

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 12 MAY 2021



## WEATHER

Max: 38.9°C  
Min: 29.1°C  
RH: 38%  
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Rain likely in evening. Max/Min temp. 38/28°C

## ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Vaishakha Shuddha Padyami till 3.05 am (Thursday)  
Star: Krittika till 2.39 am (Thursday)  
Varjyam: 1.05 pm to 2.53 pm  
Durmuhurtlam: 11.47 am to 12.38 pm

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm

## HJRI CALENDAR

Ramzan 29, 1442 AH

## PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.39 am  
Zohar: 12.22 pm  
Asar: 4.41 pm  
Magrib: 6.45 pm  
Isha: 7.58 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.40 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.46 AM

MOONRISE TOMORROW 5.25 AM

MOONSET TODAY 6.23 PM

## RAMZAN TIMINGS

IFTAR: 6.45 PM (TODAY)

SEHR: 4.16 AM (TOMORROW)

## COUNTER POINT



People have learned to live with Corona... now, they need to learn to live without oxygen!

## SHORT TAKES

## Petrol, diesel price hiked for 6th time

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices on Tuesday were hiked for the sixth time this month, propelling prices to cross the ₹100-a-litre-mark in places from Nanded in Maharashtra to Rewa in Madhya Pradesh to Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. Petrol price was hiked by 27 paise a litre and diesel by 30 paise per litre.

## Random aviation breath analyser

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday directed that air traffic controllers and five per cent of pilots and cabin crew on duty will undergo random breath analyser tests for next three months in view of the pandemic. Justice Prathiba M. Singh further directed the ATCs, pilots and cabin crew to give an undertaking that they have not consumed any alcohol or psychotropic substance within 12 hours prior to a flight.

## Docs warn over cow dung therapy

Ahmedabad: Doctors in Gujarat have warned against a so-called 'cow-dung therapy', saying smearing of cow dung on the body does not give protection against coronavirus but may cause other infections including mucormycosis. Some people were visiting a cow shelter to take the therapy, believing it increases immunity against Covid-19.

## ED files case on Anil Deshmukh

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a criminal case under the anti-money laundering law against former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh in an alleged 'bribery' case, official sources said on Tuesday. They said the case registered under sections of the PMLA was filed after studying a CBI FIR filed against Deshmukh in April.

## WORLD | 9

Germany bans data sharing by Facebook



## SPORTS | 12

Osaka raises doubts over Olympics

## TABLOID

Golden Globes 2022 dropped over diversity



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# 10-day lockdown to fight Covid-19

Four-hour relaxation from 6 am to 10 am every day; KTR heads task force to buy medicines

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

The Telangana state government announced a lockdown in the state for 10 days from Wednesday, with a four-hour exemption for people to complete their essential work between 6 am and 10 am.

The Cabinet, which met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao here on Tuesday, decided to enforce the lockdown while exempting agriculture, health, construction, warehousing, e-commerce, door delivery of food and a few other sectors. The Cabinet will meet again on May 20 to review the situation and decide on continuation of lockdown.

During this 10-day period testing for Covid and vaccination will continue. Banks and ATMs will operate as usual, government offices will function with one-third staff, LPG cylinder supply will be normal and supply of water and sanitation works both in urban and rural areas have been exempted.

Procurement of paddy will continue and so will employment guarantee works. All establishments were directed to pay the full salary to their employees during the lockdown.

The Cabinet decided to close down cinema halls, swimming pools, clubs, gyms, amusement parks and sports stadia. City transport and metro services will be restricted between 6 am and 10 am and public distribution system shops will be open only during the four-hour window.

Medical shops and hospitals will run round-the-clock. The lockdown does not cover goods vehicles carrying commodities on highways, while passenger vehicles will be stopped.



An ambulance carrying Covid patient drives by as hundreds of people throng a liquor store in Hyderabad after the government announced lockdown on Tuesday. Social distancing norms were totally ignored. — S.SURENDRA REDDY

● THE GOVERNMENT felt such pressure that it had to approve the lockdown and inform the High Court of the decision, besides leaking it to media while the Cabinet meeting was in progress.

● NEWS OF lockdown was out in 20 minutes of the Cabinet meeting

Filling stations on highways will stay open. Interstate bus services will be suspended.

After recovering from Covid, IT and industries minister K.T. Rama Rao was given the crucial responsibility of heading a task force that should ensure regular procurement and supply of medicines and injections. The Chief Minister also called manufacturers of remdesivir from the Cabinet

meet and asked them to supply adequate quantities to the state.

The government which vehemently opposed the lockdown, as was evident from the statements of the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar two days ago, had a rethink with the Telangana High Court taking a serious view against the government's handling of the second wave of Covid-19.

The government felt such pressure that it had to approve the lockdown and inform the High Court of the decision, besides leaking it to media while the Cabinet meeting was in progress.

While the Cabinet meet began at 2 pm, news of lockdown was out within 20 minutes.

● Page 2: Sudden lockdown surprises HC

## WHAT'S PROHIBITED

1. Cinema halls, amusement parks, clubs, swimming pools, gyms, religious places

## WHAT'S PERMITTED

- \* Medical services including vaccination
- \* E-commerce (delivery) of goods including food, pharmaceutical, and medical equipment
- \* Supply chain of essentials including milk, vegetables, groceries
- \* Movement of LPG cylinders
- \* Construction activities if workers are available at site
- \* Agricultural operations
- \* Cold storage and warehouses
- \* Banks/ATMs, insurance, related services
- \* Marriage related gatherings with maximum of 40 persons
- \* Funerals with not more than 20 people
- \* Sanitation, water supply and power services

# HC slams TS way of fighting Covid

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

Once again, the High Court on Tuesday came down heavily on the Telangana government for showing complacency in dealing with the second wave of Covid-19.

The division bench comprising Chief Justice Hima Kohli and Justice B. Vijayseen Reddy observed that the government itself had been causing damage to Telangana and its people.

It rapped Chief Secretary

Somesh Kumar for his infamous "situation under control" remarks at a recent press conference which it described as a tame campaign.

The Bench took notice of the highest executive authority in the State dismissing the need for lockdown immediately after the High Court suggested additional restrictions like weekend lockdowns to contain the spread.

● Page 2: CJ 'slams' state on review of situation

# States rushing for global vax tender

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

is very less, the Opposition parties are blaming the state governments for the short supply. So we have come up with the idea of global tenders," sources in the AP government told this correspondent.

