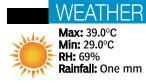
# 'Onicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM | WEDNESDAY | 2 JUNE 2021



Forecast: Humid and Partly Cloudy. Max/Min temp. 39/29 QC

Plava: Uttarayana Tithi: Vaishakha Bahula Asthami till 1.15 am (Thursday) Star: Satabhisham till 5.30 pm Varjyam: 11.52 pm to 1.35 am (Thursday) Durmuhurtam: 11.48 am to Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm HIJRI CALENDAR **Shawwal** 20,1442 AH

> (ROYAL MOSQUE) Fajar: 5.25 am **Zohar:** 1.30 pm Asar: 5.00 pm Maghrib: 6.26 pm Isha: 8.30 pm

**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.28 AM SUNSET TODAY 6.33 PM MOONRISE TODAY 12.15 AM MOONSET** TOMORROW 12.54 AM



He recovered from Covid, but got a heart attack after seeing the hospital bill!

TAKES

## PRASAD, EX-CS OF UNITED AP **PASSES AWAY**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD. JUNE 1

S.V. Prasad, former chief secretary to erstwhile combined Andhra Pradesh, died of Covid at a private hospital here on Tuesday.

Prasad's wife Lakshmi and his two sons, Vardhan and Sailesh, were also admitted to the hospital after they were tested positive. While the family recovered from the virus and was initially in home isolation, they developed post-Covid symptoms and were hospitalised.

According to close relatives, doctors performed a brain surgery on the exofficial and his wife a few days ago to remove clots. While Prasad breathed his last in the morning, doctors said his wife was in a critical condition. Both sons are stable.

Full report on page 2

#### **Human case of** bird flu in China

Beijing: China has reported the first case of human infection with the H10N3 strain of bird flu from the country's eastern Jiangsu province, China's National Health Commission said on Tuesday. The patient, a 41year-old man from Zhen-

jiang city, is currently in a stable condition and meets discharge standards, the state-run CGTN TV reported. Officials said the risk of causing a pandemic was extremely low.

Full report on page 5

#### **Brics resolves**

against terrorism

New Delhi: Five-nation grouping Brics on Tuesday resolved to combat terror ism in all its forms and manifestations, including the

cross-border movement of terrorists, and vowed to step up joint efforts in building support for an India-backed global framework to deal with the menace. At an India-hosted virtual meeting, the foreign ministers of Brics countries vowed to finalise a "resultoriented action plan" by the bloc's counter-terrorism

working group in 2021.



WORLD 5

**New Vatican law** criminalises abuse

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SPORTS 8

**Osaka pulls out** of French Open

**DC CORRESPONDENT** VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1

The state government will accord priority to the development of Visakha-

patnam fishing harbour

and prepare an action plan

Kakinada fishing harbour and Kothapatnam fishing

Chief Minister Y.S.
Jagan Mohan Reddy
instructed officials to initi-

ate measures for the completion of ₹15,743 crore Agri Infra Fund projects

in the stipulated period.

The government has recently allocated ₹31,256

crore in the budget for various agri-related schemes.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said

coordination between vil-

lage secretariats and RBKs

(Rythu Bharosa Kendras) should be effective and National Rural Employ-

ment Guarantee Scheme

(NREGS) works should be

expedited. He directed the

officials to monitor the progress of projects regu-larly and conduct review

He directed the officials

to prepare an action plan

meetings every 15 days.

landing centre.

development of

**TABLOID** 

An ode to nature



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#### **End of season sale**



People buying mangoes on Eluru road in Vijayawada on Tuesday as the season would

## Junior doctors to boycott duties for higher stipend

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |

VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1

Andhra Pradesh seems to be heading for a health crisis with nearly 5,000 medical students gearing up to boycott all duties including Covid care in protest against an inordinate delay in stipend hike.

Already 300 senior residents along with over 800 final year PG have served a strike notice on the government and others are expected to join them.

Their list of demands include: hike in stipend to senior residents to ₹80,000 with retrospective effect from January, 2020; TDS waiver on stipend; and, incentives for Covid duty, especially for ground-level medicos like interns, postgraduates and senior resi-

KOLKATA/NEW DELHI, JUNE 1

In a move that may fur-

ther escalate tensions between the Centre and

the Mamata Banerjee-led

West Bengal government,

the Union home ministry

late on Monday evening

slapped a showcause notice on 1987-batch IAS

officer Alapan Bandyopa-

dhyay hours before he

retired as the state's chief

secretary after rejecting a

The notice, under Section 51 of the Disaster

Management Act 2005,

which is punishable by a

prison term of up to two

years or a fine, or both,

was served to the state's

former top bureaucrat as

he skipped a review meet-

ing chaired by Prime

three-month extension.

## **CORONAVIRUS CASES IN STATE RISE TO 11,303**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1

The state has witnessed a rise in new Coronavirus infections with 11,303 cases recorded in the last 24 hours, compared to 7,943 cases registered on Monday. The state had been recording a gradual decline in daily cases in the last few days

Full report on Page 3

dents. The contention of senior residents is that they are getting monthly stipend

Bengal's ex-CS gets Centre's

notice for violation of DMA

on May 28 on the devasta-

tion by Cyclone Yaas in

Mr Bandyopadhyay, who

has been appointed by Chief Minister Mamata

Banerjee as her chief

adviser for three years

after he retired from ser-

"explain in writing" to the ministry within three days on "why action sho-

uld not be taken against

him" under Section 51 of

the DM Act. This particu-

lar section relates to "pun-

ishment for obstruction"

for refusal to comply with

a direction given by the

Central government.
The notice states: "The

officer, by abstaining him-

self from the review meet-

Minister Narendra Modi

taken by Prime

was directed to

₹45,000. Even though it is mandatory to hike it every two years, the hike has been kept pending since January 2020. They say this is resulting in getting less stipend than their invier perturbations. junior postgraduates.

They claim the neighbouring Telangana state is paying ₹80,500 as stipend to the senior residents and other states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are providing Covid incen-tives, while AIIMS is offering ₹1.05 lakh as stipend to the senior residents.

Though they submitted several representations to the health authorities since November 2019 for hike in their stipend and other incentives, they say there was no response.

officials turned deaf ea

at cyclone-affected Kalai-

kunda in West Bengal on

May 28, has acted in a

manner tantamount to ref-

using to comply with the lawful directions of the

Central government and is

thus violative of Section

51(b) of the Disaster

"After the Prime Minis

ter arrived at Kalaikunda

for a scheduled review

meeting with the chief

minister and chief secre-

tary of West Bengal, the

Prime Minister and other members of his entourage

waited for nearly 15 min-

utes for the officers of the

Sources at Nabanna, the

state secretariat, claimed

on Tuesday evening that

Mr Bandyopadhyay would

reply to the MHA's notice,

citing proper grounds.

state to arrive

Management Act 2005."

# **COVID 2ND WAVE**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

present.

and Andhra Pradesh

## **SEVEN YEARS ON, TELUGU STATES WAIT FOR BIFURCATION PROMISES**

fishing harbours in AP

Jagan plans to develop

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

Seven years after Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated on June 2, 2014, both Telangana and the residuary state of Andhra Pradesh continue to suffer bifurcation blues as most of the promises made by the Centre to both the states in the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, remaining unfulfilled.

Distribution of assets and liabilities of common institutions listed under Schedule 9 and 10 of the Act, mostly located in Hyderabad are still pending with both states fight-

focus on developing the fishing harbour in Visak-

hapatnam in all aspects.

for setting up a fish landing center at Kothapatnam in Prakasam district and development of a fishing harbour in Kakinada. He instructed the officials to

He said it was targeted to complete four fishing harbours Uppada (East Godavari), Nizampatnam (Guntur), Machilipatnam (Krishna) and Juvvala Dinne (Nellore) in first phase by December 2022.

ing cases in courts.

There are 107 institu-

rinere are 107 institu-tions listed under Schedule 10, of which 97 are located in TS, mostly in Hyderabad, it being the capital of undivided Andhra Pradesh for near-

ly six decades. There are another 89 institutions listed under Schedule 9 of

AP Reorganisation Act. All these institutions

together have assets worth thousands of crores

of rupees in the form of assets and bank deposits,

on which both the govern-

■ Page 2: Water disputes

affect AP-TS ties

ments are staking claim.

The officials informed

Orders officials to complete ₹15,743-crore Agri Infra projects him that in the second phase, fishing harbors were being constructed at Budagatlapalem in Srikakulam district, Pudimadaka in Visakhapatnam district, Biyyaputhippa in West Godavari district and a fishing harbour in Prakasam district port. They were asked to complete the works in time without fail. The officials informed that the total estimated cost of all these projects was 15,743 crore.

Regarding AP Dairy Development Cooperative Federation (APDDCF) projects, the officials explained that the govern-ment was constructing 9,899 bulk milk cooling units (BMCUs) at an estimated cost of Rs 1,885.76 crore and 8,052 automatic milk collection units with an estimated cost of Rs 942.77 crore across the state. Land was identified at 9,051 locations for BMCUs and construction works have already started for 6,252 units across the state. The target is to

complete the construction

BMCUs September 30, 2021.

## IS NOW ABATING, **SAYS CENTRE**

The Central government on Tuesday said that the "ferocious" second wave is abating as more than half of the country's total districts have less than five per cent positivity at

According to data on Covid cases collated by Covid19india.org, the country has recorded 1,32,439 cases on Tuesday, which is a tad higher than the Monday fig-

However, 86,033 cases or 64 per cent of the total cases on Tuesday were reported from five states Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra that have more than 10,000 cases each.

### SC brings back IGST on imported oxygen gadgets DC CORRESPONDENT for import of O2 concen-The HC order was

NEW DELHI, JUNE 1

The levy of 12 per cent Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on oxygen concentrators imported or gifted for personal use is back.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed an order of the Delhi High Court that had held that May 1, 2021, finance ministry notification imposing 12 per cent IGST was unconstitutional.

The top court bench comprising Justice Chandrachud and Justice M.R. Shah stayed the HC order which held that, during the Covid pandemic, the oxygen concentrators constitute a life-saving device and, therefore, should be treated on par

stayed by the apex court after A-G said the **GST Council will discuss** this issue on June 8

with life-saving drugs. We are staying the operation of the High Court order till further orders,' the court said in its order. The HC order was stayed by the Supreme Court

Attorney-General after K.K. Venugopal told the court that the GST Council is meeting on June 8 to deliberate on granting an exemption to essential commodities related to Covid-19, including oxygen concentrators. Attorney-General

also informed the court that the IGST exemption to state and its agencies

trators was given as these were to be given free to poor and needy. The High Court order

holding the finance ministry notification as unconstitutional come on a petition filed by a senior citizen Gurcharan Singh who had challenged the vires of the notification invoking Article 21C guaranteeing the right to life that also includes the right to health.

By May 1, 2021, notification, the GST on oxygen concentrators reduced from earlier 28 per cent to 12 per cent. The petitioner had knocked on the doors of the Delhi High Court after he was asked to pay IGST on the oxygen concentrators sent to him as a gift by his nephew.

## CBSE, ISC class 12 exams cancelled

**VINEETA PANDEY | DC** NEW DELHI, JUNE 1

Putting an end to the suspense on holding of the CBSE Class 12 exams, the Centre on Tuesday announced its cancellation, in both online and offline modes. The CBSE will now compile Class 12 results as per a "well defined objective criteria" in a "timebound manner", the government said after a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Those students who still

want to take the exams for evaluation will have that option when the Covid-19 situation improves. The Prime Minister said the decision on the CBSE Class 12 was taken in the interest of the students as the pandemic had affected the academic calendar and the board exams issue was causing immense anxiety among students, their parents and teachers, "which must be put to an end".

Soon after the Centre announced this decision, the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) said its Indian School Certificate (ISC) Class 12 board examination would also be can-

19 situation. "The exams have been cancelled. The alternative assessment criteria will be announced soon," CISCE secretary Gerry Arathoon said.

"Health and safety of our students is of utmost importance. In today's time, such exams cannot be the reason to put our youth at risk... All stakeholders need to show sensitivity

SAD END

#### His mother Aruna sought mercy killing for his son after doctors found no cure for his son's ordeal

# Boy whose mom sought his mercy killing dies

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JUNE 1

A nine-year-old boy died in the lap of his mother, who was desperately seeking permission from a local court in Punganur, Chittoor district, to end his painful ordeal by mercy killing. Doctors had said that there was no cure for the rare blood disorder that the boy, Harshavardhan, was suffering from.

The parents were too

poor to pay for his medical

G. Aruna, the mother of

Harshavardhan, hailing from Beerjepalli village in Chowdepalli mandal, was going to the Punganur court for the last two days to seek the approval of a designated judge to grant mercy killing of the boy.

According to her, Harshavardhan became bedridden after he met with an accident at his school about five years ago. At that time, the doctors found that he had a very rare medical condition that caused him to ooze out sweat blood from his skin, • When the boy, Harshavardhan, had met with an accident near his school about five years ago, doctors found that he had a very rare medical condition that caused him to ooze out sweat blood from his skin, nose and mouth.

 His parents tried spent all that they had to save him but in vain. Subsequently, his mother sought the court's permission for the mercy killing of his son. While returing home in an autorickshaw, the boy suddenly began to bleed and died in the arms of his mother.

Initially, Aruna and her husband Mani approached several doctors and did everything they could do to save their child. Even as

they ran up huge debts, they learnt that there was no cure for Harshavardhan's condition. "Being from a very poor

family, we sold everything we had and even borrowed money from many to save our child. But all our efforts went in vain as the doctors declared that the boy was suffering from a rare disorder which had no cure," Aruna, speaking through her tears, told mediapersons. In the last few years,

Aruna approached several hospitals in AP and Tamil Nadu to save her only son. 'She did everything she could do and spent every penny she had or borrowed from others to get him

help her save her child. She ran out of money and reached a point where she was unable to bear the medical expenses any further and could no longer see the agony of her child. As suggested by our relatives, she tried to move the court to seek help for the treatment of the boy or grant mercy killing for him," a relative of Aruna

In this regard, Aruna was coming to Punganur court along with her son to file a mercy killing petition for

the last two days. As the court remained closed due to holidays, Aruna, carrying her son in her arms. was returning home in an auto rickshaw on Tuesday when he suddenly began bleeding and died in her arms With the help of locals,

mother carried Harshavardhan to her home in the same autorickshaw. A pall of gloom descended on Beerjepalli. Villagers and relatives gathered in large numbers at Harshvardhan's house to console his mother.



SHORT TAKES

### **GOVT EXTENDS TENURE OF 4 ADVISERS**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1

The AP government on Tuesday issued orders extending the tenure of its four advisors by a year. They are G.V.D. Krishna Mohan, Thalasila Raghuram, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy and Ajeya Kallam.

Krishna Mohan is working as adviser (communication) to the government, while Raghuram is adviser (coordinating programmes). Kallam is principal adviser to Chief Minister and Ramakrishna Reddy is adviser (public affairs).

Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das issued the orders related to extension of these officers. Ajeya Kallam has also been

given additional responsibility as chairman of Steering and Implementation Committee for YSR Jagananna Saswatha Bhu Hakku Mariu Bhu Raksha Padhakam.

## **TIRUMALA RAO TAKES CHARGE AS RTC MD**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1

Senior IPS officer Dwaraka Tirumala Rao assumed charge as vice-chairman and managing director of APSRTC on Tuesday. Soon after assuming charge, he enquired about the operation of buses, safety norms being adopted, conversion of high end buses providing beds with oxygen supply for Covid-19 patients and issues of priority.

## **CM TO CONDUCT REVIEW MEET ON LAND RESURVEY**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will preside over a high-level review meeting on land resurvey project on Wednesday. AP is the first state to undertake a land resurvey in the country after about a 100 years.

Survey, Settlement and Land Records commissioner Siddhartha Jain said the survey process had started in 51 villages involving 63,433 acres as a pilot project on December 21.

This will lead to ownership of plots being granted people in 17,500 villages and 110 urban centres under the YSR Bhuraksha Jagananna Bhu Hakku pro-

## **JAGAN SAYS RAJU'S CHARGES ARE MOTIVATED**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

Refuting the allegations made against him in the bail cancellation petition filed by YSRC Narsapur MP Raghu Ramakrishna Raju, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy filed a counter before the CBI court on Tuesday stating that Raju had filed the petition with an ulterior motive.

