THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | THURSDAY 13 | MAY 2021

WEATHER Max: 36°C Min: 24°C Rainfall: 2%

ASTROGUIDE

Pilava: Chithirai 30 Tithi: Thuvidhiyai Star: Rohini Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm Yamagandam: 6 am to 7.30 am **PRAYERS**

Fajar: 4.31 am Luhar: 12.11 pm **Asar:** 3.19 pm Maghrib: 6.25 pm Isha: 7.40 pm **SUNSET TODAY 6.37 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.00 AM**

MOONRISE TODAY 6.59 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 8.49 PM

CORONA CWUNT

(+3,22,902) (+3,529) 2,36,63,494 2,57,754

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+30,355)TN: 14,68,864 16,471

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

£ 16,08,47,352 **DEATHS** 33,39,015 COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 219

worldometers.info

Govt bans photography at Central Vista site

New Delhi: Amid criticism over the Central Vista Redevelopment Project, the Central Public Works Department has prohibited photography and video recording at the construction site near India Gate. Sign boards have come up at the redevelopment site of the Central Vista Avenue, which read: 'No photography', An official in the CPWD, which is executing the project, did not comment on this when contacted.



Everyone in the party should use cow dung, which is more powerful



Plea to allow Pasteur Institute of India to produce Covid vaccine



WORLD | 5 China, Russia using digital

tech to sabotage, steal: UK

TT legend Chandra

SEKAR | DC

CHENNAI, MAY 12

SPORT | 8 is no more



Vol. 11 No.136 Established 1938 | 8 PAGES | 4.00

PUDUCHERRY

DMK alleges BJP

plot to unseat NR

Give jabs free, oppn tells PM

■ Stop Grand Vista and fight Covid, 12 leaders write to Modi

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, MAY 12

Stepping up their attack on the NDA government for its alleged failure in handling the second wave of the pandemic Covid-19, leaders of 12 opposition parties on Wednesday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking a free mass vaccination campaign against Covid-19, and a suspension of the Central Vista project and divert the money to aid the fight against coronavirus. Claiming that the Covid-19 pandemic has turned into an 'apocalyptic human tragedy' in the country, the opposition Congress president Sonia Gandhi and some chief ministers, also demanded the Centre provide food grains to the needy, and give ₹6,000 per month to all the jobless people.

"Procure vaccines centrally from all available sources - global and domestic. Immediately begin a free, universal mass vaccination campaign across the country. Invoke compulsory licensing to expand domestic vaccine production. Spend budgetary allocation of Rs 35,000 crores for the vaccines," the leaders said in their letter.

"Stop Central Vista construction. Use the allocated money for procuring oxygen and vaccines, instead. Release all money held in the unaccounted private trust fund, PM CARES, to buy more vaccines, oxygen and medical equipment required," they also told the Prime Minister. In their joint letter in

which they make nine suggestions to the government, the leaders have also demanded a repeal of the three Central farm laws datas' (food-growers) from becoming the victims of pandemic. A large number of farmers are sitting in protest at three borders of Delhi, seeking the farm laws passed by Parliament in September last year be scrapped.

New Delhi, May 12: The

B.1.617 variant of the coro-

navirus first identified in

India last year has been

found in 44 countries, says the World Health

which has classified it as

a 'variant of concern'.

Organization



speaker's chair as Chief Minister M.K. Stalin watches in Chennai on Wednesday.

TN to buy vax from abroad, incentivise health workers

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR, D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, MAY 12

Intensifying its fight against the second wave of Coronavirus, the newly-elected M.K. Stalin gov-ernment took a slew of path-breaking decisions such as importing vaccines through global tenders, giving incentives to medical personnel and holding an all-party meeting to chalk the future strategy. After a review meeting at his chamber on the Kalaivanar Arangam assembly premises on Wednesday, the Chief Minister announced that the state would procure vaccines through global which, they claimed, will tenders with a view to vaccinating its population between 18 and 45 years expeditiously.

The supply of vaccine from the Centre was inadequate and that the Centre itself had given the go ahead to the states to procure vaccines on their

SARS-CoV-2 result

changes in transmissibili-

ty and severity, or if they

lead to changes in public

health and social mea-

sures' implementation by

national health authori-

ties. WHO has also char-

acterized the lineage

B.1.617 variant found

in 44 nations: WHO

(WHO)

Renewed Vigour

To float global tender to buy vaccine for inoculating people aged between 18 and 45

TO PAY ₹25 LAKH to families of doctors who died while on duty

All party meeting today

Similarly, he also ordered the industry, health and social welfare departments to ensure that supply of medical oxygen to the hospitals in the state was maintained by procuring it from other states. Though the supply of oxygen to the state was increased from 280 tonnes to 419 tonnes, there was still a shortfall, he said.

To encourage and motivate the medical professionals to help the state continue the fight against TO ENSURE supply of medical oxygen to all hospitals

TO PAY AN INCENTIVE of ₹30,000 to doctors; ₹20,000 to nurses, PG students and medical interns and rs 15 to staff such as lab technicians, CT scan operators, ambulance workers and sanitary staff for

Coronavirus, announced an incentive ranging from Rs 15,000 to Rs 30,000 to different categories of health workers for the months of April, May and June in the sec-

three months

ond While doctors would get ₹30,000, nurses, PG students and medical interns would get ₹20,000 and all other medical staff such as lab technicians, CT scan operators, ambulance workers and sanitary staff

Covaxin gets nod for trial in children

New Delhi, May 11: Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin has been recommended for phase II/III clinical trial on those aged between two and 18,

official sources said. The trial will take place in 525 subjects at various The subject expert committee of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation on Tuesday cleared Bharat Biotech's application for permission to conduct the trials to evaluate safety, reactogenicity and immuno-

TALLY DIPS BUT DEATH TOLL IS RECORD 4,205

VINEETA PANDEY |DC NEW DELHI, MAY 12

With 4,205 fatalities India on Wednesday set a new world record in the number of deaths in a single day from Covid-19. Ten states account for 73.17 per cent of these deaths out of which Maharashtra recorded the maximum fatalities (816), followed by Karnataka (517) and Delhi (300) in the last 24 hours. The Maharashtra government is now contemplating extending the lockdown for another 15 days. Assam too has decided to go for stricter restrictions as 5,657 people tested positive in the state on Wednesday. While India on

Wednesday recorded 3.48 lakh new cases, it also had a high number of recoveries as 3.55 lakh people got cured of Covid in the last 24 hours. India's recovery rate 83.04 per cent -- and cumulative number of recoveries -- 1,93,82,642 -- are now the highest in the world.

However, in the last one week about 30 lakh new infections have been recorded.

CENTRE TO BUY 1.5 LAKH OXYCARE **SYSTEMS OF DRDO**

New Delhi, May 12: The government Wednesday approved the units of 'Oxycare' system developed by the Defence Research Organi-Development sation (DRDO) to help in the treatment of Covid-19

patients. Oxycare is an oxygen supply system based on

SpO2 (oxygen saturation) level. The DRDO has already transferred the technology to multiple industries in India for large-scale production of the Oxycare sys-

tem.
The "Oxycare' systems will be procured for Rs 322.5 crore using the PM-Cares Fund, according to the defence ministry.
"The Oxycare system

delivers supplemental oxygen based on the SpO2 levels and prevents a person from sinking into a state of hypoxia which can be fatal," the ministry said. — PTI

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR, D. • Nominating MLAs CM. who is in

The bid by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to cap-ture the government in Puducherry by nominating three members to the territorial assembly even before the elected house was sworn in has drawn flak from various quar-ters with DMK general secretary and Tamil Nadu Water Resources Minister Durai Murugan terming it

an attempt to gain power through the backdoor. While the NR Congress of Chief Minister N. Rangaswamy had won 10 seats in the 30-member house, the BJP and the opposition DMK had won 6 seats each in the elections held on April 6 this year. The centre nominated three members to the assembly as per the Constitution.

Condemning the nomination of MLAs when the Chief Minister was admitted in hospital, Mr Murugan said it was painful to see the attempts to desecrate the people's verdict by the BJP.

Nominating the MLAs without consulting Mr Rangasamy, who is also the leader of the alliance in which the BJP faced the election, has made the people of the Union territory suspicious of the BJP's intentions, he said. Dravidar Kazhagam president K. Veeramani said the DMK alone could

do something about sav-

without consulting hospital, has raised suspicions in the

Union Territory ing the situation Puducherry, where the BJP was indulging in horse-trading to change the political arithmetic and form its government.

Of the six independent MLAs who have been elected to the House - the strength has been raised to 33 through the nominations by the Centre - three have been bought over by the BJP, Veeramani said, adding that it would increase its strength to 12, making it the single

largest party. "Even if the NR Congress, which has strength of 10 in the House, is allowed to form the government now, the BJP will start playing games by first demanding the post of a deputy chief minister for its nominee," he said. "Subsequently, it may overthrow the government and install its own." Mr Veeramani recalled the manner in which the earlier Congress government was pulled down by making MLAs resign and said he feared a repeat of it. Even now, of the three MLAs nominated by the BJP, one had defected from the DMK, another from Congress and the other had joined the BJP just

WAR FOOT

Your visit to violence-hit area violates norms'

A day before West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar was scheduled to begin his tour of areas affected by post-poll violence, chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday advised him to desist' from undertaking 'field trips' and follow the established government protocol.

'NAVLAKHA CAN **BE PUT UNDER HOUSE ARREST**

before the elections. **P2**

PARMOD KUMAR |DC NEW DELHI, MAY 12

Supreme Court Wednesday rejected a plea for default bail by human rights activišt Gautam Navlakha, one of the accused in the January 2018 Bhima Koregaon violence case, over his alleged links with Maoists. Rejecting Mr Navlakha's bail plea, a bench of Justices Uday Umesh Lalit, Indira

Banerjee and

Joseph suggested that the lower courts could put him under house arrest, given the need to stop overcrowding of jails in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic's second wave. They said that using the provisions of Section 167 CrPC, an accused can be put under house arrest when sent instead of sending him to jail as is ordinarily done. Indicating the criteria, Justice Joseph said an accused could be sent to house arrest given factors like "age, health condition and the antecedents of the accused, the nature of the crime, the need for other forms of custody and the ability to enforce the terms of the house

RETAIL INFLATION DOWN, IIP UP

New Delhi, May 12: With easing of food prices, India's retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index or CPI, slowed to 4.29 per cent in April 2021, while industrial output, measured by the Index of Industrial Production or IIP, grew 22.4 per cent in March 2021 as compared to 16.7 per cent in the same period a year-ago.

B.1.617 as a variant of concern (VOC). — *PTI* sites, including AIIMS, Delhi and AIIMS, Patna. The UN body routinely genicity of Covaxin jabs in children. — *PTI* than a PPE Kit! REPORT ON PAGE 4 assesses if variants of Israeli airstrikes kill Hamas leaders as unrest brews at home

Gaza City, May 12: Israel killed a string of senior Hamas military figures on Wednesday and pounded three multistorey towers as it hammered the Gaza Strip with airstrikes and militants in the territory fired rocket barrages. Dozens have died in the worst violence since a 2014 war, with no resolution in sight.

The fighting has taken on many hallmarks of that devastating 50-day conflict between Israel and Hamas, but with a startling new factor: a burst of fury from Israel's Palestinian čitizens in support of those living in the territories as well as counterviolence by Jewish Israelis.

In response, Israel deployed border guards in two mixed Arab-Jewish cities that saw unrest in previous days, including the burning of a Jewish-owned restaurant and a synagogue, the fatal shooting of an Arab



Smoke rises after an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City, the Gaza Strip, Wednesday.

man and attacks on Arabowned cars. It was a rare use of the paramilitary force, which normally puts protests down Palestinians in the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

Palls of gray smoke rose in Gaza as Israeli airstrikes struck apartment towers and blasted multiple Hamas security installations. In Israel, hundreds of rockets fired by Gaza's Hamas

rulers and other militants at times overwhelmed missile defences and sent airraid sirens and explosions echoing across Tel Aviv. Israel's biggest metropolitan area, and other cities.

The death toll in Gaza rose to 53 Palestinians, including 14 children and three women, according to the health ministry. At least 320 have been wounded, including 86 children and 39 women. Seven have been killed on the Israeli side by rocket fire, including the first death of an Israeli soldier in this round of conflict. The other deaths have been civilians, including three women and two chil dren, one of them a 6-yearold killed in a rocket strike on an apartment building in city of Sderot. Dozens in srael have been wounded.

There was no sign that either side is willing to back down. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to expand the offensive, saying it "will take time." Hamas has called for a full-scale intifada, or uprising. The last such uprising began in 2000 and lasted more than five years. \blacksquare **P5**

Kerala nurse killed in Israel by Hamas

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 12

An Indian woman from Kerala, identified as Soumya Santosh, 31, was killed in a rocket attack in Israel carried out by militant group Hamas, after which New Delhi assured all assistance to the family and also condemned the violence that has broken out, urging restraint by both Israel and Palestinian militant

groups. The victim, who is survived by her husband and nine year-old son who are living in Kerala, was working as a domestic help at a house in the

Israeli city of Ashkelon when a rocket fired by Hamas militants hit the house. Both minister of state (MoS) for external affairs V. Muraleedharan and Israeli Ambassador Ron Malka spoke to the family of the victim and paid their condolences.

According to media reports, the victim hailed from Keerithodu in Idukki district and had been working as a domes-tic help in Israel for the last seven years.

She was reportedly killed in the rocket attack as she was talking to her husband Santhosh back home in Kerala over a

SHORT TAKES

VIT DONATES ₹1.25 CR TO CM'S **PUBLIC RELIEF FUND**

Chennai, May 12: The Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) on Wednesday May 12, 2021) donated ₹1.25 crore to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund (TNCM-PRF) to help the State Government in its efforts to combat Covid -19 pandemic. VIT founder and chancellor Dr. G. Viswanathan said that ₹1.25 crore provided to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund comes from the one day salary donated by fac-ulty and staff of Vellore Institute of Technology (Vellore and Chennai campuses) and the contribution made

by the management of VIT.

VIT registrar Dr. K.
Sathiyanarayanan and
Director of Centre for
Sustainable Rural Development & Research Studies (CSRD) Dr. C.R. Sundara Rajan handed over the online transfer receipt for VIT's contribution to Vellore District Revenue Officer on

VIT BUSINESS SCHOOL GETS GLOBAL ACCREDITATION

May 12: VIT School, Institute of Technology (VIT) has been accredited by Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International, the top accrediting body for business schools globally. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), USA accreditation places VIT Business School among the prestigious global business schools that have received this recognition. It joins the league of only 901 business schools across 58 countries that are AACSB accredited. VITBS is the 15th accredited business school in India and 2nd in Tamil Nadu.. The business school that operates out of Vellore and Chennai campuses has achieved this coveted recogni-On achieving this accreditation, Dr.G. Viswanathan, Founder and Chancellor, VIT said, "It is a prestigious moment for Institute Technology. We thank AACSB for recognizing VIT Business School's academic rigor, research excellence, social, Industry and global connectivity. I congratulate Team VITBS, for achieving AACSB's global accreditation. The team shall strive to reach newer heights in serving the students

SATHYABAMA VARSITY DONATES ₹50 LAKH TO RELIEF FUND

Chennai. May Dr.Mariazeena Johnson, chancellor, Dr.Marie Johnson, president, Ms. Maria Bernadette Tamilarasi Johnson, vice president of Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Deemed to be University, greeted M.K.Stalin for being sworn in as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. The university donated ₹ 50 lakh to CM's Relief fund of Tamilnadu, according to a press release.