The officials took the cue from the Uttar Pradesh government, ruled by the BJP, which was first among the states to moot global tenders. Odisha, too, announced global procurement. With the news of states attempting to procure vaccines with global tenders, several agencies were said to have approached the officials with proposals.

● Page 2: No clarity on direct import from makers



Smoke rises after an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City, on Tuesday. — AP

# 26 Covid patients die in Goa hosp, min seeks probe

Panaji, May 11: Goa health minister Vishwajit Rane said 26 Covid-19 patients died at the state-run Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in the early hours and sought an investigation by the High Court to find out the exact cause.

He said these fatalities occurred between 2 am and 6 am "which is a fact", but remained evasive about the cause.

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who visited GMCH, said the gap between the availability of medical oxygen and its supply to Covid-19 wards in the GMCH might have caused some issues for the patients" even as he stressed that there is no

CM's visit to the GMCH. Rane said the medical oxygen requirement of the facility as of Monday was 1,200 jumbo cylinders of which only 400 were supplied.

"If there's a shortfall in the supply of medical oxygen, the discussion should be held about how to bridge that gap," he said.

Rane said a three-member team of nodal officers set up by the state government to oversee Covid-19 treatment at GMCH should give its inputs about the issues to the CM.

Earlier in the day, the CM donning a PPE kit visited Covid-19 wards in the GMCH where he met patients and their relatives.

— PTI

# BJP asks Cong. to cut Covid criticism

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 11

A day after the Congress Working Committee blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government for mishandling the Covid-19 crisis, BJP president J.P. Nadda, in a letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday, said he was "saddened but not surprised by the conduct of the Congress during these challenging times" as it "did not do the right thing, instead only did wrong politics" over the global pandemic.

In a four-page letter, Mr Nadda said under Mr Modi, "India's fight against Covid is driven by unwavering belief in the principles of science, support to innovation, trust in our Covid warriors and cooperative federalism", while pointing out that the conduct of top Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, "will be remembered for duplicity and pettiness".

He also added, though, that there are "certainly a few members of your (Congress) party who (like several other selfless citizens) are doing commendable work in helping people, (but) their hard work gets eclipsed by the consistent negativity spread by the more senior members of the party".

● Page 8: Nadda defends huge poll rallies

# Shoppers suspect lockdown might be even extended

# Id buyers in shopping frenzy

ATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

Sudden announcement of 10-day lockdown led to a frenzy among Id shoppers who jostled with one another to make purchases not only for Ramzan but the impending 10-day lockdown.

● OBSERVERS FEAR this rush itself could rocket up rising cases of Coronavirus.

an outpouring of people to buy essential commodities following announcement of lockdown from Wednesday 10 a.m.

Observers fear this rush

itself could rocket up rising cases of Coronavirus.

Even before evening could set in, there were long traffic jams in Old City. Most push card and table vendors ran out of stock before the evening itself, as they were not prepared for the rush that followed announcement of the lockdown.

Physical distancing went for a toss. Although there will be a relaxation of four hours for purchasing essential items like groceries and vegetables, people feared that like last year, they will not be

allowed to venture out.

Long queues of vehicles could be seen on main roads. It took citizens hours to reach their destinations. Logjam persisted in Dar-ul-Shifa, Shah Ali Banda, Hussaini Alam, Chaderghat, Khilwat, Mallepally, Asif Nagar, Mehdipatnam and Tolichowki areas. Even Golconda, Jahanuma, Dabeerpura and Kalapathar were not spared.

Traffic police deployed additional personnel to regulate traffic, which eased only in the night.

● Page 2: All schools told to announce SSC results

# ALL SSC STUDENTS 'PASS', MARKS ON INT. ASSESSMENT

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

The school education department on Tuesday declared all SSC, Class 10/OSSC/ vocational students as "pass", as a one-time measure in view of the grim Covid-19 situation. In order to award grades, "the performance of students for internal assessments as regards the 20 per cent marks is scaled to 100 per cent marks assessment."

● Page 2: All schools told to announce SSC results

Reports on Page 10

**BODY OF NRI AIRLIFTED FROM DUBAI**DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, MAY 11

The body of a non-resident Indian who died of cardiac arrest in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, was airlifted to

India and reached to his native place, Bojja Thirupati, the native of Ragamet village of Choppadampet mandal in this district went to Dubai 15 years ago for work. He died five days back.

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**HC: Lockdown is knee-jerk move**

Says people ought to have been given more time as in other states

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

The Telangana High Court observed that the sudden decision to impose lockdown in the state was a knee-jerk reaction of the government. "Till yesterday you had no idea of imposing a lockdown. By announcing lockdown from Wednesday all of a sudden, how will the general public and migrant workers manage?" the court said.

Chief Justice Kohli said the people of the state ought to have been given further breathing time to get ready to face the lockdown as the other states which have already imposed lockdown, had given sufficient time to their citizens to pool up various household provisions or to travel to their places.

The court directed the government to ensure that all migrant labour who are working in the state and who eke out their living on a daily basis, be given priority by ensuring that requisite transport is arranged for them, if they intend to leave the state and sufficient time should be given to them to reach out to bus and railway stations to head towards their native places. It also directed the state to furnish all details pertaining to the migrant labour in its next status report.

The court directed the Centre to ensure zero deficit of oxygen supply to Telangana by the next hearing on May 17. The state government said there was a 450 MT deficit of oxygen supply from the Centre as on May 9. However, the court refused the request of the Telangana government to direct the Union government to enhance the oxygen allocation of 600 MT per day. The court said that it would not interfere into the issue of allocations.



A doctor brings her grandmother who was in an unconscious state in an autorickshaw for admission to the King Koti hospital on Tuesday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

**Enforce rules during Id, film it: HC**DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD MAY 11

The Telangana High Court has directed the police commissioners of Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Rachakonda to ensure that there is 'Covid19-appropriate behaviour' on the part of the people during the curfew relaxation periods, mainly on the day of the festival of Id-ul-Fitr.

The court has advised the commissioners to have the Id celebrations video-graphed during the curfew-relaxation phase on May 14 at prominent places and reach this to the court by

May 17. A division bench comprising Chief Justice Hima Kohli and Justice B. Vijayen Reddy gave the directions on Tuesday during an urgent hearing on the Covid-19 situation in the state.

The court noted from media reports that there were several violations of Covid-19 guidelines vis-a-vis wearing of masks, social distancing etc., in the Old City. It took up the issue based on media reports and photos published about such violations during the shopping for Id-ul-Fitr.

