored that it was

unfortunate that the

present rulers targeted

the temples instead of

using schools and function halls that would have all the necessary facilities. "Had this Chief Minister held a

review meeting even

once to find out and resolve the problems of

archakas in the temples?

What did he do for their

well-being in the past two years?" he also

The TD alleged that since the YSRC came to

power, there were over

180 attacks on the

Hindu temples all over Andhra Pradesh but the YSRC government mis-

erably failed to take any

tees in the state.

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, MAY 18

## ₹332.90 crore earmarked to set up 100 aqua hubs

From Page 1

The CM deplored that the previous government completely neglected the welfare of fishermen and aquaculture in the state. In order to create more opportunities for the fishermen who were hitherto going to other states in search of livelihood and risking their lives, eight fishing harbours would be set up.

He informed that works were afoot on four har-bours during the phase-1 at Juvvaladinne in Nellore district, Uppada in East Godavari, Nizam-patnam in Guntur, and Machilipatnam in Krishna district, with an outlay of ₹1,510 crore. Four more harbours would be set up in Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, West

₹10,000 into his account, face difficulties for eking he said that during the Covid-19 pandemic period, difficulties even loans from private financiers and under such circumstances, the state government provided a breather to them. He mentioned that in the past, if an elder or breadwinner of the family died, the family used to

DC CORRESPONDENT

YSR Congress has strongly hit out at BJP for its

strong opposition to start-

ing Corona centres in tem-

ples, and said all should

cooperate with the govern-

ment for the containment

Corporation (GMC) Mayor

Kavati Sivanaga Manohar

flayed leader

Lakshminarayana's

stance on the issue. He alleged that the BJP was

trying to create differ-

ences among people of

various faiths in the name

Municipal

Kanna

of Covid-19.

Guntur

VIJAYAWADA, MAY 18

Godavari and Prakasam districts with an expenditure of ₹1,365 crore, which would create employment for 80,000 fishermen. The Chief Minister said

that the state had set up 35 aqua labs to check the quality of aqua products with an expenditure of ₹50.30 crore besides AP Fisheries University in West Godavari district to

take up training and research in aquaculture.

An outlay of ₹332.90 crore had been earmarked to set up 100 aqua hubs to help farmers procure better prices for their produce. Each hub would have 120 retail shops to sell their produce directly. In phase-1, 25 agua hubs were being set up across

Recalling the poor governance by the previous gov-

out their livelihood. But, now, the government the fishermen were facing was giving ₹10 lakh compensation bereaved families and it would help them greatly. He opined that if the government established more minor ports on the lines of fishing harbours, the fishermen would get employment.

Participating in the

name of religion.

Naidu recalled that as

many as 40 temples were demolished in Vijayawada

government, but the then minister for endow-

ments belonging to BJP and other saffron

Lakshminarayana turned

mute spectators to the

attack on Hindu temples

of religion.

leaders

during the of Telugu

YSRC strongly hits out at BJP for

opposing Covid care at temples

GUNTUR MUNICIPAL Corporation (GMC) Mayor Kavati Sivanaga Manohar Naidu flayed senior BJP

differences among people of various faiths in the

He alleged that the BJP was trying to create

regime

Desam

but the

including

leader Kanna Lakshminarayana's stance on the issue.

ernment that failed to compensate the fishermen of Mummidivaram village, the CM said that his government paid compensation to the extent of ₹75 crore to the fishermen who incurred a loss due to evacuations. Though they did not get the amount from the company, the government paid humanitarian

Minister for fisheries Dr Seediri Appalaraju, MP Mopidevi Venkata-ramana, Chief Secretary Adityanath Das, Special Chief Secretary Poonam Malakondaiah, Commissioner of Fisheries Kannababu, Government Advisor (Agriculture) Ambati Krishna Reddy and other officials were present in the event.

grounds, he added.

video conference from the collectorate at Kakinada, Welfare Minister Ch. Srinivasa Venugopala Krishna said that the CM increased the subsidy on diesel from ₹6.03 to ₹9. Kakinada MLA Dwaram-Chandrasekhara Reddy advised fishermen the their nets and boats repaired during the conservation period.

without any concern. He said the YSRC government led by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan

Mohan Reddy is recon-

structing those 40 demol-

ished temples, which show

their respect towards Hindu temples.

ples and 'Satrams' to treat

temple priests and other

The Mayor said that the government was starting Covid care centres at tem-

### **FISHING HARBOUR** TO COME UP AT **BUDAGATLAPALEM**

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 18

Deputy Chief Minister Dharmana Krishna Das said that the works on the proposed fishing harbour at Budagatlapalem under Etcherla mandal in Srikakulam district would begin this year.

The Deputy CM said ₹10,000 each was credited to the accounts of fishermon to help in tiding every

men to help in tiding over the crisis caused by Covid-19 and two-month fishing holiday.

He said the amount was deposited in the accounts of 16,630 fisherfolk in 11 mandals in Srikakulam. He said Bhavanapadu gre enfield port works would begin soon and the fishing jetty at Vajrapukotturu would also be completed this year. A university on fisheries would come up in West Godavari, he said.

In Visakhapatnam, minister for tourism Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao said 22,366 fishermen were being benefited under the Matsyakara Bharosa scheme for which ₹22.36 crore was being spent by the government.

The compensation towards the fishing holiday losses was a meagre ₹4,000 under the Telugu Desam government and now it was enhanced to ₹10,000.

staff working there. He

further said that service to

humans was service to

Coronavirus centres had

already been started at

worship places of all

faiths, the BJP was trying

to cause differences

among people by misleading them on the Coronavirus centers

issue. He demanded that

Lakshminarayana and other BJP leaders shun

politics and cooperate with the government towards containment of

services to priests and

by offering

reminded them

## Policy will be effective from April 15, 2021

From Page 1

It provides incentives to the private sector to set up the plants.

The state government has already received letters of intent from companies like Nova Air (Śri (Kadapa), (Chittoon) Liquid Praxair (Chittoor) and Inox Air Products (Vijaya-wada/Guntur) to enhance the oxygen production in state. Moreover, six Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) units have already been identi-fied and refurnished to produce oxygen.

Several entrepreneurs are keen on setting up small and medium-scale oxygen plants. The state government is in talks with several suppliers across the globe for importing zeolite molecu-

lar sieve as it is a key component in the oxygen PSA

The policy aims to dis-

tribute the manufacturing of oxygen across the state by adopting zoning methodology. The incentives allow for subsidising capital expenditure (Capex) (30 per cent up to 30 lakh/MT) as well as operating expenses (Opex) (power subsidy up to ₹2 per unit) to allow investors to maintain profitability during these uncertain times. The policy will be effective from April 15, 2021 and will be valid for a period of one year. It also incentivises first movers and the time limit for commissioning PSA, Lox and Heliox plants is six months, 18 months and 24 months respectively from the date

### Tax waiver for 2014 and 2015 cost AP ₹60 crore

From Page 1

In the pre-Goods and Services Tax regime, a two per cent tax was levied on the inter-state rice and broken rice sales if they were transported along with C form and five per cent tax in the absence of C form. Several rice millers carried out sale transactions without the C form.

Thanks to their lobbying, the previous Telugu Desam government waived the balance three per cent tax for 2014 and 2015 financial years. There was, however, a strict condition that those rice millers who would

should have mandatorily paid the two per cent tax and completed tax assessment for the two fiscals. "While some rice millers fulfilled the condi-

tions and availed waiver,

like to avail the waiver

ued to commit the same fraud till 2017 till the GST came into existence," sources in the tax department told Chronicle.
While the waiver for 2014 and 2015 would cost

the government ₹60 crore. another ₹90 crore would be lost if the tax evasion was also taken into con-

### Govt has no hand in MP's arrest: Sajjala DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, MAY 18

Asserting that the government has no role in the arrest of MP K. Raghu Ramakrishna Raju, Go-ernment Adviser (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said the TD is conspiring to defame the government.

Addressing a press conference on Tuesday, Reddy said that Raju was involved in anti-party activities and made several criticisms against the party despite being elected on the party ticket. He questioned why Raju did not resign if he did not like the party. Refuting TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu's allegations that the MP was unnecessarily booked on treason cases, he said that in the past Naidu had filed such treason cases against Telan-

Chandrashekar Rao under Section 124A in the cash-for-vote case, and later against MLA Giddi Eswari, Muslim youth and many more. He said that Naidu was conspiring behind Raju's back to destabilise the government.

Reddy said, "Since Raju against Constitution, we wrote a letter to the Speaker seek ing his disqualification However, over the past few months his criticism went overboard and he even started to target Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy more personally, which is clearly evident that all these are taking place under direction Chandrababu Naidu, who has been toying with Raghurama to obstruct

### Harsh Vardhan had said no dearth of funds

From Page 1

Union health minister Harsh Vardhan went on record in the Lok Sabha in last March that there would be no dearth of in the current fiscal in addition to ₹5 crore which had been released as per milestones. A few months ago, G. Kishan Reddy, minister of state for home, visited the campus announced the Centre's grandiose plan from the current 50 acres to 150 acres with more

the government."

funds. But his promise could fetch only ₹15 crore of expanding the facility facilities. "The Centre has been

neglecting

AIIMS for a long time. We handed over the required buildings to the Centre in time but it failed to start full-scale operations even today. Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has been pursuing with the Centre for adequate funds for the last seven years but in vain," said G. Jagadish Reddy, energy minister and in-charge of undivided Nalgonda district.

MORE | TESTS 50,000 samples collected from persons suffering from fevers during the survey

Covid-19

temples staff.

## AP to continue its survey to curb spread of Covid

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 18

Andhra Pradesh government will continue for a few more days its survey to detect cases of fever in all districts as part of its efforts to curb the spread of Covid-19 in the state.

Principal secretary (health) Anil Kumar Singhal told media persons on Tuesday that the initial fever survey for three days in AP helped them identify 90,000 people suffering from fever,

bility of a person suffering from Covid-19. "We intend to continue such surveys to identify people suffering with fever," Singhal

Explaining details of the first survey, he pointed out they had collected blood samples of 50,000 persons suffering from fever. Some of them had been tested for Covid-19 too. Those preferring to be in home isolation while suffering from fever had been given isolation kits. The first

• PRINCIPAL SECRETARY (health) Anil Kumar Singhal told media persons on Tuesday that the initial fever survey for three days in AP helped them identify 90,000 people suffering from fever, which indicates the possibility of a person suffering from Covid-19.

survey got completed in just three days as a strong contingent of ANMs and Asha workers had been available throughout the state. This enabled authorities to initiate measures for curbing the spread of virus.

The principal secretary disclosed that 104 call cen-

tre received 12,629 calls in the last 24 hour. Of them, 2,747 calls had been for admission to hospitals while 1,617 for test results. He said through telemedicine call centre, 16,000 persons suffering with fever and staying in home isolation have been advised

must take. He maintained that they have received no complaint on short supply of medicines from any-

Singhal said during the last 24 hours, AP received 620 metric tonnes of medical oxygen allotted by the centre. He explained in detail how medical oxygen is being distributed throughout the state from various centres.

He advised people not to get carried away by misinformation on social media platforms on number of py in AP.

Covid-19 cases and deaths He made it clear that the state government has been announcing details on a regular basis.

The principal secretary pointed out that the state government has issued an order to provide ₹15,000 each to next of kin Covid-19 deceased as financial assistance for performing the last rites.

He said based on a report of state-level experts' committee, they are not carrying out plasma thera-

single step.

about medications they



### SHORT TAKES

### **THUNDERSTORMS LIKELY IN NORTH COASTAL AP: IMD**

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 18

A low pressure area is likely to form over East Central Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood around May 23, a report by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Tuesday. The system might bring in rain to coastal AP and propel advancement of the southwest monsoon.

The monsoon is likely to advance into the South Andaman Sea and southeast Bay of Bengal around May 21. Southeasterly and southerly winds will prevail all over Andhra Pradesh during the

next few days.
The IMD predicted thunderstorms for north coastal AP and a rise in temperature by two to three degrees Celsius during the next three days.

### **CHITTOOR POLICE SEIZES LIQUOR WORTH ₹50 LAKH**

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MAY 18:

The Chittoor district police wing on Tuesday seized ₹50 lakh worth non-duty paid liquor and arrested six persons involved in the illegal transportation of liquor from Karnataka near Gajulapalle village under Thavanampalle

Disclosing the case details to media persons at the district headquarters, Superintendent of Police S. Senthil Kumar said the police team led by Sub-Inspector K. Rajasekhar received a tip-off about the illegal transportation of liquor from Karnataka state. Based on the information, the team has conducted vehicular checking at Anjaneyaswamy statue in Gajulapalle village where they found two motorbikes coming towards the checkpost at abnormal speed.

When the police intercepted the two motorbikes and inquiring the riders, a truck and a car following the motor-bikes also stopped at a distance. On observing the police, four accused in the car fled away from the spot after abandoning the vehicle.

