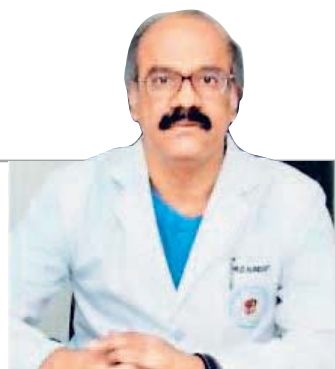


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VIJAYAWADA | MONDAY | 31 MAY 2021



WEATHER



Max: 37.0°C
Min: 28.0°C
RH: 81%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Clear.
Max/Min temp.
37/28 °C

WORLD | 5

UK PM marries
Carrie Johnson

SPORTS | 6

Cummins to skip
IPL phase 2

TABLOID

Is Covid-19 treatment
based on trial and error?

Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas followed for 7 yrs: Modi

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, MAY 30

As the BJP-led NDA government completed seven years in office amid India grappling with the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the nation followed the mantra of “sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas” and that “India now moves ahead not under the pressure of other countries but with its own convictions.”

On a day the ruling BJP held welfare programmes across the country to mark the second anniversary of the NDA government's second term as “Sewa Divas”, with party president J.P. Nadda flag-



ging off Covid relief material for Delhi, the Opposition parties claimed the Narendra Modi government had proved to be the “weakest government in the country in the last 73 years”, saying that the government had given the country “unmeasurable pain” as it listed unemployment, petrol prices, inflation, the farmers issue and “mis-

management of the Covid crisis”, among other issues, to attack the government.

Modi, asserting that India was “fighting Covid-19 with all its might”, on Sunday spoke to a number of people ranging from those engaged in transporting medical oxygen to lab technicians, and said the nation's resolve to prevail over the virus was equal to the magnitude of the challenge it faces.

In his monthly “Mann ki Baat” radio address, Mr Modi noted that the nation also faced several natural disasters and said more lives were saved than in the past with the Centre, states and local administrations coming together to carry out relief and rescue operations.

Almost every house got state benefits, says CM

On 2nd anniversary, Jagan says 94.5% poll vows were kept

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 30

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that out of 1,64,68,591 households in the state, 1,41,52,386 households were benefited by any one of the schemes of his government.

The Chief Minister on Sunday released a letter titled ‘Rendo Yeta Ichhina matake pedda peeta,’ (Second year too, promise made and a document ‘Maliyedu’ – Jagananna Thodu, Jagannanna Manifesto 2019) on the occasion of completion of two years of governance.

The Chief Minister said two documents would be shared with every household through volunteers. One is a letter written to the women in a family which would have details of schemes benefited by the family and the other includes details of the election manifesto promises that were fulfilled in the last two years of governance.

The Chief Minister said he considered the election manifesto as ‘Bible, Quran and Gita’ and worked to fulfill every promise in it.

He expressed satisfaction at the performance of his government in the last two years.

He said an amount of ₹95,528 crore was directly transferred to the accounts of people through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes and another ₹37,197 crore aid was extended indirectly through other various schemes such as YSR Aarogyasri, Jagannanna Thodu, Gorumudha, YSR Sampoorna Poshana etc., totalling ₹1.31 lakh crore.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy speaks after releasing two documents – ‘Word Given in the Second Year is a Large Plateau’ and ‘Maliyedu - Jagannanna Thodu, Jagannanna Manifesto 2019’ on the occasion of his government's second anniversary at the camp office in Vijayawada on Sunday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

REPORT CARD

● Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said an amount of ₹95,528 crore was directly transferred to the accounts of people through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes.

● He said ₹37,197 crore aid was extended indirectly through other various schemes such as YSR Aarogyasri, Jagannanna Thodu, Gorumudha, YSR Sampoorna Poshana, etc.

● Jagan said women were the beneficiaries of 66 per cent of the welfare schemes and all these details would be shared with every household through volunteers.

He said a total of ₹1.3 lakh crore was spent transparently, without giving any scope for corruption. Even scheme was

delivered right at the doorstep of beneficiaries. The Chief Minister also said that all the schemes were successfully imple-

mented with the help of village/ward volunteers, employees of village/ward secretariats and government employees including District Collectors.

He said he was proud to say that 94.5 per cent of the election manifesto promises were fulfilled.

The Chief Minister said women were the beneficiaries of 66 per cent of the welfare schemes and all these details would be shared with every household through volunteers.

Reddy thanked everyone for their support during the last two years and prayed to the god to give strength to fulfill all the dreams in the coming three years.

India sees 1.5L cases, 2nd Covid wave ebbs

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 30

The deadly second wave of Covid-19 appeared to be ebbing faster, with the country reporting a shade over 1.5 lakh new cases on Sunday. At 11.15 pm on Sunday, the number of daily new cases stood at 1,52,644, the crowdsourced covid19india.org reported. This is down from 1.65 lakh cases reported for Saturday by the Union health ministry on Sunday morning.

The number of dead also decreased from 3,460 on Saturday to 3,110.

However, the fall in cases and the plateauing of Covid-19 cases in India does not mean that the country can let its guard down as the situation continues to be of concern and challenge, the World Health Organization's regional director for South East Asia Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh has said.

She warned, “We can't predict the next surge,” but went on to add saying

it can be prevented. Dr Singh was quoted by ANI as saying that the lesson from the second wave surge is one that “at no cost can we let our guard down. We must take Covid vaccine at the first available opportunity.”

The second wave, Dr Singh added, put an immense burden on the already overwhelmed health services, and that another surge must be prevented.

The daily recoveries continued to outnumber the daily new cases for the 18th day in a row with 2,35,844 recoveries registered in the 24 hours between Saturday and Sunday nights. The recoveries stood at some 78,000 more than the new cases.

Despite the overall fall in cases, several states continued to report on Sunday new Coronavirus infections in high numbers with 28,864 cases reported from Tamil Nadu, followed by 20,378 from Karnataka, 19,894 from Kerala, and 18,600 from Maharashtra.

12 CR VACCINE DOSES TO BE READY IN JUNE

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 30

India on Sunday registered 1.65 lakh new cases — its lowest count in 46 days. The active caseload has further dipped to 21.14 lakh and the daily recoveries continue to outnumber the new cases for the 17th consecutive day. Deaths, however, continue to be high — with 3,460 fatalities in the last 24 hours.

Several major cities have started witnessing a significant dip in cases.

The Centre on Sunday said that nearly 12 crore anti Covid-19 vaccine doses will be made available to the states and UTs in June, which is 50 per cent more than what they got in May, to boost the nearly halted vaccination drive.

The health ministry said states were informed about the availability of vaccines for June and a delivery schedule will also be shared with them.

COUNTER POINT



Stay home, stay safe from price rise!

SHORT TAKES

PSBs offer loan for Covid spend

Mumbai: Public sector banks on Sunday announced that they would be offering unsecured personal loans of upto ₹5 lakh to salaried, non-salaried as well as pensioners to meet the treatment cost for Covid 19 at a concessional rate besides announcing new loan schemes for hospitals/dispensaries, vaccine manufacturers, etc.

Central Vista: HC to decide today

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court will decide on Monday whether to allow the continuation of the Central Vista project work during the prevailing Covid pandemic. A bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh, which had been hearing a plea for suspending the ongoing construction work during the Covid pandemic, has fixed May 31 for delivery of its judgement on it, the high court's cause list revealed on Saturday.

More EPFO, ESIC sops for workers

New Delhi: The ministry of labour and employment on Sunday announced additional benefits for workers through social securities schemes run by the EPFO and the ESIC amid the Covid-19 pandemic. These benefits include pension for dependents of insured persons with Employees' State Insurance Corporation who died due to Covid-19 and hike in maximum sum assured under the group insurance scheme EDLI.

Oppn contests Centre GST dues

New Delhi: The compensation amount promised by the Centre is estimated to be higher than the ₹1.58 lakh crore projected by the Centre, and a special session of the GST Council will be convened to discuss it, three Opposition-ruled states said. Finance ministers of Kerala, Punjab and Chhattisgarh said there was no consensus on the compensation requirement in 2021-22 in the May 28 GST Council meeting.

