

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | FRIDAY 21 | MAY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 33°C
Min: 29°C
Rainfall: 6%

ASTROGUIDE

Pilava: Vaikasi 7
Tithi: Navami
Star: Pooram
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
Yamagandam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.28 am
Luhar: 12.10 pm
Asar: 3.23 pm
Maghrib: 6.27 pm
Isha: 7.43 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.29 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.42 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 1.36 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 2.56 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+2,50,960)	(+3,955)
2,60,22,499	2,91,112

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+35,579) 397
TN: 17,34,804 19,131

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

16,59,54,760

DEATHS

34,38,690

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES 219

worldometers.info

Twitter starts verification process for 'blue tick'

San Francisco: Twitter will start rolling out its verification application process from Thursday after which approved user accounts can sport the 'blue verified badge'. Twitter had paused its public verification programme a few years ago. However, last year, Twitter said it would re-launch the account verification process in 2021.

Biden to sign anti-Asian hate crimes bill

Washington: United States President Joe Biden has announced that he will sign the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act on Thursday, paving the way for the legislation to stop hate crimes against Asian Americans that have occurred since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Biden announced his decision on a Twitter post, saying that 'hate has no place' in the country. 'Hate has no place in America — and I look forward to making that clear this afternoon by signing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act into law,' he tweeted.

COUNTER POINT



Our kids are having enough milk... they are using only our urine and dung!

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MAY 20

The Indian Navy on Thursday confirmed the death of 37 personnel onboard barge P305 with the recovery of their bodies. Barge P305 went adrift and sank in the Arabian Sea off Mumbai coast during Cyclone Tauktae and search operation for at least 36 missing personnel is still on. A total of 188 of the 261 onboard have already been rescued by Indian Navy and Coast Guard.

The barge sank 35 nautical miles off Mumbai as Cyclone Tauktae battered India's west coast. P305 was amongst the four barges that suffered during the cyclone. The other three were Gal Constructor and Support Station-3 -- deployed by the engineering firm Afoons for its ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Corporation) contract. "In one of the most challenging SAR Ops in the aftermath of #CycloneTauktae, 325 survivors have been rescued &

37 #BNV recovered off Mumbai & Gujarat Coasts. Vigorous SAR efforts continue for the missing crew of Barge P305 which sank off Mumbai with five IN ships, aircraft and helos deployed," the Indian Navy spokesperson tweeted on Thursday. The Navy is leading a massive, round-the-clock rescue effort that includes several of its ships, P-81 reconnaissance aircraft and Sea King helicopters, as well as Coast Guard and ONGC vessels, to detect survivors from the

sunken barge and other vessels stranded or affected by the storm. Indian Navy Commodore Ajay Jha said the Navy on Thursday morning launched a fresh aerial search and rescue mission, deploying helicopters and Naval ships through the night, to trace any movement in the dark waters to look for survivors. According to him the search operations would continue for another three days at least. The Directorate General

of Shipping had already ordered an investigation into the deaths. Now the Mumbai Police has also announced a probe into barge P305 remaining in the area despite storm warnings. An ADR (accidental death report) was registered Wednesday in connection with the deaths. On Thursday morning the Coast Guard said another missing tug -- Sangeeta, with a crew of 10 -- had been located about 10 nautical miles west of Maharashtra's Tarapur.



Indian Navy rescues 137 crew of GAL Constructor which ran aground off Mumbai. — PTI



STATE | 4

One more leader bids adieu to Kamal



WORLD | 7

EU finalizes Pfizer deal for 1.8 billion vax doses

SPORT | 8

Dravid to coach India on SL tour



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Record data on Covid-19 among youngsters: Modi

Be better prepared for future, PM tells officials

DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
NEW DELHI, MAY 20

In the backdrop of reports that a third wave of the pandemic Covid-19 could affect the youth and children more, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday directed officials to record the spread of coronavirus infection and its seriousness among the youth and children.

The Prime Minister, in his interaction with district magistrates and field officials, said there are concerns about the infection spreading among the young generation due to mutations in the virus and asked officials to analyse the statistics in their districts. They will have to be better prepared for the future, he said.

There have been reports that the virus may hit the young generation, a demography which has so far not been affected hard as the adult population with people in the older age bracket being seen more susceptible.

Cautioning that that the challenge posed by Covid-19 will remain as long it is present even at a "minor scale" in the country, Mr Modi told officials to work to ensure that people continue to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour.

The challenge remains as long as the infection is

Why Modi feels so insecure: Didi

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MAY 20

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday directly accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of barring her and other chief ministers from speaking up for their demands on Covid-19 pandemic at a virtual meeting he chaired.

This was also the first time the Trinamul Congress supreme came face to face with Mr Modi officially after her party came to power for the third consecutive time in the state by defeating the BJP in the assembly elec-

present even at a minor scale, he said.

Asking officials to analyse data separately for urban and rural regions besides those for tier 2 and 3 cities, Modi said it will help them prepare their strategy accordingly.

The officials, who interacted with Modi via video-conferencing, were from Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Puducherry,

tion.

Tearing into Mr Modi, Ms Banerjee alleged, "Ten chief ministers including me were present with some district magistrates there. We however did not allow the DMs from our state to attend it since a CM, if present, gets the priority over them. In a federal structure, though the CMs were invited, they were not allowed to speak of their public demands. They were made to sit like puppets and bonded labourers. Only the PM kept talking all through without giving us a chance even. It was just a casual and superfluous meeting." ■ P5

Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. He had spoken to a group of field officials on Tuesday too.

Speaking on the vaccination programme, the Prime Minister said suggestions from states and other stake-holders have been incorporated and added that the Union Health Ministry is informing states about the availability of jabs for 15 days in advance.

MUCORMYCOSIS IS A NOTIFIABLE DISEASE IN TN

T. SUDHEESH | DC CHENNAI, MAY 20

The state government on Thursday declared mucormycosis or black fungus infection as a notifiable disease under the Public Health Act to help halt its spread among Covid-19 patients.

Health secretary J. Radhakrishnan said the step is aimed at giving maximum attention to treatment of the infected patients. "With the disease being declared a notifiable disease, the hospital authorities are legally bound to inform the health department on the cases reported in their establishments," the health secretary said. "It will help the 10-member committee constituted to manage mucormycosis spread assess the situation effectively." ■ P2

STALIN LAUNCHES VACCINATION FOR 18-44 AGE GROUP

Tirupur, May 20: The free of cost Covid-19 inoculation drive for beneficiaries in the 18 to 44 age bracket was inaugurated here on Thursday by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin.

The vaccination exercise began at the Netaji Apparel Park here which has a 12,000 strong workforce and all eligible employees would be administered the jabs, an official release said adding Mr Stalin gave away certificates to beneficiaries.

In the first phase of vaccination for this group, Mr Stalin ordered vaccinating high-risk category people and industrial workers, the release said.

All efforts were being made to procure 3.5 crore vaccine doses through global bids and 1.5 crore under a system of allocation to states for vaccination of those under 45 years of age. — PTI

Summer surprise



Chennai was in for a summer surprise as there was a heavy spell of convective rain on Thursday evening. It was so heavy in some parts of the city that it led to water logging as on the Pallavaram flyover. — E.K. Sanjay

CM asks President to free all 7 convicts in Rajiv case

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 20

A day after sanctioning one month parole for A.G. Perarivalan, one of the seven convicts languishing in prison in connection with the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday urged President Ram Nath Kovind to release all the seven.

In a letter to the President on Thursday, Mr Stalin said Perarivalan, S. Nalini, Murugan, Santhan, Jayakumar, Robert Payas and P. Ravichandran had been "undergoing agony of imprisonment for about three decades".



Majority of the political parties had sought the remission of the remaining term in the life sentences that the seven persons were now undergoing and had wanted their immediate release, Mr Stalin said, adding that it was also the will of the people of the state. Recounting the developments in the issue, Mr Stalin explained that tho-

ugh the Tamil Nadu government had recommended the release of the seven persons to the Governor on September 9, 2018, it was not done citing the pendency of investigation by the Multi-Disciplinary Monitoring Agency (MDMA) of the CBI as the reason.

Later, despite the Centre and the CBI clarifying in the Supreme Court that there was no connection between the MDMA's probe into the Rajiv Gandhi assassination and remitting the life sentence of the convicts, the Governor referred the matter to the President, saying that he was the competent authority. ■ P2

Educate Covid orphans: Sonia

New Delhi, May 20: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide free education in Navodaya Vidyalayas to children orphaned due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In her letter, Ms Gandhi said the nation owes it to children to give them hope and provide them a robust future after their tragedy.

"I am writing to request you to consider providing free education at the Navodaya Vidyalayas to children who have lost either both parents or an earning parent on account of the Covid-19 pandemic," the Congress chief said. "I feel that as a nation, we owe it to them to give them hope for a robust future after their tragedy."

The BJP, however, took a swipe at the Congress chief, saying her idea of looking after kids orphaned during the pandemic is "outdated and copied".

"Several state governments are already doing it except perhaps those run by the Congress. Instead of writing to the PM, she should have written to Amarinder Singh and

COVID CASELOAD, ACTIVE CASES, DEATHS DROP

New Delhi, May 20: With 2,76,110 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, India's tally of Covid-19 cases climbed to 2,57,72,440 while the daily deaths were recorded below 4,000 after four days, taking the toll to 2,87,122, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday.

A total of 3,874 fatalities due to Covid-19 were registered in a span of 24 hours. The active cases have further reduced to 31,29,878, comprising 12.14 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 86.74 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed. — PTI

Ashok Gehlot, BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi shared Ms Gandhi's letter on Twitter and said it is high time the government of India listened to the suggestion. — PTI

I-T RETURNS CAN BE FILED TILL SEPTEMBER 30

New Delhi, May 20: The government on Thursday extended the due date of filing income tax returns for 2020-21 for individuals by two months till September 30. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has also extended the ITR filing deadline for companies by a month till November 30.

As per the income tax law, for individuals whose accounts are not required to be audited and who usually file their income tax return using ITR-1 or ITR-4 forms the deadline to file ITR is July 31. The deadline for taxpayers, like companies or firms, whose accounts are required to be audited is October 31. In a circular, the CBDT said an extension of time limits is being given for certain tax compliances "to provide relief to taxpayers in view of the severe pandemic". Also, the deadline for issuing Form 16 by employers to employees has been extended by a month till July 15. — PTI

PINARAYI, 20 MINISTERS TAKE OATH IN KERALA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 20: CPM veteran Pinarayi Vijayan, who led the Left Democratic Front (LDF) to an unprecedented consecutive victory in the April 6 assembly polls, was on Thursday sworn in as chief minister of Kerala for the second term.

Governor Arif Mohammed Khan administered the oath of office to Mr Vijayan and 20 of his cabinet colleagues in a low-key function at the Central Stadium here, which was held completely in adherence with the Covid protocol. — PTI

Navy confirms death of 37 on board barge; rescue ops to continue

OTHER STORIES

CM urges Prez to release Rajiv convicts from jail

From P1

The Chief Minister also recalled how the death sentence of Nalini was commuted under Article 161 of the Constitution and referred to the Supreme Court commuting the life sentences of three others.

Now that the seven persons have undergone incarceration for three decades and in the context of the courts recognising the need to decongest prisons, Mr Stalin urged the President to accept the recommendation of the state government and release all of them from jail.

State receives one lakh doses of Covishield

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 20

Tamil Nadu on Thursday received one lakh doses of Covishield. These one lakh doses of Covishield, that arrived from Mumbai in nine parcels via Indigo Airlines flight on Thursday evening at Chennai the airport is to be administered to the people to safeguard them against Covid-19.

