# nicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | THURSDAY 6 | MAY 2021

#### **WEATHER Max:** 34°C Min: 26°C Rainfall: Nill

### ASTROGUIDE

Pilava: Chithirai 23 Tithi: Dhasami Star: Sathayam Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm Yamagandam: 6 am to 7.30 am **PRAYERS** 

Fajar: 4.34 am Luhar: 12.11 pm **Asar:** 3.16 pm Maghrib: 6.24 pm Isha: 7.38 pm

**SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.47 AM MOONRISE TODAY 1.38 AM MOONSET TOMORROW 2.18 PM** 



CASES

(+4,06,383) (+3,838) 2,10,64,862 2.30.010

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+23,310)

TN: 12,72,602 14,779

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES



worldometers.info

#### **UK variant dominates** north India: NCDC

New Delhi: The United Kingdom strain of coronavirus is currently dominating parts of north India while the double mutant variant is found mostly in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat, Director of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) Sujeet

Singh said on Wednesday. He, however, added that the B1.1.7 lineage of SARS CoV-2 (UK variant) is declining in prothe last month and a half.

### **Maoist party withdraws** support, Oli loses majority

Kathmandu: Nepal's embattled Prime Minister K P Sharma Oliled government on Wednesday lost majority support in the House of Representatives after the CPN (Maoist Center) led by Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' officially withdrew

support to it. The party submitted a letter to this effect to the parliament secretariat, informing about its decision to withdraw support to the government, according to a senior leader of the party, Ganesh Shah.

### **Customs cleared 1L oxygen** concentrators: Govt

New Delhi: The Centre on Wednesday told the Delhi high court that from April 24 to May 4 it has cleared over one lakh oxygen concentrators and only907 units were pending clearance as of Tuesday. In a status report filed before a bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli, the central government has said that it has cleared 1,09,689 oxygen concentrators in the given period.



Hike the prices by a paise where we won, and by a

CITY | 2 Sterlite may start oxygen production in next 7 days



WORLD | 5 Wine aged aboard ISS to sell for \$1mn

SPORT | 8 Mahrez fires Man City into CL final



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# **Tech glitch in O₂ supply kills 13**

### ■ Patients at Chengalpettu Medical College hospital had no oxygen: kin

SINDHIYA SAMUEL, P.A. JEBARAJ | DC CHENNAI, MAY 5

As many as 13 patients died at the Chengalpattu Government Medical College Hospital on Tuesday night due to alleged oxygen shortage though district collector A. John Louis denied shortage but admitted a 'technical glitch' could have disrupted the supply of oxygen. The director of medical

education would probe into it, he said.

Narrating the harrowing incident, the relatives of the deceased patients said that the deaths were caused due to insufficient oxygen supply. The 13 patients, aged between 40 and 85, who were in critical care unit, passed away one after the other at around 10.30 pm, they

They also claimed that hospital staff took oxygen cylinders from ambu-lances and tried to save a few patients who needed oxygen the most when the situation went out of control. But it was in vain.

Then the situation was brought under control around midnight by transporting cylinders from SRM and Karpaga Vina-yaga medical colleges to the hospital GH.

Mr Louis said he received a call at 11 pm

that there were some issues in the hospital and rushed there. The hospital had 10 kilolitre oxygen as against the total capacity of 23 kilolitre, he said, adding that there were also two external 3 kilolitre oxygen set ups. **P3** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry has

asked all states and Union

territories to check rising

incidents of fire in hospi-

tals and nursing homes in

view of the increased load

of Corona patients. Home

ministry has advised the

states to conduct a detailed

review with officials from

the health, power and fire

departments, and prepare

NEW DELHI, MAY 5



Post-graduate doctors at the Chengalpattu government hospital in Chennai stage a protest against the alleged negligence on Wednesday.

### New curbs: groceries, veg shops to close by noon

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR, D. SEKAR | DC

Grocers, vegetable vendors, tea shop owners and other shop keepers would have to down shutters by 12 noon from Thursday as the new set of restrictions come into force with a view to controlling the spread of Covid-19, which is wreaking more havoc in its second wave.

a detailed plan of action to

ensure that fire safety mea-

hospitals and health facili-

sures are in place in all

Home ministry sources

said there was a tremen-

dous increase in the load

on the health infrastruc-

ture due to the rapid rise in

Corona cases and this was

one of the reasons why hos-

pitals and nursing homes

were facing more incidents

Announcing a new timing for the sales of liquor, the government announced that TASMAC shops will remain open from 8 am to 12 noon, while bars, clubs, pubs, and other places of public gathering



Grocers, vegetable vendors, tea shops, other shops: till 12 noon

Restaurants, hotels, mess, bakeries: 6 am-10 am; 12 noon-3 pm; 6 pm-9 pm. (only take-away services) Fish, meat, chicken vends: 6 am-12 noon

Bars, clubs, pubs, places of public gathering: Shut fully





have been shut until further orders. In the new restrictions that will be in force till May 20, government and private offices will work

with 50 per cent atten-

dance and public trans-

tioning of their equipment.

that states assist both gov-

ernment and private hospi-

tals in further strengthen-

ing their fire safety mea-

sures and upgrading other

infrastructures so that at

least cases of short circuit

Over the last one month

at least four major cases of

hospital fire have been

can be avoided.

The ministry has advised

port, too, would run with 50 per cent occupancy.

Public transport: 50 per cent occupancy

Government employees with disabilities have been fully exempted from atten ding office during the perian official order said. P3

in addition to smaller inci-

dents being reported from

Madhya Pradesh, Uttar

Pradesh, Karnataka and

"States/UTs requested to issue directions to the offi-

cials concerned at various

levels, that health facilities

should be visited by field

level officials, to examine

internal wirings and availability of functional safety

equipment and take reme-

some other states.

### **EC AGAINST PLEA SEEKING GAG** ORDER ON MEDIA

**THIRD COVID-19** 

**SAYS CENTRE** 

government

be predicted.

New Delhi, May 5: The

government on Wednesday said that a

third wave of coronavirus

pandemic was "inevitable" although a time-frame for it could not

In a press briefing by the ministry of health and

family welfare on Wednesday, officials said the long Covid wave of such "ferocity" that the

country was experiencing

currently "was not pre-

Twelve states, including Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh,

have more than 1 lakh

active Covid cases, the

Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal,

Rajasthan and Bihar are

among the states that

show increasing trend in

Kerala,

government said.

daily cases, it said

New Delhi, May 5: The Election Commission on Wednesday said it was unanimous that there should not be any prayer before the Supreme Court for restriction on media reporting over oral observations made by judges.

The Commission was responding to a news report that the poll panel's plea in the Madras High Court to gag the media from reporting oral observations of judges leave petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court against the high court's "murder charges" remark were not unanimously approved by the poll panel.

A senior functionary said the EC had moved the top court against the oral observations of the Madras High Court. He said based on the observations people could seek action against EC offi-

# **WAVE INEVITABLE,**

DMK president M.K. Stalin hands over a resolution of DMK legislature party electing him leader to Governor Banwarilal Purohit at the Raj Bhavan in Chennai on

### Stalin appointed **Chief Minister**

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR, D. SEKAR |DC CHENNAI, MAY 5

Governor Banwarilal Purohit appointed M.K. Stalin, who has been chosen leader of the DMK legislature party, as Chief Minister on Wednesday and invited him to form the next government in the state.

Mr Stalin would be sworn in Chief Minister along with his ministerial colleagues on Friday 9 am at the Raj Bhavan in a simple function, which will be attended by around 200 persons.

Earlier in the day, the DMK president, along with his poster according

with his party general sec-retary Durai Murugan, treasurer T.R. Balu, principal secretary K.N. Nehru and organisation secretary R.S. Bharati, called on the Governor at Raj Bhavan.

Mr Stalin handed over

the meeting of the DMK legislators on Tuesday at Anna Arivalayam, electing him as the leader, and also a list of some 28 ministers to be sworn in along with him.

Following that, the Governor's office handed over a letter to him inviting him to form the gov-ernment. Raj Bhavan officials have been coordinating with the state officials the conduct of the swearing-in function.

The names of ministers chosen by Mr Stalin became a matter of speculation that too many lists were making their rounds in social media with people making their own guesses and conjectures.

Though the DMK cadre and functionaries would have preferred to have a gala function to mark the installation of the government at a public place in view of the party returning to power after 10 years

Quota cannot go beyond 50 p.c: SC

New Delhi, May 5: The Court Wednesday struck down Maharashtra granting quota Marathas in admissions and government jobs, terming it as "unconstitutional", and held there were no exceptional cir-cumstances to breach the

The top court also refused to refer the Mandal judgement to a larger bench for reconsideration, saying it has been upheld time and again by its vari-

50 per cent reservation cap

set by the 1992 Mandal ver-

ous verdicts. A five-judge constitution bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan concurred on three major issues, and said the MC Gaikwad commission report which was the basis for the Maratha quota did not highlight any exceptional circumstances for grant of reservation to

the community.
The five-judge bench gave four verdicts, while concurring unanimously on three major issues including that the grant of Maratha quota is invalid. Justices L.N. Rao, Hemant Gupta and S. Ravindra Bhat concurred with Justices Bhushan and S. Abdul Nazeer in upholding the constitutional validity of the 102nd amendment but said states cannot decide on the list of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) and only the President has the power to notify it. Justices Bhushan and

Nazeer in their minority view said both the Centre and state have powers to decide on the list of SEBC. The majority verdict directed the Centre to noti-

fy a fresh list of SEBCs. and said till the time notification is being issued the existing list will holds its The bench said appoint-

ments made in govern-ment jobs and admissions in post-graduate courses after the Bombay High Court upholding Maratha quota and September 9, 2020 order of the top court staying the implementation of quota will not be

#### Maharashtra and Gujarat of fire and other malfuncdial actions," it said. 2 of MEA team to UK test positive

### **INDIA'S US ENVOY MEETS FAUCI, DISCUSSES ON COVID-19 CRISIS**

**INSIDE** 

India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu held a virtual meeting with America's top public health expert Dr Anthony Fauci and discussed the current Covid-19 crisis in India

PAGE 5

RAJIB CHOWDHURI |DC

In a first, Mamata

Banerjee and Jagdeep Dhankhar sparred with

each other face to face at

Raj Bhavan over the immediate priority of the

new government --- bat-

tling the Covid-19 pandem-

ic or an end to the deadly

post-poll violence -- in

West Bengal as soon the

Trinamul Congress supre-

mo was sworn in by the

governor on Wednesday

morning as the state's

chief minister for the third

consecutive term. The

simple ceremony was boy-cotted by BJP MLAs in

protest against the alleged

KOLKATA, MAY 5

itive ca Jaishankar said accompanying

MHA orders review of hosp. safety

Jaishankar to the United Kingdom have tested positive for Covid-19, forcing the minister to take his remaining schedule here, including his inperson meetings at a G7 gathering, virtual as a 'measure of abundant caution" Was made aware yes-

terday evening of expo-sure to possible Covid pos-

killings of their party

cadres by TMC workers.
Standing next to Mr
Dhankhar, Ms Banerjee
prioritised the Covid-19

battle over tackling the

post-poll violence, down-

playing the deadly clashes

as "sporadic incidents", orchestrated by a "politi-

cal party", in her veiled reference to the BJP. Irked

Dhankhar not only pub-

licly differed with her but

also said that ending the

post-poll violence should

be the top agenda of her

control the Covid-19," Ms Banerjee said. "Reaching

Nabanna (state secretari-

"Our first priority is to

new government.

her remarks, Mr

dant caution and also out of consideration for oth-

they left for the UK on Sunday. "Test result of all four were negative," said

delegation members are unwell and India will see what the British authorities say about their protocol and process. Mr Jaishankar was to

of the summit over a working dinner on Tuesday evening and furmeetings Wednesday.

"We deeply regret that Foreign Minister Dr Jaishankar will be unable to attend the meeting today in person and will now attend virtually, but this is exactly why we have put in place strict Covid protocols and daily testing," a senior UK

### Covid tops Mamata priority but Guv says stop violence first **BJP** workers flee to Assam with families to escape TMC violence

MANOJ ANAND |DC GUWAHATI, MAY 5

BJP president Assam Ranjeet Kumar Dass on Wednesday rushed western Assam's Dhubri district with relief material for more than 400 BJP workers and their family members who crossed over to Assam to escape post-poll violence in neighbouring West Bengal.

Informing that a team of

BJP workers are accompanying him to look after the attacked women members victims of Bengal vio-Mr Dass told lence, reporters, "the BJP workers and their families from Bengal can live in Assam as long as they don't feel safe about returning to West Bengal. We are giv-

those who fled their state." The BJP has alleged that goons backed by the Trinamool Congress have killed their workers,

ing shelter and food to all

vandalised houses, looted shops belonging to party members and ransacked party offices. The party has claimed

that nine people have died in violence across six districts so far. The exodus of BJP work-

ers along with their families from West Bengal continued even on Wednesday due to post-election violence unleashed allegedly by TMC goons.



rupee where we lost!

#### Sources in Delhi said all the members of the Indian delegation had tested neg-**London, May 5:** Members of the small delethe first formal gathering Twitter on Wednesday. gation external affairs minister ative for Covid-19 before 'As a measure of abun-

ers, I decided to conduct my engagements in the virtual mode. That will be the case with the G7 Meeting today as well," he said. According to numerous sources, two members of the delegation tested positive on Tuesday with further test results still a source.
They said none of the

join ministers from the other G-7 guest nations for

MC Supremo Mamata Banerjee takes oath as the Chief Minister of West Bengal for the third time consecutively during her Swearing-in-Ceremony, at Governor House in Kolkata, Wednesday.

at), we will hold a meeting on this and inform everyone about our decisions.

Second, I urge all political parties to maintain peace, order and harmony." **P4** 

### **Welcome hotels** offer quarantine facilities

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 5

Select Welcomhotels, across India are offering quarantine facilities to Covid-19 patients in collaboration with partner hospitals in a bid to flatten the Covid-19 curve. The hotels offer clean accommodation, advanced safety and cleaning protocols with full attention to in-room hygiene including food delivery. Processes are re engineered to maximise safety across hotel touch points. The stay entitles guests to avail of all meals at the hotel.

On-site medical care will also be provided by the part-ner hospitals as per their guidelines. As part of the affiliation, the hospital would place a few of their medical and healthcare professionals to monitor key parameters and details as they deem fit. Anil Chadha, COO-ITC Hotels

, said that the collaboration between Welchomhotels and partner hospitals would be able to provide some relief and comfort to the community.

### **O2 concentrators** arrive from Malaysia, China, UK

**DC CORRESPONDENT** CHENNAI, MAY 5

Oxygen concentrators from Malaysia, England and China According Chennai Customs, they had facilitated speedy clearance of concentrators 38 oxygen imported Orthodynamics from the UK and 2 by M/s VRP enterprises in China. Similarly, a consignment of 3 oxygen concentra-tors was imported by M/s Aptiv Components from Malaysia. The customs said it had completed all clearances within 15 minutes of the concentrators reaching Chennai International Airport.