### **COVID REPORTS TO BE KEPT ONLINE WITHIN 4 HOURS**

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, MAY 18:

West Godavari district collector Karthikeya Misra instructed the officials to give results of Covid-19 sample tests within four hours after creating a rapid test ID. He said that such results should be kept online immediately and the results of VRDL and TruNat tests should be revealed on the same day. He said that it was noticed that there was a gross delay in reaching samples to VRDL labs and the results will be delayed. He said that the first phase test reports should be reached to VRDL labs by 10 am every day and the RDOs and Municipal Commissioners should pay attention to it. He also said that 23 special vehicles have been provided to reach the samples to VRDL labs in the district. He said that special attention should be paid on fever surveys in Kukkunuru, Polavaram and Velerupadu mandals. He said that the persons who were identified in fever surveys should have tests completed by

Wednesday.

He said that German sheds should be completed immediately and ventilators, oxygen cylinders and others facilities should be provided in the

### **KOVUR LEGISLATOR SLAMMED FOR**

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MAY 18

legislator Prasannakumar Reddy came cadres and registering false cases against them since last 3 months.

State Spokesperson Anam Venkata Ramana Reddy has flayed the legislator for harassing TD cadres with the help of the police for working against the ruling party during the recent elections.

He said Kodavalur police went berserk at the instance of the MLA and beaten up a TD

supporter Vobbani Seenaiah. The police took him into custody in a civil dispute and thrashed him inflicting

## People ignore curfew rules

SP asks cops to slap huge penalties on violators as per Covid guidelines

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, MAY 18

The 18-hour curfew which has been extended till the end of May last is not yielding desired results in the district.

In major towns like Kurnool, Nandyal and Adoni, people are freely moving on roads on pretext of going on emergency work such as getting medicines.

The traffic sometime resembles that during normal days and is even witnessing jams in the district headquarters, at APSRTC bus station road, hospital road, Rajvihar Circle etc.

District SP Kaginelli Fakkeerappa has warned people not to flout the curfew regulations in their own safety and that of the society at large. But, the cops on the ground are unable to enforce the regulations strictly.

The daily health bulletin put fresh positive cases at 991 on Tuesday, taking the total count to 1,02,193 in the district. Of the total cases, 93,776 people had recovered from the virus and 7,772 patients are still being treated. The cumulative death toll has touched

645. People are hanging around in groups near tea stalls and tiffin centers even after the relaxation time from 6 am to 12 noon. But at some places in the city, public is not returning home and are seen moving around carelessly. It is also worrying that at some of the shopping complexes, key circles, and tea stalls, many people are not wearing face masks and not maintaining a physical dis-

A senior citizen Siddharamayya, a resicitizen dent of Madhuranagar in the city, opined that the police and the municipal officials were seen only while closing down shops, general stores and business establishments. But they are nowhere in controlling gathering during the relaxation period or after that. Unless people's movement is checked, the spread of Covid-19 cannot be stopped. The virus cannot move itself and it is only the humans who carry it around and spread it to others, he pointed out.

**PANIC GRIPS** 

**PUTTUR OVER** 

**BUND SAFETY** 

TIRUPATI, MAY 18

DC CORRESPONDENT

Residents of Puttur are

gripped by fear that the

summer storage tank

located in the town,

spread across nearly 50

acres, could breach any-

time as cracks have been

noticed on the tank bund

- up to 150 metres long

and 10 metres depth. The

incident has raised doubts on the quality of earthen works, the

major component of the

filled up with water up to 85 per cent of its capacity, following inces-

sant rains in the town.

Though the locals who

depend on the tank dur-

ing summer are happy, cracks developed on the bund have them wor-

On receipt of news, Local MLA R.K. Roja

telephoned district col-

lector M. Hari Narayanan and urged

him to take measures to fill up the breaches and

strengthen the bund.

She blamed the then local MLA, Gali Muddu

Krishnama Naidu of

Telugu Desam, and the

contractor for the poor

Recently, the tank was

project.

ried.



Relatives of a Covid-19 patient taking him to the Government hospital on a two-wheeler for treatment at Benz

### AP records 21,320 new Covid cases, 99 deaths

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 18

Andhra Pradesh registered 21,320 fresh Coronavirus infections and 99 deaths in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities reported that out of 91,253 samples tested, 21,320 persons were found infected with the Coronavirus.

Out of a total of 1,81,40,307 samples tested far in the state, 14,75,372 tested positive for the virus, and of them, 12,54,291 recovered and 2,11,501 are undergo-

In the daily caseload, 10 districts reported more than 1,000 cases each, with East Godavari coming at the top with 2,923 followed, by 2,804 in Anantapur, 2,630 Chittoor, 2,368 in Visakhapatnam, 1,762 in West Godavari, 1,466 in Srikakulam, 1,291 Guntur, 1,251 in Nellore, 1,048 in Krishna, 1,036 in Kadapa, 991 in Kurnool,

Meanwhile, the SP visit-Banaganapalle, Bethamcha and Owk mandals and inspected large numbers and the also urged the public to the enforcement of curfew. He asked the cops not ple to stay indoors. He gencies.

With the spread of Covid-

19 infection even to remote areas, the resi-

FOUR ARRESTED FOR SELLING **REMDESIVIR INJECTIONS IN BLACK** 

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY. 18

Krishna district police nabbed four persons selling remdesivir injections in black market on Tuesday. The police Tuesday. seized five remdesivir injections from the culprits. Krishna district superintendent of police

965 in Vizianagaram and 785 in Prakasam.

East Godavari also tops the state list in the cumulative active cases at 30,463, followed by 23,139 in Chittoor, 20,545 in Prakasam, 20,155 in Visakhapatnam, 18,745 in Nellore, 18,614 in Guntur, 16,637 in Anantapur, 14,502 in West Godavari, 12,781 in Srikakulam. 9,953 in Krishna, 9,789 in Kadapa and 8,406 in Vizianagaram.

In the case of deaths,

He pointed out that infec-

tions were taking place in

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC MAHBUBNAGAR, MAY 18 Vanam (village forest). A congenial atmosphere

Burial ground as isolation

area for Covid-infected

tion in the black market and arrest of four members. The SP said that the police arrested M. Koorella Saibabu, Rukmini, Palaparti Gopiraju and Markapudi Mohana Rao. Chittoor, Krishna and izianagaram recorded 10 each, followed by nine

M. Ravindranath Babu

on Tuesday told the media in Machilipatnam

about the sale of injec-

each in East Godavari and Prakasam, eight each in Anantapur, Guntur, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari, six each in Kurnool and Srikakulam, five in Nellore and two in Kadapa. The state health author-

said 21,274ities Coronavirus patients were discharged after recovery in the last 24 hours in the state.

to brook any violations. asked them to file huge penalties on violators as per Covid guidelines. He large numbers and the also urged the public to

> tive. They spread the infection to the other houses. "As the houses

are small and congested,

we have decided to shift

### **GOVT URGED FOR VACCINATION TO ALL RTC STAFF**

DC CORRESPONDENT

The AP Public Transport Department (APSRTC) National Mazdoor Unity Association has urged the government to protect the lives of RTC employees by administering Corona vaccines to all them on priority. It deplored that as many as 240 employees died due to Covid-19 and 9,200 are suffering from the pandemic across the state.

Association president P.V. Ramana Reddy and secretary Y. Srinivas Rao wrote a letter to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on the problems faced by the RTC staff during the current Covid pandemic surge and appealed to him to direct the medical and health department to vaccinate the RTC staff immediately as 50 per cent employees are yet to be vaccinated.

They requested that the RTC staff be recognised as frontline warriors and provide jobs on compassionate grounds to the families of those claimed by the deadly virus.

They said that in all 18 per cent of the staff had been diagnosed as infected by the virus till now. 240 employees died due to Covid-19.

shift people with symp-

toms of corona to the iso-

lation room. Villagers

are helping them with

isolated people with biryani in the past two

days," the sarpanch said.

A tribal who was isolat-

ed along with 10 others

from his thanda said he

was feeling better with

sufficient sunlight and

sudden improvement in

The retired senior Ayush medical officer explained, "Applying

medicine through eyes is

known as Nethranjanam

in Ayurveda. Medicines,

such as Ananda Bhairavi, Mrityunjaya Ras-

am, Seethansa Rasam,

their oxygen levels.

"We have served these

food and medicines.

## The sarpanch urged the

Gogula Sivaiah, 25, of Veerubotlapalli village in Kaluvoy mandal.

DC CORRESPONDENT **NELLORE, MAY 18** 

Responding to a request associations to give priority for journalists in treatment for Covid, water resources minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav told the district collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu to allot a ward to journalists at Narayana General Hospital in Nellore.

₹50,000 each to the families of journalists who succumbed to the virus recently from his funds.

nalists who died because of Covid-19 last year.



## Many Covid-19 deaths going uncounted

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | VIJAYAWADA, MAY 18

Several Covid-19 deaths are going unreported, especially at private hospitals as people are taking their loved ones home against medical advice when there were bleak chances of survival and performing last rites after their death in various parts of AP.

This practice is very much prevalent in rural areas where family members take patients to hospitals in critical stage, and return with them when told there are no beds, oxygen or other facili-

Such deaths are not being reported to the government. The families prefer this way as they do not want to miss the chance to bid final farewell and conduct last rites, because they would not be handed over the bodies if deaths were due to Covid-19.

Though this practice is also found in urban centres, it is more prevalent in rural

What is worrying is that people are taking back the sick home even if they are found to contract the viral infection, and thus are putting themselves at risk.

In Rajahmundry, a 63-yearold woman was infected with Coronavirus and was admitted in a private hospital. After a few days, as her oxygen levels dropped alarmingly, the hospital advised the family to shift her to any other hospital which has a ventilator. However, losing hope in her recovery, her son hired an ambulance to take her home and on the way, he even purchased a body bag and placed an order for a coffin. of reaching home. Though it was a Covid-19 death, it went unaccounted for. Her family members buried her body at a burial ground as per their tradition. However, her husband and two sons were infected. Her husband is in critical care at KGH, Visakhapatnam. A distant relative, who was asked to take care of her grandchildren aged 10 years and seven months, was also infected along with the older child. Though the child recovered, he lies in critical condition at KGH. The deceased woman's daughter and son-in-law who wore PPE kits during the funeral were, however, not infected.

In another case at Kakinada, a 65-year-old retired employee was infected with the Coronavirus and was taken to the government hospital. His oxygen saturation was down to 80 per cent and also the pulse rate was down. As they could not get a bed, the family made enquiries with some hospitals and called for an ambulance. By the time it arrived, the patient

The body was taken home and the death went unre-

A senior government doctor said, "If Covid-19 deaths fail to be reported properly, the state government may not be able to assess the gravity of the spread of virus and resultant deaths, and come up with a plan to tackle it. So, a mechanism should be evolved to report all such deaths. Covid-19 infected bodies should never be given to family members as it will result in spread of the virus. Covid-19 test should also be done on those who died due to She died within a few hours other reasons to play safe.

### **GOLD WORTH `11 LAKH RECOVERED**

DC CORRESPONDENT **NELLORE, MAY 18** 

Venkatagiri police have arrested a notorious thief and recovered ₹11 lakh worth of gold and a motorcycle from him on Tuesday.

The accused identified as

housebreaking several cases under Venkatagiri police station limits. Sivaiah was in a juvenile home in Tirupati for a long

There are theft cases

against him at Rapuru,

Dakkili, Chejerla, Sangam

and Manubolu police sta-

tions. He as also involved in

time as he started committing thefts.

#### **ANIL GIVES `50K AID TO KIN OF EDUCATIONAL JOURNALISTS CAREER/ENTRANCE**

The minister gave The minister had also

extended financial assistance to the kin of jour-

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#### them to the burial ground (Vaikunta metres away from dents of Kishtampalli Thanda in Nawabpet Kishtampalli. Dhamam) where we have mandal of Mahbubnagar The burial ground is recently built a room." The Vaikunta Dhamam adjacent to the thanda district have hit upon a novel idea — of shifting that has a population of those tested Covid-19 poshas trees that turn the air fresh. This is an ideal itive to the burial ground The village is safe from for isolation purpose. Kishtampalli village Covid-19 but residents of place for people to live in the thanda were infected. isolation. Both electricity and water connections sarpanch Srinivasulu The sarpanch said four said the burial ground is adjacent to the Palle people recently came have been provided

from Pune to the thanda.

prevails there with suffi-

cient natural oxygen sup-

ply. The thanda is 500

## 'Stop Ayurvedic eye drops for Covid'

Specialists, however, opine that government can

examine effectiveness of Anandaiah's medicine by

allowing him to treat 20 critically ill patients after

taking consent from the kin of ailing.

DC CORRESPONDENT **NELLORE, MAY 18** 

Noted physician and Jana Vignana Vedika executive member Dr Ramanaiah has demanded that administering of free eye drops as Covid cure at Krishnapatnam village in Nellore district be stopped forthwith. The doctor feared that people may otherwise lose their eyesight in case these drops are being made in unhygienic conditions.