WB top official may not report to Centre without state's nod

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, MAY 30

Speculation is rife that West Bengal chief secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay may not visit New Delhi on Monday, which is also the date of his retirement, to report to the Centre despite its direction for his deputation as the Mamata Banerjee government has not relieved him yet from his present post in the state.

The state's top bureaucrat, who got a three-month extension last week

from the Narendra Modi government after a request from the Trinamul Congress government for his efficiency in handling the Covid-19 pandemic, has been asked to report at 10 am on Monday at North Block, at the department of personnel and training under the ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions which is headed by the PM himself.

The order was sent under the provisions of Rule 6(1) of the Indian Administrative Service (Cadre) Rules 1954 on May

28 evening, hours after the 1987 batch IAS officer accompanied the CM in skipping the PM's review meeting on Cyclone Yaas in West Midnapore.

While the Centre has not acted on the CM's request to withdraw its order, the state government has also taken a firm stand by not issuing Mr Bandyopadhyay any order for his release, which is essential for all bureaucrats in the all-India service cadres to go for a Central deputation from their places of posting in the state.

STOCK | TAKING

People weigh Jagan's two-year rule; Supporters give credit to Navaratnalu, DBT

YSJaganAneNenu trends on social media

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, MAY 30

With the Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government completing two years in office on Sunday, all social media platforms are abuzz with talk on the highs and lows of his rule, evaluating how effective his administration has so far been.

It was on May 30, 2019 that the YSRC government took charge after its landslide victory in the general elections. Two years on, there is a mixed reaction in the social media — while

the majority is lauding his style of governance, the remaining rues neglect of development and capital city issues.

The Twitter hashtag #2YearsForYSJaganAneNenu went on rage. As per reports, it has been retweeted by a million people in less than two-and-a-half hours after it was created. “Some things in life are worth waiting for. Even GOD must have felt that @ysjagan journey should be an inspiration & his destination should be phenomenal with unprecedented victory. 2014 to

● The supporters of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy started a social media trend with hashtag #2YearsForYSJaganAneNenu.

● It was soon joined by YSRC leaders and others. As per reports, this hashtag was tweeted by 10 lakh people in less than two and a half hours.

● Apart from the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes, other welfare schemes for farmers and weavers, lawyers, also received appreciation from the public on social media forums.

mandate vachunte (means: if he got mandate in 2014), we may not experience these high amazing moments #2YearsForYSJaganAneNenu,” tweeted Dr Praneeth Elia, a pediatrician, at his handle @DrPraneethK.

The ‘Navaratnalu’ welfare schemes and a slew of other popular schemes of Jagan and how they consolidated his vote-bank and

fetched him a good mileage in local elections has occupied the top spot. Apart from the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes, other welfare schemes for farmers and weavers, lawyers, etc., also received appreciation from the public on social media forums.

In contrast, some hashtags like #JaganDestroyed APin2Years and #2YearsOf JaganFailures also went viral on twitter on the same day.

There was a social media outpour against DBT schemes, as many netizens opined that the alleged

indiscriminate borrowing by the state government to implement its welfare schemes has damaged the state treasury. While some are hailing the DBT schemes, many more are pointing to the alleged negligence of industrial and infrastructure development. It may be noted that the government has come up with industrial policies and promised to provide a lot of incentives to the sector, but no major industries or new infrastructure projects have come up in the state in the last two years.

Dousing fire



Smoke billowing from the Singapore-registered container ship MV X-Press Pearl, which has been burning for the eleventh consecutive day as vessels try to douse off the fire, in the sea off Colombo Harbour in Sri Lanka.

— AFP

MONSOON KEEPS KERALA WAITING FOR 2 MORE DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 30

The onset of southwest monsoon might be delayed by another four days. The IMD has set a new date June 4 for the event, which heralds the rainy season in India.

As per the latest meteorological indications, the south westerly winds could strengthen further gradually from June 1 onwards, resulting in a likely enhancement in rainfall activity over Kerala. Hence, the southwest monsoons are likely to set in over Kerala on June 3.

■ Page 2: Rain forecast for 75% of weather stations

JET-LOAD DOCUS SENT TO DEPORT CHOKSI: ANTIGUA

New Delhi/Saint John's, May 30: India has sent a private jet loaded with documents for deportation of fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi from Dominica where he is said to have gone with his girlfriend on a romantic escapade from his sanctuary in neighbouring Antigua only to be arrested.

Qatar Airways private jet flew from Delhi to Dominica on Friday carrying documents needed for deportation of Choksi who is wanted in ₹13,500 crore-bank loan fraud case, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne told a local radio station. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

RAIN FORECAST
FOR 75% OF
STATIONS

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier, it was predicted that the monsoons would set in over Kerala on May 31.

Director of IMD, Amaravati, Stella S said the rainfall activity should be in more than 75 per cent of the weather stations in Kerala for declaring the onset of monsoons. Along with other factors like wind direction, wind speed, and quantum of outgoing long wave radiations over specific areas in the equatorial Arabian Sea, the main criterion remains the rainfall over the designated stations.

CHRISTIANS SEEK
AIDING OF ALL
SECTIONSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 30

The Christian fraternity praised the dedication of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy towards fulfilling the election promises by implementing welfare schemes in the two years and sought aiding all sections of society in the next three years.

PHOTO-SHOOT
TURNS TRAGIC,
3 DROWNDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 30

A photo-shoot led to drowning of three youngsters in a water body in Vizag Agency on Sunday. The police are still searching for the missing bodies.

Agency police said a group of 10 friends from different places went to the waterfalls (Guddugummi) located near Olubedda village under Hukumpeta Mandal in Vizag Agency for a photo-shoot and to swim in the water body.

While they were taking the photos, one youngster accidentally slipped into the waters. In an attempt to save him, two more ventured into the waters and they also went missing.

Two of the missing persons are Intermediate second year students while the third is a degree student. They were identified as Mori Niranjana, a native of Bakuru of Hukumpeta mandal, Vinod Kumar and Siva Nagendra Kumar, both from Sanyasampalem of Hukumpeta mandal.

Based on the information, the police rushed to the spot and launched a search operation. However, their efforts proved futile due to sunset.

Locals fear that the missing persons might have drowned. The police appealed to youngsters in the region to stay indoors during curfew timings and not to go for adventure events.

VACATION FOR
UP TO SSC TILL
JUNE 30DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 30

The summer vacations for Classes 1 to 10 functioning under all managements has been extended to June 30 in view of the Coronavirus crisis in the state.

Director of School Education Vadrevu Chinaveerabhadhrudu issued the orders to this effect on Sunday.

Recently, the government postponed SSC exams which were scheduled from June 7. It would review the situation in July month.

According to the order, keeping in view the present situation and since the government decided to postpone the SSC examinations due to the second wave of Covid-19, the summer vacation for teachers and students of Classes I to X for all types schools is extended till June 30. The Director, SCERT, is requested to prepare a detailed academic calendar and the activities to be taken up through various means i.e., DD, radio, YouTube, personal contact through WhatsApp groups etc., for the online education for all classes from June 12 onwards. In case of SSC students, the headmasters concerned have to extend necessary academic support to the students from June 1 itself.

The Coronavirus infection has been gradually decreasing for the past few days in AP and medical experts are expecting the Covid-19 second wave to subside by June last week or July first week and, hence, the government will take a fresh decision about the schools reopening after reviewing the situation in the coming days.



YSRC leaders celebrate with CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy the completion of two years in office, at his camp office in Tadepalli on Sunday.

YSRC: AP has seen 15 years' development in just 2 years

CM successful in assuring people that tomorrow would be even better

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 30

The YSRC Congress affirmed on Sunday that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has fulfilled many dreams of the people in the last two years, which had been awaiting implementation in the AP region for the past 15 years.

The YSRC on Sunday celebrated its second anniversary of coming to power in the state. Government adviser on public affairs Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy hoisted the party flag, cut the cake and paid floral tributes to the late chief minister Y.S. Rajashekar Reddy at the party's central office in Tadepalli.