# Anna Nagar, Ambattur & Adyar turn Covid hotspots

T. SUDHEESH I DC

CHENNAI, MAY 5

Three zones - Anna Nagar, Ambattur and Adyar - have become Covid-19 hotspots as active cases continue to spike. Teynampet and Kodambakkom have now reached a plateau.

New hotspots, however, will increase the demand for hospital beds and medical oxygen in the coming days. The active cases continue to surge in specific zones at a time when the city started reporting over 6,000 new cases daily.

Till last week, three zones Teynampet, Kodambakkam and Anna Nagar - were reporting 3,000-plus active cases each. But now the number of zones which crossed the 3000-mark touched five adding Adyar and

On Tuesday, these five zones together contributed 16,063 cases out of a total of 33,222. According to Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) data, Anna Nagar (3,800) topped the table overtaking Teynampet (3,038). Adyar, which reported around 2,479 cases last week, now claimed second position with 3,098 cases.

The cases in Ambattur also jumped to 3,071 from 2,689. However, other critical zones such as Teynampet (3,038) and Kodambakkam (3,056) showed a downward trend. While Teynampet had reported 3,293 cases last week Kodambakkam added 3,100 on Wednesday. Thiru Vi. Ka. Nagar added 2,656 cases, a surge from last Perungudi, which reported below 2,000 cases last week, recorded 2,132 cases and Valasaravakkam registered 2,350 cases, a surge from 2,033.

Teynampet continues to retain the top slot in death toll among zones with 601 cases. Nagar (563) and Kodambakkam (558) have also crossed the 500 mark. The zonewise total death toll goes as follows: Tondiarpet (383), Royapuram (416), Thiru. Vi. Ka. Nagar (499), Ambattur (346), Adyar (390), Madhavram (125), Valasaravakkam (251), Alandur(189) and Perungudi

The total death toll in the city reached 4,894 till Tuesday while it was 4,661 on April 28. As many as 233 patients in the city succumbed to Covid-19 in

However, the GCC administration till May 4 was able to administer at least 15,13,628 doses of vaccine since January 16. On Tuesday alone, 9,374 beneficiaries in the city took the

According to officials, work

was underway to add 2,400 beds to the already available 2,545 oxygen-supported beds in the city in the government sector. Out of this, at least 250 new oxygen-supported beds each in Royapettah Hospital and the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Egmore are functional now. A total of 500 beds being set up for the Covid Care Centre to come up in Chennai Trade Centre will also be oxygen-sup-

### Sterlite may start oxygen production in next 7 days

M ARULOLI I DC

The production of medical grade oxygen at the Sterilite Copper plant is expected to commence in the next seven days.

Thoothukudi district collector-headed committee, constituted as directed by the Supreme Court to monitor the oxygen production for medical use at the Sterilite plant, on Wednesday inspected the readiness of the oxygen units within the factory premis-

The monitoring committee also comprises oxygen plant expert Joseph Bellarmine, Anto Soris, deputy chemist at the Tangedco-run TTPS, Amarnath, retired fire safety officer at Thoothukudi Zirconium complex, and Prof. Kanagavel, head, department of chemistry, Kamaraj College. They will inspect the oxygen production units, which according to Sterlite have been kept ready

to resume operation, once the state

Thoothukudi collector Senthil Rai told the media that after getting approvals from various departments like the TWAD board, corporation, fire and industrial safety, Sterlite would be given the power and water supply required to operate the oxygen plants on a standalone basis.

Senthil Raj added, "Sterlite has submitted a list of personnel to be involved in the oxygen production which will be vetted by the technical experts in the monitoring commit-tee, based on which permission will be granted for entry of the personnel to work in the oxygen plant.

Once all permissions are given and the machineries are verified by conducting a hot run test, a safety audit by the monitoring committee will be conducted and on successful completion of these processes, Sterlite will start oxygen production in the next seven days, added the collector.

### Covid surges with 23,310 new cases, 167 deaths

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 5

Registering another day of surge in Covid-19 cases, the state on Wednesday reported 23,310 new cases and 167 deaths. This is a leap from 21,228 new cases and 144 deaths on Tuesday.
A total of 20,062 patients

were discharged from hospitals after treatment across the

According to health department data, the total Covid-19 tally in the state has reached 12, 72, 602 while death toll reached 14,779 including 4,952 in Chennai.

Chennai registered another single day spike with 6,291 cases, an increase from 6,228 on Tuesday. The district also reported 58 deaths. Total number of cases in the district touched 36,4081.

Chengalpattu district, which added 1,608 new cases on Tuesday, registered 1,755 district,

cumbed to Covid-19 in the district. Total cases in the district now stand at 88 192

Thiruvallur district crossed the thousand mark for the third straight day with 1,152 cases, a dip from 1,207 on Tuesday. A total of 12 people lost their lives in the district on the same day.

contribution Chennai and surrounding including Thiruvallur

Chengalpattu went up to 9,431 from 8,975 on Tuesday. Daily active cases have also gone up to 1,28,311 from 1,25,230 on Tuesday. Daily total active cases in the Chennai district touched 32,917, a dip from 33,222 on Tuesday.

A total of 1,48, 695 persons took RTPCR tests through 264 labs while total individual tests on Tuesday were 1,34,141. At least 2,29,79,687 individuals tested so far in

### VACCINE. OXYGEN AND BEDS





(Left) Corporation Commissioner P.Kumaravel Pandian inspects a Covid-19 swab test camp at ward 15 in Coimbatore on Wednesday. For the Second day, A "Vaccines out of stock" board was kept outside the vaccination centre in Govt Arts College in Coimbatore on Wednesday showing the great demand for vaccines now.





(Left) Patients with oxygen cylinder waiting outside RGGGH on Wednesday. JITO Chennai Chapter donates Oxygen On Wheels for emergency Oxygen outside Government Omandurar Hospital.

### Ease COVID-19 restrictons, say Tirupur exporters Coimbatore, May 5: Tirupur consisting of 95 per cent strength Exporters' Association (TEA) MSMEs, have to purchase required

Exporters' Association (TEA) on Wednesday sought relaxing between May 7 and May 20 for the benefit of exporting units and job-working units during PPE and masks, the association tne period. The association has requested Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary Dr Rajeev Ranjan to permit shops selling accessories, dyes and chemicals, and fabrics to function with less number of workers in Tirupur.

The knitwear exports sector,

shops dyes and chemicals and fabrics and items required for manufacturing of COVID protecting said. Closure of shops for 15 days would delay the manufacturing and exports apart from delay in supplying of the muchrequired PPE and masks, it

Most of the exporting units do not have enough financial

to procure the required items immediately open would help the knitwear sector at this hour of crisis, TEA president Raja M Shanmugham said in a letter.

Copies of the letter have been sent to Industries Department Secretary Muruganandam and Tirupur district collector Dr K Vijayakarthikeyan, too, to take up the issue with the government, he said.

# Cong to elect leader on Friday HC rejects plea to quash charge memo

**DC CORRESPONDENT** CHENNAI, MAY 5 The TNCC has called

a meeting of elected choose the leader of the Congress Legislative party on Friday, May 7, 6 pm at their headquar-Sathyamurthy Bhavan.

A communique from the party instructed all the MLAs to attend the meeting, which will be presided over by TNCC President K S Alagiri,

The party's Tamil Nadu in-charge, Nadu Dinesh Gundu Rao and AICC national secretaries Sanjay Dutt and Sirvelli Prasad, will also attend the meeting, the communique

said. The Congress is now the third largest party in the State Assembly with 18 of its nominees winning their seats. The party was allocated 25 seats by the alliance leader, DMK, and 18 of the nominees emerged victorious.

The party's nominee

who contested the bye election to Kanyakumari Sabha seat also won the seat.

Assembly constituencies to be represented by the Congress are Chennai city's Velachery, Ponn-Sriperumbudur, Sholingur, Erode East, Udhagamandalam, Vriddhachalam, Aranthangi, Karaikudi, Sivakasi, Myladuthurai, Tiruvadanai, Srivaikuntam, Nanguneri, Killyoor, Tenkasi, Colachel and Vilavancode.

#### DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 5

The Madras high court has dismissed a petition filed by an Professor Thiruvalluvar University. challenging the charge memo issued against him for allegedly producing a fake experience certificate a decade ago. Justice S. Vaidyanathan dismissed the petition filed by A.Paneerselvam, challenging the charge memo dated January 19, 2020 issued against

According to petitioner, he joined the services as an Associate Professor (Zoology) in the department of Zoology on November 9, 2010. Earlier on November 28, 2014 a show cause memo was issued with regard to a fake experience certificate alleged to have been given by the petitioner for which a detailed explanation has been given and thereafter no further proceedings took

On January19, 2020, the petitioner received a communication that the Registrar-in-charge, Thiruvalluvar University has proposed to hold an enquiry on the charges framed against the petitioner. The charge memo itself was illegal on three counts.

The judge said based on the 85th Syndicate meeting held on August 9, 2019, a departmental action has been initiated against the petitioner for which a charge memo has been issued. The syndicate alone has got power to initiate action against a Professor, which has been done in this case, communicated by the Registrar, who may be a witness, who may or may not go into facts at a later point of time. It does not mean that the Registrar-incharge cannot communicate the Syndicate decision to the petitioner, even if he was going to be a witness in this case, the judge added.

### E 'SPURIOUS' CASE OF COVII



Congress MP Vijay Vasanth

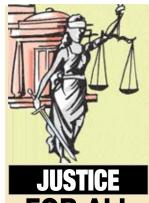
K.S.Alagiri at party office on

Wednesday.

calls on TN Congress president

hen helmets were made compulsory decades ago, there used to be quality checks and insistence on the ISI mark. This was for personal safety. Masks during a pandemic are for both personal and public safety. But what are the quality checks in place for a preventive measure with life or death ramifications?

How do you know if the ubiquitous N95 masks sold in the market are genuine? Look for a 7 digit Testing & Certification (TC) approval



number printed on each mask. If it does not exist, that's a red flag. denotes standard set by the US

nal Safety (NIOSH) Occupational classification 95% filtration of air borne particles. Similarly, the Bureau of Indian Standards has set quality standards such as IS:9473 for masks with a particulate filtration efficiency of 95%. Gullible folks wearing fake N95 masks would be under a legitimate belief that they are protected against aerosols containing the corona virus. Due to a false sense of safety, these users could end up getting infected and spreading the dreaded virus to other unsuspecting victims. With people dying every day and the authorities struggling to get those going outside to wear masks properly, pushing spurious products into

the market is nothing short of a crime against humanity. At the very least, in addition statutes, such manufacturers should be prosecuted under Sections 269 and 270 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for negligent or malignant acts likely to spread diseases dangerous

It is the duty of the the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) to crack the whip against manufacturers of not just low quality masks, but also sub-standard devices such as digital thermometers, nebulizers, syringes, blood pressure monitors and glucometers under the Medical Devices (Amendment) Rules, 2020. I wonder why commonly used items during the pandemic like pulse oximeters, infra-red thermometers and oxygen concentrators do not figure in the list of 37 notified devices. Shouldn't they fall under the definition of 'devices' for "diagnosis" under Section 3(b)(iv) of the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 under which these rules are framed? Even empty gelatin capsules are within the meaning of 'drugs' under these provisions. With hospital beds full, the common advice to patients with Covid symptoms is to seek admission if their oxygen saturation falls below 93. This is how crucial the reading on a simple oximeter is. With unbranded products flooding the market, false readings on defective devices constitute a serious issue that warrants urgent attention.

Then there is an abominable breed of criminals out to exploit human misery by selling chalk powder solution as the much in demand Remdesivir injections. Despite two recent circulars from the Drugs Controller General of India to all States and Union Territories calling for "a strict vigil" and "stringent action" to stop hoarding, black-marketing and overcharging, there are media reports of Remdesivir and Tocilizumab being sold even 10 times higher than MRP. The Delhi High Court in Bram Health Care Private Vs Union Of India (2021) recently warned of separate contempt action

are conducted under Rule 30 of the Drug Price Control Order, 2013 at warehouses, stockists and pharmacies to arrest this pernicious practice of hoarding and black-marketing of life saving drugs during a health crisis.

against such offenders.

It is imperative that raids

Offenders must also be arrested under Section 3 of the Prevention of Blackmarketing & Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code and relevant provisions of the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, amended in 2008. The licences of medical shops found violating Rule 26 of the Drug Price Control Order, 2013,

stipulated rate must be sus-

pended pending expeditious investigation.

The Delhi High Court in Bhavreen Kandhari Vs Govt Of NCT Of Delhi (2021) lit a flame of hope. "We the people, need to stand up to showcase our best qualities and virtues...collectively conduct ourselves with sensitivity and empathy...shun selfishness, greed and indifference."

The pandemic has been a battle of good versus evil of the medical fraternity toiling incessantly in those PPE kits to save lives and of Shylockian mercenaries out to make a quick buck even over funeral pyres.

(The writer is an advocate at the Madras high court, columnist &

IN BRIEF

### **Gold smuggled** from Dubai seized

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 5

Air Customs at Chennai Airport foiled a gold smuggling attempt by a Dubai passenger and seized gold worth ₹28 lakhs. The passenger was arrested.

suspicion Based Elangovan Panchanathan (46) of Puducherry, who arrived from Dubai by an Emirates flight, was intercepted at the exit. During his personal search, three bundles of gold paste weighing 668 grams were recovered from his person. On extraction, 578 grams of gold valued at ₹28 lakhs was recovered and seized under Customs Act.

### VITEEE 2021 to be conducted online from May 28 to 31

Vellore, May 5: The VIT Engineering Examination (VITEEE) 2021 will be conducted as online remote proctored examination on May 28, 29 and 31, 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic. The applications will be closed on May 20. Candidates are requested to complete the application at the earliest and take the examinations in a safe environment. Further details are available in the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) website "www.vit.ac.in"

### **TVS Motor** registers sales of 238,983 vehicles in April

Chennai, May 5: The country's two and three wheeler giant, TVS Motor Company registered sales of 238,983 vehicles in April 2021 as against 9,640 in April 2020. The domestic sales in April 2021 came down due to pandemic lockdowns in many states. However, the retail sales continue to be ahead of dispatch. "We have reduced dealer stocks to support the channel partners and will produce to maintain adequate inventories for customer demand when it reopens", a company release

The year-on-year growth is not comparable due to the low base of sales in April 2020 because of the lockdown imposed by the Government of India during that period. Two-Wheeler Total two-wheelers registered sales of 226,193 in April 2021 as against 8,134 in April 2020. The domestic two wheeler sales registered 131,386 in April 2021. The scooter registered sales of 65,213 in April 2021. The motorcycle registered sales of

133,227 in April 2021.

Exports: The Company's total exports registered sales of 107,185 vehicles in April 2021 as against 9,640 units registered in the month of April 2020. Two-wheeler exports recorded sales of 94,807 units in April 2021as against 8,134 units in April 2020. The company recorded three-wheeler sales of 12,790 vehicles in April 2021 as against 1,506 in April 2020.