Likewise, retired senior medical officer of Ayush department, Dr V. Ramakrishna Reddy of Ongole has called for extreme care while producing and administering eye drops. Dr Ramanaiah under-

lined that there is no sci-

entific evidence about

the efficacy of medicines

Krishnapatnam by local Ayurveda doctor Bonigi Anandaiah to thousands of patients making a beeline to the village every

day.
The doctor acknowledged that Anandaiah been offering Ayurveda treatment to

patients affected by brain snake and scorpion bites. However, he expressed surprise that he is now offering treatment for Coronavirus too free of 'Though there is no

danger with oral medi-

cines, eye drops can dam-

age the entire nervous system," Dr Ramanaiah

Ayush medical officer, however, opined that government can examine Anandaiah's medicines by allowing him to treat 20 critically ill patients

after taking consent from the kin of ailing. Dr Ramakrishna Reddy under tongue

through anus is an ageold practice. He said any applied through these four paths gives immediate results, explaining the reason behind critical Covid patients responding to

effectiveness of who are on ventilators

pointed out that administering Ayurvedic medicines through eyes, nose,

and Prabhakaravati, are applied to eyes in the form of paste like Katuka (kajal). Such medicine would reach the brain in seconds and help people come out of even coma, unconsciousness and very high fever," he explained. Dr Ramakrishna Reddy and

said ingredients used by Anandaiah in his oral medicines are harmless. He, however, maintained that the state government should validate these medicines through lab tests before they are administered to general

drops being He and retired senior Krishnapatnam

with

population.

### **NO HIGH COURT RELIEF FOR KALRA**

New Delhi, May 18: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday declined to direct an expeditious decision on the bail plea businessman Navneet Kalra, arrested in connection with alleged black marketing of oxygen concentrators, saying "let the law take its own

Justice Subramonium Prasad declined to interfere with the observations made by a sessions court while dismissing Kalra's anticipatory bail plea, saying the Supreme Court has already laid down the law with regard to observations made by courts and their reporting by media organisa-

The high court declined to grant the reliefs sought on behalf of Kalra, represented by senior advocate Vikas Pahwa, saying that he had moved an anticipatory bail plea which has become infructuous due to his arrest and therefore, nothing remains in

the matter.
Pahwa had made two oral prayers on Tuesday, that directions be issued to the trial court concerned to decide his client's bail plea expeditiously and secondly, to expunge the observations made against Kalra by the sessions court as due to his arrest he can no longer challenge the order denying him anticipatory bail.

#### **NIGHT CURFEW TO CONTINUE IN 36 GUJARAT CITIES**

Ahmedabad, May 17: The night curfew in 36 cities of Gujarat, including nine metros, has been extended by three more days to control the spread of coronavirus, the state government said on

As per the decision taken by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, the limited restrictions, including the curfew between 8 pm and 6 am, will continue to be in place in 36 cities from Tuesday to Thursday, a government release said.

Restrictions currently in force in other parts of Gujarat except these 36 cities will also continue between 6 am on May

18 till 6 am on May 20, it said. Rupani said the government will take a call on whether to extend the night curfew and other curbs beyond May 20 after assessing the situation.

Gujarat on Monday reported 7,135 new coronavirus positive cases, taking its infection count to 7,59,754, while 81 deaths increased the toll in the

state to 9,202, an official said. vernment has only ordered the continuation of essential services and activities during these three days, in accordance with the Centre's guidelines, said the release.

Services directly associated with the operation of Covid-19 and those specified as essential and urgent will not be affected. Medical, paramedical and allied health services, oxygen production and distribution systems will also continue, it said.

### **BADRINATH OPENS AFTER** WINTER CLOSURE

Gopeshwar (U'khand), May 18: The famous temple of Badrinath in the upper Himalayan region Uttarakhand opened after the winter break early on Tuesday amid traditional rituals.

The chief priest of the temple, Ishwar Prasad Namboodiri, opened the portals of the temple at 4.15 am chanting Vedic hymns and praying for the well-being of

However, the opening ceremony was a subdued affair with only a limited number of people, including the priests, Dharmadhikari and administrative attending it in compliance with the Covid-19 standard operating procedure.

In normal circumstances, thousands of people turn up at the high-altitude temple dedicated to Vishnu to witness its opening ceremony.

For the second consecutive year, the temple witnessed a simple, thinly-attended open-

ing ceremony. The temple was decorated with around eight quintals of

marigolds on the occasion. With the opening of Badrinath, all the four Himalayan temples known as char dham are now open in Uttarakhand. Kedarnath opened on Monday while Yamunotri and Gangotri opened on May 14 and 15 respectively. However, they have been kept out of bounds for pilgrims for the time being due to the pandemic.



Guest workers leave for their native states from the inter-state bus terminal at Kaushambhi during the second wave of the Coronavirus in Ghaziabad on Tuesday.



A medic, wearing a PPE, conducts random Covid-19 testing of street vendors near Charbagh Railway Station in Lucknow on Tuesday.

director Dr Priyanka

Shukla has written letters to all chief medical health

officers of the districts in

the state and all the med-

ical establishments in the

state to conduct microbio-

logical surveillance in the

government and private hospitals in their areas

and send weekly reports to

the state health depart-

The state health department asked the govern-

ment and private hospitals

in Chhattisgarh to follow

the standard treatment

protocol set for treatment

of people suffering from black fungus infection.

## MP sees rise in black fungus cases

#### Medical examination of all those who have recovered from Covid-19 to be conducted

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MAY 18

Surge in black fungus infection cases in Madhya Pradesh has sent alarm bells ringing in the state administration forcing the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government to launch microbiological surveillance in the hospitals.

State medical education minister Vishwas Sarang told reporters that the government has launched a drive to detect black fungus infection cases in the state by conducting medical examination of all the

people who have recovered from Covid-19 in MP.

"We have launched microbiological surveil-lance in all the government as well as private hospitals in the state to detect potential cases of black fungus infection. We have ordered medical examination of all the people who have recovered from Covid-19 to detect developing infection cases and treat them", Mr Sarang said.

An official report said a total 500 cases of black fungus infections have been reported in the state

infection has claimed life of a man who had recovered from Covid-19 recently in the state.

"The ongoing survey to detect such cases could only establish the gravity of the situation in the state", a senior officer of the MP health department The state government

has created dedicated treatment facilities for such cases in the five government-run major hospitals in Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur, Gwalior and

injections in the market. We have approached the Centre to ensure adequate supply of antifungal drugs and injections to the state as soon as possible", Mr

Sarang said.

The Madhya Pradesh government had earlier declared that all the patients suffering from black fungus infection would be treated free of cost in all the government hospitals.

The state government on Tuesday fixed prices of the anti-fungus injections manufactured by various "We are facing shortage pharmaceutical compa-of antifungal drugs and nies and warned that

action would be taken against the druggists who were found selling the products at inflated prices. Meanwhile, Chha-ttis-

garh government has also

ordered microbiological surveillance in all the government and private hospitals in Chhattisgarh to detect cases of black fungus infection. "As many as 76 cases of

black fungus infections have been detected in have been uetector. Chhattisgarh so far", a for the spokesman for Chhattisgarh health department told this newspaper on Tuesday. Chhattisgarh

### **EFFORTS BEING MADE TO RAMP UP VACCINE SUPPLY: MODI**

New Delhi, May 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that continuous efforts are being made to ramp up Covid-19 vac cine supply in a big way asserting that attempts are on to provide states 15-day advance schedule of the inoculation programme as it will allow them to prepare accord-

ingly.
Interacting with state and district officials at a virtual meeting, he described them as "field commanders" in the fight against Covid-19 and said localised containment zones, aggressive testing and sharing correct and complete information with people

are weapons to defeat it.

The meeting was attended by district magistrates from 46 districts

across nine states. People's convenience increases when informa-tion like bed availability for the sick or the vaccine availability are easily available, Modi said and also asked officials to curb black-marketing and take strict action should be taken against

tnose wno ao so. Noting that coronavirus infections are decreasing in some states and increasing in some others, he emphasised the need to be more vigilant in the face of decreasing tally and underlined that he has always stressed that the fight is about saving

every single life. Asserting that vaccination is a strong way to fight Covid, Modi said myths about it have to be

collectively rooted out. The health ministry is streamlining the system and process of vaccination, he said, stressing the need to stop vaccine

wastage. Noting that every district has its own unique challenges, he told offi-cials that they had a free hand to innovate to suit their local needs and asked them to share their feedback about any change in policy they may want without any

inhibition. Hailing officials, the prime minister said many of them worked despite being Covid positive while some lost their family members but they gave duty their foremost priority.

'You understand the

challenges of your district much better. So when your district wins, the country wins. When your district beats Corona, the country defeats Corona," a PMO statement said quoting Modi. He asked officials to also take care of the ease of living of every citizen of their district saying there is a need to stop infection and also ensure unhindered flow of essential supplies.

Hailing officials, Modi

### **Ex-IMA chief dies of Covid; 2nd** wave claims 270 doctors so far

New Delhi, May 18: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Tuesday said 270 doctors

The list of the deceased doctors includes former IMA president Dr K.K. Aggarwal, who suc-cumbed to the deadly

virus on Monday. Bihar saw the maximum number of 78 deaths of medical practitioners, followed by Uttar Pradesh (37), Delhi (29) and Andhra Pradesh (22).

According to the IMA Covid-19 registry, 748 doctors succumbed to the disease in the first wave of the pandemic.

"Last year, 748 doctors across India succumbed to Covid-19, while in the current wave, in a short period, we have lost 270 doc-

"The second wave of the pandemic is turning out to be extremely fatal for all and especially for the healthcare workers who are at the forefront," IMA president Dr JA Jayalal said. Padma Shri awardee and eminent cardiologist Dr K.K. Aggarwal has died of Covid-19, a statement posted on his Twitter handle said.

Aggarwal (62), the former national president of Indian

## Corona cases across the country have succumbed to the coronavirus infection in the second wave of the pandemic continue to fall

VINEETA PANDEY I DO NEW DELHI, MAY 18

There appears to be some light at the end of the dark tunnel of the Covid-19 second wave, as for the second consecutive day India recorded less than 3 lakh daily new cases while daily recoveries crossed more than 4.22 lakh for the first

A decline of 1.63 lakh in the active caseload in the last 24 hours was registered, and 2,63,533 new

However, the death fig-

Association (IMA), was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here and was on ventilator support since last week

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Keiriwal described his death as a 'setback for the whole

nation" "Passing away of Dr. KK Aggarwal is a setback for the whole nation. He acted all his life for the health rights of common people especially poor, deprived n Medical marginalized. A great

es continue to be very

It may be noted that a total of 4,329 fresh fatalities were recorded in 24 hours on Tuesday.

Also, several states that earlier reporting very high cases are now showing a decline in daily trends while some others continue to show an upward trajectory.

However, a Union health ministry official on Tuesday said that only two per cent of total population has been affected so far and 98 per cent are still susceptible.

human being. RIP! (sic)," he wrote on Twitter. According to the statement posted on Twitter, Aggarwal passed away at 11.30 pm on Monday after

"lengthy battle with Covid-19" "Even during the pandemic, he made constant efforts to educate the masses and was able to reach out to 100 million people through numerous videos and educational

programmes and saved countless lives. He wanted his life to be celebrated and not mourned," the statement

Aggarwal posted videos raising awareness about the deadly virus on his Twitter handle. Even while he was hospitalised, india ker uploading videos about

In January, Aggarwal's banter with his wife during a live session on a social media platform had left netizens in splits. In the video, Aggarwal's wife was heard scolding him for going to take the anti-Covid vaccine shot alone

and not taking her along. The former IMA president is survived by wife Dr Veena Agarwal, son Nilesh and daughter Naina. He had received the Padma Shri, the country's fourth-highest civilian honour, in 2010. He was also honoured with the Dr B.C. Roy Award.

Aggarwal's name was mentioned in the Limca Book of Records for training the maximum number of people in the lifesaving technique of hands-only CPR at one go.

Aggarwal was born in Delhi on September 5,

He completed his MBBS from MGIMS, Sevagram University, where he was adjudged the best graduate in 1979.



Relatives of a patient react to the non-availability of a bed at a Covid hospital in Kolkata.

### Odisha extends curbs till June 1

**AKSHAYA KUMAR** SAHOO | DC **BHUBANESWAR, MAY 18** 

The Odisha government on Tuesday extended the lockdown restrictions in the state till June 1 to arrest the steady surge in cases of Covid-19.

The first two-week long lockdown that came into force in the state on May 5 set to end on Wednesday.

According to chief secretary Suresh Kumar Mohapatra, after thorough consultation with health experts, the gov-ernment decided to extend the lockdown for two more weeks.

Sources said the State had exhibited a Test Positivity Rate (TPR) of 20 per cent but after nearly two weeks of lockdipped to 18.2 per cent. This apart, in another

major development, the government revised the period of relaxation for availing of essential commodities from 6 am to 12 pm daily to 7 am to 11 am. "The weekend shut-down will however con-

tinue as usual. Tighter restrictions will be clamped during the weekends and violators will be strictly dealt with," chief secretary Mr Mohapatra informed through a virtual press briefing. Offices in private/ cor-

porate and civil society sector shall work with reduced manpower, preferably at 33 per cent of their staff strength. Government offices will function with not more than 10 per cent staff.

### FIGHTING I COVID Over 1,000 children, parents reach out to govt helpline to tackle Covid woes

## Kids, parents open up about Covid stress

From facing loneliness in Covid-19 isolation ward to exhibiting aggressive behaviour after parents contracted the virus, over 1,000 children and parents have reached out to government helpline seeking

With an objective of providing psychological firstaid and emotional support to children affected during

the pandemic, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is providing telecounselling to children Samvedna

(Sensitising Action on Mental Health Vulnerability through Emotional Development Acceptance) - a toll-free helpline launched to provide psycho-social mental support for affected children. According to Women and Child Development Ministry officials, redressal of 1,009 complaints have been done between

In a case from a Covid-19 isolation centre in Aurangabad, a 15-year-old child expressed frustra-

2021.