The court has advised the commissioners to have the Id celebrations video-graphed during the curfew-relaxation phase on May 14 at prominent places and reach this to the court by

"We came across reports that the congregations in the Old City continued till midnight right under the nose of the police and there was no monitoring of the C-protocol observance. Hotels were closed from the front and kept open via the backdoors, serving the people with food. And, food is delivered at home. Is this what a night curfew is," questioned the CJ.

"The whole press, the whole media is showing photographs, videos, writing to us, sending e-mails showing how Covid-19 norms are being flouted. There is nothing like mask-

ing, there is no social distancing as if the people of the Old City are immune to Coronavirus. What is the local police doing, what are the authorities doing," the Bench asked.

Faulting the police for its "Nelson's eye" attitude, the court advised them to act in a strong manner to enforce the Covid-19 regulations. "Is religion more important than the humanity, is humanity not a religion itself? No religion teaches us to violate the rules or infect others with deadly viruses. Rule of Law should be followed by all," the CJ said.

**DON'T STOP AMBULANCES AT BORDERS, RULES HC**DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

The Telangana High Court reprimanded the state government and the police for stopping ambulances ferrying patients across the inter-state borders. A Division Bench of the High Court headed by Chief Justice Hima Kohli observed that it was utter violations of fundamental rights of citizens ensured by Indian Constitution.

Justice Hima Kohli asked the Director General of Police who had given him the authority to stop ambulances while allowing the general public.

When it was submitted that there was no circular or advisory issued by the government and it was only oral instructions to prevent havoc at hospitals, Chief Justice wondered if the Telangana state government ran on oral instructions, instead of GOs and advisories.

On Tuesday, the Division Bench held an emergency hearing on Covid cases, related to the issue of stopping of ambulances at interstate borders and utter violations Covid protocols at Ramzan shopping and congregations in the old city area. These two issues were taken suo motu by the court, following reports published in various newspapers.

In the afternoon, the AG submitted that RMPs practicing in other States like Karnataka and Chhattisgarh were recommending patients to private hospitals in Telangana, and with the influx of patients, the people of Telangana state were not getting beds in Hyderabad hospitals.

The court directed the Telangana state police not to prevent ambulances carrying Covid-19 patients from neighbouring states into Telangana state, unless the government issued any advisory.

**WILL TAKE UP CONTEMPT PROCEEDING CASES, HINTS HC**DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

situation with some cosmetic exercises. The state government has been attempting to portray a rosy picture in contrast to the ground realities, it said.

The Chief Justice told the Advocate General that the court felt sorry about the government's attitude and not acting strictly to contain the spread of the virus till the court insisted.

"We are sailing in the same boat but discard every direction given by us," the court said.

When senior counsel L. Ravichander drew Bench's attention to overcrowding at food joints and shops giving a go by to social distancing, the Chief Justice said the court was flooded with mails and reports with photographic evidence to establish non serious implementation of the night curfew.

"Now what made you to review the situation and opt for lockdown," she said.

Maintaining that the government was not heeding to its suggestions, the court observed that the higher echelons of power were putting their back by presenting a hunky-dory

"You impose curfew and make the shop close by 7 pm but allow them to carry out their business through the backdoor till midnight," Justice Kohli pointed out.

"With less number of tests, less active cases were found. The Central government, going by the number of positive cases in the country is allocating life-saving drugs and oxygen to the states and because of laxity of officials and less testing, Telangana is getting less life-saving drugs and oxygen," the court observed.

The High Court sought information on the failure on the part of officials to provide oxygen to patients at King Koti hospital, which led to the death of many patients.

**SCHOOLS TOLD TO ANNOUNCE SSC RESULTS**

FROM PAGE 1

All schools have been directed to announce the SSC results.

The decision comes after the government decided to cancel SSC exams that were previously scheduled from May 17, and postponed exams for students of Intermediate.

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**Radhika Reddy gives away food packets, remdesivir to needy**

STORIES | OF HOPE

Radhika Reddy gives away food

**IN BRIEF**  
**Dr Reddy's inks pact with Eli Lilly**

**Hyderabad:** Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Tuesday said it has inked a licensing pact with Eli Lilly and Company to produce Baricitinib in the country for treatment of Covid-19. The Hyderabad-based firm said it has entered into a royalty-free, non-exclusive voluntary licensing agreement with Eli Lilly and Company for the manufacture and commercialisation of the drug in India.

**TS RECORDS 4,801 NEW CASES, 32 DEAD**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

As many as 4,801 Covid-19 cases were reported on Tuesday along with 32 more deaths due to the disease. This takes total cases to 5,06,988 so far and deaths from Covid-19 to 2,803, according to the state health department.

It said that 7,430 people were deemed to have recovered from the disease on Tuesday taking their total to 44,049 so far, and that 75,289 Covid-19 determination tests were conducted across the state. However, results from 2,878 tests, it said, were pending.

Tuesday's cases were just 21 fewer than on Sunday, for which the department said, it recorded 4,826 cases.

Hyderabad and the rest of the GHMC area on Tuesday reported 756 cases, a slight increase from 722 on Monday. Similar was the case with Ranga Reddy district with 325 and 302 cases respectively for the two days. Medchal-Malkajgiri district recorded 307 cases, followed by 254 in Nalgonda, and 215 in Warangal Urban district.

**VACCINES TO BE GIVEN FROM 9 AM TO 4 PM**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

All medical and health services, including all government and private hospitals, diagnostic and testing centres will function normally as they do during any other period. The lockdown will not affect any health services anywhere in the state of Telangana.

The government vaccination centres delivering Covid-19 vaccination to people will also function normally. However, as announced previously, only those eligible for getting their second dose will be given the vaccines.

Those seeking the second dose should show proof of having taken the first dose, either in form of a partial vaccination certificate that they can download from cowin.gov.in, or the message they may have received confirming them taking their first dose. Those eligible should also take their Aadhaar card with them.

Those seeking to get their second vaccine dose, or anyone suspecting that they caught Covid-19, can go to the nearest vaccination, or testing centres and avail the services.

The police department has been informed to allow free movement of citizens seeking to get their vaccine shots or wanting to get themselves tested for Covid-19 at their nearest available centres.

In Monday, the health department said on Monday, it administered 1,06,359 second dose shots across the state.

Vaccinations will be given at the centres from 9 am to 4 pm.

# 1 doc, 1 nurse, 1 patient care staff run Tims ICUs

**BALU PULIPAKA | DC**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

There appears to be no end to the woes of Covid-19 patients at Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (Tims), at Gachibowli. First, it was the lack of good quality food, and then extremely delayed delivery of food to the patients.