NURSES DAY OBSERVED IN MANNARGUDI

DC CORRESPONDENT MANNARGUDI, MAY 12

was at the government headquarters hospital at Mannargudi in Tiruvarur district Wednesday.

The nurses under the leadership of superintendent of the hospital Dr Vijayakumar took a pledge for selfless service to

Call to permit PII to produce Covid vaccine

B. RAVICHANDRAN I DC

The Nilgiris unit of the CPI(M) has called for urgent steps to give licence to the century-old Pasteur Institute of India (PII) in Coonoor to produce vaccine for Covid-19. PII is a pioneer in Rabies vaccine produc-

V.A. Bhaskaran, the Nilgiris district secretary of the CPM, said that PII is also involved in the production of DPT vaccines to check diseases like diphtheria and whooping cough.

Though this premier institute faced some troubles a decade ago, the CPM along with its allies then opposed the move to down unit. Eventually the union government gave its nod to upgrade the vaccine manufacturing infrastructures in PII-Coonoor as per the World Organisation norms. Good water and power facilities have been added to the PII campus.

Now, when the country is struggling to combat the Covid-19 second wave and shortage of Covid vaccines, the TN government should take immediate steps to obtain necessary nod from the Centre from the Centre under the compulsory licensing mode to help the PII-Coonoor produce Covid vaccine. The PII with its expectice in year with its expertise in vaccine production and skilful work force can take up Covid vaccine produc-



As a humanitarian gesture, the Masjid Javeed at 3rd Avenue in Anna Nagar has opened a quarantine centre for people who are Covid-19 negative and need a place to stay for a few days. M. Mohammed Yousuf, the mosque committee secretary, told DC: "We have made arrangements for people who want to isolate themselves for quarantine. It's absolutely a place for peace of mind and to relax. He added, "people keep asking us if we can accommodate Covid-19 positive persons, which we can't. We have approached the Chennai corporation for protocol permission. Based on people's needs, bed, oxygen and other facilities will be provided. During the Covid-19 first wave lockdown, Masjid Javeed contributed food and money to the needy."

Lockdown may lead to drop in cases: Govt

G. SRINIVASAN | DC THANJAVUR, MAY 12

There is a possibility of Corona cases coming down due to the two-week lockdown in Tamil Nadu, said K. Phanindra Reddy, Commissioner Revenue administration,

here on Wednesday. He inspected the urban primary health centre at Kallukulam at Thanjavur.

He told the media that the down to 200 to 300. If this Administration of the vacgovernment has given the bitter pill of lockdown to control Covid-19. He sought the cooperation of people in bringing down Corona cases by following the preventive measures the preventive measures during lockdown.

Corona is under control in Thanjavur if we consider the overall situation in

trend continues, cases will come down further, Reddy

Vaccination is going on well in Thanjavur.

The effectiveness Covidshield and Covaxin vaccines has been tested the state. At the state level and proved. The governalso, the cases have come ment also certified them. cines to people are man-Those who took the first

Dr. Subbaiyan, monitor-ing officer for Thanjavur district and director of

aged based on availability. dose are given the second dose on a priority basis, Reddy said.

horticulture, and M. Govinda Rao, Thanjavur district collector, were also

has shown a positive sign on May 11, when 633 patients, under treatment, got discharged against 628 new cases reported on May 11. The number of cases has been registering a continuous dip for the last three days. Of the total number of

DC CORRESPONDENT THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 12

Thoothukudi district, an

compared to three of its

neighbouring districts, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi and

Kanyakumari, however

showed a sign of plateau-

ing since May 10, when the positivity rate went

down by around 6 per-

The recovery rate in

Thoothukudi district too

3,040 samples tested by RT-PCR on May 9, 884 were found to be positive. It was 892 on the previous day. The positivity rate, however, went down to Covishield and 777 of the 3,239 samples dosages of Covaxin.

Large number of people waiting in front of Government Kilpauk Medical College on Wednesday for Remdesivir Positivity rate comes down in Thoothukudi by 6% tested. May 11 witnessed a further dip in new

cases, as against 3,046 samples taken for RT-PCR industrial hub, which reported highest number of daily cases of Covid-19, test in the district, 628 were found to have the infection.
Thoothukudi which registered 31,376 cases in

the second wave till date got 26,299 cured and discharged from hospitals. As of now the district has 4,906 cases undergoing treatment both at hospitals and at home.

'There is no shortage of beds for Covid patients," said district collector Dr K Senthil Raj. He added that the occupancy rate of beds at Thoothukudi medical college hospital, other government hospitals, Covid care centres and at private hospitals was 76 percent.

So far a total of 89,523 got vaccinated in the district, according to health department sources and the district as on May 12 has 14,890 dosages of

40-bed centre for Covid treatment

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUVARUR, MAY 12

A 40-bed centre for providing treatment exclusively to Covid-19 patients was Government hospital at

HUTS DESTROYED

Three persons including a fire-

fighter were injured while try-

ing to put out the fire caused by

Asthinapuram in Chromepet on

Tuesday night at the house of

Sarayanan (53) – Jevakodi (44) in

Nethaji Nagar in Asthinapuram

and two huts including theirs suffering damage, the police

After an alert about the fire.

fire and rescue services person-

nel from the Tambaram fire sta-

tion rushed to the spot. While

they were trying to douse the

flames caused by the cylinder in

the house's kitchen, another

cylinder kept in the house burst

unexpectedly. Ravikumar (28), a

firefighter suffered injuries.

Two other persons living nearby,

identified as Ajith Venkatesan

(26) and Selvakumar(28) suffered severe burns due to the

They were rescued and sent to

the Chromepet government hospital. Police said Ajith was shifted to the Kilpauk Government medical college and hospital.

When the Chitlapakkam police

enquired about the accident,

they came to know about the

leakage in the gas cylinder. Police sources said that Jeyakodi turned on the gas stove

and left the house forgetting she

few minutes and tried to lite the

stove, it triggered a huge blast.

The house was completely

wrecked. However, she escaped.

The Chitlapakkam police regis-

tered a case and begun an inves-

When she came back after a

had switched on the gas.

The cylinder exploded on

ylinder blast at a nouse in

IN FIRE, THREE

DC CORRESPONDENT

INJURED

CHENNAI, MAY 12

Nannilam in Tiruvarur district on Wednesday.

According to a government press release, 40 persons including a 12-yearold girl were admitted there. Yesterday alone, in

new cases of Covid-19 were reported.

Every day as many as 2,800 to 3,000 RTPCR tests have been conducted of which more than 150 were positive. On May 11, 2,800

People in Vellore were in for happiness as they witnessed rain on Wednesday,

Stalin must take interest in saving Pondy

from being tainted by saffron: Veeramani

Lieutenant Governor.

Kiran Bedi as the

After engineering defec-

tions from the Congress,

which was in power, and

also nominating three

MLAs, a new practice introduced by the Narendra Modi regime at

the Centre, it wreaked havoc with the elected

government just before

the elections.

Now that the BJP has

created a situation in which it has an upper

hand arithmetically and

may even lure the remaining three inde-

giving them the much-needed respite from heat. Surrounding villages also

which 270 were positive. Three persons lost their lives on May 11 in the district due to the Covid-19 and another 227 were discharged from the hospi-

From April last, 5,930

pendent MLAs to its fold,

thus increasing its strength to 15 and then

ask the N R Congress,

having just 10 MLAs, to

be relinquish the leader-

installing its own govern-

ment, the only option left

to Mr Rangasamy is to

seek help from the DMK

and the Congress, which

has a combined strength

of 8 MLAs. With his 10

MLAs and the 8 from

DMK and Congress he

can have a majority in the

33 member House.

To prevent the BJP from

ship role in its favour.

were infected Covid-19 of which 24 lost their lives. So far 51,234 persons have been administered vaccines and 95 places are declared as contaminated zones

CBI officer who probed Rajiv assassination case passes away

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 12

Former CBI officer K. Ragothaman, who was the Chief Investigating Officer Rajiv Gandhi assassination case and had penned books sensational assassinations in India died of Covid-19 here Wednesday in Chennai.

K. Ragothaman (76) was admitted to a hospital here last week for Covid-19 treatment and breathed his last this morning, sources said. hospital

Ragothaman was the Chief Investigating Officer in the CBI's Special Investigation Team that probed the killing of Gandhi on May 21, 1991, at Sriperumbudur by a female LTTE suicide bomber during an election rally. Ragothaman had spent more than 10 years investigating the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. In recognition of his meritorious service, Ragothaman was awarded Police Medal in 1988 and President Medal for distinguished service

He had also penned a few books, including the assassination of Mahatma – Indira – Rajiv Gandhis' Conspiracy to Kill Rajiv Gandhi from CBI

Autos double up as ambulances Chennai, May 12: At a callers seeking oxygen,"

time when oxygen is on Kumaraswamy said. high demand amid the second wave of covid-19 in the receives about 150 to 200 country, with people scampering for hospital beds with oxygen supply, a citybased NGO is reaching out to the needy in makeshift ambulances with the life saving gas.

"emergency auto used by patients home quarantined and in dire need of it.

City-based Kadamai Educational and Social Welfare Trust is operating innovative auto ambulances, albeit in a smaller radius in the northern parts, but is fast turning out to be a much sought after service.

"A jumbo hospital oxygen cylinder from the clinic we run and another cylinder that we obtained from an industrial unit, both of 47 lt capacity, were fitted to two autos to provide oxygen to the people in north Chennai area, round the clock," T C Kumaraswamy, head, education department of the trust, told *PTI*.

These emergency auto ambulances are operated by six persons on shift basis and they respond promptly to callers who seek medical oxygen to improve their oxygen lev-

"Presently, we operate only within 15 km radius in north Chennai alone

and we don't discourage

On an average, the trust

caus a da On Monday night, an ambulance ferrying a coronavirus patient ran out of oxygen and its driver approached the trust for

help.
"The 64-year-old patient ambulance" is also being from Royapuram was administered oxygen from our auto and he was taken to the hospital later," he

> The service is restricted to patients who could sit comfortably in the auto, Kumaraswamy said.

> 'We have been running the service successfully for the twelfth day today. We respond to requests also from people who have no access to ambulances or oxygen cylinders at home,' Vasantha Kumar,

founder secretary of the trust said.

Further, another metro-based volunteer organisation has launched a "Help Chennai breathe" campaign, aimed at crowdfunding a sum of Rs three crore to provide equipment like 420 oxygen cylinders and 240 oxygen concentrators to five government hospitals in the city.

Gayathri Suryanarayanan of 'Samarpana' said she launched the initiative after her own experience with oxygen issues. The effort has helped the

organisation raise about ₹25 lakh —*PTI*

Stalin invites leaders of all political parties to come up with ideas to tackle second wave of pandemic

Mr Stalin also remembered the sacrifices of the medical community in the last one year and announced a compensation of Rs 25 lakh to the families of doctors who laid down their lives in the line of duty.

Displaying an immediate priority to come up with more efforts to overcome the challenges thrown by the second wave of the pandemic, Mr Stalin called for the allparty meeting at the Secretariat

He has invited leaders of all political parties to come up with ideas to tackle the situation effec-

In his message on 'International Nurses Day' mr Stalin referred to the Covid-19 crisis and assured nurses that their welfare would be taken care of by the government. Reminding them that pandemic Covid-19 was not different from a war, he wanted the nursing community to stand by the govern-

On the opposition side, the DMK has 6 MLAs and

Congress 2. Mr Veeramani said DMK president M.K. Stalin must take interest in sav-

ing Puducherry from being tainted by saffron as it was also the land of

The BJP started eyeing

Puducherry perhaps to turn it into the party's

gateway to the South a

few years back and start-

ed the mission to capture

power by first appointing

ing, to fight the pandemic.

Transmile the Greater Chennai Corporation has called for applications from final year MBBS students to fill 300 vacancies for the post of trainee medical officer. They would be recruited on contract basis for a period of three months, paid a consolidated salary of ₹40,000 per month and deployed in Coronavirus-related

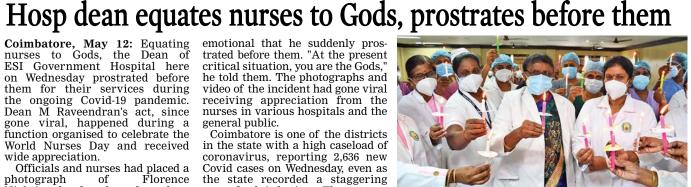
Coimbatore, May 12: Equating nurses to Gods, the Dean of ESI Government Hospital here on Wednesday prostrated before them for their services during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Dean M Raveendran's act, since gone viral, happened during a function organised to celebrate the World Nurses Day and received wide appreciation.

Officials and nurses had placed a hotograph of Florence photograph of Florence Nightingale, founder of modern nursing, to pay floral tributes on the hospital premises. A group of nurses gathered at the entrance to welcome Raveendran, who became so

emotional that he suddenly prostrated before them. "At the present critical situation, you are the Gods. he told them. The photographs and video of the incident had gone viral receiving appreciation from the nurses in various hospitals and the general public.

Coimbatore is one of the districts in the state with a high caseload of coronavirus, reporting 2,636 new Covid cases on Wednesday, even as the state recorded a staggering 30,355 fresh infections. The western district has 15.178 active cases. including those under home treatment, according to government fig-



Nurses of Government Kilpauk Medical College take pledge on the occasion of World Nurses Day on Wednesday. Hospital Dean Dr P. Vasanthamani also present on the occasion.



OTHER STORIES

Regularise staff, **AIDS control assn** urges CM

DC CORRESPONDENT **TIRUVARUR, MAY 12**

The Tiruvarur district unit of the Tamil Nadu AIDS Employees Association has appealed to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to regularise the services of the AIDS check-up and advisory committee members immediately.

In a letter to Mr Stalin, association's Tiruvarur district joint secretary T. Logambigai pointed out that the AIDS control society was established 23 years ago, but till today none of the employees of the society is permanent. Despite this, they are working for the welfare of the AIDS patients and also working in the government hospital laboratories on par with the other permanent employ-

Tiruvarur collector warns against child marriage

R. VALAYAPATHY I DC **TIRUVARUR, MAY 12**

Santha, Tiruvarur Collector, has warned those who encourage or perform child marriages with stringent punishment. In a release at Tiruvarur on Wednesday, she said 12 child marriages were stopped in Tiruvarur district in the last 4 months and all such offenders were under strict vigil.

She called upon the people to intimate any child marriage events, without any hesitation. The general public can contact childline toll-free number 1098 or the district social welfare officer 9750570683 or child protection officer 9345560539 or can contact the police control room on



Corporation commisoiner Gagandeep Singh Bedi inspecting work at Covid care cen-

I don't possess sky high powers: Speaker

DC CORRESPONDENT

Newly elected Speaker M. Appavu said that his authority was bound by the members of the House and that he did not possess sky high powers, assuring that he would conduct the proceeding by upholding democratic values

In his maiden address as Speaker, the MLA from Radhapuram thanked Chief Minister M. K. Stalin for reposing faith in him and said that it was the Assembly that had powers and not Appavu the individual.