"The petitioner wants to garner publicity through sensationalism and hence using the judicial system for this purpose," alleged Jagan Mohan Reddy in his 98-page counter to the plea by Raju who urged the court to cancel the bail granted in the disproportionate assets and the quid pro quo-

related cases.
The AP CM took to the notice of the court the cases registered against the petitioner for cheating banks and other criminal cases. 'Total nine cases are pending against the petitioner. Ramakrishna Raju is accused of having siphoned off public money from the banks to the tune of over ₹900

The cases were registered by the CBI in relation to fraudulent dealings with the banks. All the facts have been suppressed and he is mud-slinging on others," he said.

The counter petition also stated that the AP CM had nowhere violated the bail con-

ditions. He also said the petitioner's contention that he was influencing the CBI was not true. His lawyers pointed out that the CBI was operating under the Union Home Ministry. They maintained that the language used by the petitioner in his petition was highly objec-

The CBI also filed a counter, leaving the decision in this petition to the court. The court

adjourned the case to June 14.



People in large numbers wait in queue without maintaining physical distance outside the Indian Naval Canteen at

# **Aqua sector in state set** to get ₹646 crore boost

## CM holds review on aqua, fisheries and food processing

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1

The state government will set up 10 processing units, 23 pre-processing units and 100 aqua hubs for the welfare and development of aqua farmers and fish-

ermen. The officials during a review meeting on Agri Infra Fund projects at the camp office here on Tue-sday conducted by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy explained the projects in detail. They stated that the state government had already sanctioned 25 agua hubs out of 100 and works would start in this month. It is estimated that cost of 133 processing, pre-processing units and aqua hubs wo-

TD LEFT BEHIND

₹1.5 LAKH CRORE

**DEBT: KANNABABU** 

Kurasala Kannababu has clarified that the

state government went

in for borrowing to keep

its promises of welfare

benefits to the public despite the Covid-19

wnich is crippling state

finances, unlike the pre-

vious government which

left behind a debt bur-

den of ₹1.50,000 crore by

squandering it for per-

sonal needs in the name

Speaking to the media

here on Tuesday, the

minister mentioned that

the government gave

priority to welfare over

pumped money to revive

the sagging economy

and stood by the weaker sections during the pan-demic crisis. He asserted

that the government did

not hold back any wel-

fare schemes despite a

decline in revenue, as Chief Minister Y.S.

Jagan Mohan Reddy

clearly wanted the government to stand by the

people in such tough

times. He said that the

government had spent

₹1,30,000 crore through

various schemes for the

public welfare in the last

two years, where the financial aid reached people directly through

DBT, without any bro-

Kannababu said the

state was in revenue deficit after bifurcation

and criticised Naidu for

pushing the state into

He stated that the TD

leaders misused over

₹68,000 crore in the name of capital expendi-

ture for all those incom-

He slammed TD lead-

ers Yanamala Ramakri-

shnudu and Nara Lok-

esh for their false propa-

ganda against the gov-

ernment alleging that

the state finances were

running into debts and

stated that the entire

propaganda was to

divert people's attention.

He said the entire state

had witnessed how the

previous government

managed the finances in

He challenged them to

reveal the welfare schemes on which they

their five-year term.

spent ₹1,50,000 crore.

kerage system.

further debt

plete projects.

of public welfare.

development

 REGARDING THE food processing sector, the officials informed that a total of 10,111 food processing units would be set up in the state and seed and millets processing units would be set up at panchayat level.

uld be around ₹646.9 crore. Regarding the food processing sector, the officials informed that a total of 10,111 food processing units would be set up in the state and seed and millets processing units would be set up at pan-chayat level. Primary and secondary food processing units would also be set up. Crops, which have scope for food processing, were identified in 25 parliamentary constituencies and lands are being identified accordingly for setting up units. The target is to complete the construction of food processing units by

the end of June next year. Explaining about the custom hiring centres, the officials stated that a total of 10,750 centres were being set up at Rythu Bharosa Kendra (RBKs) level in the state and each unit would cost ₹15 lakh. Hi-tech and high-value farm mechanisation hubs would come up at 175 locations at Assembly constituency level and the cost of each hub would be around ₹1.5 crore. Special clusters were identified in four districts where paddy production is high and five Custom hiring centres and oth will be set up at Cluster present.

level for a mandal in those districts. A total of 1,035 cluster level Custom hiring Centres with an estimated cost of ₹25 lakh each will be set up.

Agriculture minister Kurasala Kannababu, agri-culture special chief secretary Poonam Malakondaiah, industries special chief secretary Karikal Valaven, finance principal secretary S.S. Rawath, marketing principal secretary Y. Madhusudan Reddy, marketing commis-Pradhyumna, APDDCF director Ahmed Babu, agriculture commissioner H. Arun Kumar, fisheries commissioner K. Kannababu, horticulture commissioner S.F. Sridhar and other officials were

## Fear of infections in closed spaces hits liquor biz in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1 TIRUPATI, JUNE 1 Minister for agriculture

> Liquor sales during May in the state slid following a reduction in business hours for the outlets in the wake of partial lockdown imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19.

> There was a 9.74 per cent fall in the overall sales of liquor in May when compared to the sales in April. Though business hours for liquor shops and bars and restaurants were the same (six hours a day), the latter suffered a sharp decline in sales when compared to the state-run outlets, where the business was the same as in pre-

> Officials attribute the fall in revenue to the shrinking business at bars and restaurants. They say boozers, in large numbers, are lining up at the state-run liquor shops

 There was a 9.74 per cent fall in the overall sales of liquor in May when compared to the sales in April. Though business hours for liquor shops and bars and restaurants were the same (six hours a day), the latter suffered a sharb

decline in sales when

outlets, where the busi-

ness was the same as in pre-Covid days. during the curfew relaxfrom 6 am to 12 noon. They are worried about the spread of Covid-19 in closed places and

compared to the state-run

thus are keeping away from bar and restaurants "In the wake of partial lockdown, we expected a decline in sales because a majority of customers used to go to the bar and restaurants only in the evening. Only a few cus-

tomers are coming during

daytime. So, naturally there is a massive decline in business," said a bar owner in Tirupati city.

As per the sales report the sale of liquor both at state-run liquor shops and bars and restaurants was around ₹1,686.32 crore in May, whereas in April it ₹1,868.35 crore. total of 17,28,533 and 18,95,393 IML cases were sold out in May and April months, respectively, and the revenue generated from their sales was pegged at ₹1582.24 crore and ₹1,665.06 crore.

The sales of beer significantly fell last month compared to April, from 8,59,462 lakh cases in April to 4,13,681 cases in May. The revenue fell from ₹203.24 crore to ₹104.09 crore. The average sale of both IML and beer was around ₹62.27 crore per day in the month of April and it declined to ₹54.39 crore per day now.

# Prasad had privilege to run administration for 2 decades

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS I DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

S.V. Prasad, former chief secretary of undivided Andhra Pradesh, who passed way on Tuesday, will go into the annals of history as the only bureaucrat who had the privilege to run the state administration for about two decades.

Yet, he remained "ajata satru" so much so that none of the dozen-odd senior officials, who were overlooked by the then Chief Minister K. Rosaiah to make this ever smiling and friendly bureaucrat the Chief Secretary, mur-mured, leave alone questioning the decision in

Everyone in the administration felt that Prasad was destined to become Chief Secretary and that it was only a continuation of what he had been doing earlier, running the state administration, after a short break during the Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy regime.

The 1975 batch officer began his career as a sub collector like any other pass-out from Mussorie-based Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, but soon made his mark with his administrative skills and positive approach in resolving issues. He entered the power corridors when N. Janardhan Reddy was

Chief Minister in the early 1990s and gained enormous confidence of two more Chief Ministers down the line – Kotla Vijayabhaskar Reddy and N. Chandrababu Naidu. Like the longest serving Chief Minister record of Naidu, he too served as principal secretary to the Chief Minister for a record nine consecutive years. "His success lay in his

ability to grasp the issues concerning the state, guess the positive and negative impacts of a decision and communicate the same to the political bosses in an unbiased manner," says retired IAS official Balasubrahmanyam, who was part of Naidu's CMO and a close associate of Prasad.

There is no surprise that who always wished to keep a low profile, may never get the credit for giving the country one of the finest and impactful President - Dr A.P.J. Kalam. revealed by Balasubrahmanyam to this correspondent, while mourning the death, it was Prasad, who suggested Kalam's candidature to Naidu who in turn took it up with the then powerful BJP duo of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and home minister L.K Advani. The rest of cour-

se is chronicled history. Known for not losing his wit despite being in the thick of tense moments, Prasad, tongue in cheek, told Naidu that he would end up as the youngest Prime Minister of India. This was when his view



## Former CS, Prasad, succumbs to Covid

DC CORRESPONDENT **HYDERABAD JUNE 1** 

S.V. Prasad, former chief secretary to erstwhile combined Andhra Pradesh, died of Covid at a private hospital here on

Tuesday. He was 70. Prasad's wife Lakshmi and his two sons, Vardhan and Sailesh, were also admitted to the hospital after they were tested pos-itive. While the family recovered from the virus and was initially in home isolation, they developed post-Covid symptoms and were hospitalised. According to close rela-

tives, doctors performed a brain surgery on the exofficial and his wife a few days ago to remove clots. While Prasad breathed his last in the morning, doctors said his wife was in a critical condition. Both sons are stable.

Prasad was widely acclaimed as an efficient officer and a kind individ-ual. The 1975 batch officer, a native of Vadisileru village in East Godavari, did his engineering from JNTU at Kakinada and joined IAS while doing Masters in Business from IIM, Ahmedabad.

He served in different posts including as collector of Visakhapatnam and Kadapa districts, Informa-tion and Public Relations Commissioner, principal secretary to the CM, APSRTC managing director and revenue principal secretary before becoming chief secretary in 2010.

He also held the post of vigilance commissioner after his retirement in

September 2011. Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu, Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan, Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, Chi-ef Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Jagan Mohan Reddy and Chandrashekar Rao respectively and Telugu Desam president Chandrababu Naidu condoled the death of the retired bureaucrat.

was solicited by his boss at about 3 am at AP Bhavan, New Delhi, on the day the exit of H.D. Deve Gowda as PM became certain and Naidu was under pressure to accept the crown of thorns.

Insiders say he did not mince words, again in his own witty style, in opposing Naidu's decision to advance Assembly elections post Naxal attack on him at Alipiri en route to Tirumala wnen Naidu was jubilant over schoolchildren thronging his residence with roses in their hands to express solidarity, his principal secretary was said to have reminded him that the visitors, unfortunately, can't vote.

for officials or politicians to share their joy, fears, anguish or anger. Even ruling Congress leaders felt suffocated over the YSR's CMO not being as friendly as Prasad-headed CMO during the TD rule towards them. He stood by juniors when they looked

decisions as Warangal collector despite political pressure," pointed out Adityanath Das, Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh. As Vigilance Commissioner. Prasad was liberal in punishing the lower rung officials particularly when they don't have mala fide intentions.

Prasad was always there

at him, "Sir backed my

This correspondent had opportunity to interact with him on numerous occasions for more than a decade and developed an administrative decisions. But, the disappointment over Prasad not heeding to the repeated suggestion to pen an autobiography that would have a potential to become a text book to the civil servants of his next generations will

"Rayalandi (I have to write one day)," was his reply every time with the trade mark disarming smile largely writ on his face, perhaps unmindful of extraordinary situa-tion in the form of Covid and losing battle to the fatal virus.

#### Water disputes affect ties of both Telugu states bonhomie by meeting over between the states to hra Pradesh, K. Chandra- to Chandrashekar Rao

From Page 1

About ₹1,51,349 crore under capital heads, ₹28,099 crore under loans and advances, ₹4,474 crore under deposits and advances, ₹238 crore under suspense and miscellaneous, and ₹310 crore under remittances are yet to be apportioned even after seven years of bifurcation. While the 'political rival-

ry' between Chief Minist-

ers of Telangana and And-

shekar Rao and, at that time, N. Chandrababu Naidu, respectively was attributed to delay in resolution of bifurcation issues between 2014 and 2019. the situation did not improve much even after the change of guard in AP after the YSRC government headed by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy stormed to power in 2019. Jagan Mohan Reddy

extended a 'friendly hand'

within days of becoming the Chief Minister by handing over all government buildings in Hyderabad including Secretariat and Legislative Assembly buildings to the Telangana state government which Naidu had refused to do till 2019 even after shifting the AP administration to

Amaravati in 2016. Though Chandrashekar Rao and Jagan Mohan Reddy initially displayed

half a dozen times to resolve bifurcation issues, the situation is back to square one after the AP CM launched Rayalaseema lift irrigation scheme in May 2019 to

divert Srisailam water, which fuelled 'water disputes' between both the states again after which both the Chief Ministers never met.

Secretary-level

resolve bifurcation issues came to a halt in January 2019. The Centre, which is supposed to hold regular meetings with Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state governments to resolve bifurcation issues, did not conduct a meeting for nearly two years after August 2019 and recently held a meeting in April which ended abruptly consensus reached on any issue.

#### Progress report a bundle of lies: TD

Vijayawada: Senior TD leader Yanamala Ramakrishnudu has termed Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's book on development during the past two years as a bundle of lies. He demanded that Jagan explain why poverty levels, per capita debt and infrastructure gaps increased if his rule was focussed keenly on welfare and development.

**COVID** I SCARE While 20 people allowed for funeral, not a single family member present in many cases

# Relatives abandon traditions, customs in burial

**VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC** KAKINADA, JUNE 1

The scare of Coronavirus has made kith and kin of persons succumbing to virus abandon all traditions and customs, whichever their religion. Most are not coming forward to follow the rituals for the dead, which are believed to provide them a better afterlife.

It is said a person must maintain good relations with at least four persons

who can carry him or her to the funeral ground. In these calamitous times, there are only two people available, one the ambulance driver and the other "katikapari" who places the body on the pyre before it is lit up. There have been numer-

ous cases when voluntary organisations have come to perform the last rites, as members are unwilling to even accompany the body. As a result, the dead are being denied the traditional final rituals, which differ from caste to caste and religion to religion. Among certain groups, rituals are such that they go on for about three hours before the body is consigned to flames or buried.

Ironically, while the government allows 20 members to attend a funeral. not a single family member is present in many cases. That is the level of scare that Coronavirus had induced among cer-

tain people. Many families prefer to hand over the body to service organisations. When a prominent caste Hindu died in East Godavari district, his funeral was performed by two Muslims who never knew him. "We

bers they come along. But none cared or dared due to Covid scare," said one of the two – Ameer Pasha. Pasha and his team have been performing funeral rites for the past one year

appealed to family mem-

Pasha says instance, at Ryali village in Atreyapuram mandal, nobody, including family members, came forward to carry the body. People with vehicles in the village were not willing to take the body to the funeral ground.

in East Godavari district.

"Our team finally took the body in the village garbage rickshaw and performed the last rites," Pasha said. The situation was similar in case of

Ravulapalem. Vedic G.Ramakrishna "There is a famous adage, which states that a son will protect or save parents from pangs of Punnama Narakam (hell). But in the present Covid-19 situation, no son is willing to save parents from throes of hell. Family members have become insensitive to tradition because they want to save their own lives.

death

another



Vice-Admiral Sreekumar Nair

### **NAIR TAKES CHARGE AS DG OF NAVAL PROJECTS IN VIZAG**

DC CORRESPONDENT SAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 1

Vice-admiral Sreekumar Nair has assumed charge as director general naval projects here on

Tuesday.

The vice admiral Nair took charge from vice admiral Kiran Deshmukh, AVSM, VSM Nair served as admiral superintendent, Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam and also as an assistant chief of material assistant chief of material (information technology and systems) at Integrated Headquarters, Union ministry Integrated of defence (Navy). The flag officer was commissioned as electrical officer into the Indian Navy on 17 August 1987 and is an alumnus of erstwhile Regional Engineering College, Tiruchirapalli and IIT Delhi.