## **Activists want stricter** environment laws

A. ARUL PALANI I DC CHENNAI, MAY 5

environmental activists and film personali-Chief Minister MK Stalin to stricter laws to (elect) protect the environment in the State as the Central government is attempting to dilute the environment

Greeting Stalin for steering the DMK to a victory with an absolute majority, and the progressive alliance for its commendable performance, they have stated that at a time when development needs a reorientation strong environmental laws, the Union government is busy diluting even meagre protections offered by the laws such as EIA Notification and Coastal Regulation Zone Notification.

Environmental degradation hurts women, the poor, the historically margin-alised communities, the farmers and fish workers disproportionately. In order to remain true to its values of social justice and equity. Tamil Nadu has to evolve stricter laws and better environmental due diliWrite to

gence to make up for the lack of it in the central laws. They requested the new

government that the Vedanta copper smelter in Thoothukudi should not be allowed to reopen, and the company and its directors should be prosecuted for their environmental crimes. They have demanded the government to scrap the environmentally degrading eight lane Salem Chennai expressway, Adani port expansion in Kattupalli, the Kanvakumari International Container Terminal, the Chittoor-Thachur six-lane expressway and the setting up of four additional nuclear reactors Koodankulam.

They have sought the new government to withdraw the previous government's request for denotification of Vedanthangal Sanctuary, and for the reduction of protective buffer for the Pulicat Sanctuary, to clean up Hindustan Unilever's mercury-contaminated Kodaikanal factory site to global standards, prohibit Genetically Engineered seeds in Tamil

The government must introduce a comprehensive groundwater with stringent norms to limit commercial extraction and use and to evolve comprehensive policy against forced eviction of economically disadvantaged urban communities to distant and often environmentally vulnerable areas.

The government must enact state-level laws to strengthen and realise the objectives of the CRZ and Notifications, EIA strengthen panchayat- and ward-level committees to monitor and act against environmentally degrading practices within their jurisdiction. They sought promotion of

district-level economic and environmental conserva-tion plans for hill districts to safeguard the ecological integrity of the Western and Eastern Ghats, which are sources of Tamil are sources of Nadu's life-giving rivers, to promote decentralised, small-scale renewable energy systems and announce an end to all proposed and in-the-pipeline coal thermal power projects in the state

and to strengthen the process of public consultation and participation in environmental making particularly in relation to infrastructure and industrial projects.

Among those who signed

the memorandum are - V.

Vasanthi Devi, former Vice Chancellor and President, Movement to Save School Education, Tamil Nadu & Puducherry, former Madras High Court Judge, Justice Hariparanthaman, Nityanand Jayaraman, Social Activist, Chennai Solidarity Group, ace Kollywood director Vetri Maaran and actor Vijay Sethupathi, T.M. Krishna Musician, retired IAS officer, M.G. Devasahayam, Madras High Court Advocate R. Vaigai, Dr. S. Janakarajan, former Professor, MIDS, Chennai former and President, South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies, Chennai, G. Sundarrajan, Poovulagin Nanbargal, S.P. Udaya-kumar, People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy and Prof. Ramu Manivannan, Professor & Head Department of Politics & Administration,



With Covid deaths increasing everyday, relatives at Government hospital in Chenani request the hospital authorities to expedite the process of handing over the body in a sad state of affairs.

### Court sentences youth to life term for rape

DC CORRESPONDENT PUDUKKOTTAI, MAY 5

The district fast track mahila court on Wednesday sentenced a 28-year-old youth to undergo life sentence for sexually assaulting a teenage girl studying in Class 12 at Perambur village in Pudukkottai.

According to the prosecution, the accused Rajiv Gandhi sexually assaulted the girl. Based on the victim's father's complaint, the Mathur police arrested the accused under the Pocso Act and filed a case against him before the mahila court.

The judge, Dr.Sathya,

tenced and convicted the accused to undergo two years on another count. She also slapped a fine of ₹1.20 lakh. The judge directed the Tamil Nadu government to pay a compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the victim in addition to the already paid compen-

### BJP youth leader held for murder threat

G. SRINIVASAN I DC THANJAVUR, MAY 5

Pattukottai police arrested Anbarasan, the Thanjavur south BJP youth wing secretary, on Wednesday for an alleged murder threat on Facebook to Shanavaz, the magapatana and deputy general secretary of Whitelesi Chiruthaigal Katchi. The to Shanavaz, the Nagapattinam MLA Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi. arrest was based on a complaint lodged by Mohamed Yahya, co-ordinator of Pattukottai Islamiya Makkal Nala Sangam.

Anbrasan wrote on Facebook, "that lotus bloomed in Tamil Nadu as per the prediction made by sister Tamilisai. I thank those who worked for this victory. As a tribute to you all, death news of Shanavaz will come to you". The police booked Anbarasan under sections providing punishment for murder threat

### Nine Covid-19 testing centres in Thanjavur

**G. SRINIVASAN I DC** THANJAVUR, MAY 5

Corona testing centres are functioning at nine places in Thanjavur district, said M. Govinda Rao, Thanjavur collector, here on Wednesday. He told presspersons after inspecting the preparations at Raiah Mirasudhar Government Hospital here that corona tests are conducted at government hospitals at Thiruvaiyaru, Papanasam, Orathanadu, Kumbakonam and Pattukottai.

Tests are also conducted at corona care centres at medical college hospital and private hospitals.

People who tested positive are advised to be either in home quarantine or take treatment at hospitals. The collector also said that there are 1,250 oxygen beds in the district and at present only 50 per cent of the oxygen beds are occupied. He inspected the ophthalmology building constructed at a cost of ₹16.40 crores at RMH.

Dr. Ravikumar, dean of Thanjavur medical college, and R. Velumani, RDO, Thanjavur accompanied the

### Officers and staff should be accessible

Another Government Order made it clear that all Group A officers and heads of departments should attend office regularly while the other staff would be attending work on alternate days or as per the schedule drawn up depending on their requirement in office.

However, all officers and staff should be available for office work and accessible through electronic mode of communication and all govern-

barred from leaving headquarters without permission. As far as eateries

are concerned, the

regulations restrict the timing on all days other than Sundays when a total lockobserved. Only those in the services that are exempted from the lockdown would

be allowed to function on Sundays. For the takeaway services, the timing restaurants, hotels, mess and bakeries is between 6 am

ment staff have been and 10 am. 12 noon to 3 pm and 6 pm and 9 pm. Tea Shops, however, would have to shut down at 12 noon. No dine-in facility would be allowed in any of the establishments. On Sunday, too, the

timing for parcel services in eateries will be the same and applicable even to e-commerce services like Swiggy and Zomato. However e-commerce services for businesses other than food delivery would not be allowed on Sundays.

only between 6 am and 12 noon from Monday to Friday and closed completely on Saturdays Sundays. All industries that have already been given exemption from

chicken vends would

be allowed to open

the lockdown would be allowed to function without interruption even when other establishments are closed, whether it is during the day or night or on Sundays, and that include the electronic and print

### Wild tusker 'Rivaldo' to be treated in kraal

**B. RAVICHANDRAN I** 

OOTY, MAY.5

'Rivaldo', injured an wild tusker, will undergo treatment at the kraal set up in Vazhaithottam. The elephant was movaround Masinagudi and Mavanallah areas in Mudumalai Tiger

Reserve (MTR) buffer zone limits.

The jumbo, which lost the tip of its trunk, was being fed idlis by some private resort owners in Vazhaithottam in 2013 and was used by them to run shows for the tourists. When Deccan Chronicle brought this



to light, the forest department released the jumbo from the clutches of the resort owners to help it find its own way to live in the jungles.

The tusker adapted itself to pick fodder with its semi-functional trunk and managed to thrive all these years. February, the administration made

efforts to guide it to the elephant camp at Theppakadu in MTR to treat the trunk injury and other related ailments. However, their efforts did not materialise then as the jumbo failed to respond.

LCS Srikanth, MTR deputy director, said that for the last four days Rivaldo was allowed to

use the kraal freely by giving it fruits and other fodder. As it adapted to the kraal culture, on wednesday morning it was lodged inside the This is a first of its kind attempt of taking an elephant freely into the kraal without tranquilising or using force, he noted.

"As per the high court directions, necessary action will be taken to treat this jumbo. After a period of observation and treatment, a decision will be taken in consultations with a team of veterinarians and a report will be submitted to the high court", he

### Patients died alredy critical: Collector

'We also had cylinders that were refilled and when the pressure aropped we continued this. There is no question of oxygen shortage," he said.

The collector said those who required oxygen at high pressures survived and that the patients who died were already critical with other comorbidities and issues.

Of the deceased, only one patient was Covid positive while others tested negative but had viral pneumonia and comorbidities. The collector deputed a deputy collector to

the beds and oxygen supply at the GH and shift the severe cases to the Covid Care Centres.

Meanwhile, the postgraduate doctors at staged a morning on hospital

by

Chengalpattu government hospital a protest Wednesday premises against

negligence alleged exhibited administrators of the According to protest-

ing doctors, the hospital could not meet the oxygen demand as almost all oxygen beds in the wards treating

continuously monitor Covid-19 and those the infection were that usually requires kilolitres oxygen per day needed on Tuesday which the hospital doctors delib-

erately ignored. people from the Democratic Youth Federation of India( DYFI) staged a protest outside Chengalpattu government hospital, condemning the negligence from the hospital side. They held

placards and raised

hospital management.

### Patient benefits from Ecmo

suspected to have Chennai, May 5: A 34year-old patient infectoccupied. The hospital ed with Covid-19 and poor lung function has received a new life with ECMO (Extr-Oxygenation) at Fortis Hospital, Vadapalani. That ECMO can prove Similarly, around 50 an effective treatment solution in these chalpatients with weak lung function was demonstrthe ated by Dr Govini Balasubramani, Head, CTVS, Heart and Lung Transplant, Fortis Vadapalani and his medical team of cardiothoracic surgeons, pulmoslogans against the nologists and intensive

### 'Remove encroachments in Padi-Otteri Nullah'

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 5

The Madras high court has directed the Commissioner, Greater Chennai Corporation to consider and dispose of a representation which sought to remove the encroachments in the water canal along Padi-Otteri Nullah adjacent to Anna

Nagar Extension area. The first bench compris-

ing Chief Justice Sanjib Justice and Senthilkumar moorthy gave the directive while disposing of a Public Interest Litigation filed by Anna Nagar West Extension Association represented by The bench said the peti-

tioner complains of an encroachment in the water canal along the Padi-Otteri Nullah adjacent to Anna Nagar Extension area in Chennai. The Otteri Nullah was serving as a water way for many years and prevented flooding in the adjoining residential area. On account of encroachments and the

dumping of garbage, the width of the Nullah has decreased considerably. The petitioner said the matter was brought to the attention of authorities but that no action was taken to remove encroachments. representations were submitted, the last of it on August 21, 2020, the

The bench said the government advocate and the standing counsel for Greater Chennai Corporation stated that the representation of the petitioner would be considered and, if it was found that there were encroachments, appropriate action would be taken in accordance with law.

The petitioner was permit-

ted to submit a fresh repre sentation to the Greater Chennai Corporation within two weeks, which is to be considered and disposed of by the Corporation within six weeks. Appropriate action should be taken by the corporation in accordance with law to remove four months, the bench said.

P Wilson said the sugarcane

growers are put to untold

hardships and are in huge

financial distress in Tamil

Nadu and Puducherry. About ₹1,000 crores are due

to the sugarcane growers by

The decision to make it a simple affair was taken in view of the pandemic.

Mr Stalin will be the third chief minister from the DMK to assume office after C.N. Annadurai, the party founder, and M. Karunanidhi. The party first captured

power in the state in 1967. The DMK now has a combined strength of 133 MLAs – 125 DMK members and the rest members of alliance parties who contested on the symbol 'rising sun'- in the 16th assembly and thus is not dependent on other parties

for a simple majority.

Ever since the election results were announced, senior state government officials

Stalin to assume office in simple affair have been consulting Mr Stalin by calling on him at his residence on a regular

basis.

Stalin too made announcements like declaring media persons as frontline workers in the war against Covid-19 and also urged the people through a statement to follow the restrictions that are being brought in from Thursday. It is also learnt that Mr

Stalin, immediately after taking office as chief minister on Friday, will be addressing district collectors through a video conference to brief them on the step to be taken on combating the second wave of Coronavirus that is taking a heavy toll in

### ए अर इंडिया A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 🖒

CORRIGENDUM Recruitment advertisement - Chief Executive Officer (1) Al Airport Services Ltd. (2) Al Engineering Services Ltd. (3) Alliance Air Aviation Ltd.

In view of the current pandemic situation, the last date of receipt of applications has been extended till 17th May 2021 (1700 hrs), Candidates have option to apply through email also. For further details, please refer to Corrigendum/Advertisement available on career page of Website: www.airindia.in

#### Sugarcane mills in TN and Pondy hoping to pay farmers and Public Distribution Raosaheb Patil Danve said also like to inform you that to improve liquidity of A.ARUL PALANI I DC also been communicated that the arrears of in the country. For sugar CHENNAI, MAY 5

The Central Government has stated that sugar mills Tamil Nadu and Puducherry are making efforts to pay arrears to the tune of ₹435.60 crore to sugarcane farmers for cane procured from them for 2019 -20 to 2020-21

While replying to special mention raised DMK MP, P Wilson, on February 8, 2021 during zero hour in Rajya Sabha regarding non payment of cane price arrears to sugarcane growers by sugar mills in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, the Union State for Consumer Affairs, Food that "the Tamil Nadu government in a letter dated March 18, 2021 had informed that there are 16 sugar mills under cooperative sector, two under public sector and 26 sugar mills are under private sector. So far the mills under cooperative and public sector are concerned, except for Tiruttani Cooperative Sugar mills, which has ₹8.74 crore of FRP arrear of sugar season (SS) 2019 -20, all the cooperative and pub-

In a letter sent to Wilson,

lic sector sugar mills have

paid the FRP arrear upto SS

Tiruttani Cooperative Sugar Mills will be settled soon. As far as sugar mills of private sector are con-cerned, FRP arrear of Rs. 155.17 crore is pending up to SS 2019-20. For SS 2020-21, the Cooperative Sugar mills have FRP arrears of ₹137.40 crore, public sector sugar mills have FRP arrears of ₹29.00 crore and private sector sugar mills have FRP arrears of ₹105.29 crore. Also, all the sugar mills are taking sincere efforts to clear their FRP arrears as early as possible". The total outstanding

arrears as on March 15, 2021 was ₹435.60 crore. I would

sugar mills enabling them to clear cane price arrears of farmers, the Central Government has taken various measures for sugar industries and sugarcane farmers of the entire country in the past three sugar seasons and the current sugar season viz. extended assistance to sugar mills to facilitate export of sugar; extended assistance to mills for maintaining buffer stocks, extended soft loans to sugar mills. As a result of these meas-

ures, only Rs. 409 crore are left of sugar season 2018-19 against the total payable of ₹86,723 crore by sugar mills

season 2019-20, payments of ₹74,339 crore have been made against total payable cane price of ₹75,845 crore and cane arrears of only ₹369 crore are pending in the country as on April 5, The Central Government

has already taken various measures to make the sugar sector viable and profitable. However, the Central Government is continuously monitoring the sugar sector scenario and appropriate measures will be taken. as and when required, keeping in view the best interest of sugarcane farmers and

other stakeholders. Addressing Rajya Sabha Puducherry.

these sugar mills. The Union Government should also come out with a definite sugar cane policy and should frame a rehabilitation package specifically for sugar cane growers in Tamil Nadu, taking into account the pandemic crisis, and sanction a special fund of Rs. 1,000 crores to be paid, through the nationalised banks, to all the sugar cane growers in



### **Himachal goes into** 10-day lockdown

Shimla: The Himachal Pradesh government on Wednesday decided to impose a lockdown in the state from May 7 to May 16 to check the spread of Covid-19, an official said here. The decision to impose the lockdown was taken at a state cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, the spokesperson added. The meeting was held to review the current Covid-19 situa-

### **Kerala: Helpline for** hearing impaired

tion in the state.