When the House met on second day on sday, pro-tem Thursday, pro-tem Speaker Pitchandi was on the chair. He announced the result of the Speaker election, saying

In his maiden address as Speaker, the MLA from Radhapuram thanked Chief Minister M. K. Stalin for reposing faith in him and said that it was the Assembly that had powers and not Appavu the individual

Appavu has been elected unanimously, and invited him to take charge.

Appavu was then led to the chair by the Leader of the House Duraimurugan and Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami. Speaker then announced that Pitchandi has been elected unanimously as the Deputy Speaker.

After leaders of all the parties spoke, Stalin, in his address, said that the ruling party would conduct itself in maintaining democratic traditions in the House and that there would be no display of arrogance and pride.

The Opposition and the Ruling Party are two sides of the same coin and without one there would be no value, said Palaniswami, urging the Speaker to con-duct the proceeding like a teacher overcoming emotions and anger.

Also he wanted adequate time for the Opposition MLAs to express their views on the floor of the House and assured his cooperation in the smooth conduct of the proceedings.
The other leaders who

spoke, felicitating the Speaker, were: J G Prince

(BJP), Sinthanai Selvan Thirumalaikumar (MDMK), Ramachandran

Nagai Maali (CPM), M H J a w a h i r u l l a h (Manithaneya Katchi), E R Easwaran (Kongunadu Makkal Desiya Katchi) and T Velmurugan of Tamilaga Valurimai Katchi.

Appavu had a word of praise for the Deputy Speaker, who also addressed the House. The Speaker said that he wanted to take members of all parties along while presiding over the proceedings of the House and wanted the Assembly to set an example for the nation.

Finally the House adjourned sine die follow-(Congress), G K Mani ing a resolution passed by (PMK), Nainar Nagendran the Leader of the House.

2,007 fresh cases of coronavirus in Puducherry, total 77,031 cases

Puducherry, May 12: Puducherry posted 2,007 fresh cases of coronavirus on Wednesday, pushing total positives to 77,031. Twenty-seven more people succumbed to the disease during the last twenty-four hours raising the toll to 1025.

The deceased were in the age groups ranging between 47 and 85 years.

Director of Health and Family Welfare services S Mohan Kumar said while Puducherry region alone accounted for 1,590 new cases. Karaikal had 238 cases followed by Yanam 129 and Mahe 50.

Director of Health and Family Welfare services S Mohan Kumar said while **Puducherry region alone accounted for** 1,590 new cases. Karaikal had 238 cases followed by Yanam 129 and Mahe 50.

There were 15,562 active cases (2065 in hospitals and remaining 13,497 in home isolation), 60,424 patients recovered and were discharged so far

and remaining 13,497 in

home isolation), 60,424

patients recovered and

As many as 1,247 patients recovered and were discharged during

were discharged so far.

the last 24 hours.

The 2,007 fresh cases were identified at the end of examination of 9,176 people, projecting test positivity rate at 21.87 per-

cent. There were 15,562 active cases (2065 in hospitals

OUICK CROSSWORD

The fatality and recovery rates were 1.36 percent and 78.44 percent respec-He said so far 8.80 lakh

samples were tested and of them 7.89 lakh were found to be negative. On the vaccination front,

33,219 health care workers and 19,629 front line workers have been inoculated so far.

The official said 1,24,384 people coming under the category of either senior citizens (sixty years and above) or those above 45 years with co-morbidities have been inoculated so

Madras Christian College launches Covid task force

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 12

With a view to support the government in the fight against Covid-19 and precasualties in Madras Chennai, College, launched Christian Tambaram Covid-19 task force on the campus. Dr P Wilson, Principal, MCC, said in line with social relevance being a guiding principle of college, the task force has launched to serve as a composite support system in providing ambulance service, food, nursing care, medical consultation, referrals through Wilson sought participation of the MCC community by pooling in all possible resources in serving society during the pandemic crisis

networking for hospital placement in addition to providing basic quarantine facility in IGH for mild Covid-19 cases with lung involvement less than 5 per cent and in Selaiyur Hall (Hostel) Eblock for isolation of peo-

ple who have been the primary contacts of the infected.

He sought participation of the MCC community by pooling in all possible resources in serving society during the pandemic

He said those who wish to participate in the cause and sought services for mobilizing resources and networking in various capacities. Those interested can contact Dr. Prince Annadurai for further information and initiate the work as soon as possible because we have a huge need around us, Wilson added.

COFFEE-BREA

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



some initiatives to get a favourable response in your love life. Make time for yourself. aurus: Politics at work may distract you from professional objectives. Develop a healthy relationship with children. Don't

Gemini: Keeping yourself reserved would immensely benefit you today. You might find

yourself inclined towards spirituality. You

Aries: Consider market risks before making any investments. You must take

take romantic partner for granted.



need to listen to family elders. **Cancer:** Let your partner know your desires to renew the romantic bond. Restrain from

consuming alcohol and smoking cigarettes. You may not enjoy monetary gains.



eo: It will be a hectic day. Your personal life will be overshadowed by family life. But, It will bring you immense joy. Observe dietary restrictions for the sake of your health.



Virgo: You might find yourself subjected to extreme pressures from family members. Take suggestions from family elders. Overt enemies would try to take advantage of your nice behaviour.

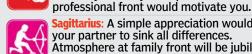
Zareen Khan is an Indian actress and model. She made her screen debut with a leading role in Veer

co-starring Salman Khan. She earned commercial success in Bollywood with Housefull 2. ibra: Your helpful nature will encourage you to lend a helping hand to the people in distress. You are likely to confront some

You share your b'day with

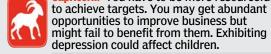


anxious moments on the family front. orpio: Stick to a fiber rich diet of salads, green vegetables and fresh fruits to nourish your body. Fast paced activities at



gittarius: A simple appreciation would force your partner to sink all differences. Atmosphere at family front will be jubilant. You may have misconceptions about dieting.

pricorn: You have to be more resourceful



opportunities to improve business but might fail to benefit from them. Exhibiting depression could affect children. rius: The day may bring you unexpected physical ailments. Your investment plans are not



up to date. Inability to lend a helping hand to a needy person could damage your reputation. isces: You may experience physical, mental illness due to unhappiness. You might receive an e-mail from a long-separated beloved. You fail

to meet the person of your dreams even today.



ALDER

NUMBERS 10 AND 11 DOWNING

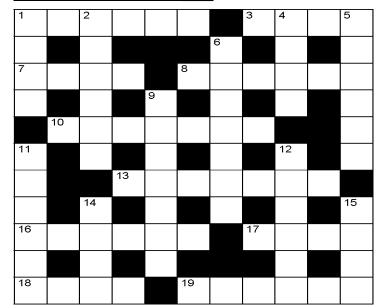
STREET

n London, the prime minister lives at 10 Downing Street, and the chancellor of the exchequer at No. 11. That is appropriate because the man who deals with numbers is in the beause with the bers is in the house with the more useful bridge number --

Yesterday, we looked at the Rule of Eleven. It helped third hand to find the winning defense at trick one. Sometimes, though, it gives assistance later in the play -

After South, in answer to Stayman, denied a four-card major, the contract was three no-trump. West led the spade seven: five, jack, king. Declarer played a club to dummy's ace and a club back. What should East have discarded?

South started with eight top tricks: one spade (given the first trick), two hearts, three diamonds and two clubs. He was hoping for



Down

1. Prevalent (4)

6. Died out (7)

9. Quandary (7)

2. eg. Milky Way (6)

4. Affair of honour (4)

5. Shunting track (6)

Across

- 1.Get back (6) 3. Likelihood (4)
- 7. Brimming (4) 8. Go over (6)
- 10. Show (7) 13. Seducer (anag) (7)
- 16. Misgivings (6) 17. Hoodlum (4)
- 18. Balanced (4)

19. Spanish city (6)

В ESL MZYIO

Word Mine

DDAY'S RATINGS: 9 AVERAGE; 10 GOOD; 12 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.

NASWERS: bile, boil, bole, limb, limbo, lob bey, slob, symbol, SYMBOLIZE, zombie

Dealer: South Vulnerable: Both West North Pass 2♣ Pass 3NT

11. Place of worship (6) 12. Slight wind (6) 14. Naked (4) 15. Matured (4)

jumble **AGDOM IVROS ANOSES** SENVTI

lumbles: CRYPT SHIFT top floor were - HIGHER-UPS

overtricks if the clubs would run. However, those hopes were dashed when East dis-carded on the second round. Still, he might have survived, except that East applied the Rule of Eleven to the opening lead: 11 minus 7 is 4. So, there were four spades above the seven in the dummy, the East hand and declarer's hand combined. And East had seen all four. So, West's suit was ready to

run. Also, from the auction

West was known to have started with five or six spades. But West did not know who held the spade queen. If South had begun with K-Q-x of spades, Wes had to try to get East on lead for a spade play through declarer. To clarify matters for his partner, East discarded the spade queen

(Answers tomorrow URCHIN GOTT tives with offices on the

Across: 1. Beekeeper, 6. Snout, 7. Hosts, 9. Toys, 10. Scampi, 12. Astern, 14. Smug, 17. Equip, 18. Rifle, 19. Chrysalis.

(Asia Features.

CALVIN AND HOBBES | Bill Watterson







ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman







BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall









TARZAN|Edgar Rice Burroughs







SHORT TAKES

Oppn demands ₹6K to all jobless, free foodgrain

From P1

Apart from Congress president Gandhi, the signatories include former prime minister and JDS leader H.D. Deve Gowda, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar, chief ministers Uddhav Thackeray (Shiv Sena), Mamata Banerjee (TMC), M.K. Stalin (DMK), and Hemant Soren (JMM). Former chief ministers Farooq Abdullah (NC) and Akhilesh Yadav (SP) have also signed the letter, alongside Tejashwi Yadav (RJD), D. Raja (CPI) and Sitaram Yechury (CPM).

The leaders noted that they have in the past also suggested to the government the measures they believed were "absolutely imperative" for the Centre to implement to arrest the situation.

"Unfortunately, your government has either ignored or refused all these suggestions. This only compounded the situation to reach such an apocalyptic human tragedy," they

Without going into all the "acts of commission and omission" by the Central government that have brought the country to such a pass", the opposition leaders demanded that the new meas-ures suggested by them be undertaken on a war footing.

The opposition leaders also demanded giving all jobless at least ₹6,000 per month and a free distribution of foodgrains to the needy, saying over one crore tonnes of foodgrains are currently "rotting in central

"Repeal farm laws to protect lakhs of our annadatas becoming victims of the pandemic so that they can continue to produce food to feed the Indian people," they said.

"Though it has not been the practice of your office or gov-ernment, we would appreciate a response to our suggestions in the interests of India and our people," the leaders said in

Govt approves procurement of 1.5L units of DRDO 'Oxycare' system

New Delhi, May 12: The government on Wednesday approved the procurement of 1,50,000 units of 'Oxycare' system developed by the Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to help in the treatment of Covid-19 patients.

Oxycare is an oxygen supply system based on SpO2 saturation) level. The DRDO has already transferred the technology to multiple industries in India for large-scale production of the Oxycare system. The 'Oxycare' systems will be procured for Rs 322.5 crore using the PM-Cares Fund, according to the defence ministry. "PM-Cares Fund has accorded sanction for procurement of 1,50,000 units of 'Oxycare' system developed by the DRDO at a cost of ₹ 322.5 crore," it said. The ministry said 1,00,000 manual and 50,000 automatic Oxycare systems are being procured. "The Oxycare system delivers supplemental oxygen based on the SpO2 levels and prevents a person from sinking into a state of hypoxia which can be fatal,' the ministry said in a statement. Oxycare was developed by the Bengaluru-based DRDO's Defence Bio-Engineering and Electro Medical Laboratory (DEBEL) for soldiers posted at extreme high-altitude areas. "The system is indige-

nously developed for opera-tion in field conditions and is robust. It can be effectively used to treat COVID-19 patients," the ministry said. It said the variants of the system have been configured. "The basic version consists of a 10-litre oxygen cylinder, a pressure regulator cum flow controller, a humidifier and a nasal cannula. The oxygen flow is reg-ulated manually based on the SpO2 readings," the ministry said. "In the second configuration, the oxygen cylinder is equipped with electronic controls which automatically regulate the oxygen flow through a low-pressure regulator and an SpO2 probe," it said. Various parts of India have been ravaged by a devastating second wave of coronavirus pandemic.

One of the most common complications being faced by the COVID-19 patients has been a drop in oxygen levels. The huge surge in coronavirus cases has triggered a shortage of medical oxygen

across the country.



Bhima Koregaon case: SC dismisses Navlakha's bail plea

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, MAY 12

Supreme Court Wednesday rejected a plea for default bail by human rights activist Gautam Navlakha, one of the accused in the January 2018 Bhima Koregaon violence case, over his alleged links with Maoists.

Rejecting Mr Navlakha's bail plea, a bench of Justices Uday Umesh Lalit, Indira Banerjee and Joseph suggested that the lower courts could put him under house arrest, given the need to stop overcrowding of jails in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic's second wave. They said that using the provisions of Section 167 CrPC, an accused can be put under house arrest when sent to judicial custody instead of sending him to jail as is

ordinarily done.
Speaking for the bench, Justice Joseph said: "The concept of housearrest as part of custody under Section 167 has not engaged the courts, including this court. However, when the issue has come into focus, and noticing its (Section 167) ingredients we have formed the view that it involves custody which falls under Section 167."

Justice Joseph said: "We observe that under Section 167 in appropriate cases it will be open to the courts to order house

Indicating the criteria, which it said was not exhaustive, Justice Joseph said an accused could be sent to house arrest given factors like 'age, health condition and the antecedents of the accused, the nature of the crime, the need for other forms of custody and the his incarceration for 93

AKSHAYA KUMAR SHOO

The Odisha government

on Wednesday decided to

administer Covid-19 vac-

cine to vulnerable people

who don't possess any

In a letter to all the col-

lectors and Municipal

Corporation Commissi-

oners, additional chief

secretary to the govern-ment, P K Mohapatra, asked to immediately

identify such persons and

bring them under the

identity proofs.

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 12



ability to enforce the terms of the house arrest".

Having shown the new course for the subordinate judiciary to follow by sending an accused to house arrest, in the case of Mr Navlakha, the court rejected his contention that he was entitled to default bail as the National Investigating Agency did not file the chargesheet within the statutory 90 days from the date of his arrest.

He had contended that the 34-day period when he was put under house arrest by the Delhi high

court have not been accounted for in the 90day time limit for filing the chargesheet. Mr Navlakha was put

under house arrest by the Delhi high court while hearing his challenge to the transit custody granted by a Delhi court to the Mumbai police. The high court held the magistrate's order as flawed.

Holding that his house arrest wasn't under Section 167 CrPC, the Supreme Court in its 206page ruling upheld the Bombay high court's ruling that the law requiring the NIA to file the chargesheet against an accused within 90 days of

arrest was not flouted. The high court hadn't plea to include the 34 days of his house arrest in Delhi from August 28, 2018 to October 1, 2018 to show

Odisha to vaccinate sadhus, saints,

nomads and non-ID proof holders

ary must register in the COWIN portal. The bene-ficiary has to register in

the portal with one of the

proofs. However, some vulnerable groups of citi-

zens may not possess any

of the seven prescribed identity cards. Such vul-

nerable persons may not

be denied for Covid-19 vac-

cination for absence of

identity proof. Hence, there is a need to provide

special consideration for

Covid-19 vaccination of

the vulnerable popula-

Covid-19 vaccination ies are also at risk of tion sessions for this purdrive, it has been pre-exposure to Covid-19 pose," the official said.