The admiral received the Nano Sena Medal (NM) in 2010 and Ati Vishesh Seva Medal (AVSM) in 2021 for his meritorious service.

## **TWO GANGS OF RED SANDERS SMUGGLERS HELD**

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, JUNE 1

Kadapa district police have arrested two gangs of inter-state red sanders smugglers in separate raids on Tuesday morning.

Announcing this on Tuesday, district superintendent of police Karur Karunapati Nagendra Kumar Anburajan said they have taken into custody nine smugglers and seized two vehicles, five mobile phones and 55 logs of red sanders from them.

Giving out details at a press conference, the SP disclosed that two separate raids were carried out in T. Sundupalli mandal of the district. Among tne arrested is Gajjaia Srinivas Reddy, 41, of K. V. Palli mandal in Chittoor district.

He had earlier been convicted in 17 red sandalwood smuggling cases in Chittoor and Kadapa districts, apart from being jailed under Preventive Detention Act.

## **DRDO ISSUES GUIDELINES ON USE OF ANTI-COVID DRUG**

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, JUNE 1

DRDO has advised the public to use their 2DG medicine for Covid-19 treatment only under the care and prescription of doc-

It may be recalled that the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), a lab of DRDO, in collaboration with Dr Reddy's, Hyderabad, has developed an anti-Covid-19 therapeutic application of the drug

called 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG). Clinical trial results have shown that this molecule helps in the faster recovery of hospitalised patients and reduces supplemental oxygen dependence. DRDO had claimed that higher proportion of patients treated with 2-DG showed RT-PCR negative conversion in Covid

Against this backdrop, DRDO on Tuesday issued directions for the use of 2-DG in Covid patients It is to be used for emergency use as an adjunct therapy to the standard of care in the treatment of Covid patients in hospital settings. Ideally, 2DG should be prescribed as early as possible by doctors for moderate to severe Covid patients for a maxi-

mum duration of up to 10 days. Uncontrolled diabetes, severe cardiac problem, ARDS, severe hepatic and renal impairment patients have not been studied yet with 2-DG and, hence, caution should be exercised.

2-DG should not be given to pregnant and lactating women and patients below 18 years. Patients/attendants are advised to request their hospital to contact Dr Reddy's, Hyderabad, for medicine supply at email: 2DG@drreddys.com.

## **Covid emergency**



Relatives shift a Covid patient to CSR Block for treatment inside King George Hospital in Visakhapatnam on

# App, call centre for **Anandaiah potion**

## Do not rush to Krishnapatnam, order it online, says officials

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, JUNE 1

As the state government has given its nod for the distribution of the popular concoction of Bonigi Anandaiah Krishnapatnam, officials are bracing to manage a huge rush of Covid

patients or their atten-

dants to the village. District Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu, SP Bhaskar Bhushan and ruling party legislator Kakani Govardhan Kakani Govarunan Reddy on Tuesday held talks with Anandaiah on the modalities to be fol-lowed to prevent the crowds from turning into super spreaders, duly following a High Court order.

**POSITIVE CASES** 

**DROP TO 7.4 PER** 

**CENT IN NELLORE** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

Speaking on the occasion, Collector said they have been planning to decentralise the distribution. The Collector said they would develop a mobile app besides set-ting up a call center for the benefit of people to book herbal medicine online. He appealed to the people from other parts of the state as well as other parts of the country not to come to Krishnapatnam for the

medicine and assured to supply the preparation to Hinting that the preparation would be ready by next Monday, Govardhan Reddy said priority

would be given to treating infected patients, and

medicine

would be prepared later. He said they would supply the mixture by post and courier services for ute to those booking it online.

Anandaiah said he was gearing up to start production in a couple of days and priority would be given to the infected people belonging to Sarvepalli segment, followed by the people of the district. He said he plans to supply the preparation for 5,000 people in each district later.

When asked about financial implications since he is supplying the medicine free of cost, he said many people are ready to sponsor it.

Pointing to the advice of Govardhan Reddy, he said the legislators concerned

would bear the cost of raw material to distribute the medicine in their respective areas.

He said he would take the cooperation of the government whenever necessary. To a query, he said the TTD offered to supply raw material, i.e.

On the production in different locations, he said it is a sentiment to produce the medicine only at Krishnapatnam but he would look at other options if necessary. "We have some power supply problems in the village and Collector said, hinting that he would start production from the coming Monday.

## 300-bed hospital opens close to super speciality hospital

NELLORE, JUNE 1 DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, JUNE 1

Much to the relief of medical professionals and district authorities, percentage of Covid positive cases dropped to a single digit — 7.4 per cent — on Monday for the first time in the last two months.

Some 378 persons out of 5,058 samples tested during the last 24 hours ending at 9 am on Monday tested positive.

The percentage of positive cases, or TPR, was hovering between 1.55 per cent and 7.73 from March 22 to April 12. It started increasing abnormally thereafter, causing tension to the authorities. The positive rate touched a high of 40.51 per cent (1,347 positive cases) on April 19 when the samples tested were 3,325.

The decline in the positive cases for the first times in the second phase of Covid on Monday was a matter of relief to doctors and other medicare professionals. Officials were meanwhile happy over the drop in the daily consumption of oxygen by 9 tonnes. As against the daily consumption of 47 tonnes, the utility of oxygen came down to 38 tonnes during the last three days, district collector K.V.N Chakradhar Babu said.

from various parts of with a set of nursing and

300-bed Covid care hospital erected with German hanger structure by way of an extension to the super specialtv hospital here was inaugurated on Tuesday.

In the view of the huge number of Covid patients being unable to get oxygen beds at various hospitals, collector Gandham Chandrudu initiated the plan for a Covid care hospital closer to the super specialty hospital. This facility will be of help to patients arriving here

Medical services was toilets are provided as launched at the facility

via virtual mode by district incharge minister Botsa Satyanarayana. Roads and bridges minister Shankar Narayana, MPs T. Rangaiah and Gorantla and MLA Ananta Venkatarami Reddy took part. The new facility was set up on an acre of land with 300 beds, oxygen concentrators and a provision for oxygen through pipeline. About 158 staff members including 38 doctors will serve at the hospital

other staff. More than 50 aiso a 125kva generator for use in case of power

Botsa appreciated the efforts by the district administration to erect the hospital in 20 days. "Our intention is that government hospitals should be the ultimate service providers rather than private hospitals," the minister said.

Chandrudu said the work on the hospital was completed within two weeks by a team

## Doctors say officials turned a deaf ear

From Page 1

AP Senior Resident Doctor Association president Dr Ravi Banoth said, "As the state health authorities are not responding to our longpending demand for hike in stipend and sanction of Covid incentives, we are forced to boycott all our duties by alerting authorities concerned in advance to make alternate arrange-

As CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy appreciated the

wanted any issues to be taken to his notice, we want to meet CM and apprise him of our problems. We have confidence that he would resolve them. We have no intention to trouble the

Meanwhile, junior doctors including the PG first, second and final year students and house surgeons are also getting ready to boycott all duties with the same demands.

They say that the first year students are getting healthcare workers for a monthly stipend of fail to respond to Covid care recently and ₹48,000, second year our pleas."

₹44,075 and house surgeons ₹ 18,000. Though they received a communication from the office of director of medical education to consider them for senior residentship, there was no mention about hike in stipend. AP Junior Doctors Association president Dr Rahul Roy said, "We are also going to boycott all duties

if the health authorities

along with senior residents for hike in stipend and other incentives

the state governments for present and future medical use. The imported 3 cryogenic oxygen tanks were from Singapore and handed over to the

## **WATER I SCARCITY Water shortage in Christurajupuram, Ramalingeswara Nagar**

## 2 new water reservoirs in Vijayawada

• The deputy mayor herself said Christurajupuram and Ramalingeswara Nagar, though being within the

heart of city, are facing acute drinking water short-

age. In this regard, Bellam Durga instructed officials

problem by constructing two new water reservoirs at

to initiate measures to resolve the drinking water

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation will construct two new water reservoirs at a cost of ₹8 crore for supplying drinking water to people of the city, announced Vijayawada deputy mayor Bellam Durga on Tuesday.

areas of Vijayawada East constituency. She was responding Corporators and conto complaints about inadin-charge

a cost of ₹4 crore each.

equate supply of drinking water in various among Avinash were among those among those who participated in the meeting. Avinash pointed out

that people living in hilly

deputy mayor herself Christurajupuram and Ramalingeswara Nagar, though being within the heart of city, are facing acute drinking water

areas are facing severe

difficulties in getting

drinking water supply as

pipelines have been dam-

to resolve the drinking water problem by conaged and there are no overhead water tanks in structing two new water reservoirs at a cost of ₹4 crore each. said

She further directed that pipelines be repaired replaced drains water cleaned to resolve issues of water overflowing and

stagnating on roads.

In this regard, Bellam

Durga instructed offi-

cials to initiate measures

# After five-day dip, Covid cases rise to 11,303 in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT

administration Covid-19 vaccine to 1.04 VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1 crore people since it began the drive on January 16. The health department adminis-tered 74.92 lakh first doses and 25.24 lakh sec-Andhra Pradesh has witnessed a rise in new Coronavirus infections with 11,303 cases recorded in the last 24 hours, compared to 7,943 instances registered

**AP GIVES COVID** 

**CRORE PEOPLE** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

The Andhra Pradesh government has suc-cessfully completed

ers, people aged above

ers, people aged above 45 years, those aged between 18-44 years and those aged above 60 years. There is a need to ramp up the supplies many times, say he offi-cials. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy himself addressed let-

himself addressed let-ters to Prime Minister

Narendra Modi under-

lining the need to allo-

cate more doses to AP

and extend other sup-

port in terms of medical oxygen and medical

The state health authorities maintain that as AP has estab-

lished a good network of ward/village volun-teers, ANMs, Asha

workers and health cen-

tres with medical offi-

cers and paramedics,

they are taking up fever survey door-to-door to

identify people showing symptoms of Covid. With such a vast net-

work, they are able to

work, they are able to provide good care and can take up vaccination too in a big way if enough doses are provided. AP already achieved a distinct record of vaccinating nearly 6.2 lakh people on a single day, the pointed out

AP Covid Helping

Hands nodal officer Dr Arja Srikanth said, "We

have completed admin-

istration of over one

crore doses of Covid

vaccine to our people in

the state so far and one

in seven people got the jab with at least one

dose in the state."

**AP RECEIVES 3** 

**OXYGEN TANKERS** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

AP receives 3 Cryogenic

Oxygen Tankers for free

Infrastructures Limited

(MEIL) helpful towards

serving the needy

Covid-19 patients. The

MEIL which is bridging the gap between the supply and demand for

medical oxygen in the

fight against the pan-

demic by supplying free

oxygen to hospitals, has

now imported cryo-genic oxygen tanks and delivered them free to

VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1

Engineering

**CRYOGENIC** 

infrastructure.

**JAB TO OVER ONE** 

ond doses.

The officials maintain that AP has received 98 lakh doses of both Covishield and Covaxin varieties. from the on Monday.

The state had been recording a gradual decline in daily Covid-19 cases in the last few days. While it reported 18,285 infections on May 26 the numbers had varieties from the Centre so far, while it procured some doses on its own. The officials point out that states like on May 26, the numbers had been 16,167 on May 27; 14,429 on May 28; 13,756 on May 29 and 13,400 on May 30. The Gujarat and Maharashtra are getting nearly 25% of vaccine doses based on their population, while AP is getting only 18%.

AP is facing a severe shortage of vaccine doses to administer to all targeted beneficiaries including healthcare workers, frontline workers, people aged above Gujarat cases fell steeply to 7,943 on May 31, when 83,461 sam-

ples were tested.

AP health authorities reported on Tuesday that out of 93,704 samples tested during the last 24 hours, 11,303 persons have been found infected with Coronavirus. With this, total 1,93,50,008 samples have been tested so far in the state. 17,04,388 of them have been found infected with the virus. Of them, 15,46,617 have recovered while 1,46,737 are under

treatment.
On the day, East Godavari reported the highest of 2,477 Covid-19 cases, followed by 1,536 in Chittoor, 1,116 in West Godavari, 985 in Visakhapatnam, 953 in Anantapur, 935 in Prakasam 693 in Prakasam, 693 Srikakulam, 686 in Guntur, 647 in Krishna, 444 in Nellore, 323 in Kadapa, 286 in Kurnool and 222 in

reported on Tuesday that out of 93,704 samples tested during the last 24 hours, 11,303 persons have been found infected with Coronavirus. With this, total 1,93,50,008 samples have been tested so far in the state. 17,04,388 of them have been found infected with the virus.

AP HEALTH authorities

East Godavari continues to be the worst-hit with highest number of 30,267 total active cases, followed by 19,184 in Prakasam, 17,459 in Chittoor, 12,197 in Nellore, 12,134 in Visakhapatnam, 11,481 in West Godavari, 9,981 in Krishna, 8,874 in Guntur, 8,014 in Srikakulam, 4,873 in Vizianagaram, 4,316 in Kadapa, 4,244 in Kurnool and 3,713 in Anantapur.

With regard to daily deaths, West Godavari

reported 20, followed by 14 in Chittoor, nine each in Anantapur and Guntur, eight in East Godavari, seven in Visakhapatnam, six each in Krishna, Kurnool, Srikakulam and Vizianagaram; five in Kadapa, four each in Nellore and Prakasam, with total deaths being 104 during the last 24 hours. With this, the death toll has

scaled up to 11,034. State health authorities have on Tuesday discharged 18,257 persons after recovery from various hospitals

## Parents attack hosp. after their kid dies

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL JUNE 1

Visakhapatnam.

Enraged with the death of a two-year-old baby, the parents of the boy attacked Rafah hospital at Nandyal. The parents allege that it was due to the negligence of the doctor they lost their child. Hospital authorities also lodged a counter-com-plaint against them at the police station. But later both parties withdrew complaints, said Chidananda Reddy.

Reshma and Sheik Ma

line in the Bommalasatram area of Nandyal town got their two-year-old son admitted in the Rafah hos-

pital. The boy was taken in a condition as some inconvenience found in the esophagus tract. The boy subsequently died in the

hospital, said the DSP. Unable to come to terms, the parents and their relatives shouted against doctors alleging the boy could not be salvaged due to doc-

tors' negligence. The DSP said that no case

## Centre flayed over hike in fuel prices

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JUNE 1

Transport unions staged a protest against the increasing petrol and diesel charges at Zilla Parishad Centre here on Tuesday. They raised slogans against the Central government, demanding rollback of the steep increase in prices immediately.

CITU leader Seshubabji said during the Covid-19 pandemic, many people lost their jobs and the common people were facing severe hardships for their livelihood.

Transport workers plight had become very miserable for the past one year. In circumstances. these the Central government hiked petrol and diesel charges, hitting hard the

transport sector.
When crude oil rate was \$148 per barrel in international market, the oil prices in India were ₹60 per litre but, now, petrol prices crossed ₹100 per litre even as the crude oil rate was \$48.

Vikasa Vedika Secretary K. Sathiraju said that the subsidy in domestic

gas was stopped permanently and the Narendra Modi government hiked the petrol, diesel and gas prices to benefit private oil compa-nies. He also alleged that in order to increase electric vehicle sales, the prices were being hiked intention-

ally. He demanded that the Centre bring diesel, petrol and oil prices under the GST limits. CITU leaders Palivela Veerababu, Tata Magic Vehicles Union leader P. Ramesh, Karri Srinivas, auto union leaders K. Kesava, P. Appa Rao and others were present.

At Rajamahendravaram, TD state organising secretary Adireddy Srinivas said the state and the Central governments were hiking petrol, diesel, gas and cooking oil rates abnormally and, as a result, the common people were facing troubles. The CPI staged agitation at Tatipaka centre in Rajamahendravaram. Its leaders said the PM and the CM failed in curbing Covid-19 in the country as well as in the state, but they were imposing more burden on the people by hiking petrol

and diesel charges.