The State government ordered more of the life-saving vaccines for the state, as the second wave of coronavirus is spreading fast, these vaccines arrived here. Health department officials received the vaccine and it was taken to the vaccine storage Centre at the DMS complex in the city.

TN gets consignment of medical oxygen from Odisha

Coimbatore, May 20: Tamil Nadu received its 10th consignment of medical oxygen on Thursday by rail from Odisha, amid the COVID-19 surge in the southern state.

An Oxygen Express train carrying 29.24 metric tonnes of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) arrived at Madukkarai Railway station near here from Rourkela in Odisha, a railway division release said.

Tamil Nadu has received 584.45 MT of oxygen, delivered through 11 trains, so far.

In its fight against the pandemic, Indian Railways helps in transporting the life saving gas to various states to provide treatment to Covid patients.

So far, the Railways has delivered nearly 12,630 MT of LMO in more than 775 tankers to different states across the country which includes Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. — PTI

Scheme to ramp up hosp infra with donations in Pondy

Puducherry, May 20: A scheme envisaging liberal contributions from philanthropists and enterprises to ramp up infrastructure in hospitals to better fight the fast spreading COVID-19 pandemic in the union territory was launched here on Thursday by Lt Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan.

The 'Uyir Kaatru' (breath of life) scheme aimed at the donors playing a pro-active role to contain the virus that would help the affected recover faster, she said.

The Lt Governor said the Union Territory was now in a 'very difficult predicament' with the spike in the number of cases and was leaving no stone unturned to check the spread.

She said private hospitals were also augmenting oxygen beds in their premises to cater to the needs of the patients.

— PTI



HR&CE minister P.K. Sekar Babu and Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner Gagandeep Singh Bedi inspect corona care centre in a school at Kolathur on Thursday.

— DC

Kanchi vegetable market temporarily shifted

P.A JEBARAJ | DC
CHENNAI, MAY 20

The bus bays and platforms at the Kanchipuram bus stand were converted into stalls for the vegetable vendors from Thursday.

The vendors, who had shopped at Kanchipuram Rajaji Market, shifted to the bus stand to ensure social distancing among sellers and customers in wake of the situation arising out of the coronavirus outbreak.

Social distancing is one

Social distancing is one of the many measures which can help people avoid catching the highly contagious virus

of the many measures which can help people avoid catching the highly contagious virus.

The district administration had taken efforts to decongest the vegetable markets in the city as a precautionary measure against the spread of

COVID-19 and allotted space at the bus stand for the vegetable traders.

According to the sources, retail selling of fruits, vegetables and flowers has been completely banned at the bus stand. Only wholesale selling of vegetables will be permitted in the Kanchipuram bus stand. The public (retail buyers) cannot visit the market in person. Kanchipuram Collector Maheshwari Ravikumar inspected the arrangement on Thursday.

Result of Covid test should be declared expeditiously: HC

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, MAY 20

The Madras high court has said every endeavour should be made by the testing centres in the state to declare the results as expeditiously as possible so that a person who is affected by the Corona virus can immediately quarantine himself if he is asymptomatic and the further spread may be arrested.

The first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthil Kumar Ramamoorthy gave the above directive in response to the complaints that some of the test results are being announced on a day-after or several days-after basis. It was also complained that if a person finds that he has tested positive four days back, he would have been a super-spreader in the interregnum.

Passing further interim orders on a suo motu proceedings and a batch of PILs, the bench said the figures furnished by both the State of Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry reveal that



despite the increased number of positive cases, the rate of increase has fallen over the last seven days or so. In addition, there has been an augmentation of facilities and, by and large, those affected by the virus were receiving some form of treatment, which could, however, be better, the bench added.

The bench said the central government has filed a report, but there was no indication of the allocation of any drugs or vaccine in the near future or of any plan which was in place. "It is hoped that a more detailed report as to a centralised plan of action to deal with the emergency would be filed by the Centre when the matter is taken up next on

May 24, 2021", the bench added.

The bench said as to the supply of oxygen, the report of the Health secretary reveals that the daily 100 MT allotment from the eastern corridor has not been delivered on a regular basis. However, there were oxygen generators and concentrators which have been pressed into service and the supply of liquid oxygen was restricted for use of patients who were in critical care. There has to be an increase in the supply of oxygen to both the State and the Union Territory. Puducherry says that its daily demand may go up to 65 MT though the supply at present was adequate and manageable. Indeed, previous orders have recoded that the State may require 800 MT of oxygen on a daily basis. It was hoped that by now the Centre would have augmented the supply of oxygen so as to ensure equitable distribution and enhanced supply to all States and Union Territories, including these two, the bench added.

The bench said the sil-

huge revenue, he said.

He said while the wholesale rate of toor dal is less than Rs 100 per kg, Christys group Rasi Nutri Foods and societies such as NACOF and Kendriya Bhandar, acting as frontals of Christy group, quoted more than Rs 143 kg in the tender opened on May 5. The difference would have resulted in a loss of almost Rs 80 to Rs 100 crores to the exchequer.

In the complaints filed on May 17 and 18, the NGO had

sought cancellation of the tender and modification of conditions of all future tenders to break the Christy cartel and action against officials.

He also claimed to have evidence of how the tender for corona relief kit for 2.11 crore ration card holders was also fixed. "We have appealed to the government to blacklist the Christy group and also file criminal cases against all those involved in the scam" he added.

Dean denies black fungus death in T'kudi hospital

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 20

The widespread news that Mucormycosis (black fungus) claimed its first casualty in the state at Kovilpatti in Thoothukudi district was denied by Dr. Revathy Balan, dean, Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital (TMCH), who said the deceased, Soundarrajan, 58, died of Covid-19.

Welder Soundarrajan of Kovilpatti, who was diagnosed positive for Covid-19, was admitted at a private hospital in Kovilpatti on May 10.

According to Soundarrajan's son Vijayaraj, his father underwent treatment at the private hospital for seven days and complained of puffy and watery eyes. Suspecting it to be Mucormycosis, Soundarrajan was referred to TMCH on May 17, where he succumbed around 2.30 am on May 20.

As the RT-PCR test result came negative for Soundarrajan a day before his death, his family members and relatives believed that Soundarrajan died of Mucormycosis, which is allegedly affecting patients who recovered from Corona.

The doctors who treated Soundarrajan at TMCH said the cause of his death was Covid and not black fungus.

TN seeks 5K anti-fungal vials from Centre

From P1

He said the state government has requested the Centre for the allocation of 5,000 vials of anti-fungal injection Amphotericin B. "With this we will be able to deal with the disease," he said.

The health secretary said there was no need to panic about the infection. "There are only nine cases identified in the state so far, out of which six cases are old and three patients are diabetic," he said. "This is not a new disease, and is curable. We have found that a lot of misinformation is doing the rounds on social media. People are requested not to believe in such fake information."

Apart from Tamil Nadu, the Telangana government also declared Black Fungus a notifiable disease under Epidemic Diseases Act 1897 on Thursday.

All government and pri-

vate health facilities shall follow the guidelines for screening, diagnosis and management of black fungus issued by the Union ministry of health and family welfare (MoHFW) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). "This fungal infection is leading to prolonged morbidity and mortality amongst Covid-19 patients," said Lav Agarwal, joint secretary, MoHFW in a letter to the states.

The treatment of this fungal infection requires a multi-disciplinary approach by a team of doctors consisting of eye surgeons, ENT specialists, general surgeon, neurosurgeon and dental maxillofacial surgeon, among others, and administration of Amphotericin-B injection as an antifungal medicine.

Dr. S. Soundari, head of medical services, Dr. Agarwal Eye Hospital,

Chennai, said mucormycosis infection affecting eyes can be treated using medicines or through surgery.

"Medical professionals treating Covid patients must avoid or reduce the use of steroid and immunomodulating drugs," she said.

Considering the strong and growing Covid-19-eye connection, people should come forward to use goggles and facial protection while following other standard Covid-19 appropriate behaviours, she said. "However, our immunity is our best defence against all infections. Hence, make no compromise on good food and sleep. Staying hydrated, exercising regularly and cultivating a stress-free mind are all important. Those with diabetic conditions need to keep an eye on their blood glucose level."



— DC



A biker and a cyclist ride in incessant rain that lashed Chennai and its surrounding areas on Thursday evening.

A water-logged Kamaraj Salai under Pallavaram flyover.

— DC

Shower pours as big relief to Chennaiites

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 20

In a big relief to residents, heavy rains lashed several parts of the city on Thursday evening.

Though it was a hot day till around 5 pm, the sky turned overcast, leading to a sudden spell of pouring for over an hour. According to the weather experts, the city, which is grappling with soaring mercury for several weeks, may experience light showers in some areas till Saturday.

The city weather stations including Nungambakkam and Meenambakkam had recorded a day temperature of around 37 degree Celsius.

Officials of the meteorological department said a brewing weather system over the North Andaman Sea as well as east-central Bay of Bengal influenced thunderstorms over the state. A low pressure likely to form by Saturday would intensify and become a cyclonic storm

Two flights delayed at Chennai airport due to bad weather

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 20

Two flights were delayed at the Chennai domestic airport on Thursday evening due to rains and thunderstorms.

Chennaiites on Thursday evening saw mild rains in several parts of the city, accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning. According to the airport sources, an Indigo airlines flight that was scheduled to depart from here to Madurai at 4: 20 pm and another 4: 45 pm Indigo flight to Bengaluru were both delayed to take off due to the bad weather condition. The flights took off an hour later, sources said. Similarly, a Chennai-bound Tuticorin flight was unable to land on time at the Chennai Airport. The aircraft that was to land by 5. 05 pm, descended here after 30 minutes. A thunderstorm is more likely to delay your take-off or landing than it is to cause turbulence at cruising altitude or cause the aircraft difficulty during its climb or descent.

by May 24 and reach the Odisha-West Bengal coast by May 26. Thursday's thunderstorm was caused due to a convective activity resulting in coastal areas and Puducherry

likely to get light rains till the weekend. Apart from Chennai, Kachirayapalayam in Kallakurichi district registered 10 cm rain during the past 24 hours.

Address vax hesitancy, ramp up vaccination



B. Vijayalakshmi

Viewpoint

With Tamil Nadu emerging as the state with the maximum number of active cases of Covid-19 in the country, it is time the government pulled out all the stops to ramp up vaccination in the

state. Health authorities are struggling to allay fears of residents and combat rumours that trigger vaccine hesitancy in the state. Fighting misinformation on vaccines continues to be a challenging task and it has

to be managed with facts and in a systematic manner, say experts.

Efforts must be made to spread awareness, sensitise residents and remove any fears regarding side-effects of the vaccine. Information blitzkrieg on vaccination will lead to course-correction in people's behaviour.

The Greater Chennai Corporation is trying numerous ways to speed up the vaccination process.

Fever surveillance workers have been visiting houses and apartments to collect data on the number of peo-

ple yet to be vaccinated.

The civic body has opened bulk vaccination registration for residents' welfare associations, big companies, NGOs and communi-

ties. Residents' welfare associations also have been working with the civic body to organise special vaccination camps in their places and help senior citizens and others above 45 years take their first/second doses.

Such special vaccination camps organised in residential areas including the suburbs, and in gated communi-

ties and apartments have evoked good response.

The move has ensured hassle-free vaccination as people don't have to worry about travelling to get vaccinated.

With vaccination for 18 years and above opened in the state, the civic body must expand vaccination drives and inoculate the maximum number of people every day.

Addressing vaccine hesitancy, ensuring steady vax supplies and speeding up vaccination will help in flattening Covid second wave curve in the state.