September, 2020 to May 7,

tion over not getting enough love from parents due to more number of siblings and called up to talk about her parents' pressure of getting her married of early.

The counsellor spoke to the child and her parents and suggested to encourage her to focus on aca-

In another case, parent of a six-year-old child in Kanpur called to discuss the aggressive behaviour lodged in an isolation centre after contracting the

The counsellor suggested that the child engage in different activities like narrating stories or playing with toys. It was found that as the parents were keeping to themselves after the family tested positive, the child was feeling lonely and exhibiting aggressive behaviour.

A 17-year-old boy from Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli isolation centre called up and talked about being scared of loneliness. The counsellor advised him to spend time engaging in activities he is interested in and making a reg-

ular routine to get away from boredom. This tele-counselling

service is available on a toll-free number 1800-121-2830 from Monday to Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm and 3 pm to 8 pm and is exclusively for children who are willing to talk and are in need of counselling. When a child/caretak-

er/parent dials Samvedna, they get to speak to a pro-fessional counsellor in a safe environment. Telecounselling is provided to children under three categories: children who are in quarantine/isolation/Cov

id care centres, children who have Covid positive parents or family members, and children who have lost their parents due to the pandemic. This service caters to

children from all over India in various regional languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Oriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, the Women and Development Child Ministry said.

service launched in September 2020 and aims to support children in the difficult times of pandemic.

said many of them worked despite being Covid positive while some lost their family members but they gave duty their priority.

### SHORT TAKES **SHARK KILLS SURFER OFF OZ**

**EAST COAST Sydney, May 18:** A surfer was killed by a shark on Tuesday off the Australian east coast, police said.

The man, aged in his 50s, had been surfing off Forster, 220 kilometres (137 miles) north of Sydney, when he was attacked late in the morning, a police statement said.

Onlookers pulled the man from the water suffering criti-cal injuries to his upper right thigh, police said.

The Ambulance Service said the man could not be resuscitated despite the best efforts of paramedics and bystanders at the scene.

Forster beaches have been closed. Police said they were working with government authorities to identify the species of shark.

Lower North Coast Surf Life Saving branch president Brian Wilcox said a drone search after the attack had spotted two sharks in the area.

#### **JET RETURNS TO SAN JOSE AFTER ENGINE ISSUE**

San Jose, May 18: Federal officials say an American Airlines plane returned to the main San Jose airport shortly after takeoff on Monday after pilots reported an issue with one of the plane's two engines.

The airline said the pilots shut down the engine after an indicator light came on. The Federal Aviation Administration said it was investigating the incident. American Airlines flight 2049 took off for Phoenix but circled and returned to Mineta San Jose International Airport shortly after takeoff. The airline said the plane landed safely and taxied to the ter-

minal, and no one was injured. There were 112 passengers and five crew members on board the Airbus A320.

The two engines on the 20-year-old jet were made by International Aero Engines, a joint venture of Pratt & Whitney and German and

Japanese companies. In February, a Pratt & Whitney engine shed pieces of the housing over Denver during a United flight.

#### **400 KG COCAINE BOUND FOR KOSOVO SEIZED**

Rome, May 18: Italian border police said Tuesday they seized more than 400 kilogrammes of cocaine from South America in a joint operation with Kosovar and Albanian authorities.

market value of more than 100 million euros (\$122 million), were first detected at the port of Gioia Tauro, in the southern Italian region of Calabria.

They were hidden in a container coming from Santos, Brazil "officially containing chicken," the Guardia di Finanza border police said in a

Italian authorities decided to let the container continue its journey and arrive at its final destination in Lipjan, Kosovo.

There, Italian, Albanian and Kosovar police intervened and arrested 25 people, including seven charged with international drug trafficking.

Italy is known as a key hub for the illegal drugs trade, and its fearsome 'Ndrangheta mafia, based in Calabria, controls most of the cocaine entering Europe.

#### **CANADIAN JAILED** FOR SMUGGLING **IMMIGRANTS**

Washington, May 18: A Sri Lankan-origin Canadian national on Monday was sentenced to 32 months in prison on charges of smuggling undocumented immigrants from Sri Lanka into the US for financial gains. Sri Kajamukam Chelliah, aka Mohan, in his February guilty plea admitted to conspiring with others to facilitate the travel of undocumented immigrants from Sri Lanka through Haiti, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the Bahamas to the United States from on or about July 1, 2019, through on

or about October 10, 2019. Federal prosecutors said during the course of the conspiracy, Chelliah worked with other human smugglers, arranging housing and transport for undocumented immigrants en route to Canada through the

United States. Chelliah arranged for the individuals to be transported from the airport in Port Au Prince, Haiti, to a hotel where he housed and provided them with food. He then arranged for transportation by boat from Haiti to Turks and Caicos Islands, then to the Bahamas, and then by boat to Miami,

## HK suspends operations of its Taiwan office

Hong Kong, May 18: Hong Kong is temporarily shutting its representative office in Taiwan, officials said Tuesday in the latest indication of strai-

ned ties. "The Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (Taiwan) has temporarily suspended operations with effect from today," Hong Kong's gov-ernment said in a brief statement, which did not give a reason for the closure. A government spokesperson said that the decision "has nothing to do with the Coronavirus situation" in Taiwan where cases have recently spiked and prompted the reimposition of some social

distancing measures.
Asked whether the closure was tied to politics, the spokesperson declin-

ed to comment. Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, which handles relations with China, said it "deeply regrets the Hong Kong government's unilateral decision" and vowed to keep its own office in the financial hub open despite strained ties.

Hong Kong abides by authoritarian China's view that democratic, self-ruled Taiwan is part of its territory and must be seized one day, by force if necessary. Like Beijing, Hong Kong does not recognise Taiwanese authorities as legitimate.

### **NEW CATHOLIC BISHOP: RESPECT PLURALITY**

Hong Kong, May 18: Hong Kong's incoming Roman Catholic bishop Stephen Chow called for plurality to be respected, in a time of polarisation in the Catholic community as the city's political situation deteriorates.

Chow said while he had "no big plan" on how to unify a diocese that had become politically polarised over the last two year rs amid months of antigovernment protests in Hong Kong, he believed that God wanted them to be united.

"Unity is not the same as uniformity," Chow said at a news conference Tuesday. "One thing I've always mentioned recently in schools is (there is) unity is plurality.

However, there is a huge amount of trade between Hong Kong and Taiwan. According to Hong Kong's government, Taiwan is its second-largest trading partner, its third-largest market for domestic exports, its fifth-largest market for re-exports and its second-largest source



Bangladeshi journalist Rozina Islam, (C), is escorted by

### Scribe's health anomaly stories lands her in jail

Dhaka, May 18: A senior Bangladeshi woman jour-nalist, known for her investigative reporting, was arrested on charges of violating a colonial-era official secrecy law, the police said on Tuesday, triggering protests by the rights groups and her colleagues. Rozina Islam, a senior reporter of Bangla daily Prothom Alo, the largest daily newspaper based on circulation, was on Monday detained for over five hours by the Health Ministry officials for allegedly clicking a picture of a document with her cell phone with-

out permission. She was later arrested by the police. The ministry filed a case against her at around midnight under the 1923 Official Secrets Act while she spent her night under the police custody, the police said. She was produced before a court here with a petition seeking her to be remanded in custody for five days, which the judge rejected and sent her to jail to await the routine

legal procedures. The judge said he would entertain the prosecution charge and the defence statements including her bail petition on Thursday A prosecution lawyer told reporters that "whether the allegation is true or false, a case has been filed" which needed a procedure to be disposed of.

Rozina, who earned the reputation of being an investigative journalist has in recent months published several reports exposing the health ministry's alleged malpractices during the Covid-19 pan-demic, drawing public attention. She also published several reports involving the health sector which included alleged graft in procurement at the health ministry, corruption in doctors' recruitment and how urgent medical equipment for Coronavirus treatment were left at Dhaka airport for months. "The incident is unfortunate," Health Minister Zahid Maleque told TV channels without elaborating further. -PTI

## 10 wounded, 4 seriously, in Gaza strike: Israeli medics

Attack came as Palestinians went on strike in a rare collective action

Gaza City (Gaza Strip), May 18: A strike launched from Gaza on Tuesday wounded 10 people in southern Israel, four of them seriously, Israeli medics reported, as Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers continued to trade attacks.

The projectile attack Tuesday afternoon hit a region in southern Israel, according to the Magen David Adom rescue service. It came as Palestinians across Israel and the occupied territories went on strike in a rare collective action against Israel's policies. With the war in Gaza showing no sign of abating and truce efforts apparently stalled, the general strike and expect-ed protests could again widen the conflict after a spasm of communal violence in Israel and protests across the occupied West

Bank last week.

Israel's airstrikes toppled a six-storey building that housed bookstores and educational centres used by the Islamic University and other colleges, leaving behind a massive mound of rebar and concrete slabs. Desks, office chairs, books and computer wires could be seen in the debris. Residents sift-ed through the rubble, searching for their belongings. Israel warned the building's residents ahead of time, sending them fleeing into the predawn darkness, and there were no reports of casualties.

Israel said it was targeting militants, their tunnels and rocket launchers across the territory. "The whole street started running, then destruction, an earthquake," said Jamal Herzallah, a resident of the area. "This whole area was shaking." Heavy fighting broke out

May 10 when Gaza's militant Hamas rulers fired long-range rockets toward Jerusalem in support of Palestinian protests against Israel's heavy-handed policing of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, a flashpoint site sacred to Jews and Muslims, and the threatened eviction of dozens of Palestinian families by  $I_{owish}$  settlers. -AP



## Biden supports Israel's right to self defence

Washington, May 18: US President Joe Biden, in a telephonic call with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, supported Israel's "right to defend itself" against indiscriminate rocket attacks and encouraged him to make every effort to ensure the protection of innocent civilians, the White House has said. Biden welcomed efforts to address inter-communal violence and to bring calm to Jerusalem, the White House said in a

readout of the call. During the phone call on Monday, Biden reiterated his firm support for Isra-el's "right to defend itself" against indiscriminate rocket attacks, it said. He encouraged Israel to make every effort to ensure the protection of innocent civefforts to address intercommunal violence and to bring calm to Jerusalem, the White House said in a readout of the call.

The two leaders discussed progress in Israel's military operations against Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza, the White House said. "The President expressed his support for a ceasefire and discussed the US engagement with Egypt and other part-ners towards that end," said the readout.

Palestinian militant group Hamas has fired more than 3,000 rockets over Israel during the past seven days, pushing more than half of Israel's popu-

lation into shelter houses and Israel has carried out hundreds of devastating retaliatory attacks in Gaza. More than 200 people have been killed in the recent escalation in the region, including a caregiver from India. US Secretary of State

Tony Blinken, who is travelling right now, also spoke to his Israeli counterpart, Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi and discussed America's efforts to bring an end to the violence, which has claimed the lives of Israeli and Palestinian civilians, including children, said State Department Spokesperson Ned Price.

"Blinken also expressed deep concern at the intercommunal

### **EU MULLS WAYS** TO HELP DEFUSE **ONGOING CONFLICT**

Brussels, May 18: European Union foreign ministers are meeting Tuesday to discuss how to use the 27-nation bloc's political clout to help diplomatic efforts to end the fighting between the Israeli armed forces and Palestinian

militants.

The EU has been united in its calls for a ceasefire and the need for a political solution to end the latest conflict — now in its second week — but the nations are divided over how best to help. No firm decisions involving threats of sanctions or other measures are likely from the ministers' video-conferen-ce. At least 212 Palestinians have been killed in heavy airstrikes so far, including 61 children, and over 1,400 people wound-Gaza's Ministry said.

-AP

## China offers to host Afghan peace talks

which has stepped up its diplomacy between Pakistan and Afghanistan in the wake of the US troops withdrawal from the wartorn country, has offered to host peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Significantly, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who in the last two days held telephone talks with his Pakistani and Afghan counterparts, said that

han government headed by Ashraf Ghani in playing a leading role. The offer to facilitate peace talks was made during Wang's phone talks with his Afghan counterpart Mohammad Haneef Atmar on Monday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told a me-

dia briefing on Tuesday. Asked to elaborate, Zhao said, "China is ready to facilitate intra-Afghan tal-

sary conditions for negotiation in China." The US had announced its plans to withdraw its troops completely from Afghanistan by September.

The US troop pull-out has raised concerns in Beijing that it may lead to the regrouping of Xinjiang province's Uygur Muslim militants in Afghanistan, which shares borders with China.

During their telephonic

conversation, Wang told Atmar that "China will continue to support the Afghan government in playing a leading role in the country's peace and reconciliation process", state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Wang also called on all parties to support and implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions to promote a smooth transition of the Afghanistan situation, to avoid in

terrorist forces, it said. In a comment that may not go down well with the Taliban, Wang, according to the report, expressed his hope that Afghanistan's future leadership will pursue a moderate Muslim policy, promote a fore-ign policy of peace, maintain friendship with neighbouring countries, and

firmly combat all forms of

terrorism.