Addressing a press conference, Ramakrishna Reddy said the CM has fulfilled the aspirations of the people and brought about revolutionary changes in the state since 2019. He has been "working tirelessly for the welfare of the people".

Ramakrishna Reddy said the CM has overcome the financial constraints due to the state's bifurcation and the Corona pandemic.

The Chief Minister has set up village secretariats and completed several schemes within the stipulated time frame, extended the benefits to all the eligible. He has implemented schemes like the YSR Rythu Bharosa, crop insurance, input subsidy, interest free loans for farmers and also one for

Gold standard set in AP governance, say leaders

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, MAY 30

Marking the second anniversary of Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, the Kurnool unit of YSR Congress said 31 schemes have been granted to the district, touching upon all the sections of the society.

It was indeed an 'epoch-making victory' that has brought revolutionary changes in the governance, with the poorest of the poor being the target of people's welfare government, said B.Y. Ramaiah, a senior leader of YSRC. The last two years were a "golden rule" as money directly reached the accounts of the public. It is a Gold Standard, he said.

Panyam MLA Katasani Rambhupal Reddy said the major benefit to the district was declaring it as the Judicial Capital of the state.

The government earmarked 2,000 acres at

financially supporting women self-help groups.

Reddy said the CM has been successful in assuring people that tomorrow would be even better. "The

Jagannath Gattu on the outskirts of Kurnool for the purpose of developing a judicial complex with complete infrastructure. The MLA further said that bringing transparency in tenders, the Jagan Mohan Reddy government called for reverse tendering for the Vedavathi project, RDS, and Owk tunnel and conserved precious money.

Reddy said Kurnool airport has been named after Uyyalavada Narasimha Reddy, fulfilling the aspiration of the district. Taking the governance to the doorsteps of the people, the government opened 845 Sachivalayams where 545 services are provided to the public.

Health was accorded top priority by the government as ₹500 crore was sanctioned for improving infrastructure at Kurnool Government General Hospital. School buildings were also given a facelift under the Naadu-Nedu programme, the MLA added.

CM has revamped the education sector, ensuring better education. He will be laying the foundation stone for 14 medical colleges in the state tomorrow by online video-mode.

JAGAN WILL BE
CM FOR ANOTHER
40 YEARS: MLADC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, MAY 30

Kamalapuram legislator P. Ravindranath Reddy said that Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will be the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for another 40 years.

Leaders cut a cake at the district party office here on Sunday to mark the two years completion of the YSR Congress government.

Ravindranath Reddy said that Jagan Mohan Reddy was a young leader with a good vision and one who implemented welfare schemes as promised during the financial crisis due to the corona pandemic. He said that Jagan Mohan Reddy would be a competent administrator like his father.

YSRC activists and followers, under the leadership of Jagan Mohan Reddy, are striving for a better Andhra Pradesh," he said.

MLA DISTRIBUTES
100 PUSH CARTS
TO POOR PEOPLEDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, MAY 30

Marking the occasion of completion of two-year rule of the Jagan Mohan Reddy government, Srikalahasti MLA Biyyapu Madhusudhan Reddy distributed 100 pushcarts worth ₹10,000 each to poor vendors free of cost in his constituency on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA heaped praises on the Chief Minister for ruling the state effectively and providing welfare to all sections of people, despite several hardships in his way.

"In order to mark Jagan's good governance and his commitment to serve the poor, today we have distributed nearly 100 pushcarts to poor vendors. This initiative helps in decentralising the vegetable and fruit stalls at the town market, where huge crowds are coming to purchase vegetables and fruits almost every day, during the curfew relaxation time," he said.

The MLA hoped that the vendors from market would cover every street in the town.

Jagan has been giving top priority to both welfare and development activities, he said.

Many orphans miss
₹10L Covid aid: TDPATHRI RAJASEKHAR |
DC
NELLORE, MAY 30

While praising the government aid of ₹10 lakh each for the children who lost their parents to Covid as well as ₹15,000 toward funeral expenses to families of Covid victims, TD state spokesperson Anam Venkataramana Reddy said the benefit would have reached many children but for underreporting of Covid deaths by the government.

"Both the schemes are of no use to a majority of children who lost their parents to Covid as the government downplayed the real figures of Covid deaths to showcase that they are containing the deadly virus," he alleged.

According to the TD leader, the district administration showed 302 Covid deaths between March and May this year, which means 3.3 deaths per day in the entire district, but the rush at graveyards contradicted the government figures.

A grave injustice was done to the poor, as a result, he alleged.

Referring to the announcement of Prime Minister of ₹10 lakh deposit for orphaned kids, he took a dig at the state government for claiming it as its own scheme even while not recording all the deaths.

Covid rendering
children orphansDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, MAY 30

Covid-19 virus played havoc with many families, snatching both parents of some children and rendering them orphans. In some cases, one of the parents is gone. If the deceased happens to be the breadwinner or mother, the future of the children would be bleak.

Officials identified 17 children who have become orphans by losing their both father and mother while 206 children lost either their mother or father. Covid-19 also belied the hopes and dreams of parents about their children.

The state government has announced ₹10 lakh to each orphan kid. The amount will be deposited in the name of the orphaned child when he or she attains age 25. The guardian can avail the interest money to educate and help shape the future of such kids.

Parents of an 11-year-old girl wanted to see her daughter as doctor. But, her father Vaddi Babji (lorry driver) and mother Achutha Kumari of Thimmapuram have died of Covid-19, leaving their daughter an orphan.

"I will look after my granddaughter till I am

alive," said Babji's father Vaddi Subba Rao. East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy told the girl that she would be a doctor and the government would help her get good education.

When relatives brought two boys, five-year-old and two-year-old, to the collectorate, even some of the officials were in tears. Their father Peruvai Rajesh was working as a security guard in a paper mill at Rajamahendravaram. He had shifted his family to Kontha-muru village from Gokavaram for the education of his two sons. But he and his wife Rani died of Covid.

His brother P. Kumar Babu, a painter, is looking after the two kids. Muralidhar Reddy said that these two kids will be given ₹10 lakh each for their education and their future career.

Meanwhile, the women and child welfare department has issued an advisory to local officials to pay ₹500 for children under the sponsorship programme.

ICDS officer Venkat said the department is making all arrangements for the welfare of the orphans. ICDS is processing necessary documents of such kids and their parents for the aid scheme.

Confinement of
Bonigi lamentedDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, MAY 30

Senior TD leader Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy lamented the confinement of Bonigi Anandaiah at a time when people have placed him on a highest pedestal, treating him like a god.

In a letter addressed to Anandaiah on Sunday, Somireddy said his name is echoing all over the country and people from all walks of life are hailing his concoction irrespective of political affiliations.

"People are feeling sad for constraining you under the pretext of security and it is unfortunate that they are denying freedom which is enjoyed even by the prisoners. In fact, the entire Krishnapatnam is behind you and they are ready to provide protection to you even if the government

fails to extend the security cover," he wrote.

The former minister said that there is a worry over his health among people after noticing the pressure being applied on him by some vested interests.

Somireddy said that keeping him in a private building, which is equipped with a huge kitchen, makes it seem, "your medicine will be distributed to people only after fulfilling the requirement of ruling party leaders, their followers, and officers. You will be freed only after the completion of this process."

Right from Vice President of India to district-level leaders, everyone is hailing Anandaiah but unfortunately Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is yet to open his mouth, Somireddy said in the letter.

Jagan has committed 96 crimes in two years: TD

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 30

TD state president K. Atchannaidu alleged that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had committed 96 crimes in his two-year rule. Releasing a booklet 'Rendellalo Vidhwamsam' (destruction in two years) here on Sunday, Atchannaidu said that after coming to power, Jagan Mohan Reddy began his rule with a destructive attitude unlike others. He started off by demolishing Praja Vedika and continues to demolish properties of

people who are critical of his government.

He said JCB, ACB and PCB became his tagline to take on the Opposition. He had taken over CID completely and had unleashed terror among Opposition leaders, he alleged.