"In all the phases of tion, as these beneficiar-

prescribed ID

scribed that the benefici- infection," Mr Mohapatra

wrote in the letter.

"Such groups of people include nomads (includ-

ing sadhu/saints from

various religions), prison

inmates, inmates in men-

tal health Institutions, cit-

izens in old age homes,

roadside beggars, people

residing in rehabilitation

centers/camps and any

other identified eligible

persons, aged 18 years or

more, and not having any of above prescribed indi-

vidual photo ID cards. The

COWIN portal will pro-

vide the facility for cre-

ation of special vaccina-

days in the calculations and dismissed his appeal on February 3, 2021.

The NIA had filed the chargesheet on October 9, 2020. Seeking default bail, Mr Navalakha had shown 34 days of house arrest, plus 11 days of NIA custody and 48 days in Tihar

Jail, Delhi, and Taloja Jail, Mumbai.

Mr Navlakha and the other activists are accused of allegedly making inflammatory speeches and issuing provocative statements at the Elgar

Parishad meeting in Pune on December 31, 2017 that led to violence at Bhima Koregaon the next

Mr Navlakha had approached the Supreme Court against the Bombay high court order denying him bail. He is among the eight alleged Maoist activists against whom the NIA filed a chargesheet on October 9, 2020. The others are Teltumbde, Hany Babu, an associate professor in Delhi, Sagar Gorkhe and Jaichor C.
Jagtap Or
Milind Ramesh Gaichor of Pune, Kondhawa,

Teltumbde of Yavatmal and Stan Swamy of Ranchi. Mr Swamy, a 80-year-old priest, was arrested from his home in Ranchi only two days before the filing of the chargesheet. Anand Teltumbde, a pro-

fessor who normally lives in Goa, was one of the conveners the Buima Koregaon Shaurya Din Prerna Abhiyan and was present at Shaniwar Wada in Pune on December 31, 2017, where the Elgar Parishad programme was organised. The NIA claimed it recovered incriminating documents revealing his role in CPI(Maoist) activities.

Your visit to violence-hit area violates norms'

Mamata writes to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC

A day before West Bengal Jagdeep Dhankhar was scheduled to begin his tour of areas affected by post-poll vio-lence, chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday advised him to 'desist" from undertaking "field trips" and follow the established government protocol.

In a strongly worded letter to the governor, who is planning to undertake the trip in a BSF helicopter, Ms Banerjee drew his attention to the state home (political) department's 'Manual of Protocol & Ceremonials' which mentions: "The programme for the governor's visits to places in the districts is finalised by the secretary to the governor after obtaining the orders of the government. However, before recommending a request to the governor for acceptance, whether it is from a private party or a government Institution, the secretary to the governor consults the government and the commissioner of the division and the district officer in charge of the proper execution of the overall programme."



'The programme for the governor's visits to places in the districts is finalised by the secretary to the governor after obtaining the orders of the government. However, before recommending a request to the governor for acceptance, whether it is from a private party or a government

Institution, the secretary to the governor consults the government and the commissioner of the division and the district officer in charge of the proper execution of the overall programme

She told the Governor, "I find from social media that you are unilaterally proceeding to the district of Coochbehar on 13-5-2021 and, sadly, I find that to be violative of the longstanding norms as evolved over several decades. I, therefore, would expect that you will kindly follow the well-established norms of protocol, as stated above, and desist from abrupt decisions with regard to field visits."

Reminding Mr Dhankhar of one of her previous let-ters, Ms Banerjee added, "I had requested and specifically advised you 'to refrain from surpassing the chief minister and her Council of Ministers and communicating with and dictating to the state officials, in excess of your under Constitution and direct-

ing them to attend before you'. I find that you are steadily ignoring this advice, solemnly rendered by me to you, and have been communicating with and dictating the state officials. You have also been seeking reports from them directly. I urge you and again request and advise you to refrain from this. I am asking my chief secretary to go by this

Hitting back at the Trinamul Congress supre-mo immediately, Mr Dhankhar, who plans to visit Assam first on Thursday morning to meet BJP workers in a shelter there, rejected her advice and reminded her of his "constitutional of his duties." In his reply to her, Mr

Dhankhar wrote, "In time such unprecedented

crisis there was need to act in togetherness with all concerned, including the governor. It was no time for optics or playing to the gallery when we are in the midst of unprecedented post-poll retributive violence. I can't persuade myself to subscribe to the stance reflected in your communication. It betrays elementary ignorance of constitutional provisions. We both, being constitutional functionaries, are subject to the Constitution. I am sure vou will at least concede supremacy of the Constitution, that by oath you are ordained to follow. It is a textbook preposition that provisions of the Constitution can neither be diluted nor ignored." He added, "I am appalled

that a leader of your stature should be even contemplating that in making visits the governor has to obtain orders of the government. Surprising that you became aware of this con-

stitutionally untenable provision at a time when my visits are to share the pain and agony of suffering people. I am just not persuaded by your stance. There would be no sane takers of this."

Kin of Kerala woman killed in rocket strike in Israel still in shock

Idukki(Ker), May 12: The family of a 30-year-old Kerala woman, who lost her life in a deadly Palestinian rocket attack in Israel, is yet to recover from shock.

They cannot believe that they will never be able to see her

They never imagined such a tragic end to Soumya, who worked as a caregiver for an elderly woman in Ashkelon in that country, although she had often shared her anguish with them about massive firings in the Israeli territory by Palestinian mili-

Santhosh, a resident of Keerithodu in Idukki district, is struggling to console their nine-yearold son, who could not cope with the situa-

"He is awaiting her call," Santhosh told reporters here, while holding back his tears. It all happened as

Soumya was planning her return to Kerala, ending over seven years of toil in the Israeli city, for a better life back home.

It was a Tuesday after-noon and Soumya was on a video call with her husband telling him about the tense atmosphere in the southern İsraeli coastal city of Ashkelon.

Little did she knew that it would be her last

As she was sharing the details of the war-like situation prevailing in the area, Santhosh heard a huge sound on the other and the other end.

Her phone, which was still connected, had fall-



A nurse offers prayer to Florence Nightingale, on the occasion of International Nurses Day, at a Covid-19 hospital in Kolkata, Wednesday.

DOOR-TO-DOOR JAB WOULD HAVE **SAVED SEVERAL PEOPLE, SAYS HC**

SHAHAB ANSARI I DC

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday asked the Central government to reconsider its current protocol that doesn't allow door-to-door vaccination. The court also said that had the government incorporated such a policy earlier, it could have saved lives of senior citizens and specially-abled persons who were unable to

MUMBAI, MAY 12

visit vaccination centres.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta

and Justice Girish S. Kulkarni was hearing a PIL filed by city-based lawyers Dhruti Kapadia and Kunal Tiwari, seeking directions to the Centre, the Maharashtra government and the BMC to provide door-to-door vaccination facility for people over 75 years of age, the specially-abled and the bed-ridden.

inoculation process.

JAB | SAFETY | Pregnant women make antibodies after vaccination and transfer them to babies

Vaccines don't damage placenta: Study

suggests a study that found no evidence of injury to the placenta in pregnant women who received the preventive.

first-of-its-kind published on Tuesday in the journal Obstetrics & Gynecology, adds to the growing literature that Covid-19 vaccines are safe in pregnan-

New Delhi, May 12: black box in an airplane. If cond-19 vaccines may be safe during pregnancy, with a pregnancy, we usually see changes in the placenta that can help us figure out what happened, said Jeffery Goldstein, assistant professor at Northwestern University

Medicine in the US. "From what we can tell, the Covid vaccine does not damage the placenta," Goldstein said.

The researchers noted "The placenta is like the that there is a lot of vac-

data, albeit preliminary, can reduce concerns about the risk of the vaccine to the pregnancy," said study co-author Emily Miller, assistant professor at

Northwestern University. The study authors examined the placentas from 84 vaccinated patients and 116 unvaccinated patients who delivered at a hospital in Chicago, US.

Most patients received

vaccines — either Moderna or Pfizer — during their third trimester. Last year, the same team published a study that found placentas of women who tested positive for the Covid-19 virus while pregnant showed abnormal

blood flow between mother and baby in utero. Pregnant patients who want to get vaccinated to avoid contracting the disease should feel safe doing

so, Miller said. "We are beginning to

move to a framework of protecting foetuses through vaccination, rather than from vaccination," Miller said.

In April, the scientists published a study showing pregnant women make Covid antibodies after vaccination and successfully transfer them to their foetuses. "Until infants can get vaccinated, the only way for them to get Covid antibodies is from their mother," Goldstein said.

The placenta is the first

pregnancy. It performs duties for most of the foetus' organs while they are still forming, such as providing oxygen while the lungs develop and nutrition while the gut is forming. According to the researchers, the placenta manages hormones and the immune system, and tells the mother's body to welcome and nurture the foetus rather than reject it as a foreign intruder.

praised for performing last rites of Hindu friend AKSHAYA KUMAR SHOO

Muslim man

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 12 Praises continue to pour

in for Rahmat Ali, a Muslim man hailing Sundergarh, as he actively participated in Sundergarh, the funeral of his Hindu friend who died of Covid-19 last week. According to reports, a

40-year-old man named Sanatan Sanatan Patel of Bandhapali area in Sundergarh died while undergoing treatment at a Covid hospital. His body was taken to the nearby crematorium for

last rites.
When Rahmat Ali got the shocking news of his friend's death, he immediately rushed to the crematorium where he along with the crematorium staff members performed the last rites with complete adherence to Covid-19 guide-

He also changed 'Ram Nam Satya Hai, Hari Nam Satya Hai' while carrying the bier along with the deceased's relatives to the crematorium at Ranibagicha.

Covid-19 Pandemic has affected us like nothing else in our lifetimes and it has taught us that humanity is above everything else. Rahamat's act inspires despair and despondency," Sidhant Panda hope in these times of staff member of the crematorium said on Wednesday.

"Amidst plethora of disturbing images of the dead being abandoned and denied a dignified funeral, even by the near and dear ones, Rahmat Ali's act not gives a message that humanity transcends all barriers of faith, but also teaches us how to surmount the evils of fear and stigma in these dark times," said R P Gupta, a noted social activist Sundergah.

When Rahmat Ali got the shocking news of his friend's death, he immediately rushed to the crematorium where he along with the crematorium staff members performed the last rites with complete adherence to Covid-19 guidelines

EGYPT PLANS TO

WIDEN, DEEPEN

Cairo, May 12: Egypt

on Tuesday announced

plans to widen and deep-

en the southern part of the Suez Canal where a hulking vessel ran aground and closed off

the crucial waterway in

March.
The head of the Suez
Canal Authority, Lt Gen
Osama Rabie,

announced details of the

plan in a televised ceremony in the canal's city of Ismailia. Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah

el-Sissi and top govern-ment officials attended

The plan includes

widening the canal's southernmost stretch by

about 40 meters (yards)

to the east, on the side of

the Sinai Peninsula, Rabie said. That seg-

ment would also be deepened to 72 feet, from the

current 66 feet in depth.

That part of the canal is

30 kilometers (18 miles)

The plan also includes a 10-kilometer-long extension of a second

lane of the waterway

that opened in 2015. That

would bring the double-lane stretch of the canal to 82 kilometers, or 60

miles, allowing more vessels to pass through

The Ever Given, a Panama-flagged, Japanese-owned ship, had ran aground in the

single-lane stretch of the

canal on March 23 before

it was extracted six days

later after a massive salvage effort by a flotilla of

tugboats. The vessel is still held in the canal's

Great Bitter Lake amid a

financial dispute betw-

een its owners and the Suez Canal Authority.

The six-day blockage di-

srupted global shipment.

Some ships were forced

the canal.

the ceremony.

SUEZ CANAL

SHORT TAKES

IRAN CLASH KILLS 2 GUARD TROOPS,

7 MILITANTS

Tehran: Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard forces on Tue sday killed seven militants and dismantled their cell in the country's northwest near the border with Turkey, Iran's staterun IRNA news agency reported. Two Guard members were also killed in the shootout.

IRNA said the "group of terrorists" had snuck into Iran illegally from Turkey. The clash took place around noon in the city of Salmas in Iran's West Azerbaijan province,

according to the report.

The city is located about 650 kilometers (400 miles) northwest of the capital, Tehran The area has seen occasional fighting between Iranian forces and Kurdish separatists as well as militants linked to the extremist Islamic State group.

In November, unknown gunmen killed three and wounded two Iranian border guards in the province.

SUDAN FORCES DISPERSE PROTEST; TWO KILLED

Cairo: Two protesters were killed when Sudanese security forces dispersed a demonstra tion late Tuesday in the capital of Khartoum, a local medical group said.

The violence broke out when dozens of protesters made their way late in the day to the sealed-off area outside the military's headquarters to comme-morate a deadly break-up of a protester camp two years ago. The protesters have demanded justice for those killed in the 2019 violence. Security forces closed off major roads and streets leading to the government and military headquarters in Khartoum ahead of the

The Sudanese doctors' committee said security forced fired live bullets and tear gas to disperse the protesters, killing at least two people and wounding more than 15 others, some of them in critical condition. The committee is the medical arm of the Sudanese Professionals' Association, which spearhead ed the popular uprising that led to the military's ouster of Omar al-Bashir in April 2019.

CHANCELLOR PROBED OVER LYING **TO MPS IN AUSTRIA**

Vienna: Austria's Sebastian Kurz said on Wednesday that he was being investigated over possible false statements to a parliamentary committee probing corruption, in the lat-est headache for the conservative chancellor

"I wish to inform you that... prosecutors have opened an investigation against the head of my office," Bernhard Bonelli, "and against me", Kurz told reporters before a cabinet meeting.

Kurz denied any wrongdoing, saying: "I always answered all (the committee's) questions truthfully." Prosecutors confirmed in an email that the investigation had been opened after several complaints were

made to them.

The offence of lying under oath carries a prison term of up to three years.

The investigation comes after the opposition Social Democrats (SPOe) and NEOS parties accused Kurz of not telling truth in front of the committee of MPs, who are investigating the fallout from the so-called "Ibizagate" scandal that brought down Kurz's previous government in 2019.

KREMLIN IMPOSES CUTS AT U.S. EMBASSY

Under Kremlin orders, the U.S. Embassy has stopped employing Russians, forcing the embassy to cut its consular staff by 75 per cent and limit many of its services.

The order went into effect on Wednesday, bringing the sharply deteriorating U.S.-Russia relationship to an intensely personal level. Because of the cuts, the embassy can offer only very limited services, such as considering "life-and-death" visa applications. That leaves Russian businessmen, exchange students and romantic partners adrift because they won't be able to obtain visas. Even Americans will be unable to register their newborns or

renew their passports. For Anastasia Kuznetsova, a 20-year-old engaged to marry a Californian, it's a crushing blow. She had already spent about two years seeking a fiancee's visa. The notoriously laborious process for Russians to get US visas had already been slowed by Covid. "I felt destroyed, much more depressed than I was before," said Kuznetsova

Israel PM declares emergency in Lod

Netanyahu visits Tel Aviv suburbs as cops accuse Arab residents of causing riots

Jerusalem, May 12: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday declared a state of emergency in the central city of Lod as police accused Arab residents of waging "wide-scale riots".

Netanyahu's statement came after an Israeli Arab was killed in Lod the previous night as violence soars between Israel and the Palestinian territories.