### 6K migrants arrive by sea: Spain, Morocco square off

diplomatic crisis Tuesday after thousands of Moroccans took advantage of relaxed border controls in their nation to swim or paddle in inflatable boats onto European soil.

By Tuesday morning, around 6,000 people had crossed the border into feet) fence.

**Madrid, May 18:** Spain the Spanish city of Ceuta faced a humanitarian and since the first arrivals began early Monday, the Spanish government said, including 1,500 thought to

be teenagers.
The city of 85,000 people lies in North Africa on the Mediterranean Sea, separated from Morocco by a double-wide, 10-metre (32-

The sudden influx of migrants into Spain has deepened the diplomatic row between Rabat and Madrid in the wake of Spain's decision to allow in for medical treatment of the chief of a militant group that fights for the

y's meeting of the Arctic

nations' foreign ministers

in Reykjavik, Iceland, wh-

ere Moscow is set to take a

rotating chairmanship in

The base, which sits

about 1,000 kilometres (600

miles) south of the geogra-

phic North Pole, was built

using new construction te-

the Arctic Council.

### **Moeed Yusuf is** Pakistan's NSA

**Islamabad, May 18:** Pakistan PM Imran Khan has appointed his Special Assistant on National Security Moeed Yusuf as the country's National Security Adviser (NSA). Yusuf's elevation comes

in the backdrop of the reported backchannel communication with India early this year, resulting in the restoration of the 2003 ceasefire agreement on the Line of Control in February. A notification dated May 17 was issued by the Cabinet Division to appoint Yusuf as the NSA. "The Prime Minister has been pleased to approve that Dr Moeed W. Yusuf, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Security and Strategic Policy Planning, shall function as National Security Adviser with the status of Federal Minister, with immediate effe-

ct," the notification read. Last month, Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhry was asked by several journalists about reportbackchannel talks

with India. Instead of outright rejection, he said: "States have their ways and me ans to communicate which remain available even during wars. Therefore, whether any talks are taking place between India and Pakistan is not important.

In New Delhi, asked about the media reports that backchannel talks between India and Pakistan were going on for more than a year, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi did not give a direct reply.

"If you talk about channels of communication on this issue, let me just recall that our respective high commissions exist and are functioning. So that is a very effective channel of communication," Bagchi said last month. India has told Pakistan that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Islamabad in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence. India has said the onus is on Pakistan to create an environment free

of terror and hostility. Yusuf is an academic with experience of working at various think tanks in the US.

**VAST** | RESOURCES | Shrinking polar ice offers opportunities for shipping routes

## Russian base projects its Arctic power

May 18: During the Cold War, Russia's Nagurskoye airbase was little more than a runway, a weather station and a communications outpost in the Franz Josef Land archipelago.

It was a remote and deso-late home mostly for polar bears, where temperatures plunge in winter to minus-42 Čelsius (43 degrees below zero Fahrenheit) and the snow only disappears from August to mid-September. Now, Russia's northernmost military base is bristling with missiles and radar and its extended runway can handle all types of aircraft, including nuclear-capable strategic bombers, projecting Moscow's power and influence across the Arctic amid intensifying international competition for the region's

vast resources. shamrock-shaped — three large pods extending from a central atrium  $\stackrel{\circ}{-}$  is called the "Arctic Trefoil" and is painted in the white-redand-blue of the national flag, brightening the otherwise stark vantage point on the 5.600-kilometre (3,470-mile) Northern Sea Route along Russia's Arctic coast.

Other buildings on the Island, which is called Alexandra Land, are used for radar and communications, a weather station, oil storage, hangars and construction facilities. Russia has sought to assert its influence over wide areas of the Arctic in competition with the United States, Canada, Denmark

and Norway as shrinking polar ice from the warming planet offers new opportunities for resources and shipping routes. China also has shown an

increasing interest in the region, believed to hold up to one-fourth of the Earth's undiscovered oil and Russian President Vladimir Putin has cited estimates that put the value of Arctic mineral riches at \$30 trillion.

Tensions between Russia and the West will likely loom large over Thursda-

chnologies as part of Kremlin efforts to bolster the military amid spiralling tensions with the West fol lowing Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

#### DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | WEDNESDAY | 19 MAY 2021

## **Chronicle**

### CBI's partisanship mars its actions over Narada

ose who are found to have broken the law must face the full force of the law. In a democracy no one is too high to be placed above this principle, which cannot but apply in the case of the West Bengal ministers and MLAs arrested in the Narada sting case that came to light in 2016 though the sting had been carried out two years earlier.

Where public servants are concerned — and the expression includes legislators - there is a moral dimension as well. They are keepers of public trust and exercise authority, including over public finances, in the name of the people. When they misuse their position for their private gain, the faith of the people in the system as a whole is shaken, and that is why they must not be permitted to get away when

However, in order that public servants are not harassed through motivated or frivolous complaints, or for vexatious ends, procedures are laid down for their investigation or arrest. The first step here is grant of sanction for their prosecution

by appropriate authority.

partnership with states Covid-19 pandemic. But the Modi government's priority evidently lies days flat.

In the case of chief minister Mamata Banerjee's ministers — Firhad Hakim and Subrata Mukherjee — and MLA and former minister Madan Mitra — ordinarily the Speaker of the Assembly should have been the minister Madan Mitra. of the Assembly should have been the proper responsible Centre of the Assembly should have been authority to accord sanction for their prosecushould be working in tion. This is pretty much standard procedure.

rtnership with states to fight the dreaded Instead, state governor Jagdeep Dhankar, who appears to be fast acquiring a reputation for political partisanship losing over his status as high constitutional authority, was approached by the CBI and the arrests followed in five

The Assembly had just been constituted after the recent state election and the Speaker would have been place in a matter of days. Yet, the CBI chose to approach the governor

for sanction although it could just easily have waited a few days more in such an old case. This cannot but re-confirm its status as the Centre's "caged parrot" Sadly, the governor did not send the file back either. This is so much the pity and does no good to India's claim to be a constitutional democracy.

Is it not a little curious that the CBI did not seek permission for the prosecution

of Mukul Roy, who defected to BJP some years ago, and Suvendu Adhikari, who defected to the saffron party weeks before the recent election and is now the leader of the Opposition in the Assembly? This episode re-asserts the widely held impression that the BJP has become a dry-cleaner and acquiring its membership permits allegedly tainted politicos to come out smelling of roses.

This is a time when a responsible Centre should be working in partnership with states to fight the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic. But the Modi government's priority

It is signalling that after BJP's emphatic defeat at the hands of the Trinamul Congress in the recent state polls, the Centre would take the fight against the legit-imate victors to the extremes through the blatant manipulation of procedures even at the cost of hurting the spirit of democracy. Centre-state relations become collateral damage in such a scenario. Development and people's welfare will be on the backburner as political fights escalate, probably in the end leading to street battles. Truly, all this means the willful negation of the mandate of the people.

### Taxes & FDI: Change attitude

Tt is one of life's simplest aphorisms that you can't have the cake and eat it too. If the Government of India's approach to getting foreign investment is akin to having the cake, its attitude towards trade disputes in which foreign investors emerge victorious as in international arbitration is the equivalent of wanting to eat the cake. The Scottish oil exploration company Cairn Energy has exposed this contradiction in official India's approach even as it has escalated the process by mov ing to attach Air India's properties abroad on the legal premise that the national carrier is India's alter ego.

A law on retrospective taxation that the previous UPA government passed in 2012 had proved extremely damaging to the country's reputation as an investment destination. Vodafone hit the arbitration trail to expose India's income tax claims as arbitrary. The basic approach hasn't changed despite NDA being in the saddle when losing such claims in arbitration awards. Far from being graceful in defeat and settling, official India has pursued matters legally through appeal and this after having acted in a questionable and predatory manner in the Cairn issue by selling the company's assets and shares to monetise its claims.

Official India can lay a claim to a sovereign right to its tax laws but this does little for the image of a country desperately seeking foreign investments in industry as they come with considerable job generating qualities while also fulfilling the "make in India" criterion dear to the central government as a policy initiative best serving national interests. At one time, there were as many as 17 claims, stemming from disputes over undelivered incentives, retrospective taxation and payment disputes, with regard to investments under bilateral treaties through which capi-

The impression India leaves in potential foreign investors is it is a difficult country to deal with because its track record is not that good in keeping its word and delivering on promises after attracting investments. Only a change in attitude can help correct that and settling Cairn's \$1.2 billion award would be one way to demonstrate that India is keen on facilitating ease of doing business.

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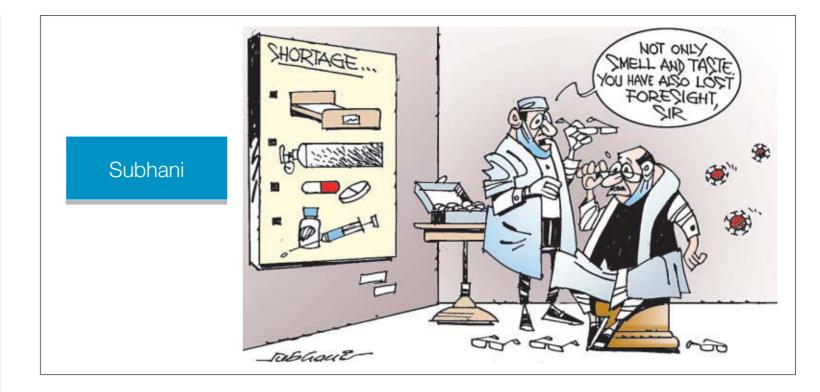
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## India can vaccinate swiftly by using 'mohalla method'



Probal DasGupta

he irony is stark. Millions scramble for oxygen cylinders beds, hospital oscillating between life and death. Around the same time, several other millions decided the political fortunes of five states/UTs. Earlier this year, Indians defied a mortal fear of the coronavirus and voted in large numbers, with a turnout of 70 per cent or higher across states. On jabs, though, it was different. A listless rollout plan curtailed the availability of vaccines and people's tentativeness only hastened the inevitable. In two weeks, a second wave swept India, spiralling into its biggest crisis. An overpowered medical infrastructure burst at its

But that's not the point. While every life-saving equipment is a survival kit, it's the pace of vaccinations that will ultimately ensure the virus. The point is: the secret to winning this war lies in our learning from past experience, including

January 13, 2011 was a historic day for India. A two-year old child in West Bengal was found crippled by polio but was later cured. It was the last time polio would strike here. That day, India became polio-free. Two years earli-er, India housed half the world's polio cases. No one thought the country could ever eradicate it. However, aided by the state, Unicef and others, India's feverish campaign against polio, led by 2.5 million vaccinators, touched 200 million homes, with 700,000 vaccinations in each round. Despite its challenges of poor infra-structure, India relied on its strengths: a "mohalla", or community, outreach.

Today, only 12 per cent Indians have got their first dose, against 50 per cent in America. Currently, the vaccination rate is less than half million a day,

sometimes falling further, given the shortage of vaccines. At this rate, it may take until summer 2022 to vaccinate 75 per cent of India. Are we prepared for more casualties until then?

A more dynamic and swifter pace of vaccinations is the antidote to arrest fatality numbers, build confidence and encourage a quicker economic revival. The polio experience is a test case. Juxtaposing the polling principle onto the vaccine execution plan gives it the kick it requires. The polling database, with details of citizens and their residences, is a ready master-sheet. In December 2020, Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla asked (then) chief election commissioner Sunil Arora to identify people above 50 at the polling station level. A promising start was made, but the plan ignored key aspects of our election experience. We should replicate our polling expertise, that was used in the polio campaign: the 'mohalla method"

Currently, the approach of using hospitals for vaccinations has proved counterproductive. A sudden desperation and opening up of vaccinations for the 18-44 age group has led to queues. inevitably means a high probability of an infection while on a hospital visit. Using the CoWin platform to register and then showing up with identifiers like PAN or Aadhaar cards at selected jab centres like schools, community halls or sports venues often used as polling booths will decentralise the process. Mumbai and Gurgaon recently started "drive-in iabs. More such measures must be undertaken across the country. The aim should be to reach people, rather than herding them at overcrowded hospitals.

The "mohalla method" will increase vaccinated numbers in clusters. The knock-on effect is that as

neighbourhoods vaccinate, infections will slow down in clusters, creating identisafe Earmarked vaccinated zones enable city administrations to loosen lockdowns methodically in areas where jabs have crossed high numbers and infections have fallen. Using age as the sole cri-

teria for prioritisation, instead of a combination of age, economic status and population density, was always expected to pose challenges. The prioritisation of senior citizens meant most people unlikely to go to work were vaccinated first. Next in line were the 45-plus population, many of whom can afford private vehicles. The most vulnerable population was the 18-45 age group — where more people use public transport. Given India has over 70 per cent people under 45, and most frontline workers including delivery personnel fall

in this category, the approach meant most of India was unvaccinated against the second wave. States with worse Covid numbers could form the bigger focus in this vacci-nation plan. At a city level, densely populated areas booths -- based on voter lists from elections. Citizens who aren't on voters' lists in their neighbourhoods can Aadhaar cards. This also helps those facing a tech

challenge in online registrations. The "mohalla method" demands deployment of substantial numbers of health workers, logistics, and vaccines. Cynics may say this isn't possible. But it actually works. India has over 12 lakh medical professionals, 7-8 lakh alternative medicine professionals, around two lakh medical students, diagnostic centre professionals,

national jab rate of 10 million (one crore) a day, which means vaccinating the country in 4-5 months. If a third wave were to arrive in late 2021, most of India would have been vaccinated.