He said that Reddy drove the state into a debt-trap of one lakh crore and each individual in the state now has ₹1 lakh debt on his head, he said.

"Had he allowed completion of Amaravati, the state would have acquired ₹2 lakh crore worth lands," the TD leader said.

On Polavaram, Atcha-

naidu said that his leader N. Chandrababu Naidu had ensured sanction of ₹52,000 crore but Reddy succeeded in getting only ₹26,000 crore. In the name of reverse tendering, the CM allotted works to people known to him. His promise of completing the project by June 1 remains a distant dream.

Alleging that the CM was responsible for the death of construction workers, who were deprived of livelihood, Atchannaidu said during the TD rule, sand was sold for ₹1,500 for a tractor-load, which today costs ₹5,000.

POSITIVE NEWS

With 94 deaths in 24 hours, the toll has touched 10,832

Covid cases continue to decrease in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 30

Coronavirus cases continue to decrease in Andhra Pradesh with 13,400 new Covid-19 infections registered in the past 24 hours on Sunday. With 94 deaths, the toll has touched 10,832.

Earlier 20,000 to 22,000 new infections were reported across the 13 districts every day. The decrease is raising hopes of an early containment of the second wave.

As many as 21,133 persons recovered on Sunday,

taking the overall tally to 15,08,515. Of the total 16,85,142 cases, around 1,65,795 are active cases. The daily positivity rate of 84,232 samples tested on the previous day was 15.91 per cent, which is the lowest in the last one month. The overall positivity rate of the 1.91 crore samples tested so far is 8.79 per cent.

East Godavari reported the single day highest of 2,598 infections followed by Chittoor with 1,971, Anantapur 1,215, and Visakhapatnam 1,054



Police checks documents during curfew in Vizag.

while West Godavari reported 968 new infections. Krishna registered 858 new cases followed by Guntur 848, Prakasam 838,

Kurnool 712, Kadapa 701, Nellore 652, Srikakulam 623 and single day lowest cases of 362 registered in Vizianagaram district.

The highest single day deaths of 14 were registered in Chittoor district, followed by nine deaths each in Prakasam and West Godavari districts, eight each in Anantapur, East Godavari, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts. Six deaths each were reported in Krishna and Vizianagaram districts, five each in Kurnool and

Nellore districts and four each in Guntur and Kadapa districts.

East Godavari is on top in with a total number of 2,23,713 Covid-19 cases followed by Chittoor with 1,89,806, Guntur 1,49,130, West Godavari 1,40,511, Anantapur 1,37,754, Visakhapatnam 1,36,621, Nellore 1,17,679, Kurnool 1,14,716, Srikakulam 1,08,753, Prakasam 1,06,761, Kadapa 94,410, Krishna 88,331 and the lowest of 74,062 was registered in Vizianagaram district.

IN BRIEF

Two die due to black fungus

Kakinada: Two persons died of black fungus infection at the Government General Hospital here. With this, the death toll due to the deadly infection rose to 8. At present, there are 57 patients undergoing treatment at the GGH.

VEHICLE RAMS MOTORCYCLE, 3 KILLED

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, MAY 30

Three members of a family, including a couple, were killed as an unknown vehicle rammied into their motorcycle from behind on the highway at Bangalore Biscuit Factory near Madanapalle in Chittoor district late on Saturday night.

The police said that the deceased were identified as D. Naresh (35), his wife Uma Devi (26) and his daughter Nishitha (5). A resident of Punganur road in Madanapalle, Naresh along with his family was returning home from his parents' house in Karnataka, when an unknown vehicle coming towards Madanapalle town rammied his motorcycle from behind.

He has been working at a chicken shop and was returning to the town to join his duties for Sunday. The three deceased were killed on the spot due to the impact of the collision and the unknown vehicle disappeared from the spot following the incident. The local police registered a case and are yet to trace the unknown vehicle and its driver.

CHILD LABOURER LOSES HAND IN ACCIDENT

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, MAY 30

In a heart-rending incident, a 14-year-old child labourer suffered serious injuries and lost his right hand in an accident at a sponge iron crushing unit near Nemakal in between D. Hirehal and Bommanhal in Rayadurgam area in the district on Saturday evening. The incident came to light on Sunday.

The boy's hand had to be amputated at Bellary hospital in Karnataka where he was rushed with the badly crushed hand. It is learnt that the boy is a dalit and hails from D. Hirehal mandal. His hand was caught in the machine and badly crushed. He also suffered injuries on other parts of the body. He was immediately shifted to a private hospital in Bellary, where a surgery was conducted and the hand was removed.

It was only three days ago that as part of the 'Operation Muskan,' the officials conducted raids at various establishments and hazardous industries to curb the practice of employing child labour. There are reports of large-scale use of child labour by the crushing units in Nemakal area in the district.

● **THE BOY'S** hand had to be amputated at Bellary hospital in Karnataka where he was rushed with the badly crushed hand. It is learnt that the boy is a dalit and hails from D. Hirehal mandal. His hand was caught in the machine and badly crushed. He also suffered injuries on other parts of the body. He was immediately shifted to a private hospital.



EDUCATIONAL

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No social distancing



People in large numbers queue up in a line without maintaining physical distance outside a liquor shop to purchase liquor at Maddilapalem junction in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

Minister opens RINL Covid Care Centre

RINL equipped with AC wards, O2 jumbo cylinders, 10 CPAP machines

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 30

Union minister for steel Dharmendra Pradhan virtually inaugurated a jumbo Covid Care Centre at Gurajada Kalakshetram in RINL Vizag Steel Township of Visakhapatnam on Sunday. Currently with 300 beds, the care centre will eventually have 1,000 beds for treatment of Coronavirus patients.

Delivering the keynote address, Dharmendra Pradhan lauded the efforts of RINL in creating the facility. He also

thanked AP government for extending all support in starting the jumbo Covid care facility.

Union minister of state for steel Faggan Singh Kulaste, who attended the ceremony, complimented RINL for providing timely relief to patients suffering from Covid-19, along with supply of liquid medical oxygen (LMO).

Several state ministers and local MPs attended the inauguration ceremony in virtual mode. They thanked the Ministry of Steel for taking the initiative for sup-

plying of LMO all over the country and for establishing Covid-19 care facilities at RINL Vizag.

Earlier, in his welcome address, RINL chairman and managing director P. K. Rath thanked AP government and Ministry of Steel for providing all support in starting Phase-I of the 1000-bed jumbo facility. He said RINL is taking all necessary measures to combat Coronavirus pandemic. Till date 15,000 of the RINL fraternity have been vaccinated. He said that around 6,700 tonnes

of LMO has been supplied till date by RINL to AP, Maharashtra and Karnataka during the second wave of Covid-19.

The Gurajada Kalakshetram complex is equipped with centralised air-conditioned Coronavirus wards, central oxygen supply with 300 jumbo oxygen back up cylinders, 20 oxygen concentrators and 10 CPAP machines. All beds have oxygen humidifiers with distilled water and flow meters.

Many farmers didn't get crop insurance: Srinivas

FARMERS PANEL DEMANDS PROBE

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, MAY 30

TDP politburo member Reddeppagari Srinivasa Reddy (Vasu) said that many eligible farmers have not been paid this year's crop insurance.

In Rayachoti constituency, where there are over 50,000 farmers, only 4,356 received the compensation, that too at lowest, he said. The government which claimed to spend thousands of crores on farmers had not compensated even 10 per cent of the farmers affected in kharif. In Rayachoti constituency, the lowest compensation was given to 1,960 farmers in Rayachoti, 311 in Lakkireddy village, 334 in Ramapuram, 621 in Galiveedu and 736 in Sambepalli and 394 in Chinnamandem. When

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, MAY 30

AP Farmers Association district president A.V. Ramana and general secretary Gali Chandra on Sunday demanded that the state government hold an inquiry into the irregularities in grant of crop insurance to the farmers affected by the Nivar storm.

The TD leader criticised the YCP government for giving only ₹1,800 crore towards compensation for losses incurred by the farmers due to seven cyclones in

the last two years. He also accused it of cheating the farmers in the distribution of input subsidies. Jagan Mohan Reddy who vouches for the farmer welfare as the bedrock of state prosperity had completely failed them, he added.