Thiruvananthapuram: At a time when the Covid-19 cases are surging, the National Institute of Speech and Hearing (NISH), an autonomous organisation here and the State Disaster Management Authority, have jointly set up a 24 X 7 Covid-19 helpline exclusively for the deaf and hard of hearing. The facility is primarily meant for answering queries and concerns related to the pandemic and extending counselling to stress-related issues. Sign language interpreters will be available to attend the WhatsApp video calls made to the helpline, an official statement said here. The helpline will also reply to queries related to monsoon and the preparedness for and management of the season, it added. The Helpline numbers are: 9446750983, 9496918178, 9249505723.

### **ODISHA PERMITS HOME DELIVERY OF FOREIGN LIQUOR**

**AKSHAYA KUMAR** SAHOO | DC **BHUBANESWAR, MAY 5** 

The Odisha government on Wednesday decided to allow home delivery of foreign liquor during the lockdown.

A decision to this effect was taken as all the non-essential shops, including liquor outlets, have remained closed dur-ing the 14-day statewide lockdown that began with effect from Wednesday morning.

In a letter to the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) P.K. Mohapatra, the excise department principal secretary S.K. Lohani stated the home delivery of liquor is proposed to be permitted during

lockdown. "Home delivery of liquor Indian-made Foreign Liquor and beer (IMFL/beer) by duly

aggregators/technology platforms/delivery service providers as well as by IMFL OFF/ON shop licensees following the extant guidelines of Excise Department," the letter read. The government has also decided to allow operation of all the godowns of Odisha State Beverage Corporation for wholesale trade between 6

Another decision was also taken to ensure smooth passage of vehicles carrying genuine duty-paid liquor, the let-ter stated. The decision for home delivery of liquor was taken in view of the past experience during which it was found that consumers had resorted to illegal means to avail the intoxicant beverages.

### **LOCAL TRAIN SERVICES SUSPENDED IN WB**

Kolkata, May 5: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday took stock of the Covid-19 situation in the state, shortly after her swearing-in ceremony, and announced fresh curbs to combat the spread of Covid-19, including suspension of local train services.

Banerjee, following a highlevel meeting with top officials, said that metro rail and state transport services will be curtailed by 50 per cent from Thursday, as part of the newly imposed set of restrictions.

Banks will be operational from 10 am to 2 pm, and government offices have been told to make do with 50 per cent workforce, Banerjee said at the press meet.

The satte administration has also requested private firms to encourage work from home, the Chief Minister said.

"Local trains will be suspended from tomorrow. Staterun transport and metro services will be reduced by 50 per cent. Starting May 7, air pas-sengers will be allowed in Bengal only if they carry RT-PCR negative report, which is not older than 72 hours prior to boarding," Banerjee said.

## 13 states report more than 100 deaths a day

DC CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, MAY 5** 

India reported 3,584 deaths in the last 24 hours. Over 900 deaths were from Maharashtra, while Delhi and Uttar Pradesh reported 338 and 351, respectively.

At least 13 states are reporting more than 100 deaths a day. These include previously uncounted deaths from earlier days.

The country reported 3,91,184 lakh cases of the Coronavirus in

the 24 hours ending 9 am on Wednesday. Of these, Maharashtra recorded 51,880 cases, while Karnataka reported 44,631. Active cases

are now more than 35.58 lakh.

Maharashtra reported 57,640 fresh Covid-19 positive cases, 57,006 discharges, and 920 deaths. Karnataka reports 50,112 new positive cases, 26,841 recoveries and 346 deaths in the last 24 hours. 22,204 new cases, 85 deaths and 11,128 discharges reported in Andhra Pradesh in last 24

Kerala reported the highest single-day rise of 41,953 new Covid-19 cases and 58 deaths. Active cases stand at 3,75,658 in the state, 23,106 recovered. Total 13,62,363 patients recovered so far, while 5,565 deaths have been reported till now said Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi

12 states have more than one lakh active cases, seven states have 50,000 to one lakh active cases, and 17 states have less than 50,000 active cases. Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh & Andhra Pradesh have around 1.5 lakh active cases, said Lav Agarwal, Union health ministry Joint Secretary.

Meanwhile India has given emergency use authorisation for a Covid-19 antibody drug cocktail developed by Roche (ROG.S) and Regeneron (REGN.O), expanding its arsenal of drugs to battle a massive second wave of infections.

country in the world to administer 16 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccine in 109 days, said health ministry.

Liberalised policy (for vaccination) was started on May 1st. Under this, the drive has begun smoothly in 9 states and 6.71 lakh people in the age group of 18-44 ears have been administered vaccines, said Lav Agarwal, Union

health ministry Joint Secretary. K. Vijay Raghavan, Principal Scientific Advisor to Centre, has warned that a third wave of Covid infections is inevitable.

"A phase three is inevitable, given the higher levels of circulating virus but it is not clear on what time scale this phase three will occur. Vaccines are effective against current variants. New variants will arise all over the world and in India too but variants that increase transmission will likely plateau. Immune evasive variants and those which lower or increase sive second wave of infections.

India has become the fastest disease severity will arise going ahead," he said.

### BJP workers flee to Assam with families to escape TMC violence

FROM PG 1

Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma who regretted the incident on Tuesday claimed that around 300-400 people had entered Dhubri district in Assam from north

Bengal. Mr Dass, accompanied by Assam MP Rajdeep Roy, visited the camps where the refugees have been kept and distributed relief material. Mr Roy informed that around 600 people from Bengal have been given shelter at a camp at Agamoni in Dhubri. He added that most of the people in the camp are children and women, and that more such camps have been set up at other places in the district.

Mr Roy also said all the people who have entered Assam are from Cooch Behar district in West Bengal, where BJP won 7 out of 9 Assembly seats. "Can

only imagine the condition of the districts where TMC has majority seats. This is what Mamata has reduced Bengal to. deplorable," he added. Bengal

The victims of Bengal vio-lence who have fled to Assam told reporters that they were forced to flee after they were attacked by TMC workers. They said that they were beaten by the TMC goons, their women molested, the houses demolished, and their properties and livestock were looted.

Meanwhile, the district administration of Dhubri has informed the Cooch Behar district administration about the development. They have said that when someone fears for their life, they will flee to a place where they feel safe, and therefore the district administration is providing them shelter to stay in Assam for the time being.

### **MAMATA** SWORN-IN, **SAYS COVID TOP PRIORITY**

FROM PG 1

Bengal does not like any unrest. I also do not like it. I appeal to all -- please take proper care so that no violence erupts any-where. Post-poll, some sporadic incidents occurred. I will tackle law and order from today. I will deal with it with an iron hand. I will undertake some postings in law and order to avoid unrest. But I will not hold back myself from taking strong steps against

indulging in violence."
She added: "I just took the oath. You know the police personnel of this government under the Election Commission for the last three months. A political party unleashed atrocities in the seats that it won. We will ensure that no one is spared. I will create a new set up today itself because this was not mine in the last three months. Moreover, a lot of ineffectiveness and inefficiencies were there. I call upon all not to mete out retribution to anyone.

to anyone.

Congratulating Ms
Banerjee on winng a
term, Mr third term, Mr Dhankhar told her: "I hope that governance will be according to the Constitution and the rule of law. India is a great democracy, where power emanates from the process of law. We are at the moment in a very difficult crisis. I am getting reports from within and outside the country. People are worried. I have been in touch with the honourable CM. She has taken steps when I indicated to her. Our first priority is that we must bring an end to this senseless and horrendous violence that has affected society at large. Post-poll violence, if it is retributive, is antithetical to democracy. I have every hope that the CM will take steps on an urgent basis to restore the rule of law. I will expect from the new government a new approach and cooperative federalism.' Referring

Banerjee's excuses over the EC exercising authority, he angrily said later: "What have you seen from May 2 till ears are shut, I cannot help you. Look at the videos and reports. All on political considerations? What steps have you taken? Words are no substitute for action. Examine who is in the chair. She is in the chair. When was the Model Code of Conduct lifted? It has ended officially. Still, if someone says 'I am not in authority', what does that mean?"

#### <<<<

The Indian Railways has put together 70,000 isolation beds in more than 4,400 Covid care coaches across the country. A total of 232 coaches with nearly 4,000 beds are in use at 14 railway stations. Around 4,176 coaches are still available for deployment. – DÖMÁL KAMRAJ

### EAM defends holding elections amid Covid spike

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC

Elections are "sacro-sanct" in India and "we are a deeply political society", external affairs minister S. Jaishankar said, defend ing the government from criticism that the election process including rallies led to the spread of Covid in the country. In an interac-tion as part of the "Global Dialogue "Global Dialogue Series", the Minister who is currently on a visit to London—however conceded that the healthcare system in the country stood "exposed" in the country and blamed it on inadequate spending on health in the past 75 years, adding that this was why Prime Minister Narendra Modi had emphasised the Ayushman Bharat

health scheme. EAM Jaishankar also conceded that everyone in the country had let their guard down after the number of cases came down drastically in February this year, adding that while the focus was on reviving the economy after the lockdown last year, the 'attempt to instil confidence had created a societal complacence that all of us are part

Describing the current pandemic crisis in the country as "difficult and painful" as the current strain of the Covid virus ravaging the country was "much more virulent", the EAM howeveverything we have and more". He made it clear that all people of the county need to "put the blame game aside" and look at "what we can do" to tackle the situation.

Mr. Jaishankar also said that after the first wave of Covid, the Government had autho-rised 1,200 Oxygen plants and that money had been given to states since Health was a state subject in the Indian federal devolution of powers.

"You can't not have elections in a democratic country like India. We are a deeply political country. ... Elections are sacrosanct ... We are a deeply political society," EAM

Responding to criticism on the Government on the Government allowing the Kumbh mela, the EAM shot back saying that one cannot argue that while religious crowds area risk, (farmer) protest crowds are not. He pointed out that the Government had been accused in some quarters of imposing lockdown last year to quell the CAA protests when in fact, the Government declared the Lockdown to save the country from the first wave of the Covid virus.

On vaccines and why India exported millions nations in the past few months, the EAM made it clear that the country had international obligations such as the Covax Initiative and that the Covishield vacer said that the cine itself was a British-Government was tack-ling it by "giving it ufactured in India.

### **Isolation coaches**





### 16% vaccinated test +ve: Study

**New Delhi, May 5:** A small-scale study on 113 had received at least one vaccine dose at a private hospital in Delhi found that 18 tested positive for Covid but all except one had mild symptoms. The study, published in

the peer-reviewed jour-Diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome: Clinical Research and Reviews on May 3, was conducted on employees of the Fortis Centre of Excellence for Diabetes, Metabolic Diseases and Endocrinology in Delhi.

The participants in the study by researchers at Fortis, National Diabetes, Obesity and Cholesterol Foundation, and Diabetes Foundation (India), New Delhi, included doctors, nutritionists, nurses, paramedical workers,

and maintenance staff. Of the 113 in the study, 107 had received the sec-

ond dose of the vaccine. Taken in percentage form, the study found



that breakthrough infections — Covid infection in vaccinated individuals — occurred in 15.9 per cent (18 persons) of the vaccinated individuals and 95 per cent had mild symptoms. Of these, 17 incurred the infection after the second dose and one person.

Except one person who required hospitalisation, all others had mild Coviddisease researchers said

According to the study, the breakthrough infections in 18 persons, 17 incurred the infection after the second dose. These 17 had got their second dose after a mean of 34.8 days following the first jab.

Gujarat: Women flout norms to 'eradicate' virus

Ahmedabad, May 5: Cocking a snook at Covid-19 norms, a large number of women pots on their heads while walking towards a tem-

The video grab also shows some men taking these pots to the top of the temple and emptying them.

turned up at a religious

event organised in a vil-

lage in Gujarat's Ahmedabad district to "eradicate Coronavirus",

police said on Wednesday,

adding 23 people, includ-

ing the village head, have

A video of the incident,

Sanand taluka on May 3,

women carrying water

Navapura village

showed around

occurred

been arrested.

went viral on Wednesday, Ahmedabad rural police said appropriate action had already been taken.
A police officer said villagers Coronavirus will just go

same day and arrested 23 villagers. After the video clip sarpanch Gafabhai Thakor, for organizing this event. Police had also seized the music system from the spot," said Deputy Superintendent

of Police, Sanand Division, K.T. Kamariya. believed that Sanand away if water is poured He said all the accused on the Baliyadev temple. have been booked for vio-"The incident took lating a police notifica-

place on May 3 at tion regarding public Navapura village where gatherings under section women had gathered in 188 of the Indian Penal large numbers carrying water pots. A police team Management Act and the rushed to the spot on the Epidemic Diseases Act. including

In view of the surge in Covid-19 cases, the Gujarat government had banned all kinds of public gatherings in the state.

Tuesday. Gujarat's overall Covid-19 tally stood at 6,20,472 state health department



His hands forever.

Deeply Mourned by: Family Members

9841023957

### **COPS NAB 31 NDRANGHETA SUSPECTS**

Rome: A joint Italian-German police investigation into the ndrangheta organised crime group led to the arrests of 31 people accused of drug trafficking, money laundering and "systematic" tax evasion on the part of Italian pizzerias and restaurants in Germany, authorities said on Wednesday.

Europol and Eurojust, which coordinate law enforcement activities in Europe, said more than 800 police officers and tax officials were involved in the operation in Italy and

Germany.
Italian officials hailed what they described as a new model of cooperation and said experts from both countries formed a joint team to investigate the case, a job complicated by the encrypted phone systems the suspects used to com-

### **4 PAK SOLDIERS KILLED IN ULTRAS ATTACK**

Karachi: Four Pakistani soldiers were killed in a terrorist attack from Afghanistan while they were working on fencing the Pakistan-Afghan border in the restive Balochistan province on Wednesday, the Army said.