According to a photographer, Netanyahu himself went to the city, which is in the suburbs of economic hub Tel Aviv near the Ben Gurion airport, to call for calm.

The city of 77,000 people, including 47,000 Jewish Israelis and 23,000 Arab Israelis, had been the scene of violent clashes on Monday, the local police confirmed.

But on Tuesday evening, as protests multiplied across East Jerusalem, the occupied West Bank and also Israeli Arab cities, the situation degenerated in Lod, police said.

"Wide-scale riots erupted by some of the Arab residents and endangering communities," the police said in a statement.

"Vehicle were burnt and damage caused to proper-ty."The government said reinforcements had been deployed after Israeli media reported that three synagogues and several businesses were set on fire in Lod.

"Sixteen border police latoons (have been) platoons mobilised in areas in order to deal with the violence," the police added.

There were also violent scenes in Israeli Arab areas including Acre, Wadi Ara and Jisr A-Zarqa, where eight people were arrested, police said.

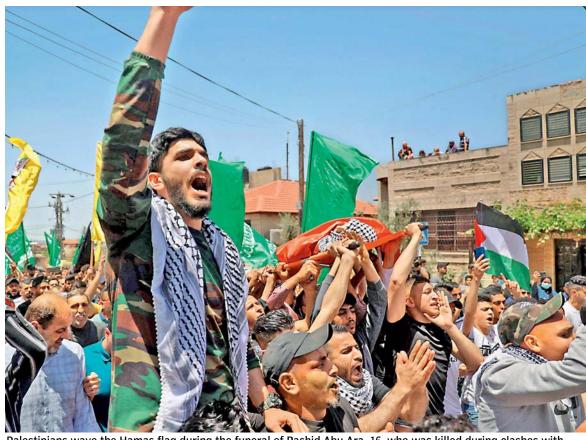
Weeks of tensions boiled over when Israeli riot police clashed with crowds Palestinians Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque, on the last Friday of the Muslim holy month

of Ramadan.

Nightly clashes since then at the compound, which is holy to both Muslims and Jews, and elsewhere in east Jerusalem have left at least 700 Palestinians injured.

On Tuesday Palestinian militants Hamas and the Israeli army traded their heaviest fire for several years, with rockets fired at Tel Aviv after an Israeli destroyed a towe block in Gaza.

Weeks of tensions boiled over when Israeli riot police clashed with crowds of Palestinians at Al Aqsa mosque.



Palestinians wave the Hamas flag during the funeral of Rashid Abu Ara, 16, who was killed during clashes with

Fear of 'war' looms over Israel

Tel Aviv, May 12: Relentless rocket fire and rioting in mixed Jewish-Arab towns fuelled growing fears on Wednesday that deadly violence between Israel and Palestinians could spiral into "full-scale war"

Israel's Defence Minister Benny Gantz vowed more attacks on Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups in Gaza to bring

"total, long-term quiet" considering a ceasefire.

Gaza militants have launched more than 1,000 rockets since Monday, said Israel's army, which has carried out hundreds of air strikes on Islamist groups in the crowded coastal enclave of

The most intense hostili-

killed at least 53 people in Gaza, including 14 chil-dren, and six in Israel, including an Israeli soldier and one Indian national, since Monday.

Three Palestinians were killed in West Bank clashes. And at least 230 Palestinians and 100 Israelis have been wounded.

The bloodshed was trig-

mosque compound, which is sacred to both Muslims

and Jews.

As world powers voiced growing alarm and the UN Security Council readied for another emergency meeting on the bloody crisis, the UN Middle East envoy Tor Wennesland warned that "we're escalating towards a full-scale

PALESTINIANS OPPOSE SOCIAL MEDIA CENSORSHIP

Dubai, May 12: With accounts deleted on accounts Twitter and content blocked on Instagram, Palestinian social media users say they have been censored from showing the reality of the unrest in Jerusalem.

The eastern part of the holy city has been hit with the worst violence since 2017, with clashes centred around the Al Aqsa mosque, the third holiest site in Islam, since Friday.

The tensions have since spiralled into a full-scale military confrontation, in which Islamist groups have fired rockets and Israel has launched air raids on targets in the coastal enclave of Gaza.

The tensions, which the Inited Nations has varned is heading United warned towards "a full-scale war", were triggered by the looming evictions of Palestinian families to make way for Israeli settlers in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah.

On social media, Palestinians have widely shared photos and videos of Israeli forces facing off with residents, in what Amnesty International has denounced as an "illegal and abusive use of force" against "largely peaceful" protesters.

Social media remains an important tool for Palestinians, many of whom believe traditional media coverage does not sufficiently capture the reality of the crisis.



Boris Johnson

India expresses concern Hamas: Gaza City commander killed

FROM PG 1

On Wednesday, Israel stepped up its targeting of Hamas' military wing. The military and internal security agency said they carried out a "complex and first-of-its-kind operation" that killed the Hamas commander in charge of Gaza City, the highest-ranking Hamas military figure killed by Israel since 2014, and several other senior militants involved in rocket produc-

Israel has struck 350 targets and killed at least 30 militants since Monday night, 14 of them on Wednesday, Israeli mili-

tary spokesman Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus said. In one of the fiercest attacks, Israeli fighter jets dropped two bombs on a 14-story building in Gaza City, collapsing it. The bui-lding, located on the

the Roman neighborhood, housed businesses in addition to offices for Hamas' Al-Aqsa satellite channel. Airstrikes also brought down a 12-story office building that housed

busiest shopping street in

Hamas offices as well as other businesses, and heavily damaged a ninestory building with residential apartments, medical companies, a dental clinic and, Israel said.

over Palestine violence establishment by Israel of United Nations, May 12: India is deeply concerned

Amid escalating tensions Israel militants. Palestinian India has expressed deep concern at clashes and violence in Jerusalem's Temple Mount as well as over evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods and called on both sides to avoid changing the status-quo on the ground.

Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Tirumurti tweeted that in the UN Security Council meeting on Tuesday on the escalation in East Jerusalem, he said that

at clashes & violence in Haram Al Sharif/Temple Mount and equally concerned about evictions in Sheikh Jarrah & Silwan neighbourhoods." He said India calls on both sides to avoid changing the statusquo on the ground. He added that the old city also houses Al Zawiyya Al Hindiyya — The Indian Hospice.

India also condemned rocket fire from Gaza, Tirumurti tweeted.

India also and urged restraint of all parties and Council resolution 2334,

Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just. lasting and comprehensive peace. The resolution also reit-

erates its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territto adhere to Security ory and that it fully respect all of its legal obligatiwhich reaffirms that the ons in this regard. -PTI

DESPITE COURT ORDER, UK PM **IGNORES DEBTS**

London, May 12: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, whose personal finances are under scrutiny after several scandals, has failed to pay a small debt nearly seven months after a court order, documents showed Wednesday.

An online database of

civil county court judgments in England and Wales showed Johnson has yet to settle the debt of 535 (\$757, 624 euros) following a ruling on October 26 last year. The judgment, con-

firmed and first reported by the fortnightly satirical and news magazine Private Eye, does not reveal details about the nature of the debt or the creditor. Johnson is named as the debtor and lists his address as 10 Downing Street — the home of prime ministers since 1735 and one of the country's best-known residences. -AFP

Taliban seizes Afghan district before ceasefire

Taliban have seized a district from Afghan government forces on the out-skirts of Kabul, ahead of a three-day ceasefire agreed between the war-

ring sides, officials said. Nerkh district is around 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the Afghan capital in neighbouring Wardak province, which has long been used by militants as a gateway to reach Kabul launch deadly attacks.

Violence has soared since May 1 when the US military began formally withdrawing its last remaining troops, as peace efforts between the Taliban and the Afghan government have stalled.

'Security and defence forces made a tactical retreat from the police headquarters of Nerkh district," Interior Ministry spokesman

Tareq Arian said. Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Taliban, said the insurgents had captured the area on Tuesday, adding that their fighters had seized the police headquarters and an army base.

The Defence Ministry on Wednesday said it would launch an offensive to win back the district, home to more than 60,000

VIOLENCE HAS soared since May 1 when the US military began formally withdrawing its last remaining troops, as peace efforts between the Taliban and the Afghan government have stalled.

people. "Commando reinforcements are on their way," said Fawad Aman, a spokesman defence ministry. Large swathes of Wardak and neighbour-

ing Logar province have been controlled or confor years Taliban fighters and have served as a strategic staging ground for militants hoping to enter Kabul.

The main highway that connects Kabul to southern Kandahar province – the former Taliban stronghold and the scene of intense fighting in recent weeks — goes through the district.

Taliban fighters have been encircling major Afghan urban centres, spurring speculation the militants are waiting for the Americans to withdraw before launching all-out assaults on Afghan

China, Russia using digital tech to sabotage, steal: UK

London, May 12: It is important to win the "hearts and minds" of like-minded countries such as India to prevent countries like China and Russia from filling the multilateral vacuum and misusing digital technology to steal and sabotage, UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab warned on Wednesday. In a keynote speech at

the CyberUK Conference 2021 organised by the UK's support cyber capacity the world for our positive vand. National Cyber Security building in vulnerable vision of cyberspace as a ry".

• WE HAVE got to win hearts and minds across the world for our positive vision of cyberspace as a free space, said Raab.

(NCSC), Centre Cabinet minister issued a stark warning of all too real attacks on democracy as he announced GBP 22 million in new funding to

countries in Africa and free space, open to all the Indo-Pacific. We invited ministers to join the (G7) meeting from India, Australia, South Korea, South Africa and Br

unei, the current ASEAN (Association of South Èast Asian Nations) chair; because we wanted to broaden the group of likeminded countries cooperating on cyber, Raab said. We have got to win hearts and minds across

responsible users and there for the benefit of the whole world. And frankly, we've got to prevent China, Russia and others from filling the multilateral vacuum, he said. The minister made refer-

ence to a clash between authoritarian and democratic states playing out in cyberspace at the moment, tors the "industrial-scale the world for our positive vandals of the 21st centurion of experience as a ry". — PTI

RISKY | LIVING | Urban areas are always exposed to climate change disasters

2. Place of Execution: Within Hulical Town Panchavat

Cities fail to adapt to climate change: Report

Paris, May 12: Hundreds of cities have no climate adaptation plans in place despite ris-ing threats like floods, heatwaves and pollution, according to a report on Wednesday that said this could put 400 million

people at risk across the world. Fast-expanding urban areas are home to more than half the population of the planet and are increasingly exposed to climate-fuelled disasters, economic shocks and health crises as the world warms, with fears that vulnerable communities

CDP, a global non-profit that collects data disclosed by companies, cities, states and

will be hardest hit.

impact, analysed over 800 global cities and found that 43 percent do not yet have a plan to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

With more and more people drawn to live in urban areas, CDP estimated that by 2030 around 400 million people will be living in poorly prepared

"The urgent need to act and have adaptation measures in place to keep the citizens safe, is increasing together with (the growing urban population), said Mirjam Wolfrum, CDP's Policy Director for Europe.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
HULICAL (SELECTION GRADE) TOWN PANCHAYAT, NILGIRIS DISRICT SPECIAL AREA DEVELOPMENT PRO L.No. 79 / 2020 Tender Notice . Tender Inviting Authority Designation, Address: Executive Officer, Hulical Town Panchayat, The Nilgiris District-643 102

EMD Amount. in Rs. (Rounded of to next Name of the work @ Km 1/8 to 3/2 with Pipe Culvert, Surface 110.00 110000.00

3. Bid document available (at free of cost): https://tntenders.gov.in and http://townpanchayats.tn.gov.in/ 4. Due date, time and place for the submission of bids (e-submission is also permitted): 28.05.2021 up to 3.00 P.M in the Office of Hulical Town Panchayat. In the event of specified date for submission of bids is declared a holiday, bids will be received and opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

i. Date, time and place of opening of Tender: 28.05.2021 at 3.30 P.M in the Office of the Hulical Town Panchayat. Selection will be based on the least cost, among the technically qualified bidders.

6. Any other important criteria by the tender inviting authority: Can be seen in the tender document. Any clarification required may be sought from the office of Hulical Town Panchayat during office hours on all working days.

DIPR/1532/Tender/2021



Chronicle

Be grateful for ideas, don't cast them in partisan light

The abject failure of the Union government in anticipating, and preparing the nation for, the second wave of the pandemic Covid-19 seems to have unsettled the ruling dispensation with its leading lights jeering at every criticism, instead of offering an answer. The practical suggestions former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had listed in his letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi were met with an uncharacteristically scornful reply by health minister Harsh Vardhan. And now the letter BJP president J.P. Nadda has written to Congress president Sonia Gandhi in reply to the Congress Working Committee's criticism that the Centre has abdicated its role in fighting the pandemic is another example. As the principal Opposition party, the Congress would be failing in its job if it does not call out the lapses of the government and force it to correct its

course. The government needs to answer it but the BJP has chosen to do the job, seeing it as a political issue. It hardly is.

The BJP president's letter essentially questions the credentials of the

Everyone will join Mr Nadda when he says the vaccine that is made in India should be a matter of national pride but his overplaying the nationalistic cap will be unacceptable

questioner, instead of rebutting the points in a way that behoves the ruling party. To the criticism about the shortage of vaccines, Mr Nadda says state governments had demanded decentralisation of the vaccination programme. This is specious because it is not the entry of the states in the market that has created the shortage; it's the complete lack of planning by the Centre, which went to the town about launching the "world's largest inoculation drive", that has created the present situation where the states are forced to wind up their vaccination camps for short-

age of doses. The shortage was felt even before the third phase of vaccination, to be taken up by the states, started. The states never wanted to pay twice or four times the price the Centre pays the vaccine manufacturers for each dose; nor did they ask for organising a competition with one another and the private sector for vaccines. Now several states, including those ruled by the BJP, are forced to float global tenders for sourcing the vaccine.

The BJP president says the Opposition parties were less appreciative of the achievements of Indian scientists in developing the vaccine. Everyone will join Mr Nadda when he says the vaccine that is made in India should be a matter of national pride but his overplaying the nationalistic cap will be unacceptable. True, there were sceptics even in the scientific community when the authorities concerned cleared the India-made vaccine for emergency use without waiting for the scientific process to get completed. Mr Nadda gives a partisan tilt to the call for adherence to the scientific process. This is unfair.

The Congress' criticism that India is witnessing a "grave calamity" was in fact shared by Mr Nadda's former colleague in the Union council of ministers, Santosh Gangwar, who put it on record in his letter to Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath. Mr Gangwar was only reflecting what millions of Covid-19 patients and their dear ones have been feeling. The BJP must realise that shooting the messenger hardly helps solve issues.

Is it time to free Rajiv killers?

he clamour for the release of seven Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convicts is bound to grow. The change in government in Tamil Nadu has given fresh impetus to what is already a state-wide push to see those involved in the periphery of the LTTE plot to kill a Prime Minister of India be freed as they have been incarcerated for close to 30 years now — May 21 will mark the 30th anniversary of the sombre event that shook the nation. The killing itself had come straight out of a Frederick Forsyth novel with belt bomber Dhanu activating the device while pretending to greet Rajiv Gandhi in Sriperumbudur when he was on a campaign visit.