Chhattisgarh NYAY to Last Mile Continues

Farmers Get Agriculture Input Subsidy



Commemorating Martyrdom Day of
Former Prime Minister

Shri Rajiv Gandhi
on 21st May 2021



RAJIV GANDHI KISAN NYAY YOJANA

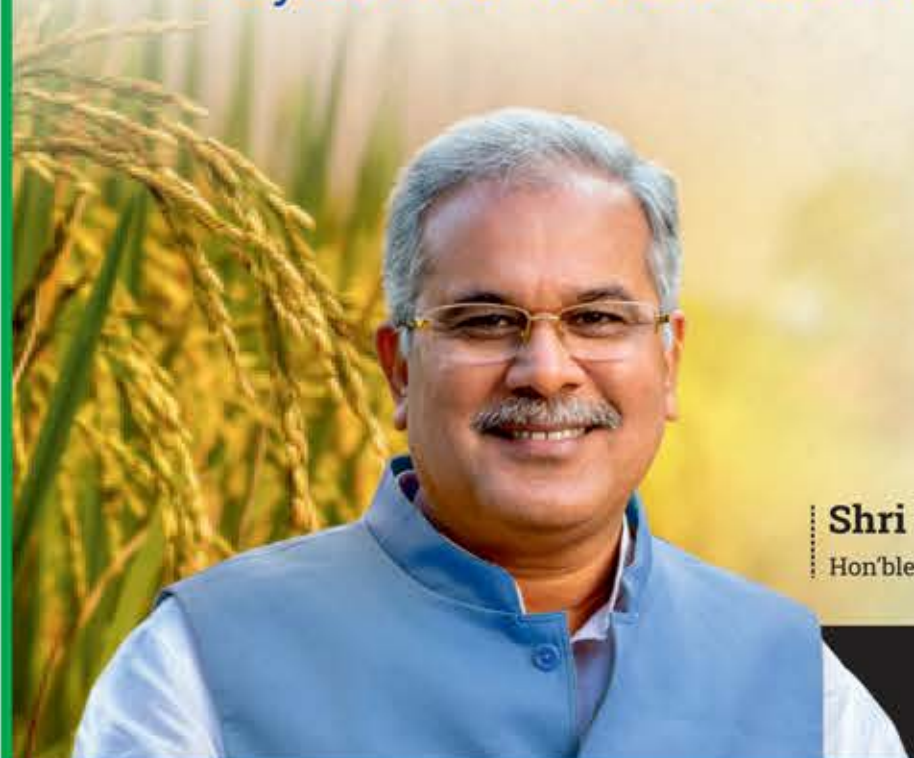
Direct Bank Transfer
of First Instalment of Input Subsidy

₹1500cr

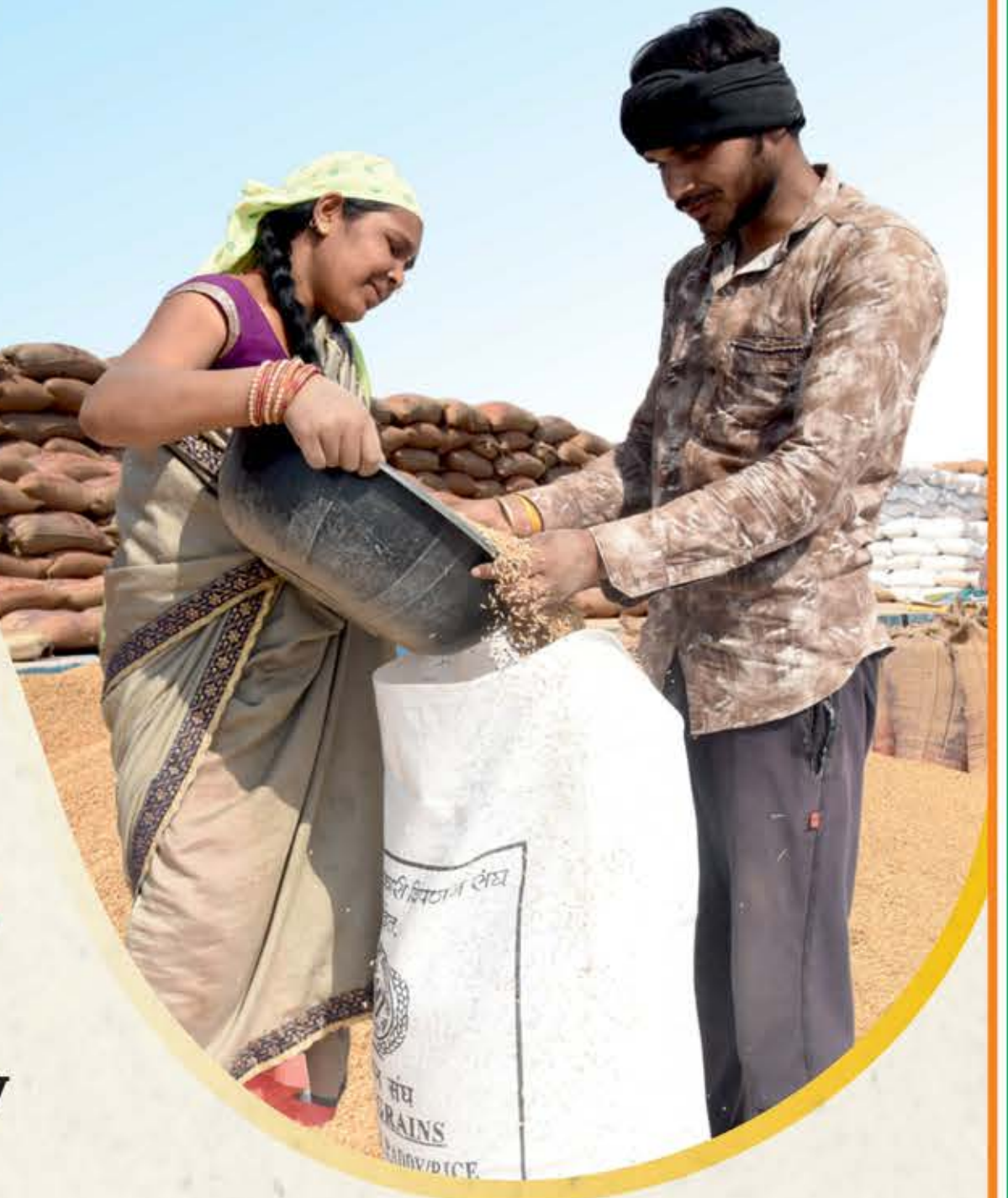
to more than 22 lakh farmers

- ❖ For Kharif year 2020-21 input subsidy of ₹9000 per acre to paddy farmers, same rate to be applicable in coming years
- ❖ Farmers selling paddy at MSP this year will receive input subsidy of ₹10000 per acre for Kharif season 2020-21 if switching crops or planting trees
- ❖ For Kharif year 2021-22, besides paddy, farmers cultivating maize, soybean, kodo, kutki and arhar will receive input subsidy of ₹9000 per acre
- ❖ Kodo-Kutki support price raised and fixed at ₹3000 per quintal

Payment of ₹5628 cr made last year



Shri Bhupesh Baghel
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh



GODHAN NYAY YOJANA

Cow Dung Monetizing Scheme

Making Cattle Rearing Economically Profitable

Payment of

₹7.17cr

(for 15th march - 15th may 2021)

to cattle owners towards
cow dung procurement

Payment of ₹88.15 cr made so far

Smt. Sonia Gandhi Ji & Shri Rahul Gandhi Ji
(Hon'ble Members of Parliament)
To Grace the Occasion through Video Conferencing



Wear
Mask



Regularly wash
your hands with soap



Maintain
Physical distancing



Get
Vaccinated



S-28774/1

Ponmudi picks flaws in varsity textbook

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, MAY 20

Is the DMK against religions? No, this is not a question raised to the electorate by one of its rival parties in the hustings but stated without ambiguity in a textbook of the Tamil Nadu Open University, which students of MA Political Science have been learning so far.

On page 144 of the textbook prescribed for first year students, a passage lists the DMK and the Communist parties as political parties that were against religions,

pointed out K. Ponmudi, minister for higher education on Thursday.

Ponmudi, who has a doctorate in political science, told the media at the Secretariat that the reference in the textbook was factually incorrect and that students should not be taught such wrong things.

Apart from that, the lesson says that the political parties convert their anti-religious views into vote banks and that they support minorities blindly. Also the lesson says that the parties turn a blind eye to problems created by Muslims.

Objecting to all these refer-

ences, the minister for higher education, under whom comes the government-run university, said departmental action would be taken against those responsible for inserting such erroneous remarks in the textbook.

The government would also find out if more such mischievous views had been incorporated in the other textbooks taught in the government universities and take appropriate action, he said. A committee would also be formed to rectify all those mistakes and also act against those responsible for the errors, he said.

One more leader bids adieu to Kamal

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 20

Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) general secretary C. K. Kumaravel resigned from the primary membership of the party on Thursday, blaming party founder Kamal Haasan for the debacle in the Assembly elections and for seeking to promote himself.

Though various candidates who contested the Assembly election as candidates of MNM quit the party one after the other in the last few days citing personal reasons, Kumaravel hit the nail on Kamal squarely putting the blame on him for the party missing an opportunity to sit in the Opposition benches of the Assembly.

Apart from the former Vice President R. Mahendran, who started the exodus from the party in the aftermath of the party's rout in the elections, and a few others, most of the leaders or candidates did not point their fingers at Kamal for their quitting the party.

Kumaravel, who left the party in 2019 to rejoin in again, however, said that the popularity of the MNM was growing in November-December, particularly after the party regained the 'Battery Torch' election symbol and actor Rajinikanth made it clear that he was not entering politics.

But Kamal blew up everything by listening to his wrong advisors who mis-

guided him and by focusing on winning a single seat.

A state secretary of MNM, S A Ponnusamy, however, blamed those trooping out by alleging that they had not joined the party mid-way to serve the people. He asked what those complaining about autocracy and self-promotion did to develop the party.

"How many villages did they visit and how many flags did they hoist?," asked Ponnusamy, who heads the milk agents association.

Kamal, on his part, was silent on the resignation and greeted Kerala Chief Minister Pinayari Vijayan for taking oath for the second time. He said he was proud of him and that he had spoken to him.



Kumki twins Sujay and Vijay. —DC

Kumki twin tuskers celebrate 50th birthday

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, MAY 20

Sujay and Vijay, the Kumki twins at the elephant camp in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR), celebrated their 50th birthday on Thursday. However, the golden jubilee birthday was a silent affair due to the pandemic.

Sujay and Vijay are the oldest surviving Kumki twins in the country. The twins are the pride of MTR as they are a rare and unique attraction in the elephant camp.

Their mother Devaki, which was a captive jumbo at the MTR long ago, delivered these twin calves on 20-5-1971 at the elephant camp. Sujay, which is almost an hour senior to Vijay, is known for its expertise in Kumki works and has served in various places, including the "Operation Malai" mission at Tiruvannamalai in 2013

which was Asia's biggest stray wild elephant capturing mission then.

Sujay and Vijay are very strong and intelligent in Kumki works that include elephant safari, jungle patrolling and anti-depredation works. They are also adept in learning commands from their mahouts and acting to perfection. Strong and brave, they used to wear capricorns and lead the jumbo parade during the elephant puja at the camp as part of Ganesh Chaturthi.

While both have shown their prowess in capturing wild rogue jumbos such as Chinnathambi, Vinayakan and Shanker in the recent past, Sujay was sent to Sadiyaval elephant camp in Coimbatore in 2015 to lend its expertise there for a couple of years. There it lost one of its tusks while fighting a wild jumbo incursion.