A team of paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) was tar-geted in Manzakai Sector located in the Zhob district of Balochistan province in the south-west of the country, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) of the mili-tary said in a statement. Four soldiers were killed and six others were injured in the incident, it said.

"Terrorists from across Afghanistan ambushed FC troops moving for fencing... FC troops responded promptly," the statement said. It did not confirm whether there were casualties on the Afghan side.

### **BOMB TARGETS HEALTH STAFF IN KABUL, 1 DEAD**

Kabul: A bomb targeted a minibus carrying medical workers in the Afghan capital Wednesday morning, killing one person, a Kabul police official said

Three medics were wounded and taken to hospitals by police, said Ferdaws Faramarz, spokesman for the Kabul police

The bus was taking the doctors, nurses and other health workers from Kabul toward northern Panjsher province when it was attacked in the northern district of Kalakan in Kabul province, he added No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, and Faramarz said police were investigating.

The attack comes a few days after the remaining 2,500 to 3,500 American troops officially began leaving the country. They will be out by September 11 at the latest. The pullout comes amid a resurgent Taliban, who control or hold sway over half of Afghanistan.

Republican lawmakers

around the country are pressing ahead with

pressing ahead with efforts to tighten voting

laws, despite growing warnings from business

leaders that the measures

could harm democracy

and the economic climate.

and business organiza-

tions, including some in

More than 50 companies

# **Biden aims to vaccinate 70%** of American adults by July 4

US is administering first doses at a rate of about 9,65,000 per day

set a new vaccination goal to deliver at least one shot to 70 per cent of adult Americans by July 4 as he tackles the vexing problem of winning over the "doubters" and those unmotivated to get inoculated. Demand for vaccines has dropped off markedly nationwide, with with some states leaving more than half their available doses unordered. Aiming to make it easier to get shots, Biden called for states to make vaccines available on a walk-in basis and he will direct many pharmacies to do likewise. His administration for

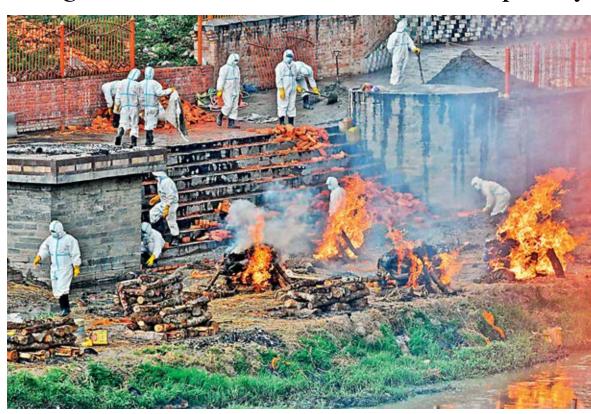
the first time also is moving to shift doses from states with weaker demand to areas with stronger interest in the shots. "You do need to get vaccinated," Biden said from the White House on Tuesday. "Even if your chance of getting seriously ill is low, why take the risk? It could save your life or the lives of somebody you love," he said.

Biden's goal equates to delivering at least the first shot to 181 million adults and fully vaccinating 160 million. It's a tacit acknowledgment of the declining interest in shots. Already more than 56 per cent of American adults have received at least one and nearly 105 million are

The US is currently administering first doses at a rate of about 9,65,000 per day - half the rate of three weeks ago, but almost twice as fast as needed to meet Biden's tar-get. "I'd like to get it 100%, but I think realistically we can get to that place between now and July Fourth," Biden said of his new goal. He said the administration would focus on three areas as it tries to ramp up the pace of vaccinations: Adults who need more convincing to take the vaccine.

Those who have struggled or are in no hurry to obtain a shot. — Adolescents aged 12-15, once federal authorities approve vaccination for that age group. Acknowledging that "the accination slowing," Biden predicted the inoculation effort is "going to be harder" when it comes to convincing "doubters" of the need to get their shots.

He said the most effecpeople would be to protect those they love. "This is your choice: It's life and death, he said. Biden's push comes as his administration has shifted away from setting a target for the US to reach "herd immunity," instead focusing on delivering as many



Workers wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) suits extend the crematorium area next to funeral pyres of people who died due to Covid-19 coronavirus disease, at a cremation ground in Kathmandu on Wednesday. — AFP

### **G7 WORKS ON GLOBAL COVID VACCINE PLAN**

London, May5: The Group of Seven wealthy de-mocracies on Wednesday worked on plans to scale up global Covid-19 vaccinations, as calls mounted for a drastic increase in funding to help develop-ing nations virtually shut out of early efforts.

Underscoring the challenges faced, the foreign minister of India-where Covid cases have soared in recent weeks — said he decided to participate in the London meeting virtu-ally after potential exposure to the virus.

India was one of several nations invited by Britain for the first in-person G7 meeting since the pandemic began last year, in an effort to rally democracies in the face of a rising China and assertive Russia. The G7 opened its final day with a session focused on open societies before taking up Covid-1

shots into arms as possible. Officials said Biden's vaccination target would result in a significant tive argument to those reduction in Covid-19 cases heading into the summer.

To that end, the Biden administration is shifting the government's focus toward expanding smaller and mobile vaccination clinics to deliver doses to harder-to-reach communi-

### WTO mulls IP waivers for vax

**Geneva, May 5:** Ambassadors from World Trade Organisation countries on Wednesday resumed discussions on trade rules protecting the technological know-how behind Covid-19 vaccines amid growing pressure on rich nations to relax them — as a way to help poorer coun-

tries fight the pandemic. The WTO's General Council was taking up a temporary waiver for intellectual property protections that South Africa and India first proposed in

The idea has gained support in the developing world and among some progressive lawmakers in the West. Authors of the proposal, which has faced resistance from many countries with influential pharmaceutical and biotech industries, have been revising it in hopes of making it more palatable. No consensus —

which is required under WTO rules — was expected to emerge from the ambassadors' two-day meeting on Wednesday and Thursday. -AP

### **NEPAL EXTENDS LOCKDOWN IN KATHMANDU**

**Kathmandu, May 5:** Authorities in the Nepalese capital on Wednesday extended the lockdown in Kathmandu and surroun-ding districts till May 12 due to the spike in Covid-19 cases. Nepal on Tuesday recorded yet another high-

est single-day rise of 7,660 new cases of the Covid. The health ministry also confirmed 55 new deaths in the past 24 hours, which is so far the highest number of fatalities recorded in a single day. The local authorities have extended the ongoing prohibitory orders in the Kathmandu Valley till May 12. — *PTI* 

### India's US envoy meets Fauci, discusses on Covid-19 crisis

wasnington, May India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu held a virtual meeting with America's top public health expert Dr Anthony Fauci and discussed the current Covid-19 crisis in India, the efficacy of vaccines against the new strains and variants of the

The meeting was part of the Ambassador's intensified and focused outreach to key stakeholders of healthcare and pandemic response in the US. This was for the first time that

Indian government official had a meeting with Fauci, who is the top advisor to President Joe Biden on the pandemic. During the meeting, Fauci

expressed his solidarity and support with India in this hour of crisis. The meeting came a day after he termed the situation in India "very desperate" and suggested that the government marshal all its resources, including the armed forces, to immediately build makeshift field hospitals, and urged

other countries to help

with not only materials but also personnel.

During his talks with Ambassador Sandhu, the virus strains and variants in India, and the efficacy of vaccines against these came up for discussion. Fauci, who is also the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institute of Health, offered American assistance, including in research and development. Discussed virus variants, vaccines, response mechanisms. —*PTI* 

# FB oversight board upholds ban on Trump

oversight board on Wednesday upheld a ban on former US president Donald Trump while ordering further review of the case, in a decision with a potentially far-reaching impact on the regulation of online

speech.
The board, whose decisions are binding on the leading social network, said Trump "created an environment where a serious risk of violence was possible" with his comments regarding the January 6 rampage by his supporters at the US Capitol.
"Given the seriousness

of the violations and the ongoing risk of violence, Facebook was justified in suspending Mr. Trump's accounts on January 6 and extending that suspension on January 7," the board said after its

But the panel also ruled that "it was not appropriate for Facebook to impose the indeterminate and standardless penalty of indefinite suspen-sion." "Within six months of this decision, Facebook must reexamine the arbitrary penalty

Washington, May 5: it imposed on January 7 Facebook's independent oversight board on and decide the appropriate penalty," said the board in its written opin-

ion. "It is not permissible for Facebook to keep a user off the platform for an undefined period, with no criteria for when or whether the account will be restored," it added.

The panel said Facebook "can either impose a time-limited suspension or account deletion."The case had been intensely followed for its repercussions for social networks seeking to curb misinformation and abusive content while remaining open to political discourse.

Trump was suspended from Facebook and Instagram after posting a video during the deadly storming of the Capitol by fired-up supporters challenging his election loss, in which he told them: "We love you, you're very special." Shortly after the board ruling,

Trump issued a statement reiterating his false claims that voter fraud caused his defeat in November, and urging his followers to "never give

also mentioned his "moral dilemma" given

the court proceedings and

lack of enough support for the Likud leader.

any wrongdoing. Presi-

dent Rivlin's spokesman

in a statement said: "Shortly before midnight, Netanyahu informed the

that he was unable to

form a government and

so returned the mandate

to the president."
Rivlin on Wednesday contacted the parties rep-

resented in the Knesser

(Israel's unicameral par-

liament) on the continua-

tion of the process of

forming a government.

The President met with

Yesh Atid party's chair-

man, Yair Lapid, and

Yamina party's chair-man, Naftali Bennett.

President's

Residence

Netanyahu has denied

# Netanyahu again fails to form new Israeli govt

May 5: forming the government, Prime Rivlin said that he was Jerusalem. Beleaguered Minister Benjamin doing so reluctantly and Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving premier, has failed to meet a midnight deadline of forming a government, giving his rivals a chance to end his uninterrupted stint at the helm of poli-

tics since 2009. Netanyahu, 71, who is facing trial on a series of graft charges, was tasked by President Reuven Rivlin to put together a government on April 6 following inconclusive polls, the fourth in the last two years.

l'he mandate given by Rivlin to Netanyahu to form a government expired on Tuesday at midnight with no breakthrough in coalition talks, prolonging the country's political stale-Likud His party

emerged as the single largest party in the member Parliament but did not have the necessary 61-member sup-

port to form a government. Likud had won 30 seats in the general election in March. While tasking Netanyahu with the

#### PUBLIC NOTICE My Client Mr.P.Rajasekaran, son of Late. Ponnaiah residing at Plot No.10/11, K.A.P. Raja Farm,

Venkateshwara Garden, Reddy Kuppam, Kannathur, Chennai 603112, has lost the original Sale deed, bearing Document No.893 of 1989, in Book 1, at S.R.O. Thiruporur, pertaining to the Dry Land property situated at Thiruporus Taluk, Previously Saththankuppam Village now Pudupakkam Village Kancheepuram District while taking copies from the Original Near Shanu Bakes (Opp to |CIC| Bank). Perumbakkam.

Though my client made an earnest effort to find the same but all are

If anybody find out the above said documents shall return the same either to my client or to me within 10 days from this Notice who will be suitably awarded, there after no claim will be entertained. S.Thiagarajan, M.com., LL.B.,

L.L.M., Advocate Roll No.MS 35/2013

No.7, New Colony 2nd Main Road, Chromepet, Chennai - 600 044. Phone: 044-22411847 Cell: 98403 43321.

#### broad support for the effort -APn Texas. targets Harris County, broad Nonetheless, it amounts home of Houston and a effort. Texas, released an open disabled voters. **EXPENSIVE | WINE** A bottle of Bordeaux spent 14 months in space station

Despite warning, GOP moves on voting bills

democratic process, we

will all prosper," the letter

said. "The growth of free

enterprise is directly related to the freedom of its citizens." The state-ment stopped short of stat-

ing opposition to the spe-

cific legislation proposed

in Texas.

### Wine aged aboard ISS to sell for \$1mn

If a bottle of Petrus 2000 that Christie's is selling tastes out of this world it might be because it aged for 14 months aboard the International Station.

Christie's hopes the bottle, now up for grabs in a private sale, will fetch \$1 million, which would make it the most expensive wine ever sold.

The bottle is one of a batch of 12 that European startup Space Cargo Unlimited sent into orbit as part of research into how food and drink

matures in space. The wine spent almost 440 days in space, or the equivalent of 300 trips to the Moon, Space Cargo Unlimited Nicolas Gaume said in a press release.

letter on Tuesday express-

ing opposition to "any changes" that would make

it harder to vote in that

state. The letter — signed

by American Airlines,

Microsoft Corp., HP Inc., Patagonia, Levi Strauss &

Co. and others — comes

amid votes on legislation

that critics say would place disproportionate

burdens on minority and

It left for the ISS on November 2, 2019 in a spacecraft known as a Cygnus capsule and returned on January 14, 2021 aboard a Dragon capsule manufactured by Elon Musk's SpaceX.

Tests carried out in March by a wine science institute in Bordeaux found that the bottles "positively endured all the



constraints of preparation, travel, and storage on the ISS," Christie's said in its press release. At the end of a blind tasting, the researchers noted \$558,000 in 2018. "remarkable differences in the colour, aroma and components, between the celestial bottles and equivalents which

"We believe the right to vote is sacred. When more people participate in our to a cautious rebuke of lawmakers using former president Donald Trump's expanded voting options

false claims about a stolen

election to make it harder

to vote. Texas is emerging

as the next major battle-

ground in the fight over

voting laws.
The Texas House could

vote, as soon as this week,

on a bill that effectively

had remained on earth.
"The wines sampled were commended for their complexity and considered to be great wines," Christie's added.

The sale is expected to smash the record price for a standard 750 ml bottle of wine. The most expensive was 1945 Romanee-Conti

Burgundy which sold at

Sotheby's in New York for

The private sale means the buyer and price will confidential remain unless the buyer chooses to identify themselves publicly. Proceeds will go towards

in 2020 amid pandemic.

The Texas Senate has

advanced its own package,

with the two chambers likely headed to a compro-

mise committee that would fashion a final ver-

Greg Abbott has expressed

Republican Gov.

funding future space missions focused on agricul-Petrus, from the Pomerol

region near Bordeaux, is considered one of the world's finest wines. A classic bottle of Petrus 2000, considered a great vintage, currently sells for

### **STORMS SPAWN TWISTERS IN MISSISSIPPI**

Birmingham: Much of the South faced more severe weather Tuesday that has killed at least three people, spawned tornadoes Sunday night and Monday and damaged homes and uprooted trees from Mississippi to West Virginia. Parts of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee, as well as corners of Arkansas and Georgia were at enhanced risk for the worst weather, according to the national Storm Prediction Center. That zone is home to more than 11 million people.

#### Tender No. TRD-BSP-111-20-21 Date: 29.04.2021 Work: Provision of OHE in connection with construction of proposed new "B class station of Shioprasad Nagar

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

responsibility

Class station of Shioprasad vagar. Tender Value: ₹ 1,32,35,021.00 EMD: Exempted as per Railway Board letter No. 2020/CE-I/CT/3E/ GCC/Policy, dt. 30.12,2020. Submission of Tender: Up to 15:00 hrs. on 28.05.2021.