The Centre has been steadfast in its refusal to countenance the release of the prisoners for life, some of whose death sentences were commuted to life. The rationale for the refusal to consider several pleas, an Assembly resolution and a Cabinet decision to recommend that they be freed on compassionate grounds has been that those associated with the killing of a Prime Minister of the land cannot be sown any mercy. The breach of security taking a PM's life — Rajiv was a former PM at the time as he had refused to try to retain his post though Congress was returned as the single largest party after the 1989 polls — was considered a national affront that hurt even more as the conspiracy was

The Tamil Nadu governor, acting obviously on orders from the Centre, sat on the matter of freeing many who had spent their entire youth in jail, including for the possibly innocent act of procuring a nine-volt battery for the detonator. The LTTE was subsequently decimated after a civil war that lasted over 25 years and Rajiv Gandhi's wife and children had also forgiven the killers. The sentiment in Tamil Nadu is overwhelmingly in favour of the prisoners' release but it is complicated as it involves foreigners. Whether cold-blooded conspirators in assassinating an Indian PM deserve any mercy when they should be in prison for life is another matter.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER

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Vijayawada: No. C 3 & 4, Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.). Phones: (0866) 2555284/ 2555287, Fax (0866) 2555234

Rajahmundry: Vemagrir, Dhawleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry 533125. Phones: (0883) 2417208, 2417618

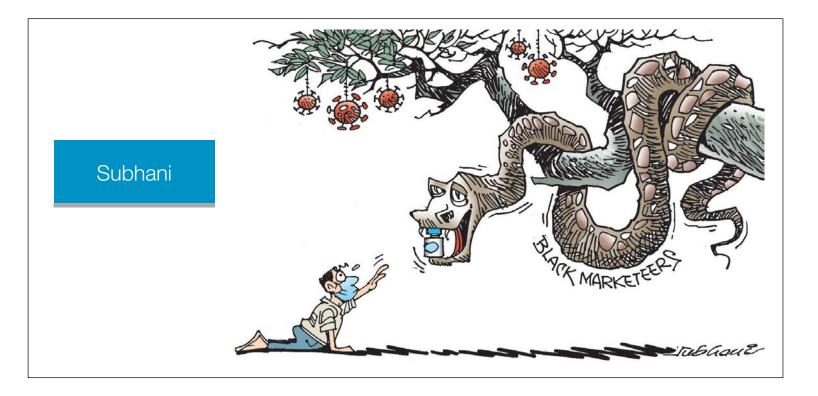
Anantapur: Thapovan Colony, Bangalore Bye-Pass Road, Anantapur 515004. Phones: (08554) 276903,
Fax: 08554-276904

Fax: 08554-276904
Nellore: Survey No. 527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemudugunta Panchayat, Nellore. Phone: (0861) 2348581/82, Telefax (0861) 2348580
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Kozhikode: No 6/1002 E, First Floor City Mall, Opp. YMCA Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001

Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph Press Thycaud post, Cotton Hills, Thiruvananthapuram-14, Ph: 0471-2735105/6/7, Fax: 0471-4016112 Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-



Will Beijing return the remains of 1962 hero?



Claude Arpi

recent months China has given a lot of publicity to several new war memorials which have come up in Tibet; this mushrooming is probably due the Galwan incidents in which the People's Liberation Army lost some 45 men and offi-cers in July 2020, although this information is still a state secret within China (it took months for Beijing to finally admit four Chinese had died in the brawl with Indian

troops). On May 6, China Tibet Net published pictures of the Lhoka (Shannan) Martyrs' Cemetery. This sub-district of the Tibet Military Region (TMD) faces the northern borders of Bhutan and the western part of the McMahon Line, north of the Tawang sector in Arunachal Pradesh.

The article says: "Among the green pines solemn Shannan Martyrs Cemetery, where are buried [the martyrs] of the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, the Tibetan rebellion, the Sino-Indian border self-defence counterattack, and the socialist revolution and construction in Tibet."

More than 700 soldiers are said to be buried there.

Tibet's so-called "peaceful liberation" should be read as the invasion of the Roof of the World; the Tibetan "rebellion" is the Tibetan masses' uprising against the occupiers in March 1959 while "the self-defence counterattack" is the treacherous attack against India in

October 1962. Along with the memori-"sculptures, manuscripts, pictures, certificates of merit, military medals... all cultural relics, silent and sacred, telling the infinite loyalty and love of revolutionary martyrs to the motherland and people."

Similar memorials can be found in Gar and Tsanda in Ngari Prefecture (Western Tibet), in Rima (north of Kibithu in Lohit Valley) and of course in Lhasa and Shigatse; the most important one is Kanxiwar Memorial on the High-way 219 (Aksai Chin road) in Xinjiang, which pays homage to the hundreds of Chinese soldiers who lost their life in the battle of Rezang-la in

While there is nothing wrong in China honouring its soldiers, it is shocking that Beijing has never returned the remains of Subedar Joginder Singh, Param Vir Chakra, who died in Tibet in November 1962. What happened to Joginder Singh?

November 1962.

In the morning of October 20, 1962, a JCO of the Assam Rifles posted at Bumla, north of Tawang, noticed some 1,000 labourers, with digging implements: they protected came soldiers. The Chinese JCO rushed to inform the nearby platoon of a possible danger

Nothing happened till 4.30 am on October 23, when suddenly the Chinese started firing with mortars and anti-tank guns to destroy Indian bunkers built south of the international border, and attacked the Assam Rifles post, which was quickly overrun, though after inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.

Subedar Joginder Singh of 1 Sikh Regiment was posted a few hundred metres away. According to the official report of the 1962 War: "The enemy attacked the forward platoon position of 'D' Coy [Company] of the Sikhs at the IB [Inspection Bungalow] Ridge, at about 5:00 hrs with the objective of capturing 'Twin Peaks'. As the climb from the bed of the nullah to the platoon position was steep,

the Sikhs were able to inflict heavy casualties to the Chinese, compelling them to retire."

Joginder Singh immediately asked for more ammunition, but by that time the enemy had cut the communications with the comapny headquarters. Joginder Singh fought like lion, he was badly wounded in the process and then taken prisoner. The citation for the PVC

gave more details: "In

this fierce action, the platoon lost half of its men but not the will to fight. Subedar Joginder Singh, despite a wound in the thigh, refused evacuation. His platoon also refused to yield any ground to the enemy. The last wave of the Chinese attack, which was more determined and more forceful, followed next. Now the platoon had very few men left to fight. Subedar Joginder Singh, therefore, manned a light machine gun and killed a large number of enemies. But he could not stem the tide of the enemy advance single-handed. Chinese continued advancing with little con-

cern for the casualties." The report concluded: "While in the enemy's custody he died because of his wound. He was awarded the (posthumously) for his bravery.

Joginder was very badly wounded. When a few days later he arrived at the PoWs' camp near Chongye in central Tibet, Chinese doctors immediately suggested an amputation (he was also suffering from frostbites), which the brave subedar refused; his chances of being promoted to Subedar-Major, the senior-most rank for a JCO (junior commissioned officer) would be jeopardised.

The report concluded: 'While in the enemy's custody he [Joginder Singh] died because of his wound. He was awarded the PVC (posthumously) for his bravery.

The Chinese doctors asked the Indian commanding officers in the camp to try to convince Joginder it was necessary if he wanted to survive. But the Indian officers failed to do so and soon after Joginder passed away. This was sometime

in November 1962. Ironically, it is at Bumla, the place where Joginder fought so well, that the first wounded jawans were repatriated by the Indian Red Cross on December 15.

In his memoirs, one of the COs remembered that on March 23, 1963, the PoWs were informed that Maj. Gurdial Singh of the Rajputs, who was in the camp, was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra. At the same time, they probably heard of the PVC for Joginder Singh.

The officer noted: "On 26 March 1963, the commandant of the camp called us to tell us we were going to be returned to India via the main-land." He further recalled: "Before leaving the PoW camp, we asked the Chinese to take us to the graves of our soldiers who had died in our camp. There were seven of them, including Subedar Joginder Singh, who had been awarded the highest gallantry award, the PVC. We were told by the Chinese that he had refused to have his toes, which were affected by frostbite [and bullet

wounds], amputated... He [had] died of gangrene." Incidentally, a war memorial has recently been constructed to honour the PVC awardee at Bum La; it was inauguby Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu, with Joginder's family and representatives Armv present. It is a first step in the right direction, but it is time for New Delhi to ask the Chinese government to repatriate to India the mortal remains of the brave Sikh soldier as well as his six other companions still buried

in Tibet. It would only be late iustice.

The writer is based in South India for the past 42 years. He writes on India, China, Tibet and Indo-French relations.

MAKE IT SEPARATE

The people are being vaccinated at both private and government hospitals and vaccination centres. To prevent the spreading of the coronavirus it would be in the interest of the people if a vaccination programme is not set up in hospitals. The Madras High Court also has rightly recommended the same. Separate centres and buildings or blocks where no covid-19 patients are admitted or undergoing treatment or where no tests (RT-PCR) are taken could be used. Doctors, nurses and other staff should be allotted exclusively for vaccination purposes and should not be allowed to attend to the covid-19 patients or related work.

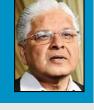
M.C. Vijay Shankar, Chennai

NEED SWIFT ACTION

ond wave of the pandemic has brought back memories of the gory days of the British colonial era marked by pestilence and famines when the poor just floated their dead down the nearest rivers. So-called tall claims of " New India' by the ruling dispensation led by BJP at the Centre were literally washed away on the banks of the holy river Ganga in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh where State authorities have continued to recover bodies of suspected Covid-19 victims. The antiquated public health infrastructure of UP coupled with the callousness of the state administration led by its Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in addressing the desperate pleadings of its people for medical oxygen and hospital beds have now turned the state an ideal place for the virus to have a free run. It is time the UP government sets its priorities right and turns the focus away from crushing the voices of dissent criticising its inept handling of the second wave and initiate steps to save human lives from the jaws

Jeyaram, Sholav and an

Ashwani Kumar



Amid grief as Covid surges, India needs divine mercy!

riven by a compelling need to unburden an unbearable sense grief, this article is also a supplication for divine mercy in these calamitous times. It is about the moral impoverishment of an ancient society and wanton abandonment of empathy, that is an essential condition of our coexistence.

Proud citizens of a resurgent nation that seeks a place on the high table of global politics have been reduced to beggary — begging for a gasp of breath, a ventilator, a hospital bed and medicines, a chance to be vaccinated on a non-discriminatory basis, transportation of the sick and the deceased, sources of information for medical relief and, above all, a cylinder of oxygen to buy time in a hope to live, have robbed us of our innate dignity which defines our humanity. The trauma of seeing a loved one slip away gasping for breath while struggling to hold on to life, wanting to live, is a burden too heavy to carry, and I should know, having lost my wife to lung failure. That she did not go due to lack of oxygen seems like a divine benediction today.

And we die a thousand deaths suffering the loss of our soul every time our dignity is wounded, when the dead do not find space in cremation grounds, when bodies are piled one upon the other waiting to be cremated even as unending funeral pyres test the boundaries of our grief, when the helpless die in rickshaws, scooters and makeshift ambulances outside hospital gates for want of oxygen or hospitalisation alone and in the cold without family or friends, when the nearest and dearest ones are forced to turn away or when nurses steal critical drugs to profiteer over human misery. When an elderly patient gives up his bed to save the life of a younger person or when the allocation of a ventilator depends on the age of the patient, we know what we are or have become -- a savage society

How else can we respond to Sahir Ludhiyanvi's damning interrogatory: Kahan hain, kahan hain muhafiz khudi ke" (Whither the sentinels of honour), except by way of humble repentance for our moral, political and societal excesses? Living with the thought of dying alone with no one to hold our hand in the last moments, not able to feel the warmth of those who are integral to our lives... remains a mourning in perpetuity.

Loneliness, as Mother Teresa had reminded us, is about the feeling of being unloved. Thoughts about the futility of human relationships and about the dispensability of those who define us have added to an unprecedented sense of aloneness. Gulzar's poignant verse depicting a decline in human togetherness even in normal times has an added resonance today: "Zindagi yun hui basar tanha, kafila saath aur safar tanha" (Life lived alone, surrounded by a crowd). And now we are compelled to be alone even in death. Hopefully, this will not be the life we want for the generations to

Wailing mothers, grieving children and the helplessness of marginalised people mock our politics and proclaim a failure of the dignitarian promise of our national charter. Our "raucous" democracy remains enthralled with electoral triumphs and the vanquishing of political opponents even as the

nation's soul is scarred beyond all recognition. The political parties are complicit in their failure to prevent large gatherings, protest movements or religious congregations - all of which are responsible for the pandemic's massive surge across the country. Our exalted institutions of democracy, including Parliament, the Election Commission and even the Supreme Court, have failed the nation. Despite its celebrated jurisprudence on human rights issues, our highest court's inability to issue binding judicial diktats against the holding of massive electoral rallies during the time of a pandemic is wholly inexplicable considering the indisputable evidence that huge physical gatherings compromise the social distancing norms and the legally enforceable Covid-related protocols. An eloquent newspaper headline about a high court sums up in varying degrees the unintended but failure nevertheless, of our constitutional institu-tions. It reads: "High court hearing, plea to get ICU bed, man dies in wait". (Indian Express, May 1)

Clearly, in matters of life and death,

judicial inaction cannot be passed off as an act of judicial restraint. The constitutional courts with a large remit need not be reminded that securing the right to life is the first charge on the exercise of judicial power and that in moments of test, justice and judgment cannot lie

Politicians for their part must know that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting" and that the excesses of power are invariably called to account. We must all accept that the embrace of humility coupled with a rejection of hubris is, in the order of things, both a sign of strength and a condition of our existence. Although the anguish and deep sorrow that drives this article is beyond the "realm of articulate thought", the soaring and silent ache in the heart begs no expression. We know that grief, felt in the innermost recesses of our being, heals even if it is a terrible burden of being, and that "God brings men in deep waters not to drown them but to cleanse them".

The writer is a former Union











COIMBATORE | THURSDAY | 13 MAY 2021

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	48,690.80	-0.96
Nifty 50	14,696.50	-1.04
S&P 500*	4,103.24	-1.18
Dollar (₹)	73.42	-0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.78	-0.12
Euro (₹)	89.10	0.13
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,074 ▼ 229	0.48
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	69.54	1.44
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.010	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.668	0.044
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

Nod for ₹18,100 cr PLI scheme for battery storage

New Delhi: The government approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for promoting battery storage at an estimated outlay of Rs 18,100 crore. With the objective to promote the 'Make in India' initiative, the National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage is expected to attract investment of Rs 45,000 crore, information and broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar said.

EU economy to expand, bouncing back from slump



Brussels: The European Union economy is set to bounce back this year after the deep Coronavirus recession and member states are forecast to have recouped the ground that they had lost by the end of next year. In its latest forecast, the EU's executive commission said that growth in the 27expand by 4.2% this year, a significant uptick from a February prediction of 3.7%.

\$376 mn outflow in India-focussed offshore, ETFs

New Delhi: India-focused offshore funds and exchange-traded funds (ETFs) witnessed a net outflow of \$376 million in three months ended March 2021, making it the twelfth consecutive quarter of withdrawal, according to a Morningstar report released on Wednesday. This was markedly lower than the net outflows of USD 986 million registered during the quarter ended December 2020.