MLA urges NLC CMD to give jobs to kin of Covid-19 victims

DC CORRESPONDENT
CUDDALORE, MAY 20

DMK MLA Saba Rajendran has requested the public sector Neyveli Lignite Corporation of India Limited to appoint the family members of its staff who succumbed to Covid-19 as employees in NLCIL.

In a letter sent to the NLCIL chairman and managing director on Thursday, Rajendran stated, "you are aware that the second wave of Covid-19 has been causing a catas-

trophe in the county and the Tamil Nadu government under the leadership of Chief Minister M. K. Stalin has adopted several strategic actions to curb the spread of the virus".

The Neyveli MLA said "I am happy to know that the NLCIL has swung into action to safeguard the precious life of our employees from the onslaught of the dangerous virus".

"It is learnt that during this pandemic period around 20 employees from NLCIL succumbed to

Coronavirus. Due to the sudden death of the breadwinner of the family, their dependents became orphans and their future became dark", he said.

"These families require care and compassion at this crucial juncture. Hence, I request CMD to pay a reasonable amount as ex-gratia and consider providing employment opportunities to the dependents of deceased employees, as a special case," he said.

CM will decide on school education commissioner's powers: Min

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, MAY 20

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will decide on the removal of the director of school education post and the powers to be entrusted with the commissioner of school education, a newly-created post, according to school education minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi.

Mahesh Poyyamozhi, accompanied by city corporation commissioner S. Sivasubramanian, corporation chief engineer Amudhavalli and Tiruchy East MLA Inigo Irudayaraj, inspected the construction of the ₹17.37-crore

new Chinthamani city bus terminal at Tiruchy on Thursday. He told reporters that orders have been issued for early completion of phase-II construction. As many as 26 city buses will halt for three minutes and proceed through this new city bus terminal.

Newly-constructed 53 shops will be allocated to the shop owners who are running shops in the old bus terminal as per the direction of the Madras high court, he added.

Earlier, the minister inspected the government headquarters hospital at Manapparai along with district collector S.

Sivarasu and Karur MP S. Jothimani. He said 75 Covid patients are undergoing treatment there. He said the government had a "Tholai Nokku" approach to meet the third wave of Covid-19 in an effective manner by intensifying preventive measures and equipping all infrastructures.

The minister also inspected the compost yard in 36 acres at Ariyamangalam and said 1,500 tonnes of garbage are segregated there every year. This drill will be completed in 6 to 7 years. Thereafter a decision will be taken on shifting the compost yard to some other area, he added.

Domestic Violence Act highly misused, says HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 20

The Madras high court has observed, "Now-a-days, initiation of proceedings under the Domestic Violence Act, which is a self contained Code has become common. Though the object of

enactment is to protect the genuine victims of domestic violence, irrespective of genders, it is being highly misused".

Justice S.Vaidyanathan made the observation while dismissing a petition from a wife, which sought a direction to the authorities to

dispose of her representation, which sought to withhold the pensionary and other retirement benefits of her husband.

The case of the petitioner was that her husband drove her and her children out of her matrimonial home and since then, she has been

staying in her brother's house. She has filed a complaint under the provisions of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act against her husband for monetary amount, in addition to a petition for divorce and her husband has been taking all steps to dispose of

his properties so as to defeat her legal claims. Though her husband was to retire on June 30, 2020, she made a representation dated November 23, 2020 to the Assistant Director of Statistics. Since there was no response, she filed the present petition, she added.

Making the above observation, the judge said the object of the Act was that the victim lady should be enabled by law to live in the matrimonial family atmosphere in her husband/in-laws house and it was not the intention of the said enactment to

enable the lady to get snapped once and for all her relationship with her husband or the husband's family.

"Finding that there is no substance in the case of the petitioner, the petition is dismissed as devoid of merits", the judge added.

COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



Aries: Spend quality time with your beloved today. Exciting job offers are on the cards for some. Do not overpend. Think hard before investing in risky enterprises.



Taurus: Do not share secrets or secretive agreements with anyone. Do not make promises you cannot fulfill. Listen to the advice of people who have experience.



Gemini: Your love life may suffer. Present your ideas with confidence. Spend time with the person you love. You may receive some rewards from a deal of the past.



Cancer: Your logical approach to life will benefit you. If you have some potential ideas, execute them. You will be supported by family and friends in your new projects.



Leo: You will find members of the opposite gender very appealing. You will need to delegate work to able subordinates in order to complete it in due time.



Virgo: People will be drawn towards you because of your creativity and intelligence. Relationships with your clients will strengthen. You need to take out time to relax and regain your energy.

You share your b'day with

Mohanlal Viswanathan is an Indian actor, Producer, Playback singer, Television host and Distributor who predominantly works in Malayalam cinema.



Libra: You should try to meet people who will help you improve your career goals. Your hard hour will bring you outstanding gains in the long run.



Scorpio: Rest, proper diet and a little exercise will be important for you to regain your strength and spirits. Speak in your defense if others try to suppress you.



Sagittarius: You should focus on domestic issues and think about the immediate needs of your family members. You will learn some new skills from your friends today.



Capricorn: Some memories or unresolved issues will come to the surface bringing you lot of tension and stress. You must deal with these problems with proper advice and seek help if needed.



Aquarius: You will be eager to talk about your plans with others. Your ideas will appeal to a majority of the people. Many will treat you with respect and some of them will want you to lead them.



Pisces: You will find it difficult to concentrate on your job or get favors from others. Stay focused on your goals to reap professional benefits. Practice yoga for mental as well as physical gains.



bridge

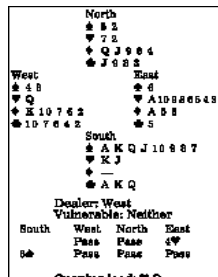
PHILLIP ALDER

PLAY THE CARD KNOWN TO BE HELD

We have been studying declarer's problems at trick one. Another critical factor is playing the right card. The simplest rule to remember is for declarer to win - or try to win - a trick in his hand with the top of touching cards. The most common exception occurs in a no-trump contract when declarer has the ace-king in hand; then, he should win trick one with the king.

This deal features another

example of playing the right card. Against South's six-spade contract, West leads the heart queen: two, ace, ...? What should declarer do? The bidding was short and spectacular. After two passes, East decided that it was unlikely his side had a slam. So, in the hope of silencing the opponents, he opened four hearts. South, though, had one of the strongest hands ever. Seeing 12 tricks, he jumped to six spades. (As a side issue,

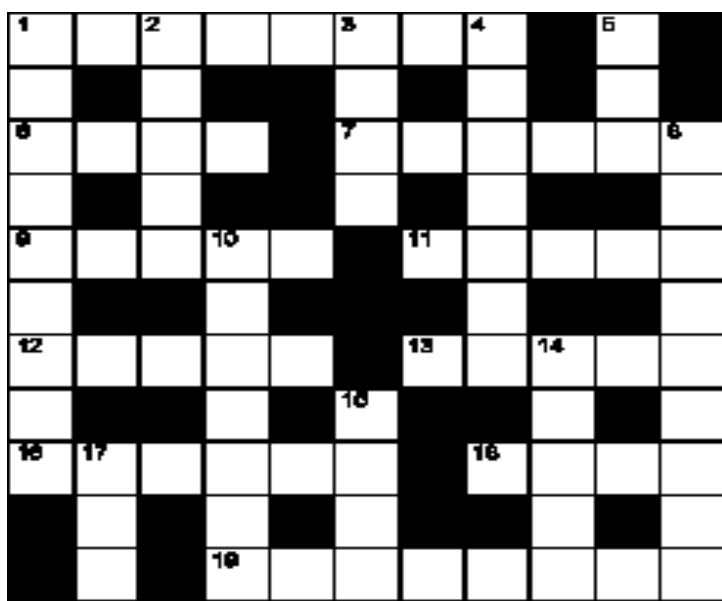


note that most tournament players do not treat a four-no-trump overall as Blackwood, asking for aces. The bid shows a big minor two-suiter, a version of the Unusual No-trump.) The secret is to play the card you are known to hold. Here, if West had the king and queen of hearts, he would have led the king, the top of touching honors. So, East knows that South started with the heart king. He must play that card immediately, with no hesita-

tion. Now East might try to cash the diamond ace. He shouldn't, because presumably South wouldn't have jumped to six off two cashing aces. However, he might. But if declarer plays the heart jack at trick one, even a sporadic East will find the right return of a heart.

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QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

- Benumbed (8)
- Submerge (4)
- Inlaid design (6)
- Dark (5)
- Creature (5)
- Form (5)
- Reinforcing bar (5)
- Walk idly, slowly (6)
- Strong sexual desire (4)
- Refuses to comply (8)

Down

- Used birds (anag) (9)
- Quash (5)
- Give a title (4)
- Lineage (7)
- Garland (3)
- Ponders deeply (9)
- Hindered (7)
- Stir into action (5)
- Tidings (4)
- Astern (3)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 6. Chronicles, 8. Awash, 10. Lunge, 13. Complicated, 14. Tokyo, 17. Pecan, 19. Consistent.

Down: 1. Whoa, 2. Moth, 3. Mill, 4. Plan, 5. Ascending, 7. Narcotics, 9. Sloop, 11. Usage, 12. Fix, 15. Kind, 16. Omit, 17. Putt, 18. Cane.

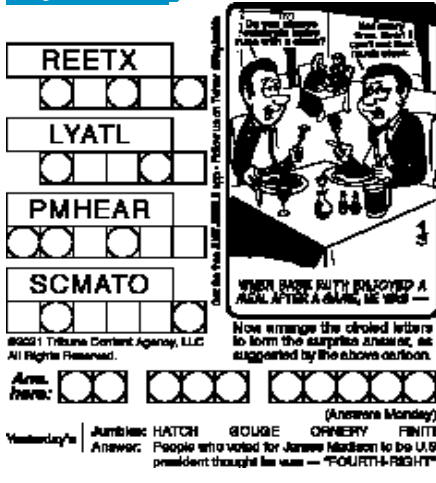
Word Mine

H
N
A
R
O
G
C
E
A

TODAY'S RATINGS: 20 AVERAGE: 22
GOOD: 24 OUTSTANDING

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 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, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

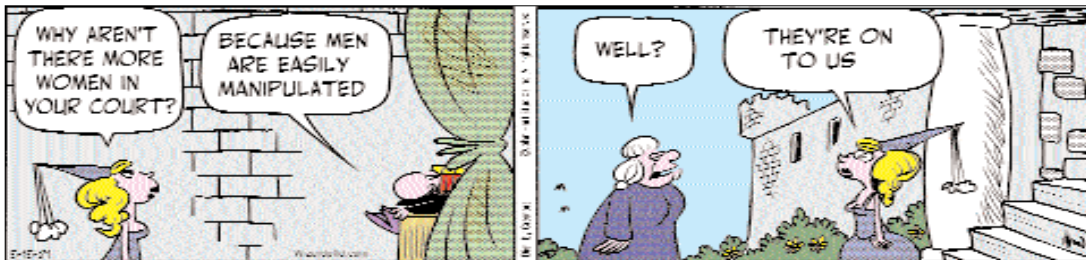
jumble



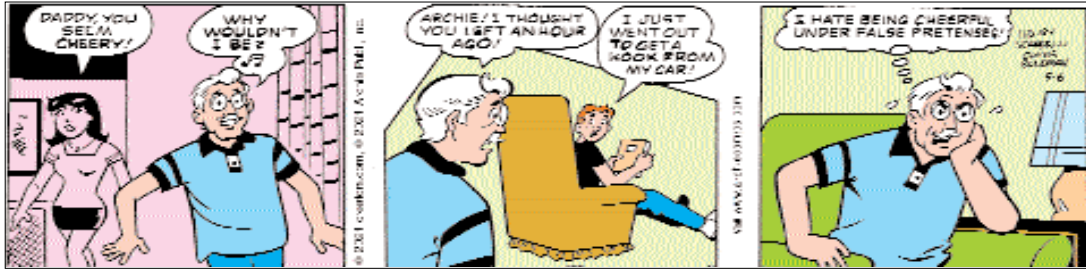
CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