Now it is poor patient care, thanks to the severe shortages of staff at the hospital. Though the issue of staff shortages was reported in these columns earlier, it has once again come to the fore following the death of eight Covid-19 patients in an ICU ward at the hospital after loss of pressure in the oxygen lines on Sunday.

This newspaper has learnt that one of the contributing factors for the deaths of patients every day at Tims is lack of staff, be it doctors, nurses,

or patient care workers. With four ICUs, one with 38 beds on the ground floor, and three more on the floor above it with 25 beds each, staff work in three shifts taking care of the patients. However, there is just one nurse, one patient care worker, and one doctor in each shift for each of the ICUs.

Inquiries revealed that it is impossible for a single doctor, or a nurse, or a patient care worker to attend to the needs of all the patients in the ICUs.

Even as they do their best and rush around, one of the biggest challenges is getting timely results of diagnostic tests.

Results of blood samples sent to the state-run Telangana Diagnostics hub at the Institute of Preventive Medicine (IPM) at Narayanguda take more than one day to come back, and it is not uncommon for patients at

Tims and its doctors to wait for even two days or more in some instances for the results.

Some tests that Covid-19 patients need to undergo and whose results are vital in treatment include D-Dimers that show the potential for clotting of blood, Ferretin test that shows iron levels, C Reactive Protein test that can help the doctor understand inflammation levels in the body, and liver function tests that help make other critical assessments on the patient's ability to deal with drugs.

"In the absence of test results which are extremely critical for successfully treating Covid-19 cases, what any doctor can do is to provide some prophylactic treatment and not address the condition that a patient may be in," a doctor said. And if stretched thin over 25 or more ICU patients to be

attended to in a single shift, it is next to impossible, whether for the single doctor, or the nurse, to attend to the needs of every critically ill patient.

Meanwhile, on the issue of oxygen, the hospital, on Tuesday, said there was no shortage of oxygen supply and that the installed liquid oxygen tank "is sufficient to meet the needs of the hospital with adequate pressure."

Calling the news report in these columns as trying to scare patients, Tims' director said the deaths "happened in ICU were part of the natural progression of disease and due to complications and not due to shortage of oxygen".

The report on the death of eight patients did not speak about the installed capacity of oxygen supply or shortage but about the fall in pressure in the lines after which the patients died.



People rush to buy vegetables at the Monda Market on Tuesday, violating the Covid-19 protocol after the state government announced 10-day in lockdown in Telangana.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

## Lockdown hits Old City

**I**mposition of the lockdown ahead of Id-ul-Fitr disappointed Muslims as they were hoping that this time they can celebrate the festival with some relaxations. The festival last year too was held in a low-key manner due to the Coronavirus-linked lockdown.

**DC** spoke with some Old City residents. Here are their reactions



We were hoping that there would not be a lockdown as the situation is gradually coming under control. The sudden announcement has disappointed us as we could not purchase many items for Id. Cloth merchants may not open their shop so early.

— Arshi Zara, School teacher, Kishan Bagh

The government could have waited for two more days. Already there is night curfew and Id prayers in Idgahs have been banned. If I knew about the imposition of the lockdown I could purchase some important items for Id.

— Sheenaz Hussain, Housewife residing in Attapur

I am worried about how I can deliver the suits to my customers. My workers have to work at home and bring the clothes to the shop. Many of the workers have no sewing machines at home. I have asked them to shift the machines home.

— Mohammed Nisar Ahmed, Ladies tailor, Sultan Shahi

I heard the news of the lockdown with dismay. Poor people will be affected badly. Dealers and stockists may hoard essential items, resulting in a hike in prices. Already the prices of edible oils have gone almost doubled.

— Abdur Rahman Suhail Farhat Foods

The hotel industry has already been affected badly since the first lockdown. This time we could not do business even during Ramzan due to the night curfew. Hotels that are serving meals may not open for four hours. Who will come in the morning to have breakfast?

— Zafar Khan  
Victoria Hotel, Hyderabad

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

One can now return from an early morning stroll with bottles of booze as the latest lockdown has allowed liquor shops to open from 6 am to 10 am.

Excise officials said liquor stores had been permitted to open for sale of alcohol, including foreign and Indian made liquor, but in compliance with Covid-19 protocols such as maintaining social distancing and wearing of face cover.

"Upon strict instructions, the liquor shops have been allowed to open from 6 am to 10 am. The liquor store owners are asked to follow strict rules by marking circles to ensure social distancing and provide a hand



People struggle to leave the counter after purchasing a bottle of liquor at a shop in Secunderabad.

— DC

sanitising station for the customers," officials said.

Even the excise department and the Telangana State Breweries Corporation Limited will be open-

ing their offices by 6 am to ensure supply of adequate stocks to wine shops, sources said.

The orders made wine shop dealers breathe a sigh

## DGP wants strict lockdown show

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

"Strict implementation of orders must be followed in all major cities and district headquarters, especially in Hyderabad. Employees who go to government offices are required to have their departmental identity cards, the same goes to print and electronic media personnel. Only 40 people from both sides should attend weddings in the state and they must have prior approvals. Similarly, only 20 people were reported to attend funerals," he said.

The DGP has directed the police to strictly enforce the lockdown as per the directions of the state Government.

The top cop held a video conference with Range IGs, DIGs, police commissioners and police superintendents in the state on the implementation of the Government's decision to impose a lockdown in the state for ten days from tomorrow.

In the video conference, attended by Additional DGP Jitender, Mahendar Reddy said that all police commissioners, SPs, DIG level senior police officers should be on duty and take steps to strictly enforce the lockdown.

## FIRST METRO AT 7 AM, LAST TRAIN STARTS 8.45 AM

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

With the government imposing a 10-day lockdown, the Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited has said it will run truncated services.

The first Metro Rail will begin plying at 7 am and the last trains will leave for their respective destinations from their starting points at 8.45 am. All Metro trains will reach their last destinations at 9.45 am, HMR said on Tuesday.