SoftBank sets record with \$17.7bn profit

Tokyo: SoftBank Group Corp. reported a \$17.7 billion fourthquarter profit, setting a new record for Japan thanks to an unprecedented windfall from its investment business. The net income was 1.93 trillion yen in the three months ended March 31, according to a filing by SoftBank on Wednesday. That's the highest ever for a listed Japanese company in any quarter dating back to



■ Food basket inflation at 2%; manufacturing surges

Inflation eases, IIP up

cent in April, just above

the RBI's 4 per cent target

and down from March's

four-month high of 5.52

per cent, according to a

Reuters poll which was taken over the past week.

Meanwhile, the industri-

al output, or IIP, on the

whole grew 22.4 per cent

in March 2021 as com-

pared to 16.7 per cent in the same period a year-ago. Despite the massive

spread of Covid-19 across the country in its second

FMCG industry grows record 9.4%

ditional trade channels jumped to double digits,

while growth in e-com-

merce normalised down

to single digits in the

January-March quarter.

"FMCG industry in India has built growth

momentum by growing at

9.4 per cent in the quarter

ending March 2021 after

growing at 7.3 per cent in

the previous quarter

(October-December 2020),

over the same quarter of

the previous year," said

FMCG Snapshot for Q1

NielsenIQ's

Intelligence team.

released

NielsenIQ South Asia

Retail

FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MAY 12

With the easing of food prices, India's retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index or CPI, slowed to 4.29 per cent in April 2021, while industrial output, measured by the Index of Industrial Production or IIP, grew 22.4 per cent in March 2021 as compared to 16.7 per cent in the same period a year-ago, government data showed on Wednesday.

The CPI data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, however, showed that inflation in the food basket was 2.02 per cent in April, down from 4.87 per cent in the preceding month. The consumer retail inflation was pre-dicted to cool to 4.2 per

New Delhi, May 12: The Indian FMCG industry

has recorded a 9.4 per cent

growth in the January-

March quarter of 2021,

helped by a consumption-

led growth and value growth by increased

prices of products, espe-cially of staples, said data

The rural market contin-

ued to perform with strong growth of 14.6 per

cent during the period and

the metro markets have

registered a positive

growth after two quarters.

Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry

sales growth from the tra-

analytics firm Nielsen.

wave, industrial activities were not hampered to a great extent.

A separate data, released by the National Statistics Office, also showed that the manufacturing sector output surged 25.8 per cent in March 2021. "Besides, mining output to alimbed 6.1 per cent too climbed 6.1 per cent and power generation increased by 22.5 per cent in March. The IIP had shrunk by 18.7 per cent in March 2020," it showed.

As per the data, during 2020-21, the IIP contracted 8.6 per cent compared to 0.8 per cent contraction in 2019-20. Industrial production has been hit due to the Covid-19 pandemic since March last year when it contracted by 18.7 per cent.

The IIP had registered a growth of 5.2 per cent in February last year.

Lead Diptanshu Ray said: "This is backed up by sta-

ples, essential non-foods

and indulgence categories." He cautioned that

the beginning of the sec-

ond quarter may bring some new dimensions, as

the situation is dynamic.

"Now that lockdowns

have resurfaced, and with

last-mile delivery boost

up, the e-commerce chan-

nel will continue to be

According to the report,

metros have registered a

growth of 2.2 per cent in

the January-March quar-

ter after two-quarters of

dynamic," it said.

IEA SAYS OIL GLUT GONE EVEN AS DEMAND FORECAST CUT ON INDIA

GRANT SMITH

The International Energy Agency said the supply glut created by the global even as demand suffers a blow from a resurgence of the virus in India.

Surplus oil inventories in developed nations are now just a small fraction of the levels seen when demand collapsed last year, with output cuts by OPEC and its allies draining the excess, the IEA said on Wednesday. Still, the agency sees a temporary setback for global consumption as infections rock India, before the recovery resumes later in the year.

"Bloated world oil inventories that built up during last year's COVID-19 demand shock have returned to more normal levels," the IEA said in its monthly report. "But India's COVID crisis is a reminder that the outlook for oil demand is mired in uncertainty. Until the pandemic is brought under control, market volatility is likely to persist." Oil markets have extended their recovery as fuel consumption roars back in China and the US, buoying crude prices to about US\$69 a barrel in

U.S. REVERSES TRUMP JAB, **REMOVES XÍAOMI** FROM BLACKLIST

May 12: The US Defence Department will remove China's Xiaomi Corp from a government blacklist, a court filing showed, marking a reversal by the Biden administration of one of Donald Trump's last jabs at Beijing before exiting office.

The court filing said the company and the US government would agree to resolve their ongoing litigation, bringing to an end a brief and controversial spat between the hardware company and Washington that had fur-ther soured Sino-US ties.

A Xiaomi spokeswoman said the company is watching the latest developments closely, without

elaborating.
Shares in the company jumped over 6 per cent in Hong Kong as news of the decision spread. The company's share price has tumbled roughly 20 per cent since it was placed on the blacklist in January in the waning days of the Trump administration.

The defence department did not immediately comment. A justice departspokeswoman

declined to comment.

The department had designated the firm as having ties to China's military and placed it on a list that would restrict US investment in the compa-

ny. Xiaomi went on the offensive by filing a law-suit against the US government, calling its placement "unlawful and unconstitutional" and denying any ties to China's military.

Job postings decline yearly, sequential fall

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 12

Amid the second wave of the pandemic, online job postings saw a decline in April, both against March 2021 as well as lockdownhit April 2020.

The employment index saw a decline in job post-ing activity in April 2021 compared to the previous month by 3 per cent. Overall job postings have declined by 4 per cent year-on-year in April 2021 compared to April 2020, Monster.com said.

The job postings for entry-level roles have declined by 5 per cent month-on-month in April 2021 against March 2021. The decline in postings is due to the onset of the second wave of the pandemic leading to lockdowns, Monster.com reported

Industries that exhibited the highest decline in job postings compared to the previous month include engineering, cement, con-struction, iron and steel, which declined 15 per cent, retail 14 per cent, FMCG, food and packaged food 12 per cent and logistics, courier/ freight/ transportation 12 per cent.

Meanwhile, industries such as travel and tourism declined 52 per cent, education 34 per cent, engineering, cement, con-struction, iron/ steel 26 per cent as of April 2021 compared to April 2020. Online job postings in

Delhi were down 1 per cent and Mumbai 2 per cent in April compared to March. Cities like Baroda

with a 10 per cent decline and Jaipur with 5 per cent have been the most impacted sequentially.

However, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai reported significant increase in the number of job postings year-on-year and marginal growth month-on-month. Agrobased industries, chemicals/ plastic/ rubber, paints, fertilizer/ pesticides and printing/ packaging recorded good growth over April 2020. Software and hardware, telecom and shipping and marine too saw growth in April. 'The second wave of the

pandemic and various intensities of lockdowns across the country have impacted hiring activity. However, hiring activity in cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai indicate a positive uptick and year-on-year growth across certain sectors and functions have been witnessed. These are positive indicators that we are better equipped to face the impact this year com-pared to April 2020," said Sekhar Garisa, CEO of

New Covid-19 lockdowns hit vehicle sales: Siam

London.

MICHAEL GONSALVES

The Covid-19 pandemic induced partial lockdown in several states hit sales of cars, SUVs, vans, bikes and scooters during April as showrooms remained shut while those open wore a deserted look.

On weanesaay Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers or Siam said passenger vehicles sales in April fell 10 per cent at 2,61,633 units compared with 2,90,939 units sold in March 2021. No year-on-year compari-

total national lockdown in April 2020 which led to zero sales in that month.

Sales of two-wheelers also fell 33 per cent last month at 9,95,097 compared with 14,96,806 units sold in March. While sales of three-wheelers dropped 57 per

cent at 13,728 units, the all categories of vehicles plunged 30 per cent at 12,70,458 units. While showrooms

remain shut in most parts of the country, automakers have been forced to advance their mainte-

nance shutdown by a month to May due to a number of business disruptions.

Maruti Suzuki, Hero MotoCorp, Honda Cars, Honda Motorcycles and Scooter, Toyota Kirloskar, MG Motor, Yamaha and Mahindra & Mahindra announced temporary plant closures. Other companies like Tata Motors are rationalising output as per demand.

Since retail off-take has been impacted, automakers are trying to avoid a pile of inventory by cutting back on production. The lockdown has hit the supply chain involving component supplies. "Supply chain related

— Bloomberg

production challenges continue with the lockdown restrictions in many parts of the country. The demand has been clearly impacted by the second wave of Covid-19, both in terms of low consumer sentiments and closure of dealerships due to lockrestrictions Raiesh Menon. Director General at Siam, said.

May Federation of Automobile Dealers Association or

FADA also reported lower sales during April based on the vehicle registration data sourced from the regional transport offices.

When compared to the previous month of March, FADA said in April 2021 total vehicle registrations were down 28.15 per cent at 11,85,374 units versus 16,49,678 units.

Passenger vehicle registrations were down 25.33 per cent at 2,08,883 units in April, as against 2,79,745 units in March this year, while those of 2W declined by 27.63 per cent at 8,65,134 units, as against 11,95,445 in the previous month, it pointed out.

Maharashtra, Delhi,
Karnataka, Kerala, UP,

Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Goa are some of the states that have announced full lockdowns, putting automotive sales in the non-essential category "The first nine days of

Mav have seen extremely lean sales due to lockdown announced by a majority of states. Even where dealerships are open, the walk-ins have dropped to 30 per cent and customers are delaying their decision." FADA said.

SAYS BHARAT BIO New Delhi, May 12: It is quite disheartening to listen to some states complaining about Bharat intentions Biotech's

DISHEARTENING

TO HEAR STATES

COMPLAINING,

supply regarding COVID vaccine Covaxin a top company official

said on Wednesday.

In a tweet, Bharat
Biotech Joint Managing
Director Suchitra Ella said the company has already dispatched Covaxin lots to 18 states on May 10. "18 states have been cov-

ered though in smaller shipments. Quite dis-heartening to the teams to hear some states complaining about our intentions. 50 of our employees are off work due to covid, yet we continue to work under pandemic lock-downs 24x7 for U," she said in a tweet.
The Hyderabad-based

firm is supplying Covaxin 18 states, including Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Odisha, Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Jharkhand and Delhi. Other states are Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Telangana, Tripura,

COFFEE WITHOUT BEANS? A STARTUP BREWS A NEW CUP

MANISHA JHA MAY 12

A block away from the Starbucks on Seattle's busy Western Ave., a woman bends over a coffee grinder and a black kettle full of bubbling water sits on a hot plate. The air is thick with the roasty aroma of freshbrewed java. The scene would be entirely unre-markable except for a few outstanding details. One, the woman is wearing a

lab coat.
Two, there's a steaming glass beaker instead of a mug. And three, not a sincoffee bean was involved in making it.

This is the office of food tech start-up Atomo Coffee Inc., where a team of food scientists and chemists led by friends and co-founders Andy Kleitsch and Jarret Stopforth are working on what they hope will be the successor to meatless meat, eggless eggs, and milkless milk.

Atomo's coffeeless coffee is made from upcycled ingredients, e.g. sun-flower seed husks and watermelon seeds, which undergo a patented chemical process to yield molecules that mimic the flavor and mouthfeel of the real thing. The resulting grounds are brewed just like a regular cup of coffee. And yes, it has caf-

— Bloomberg

DIIs stake in Nifty 500 at 14.3%

Mumbai, May 12: As for-eign portfolio investors their holding in the domestic stocks, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) have been net sellers, and their stake in Nifty-500 stocks declined to a seven-quarter low of 14.3 per cent in the march 2021 quarter, shows a brokerage analysis.

On an annualised basis, the overall FPI ownership in Nifty-500 stocks rose 160 bps to 22.3 per cent in the March quarter from 20.7 per cent in March 2020, while that of DIIs

declined 50 bps to 14.2 per cent from 14.7 per cent in

On a quarterly basis, the same FPIs saw a 20 bps decline from the December 2020 quarter, and DHs witnessed decline by 10 bps, show data from domestic brokerage Motilal Oswal Financial Services

In the March quarter, while foreign portfolio investors pumped \$7.3 billion into domestic equities, domestic institutional funds saw a net outflow of \$3.2 billion. It indicates vastly divergent

between FPI and DII purchases of equities, it said. While FPIs increased weights in two-thirds of

the sectors (telecom, metals, consumer durables. realty, and cement), DIIs trimmed weights on these sectors in particular and the overall market in general between the December and March quarters. The overall FPI ownership in Nifty-500 grew 160 bps year-on-year to 22.3

per cent while DII hold-

ings were down 50 bps

down year-on-year to 14.3

sequential trends are seen inflate costs for everyone from restaurants to confectionery and cosmetic manufacturers, and could potentially change consumption patterns. The world's most consumed edible oil is found in products as diverse as

chocolate, pastries, soaps, lipstick and biofuel, and is widely used in Asian restaurants. The tropical oil has surged more than 120% in the past year and burst through 4,500 ringgit (\$1,091) a tonne to a record on Wednesday.

"The rise in prices to all-

May 12: The meteoric time highs is bound to affect consumer habits," said Gnanasekar Thiagarise in palm oil prices to record levels is poised to rajan, head of trading and hedging strategies at Kaleesuwari Intercontinental. "Consumption is expected to go down, and if this uptrend in prices is

PALM OIL'S RISE TO HAVE WIDE IMPACT

maintained, there could be a shift in food habits

that could altogether change food preferences.' The world's top importer is India followed by China, and the largest producer and user is Indonesia. In Europe and the US, the oil faces headwinds over concerns that its cultivation causes deforestation. — Bloomberg

Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maha-rashtra and West Bengal. — PTI

GOOD ITIMES Once-in-a-decade opportunity sees new highs; BSE IT Index rises 101% IT, metal, small-cap focused funds top MFs' harvest

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MAY 12

The last one-year period has brought bumper returns for mutual fund investors, that is seen once in a decade.

No less than 14 schemes have returned more than 100 per cent during the last one year period. Even the largest funds managed by HDFC Mutual Fund and ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund falling in the safer hybrid category balanced advantage fund have generated 40 to 60 per cent returns compared to around 60 per cent returns given almost all large cap equity

Mid-cap equity funds return range between 59 and 78 per cent while the small-cap equity funds have turned the table this year with 80-100 per cent or more in return for most of the funds in the sub-cat-

Said Ravi Singhal, vice chairman, GCL Securities, "Such opportunities come once in ten years. After the 2008 financial crisis, select mutual funds had displayed similar performance in 2009. Otherwise, in general, one should not expect more than 15-20 per cent yearly return from the stock market and equity-orient-



ed mutual funds."

'The BSE IT index has given a 101 per cent return in the last one year. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemstocks were ITinvestors choice, as these companies are getting mammoth deals. Owing to

reasons such as increase in the Work From Home (WFH), change in business tactics, use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), cloud, online advertising and social media, increase in internet consumption and many more, the IT sector remained an outper-former. Looking at these factors, IT stocks will remain agile during the pandemic," Singhal said. The BSE Metal Index has given an outstanding return of 182 per cent in

last one-year period. "Due to the low-interest rates, metal demand has increased significantly across the world. As per

the USA have remained the highest since 2007. Moreover, rising housing and infrastructure demand in China will further augment the metal demand. These factors are helping the metal sector to outdo this excellent performance for one more year," Singhal said. Small cap companies have displayed fairly good performance, the BSE small cap index return

recent data, home sales in

was at 99.51 per cent in the last one year.
"Due to the COVID-19 challenge, a limitation in boundaries is helping the cap companies.