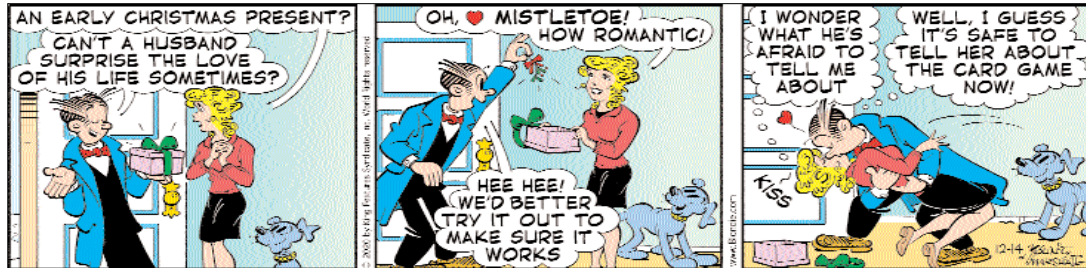
THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



SHORT TAKES

POLICE THRASH WOMAN FOR NOT WEARING MASK

Sagar, May 20: A woman was allegedly beaten up and dragged by some police personnel on a road for not wearing a mask while going out to buy vegetables amid the Covid-19 pandemic in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district.

After a video of the incident, which took place on Monday in Rahli town, went viral, a police official said the woman allegedly hit a female cop first.

The woman and her daughter were stopped by police around 11 am on Monday for not wearing masks.

The police tried to take them away in a jeep to an open jail as punishment, but the duo resisted and allegedly hit a police-woman.

In the video, some police personnel, including a female cop, were seen beating up the woman, pushing her down and dragging her by her hair.

They were trying to shift her in the police jeep while she was resisting it and in the process, they thrashed her.

However, Rahli's sub-divisional officer of police Kamal Singh said the "video showed only half of the incident".

"The woman hit a female cop first and the latter had bruises on her face of an injury caused by nails," he said.

ONE DETAINED FOR REMDESIVIR BLACK MARKETING

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MAY 20

Driver of spouse of a minister in the Shivraj Singh Chouhan was on Thursday detained in Indore for interrogation in connection with the alleged black marketing of life saving drug Remdesivir.

Govind Singh Rajput, driver of wife of state irrigation minister Tulsi Silawat was picked up by police in Indore for interrogation after Punit Agrawal, driver of a local government doctor, dragged him in the case.

Govind was, however, let off after interrogation.

"Govind denied his role in the black marketing of the life saving injection. The driver said he had procured two Remdesivir injections from Punit after he tested positive for coronavirus.

"He, however, did not use the injections since he had recovered from Covid-19 and returned the two injections to Punit", a senior police officer of Indore told this newspaper unwilling to be quoted in the interest of investigation in the case. "We may call him again for interrogation if needed", he indicated. Earlier on Monday, Punit, driver of local government doctor Poornima Gadhia, was 'caught red handed' by police while selling Remdesivir injections at inflated prices in Indore.

Interestingly, Punit told the reporters in Indore while being produced in the local court on Tuesday that he had procured Remdesivir injections from Govind.

SONIA URGES MODI TO HELP OUT COVID ORPHANS

New Delhi, May 20: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide free education in Navodaya Vidyalayas to children orphaned due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In her letter, Sonia Gandhi said the nation owes it to children to give them hope and provide them a robust future after their tragedy.

"I am writing to request you to consider providing free education at the Navodaya Vidyalayas to children who have lost either both parents or an earning parent on account of the Covid-19 pandemic," the Congress chief said.

"I feel that as a nation, we owe it to them to give them hope for a robust future after the unimaginable tragedy that has befallen them," Sonia Gandhi said.

The BJP, however, took a swipe at the Congress chief, saying her idea of looking after kids orphaned during the pandemic is "outdated and copied".

"Several state governments are already doing it except perhaps those run by the Congress. Instead of writing to the PM, she should have written to Amarinder Singh and Ashok Gehlot," BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi shared the letter on Twitter.



Mass cremation of Covid-19 victims at a crematorium set up on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Thursday.

—PTI

Vaccine will be available for all by December: Nadda

India conducts 20.55 lakh Covid-19 tests in single day

Jaipur, May 19: BJP president J P Nadda said on Wednesday the coronavirus vaccine will be available for all in the country by December.

He also accused the Congress of spreading anarchy at the time of the pandemic.

Nadda was reviewing the COVID-19 situation in Rajasthan in a virtual interaction with BJP state president Satish Poonia and party MPs from the state, a party statement said.

Nadda said the prime minister had warned the chief ministers of the states in March itself and asked them to be prepared for the second wave of coronavirus.

"India developed two indigenous vaccines for the first time in just nine months, which have been administered to 18 crore Indians so far. By the end of December, the vaccine will be available to all and its calendar has been set," he said.

Nadda said the Modi government at the Center has ensured the availability and supply of oxygen and medicines to all the states.

He said that real face of the Congress has been exposed after revelation of its tool kit.

Even at the time of the pandemic, the Congress is trying to spread anarchy in the country and is working to destroy the morale of the people by spreading

confusion among them, he alleged.

Besides Poonia, Union ministers Arjunram Meghwal, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Kailash Chaudhary, MPs P P Chaudhary, Narendra Kumar, Manoj Rajoria, Jaskaur Meena, Swami Sumedhanand and Ranjita Koli joined the meeting.

More than 20.55 lakh COVID-19 tests were conducted in a span of 24 hours, the highest-ever conducted in a single day in India, while the daily positivity rate stands at 13.44 per cent, the Union Health Ministry said on Thursday.

Cumulatively, 20,55,010 tests were conducted on Wednesday in the country.

India's daily COVID-19 recoveries outnumbered the daily new cases for the seventh consecutive day. A total of 3,69,077 patients recuperated in a span of 24 hours as against 2,76,110 infections being reported during the same period, the ministry said.

India's cumulative recoveries have reached 2,23,55,440. Besides India recorded less than 3 lakh new cases for four consecutive days now.

Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana reported 77.17 per cent of the 2,76,110 new cases registered in a span of 24 hours.

Tamil Nadu has reported the highest daily new cases at 34,875, followed by Karnataka with 34,281 new cases.

The ministry said India's total active cases have decreased to 31,29,878 with a decline of 96,341 cases being registered in the total active caseload in a day. It now comprises 12.14 per cent of the country's total cases.

Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh cumulatively account for 69.23 per cent of India's total active cases. The National Mortality Rate currently stands at 1.11 per cent, the ministry said.

—PTI

Pofma against Kejriwal: India mum on Singapore media reports

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 20

New Delhi on Thursday evening refused to react to media reports that quoted Singapore's High Commissioner to India Simon Wong as saying that his country reserves the right to invoke its anti-misinformation law POFMA (Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act) against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for his recent

comments that had alleged there was a Singapore variant of the Covid virus and that flights from Singapore to India should be stopped. Asked about the Singapore High Commissioner's comment, MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said his ministry "does not have anything to add" other than the statements already issued by the MEA earlier on Wednesday on the entire controversy.

Indian media reports

quoted Mr. Wong as saying, "Prominent political office holders must have a responsibility not to propagate falsehoods. ... In Singapore, we have Protection from Online Falsehoods & Manipulation Act (POFMA). It is meant to mitigate the spread of misinformation, so we reserve the right to invoke POFMA on some of the comments and assertions made by the honorable chief minister on this topic".

Singapore had on

Wednesday summoned India's High Commissioner there and lodged a strong protest against a recent tweet by the Delhi Chief Minister that claimed there was a Singapore variant of the Coronavirus that was harmful to children, following which the Indian High Commissioner promptly told Singapore authorities that the Delhi Chief Minister had "no competence to pronounce on Covid variants or civil aviation policy".

Navy confirms death of 37 onboard barge

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MAY 20

The Indian Navy on Thursday confirmed the death of 37 personnel onboard barge P305 with the recovery of their bodies. Barge P305 went adrift and sank in the Arabian Sea off Mumbai coast during Cyclone Tauktae and search operation for at least 36 missing personnel is still on. A total of 188 of the 261 onboard have already been rescued by Indian Navy and Coast Guard.

The barge sank 35 nautical miles off Mumbai as Cyclone Tauktae battered India's west coast. P305 was amongst the four barges that suffered during the cyclone.

Abducted ONGC employee to be released by Ulfa-I

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, MAY 20

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said that if Ulfa-I chief Paresh Baruah comes out with a formal proposal for peace talks, he was confident that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah would reciprocate it positively.

From P1

She claimed, "We were astonished at the bulldozing of the federal structure by an arrogant PM as if martial law has been imposed in the country. We felt insulted and humiliated. It happened one way. I think all the non-BJP ruled states should form a team to lodge a protest against the BJP at the Centre."

The TMC chief wondered, "Why is the PM feeling so insecure and scared? Why is he fleeing away? In his speech, he



claimed that Covid-19 deaths are decreasing. Then why are so many deaths there? Why are

bodies being thrown away in the river? Namami Gange has now become Mrityupuri Gange."

Ms Banerjee also pointed out that her demand for the dispatch of three crore vaccines was not met by the Centre. According to her, even if she gets the doses now, her government would complete the drive in the next three months.

Ms Banerjee later wrote a letter to Mr Modi to send more vaccines to the state for the central government employees working on essential services.

FIGHTING | COVID

'People should follow Covid protocols'

3rd wave possible if vaccination drive not ramped up: Scientist

New Delhi, May 20: If the vaccination drive against coronavirus is not ramped up and COVID-19 appropriate-behaviour is not maintained, there is a possibility of a third wave of the pandemic in 6-8 months, said M Vidyasagar, a scientist involved in the

Sutra Model which uses mathematics to project the trajectory of COVID-19.

He, however, stressed the Sutra Model has not predicted any third wave and it is working on it.

The Indian Institutes of Technology-Hyderabad professor cited a paper by

Italian researchers on infected people with decreasing antibodies, which give some sort of immunity, in six months.

"If the antibodies are lost, then there is a chance of immunity going down. In this case, vaccination has to be ramped up and COVID-19

appropriate-behaviour must be practiced. If not then there is a possibility of a third wave in 6-8 months," Vidyasagar said.

"We are also adding the aspects of immunity and vaccination in our model for our future forecasts," he added.

—PTI

NDRF to set up unit to deal with pandemics

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 20

Learning from the experience of the devastation caused by Corona, Home Ministry plans to set up a highly specialised Division within the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to deal "exclusively with pandemics."

As of now the mandate given to NDRF allows it to deal with all "natural and manmade disasters" like cyclone, floods, earthquake, chemical or gas leakage, building collapse etc. The NDRF is a highly specialised force and has been fully trained and equipped to deal with such disasters.

But now the Home Ministry is planning to set up a high specialised unit within the NDRF which will also deal with pandemics like Corona or other diseases. This will not only allow NDRF to have specialised medical teams but also the necessary infrastructure to set up health facilities at a short notice.