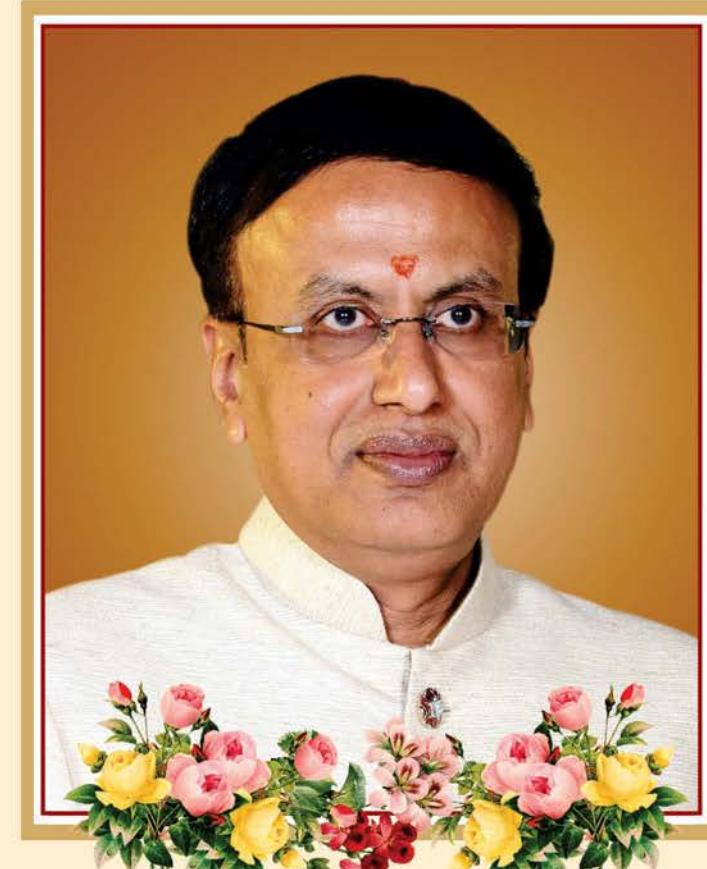
## NO INTER-STATE SERVICES, CITY BUSES 6-10 AM

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

The TSRTC said it would not run any inter-state services in view of the 20-hour a day lockdown announced by the state government.

However, the RTC said that in Hyderabad city, it will ply its services between 6 am and 10 am. Similarly, local services will be available in the districts too during the open hours. There will be no services during the lockdown hours.

## SAD DEMISE



With profound grief & sorrow, we regret to inform the demise of our beloved

### Shri Anil Kumar Agarwal

(S/o. Late Shri Bajranglal Agarwal)  
Founder - Shree Jewellers

on Tuesday, 11th May 2021

We shall always remember the smiles you put on our faces & the gap you left behind will never be filled. A great visionary who always led from the front as a true leader.

In Grief

Sunil Kumar Agarwal (Brother) Abhishek Agarwal (Nephew)  
Kaushik Agarwal (Son) Yajvin Agarwal (Grand Son) & Family

RSVP - 9618888377, 9985556510

**shree**  
Jewellers

Jubilee Hills / Basheer Bagh

## TRADERS SAY IT'S GOOD MOVE BUT QUITE DELAYED

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

Kirana merchants, automobile shops, tyre dealers and hardware traders welcomed the lockdown, saying this could have been done much earlier, along with other states.

However, they found fault with announcement of shutdown without any prior notice. The sudden declaration led to chaos within public for stocking up groceries. Roads were full of traffic and people poured out for essentials, raising fears that cases of Coronavirus could shoot up in the next couple of days.

Mohd Riyaz Khan of Kohinoor House, a wholesale and retail kirana store in Begum Bazar, said: "Human lives are more valuable than revenue. The second wave infected lot of people and we have also witnessed deaths. This is a much-needed lockdown. We wholeheartedly welcome it. Trade will surely go on during the curfew relaxation time," he observed.

Hyderabad Tyre Dealers Association welcomed the shutdown. Business has been down since April, as Maharashtra, Gujarat and others, which are major tyre producers were already under lockdown, said the association's Praveen Kumar.

Fazal Khan of Universal Motors at King Koti said, "This is a wise decision." The four-hour break will allow people to purchase essentials.

Sandeep Vyas, an automobile spares dealer, said, "Since the pandemic is spreading rapidly, shutdown is need of the hour. We welcome it. This measure will flatten the Coronavirus curve."

## Lockdown gift: Buy booze at dawn

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

One can now return from an early morning stroll with bottles of booze as the latest lockdown has allowed liquor shops to open from 6 am to 10 am.

Excise officials said liquor stores had been permitted to open for sale of alcohol, including foreign and Indian made liquor, but in compliance with Covid-19 protocols such as maintaining social distancing and wearing of face cover.

"Upon strict instructions, the liquor shops have been allowed to open from 6 am to 10 am. The liquor store owners are asked to follow strict rules by marking circles to ensure social distancing and provide a hand



People struggle to leave the counter after purchasing a bottle of liquor at a shop in Secunderabad.

— DC

sanitising station for the customers," officials said.

Even the excise department and the Telangana State Breweries Corporation Limited will be open-

ing their offices by 6 am to ensure supply of adequate stocks to wine shops, sources said.

The orders made wine shop dealers breathe a sigh



## SHORT TAKES

CONG. OPPOSES  
LOCKDOWN AT  
SHORT NOTICEDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

Former minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir has strongly condemned Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao's announcement imposing total lockdown within a short span of time.

"KCR should have been a little realistic. People would have prepared themselves mentally had they got some time," he observed.

Shabbir Ali recounted that Telangana High Court had made serious remarks against the state government for not taking adequate measures to prevent the spread of Coronavirus in Telangana state. While the High Court was in favour of taking strict measures right from the beginning of second wave, the Chief Minister, then health minister Etala Rajender, chief secretary Somesh Kumar and others kept misleading people saying there would be no lockdown or night curfew.

However, citing High Court orders, first the night curfew was imposed. Now, the 10-day lockdown has been announced, the Congress leader regretted.

He demanded that TRS government provide financial assistance to all BPL and middle-class families during the lockdown period. Further, he said government should improve infrastructure and fill gaps in the system to provide better healthcare to Covid patients.

Shabbir Ali said the Chief Minister had the habit of keeping people in the dark. "KCR speaks lies with such impact that innocent people take them for truth. When the first case of Covid was reported, he took it in a lighter vein and even claimed it could be cured with a paracetamol tablet. He kept on changing his statements, but never told truth to the people. Consequently, crores of people have been suffering due to his lies and wrong decisions," he pointed out.

RAVINDER REDDY  
TO DECIDE ON HIS  
FUTURE ACTIONDC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, MAY 11

TRS founder member and former MLA Enugu Ravinder Reddy geared up party cadre in Yellareddy Assembly constituency to decide his political future course of action. He is closely moving with former minister Etala Rajendar and also playing a vital role in Etala's camp. Reportedly, TRS leaders and activists in Yellareddy Assembly constituency are ready to follow in the footsteps of their mentor, who has close rapport with them for the last two decades.