Due to corruption in the payment of crop insurance compensation, many farmers lost the benefits.

The government would hear the cries of the remaining farmers, he added.

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₹14K cr boost to farm sector in next 3 yrs

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, MAY 30

The Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government will spend ₹14,000 crore on the development of agriculture sector in the next three years.

Disclosing this here on Sunday, agriculture minister Kurasala Kannababu said the government would set up warehouses, cold-storages, bulk-milk centres, custom hiring centres and other facilities in rural areas.

Speaking of the services rendered to the farm

● As many as 31 lakh houses were sanctioned to the poor

sector in the last two years, Kannababu said that already the government extended benefits to under various schemes such as Rythu Bharosa, crop insurance, input subsidy and others. He said the CM would lay foundation stones for 16 medical colleges in the state on Monday and the colleges would produce thousands of doctors in future.

A fish landing centre would come up at

Uppalanka in Kakinada rural mandal. He said that in the past two years, the government released ₹1,25,000 crore to the beneficiaries under various welfare schemes, without allowing any room for corruption. He said that the government also introduced several schemes, thus becoming a role model for other states. As many as 31 lakh houses were sanctioned to the poor, out of which 15 lakh were taken up in the first phase.

MLC Pandula Ravindra Babu said that due to the steps by the government

during the Covid-19 pandemic, the people were being protected from the virus. The voluntary and secretariat system was rendering a great service in containing the virus spread. He said the CM was giving priority to education and medical and health sector by bringing about revolutionary changes.

Kakinada MP Vanga Gita said that Jagan Mohan Reddy was ruling the state, keeping in view the interests of all sections of people, and turning the state ideal for the other states.

Speaking on the occasion Water Resources Minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav said CM proposed 64 oxygen plants in the state and four of them are coming up in Nellore district.

Nellore rural legislator Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy, District Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu and Joint Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad were present among others.

Referring to their plans to increase medical facilities to the Covid-19 patients, he said that a 1,000-bedded hospital is being established under the auspice of RINL in Visakhapatnam and 200 beds among them are made available to the patients from Sunday.

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SHORT TAKES

DELHI IDENTIFIES 32 KIDS ORPHANED DUE TO COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 30

The Delhi Commission For Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) has identified 32 children who were orphaned during the Covid-19 pandemic in the national capital.

Ten more children have been identified who have lost their single parent to the viral disease, DCPCR chairman Anurag Kundu said.

He said a survey was started earlier this month to trace children in similar distress. "Sixteen children have been identified who lost their parents during the second wave. We have been enquiring about them whether they require medical attention, rations, counselling, immunisation etc," said DCPCR member Ranjana Prasad.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had on May 14 said the Delhi government will bear the cost of education and upbringing of children who were orphaned during the pandemic. The government has also planned to give ₹2,500 per month to such children, and a proposal is likely to be tabled before the Cabinet soon for approval, a senior official said.

NAVY CONVERTS ITS CHOPPER INTO AIR AMBULANCE

Panaji, May 30: The Indian Navy has augmented its capacity to evacuate critical patients even in unfavourable weather conditions by fitting a medical intensive care unit (MICU) on-board an Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) at Goa's naval air station INS Hansa, an official said.

The MICU has been installed on-board ALH Mk-III from INAS 323 at INS Hansa by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), a naval spokesman said in a media statement issued here.

"With ALH Mk-III, an all-weather aircraft, being equipped with MICU, the Indian Navy can now undertake medical evacuation of critical patients by air even in unfavourable weather conditions," he said.

The MICU has two sets of defibrillators, multipara monitors, ventilator, oxygen support as well as infusion and syringe pumps, he added.

"It also has a suction system to clear secretions in the mouth or airway of the patient. The system can be operated on aircraft power supply and also has a battery back up of four hours," the spokesman said.

MANY THINGS THAT HELP TO KICK THE BUTT

DR PAWAN GUPTA

Most often people quit tobacco only to relapse faster than they had quit. It leads them to frustration and loss of confidence. On this World No-Tobacco Day, we must understand how a person gets addicted to tobacco.

Most people take to smoking because of peer pressure or experimentation. But it, later on, leads to frustration and a desire to quit, mostly due to health reasons. The only wish is someone to help quit successfully.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) had recognised tobacco as a complex disease that needs treatment. All tobacco users will have some other disease. So it would be better to commit early to quit smoking.

So why do people find it so difficult to quit smoking? There are two main reasons. One, nicotine affects the brain causing physical dependence, leading to severe cravings. Two, it is the psychological misconception of tobacco users that they can quit with willpower alone.

For quitting smoking, one needs to have a proper assessment and grading of tobacco addiction, which will help a Certified Tobacco Cessation Specialist to finalise an appropriate treatment required. A tool — an Android app ICAN-CARE — is available to assess the willpower, addiction level and type of tobacco dependence of the person.

One can follow the ICanCaRe 7Ds of quitting tobacco by drinking plenty of water, deep breathing exercise, delay, distract, diet, discuss and use drugs for comorbidities and symptom relief.

— *The author is a director of surgical oncology at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Vaishali, Patparganj and Noida.*

CENTRAL VISTA WORK: HC VERDICT TODAY

New Delhi, May 30:

The Delhi High Court will decide on Monday whether to allow the continuation of the Central Vista project work during the prevailing Covid pandemic.

A bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh, which had been hearing a plea for suspending the ongoing construction work during the Covid pandemic, has fixed May 31 for delivery of its judgement on it, the high court's cause list revealed on Saturday.

The court had reserved its judgement on May 17 on the joint plea by Anya Malhotra, a translator, and Sohail Hashmi, a historian and documentary filmmaker.

The two had contended in their plea that the project was not an essential activity and can be put on hold for time being. During the May 17 hearing, the Centre had termed the plea as a "facade" or a "disguise", aimed at stalling the project.

The petitioners on the other hand had contended they were only interested in the safety of workers at the site and citizens living in the area. — PTI



A medical worker inoculates a dose of Covid-19 vaccine to a beneficiary at a vaccination camp on the complex of Golden Temple in Amritsar on Sunday. — PTI

NDRF gets nod for mini O2 plants

Home ministry finds sudden rise in oxygen demand, lack of transportation behind crisis

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 30

Taking serious note of the acute shortage of oxygen faced across the country during the lethal second wave of the Corona pandemic Union home ministry in a major initiative will soon allow the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to have their own "cryogenic oxygen containers and mini oxygen plants" that can be set up at any required location within a few hours.

The NDRF is a highly specialised nodal agency of the Government to deal with any natural or man made disaster. Home ministry sources said the govt ernment had taken the oxygen shortage in the county extremely seriously and was putting in place a robust mechanism to avoid a repeat of such a situation in future.

Officials claimed a detailed analysis of the oxygen shortage revealed that apart from the sudden increase in the demand the other main reason was transportation of oxygen. Officials added that there is no dearth of oxygen production in the country and the main problem was of transportation.

"Adequate oxygen was available across various industrial plants in the country. But the main problem was that of transportation since highly specialised tankers are required for its transportation and not enough of them were available in the country. Now this problem would be resolved before the anticipated third wave which is likely to strike sometime in September or October," an official said.

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, MAY 30

In a first in the country, a cargo aircraft from China carrying over 1,350 oxygen cylinders landed at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Odisha capital here on Sunday.

Informing about it, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's chief advisor Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) Chairman Asit Tripathy said the incident was first-of-its-kind for the country.

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), one of the largest steel makers of the world, delivered the cylinders to the Odisha government. The delivery of 1,350 oxy-

● **ARCELOMITTAL NIPPON** Steel India, one of the largest steel makers of the world, delivered the cylinders.

gen cylinders to the Odisha government was the first tranche of a consignment of 5,150 cylinders pledged by AM/NS India to be given as a part of its contribution to bring relief to victims of Covid-19 across the state.

Describing it as a step ahead in oxygen security, Tripathy said the Chief Minister had directed that no patient shall suffer due to lack of oxygen.