## IMD FORECASTS LIGHT TO MODERATE RAIN, THUNDERSHOWERS IN AP FROM JUNE 2-6

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 1

Meteorological Department has forecast light to moderate rain or thundershowers very likely to occur at a few places over north/south coastal AP, Rayalaseema and Yanam for the next five days from June

Amaravati Meteorological Centre in a statement issued here on Tuesday has warned thunderstorms, lightning and heavy rainfall very likely to occur at isolated places over north coastal AP, Rayalaseema and Yanam for four days from June 2 to 5 and for three days from June 3 to 5 in south coastal AP.

## **ODISHA: CYBER THIEVES SWINDLE 1.49 CRORE**

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 1

increased during the lock-down period in Odisha in the last one month.

According to a statement issued by the police on Tuesday, the looters took advantage of the pandemic restrictions which prompted people to prefer online transactions for shopping and other financial activities.

The police said that fraudsters duped unsuspecting people to the tune of ₹1.49 crore during the lockdown out of which ₹70,78,714 was duped in the state capital Bhubaneswar alone during the period.

According to the data shared by the police, the Cyber help desk had received 529 calls regarding cyber frauds out of which the cyber cell in Bhubaneswar had received a maximum 256 calls.

As many as 160 calls were related to UPI fraud while 100 other calls related to frauds regarding credit and debit

Based on the data of Bhubaneswar cyber cell, 17 cases had been registered at different police stations.
Similarly, 56 dubious mobile

numbers have been blocked by the police during the period.

refunded/blocked ₹12,05,306 during the month of May, the

#### UNPARALLELED **HANDLING OF COVID IN UP: BJP**

Lucknow, June 1: BJP vice president Radha Mohan Singh on Tuesday dismissed speculation over any change of leadership in Uttar Pradesh and called the state government's handling of the Covid pandemic "unparalleled".

Singh and BJP's national general secretary (organisation) B.L. Santhosh are on a three-day visit here, meeting party leaders on "preparations to fight Covid" and what par-ticipants called "organisation-

The party vice president met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and deputy chief ministers Dinesh Sharma and Keshav Maurya on Monday. On Tuesday, the two deputy chief ministers met Santhosh. When asked about speculation over "leadership change" in the state, Singh dismissed it as a figment of someone's imagination.

Generally, the BJP review meetings take place twice a month, but this time there was a gap due to Covid-19. At the meeting, the 'seva' (service) done by us was reviewed. Apart from this, the party's preparations for a possible third wave of Covid were also discussed," he said.

## **DELHI ALLOWS HOME DELIVERY OF LIQUOR ONLINE**

New Delhi, June 1: Delhiites may soon order liquor through a mobile app or website for home delivery, with the Delhi government amending the excise rules through a notification that also allows takeaway of draught beer in bottles or growlers from microbreweries.

An official said that the amended rules were implemented with the issuance of notification, but the new facilities will take some time as the government will have to decide dates for implementing different provisions by notifying the new excise policy or separate term and conditions.

The Delhi Excise (Amendment) Rules, 2021, published in a gazette notification on Monday, permit the holders of the necessary licences to serve liquor in open spaces such as terraces, the courtyards of clubs, bars attached to hotels and independent restaurants where customers will also have choice of getting alcohol in bottles. However, it will be the sole responsibility of such establishments to ensure that no customer takes the served bottles out of the licensed premises.

The move will boost the government's revenue at a time when Delhi's economy is struggling due to ongoing lockdown that was implemented

According to the notification, the licensee will make delivery of liquor at the residences only if order is received through an app or a web portal. Such deliveries will not be allowed at offices, institutions and hostels.

## Only people can break the chain of virus to end lockdown: Stalin

## Says unless the state recovers from Covid, govt's plans for other dept's cannot be looked into

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JUNE 1

Entrusting the responsibility of putting a full stop spread ple, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said only they could break the chain of the infection that spread from individual to individual as the lockdown could not be imposed always.

Urging the people to adhere to the restrictions and the norms imposed by the government, Stalin, in a video message to the public on Tuesday, said since Coronavirus spreads from person to person, everyone should play safe and also ensure that they did not spread it to others.

New Delhi, June 1:

Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi on Tuesday attacked Prime Minister

Narendra Modi over the adverse GDP and unem-

adverse GDF and unemployment figures and raised the issue of "shortage" of drugs for treating black fungus.

"PM's hall of shame —

Minimum GDP, Maxim-

um Unemployment," he

said on Twitter and sha-

red a graph showing a ri-

se in unemployment am-

ong the youth since 2014.

day after data released

by the National Statistical Office (NSO)

showed that India's

economy contracted by

7.3 per cent in the fiscal

year ended March 2021

after the growth rate picked up in the fourth

quarter, just before the

world's worst outbreak of Coronavirus infec-

The gross domestic product (GDP) in Asia's

third-largest economy grew by 1.6 per cent in the January-March peri-

od, up from 0.5 per cent

in the previous quarter

when India began pull-

ing out of a steep pande-

mic-induced recession

questions to the central

government on muco-

rmycosis or "black fun-gus epidemic". "What is being done

about the shortage of

drug Amphotericin B?

What is the procedure

for helping the patient

get this medicine," he said on Twitter.

treatment, why is the Modi government embr-

oiling the public in for-malities," he also asked,

After thousands of

cases of black fungus

were reported among

Covid-19 patients in the

country, the Centre on

May 20 urged all states

and Union Territories to

declare it as a notifiable

disease under the Epidemic Diseases Act

to ensure mandatory

surveillance to tackle

The government had

said that the shortage of

Amphotericin B shortage will be resolved soon

as five more pharma

companies have got new

drug approval for produ-

cing it in India, in additi-

on to the existing six pharma companies. — *PTI* 

the "new challenge".

but did not elaborate.

"Instead of providing

aiso posed

in earlier six months.

Gandni

tions hit the country.

His remarks came a

reduction in the number of infections after a total lockdown was imposed on May 24 and said that though the government extended the lockdown by another week and the numbers came down further, it cannot be extended forever.

There was an urgent need to come out of the present day tragedies and step into a bright future with renewed hopes, he said, adding that the failure to put a full stop to the pandemic in its first wave had led to the second surge, which was throwing up a challenge to medical infrastructure and the state's finances.

Referring to his visit to the Covid ward at the ESI

He pointed to the drastic Hospital in Coimbatore to extend moral support to the patients, the families and the frontline workers of the medical community. he said there were several people who had affectionately warned him not to repeat such an act.

The same alarm raised by the well-wishers should be a common caution guiding the general behaviour of the people since a violation of the precautions even by one person can jeopardise the collective efforts to put an end to the spread of virus. Unless the state recov-

ered from the present ravages of the pandemic, the government's plans for the other departments cannot

As of now, the threeweek-old government had developed adequate infrastructure to face the threat of Coronavirus, leading to a situation in which there was no shortage of beds or oxygen, Stalin said.

In fact, beds were empty in hospitals, he said. Besides, three lakh persons were being vaccinated every day and 1.70 lakh RT-PCR tests were being taken daily — both the fig-ures are the highest among all states in the country — he said. He also elaborated on the

relief provided by the government to bring succour to the affected persons mentioning the payment ₹2,000 to each of the families, a move that had won accolades from Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee. Other special measures taken by the government to offset the ill-effects of the lockdown include the arranging for supply of groceries and vegetables at the doorsteps and opening ration shops and also issues a list of 13 provi-sions to cardholders, he

Meanwhile, examina-tions for the State Board Plus Two examinations may also be cancelled in the wake of the Centre doing away with the final examinations for CBSE students, citing the safety of students in the context of the Covid-19 crisis.

State school education minister Anbil Mahesh Poyamozhi said that he would discuss the matter with the Chief Minister and officials of the education department on Wednesday before arriving at a decision.

On Tuesday Poyamozhi had a rethink on his earlier decision to hold the examinations for the State Board students in the schools and said he was waiting for the CBSE's decision. The Minister had a review meeting with the Chief Minister at the Secretariat earlier in the

Now that the Centre has made it clear that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not in favour of holding the examinations for the CBSE board, the state government might also take a similar line and cancel the examinations.



## **HC DIRECTS MAHA TO ENSURE POONAWALLA'S SECURITY**

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, JUNE 1

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday said that the Maharashtra govern-ment must assure Adar Poonawalla, the CEO of Serum Institute of India, of adequate security in the wake of alleged threats to him over the supply of the 'Covishield' vaccine manufactured by his

company.

A vacation bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and Abhay Ahuja was hearing a petition filed by city based lawyer Datta Mane seeking Z+ security for Poonawalla, claiming that the news reports showed that he left the country due to fear. Even though the Union

government has already granted 'Y' category security to the Punebased industrialist, the petitioner through his lawyer Pradip Havnur, told the court that as per news reports, Poonawalla had been living in fear due to constant pressure from politicians and some others demanding that

of the Covishield vaccine to their states. Mane in his petition further said that Poonawalla had left for London due to such

he provide more supply

Notably, the SII CEO in an interview had revealed that he has been receiving threats and pressure from 'powerful

people' seeking vaccine doses on priority. The bench said the state must not consider the petition as an adversarial litigation and the state's top officials must personally speak to Poonawalla and assure him of his safety upon

his return to India. The bench directed state's counsel Deepak Thakare to speak to the government officials and convey the court's concerns. "Please speak to the highest state functionaries, maybe the state home minister, and assurance must be given to him (Poonawalla) from the top. They should talk to him per-

sonally" the HC said

#### **RAHUL TWEETS** 'Unlock' in full swing **ABOUT 'PM'S** HALL OF SHAME



Rag-pickers collect recyclable plastic from the Dhaka waste dumping site after ease



Shopkeepers open their shops at a market after the unlock process of lockdown began in Bhopal on Tuesday.



Vehicles ply on a road during relaxation hours in the - PTI ongoing lockdown in Guwahati on Tuesday.

## MP begins 'unlock', relaxes norms per cent. In a series of curfew. Similarly, relitweets, the Chief gious activities, political

## Maha: 3 new cases found in Dharavi

Mumbai, June 1: The slum-dominated Dharavi area of Mumbai reported three new Coronavirus infections on Tuesday, the civic body

The congested area with a population of over six lakh thus reported a single-digit rise in cases on the eighth day in a row, the civic body said. Dharavi had witnessed an alarming rise in cases in the beginning of April

It had reported 99 cases - the highest daily spike so far — on April 8, 2021. On May 23, the area

recorded 16 Covid-19 cases, after which the cases dipped to single

digit. The caseload in the area on Tuesday stood at 6,825, said an official of the Brihanmumbai Mun-Corporation

There are 17 active Covid-19 cases in Dharavi while 6,449 patients have recovered, he said. The BMC does not publish death figures from Dharavi. The day before the area had reported only two Covid-19 cases, the lowest spike in severRABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JUNE 1

Madhya Pradesh was on Tuesday unlocked partiallv to start economic and business activities in the

The state government has, however, extended the 'corona curfew' Madhya Pradesh till June 15. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan also announced relaxation in

lockdown was imposed on April 24 in the to contain the Coronavirus pandemic, in the wake of 47 out of total 52 districts reporting a positivity rate below five

office issued detailed guidelines regarding the relaxations that will be provided during the period of 'corona curfew' in the state.

According to the guidelines, the 'corona curfew' will remain in force from 10 pm every Saturday to 6 am on Monday. There will be night curfew in the state from 10 pm to 6 am.

Grocery shops and other small business establishments have been allowed to open. But, shopping malls, cinema halls, gym, swimming pools, picnic spots, auditorium and community centres will remain closed during the

and social gatherings will remain prohibited till June 15. Schools, colleges and coaching institutions will also remain closed during the period. On Monday, Madhya

Pradesh reported 1,205 fresh Coronavirus cases taking the tally of cases to 7,80,030. The state has recorded 48 deaths in the last 24 hours taking the death toll to 5,023.

Meanwhile, neighbouring Chhattisgarh govern-ment also relaxed some curbs in the state, but decided to extend the lockdown to different periods in different districts considering the gravity of situation in these areas. Those districts with a positive rate above five per cent shall continue with restrictions on opening of shops and other commercial establishments, as was instructed in the earlier instructions on May 24, a press release by the Chhattisgarh government

Shops and commercial establishments in all other districts reporting less than five per cent positivity rate will be opened.

However, restrictions on opening of cinema halls, swimming pools, water parks and other group gathering places will remain in force in these districts.

## FRESH I POLLS Term of five state Assemblies including Punjab, UP end next year

# EC confident of holding polls in 2022

confident of holding the five Assembly polls due early next year, including in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, on time as the poll panel has gained a lot of experience from the electoral exercise in Bihar, other Assemblies amid the Coronavirus pandemic, Election Commissioner Sushil

Chandra has asserted. The terms of the legislative Assemblies of Goa, Punjab and

New Delhi, June 1: The Uttarakhand are coming Election Commission is to an end in March 2022, while the term of the Uttar Pradesh legislative Assembly is scheduled to end in May.

"That is the foremost duty of the Election Commission that we should hold the elections and submit the list of the winning candidates (to the Governor) before the term of the Assembly expires," Chandra said.

He was asked whether the poll panel will be able to hold the Assembly polls due in five states on time

due to Covid-19 as recently it has deferred some Lok Sabha and Assembly bypolls due to the second wave of Covid-19.

Rajya bypolls and biennial legislative council elections were also deferred due to the second wave of the "As you are aware that

the second wave of Covid-19 is also receding and the numbers (of infections) are quite less. We have done elections in Bihar during the pandemic, we have done elections in four

states and one UT. We have We have experience... learned various experiment. ences on how to hold polls pandemic

during the also," he said. "I am very much sure that with the receding pandemic now, and I wish the pandemic is over soon, we will absolutely be in a position to hold elections next year which are scheduled in five states on time, as per the schedule,"

Chandra said. While Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur have BJP-led

governments, has a Congress govern-

Uttar Pradesh, the country's most populous state, has approximately 14.66 crore voters, while Punjab has over 2 crore electors, according to January 1, 2021 data of the Election Commission.

Uttarakhand has 78.15 lakh voters while Manipur has 19.58 lakh and Goa has 11.45 lakh electors.

The five states together have an estimated 17.84



People not adhering to Covid-19 norms walk at Heritage Street near Golden Temple in Amritsar on Tuesday. Puniab, which has the highest case fatality rate of 2.4 per cent in the country, registered more than 100 deaths due to Covid-19 every single day in May.

## SHORT TAKES

#### **NEW VATICAN LAW CRIMINALISES** ABUSE OF ADULTS

Vatican City: Pope Francis has changed church law to explicitly criminalise the sexual abuse of adults by priests who abuse their authority and to say that laypeople who hold church office can be sanctioned for similar sex crimes.

The new provisions, released Tuesday after 14 years of study, were contained in the revised criminal law section of the Vatican's Code of Canon Law, the in-house legal system that covers the 1.3-billion strong Catholic Church.

The most significant changes are contained in two articles, 1395 and 1398, which aim to address major problems and shortcomings in the church's handling of sexual abuse.

#### **TECH PROBLEM ON IRAN FIGHTER JET KILLS TWO PILOTS**

Tehran: An Iranian fighter jet on Tuesday developed a technical problem that killed both of the aircraft's pilots, state TV reported.

The report said the incident happened in the country's southwest, in the city of Dezful, 444 kilometres (270 miles) from the capital, Tehran

and near the border with Iraq. The report said an investigation was underway as to what had caused the malfunction of the Iranian air force's F-5 fighter jet. The TV said it happened before takeoff. It did not elaborate. The report, citing an informed source, identified the pilots as Kianoush Basati and Hossein Nami, without providing their rank. Authorities were investigating, it said.

#### **MYANMAR SCRIBE TO SEEK ASYLUM IN SPAIN**

Madrid: Myanmar correspondent Mratt Kyaw Thu will arrive in Madrid on Tuesday to ask for asylum after fleeing the military junta in Yangon, said the Spanish news agency *EFE*, which he worked for.

The 30-year-old correspondent, who will travel to Spain after failing to obtain asylum in Germany, won Kate Webb award in 2017 for his outstanding coverage of the ethnic and religious conflicts in Myanmar.