Home Ministry sources said they were examining the proposal right now and looking into the legality whether it will have to approach the Union cabinet for the sanction or the new Division can be set up through an executive order itself.

Senior officials said the devastation caused by Corona's second wave

has also been a huge learning curve for Central agencies. Shortage of oxygen, critical medicine, ventilator and hospital beds had led to a massive health crisis across the country as Corona cases registered a massive surge during the second wave.

So what the Home Ministry now plans is to put in place what's is being described as a "modern and professional unit" that can deal with all health related pandemic in future.

Even now both central para-military forces and defence forces had worked over time in setting up temporary hospitals and health car facilities, transporting oxygen and other essential items. But now the government proposes to have a dedicated agency which will anticipate, prepare and provide all necessary assistance during the such health crisis.

Senior Ministry officials argued that NDRF is an extremely competent agency with tremendous experience of dealing with natural or man-made disasters. Now with additional resources in terms manpower and equipment, the Force will be able to handle these health crisis now and Home Ministry has started working in that direction, officials said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY INVITATION OF TENDERS THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEM				
Tender Notice No. Anti cancer medicine			Date: 19.05.2021	
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items :-				
S.No	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	82211026A	Inj. Pertuzumab 420 mg	40 Nos	08.06.2021
02	82212397B	Inj. Denosumab 120mg	243 Nos	08.06.2021
03	83211140	Inj. TDM-1 100 mg	69 Nos	08.06.2021
04	82211027	Inj. Cetuximab 100 mg	530 Nos	08.06.2021
NOTE -1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.				
				1067/21
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE				
Indian Ports Association (IPA) 1ST Floor NBCC Place, South Tower, BP. Marg, Lodi Road, New Delhi-110003 Tel. No. 0091-011-24369061/63, 24368334 Recruitment Dated: 20.05.2021 IPA on behalf of Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways invites applications for the post of Managing Director in India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) Eligibility criteria and other conditions may be seen on IPA website http://www.ipa.nic.in under the head What's New/Ports/Other Organization Advertisement/IPGL. Last date of receipt of application is 15 days from date of publications of advertisement (Including date of the advertisement) <div style="text-align: right;">sd/- Chief Administrative Officer</div> Davp:37203/11/0001/2122				

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE								
Sr. DEN-HQ/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date- 15.06.2021 up to 15.00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. In place of Earnest money deposit, "Bid Security Declaration" is to be submitted or prescribed format as available in document section on the portal.								
Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System						
Open	Works	Single Bid System						
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time						
19.05.2021	01.06.2021	15.06.2021/15:00 Hrs						
S.No	Tender No.	Details of Tender						
1	20-2021-22-ADEN-1-FZR	Ordinary repair & maintenance as well as new works, additions & alterations to existing structures and emergent works in Zone no 1 (2021-22) all Service Buildings and Staff Quarters, level crossing, bridges etc. from BTTI (excluding) to FZR (excluding) on BTTI-FZR section and from KKP (including) FKA (excluding) on KKP-FKA section in the section of SSE/W/KKP under ADEN-I/FZR.						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Advertised Value (Rs.)</th> <th>Validity of Offer</th> <th>Period of Completion</th> </tr> <tr> <td>2,00,27,417.67/-</td> <td>45 Days</td> <td>12 Months</td> </tr> </table>	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion	2,00,27,417.67/-	45 Days	12 Months
Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion						
2,00,27,417.67/-	45 Days	12 Months						
		Similar nature of work - Any civil work other than track work.						
2	21-2021-22-ADEN-1-FZR	Ordinary repair & maintenance as well as new works, additions & alterations to existing structures and emergent works in Zone no 2 (2021-22) all Service Buildings and Staff Quarters, level crossing, bridges etc. from Talwandi (including) to Firozpur (including) on LDH-FZR section in the section of SSE/W/FZR under ADEN-I/FZR.						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Advertised Value (Rs.)</th> <th>Validity of Offer</th> <th>Period of Completion</th> </tr> <tr> <td>3,00,44,455.59/-</td> <td>45 Days</td> <td>12 Months</td> </tr> </table>	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion	3,00,44,455.59/-	45 Days	12 Months
Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion						
3,00,44,455.59/-	45 Days	12 Months						
		Similar nature of work - Any civil work other than track work.						
3	22-2021-22-ADEN-1-FZR	Ordinary repair & maintenance as well as new works, additions & alterations to existing structures and emergent works in Zone no 3 (2021-22) all Service Buildings and Staff Quarters, level crossing, bridges etc. from LDH (excluding) to Talwandi (excluding) on LDH-FZR section in the section of SSE/W/JGN under ADEN-I/FZR.						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Advertised Value (Rs.)</th> <th>Validity of Offer</th> <th>Period of Completion</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1,00,08,500.34/-</td> <td>45 Days</td> <td>12 Months</td> </tr> </table>	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion	1,00,08,500.34/-	45 Days	12 Months
Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion						
1,00,08,500.34/-	45 Days	12 Months						
		Similar nature of work - Any civil work other than track work.						
4	23-2021-22-ADEN-2-PTK	Ordinary repair & maintenance as well as new works, additions & alterations to existing structures and emergent works in Zone no 1 (2021-22) all Service Buildings and Staff Quarters from Dina nagar (including) to Verka (excluding) on ASR-PTK section and Batala-Qadian section in the section of SSE/W/BAT under ADEN-I/PTK.						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Advertised Value (Rs.)</th> <th>Validity of Offer</th> <th>Period of Completion</th> </tr> <tr> <td>80,07,843.41/-</td> <td>45 Days</td> <td>12 Months</td> </tr> </table>	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion	80,07,843.41/-	45 Days	12 Months
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Note 1:- Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender. Tender Notice No.- 770-W/169/WR/1/FZR/20.21,22 & 23/2021-22/DRM/FZR Date: 19.05.2021								
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE								

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	49,564.86	-0.68
Nifty 50	14,906.00	-0.83
S&P 500*	4,161.83	1.12
Dollar (₹)	73.10	0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.23	0.39
Euro (₹)	89.09	0.28
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,994.237	0.49
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	65.37	-1.94
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.968	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.642	-0.041

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Bosch Q4 net jumps six-fold to ₹482 crore

Auto component major Bosch posted a six-fold increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 482 crore for the fourth quarter, from Rs 81 crore a year ago, driven by robust sales. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 3,218 crore from Rs 2,237 crore. For FY21, Bosch reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 481 crore against Rs 650 crore in 2019-20. Revenue from operations stood at Rs 9,716 crore as compared with Rs 9,842 crore in FY20.

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₹250 kit to give result in 15 minutes Covid home test kit to hit market next week

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, MAY 20

A Pune-based research laboratory's indigenously developed self-use rapid antigen test (RAT) kit called CoviSelf, which enables Covid-19 test at home for as little as Rs 250, would be available across pharmacies from next week.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the nodal body in the fight against the tricky virus, on Wednesday officially approved the test kit, India's first such.

"This test at home will take just two minutes and results will be available in 15 minutes flat," Sujeet Jain, director at Mylab Discovery Solutions, told Financial Chronicle.

"The CoviSelf test kit will be priced Rs 250 inclusive of 'taxes,' Jain said, adding that the firm was ready to produce 10 lakh test kits every day and the production would be ramped up to 15 lakh units daily within 15 days.

He said the kits would be available by the end of next week in more than seven lakh pharmacies and the company's online pharmacy partners across India.

"After meeting the needs of our country, we will also export the kits," he said, adding that about 40 scientists and technicians had worked on the project for about five-six months top develop the kit.

Jain said the firm had spent over Rs 150 crore on the product in capex and on operating expenses.



"This test is for self-use. If you test positive via this there is no need for RT-PCR test, as per ICMR. Any adult can use this kit by reading our manual," he explained.

The kit has been designed in a way that it is extremely simple to use and it is not a biohazard. There is a disposal bag that comes along for safely disposing off the items after use.

Meanwhile, the ICMR said only symptomatic individuals and immediate contacts of people who have tested positive in laboratory-conducted tests should use this kit. "Indiscriminate testing is not advised," the top medical body said while issuing detailed guidelines on the kit's use.

"All symptomatic individuals who test negative by RAT should get themselves immediately tested by RT-PCR," the ICMR said.

The testing will be monitored using Mylab's mobile phone application, through which users are

advised to click a picture of the test strip after completing the test procedure.

"This easy-to-use test combines with Myab's AI-powered mobile app so that a user can know his/her positive status, submit the result to ICMR directly for traceability, and know what to do next in either case of result," Jain said.

Data transmitted by the phone will be centrally captured in a secure server that is connected to the ICMR's Covid-19 testing portal, where all data will be eventually stored.

Experts say these home-based tests are useful when a runaway infection pattern is observed.

"These tests are used in developed countries such as US and UK. Since these tests have high specificity, it can be used at places where positivity rate is high so as to be able to detect cases early. Positive cases through RAT are mostly true positives," Dr G.C. Khilnani, former head, pulmonology department at AIIMS, Delhi, said.

BANKS MAY SHIFT ABOUT 80 LARGE NPA A/Cs TO NARCL

New Delhi, May 20: Banks are likely to transfer about 80 large NPA accounts for resolution to the National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL), expected to be operational soon.

NARCL is the name coined for the bad bank announced in the Budget 2021-22. A bad bank refers to a financial institution that takes over the bad assets of lenders and undertakes resolution.

The size of each of these NPA accounts is over Rs 500 crore and the banks have identified about 70-80 such accounts to be transferred to the proposed bad bank, sources said. NPAs of over Rs 2 lakh crore could move out of the books of the banks to the bad bank.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Budget 2021-22 announced that the high level of provisioning by public sector banks of their stressed assets calls for measures to clean up the bank books. — PTI

Gold to gain from crypto fall, dollar weakness

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 20

The fall in the value of cryptocurrencies and a subdued dollar index will be supportive of gold. Once the speculative money starts moving from cryptocurrencies to gold, the yellow metal prices are likely to touch fresh highs.

"Cryptocurrency is neither a currency nor an asset class. But we have seen enormous amounts of speculative money going into them in the past one year as Bitcoin value moved up from \$8,000 to \$60,000 levels. Single day drop of 40 per cent has made investors realise that cryptocurrency movement has been just speculation," said Ajay Kedia, MD, Kedia Commodities.

According to him, the movement of speculative money into cryptocurrencies had led to slug-



gishness in gold in the past few months despite strong fundamentals. However, now the trend shall see a reversal and this has been evident from the gold price movement in the past few sessions.

"Gold prices in the international markets have gained by around 11 per cent while on the MCX futures it has gained by around 10 per cent between March 8 and May 19," said Prathamesh Mallya, AVP-research, non-agri-

commodities and currencies, Angel Broking.

Analysts at JPMorgan Chase too have found that large institutional investors are dumping bitcoin in favour of gold. The bank in January had predicted that bitcoin could conceivably become an alternative to gold, hitting \$146,000 in the long term.

The fall in the value of the dollar in recent weeks also increased optimism in gold prices. The dollar index on May 19 came down to 89, lowest level in a year.

Mallya expects gold prices to move higher towards Rs 51,000 per 10 gm mark in a month. According to Kedia, it will take at least a month's time for the speculative money to move into gold. Once this happens, international prices can move towards \$2,100 per ounce in a couple of months.

FY21 ITR filing deadline extended till Sept. 30

New Delhi, May 20: The government on Thursday extended the due date of filing income tax returns for 2020-21 for individuals by two months till September 30.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has also extended the ITR filing deadline for companies by a month till November 30.