Interestingly, Ravinder Reddy, former employee of the Cantonment Board, jumped into the political arena with the TRS in 2001. He won as MLA from Yellareddy four times and was a close aide of finance minister T. Harish Rao. He is the senior TRS legislator in undivided Nizamabad district.

After his defeat in the 2018 Assembly election, Ravinder Reddy is maintaining a low profile. The lone Congress MLA from undivided Nizamabad district, Jajala Surender of Yellareddy, joined the TRS, but the party cadre divided into two groups of Surender and Ravinder Reddy.

Surprise: Etala  
meets Bhatti

**Mallu Bhatti denies it was political; Congress candidate miffed**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

In an interesting turn of events, estranged TRS MLA and former health minister Etala Rajendar paid a quick visit to Congress Legislative Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka at the latter's residence in Banjara Hills in Hyderabad on Tuesday afternoon.

The senior TRS leader, accompanied by former MLA Yenugu Ravinder Reddy, received a warm welcome at Bhatti Vikramarka's residence. The leaders discussed the current political situation in the state and their future course of action for more than 35 minutes, it is learnt.

Speaking to this correspondent, Bhatti said Rajendar's visit was a courtesy call and there was nothing political about it.

"He came to our residence for the first time and we wel-

**● BHATTI SAID** Rajendar's visit was a courtesy call and there was nothing political about it.

**● IN A dramatic move, immediately after Rajendar left Bhatti's house Padi Koushik Reddy reached Bhatti's residence, ostensibly upset with Rajendar's visit to Bhatti.**

comed him with respect," Bhatti said, adding that Rajendar might reveal his political action plan in their next meeting. He said if Rajendar wanted to travel with the Congress, the party high command would take a decision.

But close associates of Huzurabad MLA said Rajendar was unhappy with the way the government was functioning. They said Rajendar might seek the support of the Congress in case the TRS forced him to resign from the post of MLA.

In a dramatic move, immediately after Rajendar left Bhatti's house, his rival in the last Assembly elections in Huzurabad,

Padi Koushik Reddy reached Bhatti's residence, ostensibly upset with Rajendar's visit to Bhatti.

Koushik Reddy is understood to have reacted in an aggressive manner and asked Bhatti why he spoke to Rajendar. Asked about this, Bhatti said Koushik Reddy visited his home regularly and it was accidental not incidental.

Sources said Koushik Reddy was not keen on Rajendar being allowed into the Congress if the TRS sacked him from the party. However, speculations are flying thick and fast among political circles on the next move of Rajendar.

CLP suggests  
setting up of  
panel for CovidDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

and deaths in Warangal and Khammam districts after the civic body elections. He demanded that a committee be set up to monitor vaccination, corona tests, treatment, availability of beds and oxygen supply. He advised the state government to launch a mobile app for people to know about corona cases and treatment details like the Delhi government did for updates and alerts.

Bhatti recalled that the previous governments had given free vaccines to prevent pox, polio and other diseases. He accused that the Telangana government had completely failed in the case of Covid vaccination. He said the state government was not questioning the Centre on the price of vaccines. He also demanded that every PHC should be upgraded to a 35-bed hospital for pandemic situations.

Bhatti also sought action against minister Ch. Malla Reddy, whose hospital is facing charges of encroachment of lake lands.

Congress Legislative Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said the Telangana state government had completely failed in curbing the spread of Coronavirus. He suggested that the state government should set up a monitoring committee with senior IAS officers for corona control. Moreover, Covid treatment should be covered under Aarogyasri with immediate effect, he demanded.

Addressing a virtual press conference here on Tuesday, the CLP leader alleged that the Chief Minister was responsible for the increasing number of Covid cases in the state. He said the government did not care even though people were in a state of panic. He came down heavily on Chandrashekhar Rao for not paying attention to the catastrophic situation prevailing in the state.

Bhatti said there was a huge increase in the number of positive cases

patients while they were dying due to lack of availability of oxygen in times of need.

He appealed to the BJP cadre to provide food to the needy people and follow the lockdown guidelines. He demanded that the state government expedite vaccination programmes during the lockdown time.

The BJP chief questioned why the state government was not utilising the 1,250 ventilators provided by the Centre.

and had also provided funds for setting up oxygen plants. However, the Chief Minister had not yet ordered setting up of oxygen plants in hospitals, he alleged.

The BJP chief questioned why the state government was not utilising the 1,250 ventilators provided by the Centre. He said Chandrashekhar Rao had not visited a single isolation centre in the state so far.

He accused the TRS and its chief of making political dramas by sacking ministers and said the Chief Minister had failed to protect Covid

FOREST DEPARTMENT ATTEMPTS  
TO PREVENT SUMMER FIRESDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

As the state begins to swell in summer heat, the forest department has made it a point to curb forest fires to the best of its ability.

As a part of doing so, it enacted the heatwave action plan of the state government, which was formulated by the Telangana State Development Planning Society (TSDPS), along with other concerned

departments. As of Tuesday, there were 20,573 forest fire alerts in the state which had burnt down 23,403.69 hectares of land.

As per the heatwave action plan, all field officers of the forest department have been directed to divide the forest areas into grids of 3 x 3 km to assess the availability of water sources in each grid and to take measures to ensure water supply in grids without a water source.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF THOSE WHO ARE FOREVER PRESENT IN OUR HEARTS



(You are with us forever)

With profound grief we inform the sad demise of  
**Shri. A. LAKSHMAN**  
(Ex Deputy Registrar, Osmania University)  
on 16 April, 2021

na jāyate mriyate vā kadāchīn  
nāyām bhūtvā bhavītā vā na bhūyāḥ  
ajo nityā shāshvata 'yam purāṇo  
na hanyate hanyamāne śharīre (Ch.2.V.20)  
in grief  
**Mrs. SHARADHA LAKSHMAN**

## SAD DEMISE

**SQN. LDR. Anil Bhalla**

S/o Late Amar Prakash Bhalla

D.O.B- 10/03/1948 D.O.D- 11/5/2021

Mourned by  
Wife SITA  
Daughter SHEFALI  
Son AKSHAY  
Daughter PRIYA  
Daughter in law SHEETAL  
Son in law RAKESH  
Grand Children  
AARAV and IRA

**Firm: AARAV CONSTRUCTIONS  
A - SQAURE CONSTRUCTIONS**



## MISSING YOU DEAR

The Great Impressions you made in our Hearts will remain Eternally...Those Joyful years we spent from our Teens till date are Unforgettable....