"Tomorrow he will fly from Frankfurt to Madrid to ask for asylum in Spain," *EFE* southeast Asia director Ramon Abarca said. "He has spent four weeks in a detention centre," he said. A spokesman for Spain's interior ministry said Mratt's arrival had not been officially registered but would be treated according to inter-

#### **2 Thai Protest LEADERS GRANTED BAIL**

Bangkok: Two prominent Thai pro-democracy protest leaders were granted bail on Tuesday, weeks after contract ing Coronavirus in the kingdom's overcrowded prison system. Activist Panupong "Mike" Jadnok and human rights lawyer Anon Numpa are both facing multiple charges under royal defamation laws.

A Thai criminal court on Tuesday granted them bail, Thai Lawyers for Human Rights said.

They had to post a 2,00,000 baht (\$6,500) bail bond each and are banned from leaving Thailand or becoming involved with further activities that defame the monarchy.

Anon has been in custody for more than 100 days and Panupong for 85.

They are expected to be released from Thammasat University Hospital later on

#### **FLOOD RECEDES** IN NEW ZEALAND, **LEAVING DEBRIS**

Wellington: Floodwaters in New Zealand receded on Tuesday, leaving behind a big mess on many farms in the Canterbury region and damage to a major bridge.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told reporters the top priority was getting transport links working again, although it was unclear how long it would take to fix the bridge that connects the town of Ashburton to the main highway south. Crews hoped to have an alternate route to the town ready by the end of the day.

Ardern said farmers had been particularly hard hit with lost feed, broken fences and debris spread across their fields. She said that seeing the damage from the air had shown her the scale of what had happened.

## Four Pak soldiers killed in terror attacks

In the exchange of fire, four to five terrorists were killed while around eight ultras were also injured

Islamabad, June 1: Terrorists attacked a Pakistani security post and later targeted a military vehicle carrying IED, killing at least four paramilitary soldiers and injuring eight others in the restive southwestern province of Balochistan, the Army said. In the first incident, terrorists targetroops in Quetta and Turbat respectively on Monday, according to a statement issued by the media wing of the Pakistan Army — the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The post near Pir Ismail Ziarat was targeted by terrorists, it said. In the exchange of fire "four-five terrorists were killed while around eight were injured" while "four sol-diers were killed while six soldiers got injured."

In another incident, terrorists targeted an Frontier Corps vehicle with an improvised explo-sive device at Turbat and injured two soldiers.

Such cowardly acts by inimical elements backed by anti state forces" said and added that they cannot sabotage the hard earned peace and prosperity in Balochistan.

It also said that the security forces are determined to neutralise their nefarious designs.

Resource-rich Balochistan for a long time has witnessed violence by the Taliban and Baloch nationalists.

Terrorists had earlier

## Ugandan minister injured in assassination bid: Govt

Kampala, June 1: Uganda's transport minister, who used to lead the armed forces, was shot Tuesday in an attack which left his daughter and body-guard dead, a government spokesman said.

The minister, General Edward Katumba Wamala, who was chief of the defece forces between 2013 and 2017, came under fire while driving in Kampala, said government spokesman Chris Baryomunsi.

'There was an attempt on his (Wamala's) life this morning ... His daughter and bodyguard were shot and they died at the scene," Baryomunsi said.

TERRORISTS HAD earlier launched twin attacks on soldiers on May 9, killing three of them and five others wounded in two separate terrorist assaults in Quetta and Turbat.

launched twin attacks on soldiers on May 9, killing three of them and five others wounded in two separate terrorist assaults in Quetta and Turbat, according to an ISPR state"General Katumba has been rushed to hospital with bullet wounds and he is receiving treatment, the crime scene has been taken over by the investigators," he added.
"This could be a case of

assassination by criminal elements but the investigations will establish the motive and those behind" the attack. Witnesses to the attack

ons that four masked men riding two motorbikes fired scores of bullets at Wamala's vehicle.

told local television stati-

Images from the scene showed Wamala's car — an official army vehicle easily identified by its distinctive military green number plates — riddled with about a dozen bullet holes in the rear and driver side of the vehicle. Tuesday's shooting is the

latest in a series of attempted killings of high-profile targets by motorcycleriding assassins in Ugan-

da's capital. In June 2018 Ibrahim Abiriga, a leading politician from the ruling National Resistance Movement party, led by President Yoweri Museveni, was gunned down alongside his bodyguard in similar circumstances.

## Manhunt in Miami for three shooters

Miami, June 1: A mancontinued into Memorial Day for three masked suspects who opened fire early Sunday morning outside a Miami banquet hall, killing two men and wounding 21 others, in a shooting authorities said had spread terror and grief through their

forced Monday by a grieving father who interrupted a news conference just as the Miami-Dade Police Department's director, Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez III, was decrying the weekend's gun violence and appealing for the community's help in tracking down the shooters. -AP

## FRANCE SUBMITS BEIRUT PORT BLAST REPORT 11 suspected ultras nabbed in Indonesia **BLAST REPORT**

Beirut, June 1: Lebanon on Monday received a pre-liminary report from France regarding last year's massive port blast in Beirut that killed and wounded thousands, judicial officials said.

The officials said the French report is useful for the ongoing investigation in Beirut over the August blast, which decimated the country's main port and caused severe damage to surrounding areas. The officials declined to give details about the report. -AP

chief Untung Sangaji said.

Jakarta, June 1: Indones-

ian police said Monday

they have arrested 11 suspected Islamic militants

accused of plotting attacks

at several Christian churc-

hes in easternmost Papua

province.
On Friday, the elite counterterrorism squad arrest-

ed 10 suspects in several

raids in Papua's Merauke

district after receiving

information about planned attacks in the province, a predominantly Christian

region in Muslim-majority

Indonesia, Merauke police

them to seize items from various locations including chemicals for explosives, modified air guns able to fire real bullets, jihadist books and documents on planned attacks, he said.

Sangaji said those arrest ed are suspected of being members of Jemaah Anshorut Daulah, which has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group and carried out a series of suicide bombings in Indone-"They allegedly planned to attack churches in several places in Merauke," Sangaji said.

The arrests led police to another suspect who was

## 8 jihadists 'neutralised' in Burkina army operation

Ouagadougou, June 1: northern town of Tasm-Burkinabe soldiers have "neutralised" eight jihadists and captured three in an ongoing operation in the north and east of the poor West African state, the army said Tuesday.

Five were "neutralised" - the usual term for killed — by national soldiers and troops of the Burkinabe battalion of the G5 Sahel force on Friday near the

aka, the army chief of staff said in a statement, describing the operation as an "offensive reconnaissance mission"

"Three suspects were apprehended and taken to the gendarmerie for quessaid, adding that weapons and materiel were seized. On Thursday, following an attack on civilians in

eastern Tialbonga, two assailants were killed during a search and sweep operation, it said. The unit killed another jihadist following an attack on army reservists in northern Gasbole, the statement said.

The Burkina Faso army launched an operation in the north on May 5 named Houne which is expected to last more than a month.

## Nato meets to prepare Afghan withdrawal

Brussels, June 1: Nato's foreign and defence ministers were meeting Tuesday to lay the groundwork for the military alliance's first summit with United States President Joe Biden, setting aside four tumultuous years with the Trump administration.

The ministers will discuss a hefty communique being drafted for the June 14 summit in Brussels, which will reaffirm the unity of the 30-nation sec urity alliance — which has been riven by infighting in recent years — and focus on future threats and challenges. "This is a pivotal moment for our alliance, and our collective security," Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on the eve of the meetings.

"In a more competitive and unpredictable world, need transatlantic unity." Chief among the challenges is dealing with an increasingly aggressive Russia, whose defence minister announced Monday that Russia would establish 20 new military units in its western sector this year to counter what it claims is a growing threat from Nato.

The rise of China and the impact of climate change — two of the Biden administration's key interests — will also be discussed, along with missile defence, cyber and hybrid warfare, and the use of disinformation. The most pressing subject for debate will be winding up Nato's opera-

tions in Afghanistan. Biden has pledged to have US troops out of the conflict-ravaged country

THE MINISTERS will discuss a hefty communique being drafted for the June 14 summit in Brussels, which will reaffirm the unity of the 30-nation security alliance - which has been riven by infighting in recent years — and focus on future threats and challenges.

CHIEF AMONG the challenges is dealing with an increasingly aggressive Russia, whose defence minister announced Monday that Russia would establish 20 new military units in its western sector this year to counter what it claims is a growing threat from Nato.

THE RISE of China and the impact of climate change - two of the Biden administration's key interests will also be discussed, along with missile defence, cyber and hybrid warfare.

by Sept. 11, but many are likely to have left by the time the summit takes place. But major questions remain over exactly how Nato will continue to fund the corruption-ridden Afghan security forces, whether to continue training special forces troops somewhere outside the country, and exactly who might provide security for civilian workers, embassies and Kabul's airport.

## Gala time for kids



Children play with soap bubbles in the centre of the Ukrainian capital of Kiev during a festive event organised by the police to mark International Children's Day on Tuesday.

## Russian authorities increase pressure on Oppn, arrest one

up their pressure on dissent ahead of a parliamentary election, arresting one opposition activist and raiding several others' homes. Andrei Pivovarov, the head of the Open Russia movement that dissolved itself last week, was pulled off a plane at St. Petersburg's airport late Monday and was to be taken to Krasnodar in southern Russia Tuesday as part of a criminal probe against him.

Also on Tuesday, police

**Moscow, June 1:** Russian authorities have ramped opposition politician Dmitry Gudkov, a former lawmaker who has aspired to run for parliament in September. At least two of his associates also had their homes searched.

The moves are part of a multi-pronged crackdown on the opposition that is widely seen as part of the authorities' efforts to prevent any opposition groups from mounting a challenge to the main Kremlinbacked United Russia party in September's parliamentary election.

United Russia's popularraided a country home of ity has waned amid the

country's economic slowdown. Last week, Pivovarov announced that Open Russia was shutting down to protect its members from prosecution after the authorities had designated it as "undesirable.

The government already has outlawed more than 30 groups using a 2015 law that made membership in "undesirable" organisations a criminal offence.

Another bill now making its way through parliament tightens punishment for their members. Open Russia was financed by tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who moved to Lond-on after spending 10 years in prison in Russia on charges widely seen as political revenge for challenging President Vladimir Putin's rule.

In March, police briefly detained about 200 participants of a forum of members of municipal councils that Open Russia helped organise. Putin's most determined political foe, Alexei Navalny, was arrested in January upon his return from Germany, where he had spent five months recovering from a nerve agent poisoning.

## RESIDENTS' I TRAUMA Owners flock to vet Qaddoura's clinic since May 21 ceasefire with Israel In Gaza, Palestinians tend to shell-shocked pets

#### Gaza City, Palestinian Territories, June 1: A smashed goldfish bowl, panicked birds in a cage, scores of animals needing treatment. The loss or injury of treasured pets has added to the grief and trauma of Gaza residents after last month's deadly

conflict. Neriman, a nine-year-old Palestinian girl, clutched a glass jar holding her goldfish Hoor, delighted it had survived after her other one, Hooriya, died in an Israeli air strike in Gaza

City. In the latest war, Israeli strikes on Gaza killed 254 Palestinians, including 66 children, as

well as some fighters, authorities there say. Fire by Palestinian militants claimed 12 lives in Israel, including one child, a teenager and an Israeli soldier.

Pets also suffered, as well as the children who owned them. so sad that Hooriya died and I cried

when I buried her in the

field," said Neriman, of

her first fish, whose name meant "Mermaid" in

"But I was so happy that Hoor had survived," she added of her second fish. At an animal clinic in Gaza City, Amani Abu Shaaban held a fluffy cat to her chest as they waited to see a vet. "My cat has been very

scared since the war. She refuses to eat, and her hair is falling out," she said. "Even the sound of a mobile phone ringing freaks her out.

One needed an operation for a broken leg, the other was dehydrated and malnourished. Dozens of pets owners

Nearby, vet Mutasem Qaddoura examined two

cats, one after the other.

have flocked to his clinic since Gaza's May 21 ceasefire though supplies to treat them are scarce. "The state of veterinary

Gaza," Qaddoura said. We use X-ray machines intended for humans and platinum screws meant to

medicine is disastrous in

Neriman and her family had been forced to flee their home on May 13, after an Israeli officer warned neighbours of an imminent strike on a near-

fix children's bones to treat the animals."

by bank. In the panic she left behind her fish, as well as two parakeets, Alloosh and Malloosh, given to her

by her father for her sixth birthday. But soon after, she start-

ed worrying. "I just had to go home with my father to get them," she said. When they returned, she

found a special outfit she had laid out on her bed for the Eid holidays covered in rubble, the bed col-lapsed and the windows blown in. "I heard Alloosh and Malloosh chirping under the rubble, and I found the fish bowl broken." she said.

Hooriya had died, but they saved Hoor, a scene shown in a video which has since gone viral on social media.

## FRENCH TROOPS **MAY LEAVE MALI: MACRON**

Paris, June 1: French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday sug-gested France will pull troops from Mali if the country's institutional instability persists and inhibits the fight against Islamic extremists.

Macron told a news conference that "our priority in Mali is the fight against terrorism and the presence of our forces on the ground is not enough in this fight. It also requires the strengthening of stable and

legitimate institutions. France has more than 5,000 troops in Africa's Sahel region. Macron's comments come a day after West African leaders suspended Mali from their regional bloc, the Economic Community of West African States, or ECOWAS, over what they said amounted to a

coup last week. ECOWAS called for a new civilian prime minister to be nominated immediately, a new inclusive government to be formed and the 18-month transition of power leading to February 2022 elections to be carried out, saying a monitoring mechanism will be put

in place to assure this. 'Neither France nor its partners are committed to getting involved (in Mali) if the ECOWAS demands are not respected," Macron said.

Germany, which has several hundred soldiers taking part in the UN stabilisation and European Union training missions in Mali, sees the need to continue those deployments, Chancellor Angela Merkel said in the joint news conference with Macron via videoconference. She added, however,

that there were "red lines" including the need to hold elections and for there to be no contact with Islamist forces, including by Mali's current president. She and Macron had agreed to have a "very, very close exchange" about developments in Mali and "if there is a situation (...) in which we see red lines are crossed, then we will coordinate our actions closely." A power vacu-um amid a 2012 coup d'etat unleashed years of chaos in Mali and allowed Islamic extremists to seize control of

northern towns.
Ultimately, a French-led military operation ousted the jihadis from strongholds in 2013, but they have regrouped and since expanded their reach.



# **Chronicle**

## Stop misuse of sedition, all other laws to stifle dissent

he Supreme Court's observation that Section 124A of the IPC which deals with sedition will need interpretation, especially on its applica-tion with regard to freedom of the press, is welcome. It is all the more refreshing that it came along with a directive restraining the police from taking coercive action against two TV channels in Andhra Pradesh for airing news, and a query, albeit sarcastic, by a bench of the court as to whether sedition cases were being filed against TV channels which aired visuals of a

body of a suspected Covid-19 victims being thrown into a river. This is not the first time that the Supreme Court has taken a close look at the sedition law vis a vis Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution which guarantees freedom of speech and expression. A Constitution bench of the Supreme Court had in 1962 upheld the constitutionality of the law but held that its use must be limited to "acts involving intention or tendency to create disorder, or disturbance of law and order, or incitement to violence". The court had gone on to say that a citizen has "a right to say or write whatever he likes about the gov-

There are reports that 96 per cent of sedition cases in were registered validity of the law. after 2014... of the 405 such cases, 149 were booked against persons the Prime Minister

ernment, or its measures, by way of criticism or comment, so long as he does not incite people to violence against the government established by law or with the intention of creating public dis**sedition cases in** the last 10 years order". A month ago, the Supreme Court had, in fact, decided that it will review the constitutional

There are reports that 96 per cent of sedition cases in the last 10 years were registered after 2014. According to one report, of the 405 such cases, 149 were booked against persons who spoke against Prime Minister Narendra Modi who spoke against who spoke against who spoke against World Adjusted World World Adjusted World Wor Yogi Adityanath. It is curious that the NDA dispensation, which scrapped about 1,500 redundant laws, chose to retain this relic of the Raj.