We can reach a

ing assistants to provide jabs, the local police and paramilitary to handle the logistics and the armed forces to provide administrative support. Every neighbourhood can plan 5-6 centres of 25-30 volunteers

each. Neighbourhood clusters could be simultaneously vaccinated in around 45-60 days (given availability of healthcare resources, vaccine supplies and errors in calculation). We can reach a national jab rate of 10 million (one crore) a day, which means vaccinating the country in 4-5 months. In a worst-case scenario, if a third wave were to arrive in late 2021, most of India have would vaccinated. But do we have vaccines?

Choosing just two vaccines and then exporting them when just eight per cent of India was vaccinated was bound to lead to shortages. India needs over two billion jabs. Scaling up is a no-brainer. J&J's Phase 3 trials are set to begin. Russia's Sputnik V is here and will be distributed by Dr Reddy's Labs. Bharat Biotech has ramped up its capacity from 200 million to 700 million doses a year. India has asked for a waiver on intellectual property and barriers on vaccines from Europe and America. It's taken a catastrophe

for us to realise we must speed up vaccinations. To execute the blueprint, the bottom line is to shed lethargic bureaucracy and ensure an efficient supply chain and execution. A crisis taskforce needs to have a crack team of senior experts from amongst medical professionals, the armed forces and civil services. Like the polio campaign earlier, a targeted media campaign involving cricket and movie stars must be the focus. The campaign must be on a war footing and the national leadership has to make this period count. The war isn't over till we have enough ammunition to fight for our citizens. And we must vaccinate to win.

The writer, a retired Army officer, is the author of Watershed 1967, based on a forgotten war between India and China, and a member of the guest faculty at New York's Columbia University

### **LETTERS**

### **SONU SOOD**

Sonu Sood the Bollywood actor has mesmerised millions by his humanistic tendencies and by his humanitarian approach to the panic-stricken people due to lack of oxygen and other amenities in this pandemic time. We salute this super hero.

**Dr Syed Sarmad** 

#### NARADA FALLOUT

The selective arrests of Trinamool Congress leaders leaving other accused who belong to the BJP in the Narada chit fund scam case by the CBI in West Bengal is surpris-ing. The brazen acts of omission and commission by the Central agency and its differential treatment of the accused of a same case would hurt fate of the case itself. **Dr D.V.G. Sankararao** *Vizianagaram* 

#### **GOOD DECISION**

In this prevailing Covid-19 pandemic situation, it was a good decision to extend the curfew as the cases are piling up at hospital doorsteps (Partial lockdown in AP) till May 31, DC, May 18). In addition, the announcement made by the government to provide financial aid to the children is a welcome move.

M. Vinesh Visakhapatnam

### 50 YEARS AGO IN Chronicle **New colony to**

#### come up on **Jubilee Hills** HYDERABAD, May 18.

The Jubilee Hills Co-operative House Building Society here, as been making good progress dur ing the last two years and construction of about 500 houses is expected to commence shortly.

The Society has acquired about 1,400 acres of land, with a view to provide fully developed plots for nearly 2,500 members for construction of houses. Facilities have not been made for starting construction of 500 houses in the first phase.

Situated as it is at a height of about 2,000 feet, the colony when developed, would be one of the most beautiful residential places in the city with well laid out parks and lawns, wide roads and all facilities.

Standing atop the hillocks or sitting in the balcony of a house one an have a panaromic view of

Sanjay Kumar



Covid crisis

across India

arious factors contributed to the BJP's poor performance in the West Bengal Assembly elections and one can't relate its poor showing only to the severe Covid-19 crisis and its mismanagement across the country. But the political fallout of the Covid crisis and its mismanagement for the BJP can't be ruled out. The results of the Uttar Pradesh panchayat elections have already given a glimpse of the challenge the BJP may face in the near future. It faced a tough challenge from the Samajwadi Party in the panchayat polls. The severe health crisis that India is facing at the moment may not have yet made the extremely popular Prime Minister Narendra Modi unpopular, but disappointment among a large number of Indians has started building. People may not directly blame the PM for the present health cri-sis, though some do, but what seems to have disappointed many Indians is his continued campaign for his party in West Bengal, which saw eight phases of

With Covid cases rising alarmingly in several states, and cities gasping for

oxygen, there were even demands to merge the last few phases of the West Bengal polls to reduce the campaign, but the Centre was silent and BJP leaders continued to address big rallies in that state. Prime Minister Narendra Modi cancelled his rallies, which seems to have done damage control over people's disenchantment with Mr Modi, but the Election Commission, that announced a ban on big rallies hours after Mr Modi's announcement that he was cancelling his rallies, created the perception among ordinary people that his move was guided by the EC's decision, of which he may have got a hint in advance.

What seems to have disappointed many people is Mr Modi's somewhat delayed effort in trying to address the Covid crisis, weeks after India plunged from one crisis to another -- from nonavailability of beds to the shortage of oxygen, not to mention the non-availability of ventilators for patients in desperate need of it for treatment. When the country faced these multiple health crises, what people saw was Prime Minister Modi addressing several election rallies in West Bengal. People saw

this as a huge contrast to last year's Covid crisis and Mr Modi's handling of it. Last year, when Covid-19 had just erupted in India, Prime Minister Modi was in full command, as he took charge and announced a nationwide lockdown. There was criticism of the way the lockdown was announced and implemented without giving advance notice, but overall Mr Modi was applauded for his bold decision which seemed to have prevented the spread of Covid-19 across India.

Now, when people were looking towards Mr Modi for his leadership in handling this crisis, he failed to establish a connect with people. Citizens remember that during last year's crisis, that was far less severe than this one, he led from the front, addressed the nation several times, and kept a connect with ordinary people. It is true that the Centre is trying its best to solve even this present crisis and started the import of Covid vaccines and oxygen, along with several other such steps, but these should have been done much earlier. Though the Centre took these initiatives, at the same time it always tried to shift the responsibility to state

governments, on the ground that health is a state subject. Putting the blame on state governments for the current health disaster was not appreciated by most people. It is important to note that there has been no change in the constitutional provisions — health was a state subject last year, as it is this year -- so why did the Centre take all the praise last year and now, as things are going out of hand, is trying to pass the blame to the states?

What might complicate the issue further and contribute to the growing disenchantment of people with the Central government, Prime Minister Modi and the BJP, is the emerging controversy around the pricing of the Covid vaccines. Not that there were no controversies around vaccination earlier, there were news about a shortage of vaccines and India having exported vaccines to various countries, but the tu-tu-mai-mai between the states and New Delhi may increase further on the differential pricing of the vaccines. It is understood that as of now the same vaccine will be procured by the states at a higher price, but it would be available to the Centre at a lower price. This dif-

ferential price is understandable if it is between private and government hospitals, but it is hard for an ordinary citizen to understand why he has to pay a higher price if he is given a vaccine purchased by a state government and a esser price if the same vaccine is pur-

chased by the Central government. What seems to have made people feel unhappy with the Centre is its lack of initiative in negotiating with the Serum Institute of India for a better price, and instead advising the states to negotiate the price themselves. The question is — why can't the Centre take the initiative on this? This is not a "normal" health crisis across the country. in the midst of a raging pandemic, the question of whether health is a state subject or not should not even arise. Some states many have erred in their preparations, but it is not the time to play the blame game. This is a time for all the states and the Centre to work together and fight a national calamity.

The writer is a professor at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and a political analyst. The views expressed here are personal. DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | WEDNESDAY | 19 MAY 2021

INDICATOR	RS	%
Sensex	50,203.73	1.26
Nifty 50	15,108.10	1.24
S&P 500*	4,159.06	-0.10
Dollar (₹)	73.04	0.24
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.58	-0.30
Euro (₹)	88.95	0.05
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,833▲333	0.69
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	67.56	-2.74
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.976	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.654	0.014
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

### **Credit Suisse to** hire over 1,000 IT staff in India

Credit Suisse Group said it planned to hire over 1,000 IT employees in India this year to show its commitment to the country and its intention to establish it as a global technology innovation centre for the bank. The hires will comprise developers and engineers with capabilities in technologies such as cybersecurity, data analytics, cloud, API development, machine learning and artificial intelligence.

### CCI okays APSEZ stake buy in Krishnapatnam



The Competition Commission of India (CCI) gave nod to proposed acquisition of additional 25 per cent stake of Adani Krishnapatnam Port Ltd by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. The acquirer already holds 75 per cent shareholding in Adani Krishnapatnam Port. "As a result of the proposed combination acquirer will hold sole control of the Target," a

### Maruti opens ₹126-cr hospital in Ahmedabad

Maruti Suzuki, in partnership with Zydus Hospitals, has announced the start of a multispeciality hospital at Sitapur in Ahmedabad. With a total capital expenditure of Rs 126 crore, the hospital has been fully funded by the Maruti Suzuki Foundation-a CSR initiative of Maruti Suzuki. At present, it is being used as a Covid care facility to help treat patients in the region. The facility is expected to serve more than 3.75 lakh people.

## Ujjivan SFB Q4 net jumps 86% to ₹136 crore

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB) reported an 86 per cent jump in its net profit to Rs 136 crore for the fourth quarter from Rs 73 crore a year ago. Total income was down by 9 per cent at Rs 735 crore from Rs 810 crore. Net interest income also fell by 21 per cent to Rs 368 crore against Rs 467 crore. "The quarter was exceptionally good. Our disbursal was at an all-time high," MD & CEO Nitin Chugh said.



### Occupancies improve, but revenues nearly halve

## **Covid hotels stay in** biz on thin margins

CHENNAI, MAY 18

In order to address the scarcity of beds, hospitality chains have tied up with hospitals to provide accommodation with care for Covid patients. While this has improved the occupancies, the revenues are significantly lower.

Since mid-April, several hospitality chains, including Taj Hotels, Ginger, ITC, Crowne Plaza, Radisson, Sarovar, Welcomhotel and Oyo, have opened their properties for Covid patients with mild symptoms as well those seeking

"At present, we have over 80 active quarantine and facilities. isolation Additionally, we have mapped and ensured readiness across 750 properties, which can be turned into quarantine centres across



the country, in case the need arises or demand increases," said Rohit Kapoor, CEO, Oyo India and South-East Asia.

"For mildly affected employees, we have isolation facilities with healthcare service providers. This includes 24\*7 nurse care, on-demand pathology and pharmacy support daily doctor visits, meals, among other services," he

According to Pradeep Shetty, honorary secretary of the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India, more than 100 properties should be offering accommodation to Covid patients across key "The occupancies should have been other-

However, the revenues are significantly low for the rooms. Some of the

wise nil in these hotels due

to the lockdown and Covid

fears. Now the properties

would be having around 30

per cent occupancies," he

state governments have capped the room rates for these facilities. As per the directive of the Delhi government, five star properties should not charge more than Rs 5,000 per patient per day and Rs 4,000 for four and three star properties.

"The average revenues per room would be around 50 per cent of the usual tariffs. Further, there could be some revenue sharing with the hospital partner," said Shetty.

According to Jaison Chacko, secretary general, FHRAI, there is also reluctance from the part of the "We have been requesting the government to categorise hotel staff as frontline workers and provide them vaccination. Most of the hotel employees are not vaccinated and this puts their lives at ' he said.

### **LNG IMPORTERS DEFER DELIVERIES ON WEAK DEMAND**

STEPHEN STAPCZYNSKI

India's liquefied natural gas importers are asking suppliers to defer deliver ies as measures to curb the spread of the deadly Covid-19 virus have cut demand for the fuel.

At least three companies, including Indian Oil Corp, have asked to delay ship ments slated for May and June delivery, according to traders. Inventories at import terminals in western India, such as Dahej, are near full capacity, the traders said.

The deferrals illustrate the extent of the natural gas glut, which has worsened over the past several weeks. While Indian firms have been accepting most contracted LNG deliveries, have disappeared from the spot market since the virus worsened last month and shipments became too pricey.

To make matters worse, a cyclone in the vicinity of mport terminals has also forced diversions

– Bloomberg

### Sensex rises above 50,000 pts, Nifty regains 15K zone

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** 

The market trended higher for the second consecutive session on further drop in fresh daily Covid cases and gained over 1.2 per cent, anticipating limited impact of lockdowns currently in place in various parts of the country.

The Sensex gained 612.60 points, or 1.24 per cent, and settled well above the 50000 mark at 50193. The Nifty-50 too crossed the 15000-mark to close at twomonth high of 15108, gaining 184 points. Barring the rising daily

deaths and slower vaccination drive, we observe more positivity around the Covid-19 situation. Daily cases have fallen below 0.3 million mark this week with visible peaking, driven by Maharashtra, UP, Delhi, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Haryana,

Gujarat, MP, Telangana, Jharkhand and Bihar. India's recoveries exceeded daily cases for the first time since mid-March and India's share in global recoveries rose to 53 per cent versus 50 per cent in daily cases," JM Financial said about Covid situa-

tion. "Even as 25 states/Union territories (UT) compris-ing 90 per cent of GDP have lockdown-like curbs overlapping between May

12 and May 24, cases in 20 states/UTs comprising 70-72 per cent of GDP have peaked. Thus these restrictions could be eased soon," analysts from JM Financial said.