The state government is ensuring efficient distribution of oxygen cylinders to all medical institutions and developing reserves. In two months,

more than 14,000 additional oxygen cylinders were added. With today's import and further consignments, the situation will become better, the official said.

Sunday's consignment for the government of Odisha extends AM/NS India's support for Covid-19 to six states across India. It has been supporting relief work in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana. The company has built a 250-bed Covid hospital in Gujarat which is now being expanded to 1,000 beds. It has been providing daily supply of 250 metric tonnes of liquid medical oxygen to destinations in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana.

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, MAY 30

With the Coronavirus cases on rise in rural areas of the state, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has announced a new drive 'Corona-Mukta Gaon' (Corona-free village) in Maharashtra. If villages in the state become corona-free, the entire state will inevitably get rid of the virus, he said on Sunday.

The cases in Maharashtra state are on decline in recent days. However, while the Covid-19 pandemic in urban areas has seen a drop, the rural areas have witnessed a gradual rise. The new drive is aimed at bringing the cases in rural areas under control.

While announcing the corona-free village drive

in a virtual address, CM specially mentioned the villages in Ahmednagar and Solapur districts, which have managed to become free of pandemic. "People like Popatrao, Ruturaj Deshmukh, Komal Tai have made commendable efforts in eradicating Covid from their villages. If we fight the pandemic in a disciplined manner like them, we can also make villages in the state corona-free," he said.

The CM also extended the lockdown-like restrictions in the state till June 15.

However, the restrictions will not be uniform throughout the state, but they will vary in cities and districts according to the positivity rate and the availability of oxygen beds, he added.

SII: Can supply 10 cr doses in June

New Delhi, May 30:

Serum Institute of India (SII) has informed the government that it will be able to manufacture and supply nine to 10 crore doses of Covishield in June, official sources said on Sunday amid complaint by states about the shortage of anti-coronavirus vaccine jabs.

In a recent letter to Union home minister Amit Shah, SII said its employees have been working round the clock in spite of various challenges

because of the pandemic.

"We are pleased to inform that in the month of June we will be able to manufacture and supply nine to 10 crore doses of our Covishield vaccine to the country as compared to our production capacity of 6.5 crore doses in May," Prakash Kumar Singh, the director of government and regulatory affairs at SII, said in the letter.

Singh also thanked Shah for his "valuable guidance and continuous support" at various stages of their

endeavour to make India 'aatmanirbhar' (self-sufficient) in Covid-19 vaccines and making it available for the people of the country.

"Serum Institute of India has always been sincerely concerned about the protection of the citizens of our country and world at large from Covid-19. Under the leadership of our CEO, Adar C. Poonawalla, our team have been working relentlessly shoulder to shoulder with our government to fight the Covid-19 pandemic,"

he said in the letter.

"We assure you that with the support of the Government of India and under your kind guidance, we are trying our best by utilising all of our resources to increase our production capacity of Covishield in the coming month also." In early May, SII had communicated to the Centre that production of Covishield would be ramped up to 6.5 crore in June, seven crore in July and 10 crore each in August and September. — PTI

STRANGE | FEARS

Villagers afraid that swab strip used for test would infect them

Tribals flee into forest to avoid virus test

Pithoragarh (Uttarakhand), May 30:

Residents of a tribal village here ran to a nearby forest when a team of district health workers came to their doorsteps recently to test them for Covid-19.

Kuta Chaurani village is inhabited by Banrawats — an endangered tribe.

The shy tribals fled to the adjoining forest on getting information about the arrival of a Covid testing team in their village on Friday, Didihat SDM K.N. Goswami said on Sunday.

"While we could test residents of Aultari and Jamtari villages, those living in Kuta Chaurani fled to the forest, the SDM said.

The Banrawat community was declared a primitive tribe on the verge of extinction by the Government of India in 1967.

● **THE ADMINISTRATION** has also been informed about the poor conditions in which the members of the endangered tribal community are forced to live with no work for them due to the Coronavirus lockdown, Sanju Pant, coordinator of Didihat youth society, said.

"We are ready to go for a health check, take medicines but do not agree to let the strip enter our body," Rajwar said. According to the SDM, his team has persuaded some literate members of the community to create awareness among the locals about the necessity of the tests.

"We will make another attempt to test them in two-three days," Goswami

said. Sanju Pant, coordinator of Didihat youth society, said corona kits have been distributed among some members of the community after taking them into confidence.

The administration has also been informed about the poor conditions in which the members of the endangered tribal community are forced to live with no work for them due to the Coronavirus lockdown, Pant said.

"We have requested the administration to distribute consumer goods other than food material to the community members," he said.

The SDM said packets of spices, edible oil and other essential items besides food packets have been distributed among them for

free. According to Didihat youth society sources, the community is facing dire shortage of essential goods as there is no earning for them due to the lockdown.

"If their plight is not addressed, they might face hunger and death," Pant said.

SDM Didihat said he has written to the block development officer of Didihat and the district development officer of Pithoragarh to give members of the community work under the MGNREGA.

"We will not let the community face hunger. We maintain a vigil on them through our revenue officials lest they should face any shortage of food," he said. — PTI

Lockdown lifted partially in J&K

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, MAY 30

The Jammu and Kashmir authorities have announced partial lifting of 'Corona curfew' in the Union Territory from Monday morning.

While 50 per cent shops and other businesses will be allowed to remain open on alternate days from Monday, the public transport can resume services with half passenger capacity.

However, a complete lockdown will remain in force at weekends — from Friday evenings to Monday mornings — till further orders. J&K's all twenty districts were brought under 'Corona curfew' from April 30 in view of an alarming

STAN SWAMY TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, MAY 30

Stan Swamy has reportedly tested positive for the Coronavirus infection after he was moved to a hospital. Swamy, who is in custody in connection with the 2018 Bhima Koregaon case, was moved to the private hospital following the directives given by the Bombay high court on Friday.

Swamy is amongst the 16 persons arrested in connection with the Elgar Parishad case. Soon after he was remanded to jail custody, he had to be shifted to the jail hospital and he has personally complained to the Bombay High Court that his health is continuously deteriorating since he has been shifted to jail.

He had stated before the court that he was able to walk, write, eat and do all of his work by himself, but with every passing day in hospital, he has become so weak that he needs help to do his day-to-day work.

According to one of Swamy's friends, his co-prisoners were assisting him to do his day-to-day work, the jail authorities should get all those tested who had come in contact with Swamy.

During hearing on his interim bail plea on health grounds before the high court he had told judges that he didn't wanted to get admitted to any hospital, however, later he agreed to go to hospital and at the directions of the Bombay HC he was shifted to Holy Family Hospital, where he has been found to be positive for Covid-19.

LABOUR MINISTRY DECLARES MORE EPFO, ESIC SOPS

New Delhi, May 30: The ministry of labour and employment on Sunday announced additional benefits for workers through social securities schemes run by the EPFO and the ESIC amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"These benefits include pension for dependents of insured persons with Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) who died due to Covid-19 and hike in maximum sum assured under the group insurance scheme Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme (EDLI), run by Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), to ₹7 lakh from ₹6 lakh.

"The ministry of labour and employment has announced additional benefits for workers through ESIC and EPFO schemes to address the fear and anxiety of workers about wellbeing of their family members due to increase in incidences of death due to Covid-19 pandemic," a ministry statement said. Enhanced social security is sought to be provided to the workers without any additional cost to the employer, it added. — PTI

Lockdown lifted partially in J&K

surge in Covid-19 deaths and fresh positive cases.

Also, the night curfew will remain in force in entire UT from 8 pm to 7 am next day.

"There shall be a complete 'Corona curfew' (during night time and weekends) with no movement of people except for permissible activities only at the time of curfew except essential and emergency services, movement, work and essential supplies shall remain exempted subject to production of wedding cards / ID cards, etc. and wholesalers, fruit and sabzi mandies may also remain open as necessary in a regulated manner to ensure provision of essential supplies", said an official order.

SHORT TAKES

ONE KILLED IN PLANE CRASH IN UTAH

Eden, May 30: One man died and another man suffered severe burns when their single-engine aircraft crashed Saturday morning near the Powder Mountain area near Eden in northern Utah, authorities said.