For further details/purchase of Tender document, eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above works, please contact Office of the Sr. DEE/ TRD/SECR/Bilasour or refer/ download Tender document which is available on our website www.ireps.gov.in. Sr. Divl. Elec. Engg. (TRD)

CPR/10/16 S.E.C. Railway/Bilaspur

NORTHERN RAILWAY  E-TENDER NOTICE									
S. N.		/UMB/NIT-03/2021-22 Name of wok	Date & Time of Opening	Approx. Cost Rs.	Earnest Money Rs.	Dated: ( Comple- tion Period	Cost of tender form Rs.		
1.		Signaling work in c/w Construction of LHS/ROB at B-40 & B-25, C-141, C-243, C-185/1, C-185, C-43A and raising and extension of high level PF at AHH, MOT, AND ABS station over Ambala Division.	02:06:2021 at 15:00 hrs.	8002479,43/-	Nil	Nine Month	Nil		
2.		6 Quad work in Kalka-Dharampur Himachal Section of Ambala Division	02.06.2021 at 15:00 hrs.	Rs. 11981963.02/-	Nil	270 Days	Nil		
3.		6 Quad work in Dharampur Himachal- Kanoh Section of Ambata Division	02.06.2021 at 15:00 brs	Rs. 11308191.41/ <sub>*</sub>	Nil	270 Days	Nii		

at 15:00 hrs. 11308191.41/-Note: 1. Open tenders through E-tendering are invited by Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom. Engineer/N. Railway, DRM Office, Rail Vihar, Ambala Cantt from the willing contractors for above noted work up to 15 HRS on due date shown against the work and will be opened soon thereafter. Tenderer(s) are required to upload scanned copies of all relate eligibility documents including PAN etc. as per conditions.

2. Please refer to the Website www.ireps.gov.in for detailed notice and tender documents.

3.Tenderer should have class-ItI Digital Signature Certificate and registered themselves on website stated above to participate in E-Tendering and they are requested to read all the instructions contained in the tender notice and tender documents carefully

before submitting their offer so as to comply with all the requisite provision/special conditions SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

966/21



# **Chronicle**

### In the end, IPL proved to be a bridge too far

o normal cricket is possible in the face of an abnormal health crisis. That is the message for the Indian Premier League (IPL), which was a bridge too far to normality when the nation has been overwhelmed by the catastrophic coronavirus pandemic. A dystopian scenario is playing out as Covid-19 patients, gasping for oxygen, die due to gross inefficiencies in reaching the life-giving elixir and funeral pyres are lighting up the night skies over the nation's capital and several major cities across the country. There was no guarantee that one of the world's richest sports boards could run an inviolable bio-bubble at a time when a minuscule organism is playing havoc with lives, snatching loved ones and sending millions into poverty. Was cricket necessary on Indian soil at such a time?

Partners in the cash-rich cricket league may have to take a ₹2,000-crore hit as the league is suspended after 29 of 60 games were played in a bubble for close to a month before it burst. There will be little sympathy for those assumed losses, not among the millions of migrant workers whose lives

The franchises had to hide far too much and if not for the Union home minister's son marshalling the cricket caboodle, the IPL would have had shutters drawn on it long before this virtual cancellation of the season came about in early May.

have been thrown into turmoil once again even as severe restrictions incommode the lives of over a billion people. There is no one that the pandemic has not touched in some way, though it must be said that for about 97 per cent of 1.4 billion people not infected, the cricket on view every evening did provide some entertainment. The brutal power of the willow, as exemplified in Kieron Pollard's match-turning blitz, was the epitome of aggression at the crease but even that pales in front of an insidious organism that slips in to destroy lives.

The franchises weren't too forthcoming on the Covid-19 trouble that had touched the IPL even before a ball was bowled, as in Devdutt Padikkal testing positive. To keep

the show going, they had to hide far too much and if not for the Union home minister's son marshalling the cricket caboodle, the IPL would have had shutters drawn on it long before this virtual cancellation of the season came about in early May. In hindsight, the league would have been better off in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) venues, which hosted the 2020 season without too much ado. The talk then of running the Indian Premier League for "the sake of humanity" was simply pretentious and aimed at staving off criticism that was building up for blithely playing cricket in juxtaposition with death amid chaos.

The attempts to start the IPL as any other economic activity in the time of the pandemic could not be faulted. A full series of matches against the visiting England team was played without stress, but that seems a long time ago now. Timing is the essence of any enterprise and in that the IPL proved a failure because a safe bubble was impossible to maintain when mutating strains are cleverly sidestepping the protection of the vaccine

too and infecting people.

And it was when the indian Premier League began to move as a travelling circus across cities that it invited trouble. Once players were infected, the IPL had to stop, not for any moralistic reason but because it had joined the list of Covid-19 spreaders. A return to an atmosphere of good health for the nation would be a prerequisite for cricket to resume in India. Greed cannot be the engine driving sport.

### Action on hate speech welcome

The decision by microblogging site Twitter to permanently suspend the account of actor Kangana Ranaut for her tweet calling for violence in West Bengal is most welcome. The social media platform has found her tweet to be in gross violation of its Twitter Rules, which do not allow the "targeted harassment of someone or incite other people to do so". Stopping people from airing their opinion is not without consequences in a democracy which guarantees the right to speech and expression, and any response to it needs to be measured against a template formed by far too many factors. But the present case offers little defence for the blatant call to violence, which has triggered strong reactions across all the social media platforms.

The actor has responded to Twitter's action by playing the victim card, saying that "a white person feels entitled to enslave a brown person, they want to tell you what to think, speak or do". That, however, hardly wash-West Bengal has witnessed after the Asseml tion results were declared may have infuriated the actor, and she has every right to protest against it. In fact, every right-thinking human being must share her angst, but the fact that she can recollect only what happened in Gujarat in "early 2000" as the solution to it is troublesome, whether she is brown or white.

Her request to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to show his "virat roop" of those times could baffle even the most ardent followers of both Ms Ranaut and Mr Modi. If she was referring to the planned loot, arson, rapes and murders that the state witnessed in those horrific times, then she breaches all the limits of acceptable behaviour. Taking recourse to racism to justify her blatant criminal intent is unlikely to convince the defenders of the right to free speech.

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KAUSHIK MITTER

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

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

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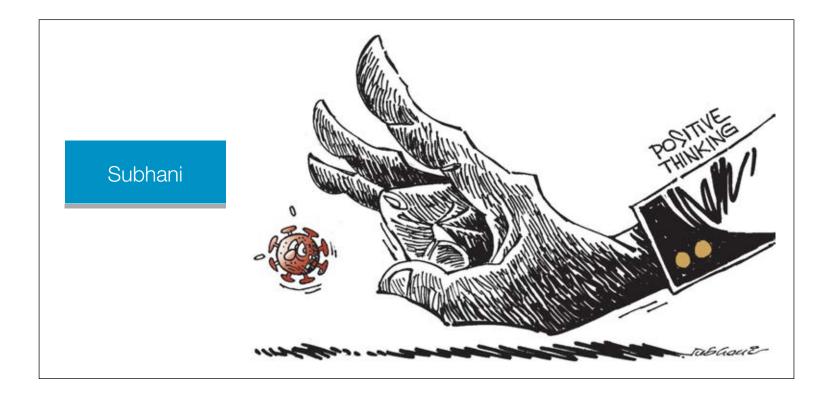
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# Inequity & privilege in the time of a pandemic



Patralekha

**Dev 360** 

s India reels under a devastating second wave of ovid-19 infections, I hear people say that "we are all in this together, we are all equally affected". But I wonder.

Are we? We may be all trying to survive in a lifeboat on the same viral sea, but some of the lifeboats are just more seaworthy than others, as someone pointed out. Even as we grieve and try to navigate our way through these terrifying times, it is important to recognise that some of us are more privileged than others.

I am alive. My family is with me. We are under the same roof. We have food on our table. I have had both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. I can work from home. These are huge privileges when so many friends, colleagues and people one has loved an for have been felled by the coronavirus.

The infection tally has zoomed past the 20-million mark; more than 222,408 people are dead across the country, says the health ministry; the actual number of those who died is likely to be

much higher.
It's true that the virus doesn't discriminate; it doesn't care if you are posh or poor. But Covid-19 will bludgeon the poor and marginalised unless urgent remedial steps are taken. Those of us who are not that old, not that poor, do not have co-morbidities or a compromised immune system have a responsibility to protect those who don't have our

advantages. The first step is to acknowledge our privilege.

New Delhi, where I live, continues to be under lockdown, and continues to gasp as friends and families of critical patients run helter-skelter trying to organise medical oxygen. Hospitals have taken their battle to the courts. The Delhi high court has become the last hope for so many hospitals scrambling to get oxygen for their Covid-19 patients as supolies become precariously short and government

responsible. This week, the high court issued a show cause notice to the Central government over the "non-compli-ance" of its order from last week to provide 700 metric tonnes (MT) of medical oxygen for the treatment of Covid-19 patients in the in Delhi. "You can put your head in sand like an ostrich, we will not," the high

officials engage in ver-

bal jousts over who is

court said. Even from my vantage position, it is easy to

relate to that. How does one reconcile the rage and helplesspeople on the street with the Centre's claim that there is no shortage of oxygen? Or the grotesquely grandiose Central Vista redevelopment project continuing in the heart of the nation's capital as part of "essential services" despite a petition in the courts arguing that the project was not an "essential service" and that it posed "a threat to the lives of the citizens of Delhi and beyond, including the lives of the workforce/labour engaged in the project", and that the construction could prove to be a

Those of us who know someone who knows someone else who is resourceful and whose voice is amplified in the social media have a far better chance of saving our loved

virus doesn't discriminate; it doesn't care if you are posh or poor. But Covid-19 will bludgeon the poor and marginalised unless urgent remedial steps are taken.

It's true that the

Covid-19 "super-spread-

How does one recognise privilege at a time like this wherever we

I found a pandemic privilege checklist on the website of Arizona State University's initiative, Project Humanprivileges it Some

flagged were: If you have health insurance, if your racial group has not been disproportionately affected by Covid-19, if you have easy access to private outdoor space, if you do not live alone, if you have not been quarantined from someone you live with, if you are below the age of 65, if you have not experienced an income/wage loss in the past two months, if you do not have a compromised immune system, if you have home access to high speed Wi-Fi, if you have not felt unsafe because of your job in the past two months, if you have received professional counselling in the past two months, if no one you know personally has contracted and died from Covid-19. if you have not received food assistance in the past two months, if you have exercise equipment in your home, if you do not have someone in your home that needs adult supervision,

if you have a pet. This is a list for people living in the US. But some of it could apply in

this country too. Even in these traumatic times, those of us who can work from home, for instance, are massively better positioned than those whose nature of work does not offer them that luxury or those who have no work right now. The first wave of the

pandemic took a heavy toll of those working in service industry,

especially in the lower rungs. People survived by tapping into their meagre savings. Many people went into debt, were forced to cut down on nutritious food. I wonder what is happen-ing to the young spa attendant who shared her dreams with me few months ago, the tailor down the street, the man selling flowers in my neighbourhood market.

matter have always been part of privilege. It continues during the pan-demic. At a time when money can't necessarily buy you medical oxygen or an intensive care bed, being on top of the food chain, having connections do help. Those of us who know someone who knows someone else who is resourceful and whose voice is amplified in the social media have a far better chance of saving our loved ones than those with no connections.

Knowing people who

Of course, even that does not always work. A former Indian diplomat lost his life while waiting for a ICU bed in the parking lot of a top hosoital in the national capital region. We all live in fear of

the virus, of losing our

loved ones at a time

when citizens appear to have been left to their own devices. Lack of privilege is when one copes with the fear of slipping into destitution. Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has promised help to auto rickshaw and cab drivers in the city whose incomes have taken a huge hit due to the coronavirus. The Delhi government also says it will give free rations to 72 lakh ration card holders.

in the right direction. However, there needs to be a strong nationwide social safety net for people who are likely to fall through the cracks

These are baby steps but

in the coming days. We must not let them fall. We must speak out. Privilege brings greater responsibilities.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and the emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@g

**LETTERS** 

#### **END VIOLENCE**

It is quite unfortunate that violence erupted in WB in the aftermath of the announcement of election results in which some 14 people had died. Political animosity is the cause for the bloodshed. The goonda raj should not be re-established since innocent people lose their lives. At this point in time when the pandemic is haunting the country and the state, political parties should shed their differences and help the state and the people win the virus war. Ms Mamata has been given a fresh ticket to rule the state for the third time in a row by the people. She should take the state towards development and shun violence.

Sravana Ramachandran,

#### **ASTRONAUT COLLINS**

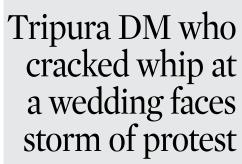
I am saddened by the news of the passing away of Michael Collins, one of the triumvirate that had made the moon landing and exploration of the moon's surface possible in 1969. Though he personally did not set foot on the moon he had been of immense support by helping Neil Armstrong to accomplish the feat by remaining in command of the satellite module and enabled his colleagues to return to Mother Earth. The great astronaut had lived a full and purposeful life of 91 with extraordinary courage and dare devilry for the cause of scientific pursuit and exploration and research of space. It is strange that the passing unnoticed when people's attention was fully engrossed in election results related news.  ${\bf V.\ Rakesh\ Kaushik}, {\it Coimbatore}$ 

### FEDERAL FRONT IN FORM

It is interesting that the successful DMK, TMC and LDF are considering formation of a Federal Front to take on the ruling BJP-led NDA in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The RJD Samajwadi party, Shiv Sena etc., will add strength. Considering the lethargic and irresponsible attitude and shoddy approach of the BJP government in handling the pandemic situation the new Federal Front has great prospects of winning the next elections hands down. But choosing the right partners and poll strategy requires an intelligent and Chanakya like approach. Unity among the partners of the front is foremost. The million dollar question will be who will be the Prime Minister candidate? Fissures among partners could arise resulting in an advantage for the BJP which is to be avoided. Removing the tyrannical BJP-led NDA government should be the main agenda. The front has to concentrate in states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh which is ruled by the BJP.

M.C. Vijay Shankar, Chennai

### Dilip Cherian Dilli Ka Babu



hile the administration has been widely rebuked for complacency in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, a district magistrate in Tripura is under fire for being overly enthusiastic in enforcing night curfew rules during a marriage in Agartala, the state capital. A video that recorded the incident went viral on the social media and political parties are gunning for

him. West Tripura DM M Shailesh Kumar Yadav is in the dock for his arrogant behaviour with a bride and groom in the middle of a wedding. Angry citizens and politicians have written to Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb seeking strict action against Mr Yadav. Some have even demanded an FIR against the official and sought his removal from

In the viral video, Mr Yadav is seen shoving attendees and arresting everyone for flouting Covid-19 norms and tearing up the permission certificate for the wedding that he himself had signed! Sources say the CM has formed a committee of two IAS officers to investigate the incident and submit a report to chief secretary Manoj Kumar for further action. Watch this space for

#### **AD HOCISM IN J&K**

If Jammu and Kashmir's change of status was meant to have a positive impact on governance in the Union territory, those hopes have been belied, many say. Ad hocism has become an integral part of governance in J&K, as evident from the list of top bureaucrats and officials who are holding more than one post. Just two examples: Shaleen Kabra, the principal secretary (home), is also the principal secretary (revenue) and financial commissioner. Similarly, Dheeraj Gupta, principal secretary (housing and urban development), is also

J&K's principal resident commissioner in New Delhi.