Adieu Tillu.  
Gone from our Sight, but never from our Hearts... With lots of pain...

**Times Square Friends**  
Faiyaz, Giri, Govind, Joel, Dr. Keerti, Krishna, Manohar, Prasad, Raghu, Somashankar, Ch. Srinu, D. Srinu, Sunil, Suresh, Uday, Vasu & Venkat.

(S/2122/D00173)



## I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever Ps.23:6

43rd BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

DOB : 12-05-1978 DOD : 25-09-2014  
**CH. JOEL KAPIL KUMAR** B.E.  
S/o. Dr. Chintala Franklin & Dr. Mrs. Joyce Premraj  
Inserted by: Wife Pramila Kapil Kumar  
Daughter Joanna Shefali and Family Members



## 7th ANNIVERSARY

DOB : 26-08-1934 DOD : 12-05-2014  
**KADIYALA GOUPARA**  
"Close in our hearts you will always Stay Loved and Remembered Every Day"  
May Your Soul Rest in Peace

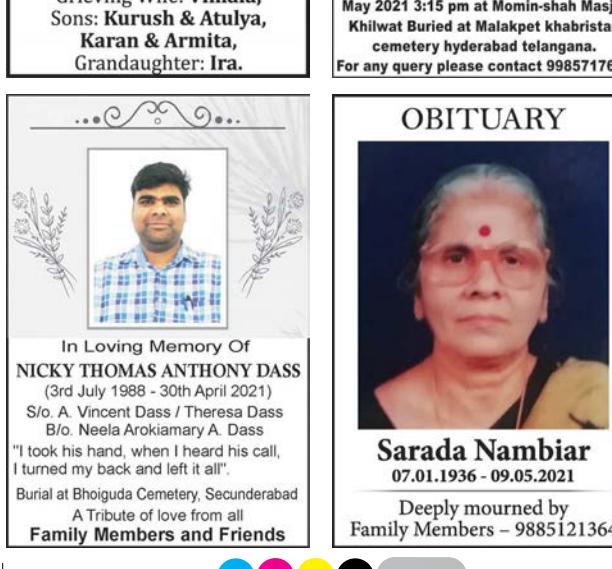
H.No.192RT, Chandulal Baradari Colony, Hyderabad  
Inserted by: KADIYALA SAJANI DEVI & FAMILY MEMBERS  
Ph: 040-29560782, 9989066213.



## IN LOVING MEMORY

DOB : 20.10.1974 — 12.05.2003  
**SANJAY BHATNAGAR**  
We miss you and always remember You. Love You Chandalekha Bhatnagar & Family

(B/2122/D00024)



## OBITUARY

DOB : 26.07.1943 | DOD:10.05.2021  
**Behram B Madon**  
Grieving Wife: Vimala, Sons: Kurush & Atulya, Karan & Armita, Granddaughter: Ira.

**Dr. Faisal Ansari**  
S/o Abdul Waheed Ansari  
R/O Syedabadi beside Quadria Masjid  
Died on Saturday at 8th May 2021 5:30 am  
Namaz-e Janaza held on Saturday at 8th May 2021 3:15 pm at Momin-shah Masjid  
Khilwat Burial at Malakpet kharistan cemetery hyderabad telangana.  
For any query please contact 9985717604

Use Ayushman Bharat,  
Aarogyasri for Covid: BJPDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) state unit president Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Tuesday demanded that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao call an immediate all-party meeting on the current situation in the state. Speaking at a recent press meet, he asked Chandrashekhar Rao to implement Aarogyasri and Ayushman Bharat schemes to save the lives of people.

Bandi Sanjay wanted the state government to pay the arrears to private hospitals under Aarogyasri immediately and then include Covid-19 in Aarogyasri. He said the Central government had allocated 440 tonnes of oxygen to Telangana

patients while they were dying due to lack of availability of oxygen in times of need.

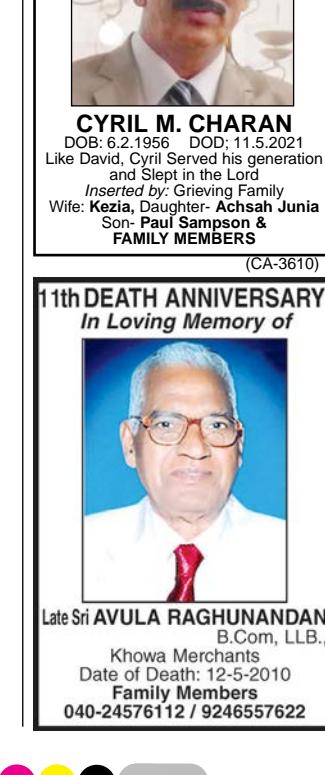
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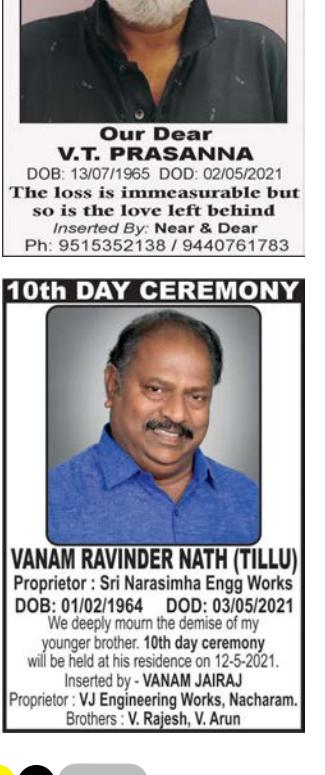
He accused the TRS and its chief of making political dramas by sacking ministers and said the Chief Minister had failed to protect Covid



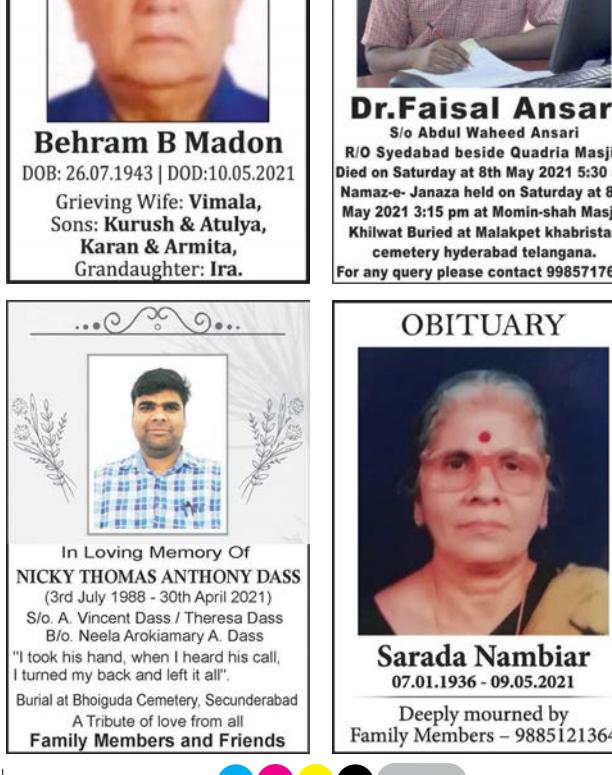
**11th DEATH ANNIVERSARY  
In Loving Memory of**  
Late Sri AVULA RAGHUNANDAN  
B.Com, LLB.,  
Khoya Merchants  
Date of Death: 12-5-2010  
Family Members  
040-24576112 / 9246557622