The National Transportation Safety Board said it is investigating the crash of the Cessna 172S.

It's not clear why the plane went down.

Authorities said the injured man was transported by air to the University of Utah burn center.

The plane had left Ogden's Hinkley Airport not long before the crash.

The crash resulted in a small fire, but officials say the crash site was cold and wet so the fire was quickly extinguished.

PLANE CRASHES INTO LAKE, 7 BELIEVED DEAD

Smyrna (US), May 30: A small jet carrying seven people crashed into a Tennessee lake on Saturday, and authorities indicated that no one on board survived. The Cessna C501 crashed into Percy Priest Lake near Smyrna after taking off from a nearby airport about 11 am, the Federal Aviation Administration said in a statement. Rutherford County rescue crews were still at the scene of the crash late Saturday and planned to work through the night, Rutherford County Fire Rescue Capt. Joshua Sanders said at a news conference.

He indicated that there were no survivors. "Our efforts have transitioned from a rescue effort to that of a recovery effort. ... We are no longer ... looking for live victims at this point," Sanders said.

He said none of the names of the victims would be released until their families had been notified. Earlier Saturday, officials confirmed that at least one person had died in the crash.

CHINESE CRAFT DOCKS WITH ORBITAL STATION

Beijing, May 30: An automated spacecraft docked with China's new space station carrying fuel and supplies for its future crew, the Chinese space agency announced.

Tianzhou-2 spacecraft reached the Tianhe station eight hours after blasting off from Hainan, an island in the South China Sea, China Manned Space said. It carried space suits, living supplies and equipment and fuel for the station.

Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony, is third and largest orbital station launched by China's increasingly ambition space programme. The station's core module was launched April 29. The space agency plans a total of 11 launches through the end of next year to deliver two more modules for the 70-ton station, supplies and a three-member crew.

China was criticised for allowing part of the rocket that launched the Tianhe to fall back to Earth uncontrolled. There was no indication about what would happen to the rocket from Saturday's launch.

Beijing doesn't participate in the International Space Station, largely due to US objections.

TIGRAY WAR: ETHIOPIANS FLAY U.S. SANCTIONS

Kampala, May 30: Thousands of Ethiopians gathered in the nation's capital Sunday to protest outside pressure on the government over its brutal war in Tigray.

Protesters at the rally in Addis Ababa carried banners that criticised the United States and others in the international community who are voicing concern over atrocities in Tigray, where Ethiopian forces are hunting down the region's ousted and now-fugitive leaders.

Troops from neighbouring Eritrea are fighting in Tigray on the side of Ethiopian government forces, in defiance of international calls for their withdrawal.

But the protesters in Addis Ababa carried placards that said "Ethiopian young people denounce the western intervention."

Others said Ethiopia's sovereignty was at stake. The US said last week it has started restricting visas for government and military officials of Ethiopia and Eritrea, who are seen as undermining efforts to resolve the fighting in Tigray, home to an estimated 6 million of Ethiopia's 110 million people.



People on Boscombe beach, as the holiday weekend is expected to bring blue skies and widespread sunshine, in Boscombe, England, on Sunday. The holiday weekend and relaxation of Coronavirus restrictions has enabled many to visit the beach, as warm weather spreads across the region. — AP

More US states ease rules as vax rates rise

Infections fall just in time for Memorial Day weekend

Bolsonaro faces protests over pandemic handling

Providence, May 30: Just in time for Memorial Day weekend, more US cities and states are shrugging off lingering Covid-19 restrictions as vaccination rates rise and the number of infections falls.

Massachusetts lifted a mask requirement Saturday, a day after New Jersey dropped its mandate. In New York City and Chicago, officials reopened public beaches, though winds and cool temperatures kept crowds away.

"Welcome back, Chicago," Mayor Lori Lightfoot said in a video announcement. The lakefront is open. Chicago's Navy Pier also reopened retail stores and restaurants, carnival rides, and tour boats and cruises after the pandemic forced months-long closures at the busy tourist destination.

It's one more sign of progress that reflects increasingly positive health data. On Saturday, Illinois' Department of Public Health reported 802 new confirmed and probable infections, the second-lowest one-day total in the last six months.

For businesses nationwide, the improving outlook and long holiday weekend offered a chance to welcome customers back to in-person shopping.

Midtown Scholar Bookstore in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, opened its doors to customers for the first time in nearly 14 months Friday. Masks are still required.

The business had switched to internet orders, sidewalk sales and virtual author events to survive the pandemic.

We had to get creative, we had to pivot, store manager Alex Brubaker said.

— AP

PM TO UPDATE SINGAPOREANS ON VIRUS FIGHT

Singapore, May 30: Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Sunday he will share his government's plan on how to combat the Covid-19 pandemic while slowly reopening the country for business in a speech to be broadcast on Monday.

The prime minister said the Covid-19 restrictions were working and the government was taking strict measures to keep Singaporeans safe from the deadly virus.

"Thank you for staying home and complying with the guidelines," said Prime Minister Lee while announcing his address to the nation in a Facebook post on Sunday.

— PTI

Rome, May 30: Italy extended Sunday an entry ban for people coming from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, as a continued precaution against the more transmissible Indian variant of the novel Coronavirus.

The ban, which does not apply to Italian citizens, was introduced in late April and was due to

expire on Sunday. It was prolonged until June 21, a spokesman for Italian Health Minister Roberto Speranza said in a statement.

The B.1.617 variant of the Coronavirus was first detected in India last year and has been blamed for much of a devastating Covid-19 wave that has battered South Asian

tries re-open to international tourists, Egypt has already been trying for months to attract them to its archaeological sites and museums.

Officials are betting that the new ancient discoveries will set it apart on the mid- and post-pandemic tourism market. They need visitors to come back in force to inject cash into the tourism industry, a pillar of the economy.

But like countries elsewhere, Egypt continues to battle the Coronavirus, and is struggling to get its

latest in a wave of anger against Bolsonaro that began months ago. After the United States, Brazil has the world's second highest Coronavirus death toll.

At the outset of the pandemic, the far right Bolsonaro dismissed Covid-19 as "a little flu" and as the death toll has risen steadily he has gone on to infuriate people in other ways, opposing stay-at-home measures and masks, touting ineffective medications, refusing offers of vaccines, and failing to anticipate oxygen shortages that left patients to suffocate.

One of the themes of the rally Saturday was how many lives might have been saved if the Bolsonaro government had started Brazil's vaccination drive earlier. The drive is going slowly and has sputtered frequently for lack of supplies.

"We must stop this government. We must say 'enough is enough,'" businessman Omar Silveira said at the Rio rally.

— AFP

Houston, May 30: A hospital in the US has been sued by over 100 staffers for turning them into Covid-19 vaccine "guinea pigs" by mandating them to get the shot. The plaintiffs filed suit against Houston Methodist Hospital Friday, the latest group of workers to challenge mandatory inoculations at essential workplaces.

Attorney Jared Woodfill said he is representing 117 workers. The lawsuit states that for the first time in US history, an employer is forcing its employees to be vaccinated "with an experimental Covid-19 mRNA gene modification injection" or be fired.

The lawsuit cited that

nations in recent weeks. This week, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said the variant has officially spread to 53 territories, and has been linked to seven other territories by unofficial sources, taking the total to 60.

In an interview with AFP, WHO regional director for Europe Hans Kluge said the increased conta-

gioussness of the new variants of the Coronavirus, including the Indian one, was one of his main worries. "We know for example that the B.1617 (Indian variant) is more transmissible than the B.117 (British variant), which already was more transmissible than the previous strain," the Belgian doctor said.

— AFP

Call for action, inclusion at Seoul climate summit

Seoul, May 30: World leaders on Sunday called for more action and inclusion of all countries in the global drive towards a cleaner and greener planet at a climate summit hosted virtually by South Korea. Climate change is a major threat to global growth, with perils ranging from declines in crop yields, extreme weather that devastates tourist economies, disease outbreaks and other catastrophes that would sap productivity.