Given the propensity of the governments at the Centre and in the states to invoke this law, it is appropriate that the apex court get on to the exercise of its review at the earliest. It is, however, a bit baffling that the court talked of a review with regard to the press, though the Constitution makes no mention of freedom of the press and assures every citizen of the right to speech and expression. It is expected that the review would ultimately benefit every citizen of this country

It is not just the sedition law that the governments now find handy to muzzle dissent or criticism. The Uttar Pradesh government had recently warned that those who publicly flag shortage of healthcare facilities Covid patients face will be booked under the National Security Act. It took a stern warning by the apex court that it will brook no violation of the right to free speech of a citizen when the country is going through a humanitarian crisis for the state government to halt its draconian moves. Another forceful and timely intervention by the Supreme Court is imperative if free speech were to survive and succeed in

## 3 kids in China: It's demographics

he China Communist Party politburo's shift to a three-child policy comes amid a falling birthrate that has led to certain demographic challenges like an ageing society which may have 300 millions people in the 60+ category by 2025. The title of the world's most populated country may not remain much longer with China as estimates have it that India is behind by a mere five crore people and is being tipped to take the title in this decade itself. The question arises, then, whether a nation can over time cope with a rising population when the economic and social indicators are far from promising as they may have been in the past.

Can society support an ageing section of people even as it faces the challenge of providing jobs for millions of young people in an environment in which industry and to an extent services too are bound to get more automated and the traditional job and livelihood prospects are fast declining in the modern age? China's problem right now seems to be to sustain what was once a demographic advantage of a vast number of younger people in the working category driving an economy that steadily rose over the last four decades into one of the most powerful in the world.

More recently, India was thought to have the advantage in which those aged above 64 represent only about 6.38 per cent of the population while 26.62 per cent are younger than 14.

As education reached all, more and more couples adopted the one or two child norm in India where family planning is only voluntary and not State policy-driven as it is in China where resentment is rife over government's invasive control over odies and where unwed or single mothers with children are not only frowned upon but also made ineligible for State benefits. There are far too may factors like economic pressures and social trends among women that govern birthrates. While policy planners may fret over demographic profiles, individual choice is more likely to govern population trends. Ultimately, it will be the economy and the environment that will dictate trends than fancy ideas of social engineering.

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Subhani



# Game score at halftime: China -1, Mankind -0



Sriram Karri

elcome. We nearly billions of people across the world, but the telecast of this soccer game is not being broadcast live only in China. We are just a few minutes away from kick-off of the game to decide the winner of the ultimate trophy world domination.

China, under its new coach, manager and captain, Xi, has prepared hard and meticulously for this match. Xi's strategy is unclear. The rival team, "All of Mankind" is unsure how to deal with Xi, even experts are divided. The excitement and tension among spectators is unbelievable, and it feels like a game of

life and death. Xi wins the toss against his rival captain, Donald T, who is shaking his head angrily, and claiming that the referee, Mr Who, is resorting to play. Xi wil off the ball. Against all rules, Xi has unveiled a new ball for the match. The sphere, green in colour, has tentacles on its surface. China has not revealed how or where the ball was made. Some experts feel that it was created in a lab, but a few say it was a natural mutation.

The jury is still out. But clearly China has an unfair advantage as they know a lot more about this ball, now dubbed Corona. By refusing to share information, clearly Xi is complicit as guilty as per the lab-leak theory. The game picks pace. Trump and his team mates are running around in confusion as Xi and his team are showing excellent coordination, dribbling the ball with practiced finesse, deflecting all attacks with nonchalance.

Trump is complaining about Who, the referee, who, however, is not entertaining any issues against China. "W" does not stand for Wuhan though, but World. There has been huge controversy over the selection of Trump for this match. Could he be changed midway, especially if he continues to fail in handling Corona? We will have to

wait and watch. Meanwhile, another fee-ble attempt at having a go into China's half has been thwarted. China is back on the attack again.

Meanwhile, the Chinese

ball, Corona, is causing discomfort to many players, as if the entire ballgame has been changed The US, UK, Italy, Spain, Hong Kong and India are all struggling. Each player is trying to figure a way to deal with the Corona ball but in a rapidly moving game, there is hardly time for them to regroup or share their learning on the go. China is mean while getting aggressive with certain players Taiwan to begin with. Taiwan has been pushed but the referee ignores the Chinese foul. China has protested against the presence of Taiwan in Mankind's team before

the game. Now China is trying to elbow India hard but gets one back. The Mankind team protests but the referee, Who, does not stop the game or admonish China. The Corona ball game continues. Suddenly as China moves forward Trump tries to stop Xi but fails. Xi trips Trump and

the referee blows the whistle. Wait? What? Unbelievable. Incre dible. Xi fouls and Who hands him an extra. China gets a penalty kick. Mankind protests but China get a chance to take a lead. Xi prepares to kick

Mankind and he does it with ease. China takes the lead. 1-0.

The coach of Mankind is looking on carefully as Trump puts up a little fight back here, taking the ball into the Chinese side. It is the Quad strategy. The US, India, Japan and Australia are moving forward with some skill. But China is not giving it up. It is using reverse

aggression tactics and is

targeting India again. The India-China momentarily distracts everyone. But India refuses to budge. China now kicks in other directions. China's selective aggres-

against Philippines, Vietnam, Australia and Japan leads to anger in Mankind.

Meanwhile, the coach decides to substitute a player. No, not just any player, but the captain. Trump is out. Biden steps onto the ground but the exiting captain refuses to hand over the band. Some internal scuffle here... but matters seem to have

finally settled nicely. Can Biden change Mankind's strategy? He has experience and great understanding China, having been a crucial player in Obama's Club before. Biden is pushing hard on the investigation flank. The ball is being held by Mankind for a tad bit longer as Wuhan keeps coming into the picture... Lab or natural mutation? The tactics are simple but are working. But will China wilt and relinquish advantage? Traditionally, China believes in the Middle domination Kingdom

Can Biden change Mankind's strategy? He... is pushing hard on the investigation flank. The ball is being held by Mankind for a tad bit longer as Wuhan keeps coming into the picture. Lab or

natural mutation?

Biden is under great pressure, having taken charge after China took a lead. Will he go down in history as the captain who surrendered American global leadership, a tro-phy held since World War II? Or can he inflict enough high costs on Xi for his misadventures? Biden is getting his players to focus on the economy flank and pushing vaccine tactics. China is imitating the vaccine ploy but does not seem to have too many takers. Except Pakistan

Meanwhile, the ball goes back to investigations into the origins of Covid. China is protesting. We are nearing the end of the play for the first half, with Xi's China holding on to the 1-0 lead. Mankind has not even reached China's half convincingly even once in this match, no mismatch. Europe has been disappointing in the game so far. Biden has another brief distraction on the field — it is Israel and Palestine having a go at each other.

Most Mankind players are looking on in disbelief while China is enjoying the distraction to catch its breath. We have just a few minutes left. It looks unlikely with the pace at which Covid is moving around the global field if there can be an equaliser. Clearly, the second half is when the fate of the match will be decided.

Will Mankind adopt a aggressive chalmore lenge to China in response to their bio-warfare tac-tics? Will Mankind get together strongly to remove China from the UN Security Council? Or impose a fine of \$10,000 for each Covid death worldwide? Biden's response – military, diplomatic, economic, or a combination? We will find out when the game resumes after a break if he can make a strong comeback.

The referee blows the whistle. Halftime. The scoreline reads Mankind 0, China -1. All the players are walking out of the ground. We will take a short commercial break. Be right back...

#### **LETTERS**

#### **ANANDAIAH 'CURE'**

Finally Boningi Anandaiah conoction got nod from both the Andhra Pradesh High Court and the state government. With this several people across the state and neighbouring state who want take his preparation for Covid-19 treatment got shy of relief. In this episode one should learn that there is no authentic treatment for Coronavirus even in allopathy. Even remdesivir and plasma therapy were recommended and later they were shunned. Why can't such chance be given to Anandaiah preparation as thousands of Covid patients are eagerly waiting for it?

Pratapa Reddy Yaramala Krishna

#### NON-ALIGNMENT

With the US pressing for new research to find the origins of Covid-19 and China furiously rejecting any new research it's the beginning of Cold War 2. While India had survived the first Cold War through Jawaharlal Nehru's Non-alignment strategy and protected itself from the two major powers — US and USSR — it seems even now non-alignment strategy is the best solution to protect India from the two nuclear superpowers that is USA and China.

Ratnaraj Jain Rajahmundry

#### YEARS AGO IN **■ DECCAN** • hronicle **Ex-Minister held for** alleged link with **Pak spies**

CALCUTTA, June 1. Former United Front Minister Golam Yazdani and former mem-Badruddoja were arrested this afternoon for their alleged involvement in the activities of a Pakistani spy ring. Chief Minister Ajoy Mukherji

told newsmen that the arrest was made under the Maintenance of Internal Security Ordinance 1971 with a view to prevent the two persons from acting in any manner "prejudicial to the defence of India and India's relations with foreign powers and the security of India.

## Aakar Patel



and other issues

ndia's external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar was till Saturday on a visit to the United States. The first half of his trip was apparently not very productive as the person he had come to meet, US secretary of state Antony J. Blinken, had to go to the Middle East on an urgent visit. Mr Jaishankar met him only several days after reaching the US. In the meantime, the minister met the Indian teams at the United Nations and had sundry other meetings. He also had an interview with former President Donald Trump's national security adviser Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster. The general, who is familiar with India and has visited it, spoke about radicalism in the region and how extremism had hurt Pakistan. He then asked Mr Jaishankar: "I wanted to ask you about how you see political developments in your own country. You are not a partisan person. You have served with great distinction across many administrations. There is concern in the midst of the pandemic about some of these Hindutva policies that could be undermining the secular nature of Indian democracy... Are India's friends right to be concerned about some of these Mr Jaishankar first corrected Gen.

McMaster to say that he was actually partisan: "Let me clarify something. I served multiple administrations when I was a civil servant. I am today an elected member of Parliament. Do I have a political viewpoint and political interest? Of course, I do. Hopefully I will be able to articulate the interest that I represent." He then says he will give two replies: a "straight political answer" and a "slightly more nuanced societal answer". His straight political answer is that in the past India had "votebank politics", but no longer does because democracy had deepened under the BJP. This had happened through "broader representation in politics and in leadership positions and in civil society of people.. who are much more confident about their culture, about their language about their beliefs. These are people who are less from the English-speaking world, less connected to other global centres". Mr Jaishankar says there's nothing to be concerned about as there is no problem, and this set of people he is referring to are "judged politically harshly and it is often used to create a certain narrative".

His nuanced societal answer is that the BJP government doesn't discriminate, Mr Jaishankar says, as they gave extra rations to people in the pandemic and put money in people's Jan Dhan accounts without separating them by religion.

We should perhaps be thankful to Mr Jaishankar that India so far hasn't decided to give entitlements to the poor based on religion. But while we are thankful, we should also note Mr Jaishankar didn't actually answer what was asked. Gen. McMaster's question was framed around the word Hindutva and its policies. What are they? They are the introduction of religion into citizenship. The United Nations and the European Union and members of the US Congress expressed disappointment and alarm over India's Citizenship Amendment

The US International Commission on Religious Freedom report for 2021 identified laws in India that criminalise conversion, especially of women to Islam. These laws are the BJP's Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act 2018, Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act 2019, Madhya Dharma Swatantreya Adhyadesh 2020, Uttar Pradesh Vidhi Viruddh Dharma Samparivartan Pratishedh Adhyadesh 2020 and Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act 2021. The USCIRF report (which recommends sanctions

against India) says while these laws 'target inter-faith marriage in particular, several other states prohibit conversion based on vague criteria, including force, inducement, allurement, coercion, fraud, or misrepresentation. These anti-conversion laws are often the basis for false accusations. harassment, and violence against non-Hindus that occur with impunity. In 2020, for example, mobs — fuelled by false accusations of forced conversions — attacked Christians, destroyed churches, and disrupted religious worship services".
India under Narendra Modi has

spent a lot of energy in drafting laws that go after minorities. The Gujarat Animal Preservation (Amendment) Bill 2017 punishes cow slaughter, that is ostensibly an economic crime, with life in jail. No other economic crime carries a life sentence. More than half of all arrests under the National Security Act in Uttar Pradesh in 2020 were for cow slaughter. This is a law that allows preventive detention, meaning the government locks up people without any crime. Muslim men are the only community for whom divorce is not a civil wrong but a criminal one. This is the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act

talaq in one sitting is not lawful in India. If I say talaq to my wife three times, our marriage doesn't end, and it is not a crime. If a Muslim man says it to his wife, their marriage doesn't end, but it is a crime. India uses a 12-gauge shotgun firing

birdshot into protesters in only one state. In no other state in India except Kashmir is the so-called pellet gun used on crowds. It has blinded and wounded thousands, including infants nowhere near the protest.

I could go on, but you get the picture.
These are the things that India's

friends are concerned about. They are new laws that are the gift to us of Hindutva, which is why Gen. McMaster used that term.

Mr Jaishankar replied to Gen. McMaster without once using the word "Hindutva", and without referring to any of the laws India was getting pulled up for around the world. The reason he ran away from the debate, of course, was that there is no defence. Obfuscation and avoiding the issue was the only way to respond to the accusation, which is a correct one, that India was harming itself and its own people through Hindutva.

The writer is a columnist and a

# quick

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	51,934.88	0.00
Nifty 50	15,574.90	-0.05
S&P 500*	4,203.77	-0.01
Dollar (₹)	72.90	0.38
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.37	0.42
Euro (₹)	89.18	0.77
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,892▲285	0.58
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	70.18	1.24
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.025	0.05
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.632	0.039
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

## Move to exempt electric vehicles from RC fees

The ministry of road transport and highways has issued a draft notification proposing to exempt battery-operated vehicles (BOV) from payment of fee for issue or renewal of registration certificate (RC). The ministry said comments from the public have been sought within 30 days. 'The ministry...proposing to exempt BOV from payment of fees for the purpose of issue or ren-ewal of RC and assignment of new registration mark," it said.

## Curbs on export of amphotericin-B injections



on export of amphotericin-B injections that are used for treatment of mucormycosis or black fungus infections. By a notification issued by the **Directorate General of Foreign** Trade, export of the injections have been put in the restricted category. This means that an exporter would need permission or licence from the directorate for its outbound ship-

## **Renault Triber** gets 4-star adult safety rating

Renault India's seven-seater model Triber has received a four-star safety rating for adult occupants, vehicle safety group Global NCAP said. The model has achieved a four-star rating for adult occupants and three stars for child occupants as per the Global NCAP's latest round of crash tests. Vehicles are rated from zero to five based on their safety features and automobiles with a higher rating are considered safer for occupants.

## Eli Lilly India gets nod for antibody combination

Eli Lilly and Company India said it has received permission for emergency use of its antibody drugs combination in the country. The company has received permission for restricted emergency use of its monoclonal antibody drugs, bamlanivimab 700 mg and etesevimab 1400 mg, used together for the treatment of patients with mild to moderate Covid-19, Eli Lilly said in a statement.



## ■Reversal of stamp duty relief affects sales

# **Mumbai property** deals take bad hit

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** MUMBAI, JUNE 1

Mumbai Metropolitan (MMR) recorded a sharp drop in property sale transactions in April-May 2021 over the Covid-19 second wave and the Maharashtra government's decision to discontinue the stamp duty waiver on property registrations from April 2021.

Sale transactions in April and May came down to Rs 10,979 crore and Rs 22,507 crore, respectively, against Rs 44,167 crore in March 2021.

The property sale transactions registered in MMR in February and January 2021 were Rs 21,696 crore and Rs 21,484

crore, respectively.

As per data from the Inspector General of Registration-Department of Registrations & Stamps Maharashtra, as on May 30, 2021, the stamp duty collection in MMR for the month was Rs 417 crore, as compared to Rs 725 crore in April 2021.

The stamp duty collection in MMR for the months of March, February and January 2021 were Rs 1,365 crore, Rs 648 crore and Rs 570 crore, respectively.