As per the income tax law, for individuals whose accounts are not required to be audited and who usually file their income tax

return using ITR-1 or ITR-4 forms the deadline to file ITR is July 31. The deadline for taxpayers, like companies or firms, whose accounts are required to be audited is October 31.

In a circular, the CBDT said an extension of time limits is being given for certain tax compliances "to provide relief to taxpayers in view of the severe pandemic".

Also, the deadline for issuing Form 16 by employers to employees has been

extended by a month till July 15, 2021, the CBDT said.

The due date for filing the tax audit report and transfer pricing certificate has been extended by a month till October 31 and November 30, respectively. For filing belated or revised return of income, the due date is now January 31, 2022.

Besides, the deadline for financial institutions to furnish the Statement of Financial Transaction

(SFT) report has been extended till June 30, from May 31, 2021.

Also, the Income Tax Department is expected to launch a new e-filing web portal for taxpayers, which they use to file routine ITRs and perform other tax-related works, early next month, officials said.

The existing web portal will be shut for six days between June 1 and 6. The officials said the new portal will be made more user-friendly. — PTI

WORLD

SHORT TAKES BANDITS KILL 11 IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Kano, May 20: Gunmen on Wednesday killed 11 people in two attacks in Nigeria's Kaduna state, the government said, in the latest violence in an area wracked by cattle rustlings and kidnapping.

In the first attack early Wednesday, the gunmen known locally as bandits, invaded Ungwan Gaida village in Chikun district, killing eight people, said state internal security commissioner Samuel Aruwan.

"Eight residents have been confirmed killed in this attack", his statement said, adding that a church and "several houses" were burnt.

Aruwan said on the same day three herders were killed by bandits who attacked Marra-ban Jos village.

KEY ARREST IN BID TO ASSASSINATE MALDIVES EX-PREZ

Male, May 20: Police arrested a key suspect in the attempted assassination of Maldives ex-president Mohamed Nasheed, officials said Thursday as the well-known climate change campaigner recovered in a German hospital.

The unidentified man, reportedly a known Islamist extremist and the fourth person to be arrested, parked the motorcycle rigged with a bomb that exploded in Male on May 6, police sources said.

Nasheed, 54, who famously held an underwater cabinet meeting to highlight the dangers of rising sea levels for his low-lying nation, was flown to Germany last week following 16 hours of emergency surgery.

A ball bearing in the bomb missed his heart by a centimetre (0.4 inches), and shrapnel was removed from his lungs, liver and limbs. He now appears to be on the mend, posting photos on social media of himself walking outside the medical facility in Germany and tucking into a Sri Lankan meal sent by Colombo's envoy in Berlin. There has been no claim of responsibility for the attack, but his Maldivian Democratic Party has said religious extremists and political interests could be involved.

Vaccines stop variants but overseas travel unsafe: WHO

Agency's Europe director: Pockets of increasing transmission can spread

Copenhagen, May 20: Progress against the Coronavirus pandemic remains "fragile" and international travel should be avoided, a World Health Organisation director warned Thursday, while stressing that authorised vaccines work against all variants of concern.

"Right now, in the face of a continued threat and new uncertainty, we need to continue to exercise caution, and rethink or avoid international travel," WHO's European director Hans Kluge said, before adding that "pockets of increasing transmission" on the continent could quickly spread.

The so-called Indian variant, which might be more transmissible, has now been identified in at least 26 of the 53 countries in the WHO Europe region, Kluge said during his weekly press conference. But he said that authorised vaccines are effective against the new strain.

"All Covid-19 virus variants that have emerged so far do respond to the available, approved vaccines," Kluge said, adding that all Covid-19 variants can be controlled with the same public health and social measures used until now.

In the WHO's Europe region, which covers part of central Asia, the weekly number of new cases fell by 60 per cent in a month, from 1.7 million in mid-April to 685,000 last week. — AFP

Nurse who cared for Boris quits, criticises UK govt

London, May 20: A nurse who cared for UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson in intensive care when he contracted Covid-19 has resigned, criticising the government's handling of the deadly pandemic and saying that nurses were not getting the "respect" and "pay" they deserve.

Jenny McGee, originally from New Zealand, said the pandemic that has claimed over 120,000 lives in the UK, has proved the toughest year in her career. "We have put ourselves

on the line and we have worked so incredibly hard, and there's a lot of talk about how we're all heroes and all that sort of stuff. But at the same time, I'm just not sure if I can do it. I don't know how much more I've got to give to the NHS (National Health Service)," she said in a Channel 4 documentary titled 'The Year Britain Stopped'.

"We're not getting the respect and pay that we deserve. I'm just sick of it. So I've handed in my resi-

gnation," She was quoted as saying in the BBC programme. The government has proposed 1 per cent pay rise for NHS staff this year. McGee also told the programme, which will be broadcast on May 24, that "a lot of nurses" felt the government "hadn't led very effectively" and that there had been "indecision" and "so many mixed messages". The infection has so far infected 4,468,366 people and claimed 127,956 lives in the UK. — PTI

EU finalizes Pfizer deal for 1.8 billion vax doses

Brussels, May 20: The European Union's executive arm on Thursday finalised a third vaccine contract with Pfizer and BioNTech through 2023 for an additional 1.8 billion doses of their CovidD-19 shot.

The European commission said the deal, which was agreed on behalf of all 27 EU countries earlier this month, will allow the buying of 900 million doses of the current shots

and of a serum adapted to the virus variants, with an option to purchase an extra 900 million shots.

The signature of the agreement comes less than a week before a court hearing in Brussels pitting the Commission against the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, which is accused by the EU of failing to deliver the promised number of doses of its own vaccine.

The Commission said that the deal with Pfizer-BioNTech stipulates that the production of doses must be based in the EU and that essential components are sourced from the region. "From the start of the supply in 2022, the delivery to the EU is guaranteed," the EU said. AstraZeneca's contract with the EU foresaw an initial 300 million doses. — AP

bars for severe back pain and numbness in his limbs. He ended the protest on April 23 after receiving treatment at a civilian hospital.

His last public appearance was by video link in court during an appeal hearing at the end of April, where he appeared

Seven beheaded in Guatemala prison clashes

Guatemala City, May 20: At least seven inmates were killed, most of them beheaded, in clashes between rival gangs at a prison in western Guatemala on Wednesday, officials said.

Hundreds of police have been deployed to restore order at the Candel prison, which houses inmates from both the Mara Salvatrucha gang and their sworn enemies, the Barrio 18.

"Preliminarily, the death of seven inmates is known," the Ministry of the Interior (Interior) said in a statement, describing the situation as a "riot".

The figure was confirmed by the Prosecutor's Office, whose staff managed to gain access to the prison, located 205 kilometres (125 miles) west of the capital.

A spokesman for the National Civil Police, Jorge Aguilar, earlier said that the violence was caused by a confrontation between two gangs, and that at least six prisoners had been beheaded. Authorities suspect one of

● HUNDREDS OF police have been deployed to restore order at the Candel prison, which houses inmates from both the Mara Salvatrucha gang and their sworn enemies, the Barrio 18.

the gangs attacked the other in retaliation for an incident that took place several days ago, Aguilar added. Gang violence and riots are common at the Candel prison, which has been condemned by human rights groups for its grim conditions.

Built to house five hundred inmates, it is currently home to over four times that number, police said. Guatemala's feared and violent gangs are known for their extortion rackets, in which they force businesspeople and bus operators to pay them protection money or face execution.

Gangs are responsible for nearly half of the 3,500 violent deaths a year in Guatemala — one of the highest death rates on earth. — AFP

Apple CEO Cook to testify today

San Ramon (US), May 20: Apple CEO Tim Cook will take the witness stand this Friday in a high-stakes courtroom battle over the lucrative commissions the iPhone maker has been raking in from its mobile app store.

The timing of Cook's highly anticipated testimony was confirmed Wednesday when a federal judge granted Apple's request to allow the 60-year-old executive to be the first witness sworn in Friday morning during a trial that has been unfolding in

an Oakland, California, courtroom since the beginning of this month.

The trial revolves around an antitrust lawsuit filed last year by Epic Games, the maker of the popular video game Fortnite. Epic is trying to prove that commissions ranging from 15 per cent to 30 per cent on transactions in apps installed on iPhones, iPads and iPods are part of a monopoly that Apple has created around a fortress blocking other payment options on its mobile devices.

SHORT TAKES

Legendary Milkha Singh is Covid +ve

New Delhi: Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh has tested positive for Covid-19 and is in isolation at his Chandigarh residence.

The 91-year-old, popularly known as Flying Sikh, is asymptomatic and claims to be in "high spirits". "A couple of our helpers earlier tested positive and so all the family members did the tests. Only I returned positive on Wednesday and I am surprised," Milkha said.

"I am fine and there is no fever or cough. My doctor told me I will be alright in three-four days. I did jogging just yesterday. I am in high spirits," he added.

None of the other family members, including Milkha's wife Nirmal Kaur, a former India volleyball captain, returned a positive test. — PTI

Shooting coach Monali dies at 44

New Delhi: In a big loss to the Indian shooting fraternity, coach and technical official Monali Gorhe died of mucormycosis on Thursday. She was 44 and is survived by her mother and a sister. Monali was admitted to a hospital after being diagnosed with Covid-19 but was discharged, only to get re-admitted to treat mucormycosis.

Many people recovering from Covid-19 have of late been afflicted by black fungus — or mucormycosis — disease. It is a fungal infection that affects the nose, eye and sometimes the brain.

A few hours before her death, her father Manohar Gorhe too succumbed to Covid-19.

Monali was the coach of the pistol core group. She had also served as the national coach of the Sri Lankan shooting team. — PTI

Bhuvneshwar's dad passes away

New Delhi: India pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar's father, Kiran Pal Singh on Thursday died at his Meerut residence after battling liver cancer for the last eight months.

He was 63 and is survived by his wife Indresh Devi and son and daughter Bhuvneshwar and Rekha respectively.

According to *ESPNCricinfo*, Singh was first detected with the illness in September last year when Bhuvneshwar was playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad in UAE for the IPL. "It is understood that Bhuvneshwar's return from the IPL in UAE, where he was representing Sunrisers Hyderabad, was mainly due to his father's health condition," the report said. Singh was undergoing treatment, including chemotherapy, at the All Institute of Medical Science here after consulting doctors in the UK. — PTI

Archer doubtful for India series

London: England pacer Jofra Archer will undergo a surgery on his right elbow on Friday, which could effectively rule him out of the first part of the five-match Test series against visiting India beginning on August 4. Archer is already out of the upcoming two-match Test series against New Zealand and this will be his second surgery after being operated upon on his right hand. "Jofra has been reviewed by a medical consultant in respect of his right elbow soreness. He will now proceed to surgery tomorrow," the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a tweet. — PTI

Medical insurance for sportspersons

New Delhi: The government has decided to widen its medical insurance cover for sportspersons by increasing the number of beneficiary athletes and including contractual coaches and support staff from this year in the wake of the pandemic. The Sports Authority of India on Thursday said that with this decision, the coverage would increase to more than 13,000 athletes, coaches and support staff. Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said the well-being of athletes, coaches and support staff are his ministry's priority. — PTI

REJUVENTUS

Dethroned as league champs, Juventus claw back to claim Italian Cup

Reggio Emilia (Italy), May 20: Dethroned league champions Juventus beat Atalanta 2-1 to win the Italian Cup for the 14th time on Wednesday as fans returned to the stadium for the first time in over a year.

Goals in either half from Dejan Kulusevski and Federico Chiesa gave coach Andrea Pirlo his second second trophy of the season after the Italian Super Cup, on the day he turned 42.