Owing to a new taxation

are finding it easier to fight with large companies. On account of fewer imports from China due to the cold war situation and border tussles, small cap companies are immensely benefiting," Singhal said. The IT sector funds with

system, small companies

over 100 per cent return as on April 27, include ICICI Prudential Technology Fund (154%), Tata Digital India Fund (113%), Aditya Birla Sun Life Digital India Fund (113%).

The small-cap funds include Quant Small Cap Fund (175%), Kotak Smallcap Fund (114%), Nippon India Small-cap Fund



SHORT TAKES

NZ 'keeper Watting

to retire after WTC

Wellington: New Zealand wicket-keeper batsman BJ Watling on Wednesday announced that he will end his over-decade long career in all forms of cricket after the World Test Championship final against India next month. New Zealand will also play two Tests against hosts England before the WTC final against India in Southampton from June 18. The 35-year-old has been a stalwart of the Test side since debuting in 2009 as an opener, going on to establish himself as a world-class keeperbatsman and claiming numerous records in his 73 Tests to date. The Northern Districts gloveman had been pondering his options for a while. "It's the right time," said Watling. The announcement of Watling's retirement was also expedited by his expected omission from the player con-tracts list. — PTI

Perera appointed

Sri Lanka skipper

Colombo: Wicketkeeper-batsman Kusal Perera was on Wednesday named Sri Lanka's **ODI captain with Kusal Mendis** as his deputy for the away series against Bangladesh this month. Perera, who has represented Sri Lanka in 101 ODIs, 22 Tests and 47 T20Is, takes over the reins from Dimuth Karunaratne who has been dropped along with Angelo Mathews and Lahiru Thirimanne. - PTI Squad: Kusal Perera (capt), Kusal Mendis (vice-capt), Danushka Gunathilaka, Dhananjaya Silva, Pathum Nissanka, Dasun Shanaka, Ashen Bandara, Wanindu Hasaranga, Isuru Udana, Akila Dananjaya, Niroshan Dickwella, Dushmantha Chameera. Ramesh Mendis. Asitha Fernando, Lakshan Sandakan, Chamika Karunaratne, Binura Fernando, Shiran Fernando.

Need competitions before Oly: Neerai

Mumbai: The training has gone along just fine but Olympicbound star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Wednesday said he is desperate for some competition ahead of the Tokyo Games given that two years have simply been "wasted" because of injury and the Covid-19 pandemic. The 23-year-old, who is being seen as a strong medal hope in Tokyo, said he has been coordinating with the Sports Authority of India to get some competition exposure. I am trying to give my 100 pe cent in training and have been training as I used to do before. The focus on training is good and it is happening well. But am in need of competitions and we are trying for it," he said. "It has been over two years that I haven't played international competitions," added Neeraj.

RP Singh loses his

father to Covid-19

New Delhi: Former India crick-

eter Rudra Pratap Singh lost his father to Covid-19 on Wednesday. The 35-year-old left-arm pacer from Uttar Pradesh informed about the death of his father Shiv Prasad Singh on twitter. "It is with deepest grief and sadness we inform the passing away of my father, Mr Shiv Prasad Singh. He left for his heavenly abode on 12th May after suffering from Covid. We request you to keep my beloved father in your thoughts and prayers. RIP Papa," he tweeted. RP Singh represented India in 14 Tests, 58 ODIs and 10 T20Is before hanging his boots in September 2018. - PTI

Semenya held for

reckless driving

Cape Town: Olympic champion Caster Semenya was sentenced to 50 hours of community service for speeding while driving in South Africa, prosecutors said on Wednesday. The runner was arrested last Thursday and released on \$35 bail, the National Prosecuting Authority said in a statement. Semenva appeared in court in the capital, Pretoria, on Friday and pleaded guilty to the offense, the NPA said. — AP

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ALL-ROUND VALUE

Bowling coach says Shardul has proved with the bat too

New Delhi, May 12: India bowling coach Arun Wednesday said Shardul Thakur has what it takes to be the fast-bowling allrounder that the team has needed ever since Hardik Pandya's back injury restricted his role with the ball. Pandya was not included in the Test team for the tour of England as he "was not in a position to bowl", according to the

Arun said that while the selectors will have the last word on finding the next set of options, Thakur has certainly made a case for

'It is more of a selectors' job to find them and then we can develop those allrounders. Shardul has proved he can be an all rounder. What he did in Australia was fabulous,

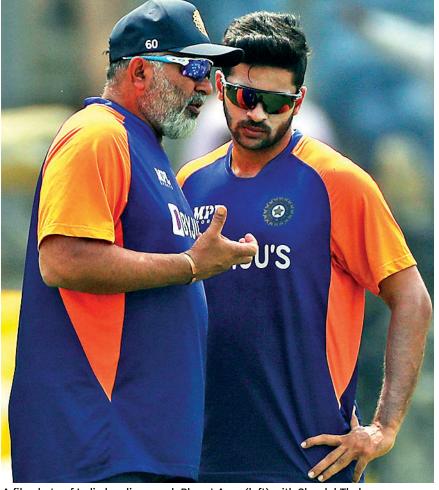
Arun said.
Pandya last played Test cricket for India in 2018, the tour of during England. He has been battling a back injury since 2019 and recently, during the IPL, also picked up a shoulder niggle.

Arun agreed that finding someone as good as Pandya would be a very

tough job.
"I wish you could just wish and develop bowlers like that. Hardik is an outstanding talent, but unfortunately, he had to undergo a back operation and then it's not very easy to come back after that," he

bowled against England, I thought he did a really good job. But, to sustain that we need to manage him well and build on his strength," he

The two-Test old Thakur was mighty impressive in the only longest format game he played in the series against



A file photo of India bowling coach Bharat Arun (left) with Shardul Thakur.

KP SAYS ECB MAY CHANGE IPL STANCE

London, May 12: Kevin Pietersen believes that England's cricket board will relent if country's top players unanimously decide to participate in the currently-suspended Indian Premier League in case it resumes September this year.

Director Cricket Ashley Giles has indicated that their centrally contracted cricketers might not be available for the second phase of the IPL as they have international commitments which they need to honour.

"It's going to be interest-ing to watch how the ECB handle this issue around not allowing its best players to play IPL if it's rescheduled," Pietersen tweeted.

When I went up against ENG, I was alone. This time, it's all their best branded players! If they stand together, they'll play IPL," said the former England captain.

Dravid picked Aussie brains: Greg

Dravid picked Australian brains to create a talent identification system better than Australia in India, the legendary Greg Chappell has said, lamenting the current lack of a similar structure in his own country that was "one of the best at developing young players. 'Chappell said that both

overtaken Australia as the best in recognising young talent and providing them a platform to succeed.

'India have got their act together and that's largely because Rahul Dravid has picked our brains, seen what we're doing and replicated it in India and with their much larger (population) Čhappell India and England have cricket.com.au.

Dravid is the Director of Cricket Operations at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. He was the head coach of India A and India under-19 cricket teams between

2016 and 2019. Chappell, one of the finest batsmen to have played the game, cau-tioned that talented Australian cricketers might find their careers at

crossroads because of the domestic structure.

"Historically, we've been one of the best at developing young players and keeping them in the system, but I think that's changed in the last couple of years. I'm seeing a bunch of young players with great potential who are in limbo. That's unacceptable. We cannot afford to lose one player." — PTI

BARCA TITLE

HOPES HANG

BY A THREAD

Madrid, May 12: Lionel

Messi scored a brilliant

volley but Barcelona's

title hopes could be over,

with a 3-3 draw away at

Levante on Tuesday giv-

chance to pull away at the

Another slip could

Atletico will move four

points clear of Barca with

two games left if they can win away at Real Sociedad on Wednesday.

Real Madrid will edge two

points ahead of Ronald

Atletico Madrid

top of La Liga.

prove decisive

Real Madrid and

to miss Games New Delhi, May 12: Star The Singapore Open, Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal and Kidambi a Super 500 event Srikanth's chances of booking berths for Tokyo Olympics are all but over after the world body on on the BWF World Tour, was the last tournament offering Wednesday cancelled the

Saina, Srikanth

Singapore due to the coronavirus-related restrictions. The tournament organisers Singapore Badminton Association (SBA) and Radminton World Badminton Federation (BWF) jointly

agreed to cancel the Singapore Open scheduled for June 1-6. The Singapore Open, a Super 500 event on the BWF World Tour, was the last tournament offering Race To Tokyo ranking points inside the Olympic

last qualifying event in

qualifying window. In the interests of all players, tournament personnel and the local community's health and safety, the event has been cancelled. BWF can confirm the tournament will not be rescheduled," the BWF

said in a statement.
"All attempts were made by the organisers and BWF to provide a safe tournament environment for all participants. However, rising Covid-19 cases globally led to complex challenges in managing inbound trav-

el." The BWF said it will

Race To Tokyo ranking points inside the Olympic qualifying window.

issue a further statement on Tokyo Olympics qualifying at a later date.

The chances of London Olympics bronze-medallist Saina and Srikanth qualifying for the Olympics had hinged on the Singapore Open after the Malaysian Open (May 25 to 30) was postponed on May 7.

After the postponement of the Malaysian Open, Badminton Association of India (BAI) had reached out to the world body, seeking clarity on the qualification scenario for its shuttlers. With Singapore suspending all flights from Covid-ravaged India, it was always going to be a difficult task for the Indian players, to travel to the country for the last qualifi-

Indian shuttlers who have already made the cut for the Olympics include PV Sindhu, B Sai Praneeth and the men's doubles pairing of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy.

— PTI

OLYMPICS CANCELLATION

DEMANDS GROW LOUDER

Tokyo, May 12: A full-page newspaper ad says

Japanese will be "killed by politics" because the gov-

ernment is forcing them to endure the pandemic with-

out vaccines. More than 300,000 people have signed a

petition calling for the Tokyo Olympics to be canceled.

And a swimming star has faced pressure to drop out of

the games. Prime Minister Yoshinide Suga, mean

while, has caused anger and confusion by repeatedly

vowing to skeptical lawmakers that the Olympics will

be safe, even as some hospitals struggle to find beds for

the sick and dying and a state of emergency was

Public frustration has even targeted Japanese swim-

ming star Rikako Ikee who tweeted recently that she

has received messages that "pained her heart" by urg-

Meanwhile, Japan plans to vaccinate its Olympic athletes before the Games, a move that would place them ahead of the general population as the government

TT loses a legend

extended on Wednesday to more places in Japan.

ing her to oppose the Olympics and not attend.

faces pressure over a slow rollout.

A Manchester City fan celebrates his club's EPL triumph.

PROLIFICI

Manchester City win EPL title for third time in four seasons

London, May 12: Manchester City were crowned Premier League champions for the third time in four seasons after Manchester United crashed to a 2-1 defeat against Leicester on Tuesday.

Pep Guardiola's side are

10 points clear of second placed United and have wrapped up the title with three games to spare. In the midst of a gruelling run of three games

in five days, United man-Ole Gunnar effectively Solskjaer handed the title to arch rivals City by picking a weakened team with 10

With many of City's players watching on television, Luke Thomas' 10th minute volley put Leicester ahead before Greenwood equalised five minutes

Caglar Soyuncu's towering header in the 66th minute ensured City could pop the champagne corks for a title party that has seemed inevitable for

months. City were denied the chance to celebrate on when Chelsea won 2-1 at the Etihad



This has been a season and a Premier League title like no other. This was the hardest one. To come through this season, with all the restrictions and difficulties we've faced, and show the consistency we have is remarkable. It is relentless

— PEP GUARDIOLA Manchester City manager

even greater triumph on

May 29 when they face

Chelsea in their first ever

Champions League final. Drained by the late fin-

ish to last season and ill-

prepared due to the sub-

sequent lack of a proper

pre-season, City were

After a dismal 1-1 draw

Bromwich Albion in December, City had won

just five of their opening

12 Premier League games. It was the worst

start to a season of

Guardiola's managerial

career, prompting the Spaniard in the startling

admission that he didn't

West

slow out of the blocks.

against lowly

Stadium, while United consistency we have is kept them waiting with a remarkable. It is relentvictory at Aston Villa on

Sunday.
But the delay was only temporary and City, who also won the League Cup in April, can finally savour a title triumph that is all the sweeter given the obstacles they have overcome this term. "This has been a season a Premier League

was the hardest one, Guardiola said. We will always remember this season for the way we won. I am so proud to be the manager here and of this group of

title like no other. This

players. 'Ťhey are so special. To come through this season, with all the restrictions and difficulties we've faced, and show the

MOST TITLES (EPL ERA) Manchester United 13

Chelsea **Manchester City** 5 Arsenal Blackburn Rovers Leicester City Liverpool

like his team. A coronavirus outbreak in the squad added Guardiola's problems in Treble-chasing City's seventh top-flight title could be the prelude to an December.

Having surrendered the title meekly to Liverpool the previous season, it seemed City were heading for a period of regression. But Guardiola masterminded such a superb recovery that City turned the title race into a procession, giving him three Premier League crowns to go with three La Liga trophies with Barcelona and three at Bayern

Munich. Following the West Brom game, City powered to 21 successive victories in all competitions, a record for an English topflight club, including a 4-1 rout of Anfield.

Koeman's side if they win away on Thursday at Granada. There are certainly no guarantees in what has been a frenetic and thrilling title race in recent weeks, with all of Spain's four contenders stumbling down the final

UEFA BEGINS LEGAL BATTLE WITH REBELS

Lausanne, May 12: UEFA on Wednesday initiated disciplinary proceedings against Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus, the three clubs yet to renounce the abort-European League project.

European football's governing body has appointed disciplinary inspectors to conduct an investigation regarding a potential violation of UEFA rules by the clubs "in connection with the so-called 'Super League' project", it announced.

"Further information regarding this matter will be made available in due course.

UEFA last week said it would take "appropriate action" against the three clubs who still support the proposed League, a competition that would guarantee its founding members involvement every season, instead of having to

and brave fighter NEHA SURANA I DC CHENNAI, MAY 12 The Indian table tennis fra-

ternity on Wednesday expressed shock and sorrow at the demise of Arjuna awardee V. Chandrasekhar. Chandra, as he was fondly called, passed away due to Covid-19-related complications here on Wednesday. He was 63 and is survived by his wife and son.

A three-time national champion, Chandra was a stylish player with a huge fan following during his playing days. As a coach, Chandra played a key role in grooming champions such as S. Raman and G. Sathiyan. His academy in Chennai has produced many a quality player.

Sathiyan, who trained under Chandra for 14 years, said his demise felt like a personal loss. "My family was pretty close to him. I have a lot of memories which I will cherish forever. When I found out he was hospitalised, I kept calling to check on his health. He was fine for a few days but I think things went out of control in the past two days," said Sathiyan.

Veteran paddler Sharath Kamal said the sport had lost a legend. "It's a very



V. Chandrasekhar

tough loss for the fraternitv. Had he continued playing, he would have brought more laurels to the country. But what happened to him was really unfortunate," said Sharath.

Chandra's life turned upside down in 1984 after he underwent a botched knee surgery at a private hospital. His brain suffered damage, he lost con-trol over his limbs and spent more than a month in a near-coma state. His valiant legal fight against the hospital made the headlines and he won the lawsuit later.

Raman hailed Chandra as a "fighter". "A multi-talent-ed person before medical negligence reduced him to fight for survival. As a player he fought against the system. Remained a fighter till the very end, battling tooth and nail with Covid," said Raman, who coaches Sathiyan now.