"We have started witnessing a 50 per cent dip in property sales after the Maharashtra government restored stamp duty back to 5 per cent in Mumbai and 6 per cent in the rest of Maharashtra from April 2021. The sales regis-

## CONSTRUCTION TO RESUME BY MID-JUNE: ASSOCHAM

New Delhi, June 1: With several states started easing Covid-related restrictions, the employmentintensive construction industry should witness resump-

tion in opera-

the middle of June, though at a curtailed level, industry chamber Assocham said on Tuesday. The chamber said it would take about two weeks for the contractors to put together again

the material and manpower at the sites after the disruptions of about 40 days in major states like D e l h i

Maharashtra, UP, Rajasthan, Bihar and Haryana, among others. The major chal-

lenge is bringing back the construction workers, Assochan said, adding, fFast vaccination of the labour force would be a big morale booster for them and their fami-

tered in the month of April & May are due to the overflow of registrations from the previous quarter where many homebuyers took advantage of the stamp duty benefit before the March deadline and registered their proper-ties later," said Ashok Mohanani, president, Naredco Maharashtra. 'Due to the impact of the

second wave of Covid-19 and the Maharashtra government's decision to dis-continue the stamp duty waiver on property registrations from April 2021, there has been a decline in the property sales in the months of April and May 2021," real estate experts

"The second wave which has been more deadly than the first wave made the homebuyers more cautious to save money for emergencies rather than

investing in properties. Amid the sudden surge in Covid cases and the various curbs due to the lock-down in the state, the sector faced a gradual slowdown, which made it extremely difficult to sustain the momentum...the homebuyers took advantage of the stamp duty benefit before the March deadline," said Pritam Chivukula, co-founder & director Tridheatu Realty

director, Tridhaatu Realty. "For the second consecutive month in a row, the real estate sector faced a dip in sales due to the second wave of the pandemic. Even the festive occasions of Gudi Padwa and Akshaya Tritiya saw buyers shying away from auspicious purchases due to the surge in Covid-19 cases," Ram Naik, executive director, The tive director, The Guardians Real Estate

## **Guidelines** for pharma PLI issued

New Delhi, June 1: The government on Tuesday issued operational guide-lines for the productionlinked incentive (PLI) scheme for the pharmaceutical industry.

The Department of Pharmaceuticals has notified the 'Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Pharmaceuticals, for which the approved outlay is Rs 15,000 crore, the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers said in a

The scheme envisages to create global champions out of India who has the potential to grow in size and scale using cutting edge technology and thereby penetrate the global value chains."

The scheme is now open to applications from the industry, the ministry said.

The applications are invited in the three groups, based on the manufacturing revenue of FY20 of the applicants. A special carve-out for MSMEs has been kept under the scheme. The application window is for 60 days starting from June 2 to July 31, 2021.

"The products covered under the scheme are formulations, biopharmaceuticals, active pharmaceutical ingredients, key starting material, drug intermediates, invitro diagnostic medical

devices, etc," it added. A maximum of 55 applicants will be selected. An applicant, via a single application, can apply for more than one

## Nestle working to update nutrition, health strategy

New Delhi, June 1: Swiss FMCG major Nestle SA said it is looking across its entire portfolio to increase the nutrient profile of its products, following international media reports that 60 per cent of the company's mainstream food and drinks portfolio failed to meet a "recognised defini-tion of health" and nutri-

Nestle is working on a company-wide project to update its nutrition and health strategy. It is looking at its entire portfolio to ensure that its products are helping meet their nutritional needs and supporting a bal-anced diet, a Nestle SA spokesperson said.

On Monday, Financial Times reported that the majority of Nestle's mainstream food and drinks portfolio failed to meet recognised standards of

health and nutrition. "The world's largest food



company, Nestle, has acknowledged that more than 60 per cent of its mainstream food and drinks products do not meet a "recognised definition of health and that some of our categories and products will never be healthy' no matter how

A presentation circulated among top executives this year, seen by the Financial Times, said that only 37 per cent of Nestle's food and beverages by revenues, excluding products such as pet

much we renovate", the

Financial Times report

said quoting a Nestle doc-

ical nutrition, achieve a rating above 3.5 under Australia's health star rating system.
"Within its overall food

and drink portfolio, about 70 per cent of Nestle's food products failed to meet that threshold, the presentation said, along with 96 per cent of beveragesexcluding pure coffeeand 99 per cent of Nestle's confectionery and ice cream portfolio," the media report noted.

While issuing a global statement, Nestle—maker of KitKat, Maggi and Nescafe—said it is working on a companywide project to update its nutrition and health strategy. "We are looking at our entire portfolio across the different phases of people's lives to ensure our products are helping meet their nutritional needs and supporting a balanced diet," he said.— PTI

## **Lending to MSMEs up 3% in FY21**

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 1

Credit offtake by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) increased by 3 per cent in the last fiscal year (FY21) against a marginal de-growth in FY20. However, the second Covid wave has hit incremental credit growth in April this year.

At Rs 12.43 lakh crore at the end of FY21, the total bank credit outstanding to MSMEs grew 3.19 per cent. At the end of the previous fiscal, the outstanding had degrown 0.21 per cent.
While micro and small

enterprises (MSEs) registered a growth of 4.22 per cent in credit offtake in FY21, outstanding by medium enterprises grew 5.14 per cent. The manufacturing sector recorded a growth of 3.07 per cent in FY21 against a degrowth of 6.15 per cent in the previous year. Services bettered growth from 3.89 per cent in FY20 to 4.83 per cent in FY21.

Some of the key policy

measures provided by the government during the pandemic led to the growth in bank credit. This includes the Emer-Credit gency Guarantee Scheme.

However, since the second wave of the pandemic started hitting industries. there has been a decline of bank credit.

In April 2021, incremenbank credit to the MSME sector fell by 3.2 per cent compared with a negative growth of 0.2 per cent in April 2020.

## Investors cheer after RBI clarifies crypto trading isn't banned

**SUVASHREE GHOSH** 

Reserve Bank of India's clarification that cryptocurrency trading isn't banned in the country is a welcome relief for a community facing push-back from traditional lenders needed to help settle these deals.

The regulator late on Monday told banks not to cite a 2018 central bank circular as a reason to hinder crypto trades, given the Supreme Court has since squashed the order. Banks must continue with other routine due diligence measures on the deals, the central

bank said. The RBI order follows local media reports that financial firms, including SBI Cards & Payment Services Ltd, one of India's biggest credit card issuers, and the nation's largest private-sector bank, HDFC Bank, had cautioned cus-

tomers against dealing in virtual currencies. Indian authorities have repeatedly expressed concern that crypto assets could be used for criminal activity such as money laundering and funding terrorism.

"Investing in crypto has always been 100 per cent legal in India and the new RBI circular clearly confirms the right to do business with crypto firms," said Avinash Shekhar, cochief executive officer at ZebPay, India's oldest crypto exchange. He added that the clarification would attract more investors to the virtual currencies.
The RBI's broader con-

cerns and banks' worries around money laundering should help to spur regulations and make the industry safer and stronger, said Sumit Gupta, CEO and cofounder of crypto exchange CoinDCX. — Bloomberg

## MANUFACTURING **PMI SLIPS IN MAY**

**MADHUSUDAN SAHOO** 

Advisory.

With the Covid second wave and subsequent restrictions across many states, India's manufacturing activity slipped in May. India witnessed the loss of growth momentum last month due to the pandemic's negative impact on demand, slowest rise of new work orders and job losses, a private sector survey showed Tuesday.

According to the month-IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index survey, manufacturing PMI stood at a ten-month low of 50.8 in May, down from 55.5 in the previous month of April. "Although the health of the Indian manufacturing sector continued to improve in May, the latest results showed a significant loss of growth momentum," the survey showed.

Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit, said, "The Indian manufacturing sector is showing increasing signs of strain as the Covid-19 crisis intensifies. Key gauges of current sales, production and input buying weakened noticeably in May."

## Moderate impact of 2nd wave seen

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE1

The impact of the second wave of pandemic on different sectors will be largely moderate compared to the first wave last year, says Brickwork Ratings.

Engineering goods, automobiles and ancillaries, BFSI and media and entertainment, which were in the "high impact" category in the first wave are now in

the "moderate" category. Partial opening of economic activities, declining

in execution are helping engineering goods. As for automobiles. demand revival over the low base of last year, robust delivery channels and pent-up demand might be supportive. Revival in the collection cycle will support BFSI. Localised and less

growth for media. However, hotels and tourism, gems & jewellery and transportation will remain highly impacted

allow a slight scope of

restrictions

stringent

due to restricted mobility and lower disposable incomes.

Textile and accessories, metal & metal products, real estate, infrastructure, construction & construction materials, chemicals & chemical products, power and consumer durables continue to be moderately impacted as last year

IT and ITeS will have a low impact compared to a moderate impact in the first wave due to higher demand and better economic prospects in the US.

## THAILAND OKAYS \$4.5-BN STIMULUS THAT INCLUDES **CASH HANDOUTS**



SUTTINEE YUVEJWATTANA

Thailand's government approved a set of economstimulus measures worth 140 billion baht (\$4.5 billion) to counter impact from the nation's biggest coron-

avirus outbreak yet. The measures— which include cash handouts to welfare-card holders and special groups, co-payments and cash rebates are expected to be implemented from July, Anucha Burapachaisri, a government spokesman,

said on Tuesday. Thailand's economy is facing strong headwinds from the country's latest Covid outbreak, which has totalled more than 130,000 cases since it began in Bangkok

nightlife venues in April.
The latest aid is on top of an 85.5-billion baht package last month that extended two cash handout programmes implemented. The two latest packages will be financed by borrowing under a 1 trillion baht programme

The package announced Tuesday includes: 93 bil-

The new outbreak has weakened prospects for

#### Lockdowns drag down auto sales MICHAEL GONSALVES therefore, sales compari-May 1 through May 16 so as son is made to April 21 to

PUNE, JUNE 1

The second Covid-19 wave has brought back pain for India's automakers as their sales slumped over the preceding month on fresh lockdowns in several states and companies suspending

manufacturing. Comparisons between last month and May 2020 are not comparable as both months saw disruptions in production. The national lockdown last year had only begun being eased in a phased manner in May,

gauge the market trend.

Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors, Kia, Mahindra and Mahindra, Honda Cars, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, and MG Motor fell sharply in May amid the pandemic, which hit the rural market hard this time round.

Suzuki Maruti

Vehicle sales at Maruti

Tuesday reported a 71 per cent decline in total sales to 46.555 units in May as compared to 1,59,691 units in April. The auto major had also shut production from

to divert oxygen from industrial use for medical purposes Sales at Hyundai dipped to 49 per cent at 25,001 units

last month against 49,002 units in April. The passenger vehicle sales at Tata Motors sales declined 40 per cent to 15,181 units in May, down from 25,095 units in April

this year. Sales at Kia India clocked 11,050 units, making it the 4th most sold car brand last month. It had sold

16,111 units in April 2021.

approved in April 2020, Anucha said.

lion baht in co-payments for consumer purchases, targeted at 31 million people; 16.4 billion baht in cash handouts to 13.65 million holders of welfare cards; 3 billion baht cash handout to 2.5 million people considered members of special groups, such as the disabled; A 28 billion baht cash-back measure aimed at 4 million high-income people.

an economic recovery with Thailand's central bank and the economicplanning agency warning of risks to their growth forecasts. —Bloomberg

## KKR, CD&R TO BUY **OUT CLOUDERA**

**LIANA BAKER** 

KKR & Co. and Clayton Dubilier & Rice LLC struck a deal to take Cloudera Inc private in an all-cash deal valuing the company at about \$5.3 billion, opening a new chapter for a once high-flying enterprise software firm that struggled to sustain growth against larger

Cloudera has explored a potential sale since midafter receiving takeover interest. The startup has seen revenue growth plunge to single digits over the past year from more than 80 per cent two years ago, hurt in part by competition from larger rivals Amazon.com Inc, Alphabet Inc and Microsoft Corp in its field of cloud software prod-— Bloomberg

## TACKLING | EMISSIONS | Dairy firms are under pressure to clean up their supply chains Now, a cow mask that traps methane burps

**AGNIESZKA DE SOUSA** 

Agriculture giant Cargill Inc will start selling methane-absorbing wearable devices for cows, putting its support behind an experimental technology that could help the industry cut greenhouse gas

emissions The mask-like accessory was developed by UK startup Zelp Ltd, which claims it can reduce methane emissions by more than half. Cargill said on Tuesday it expects to start offering the devices to European dairy farmers in 2022. The companies haven't set a price yet, but Zelp says an annual subscription fee may start

at about \$80 a cow. Tackling methane emissions from livestock is one of the most critical-and most difficult-climate issues for meat and dairy companies that are under increasing



pressure to clean up their supply chains. Having access to Cargill's vast customer network could help Zelp secure demand as it prepares to roll out a product that's still

under development. "Cargill has an impressive reach across dairy farms in Europe, said Zelp chief executive officer Francisco Norris. "They are uniquely positioned to distribute our technology to a large number the market. Some 95 per cent of methane released by cows comes out as burps and through the nose. The gas traps 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide in its first 25 years

of clients, both farmers and dairy

in the atmosphere. Zelp's wearables, placed above cows' mouths, act a bit like the catalytic converter on a car. A set of fans powered by solar-charged batteries sucks up the burps and traps them in a chamber with a methane-absorbing filter. Once the filter is saturated, a chemical reaction turns the methane into CO2, which is then released.

Zelp is working on miniaturising the technology and optimising the energy inside the device, Norris said. It's in talks with a number of potential manufacturing partners and aims to be ready

companies, maximising the rollthe year. It aims to produce 50,000 out from the very first year we hit units in the first year and as many as 200,000 units the next. The company is close to completing its next financing round, according to Norris. Cargill was attracted to the

for mass production at the end of

masks because they can be used in combination with other solutions, said Sander van Zijderveld, the company's ruminant strategic marketing and technology lead for West Europe. Several food suppliers are testing or have begun using feed additives which inhibit microbes in cows' stomachs to help them produce less methane.

'The nice thing about Zelp is that it could complement a cow that is already receiving feed additives to reduce methane emissions," he said. "It could still capture the methane that is coming out. We could reduce it even

—Bloomberg

## SHORT TAKES

## **Coach booked**

for raping teen

Jaipur: A lawn tennis coach at a sports training centre in Jaipur allegedly raped a 17-year-old player on the pretext of selecting her for a domestic tournament, police said on Tuesday. According to a complaint filed by the girl, coach Gaurang Nalwaya would call her to the Sawai Man Singh Stadium for training and sexually assault her. On the latest instance, the coach allegedly raped her on the pretext of selecting her for a tournament in Udaipur, the

police said. "A case has been lodged against the coach. Investigation into the complaint has been initiated and a search is on for the accused," Jyoti Nagar police station SHO Saroj Dhayal said.

## **Shafali maintains** top spot in T20s

**Dubai:** Indian teen sensation Shafali Verma maintained her pole position among T20 batters while Kathryn Bryce became the first woman from Scotland to make it into the top-10 in the latest ICC rankings published on Tuesday. Shafali is holding onto her top rank with 776 ranking points well ahead of Australians Beth Mooney (744) and Meg Lanning (709). India's T20 vice-captain Smriti Mandhana is ranked fourth while Jemimah Rodrigues is the third Indian batter at ninth position. India also has two bowlers in the top-10 list with off-spinner Deepti Sharma at sixth and leftarm spinner Radha Yadav just a notch below at seventh. — PTI

## Kahn to occupy **Bayern big chair**

Berlin: After 30 years in charge of Bayern Munich, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge will step down as chairman at the end of the month and be replaced by former Germany captain Oliver Kahn, the Bundesliga giants confirmed Tuesday. Rummenigge had been due to see out his contract which expires at the end of 2021, but is leaving six months early to meet the end of the financial year on June 30. Rummenigge's departure represents the start of a new era at Bayern with Julian Nagelsmann, 33, also replacing Hansi Flick as head coach going into next season. "It is strategically the most sensible and logical point

## **Scotland player** +ve ahead of Euro

in time," said Rummenigge, 65,

chairman when the new season

with Kahn, 51, to be Bayern's

starts in August. — AFP

Glasgow: The Scotland team reported their first player testing positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday at a training camp in

Spain ahead of the European

Championship.