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini was denied a first trophy of his coaching career, and Atalanta's second trophy after the 1963 Coppa Italia.

It was a boost for Juventus who go into the final weekend of the season with their Champions League qualification going down to the wire after Inter Milan ended their nine-year league reign. Gianluigi Buffon was in the Juventus goal for the final time in his career and the veteran keeper was solid on the night winning his sixth Coppa Italia 22 years after his first with Parma.

The veteran pulled off a big save just after kickoff at the Mapei Stadium in Reggio Emilia.

Duvan Zapata had pulled back for Jose Luis Palomino with 43-year-old Buffon using his legs to stop the ball.

Despite the Bergamo side's early domination Juve made the breakthrough after half an hour. Cristiano Ronaldo went down but amid a scramble in front of goal Weston McKennie sent the ball across to Kulusevski who curled into the net.

But ten minutes later Ruslan Malinovskyi blasted in the equaliser.

Pierluigi Gollini denied Kulusevski a second just before the hour after good work from Chiesa.

Chiesa then clipped the post after latching onto a Ronaldo backheel flick. But the former Fiorentina forward made no mistake with quarter of an hour remaining after combining with Kulusevski to beat Gollini. — AFP



Juventus' Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon (centre) holds the winners trophy as his teammates celebrate winning the final of the Italian Cup (Coppa Italia) match against Atalanta at the Citta del Tricolore stadium in Reggio Emilia on Wednesday. — AFP

Liverpool move into top 4; Spurs' Euro hopes dented

London, May 20: Liverpool set up a dramatic final-day battle to qualify for the Champions League with a vital 3-0 win at Burnley, while Tottenham's bid to reach the Europa League suffered a blow in a 2-1 defeat against Aston Villa on Wednesday.

Jurgen Klopp's side moved into fourth place in the Premier League thanks to goals from Roberto Firmino, Nathaniel Phillips and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain.

Liverpool are above fifth-placed Leicester on goal difference, with the Reds on +24 and the Foxes on +20. If Liverpool win

their final game at home to Crystal Palace on Sunday, they should finish in the top four and salvage a difficult campaign that saw them tamely surrender the title to Manchester City.

Leicester host Tottenham on Sunday, while third-placed Chelsea travel to Aston Villa.

Firmino put Liverpool on course for their fourth consecutive victory with a clinical finish from Andy Robertson's 43rd minute cross. Phillips got the second goal in the 52nd minute with a header from Sadio Mane's cross for his first goal for the club. Oxlade-Chamberlain lashed in Liverpool's

third in the 88th minute.

Fifth and sixth place finishes secure a spot in next season's Europa League, while seventh place brings entry into a play-off for the new Europa Conference League.

Tottenham will have to wait until their last game of the season to discover if their European destiny.

A second defeat in their last three games left them in seventh place, level on points with eighth-placed Everton and three points behind sixth-placed West Ham.

They will have to beat Leicester and hope West Ham lose to Southampton to pip their London rivals on goal difference. — AFP

MBAPPE DAZZLES AS PSG CROWNED WITH FRENCH CUP

Paris, May 20: Paris Saint-Germain have a domestic double in their sights after they won the French Cup by beating Monaco 2-0 in Wednesday's final at the Stade de France.

Goals from Mauro Icardi and Kylian Mbappe won a largely uninspiring final for PSG who now go into the weekend's final round of French league fixtures with 10th league title still a possibility. PSG have now won the French Cup six times in the last seven seasons having reached the final every year since 2015. It was also the second trophy of coach Mauricio Pochettino's managerial career. — AFP



Paris Saint-Germain players celebrate with the trophy after winning the French Cup final match against Monaco at the Stade de France stadium in Saint Denis, North of Paris, on Wednesday. Paris Saint-Germain won 2-0. — AP

INDIAN FOOTBALL TEAM AWAIT COVID TEST RESULTS AFTER REACHING DOHA

Doha, May 20: The Indian football team players underwent Covid-19 tests on arrival and are waiting for results before starting their preparatory camp ahead of the joint Qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup. The 28-member squad and support staff landed here on Wednesday night from New Delhi.

"The 28 players and the support staff are in compulsory quarantine till they receive the test results of the conducted RT-PCR tests in Doha," the All India Football Federation said in a release.

The squad will, thereafter, be allowed to kick-off their preparatory camp as part of their preparation for the

matches," it added.

The team, bolstered by the return of Sunil Chhetri, will have a preparatory camp inside a bio-bubble here before its first match on June 3 against hosts Qatar. The round of matches are being played in Doha in view of the pandemic which doesn't allow the original format of home and away matches. — PTI

PEREZ LEADS 1ST PRACTICE SESSION, HAMILTON FIFTH

Monaco, May 20: Red Bull driver Sergio Perez clocked the fastest time Thursday during the first practice session for the Monaco Grand Prix.

Perez had a best lap of 1 minute, 12.49 seconds on the sinewy 3.4-kilometre circuit that snakes around the picturesque Principality. Ferrari driver Carlos Sainz Jr and Max Verstappen, Perez's teammate, were next.

AlphaTauri driver Pierre Gasly had the fourth fastest time. He was followed by F1 champion Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas.

Hamilton is 14 points ahead of Verstappen in the standings after they finished 1-2 in the first four races. Hamilton will be aiming for his 101st career pole position on Saturday and his 99th win on Sunday. — AP

Dravid to coach India on SL tour

New Delhi, May 20: National Cricket Academy chief and former India captain Rahul Dravid is set to be the head coach of the Indian white-ball squad that will tour Sri Lanka in July.

Dravid, who stopped travelling with the India A and U-19 teams after taking over as NCA head in Bengaluru, will be the head coach of the second-string side in the absence of Ravi Shastri, who will be busy with the Test side in England at the same time.

"He will travel with the team to Sri Lanka in all likelihood," a BCCI source said.

It was reported on May 17 that Dravid was being considered for the assignment.

Bowling coach Paras Mhambrey will also be a part of the support staff.

India are expected to play three ODIs and as many T20s in Sri Lanka in July though the schedule has not been announced yet.

The squad will have plenty of fringe players and some established white-



Rahul Dravid

● **Rahul Dravid will be the head coach of the second-string side for Sri Lanka tour in the absence of Ravi Shastri, who will be busy with the Test side in England at the same time.**

ball specialists.

Hardik Pandya, Shikhar Dhawan and Shreyas Iyer are in the running for captaincy.

It remains to be seen if Iyer recovers in time from his shoulder surgery to play in Sri Lanka. — PTI

4,000 FANS TO BE ALLOWED FOR INDIA vs NZ WTC FINAL

Southampton, May 20: The World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand in Southampton will be held in the presence of 4000 spectators, Hampshire County Club head Rod Bransgrove has said.

The Covid-19 situation has improved in the UK and around 1500 people were allowed to watch the county game between Leicestershire and Hampshire at the Aegae Bowl, which hosts the WTC final from June 18.

"We're staging a four-day county game from today and for the first time since September 2019 fans were allowed for a cricket match in England. The other county games of this round will begin tomorrow and those games too will see crowds," Rod Bransgrove, the head of Hampshire County Club said.

Bransgrove told the website that the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the ICC are permitting a crowd of "4000 people" in the eagerly-awaited clash.

"I understand 50 per cent of the permitted crowds will be taken by the ICC for its sponsors and other stake holders and we will be selling the rest 2000 tickets. We have already received more than double applications from the fans," Bransgrove said.

"It is a high interest game and there is a good demand for it," Bransgrove added.

The Indian team, currently quarantining in Mumbai for two weeks, depart for the UK on June 2. — PTI

India not safe for T20 WC: Hussey

Sydney, May 20: Former Australia batsman Mike Hussey, who tested positive for Covid-19 in IPL's bio-bubble, has advocated moving this year's T20 World Cup from India to the UAE as he feels teams will be "nervous" to travel there because of the raging pandemic.

Batting coach Hussey was among three members of the Chennai Super Kings contingent who contracted the virus during the IPL, which had to be suspended after cases were detected in four teams.

"I think it's going to be very difficult in my view to play that tournament in India," Hussey told *Fox Cricket* upon his return to Sydney.

Hussey had also spent two weeks isolating in India after testing positive for the virus in Delhi from where he was transported to Chennai in an air ambulance.

"We're talking about eight teams in the IPL. I think there are probably similar number, maybe more teams coming in from overseas (for the T20 World Cup), there'd be more venues. As I said ear-

I think it's going to be very difficult in my view to play that tournament in India. I think they'll have to look some pretty big contingency plans, perhaps looking at the UAE or somewhere like that that could host the World T20.

— MIKE HUSSEY
former Australia player

lier, if they're playing in different cities, that is when the risk goes up.

"I think they'll have to look some pretty big contingency plans, perhaps looking at the UAE or somewhere like that that could host the World T20. I think there will be a lot of cricket boards around the world that'd be pretty nervous about going back to India for a cricket tournament," said Hussey.

UAE has already emerged as the back up venue and the ICC is likely to take a call on the tournament on June 1. Talking about his ordeal in India, Hussey said he had symptoms but he never feared for his life. — PTI

There's got to be much more to the ball-tampering story



Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

Cameron Bancroft wittingly or otherwise has etched his name in the annals of cricket history. The Australian opener who has yet to score 500 runs in 10 Test matches so far in his career, was caught by the television cameras trying to rough up one side of the

cricket ball in the third Test between the Aussies and South Africa in Cape Town in 2018. The sorry tale shook up Australian cricket with skipper Steve Smith and David Warner getting one year bans and Bancroft being out for nine months. Just when people thought the water had

flowed under the bridge Bancroft opened the can once again when, in an interview, he hinted that more players were aware of what's called 'sandpaper gate.' The interview pointed fingers at the bowlers who most former players believe were equally conscious that a foreign substitute (sandpaper) was being to tinker with the ball in the Test.

While Cricket Australia (CA) said that the incident was thoroughly investigated and they had reached out to Bancroft to see if he was willing to speak fur-

ther, many believe that whole affair was brushed under the carpet which, now was showing a bump on the far side. Former Aussie skippers Ian Chappell and Michael Clarke have stated that there had to be more people involved (than the punished trio), with Clarke questioning the integrity of the bowlers saying: "Can you imagine that ball being thrown back to the bowler and the bowler not knowing about it?"

Ball management, on the field of play, is as old as the game. Picking the seam

with a overgrown thumb-nail to help movement or using foreign substitutes from bottle caps to strips laden with Vaseline is a been-there, done-that situation, if one peeks into the history of cricket.

The Aussie pack of bowlers in the Cape Town Test including Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins seem to have smoked the peace pipe with Bancroft.

The incident when looked at from a practical cricketing perspective makes no sense. One cannot imagine a bowler playing at a serious level not

knowing if the ball has been played around with. The new episode in this saga brought back a memory which goes to show that not just the bowlers but even the batsmen can tell from the changing pattern of the ball.

As a schoolboy one was privy to an episode which involved Mansur Ali Khan, a.k.a. Tiger Pataudi. While playing against us (schoolboys) in a Sunday friendly in 1974-75, Tiger showed us kids his remarkable knowledge and understanding of the game. Getting out in the first

over post a hearty lunch, the former Indian skipper gently asked if the ball had been changed? No, said the vehement umpires and yes, said the bowler who had quietly replaced the ball during the break as he couldn't get a decent grip on the old one.

It was just the feel of the ball on his bat that prompted Tiger to raise a doubt. What the most iconic cricketer of that era could surmise in a minute with one good eye, international bowlers couldn't do at Newlands, Cape Town — hard to believe!