Sources say as many as 10 IAS officers in the Union Territory are holding additional charge of different departments and institutions due to a shortage of manpower in the higher echelons of the administration. J&K has a stipulated strength of 137 IAS officers, but only 58 are serving in the cadre, of which at least nine officers are on Central deputation. The Centre is apparently aware of the situation, and it recently moved to depute IAS and Group A service officers to the new UT. But this seems to have done little to solve the problem which has afflicted governance for decades in J&K.

#### **PROBE INTO HARYANA COPS**

Former Haryana home secretary and retired IAS officer Navraj Sandhu has been appointed chairperson of the Haryana State Police Complaints Authority (PCA). In

Kamleshwar Kumar Mishra and retired IAS officer Ramesh Chand Verma have been named as mem-

addition, retired IPS officer

bers of the authority. Haryana is one of 17 states that set up a PCA to protect citizens against the abuse of police powers. It adjudicates allegations of improper or shoddy investigations, refusal to register FIRs, allegations of custodial torture and police high-handedness. However, it should be noted that the recommendations of the PCA aren't binding on the state government — which makes the PCA merely a paper tiger.

For five years, the government did not appoint a chairman even as the the complaints piled up. Apparently, until 2019, the authority received 681 complaints, but it is not known how many were investigated and forwarded to the government for action. Hopefully, Mr Sandhu's appointment will make up for the lost time

### **TAILPIECE**

A significant recent non-babu event was Dr Karan Singh's ninetieth birthday, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a unique edition of the Bhagavad Gita, in 11 volumes with 20 commentaries on each verse in facsimile. The function held at the Prime Minister's residence was attended mainly by family members and a few bureaucrats involved in evolving Kashmir policy. Dr Singh opened the proceedings with a talk on the Gita and steered away from current political matters. The Prime Minister spoke, as expected, on the Gita, and closed his speech by paying fulsome com-pliments to Dr Karan Singh, the elder statesman of the Kashmir region. What the babus were left wondering was how the tea leaves of this event needed to be read.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

# quick BITES

INDICATO	%	
Sensex	48,677.55	0.88
Nifty 50	14,617.90	0.84
S&P 500*	4,186.67	0.53
Dollar (₹)	73.91	-0.05
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.70	-0.19
Euro (₹)	88.72	-0.03
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,382 <b>▼</b> 317	0.68
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	69.32	0.64
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.978	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.600	0.008

### Services sector PMI at 54 in April amid Covid crisis

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

India's services sector activities eased to a three-month low in April, as the rise in business activity was constrained by the pandemic and sentiment towards growth prospects faded. The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell to 54 in April from 54.6 in March, the slowest increase in output in three months. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion and a score below 50 is contraction.

Printed & Published by K Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed & Published at Deccan Chronicle Presses situated at SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai. Editor: **T.Venkatram Reddy**, RNI Reg. No. TNENG/2008/25473 Air surcharge Re . © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

**■** Personal loans, business borrowings also eligible

# **RBI unveils loan recast** plan for individuals, biz

**SANGEETHA G** CHENNAI, MAY 5

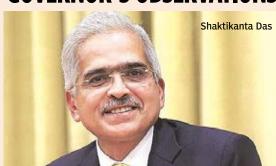
Responding to the second Covid wave, the RBI announced a slew of measures on Wednesday, providing relief and liquidity to a large section of customers It provided loan recast for certain individuals and small businesses. A liquidity window of Rs 50,000 crore has been opened for healthcare companies and patients, while small businesses can avail of Rs 10,000 crore credit from small finance banks.

As far as loan recast is concerned, individual borrowers, small businesses and MSMEs having aggregate exposure of up to Rs 25 crore and who have not availed of restructuring under any of the earlier restructuring frameworks are eligible for loan restructuring under Resolution Framework 2.0.

This is the second restructuring scheme announced by the central bank in less than one year, with the first unveiled in August last year.

Loan recast under Resolution Framework 2.0 can be invoked up to September 30, 2021 and has to be implemented within 90 days after invocation. The beneficiaries had to be classified as standard accounts as on March 31,

In the case of individual borrowers and small businesses which have availed of loan restructuring under last year's loan recast, their plans can be **GOVERNOR'S OBSERVATIONS** 



■ The situation reversed from being on the foothills of strong economic recovery to facing a fresh crisis. RBI will continue to

monitor the situation, deploy tools at command to support businesses impacted by Covid. Covid-19 situation has

altered drastically since March, India has been fighting a sharp rise in Covid cases in last few RBI is committed to

triggered stress.

To work with the government to ease stress faced by citizens. Will take big, small steps to tackle

period of moratorium or

extending the residual

tenure up to two years.

restructured their loans

earlier also can get their

sanctioned working capi-

tal limits reviewed as a one-time measure based

**QUICK CROSSWORD** 

MSMEs

12

1.Type of restaurant (9) 6. Wash abrasively (5) 7. Cup match (5)

18. Pressure group (5) 19. Mast platform (5,4)

R

Concanve impressions (5)

**Word Mine** 

E

9. Beams (4)

12. Stimulus (6)

14 Border (4)

businesses

which

have

using unconventional tools to tackle any Covid-

■ Data shows persistence of input price pressures, normal monsoon forecast should help contain food price inflation. Small borrowers, MSMEs, individuals most vulnerable. ■ India mounted a valiant defence, domestically and globally, to ramp up

with downside risk.

stress through the year.

RBI stands ready to

keep financial conditions

congenial, markets continue to work efficiently.

Global growth outlook

highly uncertain, clouded

support, and save lives.

Immediate objective is to save lives, restore livelihoods. on a reassessment of the working capital cycle, margins and the like.

vaccines and medical

Later in a notification, the RBI said individuals who have availed of personal loans, loans for business purposes and small businesses, including those engaged in retail and

than those classified as MSME, are eligible for the loan recast.

However, compared to the blanket loan moratorium given last year, the proportion of restructured loans will be lower under Resolution Framework 2.0. In order to provide further support to MSMEs

and other unorganised sector entities, a special threeyear long-term repo opera-tions (SLTRO) of Rs 10,000 crore at repo rate will be conducted for the small finance banks (SFBs). Under this, fresh lending of up to Rs 10 lakh will be provided per borrower. This facility will be available till October 31, 2021. SFBs are also permitted to lend to smaller microfinance institutions under priority sector lending. This facility will be available up to March 31, 2022.

"As in the recent past, the RBI will continue to monitor the emerging situation and deploy all resources and instruments..." said

governor Shaktikanta Das. Taking the country's healthcare infrastructure into consideration, RBI also announced an on-tap liquidity window of Rs 50,000 crore at the repo rate for healthcare infrastructure and services companies till March 31, 2022.

The RBI has also decided on a second purchase of government securities for an aggregate amount of Rs 35,000 crore under G-SAP 1.0 on May 20. It had bought government bonds worth Rs 25,000 crore on

### **KYC UPDATION EXTENDED TILL DECEMBER END**

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 5

Considering the Covid situation, the RBI on Wednesday provided some relief to the customers by asking banks and other financial institutions not to impose punitive action against those who fail to update KYC. This relief is being provided till December end.

"Keeping in view the Covid related restric-tions in various parts of the country, regulated advised that for the customer accounts where periodic KYC updating is due/pending, no punitive restriction on operations of customer accounts shall be imposed till December 31, 2021" the RBI said.

Customers can update their Know Your Customer details during this period. This facility is, however, not applicable if the customer is bound to update it due to any other reason or under instructions of any regulator/enforcement agency/court of law.

The central bank also extended the scope of video-based customer identification process, or V-CIP, for new categories of customers such as proprietorship firms, authorised signatories and beneficial owners of legal entities and for periodic updation of KYC.

Limited KYC accounts opened on the basis Aadhaar e-KYC authentication in nonface-to-face mode can be converted to fully KYCcompliant accounts.

# Cabinet nod for privatisation of IDBI Bank



FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MAY 5

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), on Wednesday, gave its in-principle approval for strategic disinvestment along with transfer of management control in IDBI Bank Ltd. However, the CCEA led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi further said in a statement that the extent of respective shareholding to be divested by the Centre and LIC would be decided at the time of structuring the transaction in consultation with the Reserved Bank of India.

The Government of India and the Life Insurance Corporation of India together own more than 94 per cent equity of IDBI Bank, with GoI holding 45.48per cent and LIC 49.24 per cent stake. The LIC is currently the promoter of IDBI Bank with management control and the government of India is the co-promoter.

The LIC board has passed a resolution to the effect that LIC may reduce its shareholding in IDBI Bank Ltd by divesting its stake along-

side strategic stake sale envisaged by the government with an intent to relinquish management control and by taking into consideration price, market outlook, statutory stipulation and interest of policy holders.
The decision of LIC's board is consistent with

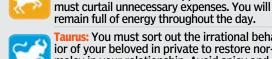
the regulatory mandate to it to reduce its stake in the bank. "It is expected that the strategic buyer will infuse funds, new technol-ogy and best management practices for optimal development of business potential and growth of IDBI Bank Ltd and shall generate more business without any dependence on LIC and government assistance/funds," government statement said, adding that resources through strate-gic disinvestment of government equity from the transaction would be used to finance developmental programmes of the government benefit-

ing the citizens.
The RBI, in March this year removed IDBI Bank from the Prompt Corrective Action framework after a gap of nearly four years on improved financial performance.

### COFFEE-BREAK

#### **Your day today** By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam Aries: Judging others harshly especially at

non-vegetarian food.



remain full of energy throughout the day. Faurus: You must sort out the irrational behavior of your beloved in private to restore nor-

domestic front would disappoint them. You



emini: Try to remain happy no matter what the situation is. You will have to act swiftly and decisively to turn the situations in your favor at home.



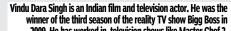
**Cancer:** Putting savings into conservative investments will brin unexpected monetary gains. Love is likely to come your way bringing moments of sheer happiness.



Leo: You will cherish all those sweet romantic memories enjoyed earlier with your partner. Herbal treatment will provide immediate relief from teeth problems.



Virgo: Diverting attention towards spirituality would immensely benefit you. Taking calculated risks would enable you to complete important projects on time. It is a promising day for love.



winner of the third season of the reality TV show Bigg Boss in 2009. He has worked in television shows like Master Chef 2, Comedy Circus, and All Most Famous. ibra: People suffering from obesity are likely to

You share your b'day with

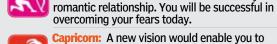


make progress in managing their weight. The desire to meet the love of your life is likely to fulfill today.

Scorpio: Don't get discouraged by obstacles.



You will have to be very diplomatic and avoid needless hassles to maintain a peaceful atmosphere at home. ttarius: You must check your impulsive behavior otherwise it could create a rift in your



apricorn: A new vision would enable you to stand up against family pressure with courage. Past investments are likely to reap rich gains. You are likely to get a remedy for several disorders.



uarius: Financial hassles may end. If you are looking for a new romantic partner you will find him/her coming your way today. Prioritizing physical and mental health would help in overall development.

isces: You must infuse a new life in love. Health



problems are not likely to trouble you at all today. Working individually would benefit you more than joining hands with friends. bridge

**PHILLIP ALDER** 

**PULL, PAUSE,** SWITCH,

**PULL AGAIN,** 

Artur Schnabel, a German-born U.S. pianist, said, "The notes I handle no better than many pianists. But the pauses between the notes -- ah, that is where the art resides."

That reminds me of humor, where the timing of both pauses and lines is often vital. In bridge, timing can be important, and we have acceptable pauses too. There should always be one after the dummy is tabled, while

declarer and the defenders plan the play. But there is another type of pause in this deal. How should South play the cards to make four spades after the defenders begin with three rounds of hearts?

The South hand, despite having only 16 high-card points, is nearly good enough for declarer to start with a takeout double, planning to bid spades on the next round. which would promise 18-20 points. (If South does double,



foreign words and proper names

are not allowed.

### Down

2. Spacious (5) 3. Classify (4) 4 Exertion (6) 6. Gunned from the air (7)

8. Sweepstake (7) 11. Fragmented puzzle (6) 13. Ship (5) 15. Liabilities (5)

Across: 1. Detonate, 7. Incur, 8. Churn, 9. Hot rod, 10. Stem, 12. Nape, 14. Porous, 17. Sushi, 18. Inset, 19.

Down: 1. Ducat, 2. Torpor, 3. Nick, 4. Taunt, 5. Dishonest, 6. Animosity, 11. Bovine, 13. Pasta, 15. Oasis, 16.

#### jumble TUYHO SIDYA H H A C**PCEDTI** How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be **DMSETO** used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

(Answers ton ROTARY FORTY Jumbles: EMCEE

the auction should continue two diamonds - two spades -

four spades.) There seem to be 10 easy tricks: five spades, two dia-monds and three clubs. However, after ruffing the third heart and drawing two rounds of trumps, South must pause. If he draws all of the trumps, when he drives out East's club ace, that defender will cash two heart tricks.

ing the suit until East wins with his ace.