The national federation said midfielder John Fleck is selfisolating and will not travel to Portugal for a warm-up game on Wednesday against the Netherlands. "The rest of the squad was retested for Covid-19 and returned negative results," the federation said. -AP

#### **Covid positive Vidal in hospital**

Santiago: Inter Milan's Chilean midfielder Arturo Vidal is receiving hospital treatment after testing positive for coron-avirus, his national team said

The diagnosis means the 34year-old will miss Thursday's World Cup qualifier between Chile and Argentina. "The medical team of the Chilean national team emphasizes that at the request of the player Arturo Vidal, it is announced that he has been diagnosed positive for Covid. the national team said on its

## Live on TV

official website. - AFP

England vs New Zealand: First Test. Day 1 from 3.30 pm on Sony Six

**FOOTBALL** 

**Euro Pre-Tournament Friendlies:** England vs Austria on Sony Ten 2; Germany vs Denmark on Sony Six; France vs Wales on Sony Ten 1

from 12.30 am (Thursday)

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# OH!SAKA

## Osaka reveals 'bouts of depression' after Paris pullout

Osaka withdrew from the French Open on Monday following the bitter fall-out from her decision to boycott all media activity at the Grand Slam event, revealing she has "suffered long bouts of depression" and will "take some time away from the court".

The best thing for the tournament, the other players and my well-being is that I withdraw so that everyone can get back to focusing on the tennis going on in Paris," the world number two wrote on Twitter.

The 23-year-old Japanese star was fined \$15,000 on Sunday and threatened with disqualification after she refused to carry out a mandatory news conference following her first round win.

She claimed on the eve of Roland Garros that such post-match inquests were akin to "kicking people when they are down" and that they had a detrimental effect on her mental health.

"I never wanted to be a distraction and I accept that my timing was not ideal and my message could have been clearer,' the four-time Grand Slam title winner said in her statement.

The truth is I have suffered bouts of depression since the US Open in 2018 and I have had a really hard time coping with

She added: "In Paris, I was already feeling vulnerable and anxious so I thought it was better to exercise self-care and skip the press confer-

"I announced it preemp-

THE RESULTS

Men's first round: James Duckworth (AUS) bt

Salvatore Caruso (ITA) 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2; Ricardas Berankis (LTU) bt Ugo Humbert (FRA x29)

6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4; Alex De Minaur (AUS x21) bt

Stefano Travaglia (ITA) 6-2, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4); Marco Cecchinato (ITA) bt Yasutaka Uchiyama (JPN) 3-6, 6-

Ceccinato (IA) bt Yasutaka (cinyama (JNY) 3-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-4; Mikael Ymer (SWE) bt Roberto Carballes Baena (ESP) 6-4, 0-6, 4-6, 6-2, 6-2; Gael Monfils (FRA x14) bt Albert Ramos Vinolas (ESP) 1-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-4, 6-4; Aljaz Bedene (SLO) bt Adrian Mannarino (FRA) 7-5, 3-6, 7-5, 6-2; Aslan Karatsev (RUS x24) bt Jenson Brooksby (USA) 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; Facundo Bagnis (ARG) bt Benjamin Bonzi (FRA) 7-5, 6-3 6-4

Women's first round: Ashleigh Barty (AUS x1) bt Bernarda Pera (USA) 6-4, 3-6, 6-2; Astra Sharma

(AUS) bt Irina Maria Bara (ROM) 7-6 (7/5), 6-2; Ons Jabeur (TUN x25) bt Yulia Putintseva (KAZ) 7-5, 6-2;



Japan's Naomi Osaka celebrates after defeating Romania's Patricia Maria Tig in the French Open first round match in Paris on Monday.

tively because I do feel like the rules are quite out-dated in parts and I wanted to highlight that.

"I am going to take some time away from the court Osaka said she has also apologised to organisers

over the affair.. Tennis French president Federation Moretton had described her vow of silence as "a phenomenal

On Monday, he said in a statement: "We are sorry and sad for Naomi Osaka.

Opens.

Mari Osaka, a former player herself, said her

The outcome of Naomi withdrawing from Roland Garros is unfortunate."

**HIGHEST EARNING** 

Osaka is the world's highest earning female athlete, making \$37.4 million in 2020.

She burst onto the scene in 2018 with a maiden Slam win at the US Open. She has gone on to win another title in New York as well as two Australian

Paris, June 1: World number

one Ashleigh Barty survived a

French Open opening round

Top seed Barty marked her

return to Paris for the first

time since her 2019 title tri-

umph by beating American

left-hander Bernarda Pera 6-4,

Barty, 25, skipped the defence of her title in 2020 due to the

pandemic but this year has

won trophies at the Yarra

Tuesday to the injury-enforced

withdrawal of

scare on Tuesday.

sister had been struggling to cope in the run-up to Paris. "Naomi mentioned to me before the tournament that a family member had come up to her and remarked that she's

"At every press conference she's told she has a bad record on clay.

"When she lost in Rome, she was not OK mentally. She was completely shattered and I think everyone's remarks and opinions have gotten to her

Wimbledon champion Petra

The Czech 11th seed, a Roland

Garros semi-finalist in 2012

and 2020, had saved a match

point in her first-round win

over Belgian qualifier Greet

Minnen on Sunday. Fifth seed

Elina Svitolina recovered from

a 2-5 second set deficit to beat

French teenager Oceane Babel

**BOPANNA ADVANCES** 

#### bad on clay," Mari wrote on Reddit.

- VICTORIA AZARENKA Two-time Grand Slam

Mental Health is nothing to criticize. Nothing to joke about. Pls take your mental health seriously. Without my support system, I truly believe I would not be here today.

I respect her decision. I respect what she does. I can't really comment on that. I feel like everyone's dealing with their

- SOFIA KENIN American fourth seed

#### WHAT THEY SAID

The only thing I feel is feel like I wish I could give her a hug because I know what it's like.

SERENA WILLIAMS
Former world No.1

I am so sad about Naomi Osaka. I truly hope she will be ok. As athletes we are taught to take care of our body, and perhaps the mental & emotional aspect gets short shrift. This is about more than doing or not doing a press confer-

we are all pulling for you! - MARTINA **NAVRATILOVA** Tennis legend

ence. Good luck Naomi-

We are sorry and sad for Naomi Osaka that she has withdrawn from the tournament.

- GILLES MORETTON French tennis federation

Stay strong (love heart emoji). I admire your vulnerability.

- COCO GAUFF American teen sensation

You shouldnt ever have to make a decison like this-but so damn impressive taking the high road when the powers that be dont protect their own.

@naomiosaka. — STEPHEN CURRY NBA star

**Everyone talks about** mental health after someone commits suicide but ridicules everyone who tries to protect their mental health. You are strong for standing up and speaking out and even giving up the game you love to protect your mental health. I salute you young queen.

— CARLOS BRATHWAITE West Indies cricketer

The challenge today is to convince people of the value of truth, honesty, compassion and a concern for others.

Here for you @naomiosa-

- MARDY FISH Former top-10 ATP

own stuff.".

#### **CORRUPTION** | CASES

## HCA heavyweights under the hammer

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

In a jolt to Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) heavyweights the Telangana High Court on Tuesday rejected their pleas to stay the proceeding against them in the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) Court.

Former president Arshad Ayub, secretary N. Shivlal Yadav and office-bearers D. S. Chalapathi, Naresh Sharma, John Manoj, P. Yadagiri, Syed Moizuddin, Surender Agarwal, R. Devaraj were among those accused of corruption in allotting developmental works of the Rajiv Gandhi Cricket

International Stadium at Uppal, Hyderabad. Justice K. Lakshman of Telangana High Court dismissed the three petitions filed by these accused, who

sought to quash the FIRs registered against them by ACB and to stay the trial proceedings at ACB court. ACB had registered three cases against the accused,

who are allegedly involved in misappropriation of funds with regards to construction works of RGICS at various stages.

The construction cost was estimated at ₹31 crore (the successful bidder had quoted ₹30,26,55,587) but over a period of time the cost was enhanced to ₹108 crore. Also, the bidder did not comply with the agreed terms, majorily non-fitting of fire fighting system and non construction of fire pump house.

There were irregularities in selling of tickets, investment of ₹83 lakh on three playgrounds at Mathrusri Engineering Qutubullapur University. Osmania Irregularities have been found even in the installa-

tion of floodlights at the Stadium. There are specific allegations that the committee has paid ₹910 for each bucket chair, whereas in the open market the cost is ₹450. The committee has paid an amount of ₹ 2.7 crore excess by taking huge kickbacks from the supplier, the court

observed. Cases were registered in 2016, 2017 and 2020 by Aijaj Ali Qureshi, secretary of Shalimar Cricket Eleven Club and C. Babu Rao Cricket Club, following ceedings," the order read.

High Court rejects pleas of several former and current office-bearers to stay graft proceedings against them in ACB Court.

which ACB authorities had investigated and filed a chargesheet against the accused. The trial was going on at ACB courts.

Meanwhile, the accused persons approached High Court seeking to quash the cases against them and to stay the proceeding in the trial court.

The accused contended Managing being Committee Members of HCA they never discharged their functions as public servants. Therefore, the provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, does not attract

against them. HCA never received any aid or grant from the Government and therefore, it is not a public authority and the accused are not public servants. The offences alleged against the accused under the provisions of the PC Act are not maintainable.

ACB Counsel submitted that there is an aid from the Government to HCA including providing of land on lease (23 acres at a nominal rent of ₹1 lakh per annum) and grants from 1963-1981. Therefore, it is a State as defined under Article 12 of the Constitution of India and provisions of PC Act are

applicable. accused, The Managing Committee Members of the said Association, discharged public duties and therefore, they are public ser-

vants in the eye of law.
"Prima facie, there are serious allegations against the petitioners herein. However, whether the HCA has received any aid or financial assistance. whether the office bearers of HCA have discharged public duty and whether they are the public servants as defined under the provisions of the PC Act is a question of fact and triable issues. The same will be decided during the course of trial. The petitioners have to face trial and prove their innocence by leading evidence. Thus, the said issue cannot be decided in the present pr

## **SHUTTLE ACE MARIN HURT, OUT OF TOKYO OLYMPICS**

Madrid, June 1: Spain's Carolina Marin, the women's Olympic badminton singles champion, will miss the Tokyo Games after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament and meniscus in her left knee.

The 27-year-old will undergo surgery in the coming days after suffering the injury during a training session last week.

"This is another blow that I have to deal with, but I will certainly be back," she wrote on social media. The three-time world champion also ruptured the ACL in her right knee in 2019 and missed that year's world championships.

## Southern flavour on sports watch

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

It's the best of both worlds in sport, especially south. Sony Pictures Sports Network has launched an exclusive channel in Telugu and Tamil, Ten 4, on Tuesday. It began with quite a boom, as regional commentary accompanied the WWE wrestling live action.

The big feast would be 10 days later though, when the biggest international football tournaments of the year, Euro and Copa America, kick off. Euro will be telecast in six languages — English, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam while Copa will drop Hindi from the list.
"During these difficult

times, the festival of football is something to cheer about for the fans. We are very excited," says Rajesh Kaul, Chief Revenue Officer, Distribution and Sports Business, Sony Pictures Networks

'We have four months of

top class sport lined up — Olympics, India's cricket tours to Sri Lanka and England. We couldn't have asked for more," he adds.

"We are pioneers in try-

ing out sports content in different languages... we have been doing this for all the marquee events. We will have commentary by different experts on the cricket series and other big competitions in local languages for sure. People are going to love it," he says, adding "Apart from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, we are trying to reach more languages across the country. We already have Bengali, Malayalam and

Hindi feeds.' Sony also announced their panelists for Euro that features footballers Bhaichung Bhutia, Sunil Chhetri, Louis Saha, Luis Garcia, Don Hutchison, David James, Terry Phelan, Mark Seagraves, Westwood, Jofre Ashley Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Sandesh Jhingan and Robin Singh.

# Trent Boult

– Agencies

#### Mount Maunganui (New Zealand), June 1: World Championship final is still a bit of enigma for Trent Boult but the New Zealand pace spearhead is confident that his team the marquee T20

International Council has given BCCI time till June 28 to take a call on whether it would World Cup in India amid the threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
The ICC Board met virtu-

being represented by BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah. The T20 World Cup is due in October-November this year. "Yes, the ICC board has agreed to BCCI's request and they will have time till June 28 to decide on hosting the T20 World Cup in India. They will come back to the Board next month with a concrete plan," a source said.

If the BCCI is unable to host the event in India given the looming threat of demic, the tournament will shift to the UAE after it gets done with hosting the IPL, which finishes likely

#### on October 10. **ICC TO EXPAND 50**

The T20 World Cup will be held every two years during the next eight-year Futures Tours Programme (FTP) cycle while the 50-over event will be a 14-team affair from the 2027 edition, ICC said.

#### Fiona Ferro (FRA) bt Liang En-shuo (TPE) 6-1, 1-6, 6-4; Jennifer Brady (USA x13) bt Anastasija Sevastova (LAT) 6-3, 6-3; Barbora Krejcikova (CZE) bt Kristyna Pliskova (CZE) 5-7, 6-4, 6-2; Ann Li (USA) bt Valley Classic, Miami and on India's Rohan Bopanna and Franko Skugor of Croatia sailed into the men's doubles clay in Stuttgart in the run-up Margarita Gasparyan (RUS) 6-0, 6-1; Elina Svitolina (UKR x5) bt Oceane Babel (FRA) 6-2, 7-5; Maria to the year's second Grand Slam at Roland Garros. second round with a 6-4 6-2 win Sakkari (GRE x17) bt Katarina Zavatska (UKR) 6-4, 6-1; Jasmine Paolini (ITA) bt Stefanie Voegele (SUI) 7-5, 6-1; Kristina Mladenovic (FRA) bt Anna Karolina Schmiedlova (SVK) 6-4, 6-0. Ironically, another Roland Gerogia's Garros press conference led Basilashvili and Andre Begemann of Germany.

two-time

Barty survives scare

## **INDIA GETS TIME TO DECIDE ON T20 WORLD CUP**

New Delhi, June 1: The

ally on Tuesday with India

a third wave of the pan-

## **OVER WORLD CUP**

Also as per earlier report, he World Test Championship will have four editions in the next cycle apart from two Champions Trophy. -PTI

# Boult wants NZ to 'create history'

The qualification process is capable of creating history when it clashes with India for the inaugural

The WTC final is scheduled to be held in Southampton from June

"The way the group has travelled and performed around New Zealand and the world, the boys are in a great place to hopefully create a bit of history,' Boult said at the Bay Oval.

"Everything is feeling good with what lies ahead, a big stage for the World Championship final, and hopefully I can get over there and be part of that second Test (against England) as well," he

"I've taken a while to understand the process with qualifying, how everything works with the points, still think no one knows how that actually works, but to get into that final the excitement is ramping up now," Boult

Talking about the Dukes

ball, which will be used

for the WTC final, the 31-year-old said: "I haven't

had too much experience

with it, played a handful

of Tests over in England.

It reacts a lot differently,

then you have to weigh in

their hands and see it move around. Hopefully we can entertain you a little bit over the next wee

added.

first Test as he has opted to spend time with his family after the suspension of the IPL mid-season. However, the seamer, who will leave for the UK on Thursday, is hoping to be a part of the second

all these different ven-"I'm sure the boys are

Boult, who has snared 281 wickets in 71 Test, will be unavailable for the

very excited to get it in

## **PLAYERS ON ENGLISH TOUR** New Delhi, June 1: The families of players and support staff of both the Indian men's and women's

cricket teams will be allowed to accompany them during their lengthy tour of England this month, a senior BCCI source revealed on Tuesday. The BCCI had put in a request that the players be allowed the company of their loved ones given that they have to spend a considerable amount of time in a bio-secure bubble because of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it is learnt that none of the BCCI office-bearers, including president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah will be present for the World Test Championship final against New Zealand in Southampton from June 18 to 22, due to the strict

"Once I step foot in the UK, get that chance to smell the English fresh quarantine rules of the country. "Yes, it's good news that players will have their families during the tour of UK. Ditto for the women's team who can also have their families air and see the ball move around a little bit I'll defiaround. These are times when mental well-being of nitely be excited," he players is paramount," the source said.

**FAMILIES CAN ACCOMPANY**