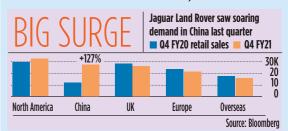
"NSE's India VIX index, an indicator of market volatility fell further by 1.89 per cent from 19.60 to 19.24 levels, a new low for 2021.Declining volatility is supporting the bullish market sentiment," said analysts.

The broader market outperformed which led to market capitalisation of all companies traded on BSE hitting a new high of over Rs 216.39 lakh crore.

The BSE Mid-cap Index gained 1.87 per cent and Small-cap Index gained 1.28 per cent.

Both foreign portfolio investors and the domestic institutions were net buyers of equities worth Rs 618.49 crore and Rs 449.52 crore respectively.

### Tata Motors Q4 loss narrows to ₹7,600 cr



MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, MAY 18

Tata Motors, India's biggest automaker, which owns British iconic luxurv car maker Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), narrowed its losses in the March 2021 quarter.

The Mumbai-based pas-

senger and commercial vehicle maker's consolidated net loss for the quarter came down to Rs 7,605.4 crore, mainly on account of asset write downs in its subsidiary JLR, compared with a net loss of Rs 9,864 crore in the year-ago quarter. The company has incurred cash write downs on assets worth Rs 9,606.1 crore during the quarter. This is apart from the restructuring costs of Rs 5,388.2 crore. This is apart from the restructuring costs of Rs 5,388.2 crore. In total, the exceptional loss in Q4 related to JLR stood at nearly Rs 14,000

It posted a loss of Rs 9,894.2 crore in the corresponding period last year and profit at Rs 2,906.45 crore in the December

2020 quarter. The carmaker's revenue from operations came in at Rs 88.628 crore for the fourth quarter, up 42 per cent from the revenue of Rs 62,492 crore clocked in

the same quarter last

year. On a standalone basis, Tata Motors reported a net profit of Rs 1,646 crore as against a loss of Rs 4,871 crore in the yearago period.

For the full financial year 2020-21, the company reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 13,395 crore. against a net loss of Rs 11,975 crore in the previous year.

JLR sold 12 per cent more luxury vehicles in the March quarter as purchases more than doubled in China.

However, Tata Motors has flagged global supplyrelated challenges, where coronavirus cases are still high in many mar-

"Supply chain issues, in particular for semi-conductors, have become more difficult to mitigate and are now impacting production plans for Q1. The company is working closely with affected suppliers to resolve the issues and minimise the effect on customers," Tata Motors said in an exchange filing on Tuesday.

demand remains strong, the sup-ply situation over the next few months is likely to be adversely impacted. We expect Q1 FY22 to be relatively weak," it said.

### Saudi wealth fund loads up on video-game makers

PAUL ABELSKY

Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund doubled down on its pandemic-era investments in video-game makers and added new bets as it raised holdings of US stocks by about a fifth to \$15.4 billion while exiting oil shares.

Fund brought its total commitment to videogame makers, including Activision Blizzard Inc, Electronic Arts Inc and Take-Two Interactive Software Inc to \$6 billion during the first quarter, according to regulatory filings. Those holdings were valued at \$3.3 billion at the end of the fourth quarter.
The PIF also added to its

roster by buying \$141 million worth of stock in South Korean e-commerce

**IT & BIZ SERVICES** 

**MARKET GROWS** 

5.4% TO \$13.4 BN

New Delhi, May 18: The

IT and Business Services

market in the country

CAGR of 7.18 per cent between 2020-2025 and

touch nearly \$19 billion by

the end of 2025 on the back of increased spending in

areas like cloud and artifi-

The Indian IT and

Business Services market

had grown by 8.43 per cent

in 2019. but the growth

Of the IT and Business

**IN 2020: IDC** 

said on Tuesday.

cial intelligence.

bolstering its investment in 0.9 Materials 3.7 Technology 13.7 Other 16.5 Consumer discretionary

giant Coupang Inc, whose biggest backer is Japanese SoftBank conglomerate Group Corp. Another new investment

last quarter included Compute Acquisition Corp, a blankcheck company set up by Intel Corp chairman Omar Ishrak, with the PIF buying a 8.7 per cent stake for \$75.7 million. The fund exited its stake in Suncor Energy Inc, Canada's top

integrated oil producer, selling 51 million shares. The \$400-billion PIF is funded through a mixture of borrowing, cash and

asset transfers from the government, and retained earnings from its investments. Chaired by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and managed by governor Yasir the fund has outlined a plan to grow its assets to over 4 trillion riyals (\$1.1 trillion) by

As the PIF is positioning itself to power the local economy, it's also made several high-profile investments in recent years, including a stake in Uber Technologies Inc and big commitments Softbank's Vision Fund.

The Riyadh-based fund acquired more than \$3 billion worth of stock in the three US video-game mak

ers for the first time during the fourth quarter. By contrast, its exposure to US equities in the third quarter fell by \$3 billion, mainly because the PIF sold stakes in exchangetraded funds that track the real estate and materials sectors.

Prince Mohammed is a big fan of video games, particularly "Call of Duty," Activision's best-selling franchise. Bloomberg Businessweek in 2016 that he was part of the first Saudi generation to grow up with the gaming technology. In the first quarter, the

fund more than doubled its Activision Blizzard stake to 33.4 million shares and almost doubled its holding in Electronic Arts, reaching 14.2 million shares at the end of March.

-Bloomberg

#### April-March 2020-21 Mineral 6.1% **₩** -7.8% **Production** (Change over the same period of previous year) During March 2021 Base: 2011-12=100 Bauxite (Utilised) Gold Manganese Ore (2,103 thousand tonnes) (148 kilogram) (331 thousand tonnes) Natural Gas (Utilised) Iron Ore (2.612 million cu. m.) (227 lakh tonnes) Lead Concentrate: Phosphorite

Chromite (601 thousand tonnes) **Crude Petroleum** (124 thousand tonnes) (41 thousand tonnes) Lignite Zinc Concentrate: (52 lakh tonnes) (960 lakh tonnes) (164 thousand tonnes) (11 thousand tonnes) (391 lakh tones) Magnesite Diamond (34 carat) (12 thousand tonn Change in Mar 2021 over Mar 2020 Increase ■ Manganese Ore: 80.1% ■ Lead Concentrate: 74.9%

■ Phosphorite: 57.0% ■ Copper Concentrate: 50.2%

■ Chromite: 45.8% ■ Limestone: 45.6% ■ Magnesite: 44.9%

■ Zinc Concentrate: 43.2% ■ Bauxite: 33.4% ■ Lignite: 25.3% ■ Iron Ore: 13.7% ■ Natural Gas (Utilized): 12.2% ■ Coal: 0.2%

■ Gold: -2.6% ■ Crude Petroleum: -3.1% ■ Diamond: -98.9%

Source: Ministry of Mines

**KBK Info**graphics

### STOCKING I UP Once viewed as liabilities, fatter inventories are back in vogue World economy is running low on everything

BRENDAN MURRAY, ENDA CURRAN & KIM CHIPMAN

recorded a lower year-on-A year ago, as the pandemyear growth of 5.41 per cent to \$13.41 billion in ic ravaged country after country and economies 2020 due to the impact of shuddered, consumers were the ones panic-buythe pandemic on organisations, research firm IDC ing. Today, on the rebound, it's companies furiously However, the IT and Business Services market stocking up. is expected to grow at a

Mattress producers to car manufacturers to aluminum foil makers are buying more material than they need to survive the breakneck speed at which demand for goods is recovering and assuage that primal fear of running out. The corporate buying and hoarding is pushing supply chains to the brink of seizing up. Shortages, transportation bottlenecks and price spikes are nearing the highest levels in recent memory, raising concern that a supercharged global economy will stoke infla-

Copper, iron ore and steel. Corn, coffee, wheat and soybeans. Lumber, semiconductors, plastic and cardboard for packag-



Linebarger, chairman and chief executive of engine and generator manufacturer Cummins Inc., said on a call this month. Clients are "trying to get everything they can because they see high demand,"
Rumsey, the Columbus,
Indiana-based company's
said. "They think it's going to extend into next year."

The difference between the big crunch of 2021 and past supply disruptions is the sheer magnitude of it, and the fact that there is as far as anyone can tell no clear end in sight. Big or small, few businesses are spared. Europe's

Girteka Logistics, says there's been a struggle to find enough capacity. Monster Beverage Corp. of Corona, California, is dealing with an aluminum can scarcity. Hong Kong's Momax Technology Ltd. is delaying production of a new product because of a dearth of semiconductors.

Further exacerbating the situation is an unusually long and growing list of calamities that have rocked commodities in recent months. A freak accident in the Suez Canal backed up global shipping in March. Drought has wreaked havoc upon agricultural crops. A deep freeze and mass blackout wiped out energy and petrochemicals operations across the central US in

February. Less than two ago, hackers brought down the largest fuel pipeline in the US, driving gasoline prices above \$3 a gallon for the first time since 2014. Now India's massive Covid-19 outbreak is threatening its biggest ports. For anyone who thinks it's all going to end in a few

months.

somewhat obscure US economic indicator known as the Logistics Managers' Index. The gauge is built on a monthly survey of corporate supply chiefs that asks where they see inventory, transportation and warehouse expenses the three key components of managing supply chains - now and in 12 months. The current index is at its second-highest level in records dating back to 2016, and the future gauge shows little respite a year from now. The index has proven unnervingly accurate in

cent of the time. To Zac Rogers, who helps compile the index as an assistant professor at

the past, matching up with

actual costs about 90 per

University's College of Business, it's a paradigm shift. In the past, those three areas were optimized for low costs and reliability. Today, with ecommerce demand soarwarehouses have moved from the cheap outskirts of urban areas to prime parking garages consider the downtown or vacant

department-store space where deliveries can be made quickly, albeit with pricier real estate, labour and utilities. Once viewed as liabilities before the pandemic, fatter inventories are in Transport costs, more volatile than the other two, won't lighten up until demand does

'We're going to continue to see some price increases over the next 12

months," Rogers said. A growing chorus of observers are warning that inflation is bound to quicken. The threat has been enough to send tremors through world capitals, central banks, factories and supermar-

—Bloomberg

### **DISRUPTIONS MAY DELAY COMPLETION OF HOUSING PROJECTS**

**SANGEETHA G** CHENNAI, MAY 18

Supply chain disruptions and worker migration due to localised lockdowns are affecting the construction of residential properties in key cities. The complemore than 4 tion of housing units scheduled for this year might be delayed due to these dis-

ruptions.
Over 4.22 lakh units are scheduled to be completed by 2021-end across the top 7 cities, according Anarock Consultants. Of this, 72 per cent of the total homes to be delivered by 2021-end are already sold out. Though there is no outright ban now during the current localised lockdowns unlike the first lockdown last year when construction activity came to a complete halt, disruptions in raw material supply chain may cause some delay in completion. "The tally of 4.22 lakh

homes scheduled for delivery across the top 7 cities by 2021-end must, however, be viewed in context with the severe second wave of Covid-19 infections. All the top cities have been affected, and it is likely that a part of these project deliveries will be pushed to 2022," said Anuj Puri, chairman, Anarock

Property Consultants. The transportation of raw materials is getting affected due to restrictions. Further, the closure of stores selling non-essential goods and restricted timings are affecting the availability. Most of the construction sites are permitted to deploy only a fraction of the workforce by ensuring social distancing norms. This too has affected the pace of work.

Moreover, the migration of workers to their native places ahead of lock-down in some cities has considerably constrained the construction activity.

"Now, amid the ongoing second wave of Covid-19 and the various curbs due to the lockdown in various states, the sector is facing a gradual slowdown which has made it extremely difficult to sustain the momentum," said Ashok Mohanani, president, Naredco Maharashtra.