Now, if East leads another heart. South ruffs it in the dummy, returns to hand with a diamond, removes East's trumps and notes the 620point plus score. When analyzing a deal, ask yourself, "If I do

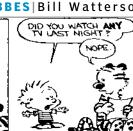
that, what will happen?" If the

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#### CALVIN AND HOBBES | Bill Watterson









THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



#### ARCHIE|Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman







**BLONDIE** Dean Young and John Marshall





ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe





TARZAN|Edgar Rice Burroughs









### SHORT TAKES **MacGill kidnapped**

and then released

Sydney: Former Australia legspinner Stuart MacGill was allegedly kidnapped from his home in Sydney and then released after an hour-long ordeal last month, New South Wales police said on Wednesday. Quoting Australian police, the country's media reported that four men were detained in connection with the alleged kidnapping following a raid. The incident took place on April 14 when he was bundled into a car and driven to a remote location, after which he was assaulted and threatened with a firearm. "I know it was only an hour that he was held but it would have been a horribly frightful hour to endure. NSW Police superintendent Anthony Holton was quoted as

saying by the local media. New South Wales state police said an incident was reported to them on April 20. - PTI

#### **Hockey coach** Kaushik tests +ve

New Delhi: Former India hockey player and coach MK Kaushik has tested positive for COVID-19 and admitted to a nursing home here. The oxygen saturation level of the 66-year-old, a member of the 1980 Moscow Olympics gold-medal winning Indian team, keeps fluctuating,

according to his family. "He is suffering from COVID-19 and is hospitalized in a city nursing home here," his son Ehsan said. "He first developed symptoms on April 17 but RTPCR and RAT tests came negative. Then we did his CT scan on chest on April 24 and pneumonia due to Covid was detected. Since then he has been hospitalized and his condition is between, neither stable nor serious. His oxygen

level drops drastically at night which is a major issue," he added. — PTI

#### **Mary Kom to begin** Games preparation

New Delhi: Six-time world champion MC Mary Kom, along with two other Olympic-bound boxers, will train at the Army Sports Institute in Pune leading up to the Tokyo Games after the national camp for women in Delhi had to be disbanded owing to COVID-19 cases among pugilists and support staff. Mary Kom (51kg) will join another Olympic-bound boxer Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), who is already at the facility. Simranjit Kaur (60kg), also bound for Tokyo, will train there too but after completing the COVID-19 post-recovery isolation. The boxers will be placed in three separate groups with two sparring partners each to ensure that the risk of infection is minimal. — PTI

#### **Sailors want Oz** coach retained

New Delhi: Olympic-bound Indian sailors Varun Thakkar and KC Ganapathy want to continue training under experienced Australian coach Ian Stuart Warren, who helped the duo qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. The duo said it will be "difficult" to push themselves to the next level and perform well at the quadrennial event if the Australian is not around in the next three months. "We have been working with a coach (Warren). We are his fifth team that he has helped to qualify for Olympics. The experience he brings in helps in keeping our mind calm," Varun said in a virtual press-conference conducted by

#### **Bucks move into NBA playoffs**

Los Angeles: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 36 points as the Milwaukee Bucks punched their playoff ticket with a 124-118 win over the Brooklyn Nets on Tuesday. The heavyweight showdown between the Eastern Conference rivals did not disappoint, with the two sides matching each other shot-forshot before the Bucks pulled away in the final quarter. Antetokounmpo led from the front for Milwaukee, with 12 rebounds, four assists and five turnovers to seal the Bucks win.

Regd. No. TNENG/2010/35692

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on Printed & Published by N. Didmakar on the behalf of Deccan Chronicle Presses situated at SP 3, Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032.

RNI Registration No: TN ENG/2005/14987 Ph Nos: 22254747, 22254748, 22254751 Editor: KAUSHIK MITTER

# MAD SCRAMBLE

### Left in lurch Aussie cricketers await flight to Maldives

Englishmen were the first ones out with eight of them landing in London, while the Australians awaited an escape to Maldives as the now-suspended IPL's foreign recruits charted their way back home assisted by the BCCI on Wednesday.
Jos Buttler, Jonny

Jos Buttler, Jonny Bairstow, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Sam Billings, Chris Woakes, Moeen Ali and Jason Roy landed in London to begin a 10-day quarantine before heading to their respective homes. The league was suspended indefinitely on Tuesday after multiple COVID-19 cases in its bio-bubble.

England skipper Eoin Morgan, Dawid Malan and Chris Jordan are expected to board a flight to London within the next

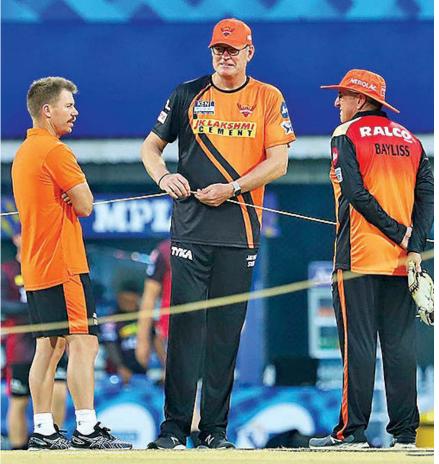
#### **England players to**

quarantine in London "I can confirm that 8 of the 11 England players in India managed to get on a flight to Heathrow last night and have landed this morning," an England and wales Cricket Board spokesperson said.

'They will now quarantine in government approved hotels. The remaining three — Jordan, Malan, Morgan should leave India within the next 48 hours," he

The Australians, on the other hand, were still waiting to know when they can fly out to Maldives, where they will stay for a few days before flying home. The detour has been forced by the Australian government's travel ban on India till May 15 because of the explosion of COVID-19

Their Prime Minister



(From left) Australia's David Warner, Tom Moody and Trevor Bayliss.

Scott Morrison refused to consider an exemption and Cricket Australia has also ruled out seeking one from the government.

"All Australians are assembling in Delhi and from there they will head to Maldives by a charter flight," a franchise said.

#### CA acknowledges

BCCI help CA's interim chief Nick Hockley said the BCCI is helping in every possible way to ensure a smooth return for the 14 players, but also to putting on a

has members of the coaching charter to bring them er an staff and commentators, back to Australia," he ricket who are in India right added.

"What the BCCI is working to do is to move the entire cohort out of India where they will wait until it's possible to return to Australia," Hockley told reporters in Sydney.

"The BCCI has been working on a range of options. That's now narrowed down to the Maldives and Sri Lanka. The BCCI is committed

IPL also featured cricketers from South Africa (11), New Zealand (10), Indies Afghanistan Bangladesh (2).

#### Kiwis to fly to UK

after May 10

New Zealand's players association head Heath Mills told ESPNcricinfo that one group of Kiwis will head to the UK for an upcoming series but that would be after May 10,

flights from India is reconsidered there.

"Due to the UK border restrictions, that group cannot get into England until May 11. It is obviously challenging for them to wait for another few days," Mills said.

The ones headed for UK include Kane Williamson, Trent Boult, and Kyle Jamieson among others. The ones who have to get back to New Zealand are

Fleming. Stephen Brendon McCullum, Kyle Mills, Shane Bond, and Mike Hesson among oth-

ers.
"The group going home to New Zealand is a real challenge. Might be one or two of the franchises might put them on a charter plane, which will be fantastic," Mills said. "We'll have that con-

firmed in the next 24 hours," he added.

#### **Hussey to complete**

CSK batting coach Mike Hussey. will stay in India to serve out his quarantine while others head back in the next few days.

The 52-day 60-match tournament would have concluded in Ahmedabad on May 30. However, only 24 days of cricket was possible with 29 completed games before the virus halted proceedings.

India is currently recording over 3 lakh cases everyday and more than 3,000 daily deaths.

unprecedented of cases has number severely burdened the health-care facilities causing an acute shortage of oxygen, hospital beds and crucial medicines. The gut-wrenching scenes at hospitals and funeral places have had an impact on the participating players as well. — *PTI* 



### Bookies hired a cleaner at Kotla

New Delhi, May 5: The recently-suspended IPL witnessed potential coruptors plugging accredited clear accredited cleaner at Delhi's Feroz Shah Kotla ground for doing "pitch-siding" which helps ball-to-ball betting, BCCI Anti-Corruption Unit chief Shabbir Hussain Shekhadam Khandwawala

has revealed. The new modus operandi was observed during one of the IPL games at New Delhi where a designated cleaner was using the time lag between actual match action and live TV coverage to help in ball-by ball

pitch siding. Pitch-siding is the practice of transmitting information from sporting events for the purpose of gambling, or directly placing bets.

betting, which is also known as court-siding or

"One of my ACU officers caught a person and handed over the details to Delhi Police. While that particular offender managed to flee leaving behind his two mobile phones, ACU lodged a complaint with the Delhi Police," Hussain, a former DG of Gujarat Police, said.

'We are thankful to Delhi Police that in a separate incident they caught two other persons from the Kotla on ACU tip-off." The Delhi Police arrested

two people with fake

One of my ACU officers caught a person and handed over the details to Delhi Police. While that particular offender managed to flee leaving behind his two mobile phones, ACU lodged a complaint with the Delhi

> SHABBIR **HUSSAIN BCCI ACU chief**

accreditation cards during the IPL match between Rajasthan Royals and SunRisers Hyderabad on

So how did cleaning staff come under the ACU radar? "He was standing (inside Feroz Shah Kotla premises) in a secluded area all by himself and so

one of our officers approached and asked him 'What are you doing here?' "He said:"Main apne girlfriend se baat kar raha hoon. (I am talking to my

girlfriend). "My officer then asked him to dial the number he was talking to and then asked him to hand over the phones. Just when he was going through the contents of his phone, the guy fled from the spot," Hussain revealed but did not divulge during which match the incident took

## IPL could have tweaked a few things: Pat

Melbourne, May Australia pacer Pat Cummins feels the IPL organisers, in hindsight, could have "tweaked a few things" after deciding to host the league in India amidst a raging COVID-19 pandemic.

Cummins, a key part of the Kolkata Knight Riders team, said previous edition held in UAE was incredibly "well-run" and the organisers pushed it "little step further" by organising it at home this

The IPL was "indefinitely suspended" on Tuesday, following multiple COVID-19 cases inside the bio-bubble.

Last year, IPL was first postponed and then shifted to the UAE with India being in the grips of the first wave of virus.

'Last year we had the IPL held over in the UAE and that was an incredibly well-run tournament, Cummins told Foxsports.

"This year, they tried to push it that little step further and have it over here in multiple cities in India. I'm sure looking back they might have tweaked a few things.



**Pat Cummins** 

Cummins, however, didn't specify what exactly could have been done differently in his comments which were made before the postponement of the league on Tuesday.

There were a lot of critical T'm just trying to do my bits. India's been such a cism for conducting the T20 league at a time when India was facing such a devastating health crisis. different

"It's two different worlds. We're lucky, we're safe, we're comfortable and there's people just trying to get basic medical home. treatment," the The Australian vice-captain

said.
"First thing was to find out whether us playing the IPL was the right thing and basically everyone said, we would be lost without the IPL for three or four hours every night. arrangements.

good country to me and cricketers.

With the T20 event being postponed, the Australian IPL players and support staff might fly off to Maldives in a bid to get

The Australian government had last week banned travellers from COVID-ravaged India till May 15 with the country's Prime Minister Scott Morrison making it clear that the IPL players will have to make their own

## **ACA CHIEF SAYS PLAYERS**

Melbourne. May 5: Australian Cricketers Association chief executive Todd Greenberg has asked its players to do their "homework" and consider the risks involved before signing overseas T20 deals in the near future as the world grapples with an evolving pandemic. "I'm not sure it will create reticence (in the future) but it will ensure players do their due diligence before they sign agreements," Greenberg was quoted as saying ESPINCTICINIO.

Greenberg acknowledged the Aussie contingent may be dealing with anxiety and stress at the moment, but promised help once they return to their country. "I was at pains to point it out during the week, the public will see our best Australian cricketers as almost superheroes, they're brilliant athletes, great cricketers, but they're human beings, some of them are fathers and husbands and they're under enormous amounts of stress," Greenberg, said.



### Hamilton, Max to resume title battle

Madrid, May 5: The race for the Formula One title has quickly become a two-man show, and it's not expected to change when the circuit goes to Barcelona this week for the Spanish Grand Prix. At a track all teams know well, Mercedes and Red Bull are expected to continue to dominate with Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen separated by eight points

after three races. 'The picture is starting to clarify. Red Bull and Mercedes are the two standout teams, and Lewis and Max are the two standout driv-Red Bull team principal Christian

Horner said. "If we get a pretty standard Barcelona, I think you'll get the four races and we can where strengths and weaknesses are. But what we can see is it's

incredibly tight. Hamilton, the fourtime defending champion with Mercedes, has the edge over Verstappen after winning the season-opener in Bahrain and last race Portugal.

But Red Bull has significantly closed the gap this season, with Verstappen picking up a win in Italy and a position Bahrain.

Manchester, May 5: After a decade of disappointment, Pep Guardiola is back in a Champions League final and just one game away from delivering on his task to make Manchester City champions of Europe for the first In the battle between two clubs with seemingly endresources but no

Champions League titles to their name, City kept their cool to beat Paris Saint-Germain 4-1 on aggregate as the French champions paid for losing their heads in both legs of the semifinal tie.

Riyad Mahrez, born and raised in Paris, scored twice to secure a 2-0 win for City in Tuesday's second leg before Angel di Maria's red card for lashing out at Fernandinho rounded off miserable another European exit for the French champions.

A first Champions League final for City, against Real Madrid or Chelsea in Istanbul, is the culmination of the club's rise since an Abu Dhabi takeover in 2008 transformed their fortunes. In the coming days, they will seal a fifth Premier League title in the past 10

Once dubbed the "noisy neighbours" by legendary former Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson, City are now not just the dominant force in Manchester but also in English football. By the end of the month,



**Smart City storm into final** 

Champions League second leg match in Manchester on

the mix of Emirati wealth and Guardiola's coaching may have also conquered

'Of course we invest a lot of money since Sheikh Mansour took over, but it is just this," said diola. "It is a lot of not Guardiola. incredible things behind

"Reaching the final of the Champions League, helps us realise in the bigger pic-ture what we have done in the last four years. What we have done these four years is incredible.

'Remarkable' consistency

Since a difficult first year

in England, Guardiola has led City to four League Cups, an FA Cup and the brink of a third Premier League title in four seasons. However, until now, that domestic success always came with the caveat of

Guardiola has won the competition twice before as a coach during his time at Barcelona, but not since

Champions League collaps-

City did not even progress beyond the last eight in his first four seasons in charge.

#### THE RESULT **Manchester City** (Mahrez 11, 63) **PSG** City advance on aggregate (4-1)

It was a similar story for the Catalan in his three years at Bayern Munich between 2013 and 2016 as three Bundesliga titles were overshadowed by three semi-final exits to Spanish opposition. 'People believe because it

happened in the past I have to arrive every year in the final of the Champions League," added Guardiola. 'This is a little bit unfair

because the consistency these guys have shown in every competition these last four or five years is remarkable."

City exorcised many of their Champions League demons against PSG.

Missed chances, controversial refereeing decisions and sloppy defending frequently combined to cost them in recent seasons.

This time an early penalty awarded against Oleksandr Zinchenko was overturned after a VAR review, Mahrez was deadly with his two chances and City's muchimproved defence withstood a first-half barrage.

'The first-half they were so good but we defended so well. We defend all together, helped each other," said Guardiola.

### **ARSENAL LOOK TO SET UP DATE** WITH UNITED

London, May Arsenal's appeared to be ending with a whimper when they were reduced to 10 men after falling 2-0 behind against Villarreal in last week's first leg of their Europa League semi-final. Instead, a precious away

goal gave them hope they can finish an inconsistent campaign on a high by setting up a showdown in the Polish city of Gdansk Manchester against United. Arsenal are ninth in the Premier League table and are unlikely to qualify for Europe next year via that route but winning the Europa League would give them a ticket back to the Champions League.

Mikel Arteta's side won the FA Cup last season but have failed to build on that triumph and are on course for a fifth consecutive finish outside the top four in EPL. Standing in Arsenal's way is their former boss Unai Emery, who won the trophy three years in a row from 2014 when he was in charge of Sevilla and also took Arsenal to the 2019 final.

Villarreal have never reached the final of the Champions League or Europa League. They have put out a promotional video, with the message: "Let's flip the script... It's our time."