South Korea — which recently announced plans to cut finance for international coal projects — is seeking a bigger role in the global initiative to go green. "South Korea will play a responsible role as a bridging nation between developing and advanced nations," said President Moon Jae-in as he opened the 2021 Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030, or P4G, summit.

The two-day summit is the second of its kind following the inaugural meeting held in Copenhagen in 2018, and is focused on public-private partnerships, especially in develop-

ing countries. Advanced nations have laid out ambitious emissions-cutting goals in recent months, as well as plans to ultimately go carbon neutral by 2050.

Earlier this month Germany tightened its targets to reduce CO2 emissions — including a 65 percent cut in emissions by 2030 — after a landmark ruling by the country's top court declared a flagship climate protection law "insufficient".

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said countries must now deliver on their green pledges.

"It's a great start, but let's not pat ourselves on the back just yet because our planet and our people need more," he said.

"We need governments that will not just make promises on climate and nature but match those words with deeds."

World leaders committed under the 2015 Paris accord to keeping the global temperature increase to under two degrees Celsius — and ideally closer to 1.5 degrees C — by 2050.

Yet many of the largest emitters have so far failed to keep up their commitments and countries have not even agreed on a unified rulebook governing how the Paris agreement works in practice.

The UN says that emissions must fall nearly eight percent annually to keep 1.5C in play — equivalent to the emissions saved during the pandemic every single year through 2030.

World leaders also stressed the importance of making sure that poorer countries are not left out in the global initiative to go green.

— AFP



In this image released Sunday by Rebecca Fulton, Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Carrie Johnson pose together for a wedding photo in the garden of 10 Downing Street after their wedding on Saturday. Johnson and his fiancée Carrie Symonds are newlyweds, according to an announcement saying they were married Saturday during a small private ceremony in London. — Rebecca Fulton via AP

Boris, Carrie wed in pvt ceremony

London, May 30: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his fiancée Carrie Symonds married Saturday in a small private ceremony in London, his Downing Street office said Sunday.

Johnson's office confirmed reports in the *Mail on Sunday* and the *Sun* that the couple wed at the Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral in front of a small group of friends and family.

The *Sun* said senior staff in Johnson's 10 Downing St. office were unaware of the wedding plans. Under current Coronavirus restrictions in England, no more than 30 people can attend a wedding. Johnson, 56, and 33-year-old Symonds, an environmental advocate, announced their engagement in February 2020 and have

a son together, one-year-old Wilfred.

The marriage is Symonds' first and Johnson's third. He has at least five other children from previous relationships. The last British prime minister to marry in office was Lord Liverpool in 1822. The reported nuptials come after a tumultuous political week for Johnson, who was accused by former top aide Dominic Cummings on Wednesday of bungling the government's response to the Coronavirus and being "unfit for the job."

On Friday, an ethics inquiry found the prime minister acted "unwisely" in renovating his Downing Street apartment without knowing where the money had come from but it cleared him of misconduct.

— AP

CHINA FRICTION IN MORRISON ARDERN TALKS

Christchurch, May 30: Growing friction with China and how to reopen borders after the pandemic will likely be among the topics discussed by the leaders of Australia and New Zealand in their first face-to-face meeting since the Coronavirus outbreak began.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison arrived in the tourist resort of Queenstown for an overnight visit Sunday. He greeted his New Zealand counterpart Jacinda Ardern with a traditional Maori hongi, in which the pair pressed noses together. Morrison is the first major world leader to visit New Zealand since both countries shut their borders last year to contain the virus.

The neighbouring countries opened a quarantine-free travel bubble last month, although a recent outbreak of the virus in Melbourne has prompted New Zealand to suspend the travel bubble with Victoria state.

Morrison's visit came as New Zealand was dealing with extensive flooding in the Canterbury region following heavy rains. Video footage showed one farmer being rescued by helicopter from a raging river, while other swelling rivers threatened to flood thousands of homes. — AP

INDIAN GETS 10-YEAR UAE GOLDEN VISA

Dubai, May 30: An Indian student has received the UAE's coveted 10-year Golden Visa, which is mostly reserved for prominent global personalities, for her merit and excellent academic credentials, according to a media report.

Tasneem Aslam from Kerala received the Golden Visa in the exceptional student category and is allowed to stay in the country till 2031, *Khaleej Times* reported.

The UAE government in 2019 implemented a new system for long-term residence visas, enabling foreigners to live, work and study in the UAE without the need of a national sponsor. These golden visas are issued for five or 10 years and will be renewed automatically.

This is one of the best moments in my life. I feel privileged to achieve this and I am thankful to Almighty Allah. My parents support has been enormous, and Insha Allah I hope to sponsor them in near future, Tasneem said.

Tasneem studied Islamic Sharia from Al Qasimia University in Sharjah and topped her class with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.94 on 4. — PTI

RECENT | EXCAVATIONS

In Nov., archaeologists had announced the discovery of 100 coffins

Egypt bets on ancient finds to revive tourism

Cairo, May 30: Workers dig and ferry wheelbarrows laden with sand to open a new shaft at a bustling archaeological site outside of Cairo, while a handful of Egyptian archaeologists supervise from garden chairs.

The dig is at the foot of the Step Pyramid of Djoser, arguably the world's oldest pyramid, and is one of many recent excavations that are yielding troves of ancient artifacts from the country's largest archaeological site.

As some European coun-

tries re-open to international tourists, Egypt has already been trying for months to attract them to its archaeological sites and museums.

Officials are betting that the new ancient discoveries will set it apart on the mid- and post-pandemic tourism market. They need visitors to come back in force to inject cash into the tourism industry, a pillar of the economy.

But like countries elsewhere, Egypt continues to battle the Coronavirus, and is struggling to get its

people vaccinated. The country has, up until now, received only 5 million vaccines for its population of 100 million people, according to its Health Ministry. In early May, the government announced that one million people had been vaccinated, though that number is believed to be higher now.

In the meantime, authorities have kept the publicity machine running, focused on the new discoveries. In November, archaeologists announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient

coffins dating back to the Pharaonic Late Period and Greco-Ptolemaic era, along with 40 gilded statues found 2,500 years after they were first buried.

That came a month after the discovery of 57 other coffins at the same site, the necropolis of Saqqara that includes the step pyramid.

Saqqara is a treasure, said Tourism and Antiquities Minister Khaled el-Anany while announcing the November discovery, estimating that only 1% of what the site contains has

been unearthed so far.

Our problem now is that we don't know how we can possibly wow the world after this, he said.

If they don't, it certainly won't be for lack of trying.

In April, Zahi Hawass, Egypt's best-known archaeologist, announced the discovery of a 3,000-year-old lost city in southern Luxor, complete with mud brick houses, artifacts and tools from pharaonic times.

It dates back to Amenhotep III of the 18th dynasty, whose reign (1390-1353 B.C.) is considered a golden

era for ancient Egypt.

That discovery was followed by a made-for-TV parade celebrating the transport of 22 of the country's prized royal mummies from central Cairo to their new resting place in a massive facility farther south in the capital, the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization.

The Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh is now home to an archaeological museum, as is Cairo's International Airport, both opened in recent months.

— AP

$$\text{av. } -PTI$$

New Delhi, May 30: Personal likes or dislikes don't matter when one is playing for the country, India's Test and ODI captain Mithali Raj said on Sunday, insisting that she and head coach Ramesh Powar have "moved on" from a bitter past to take the team forward.

Mithali and Co. are currently quarantining in Mumbai ahead of the UK tour, which is expected to provide a big push to the team's preparations for the ODI World Cup in New Zealand early next year.

The full-fledged series comprising India's first Test in seven years will also be Powar's first assignment as head coach. The former India spinner returned to the role after being sacked following India's semifinal defeat in the 2018 World T20. Mithali was controversially dropped from that game and relations between the two went south with both accusing each other of unprofessional conduct.

"We can't be living in the past. I've played for so many years, I don't have an ego or I don't give attention to my personal likes and dislikes. And 21 years has been a long time for me to sort of, you know, get through many challenges," she said. —PTI