GP

SHORT TAKES

#### Big guns Federer, **Serena busted**

**Geneva:** Roger Federer lost the first match of his comebackproper on Tuesday as the Swiss tennis great tumbled out of the

Geneva Open on his first outing in two months Federer lost 4-6, 6-4, 4-6 to Spanish clay court specialist Pablo Andujar to wreck the 39year-old's hopes of stringing a run of matches together. Meanwhile, former world num-

ber one Serena Williams crashed out of the WTA tournament in Parma, Italy, on Tuesday when she was beaten in straight sets 7-6, 6-2 in her second round match by Czech Katerina Siniakova

The 39-year-old, currently ranked eighth in the world, had been given a wild card to play in Parma after her premature exit from the Italian Open, where she also lost in the second round in what was her first match in three months. - AFP

### **England rest IPL**

stars for NZ series

London: England on Tuesday rested IPL stars including Jos Buttler and Jonny Bairstow for the upcoming two-Test series against New Zealand while Jofra Archer and Ben Stokes were not considered for selection due to injuries. England named a 15-man squad for the series starting June 2. "Multi-format players Moeen Ali, Jonathan Bairstow, Jos Buttler, Sam Curran and Chris Woakes are rested after completing a quarantine period following the cancellation of the Indian Premier League earlier this month. They will spend some time resting before joining up with their respective counties in due course," the ECB said in a statement. - PTI

### **Covid-free Saha**

fit for English tour

New Delhi: Wriddhiman Saha has recovered from Covid-19 and will be available for India's tour of England next month. Saha has reached his home in Kolkata after completing over a fortnight-long quarantine at a Delhi hotel. The wicketkeeper was picked for the Englandbound squad subject to fitness. The 36-year-old was among the players who contracted the dreaded virus in the currentlysuspended Indian Premier league while playing for SunRisers Hyderabad. "Wriddhiman is back home yesterday after two and half weeks of hotel quarantine in Delhi," a source close to the player said. Saha will have to return another negative RT-PCR test before joining the pre-departure bio-

### **BCCI** pays for Oz

bubble in Mumbai, where the

antine before boarding the

flight to England. - PTI

squad will undergo hard quar-

players' quarantine

Sydney: The BCCI is footing the bill for the 14-day quarantine of Australian IPL players, who have arrived here from Maldives, Cricket Australia interim CEO Nick Hockley said on Tuesday. Most of the 38 members of the Australian contingent, including top players. officials and commentators, landed at the Sydney airport on Monday after a forced stopover at Maldives. The players had to spend 10 days in Maldives due to a ban imposed by the Australian government on travellers from Covid-ravaged India till May 15. Hockley said the BCCI has kept its promise and funded the whole operation, "Yes," Hockley told Sydney Morning Herald when asked if BCCI was paying for

### **Cricketer Priya's** mom dies of Covid

New Delhi: India international Priya Punia, who is part of the UK-bound women's cricket squad, has lost her mother to Covid-19. The 24-year-old cricketer wrote a heartfelt post on

social media after her mother succumbed to the deadly virus. "Today I realised why you always told me to be strong. You knew that one day I would need the strength to bear the loss of yours. I miss you so mom! No matter the distance know you are always there with me. My guiding star, my mom... Love you always," Punia wrote on Instagram. - PTI

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## **GHOST FROM PAST**

### Bancroft backtracks, other Aussies urge to end ball-tampering row

Cameron Bancroft back tracked after dropping hints of other bowlers' involvement in the 2018 ball-tampering scandal while the men in question, including top pacer Pat Cummins, claimed innocence and pleaded for an end to "rumour-mongering and Innuendo" surrounding the incident that tarred Australia's cricketing reputation.

Bancroft kicked up a storm recently when he stated that it was "pretty self explanatory" when bowlers in the team knew of the plan to use a sand-paper on the ball during the Cape Town Test against South Africa in

On Tuesday, a *Sydney Morning Herald* report, quoting sources familiar with the situation, stated that Bancroft had no fresh information to give to Australia's integrity unit, which contacted him. CA had offered a reinvestigation after Bancroft's interview.

The men who were caught in the storm triggered by his statement were Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc and Nathan Lyon, who were all part of the team during the series. They issued a joint statement to deny any knowledge of the illegal plot.

"Bancroft, who is playing county cricket in the UK, had responded overnight on Monday in a conciliatory manner and indicated that he did not significant new information to share with CA," the Sydney Morning Herald report stated. "Bancroft is said to have

told CA he is supportive of the investigation and satisfied with the outcome,'

The Australian bowling attack in the Cape Town

London, May 18: New

Zealand captain Kane

Williamson is excited to

face India in the World Test Championships

(WTC) final next month

as he considers show-

against

Kohli's men to be a "fantastic challenge". India

and New Zealand square-

off in the final of the

inaugural World Test

Southampton from June

18. "When we play against

India, it has always been

a fantastic challenge and

so it is really exciting to

be playing against them,'

Williamson said in a video posted by the ICC

'It's really, really excit-

ing to be involved in the

final, obviously to win it

would be that much bet-

ter," said the 30-year-old

considered one of the

best current batsmen in

Talking about champi-

onship and how it pro-

gressed, Willimson said,

"We saw the contests in

the WTC has brought real

ly tight such as in the

India-Australia series

and our series against

Pakistan as well where

you had to really fight

hard to get the results,

Wagner admitted India

which is really great. New Zealand pacer Neil

. the games were real-

excitement.

on its Twitter handle.

Championships



A file photo of Cameron Bancroft addressing a press conference in Perth to issue an apology for his role in the 2018 ball-tampering scandal.

Test also comprised all-rounder Mitchell Marsh. According to the report, Bancroft also reached out to the affected bowlers in order to explain his recent

comments.
"...Bancroft had claimed he was left flustered by the unexpected line of questioning and that there was no malice behind his remarks.'

The joint statement issued by Cummins, Starc, Hazlewood and Lyon sought closure.

'We pride ourselves on our honesty. So it's been disappointing to see that our integrity has been questioned by some journalists and past players in recent days in regard to the Cape Town Test of 2018," the statement read.

"...we feel compelled to

Kane ready for showdown

put the key facts on the record again: We did not know a foreign substance was taken onto the field to alter the condition of the ball until we saw the images on the big screen

at Newlands. bowlers four said they learned valuable lessons and it is time to move on from the issue.

'None of this excuses what happened on the field that day at Newlands. It was wrong and it should never have happened.

"We've all learned valuable lessons and we'd like to think the public can see a change for the better in terms of the way we play, the way we behave and respect the game.

"We respectfully request an end to the rumourIt has gone on too long and their part in it. it is time to move on," the

WARNER CAN REVEAL

statement said.

England pacer Stuart Broad feels Australian cricket would be in for an "interesting time" if David Warner ever decides to write a book and open up about the ball-tampering scandal that led to him being barred from national cap-

taincy for life. Broad also agreed with Bancroft — who was banned for nine months for his role in the scandal — and then Australian bowling coach David Saker that the knowledge of the illegal ploy was not

limited to the three men

"I have seen a couple of comments from David Warner's agent, too, and I think it will be an interesting time when he stops playing for Australia and writes a book," Broad "There's no doubt the

Aussies would have been hoping this episode was signed sealed and delivered. It was an incredibly tough thing for those three players to go through. I can't see it still a conversation (when the Ashes start) in November, but I can see it being sung in the Barmy Army stands if they're

Broad said in his experience, a bowler is very sensitive to the condition of the ball. -PTI

## **RULED OUT**

Johannesburg, May 18: Cricket South Africa on Tuesday announced that coming out of interna tional retirement ahead of the upcoming T20 World Cup in India, saying that he has decided "once and for all" to not change his

Putting to rest specula-tions around his comeback, CSA said that "discussions with AB de Villiers have concluded with the batsman deciding once and for all, that retirement remain final."

The statement was reportedly made after CSA announced the team for upcoming tour of the West Indies, though it focussed largely on the squads for the the two Test matches and five T20Is in the Caribbean islands rather than de Villiers' retirement.

In May 2018, de Villiers had announced his retirement from international cricket. He played 114 Tests, 228 ODIs and 78 T20Is before announcing the surprise decision.

However, last month the 37-year-old versatile cricketer said it would be "fantastic" to make an international comeback ahead of the T20 World



## Quiet please! Ref Sudhakar leaves badminton court

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, MAY 18

Renowned badminton official Sudhakar Vemuri passed away in Hyderabad on Tuesday morning while being treated for Covid-19. He was 71 and left behind his wife and two daugh-

Sudhakar umpired at three consecutive Olym-Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996 and Sydney 2000, only Asian to do so.

The respected umpire also officiated in several tournaments including two Asian Games in 1982 (New Delhi) and 1994 (Hiroshima, Japan), one Special Olympics in 1995 (Connecticut, USA), Thomas and Uber Cups, Sudirman Cups and World Championships, and many other national and international tournaments in India and across the world.

After retiring as an umpire in 2004, he became a referee and later a Course Conductor and Assessor.

He was the deputy chairman of Badminton Asia's Technical Officials Committee till he breathed

He is also the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from Badminton World Federation (BWF) Ramineni Foundation Award in USA. Born on December 1, 1949

in Hyderabad, Sudhakar did his schooling from Methodist Boys High School, graduation at Nizam College and completed his Master's degree from Osmania University before working for the Food Corporation of India, Syndicate Bank and Airtel. Sudhakar entered the field of badminton in 1976 as a Line Judge in the Asian Championships held

in Hyderabad. He became a State Umpire in 1980, National Umpire Grade II in 1982 and Grade I in 1984 by securing 99%, the highest mark. Subsequently, he became Badminton Asia

Certificated Umpire and International Badminton Federation Accredited Umpire in 1988 before graduating to the IBF Certificated Umpire (the highest level in international umpiring) at the World Championships in

**Covid claims renowned official** A colossal figure in the badminton circuit in Hyderabad, he passed on his wisdom to several upcoming players and officials. He leaves an unparalleled legacy of integrity, honesty and commitment to badminton, and will remain irreplaceable in the hearts of those who

> - PULLELA GOPICHAND National badminton coach

knew and loved him.

I am shocked to hear that Shri Sudhakar Vemuri sir, international badminton umpire, has passed away. extend my deepest condolences to his family.

- P. V. SINDHU Badminton world champion

Really sad to hear about Vemuri Sudhakar sir. My condolences to his family. An irreparable loss to badminton. He trained many officials and players to be perfect and I personally have learnt a lot from you sir. You will always be in our heart.

- N. SIKKI REDDY Badminton doubles player

Copenhagen, Denmark, in

1991. "He was an excellent

teacher for the Technical Officials of India and Asia. Badminton Association of Telangana (BAT) conveys its deepest condolences to his bereaved family" BAT president K. Taraka Rama Rao (KTR) and officials stated in a press release.

Badminton Association of India too mourned Sudhakar's demise. "The sport has also lost one of its biggest emissaries," it said. "We thank him for all

that he has achieved with Badminton Asia. We send our deepest condolences to his family and loved ones. May he rest in peace, Badminton Asia stated.

"Deeply saddened. He was a person with high umpiring standards and a great guide to Indian badminton," said Jagan Mohan Rao Arishnapally, Handball Federation of India president.

WRESTLER | MURDER CASE

## Court denies bail to 'hiding' Sushil

Delhi Court on Tuesday refused to grant anticipatory bail to absconding Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar in connection with the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl that led to the death of a wrestler. Additional Sessions

Judge Jadgish Kumar denied the relief to Sushil Kumar against whom a case of murder, abduction and criminal conspiracy has been registered.

Wrestler Sagar Rana died, while two of his friends Sonu and Amit Kumar got injured, after allegedly assaulted by Sushil Kumar and other wrestlers on May 4 night, at the stadium premises in the national

Fearing arrest, the international wrestler moved the Rohini court in Delhi on May 17 seeking anticipatory bail, asserting that



Sushil Kumar

the investigation against him is biased and that no injuries are attributable to him.

However, Additional Public Prosecutor Atul Srivastava, representing the police, told the court that there is electronic evidence where he could be seen with a stick and hit-

ting the wrestler.

## Faf received death threat for Cup debacle

"But as a sportsman, to

India captain Virat Kohli and his New Zealand counterpart Kane Williamson.

WTC final.

trying to control the controllables."

Vihari, who is in England

for a county stint with

Warwickshire, said it would be a great feeling to

play for his country in the

would want to be in that

moment and not to get too

much carried away by the

importance of the situa-

play for India in the final

"I am excited but I

India batsman Hanuma

New Delhi, May 18: Former South Africa skipper Faf du Plessis has revealed that he and his wife received threats after a mix-up with AB de Villiers led to the latter's run out during their 2011 World Cup semidefeat to New

Played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Dhaka, South Africa lost the match by 49 runs to be knocked out of

the tournament, which was won by co-hosts India. "I received death threats after that (match). My wife received death threats. We turned on



social media and we were blown away. It became very personal. There were some very offensive things said that I won't repeat," du Plessis was

can exploit the English conditions but said the

wickets can change any-

time and become flat also.

"India has a lot of quali-

ty fast bowlers who have

done well in different con-

ditions, they can swing

(the ball) under overcast

conditions but when the

sun comes out it (wicket)

is flat and nothing hap-

pens. "(English) Conditions

and so I am not getting

carried away too much,

can change throughout tion," he said.

quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

"It makes you introverted towards people and you put a shield up. All players go through this and it forces us to keep our circles very small. It's why I've worked so hard on creating a safe space within our camp," he added. **SOUTH AFRICA** 

of inaugural World Test

Championships is always a great feeling," said the

is currently playing coun-

The majority of the

players

reached the UK as they

play a two-match series

against England starting

June 2 before the WTC

The Indians are expect-

ed to reach here in the

first week of June.

have

ty cricket in England.

Kiwi

final.

South Africa named 19 players for two Test matches to be played in St Lucia and 20 players for five T20 internationals in Grenada. Squads: Test: Dean Elgar

(c), Temba Bavuma (vc), Quinton de Kock (wkt), Erwee, Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Linde, Keshav Aiden Markram, George Maharai. Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi,

Tabraiz Shamsi, Prenelan Subrayen, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne, Lizaad Williams. T20: Temba Bavuma (c), Quinton de Kock (w), Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Klaasen, George Linde,

Sisanda Magala, Keshav

Maharaj, Janneman Malan,

Anrich Nortje, Keegan

Peterson, Kagiso Rabada,

Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Andile Nortje, Phehlukwayo, Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van Dussen, Lizaad Verreynne, Williams.