**CALLED HOME**  
I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith. 2 Tim 4:7  
W/o Bro. JAYAKAR CHAISE  
DOB:15/06/1938 DOD: 11/05/2021  
JUSTIFIED, SANCTIFIED, SATISFIED FOREVER.  
Funeral at 8:30 am, 12/05/2021, No 12 Cemetery, Trimulgherry, Sec-bad.  
Inserted by: Jayakar Chaise (Husband) David (Son) & Susan Chaise & Ashray Ruby (Daughter), Solomon, Aiden & Moraiah



**10th DAY CEREMONY**  
I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith. 2 Tim 4:7  
Our Dear  
**V.T. PRASANNA**  
DOB: 13/07/1955 DOD: 03/05/2021  
The loss is immeasurable but so is the love left behind  
Inserted By: Near & Dear Ph: 9515352138 / 9440761783  
IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
ARUL MARY ANTHONY  
(W/o Late C. Anthony)  
DOB: 30-05-1932 DOD: 11-05-2021  
She lived our lives with happiness & Sweet  
Feelings that we will always remember.  
May your soul rest in peace



**IN LOVING MEMORY OF**  
NICKY THOMAS ANTHONY DASS  
DOB: 01/02/1964 DOD: 03/05/2021  
In Loving Memory Of  
NICKY THOMAS ANTHONY DASS  
DOB: 01/02/1964 DOD: 03/05/2021  
We deeply mourn the demise of my younger brother. 10th day ceremony  
will be held at his residence on 12-5-2021.  
Inserted by: VAMAN JAIRAJ  
Proprietor : Sri Narasimha Engg Works, Nacharam,  
Brothers : V. Rajesh, V. Arun  
In Loving Memory Of  
Sarada Nambiar  
07.01.1936 - 09.05.2021  
Deeply mourned by  
Family Members and Friends

## SHORT TAKES

## CONJUNCTION OF MOON, MARS THIS WEEK

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

Three days from now, the Moon and Mars will be in conjunction and would share the same right ascension. At around the same time, the two objects will make a close approach, called an appulse.

"The only requirement that we need to have is a clear sky, and the non-twinkling object next to the moon which would appear in the sky. It would look like the planet Mars is next to the Moon. However, it is just due to perspective of viewers from the Earth," Dr B.G. Sidharth, retired director, Birla Science Centre, told *Deccan Chronicle*. The planetarium will not be holding a viewing as it is closed as part of the lockdown.

Any appearance of two or more celestial bodies is called a conjunction. "Any person who steps out to view the conjunction would notice the two celestial bodies are next to each other (as seen from Earth), but in reality they are not together (in space)," said Raghunandan, director, Planetary Society of India.

WOMAN MURDERED,  
GOLD WORTH  
₹5 LAKH MISSINGDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

A 48-year-old woman was found murdered at her residence in Chintal area of Jeedimetla on Monday night and her valuables were reported missing. The police said jewellers worth ₹5 lakh have been missing from the house.

The deceased, identified as Suvarna, was at home alone when the assailants, who are yet to be identified, reportedly gained entry and strangled her to death with a saree. Following the murder, they decamped with the valuables.

"Her husband, who returned home at night, found her lying dead on the floor with a saree tied around her neck. The house was said to be ransacked and when he checked the safe, a gold chain and other ornaments were reportedly missing," police officials of Jeedimetla said. Following a call via dia 100, the CLUES team and a dog squad reached the scene of offence and examined the spot, after which the body was shifted to the Gandhi Hospital for post mortem.

## Patience tested



A relative carries a woman to the Government General Hospital in Anantapur on Tuesday for treatment. At least six patients had reportedly died at the out-patient ward of the hospital. — DC

## CM urges PM to transfer Covaxin tech to other cos

Jagan says, at current pace it will take months to vaccinate all

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 11

Presenting a novel solution to present vaccine shortage crisis in the country, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has sought technology transfer of Corona vaccine Covaxin from its producer Bharat Biotech to other companies to increase production to fully meet demand and supply too.

With Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu and other leaders targeting the Chief Minister every day, slaming him for the state lagging others in vaccination drive, YSRC leaders had stepped up counter attacks and alleged links between Bharat Biotech and Naidu. They even challenged him to bring vaccines to the state as Bharat Biotech belongs to his relative.

A battle is raging between the two parties over the vaccination issue. Now, even Jagan Mohan Reddy seemed to target Bharat Biotech.

He wrote a letter to

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, stating that present manufacturing capacity of Covaxin doesn't cater to the huge demands of vaccine. At this rate, it may take several months to get all vaccinated in the state, he mentioned. He appealed to the PM to direct Bharat Biotech to facilitate technology transfer of Covaxin, and to ask ICMR-NIV to provide a viral train to whoever is interested and capable of manufacturing the vaccine.

The CM informed that, "the average count of cases per day over the last seven days stands at 20,300 and as of today we have 1,86,695 active cases. We have taken all the steps necessary to prevent further infections and provide quality treatment, care and support. While certain temporary measures like curfew, restrictions are taken up, the ultimate solution is in vaccinating every individual as early as possible. One of the measures we have been striving for

is to provide vaccine doses to all eligible and vulnerable populations as per national guidelines at the earliest opportunity. We have in the past been able to demonstrate capability of administering over 6 lakh vaccinations per day. However, due to the short supply of vaccine we are not able to vaccinate our population at large."

The CM appealed to the PM thus: "Under your leadership, COVAXIN, India's indigenous Covid-19 vaccine was developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) — National Institute of Virology (NIV). This is manufactured currently at the Bharat Biotech's BSL-3 (Bio-Safety Level 3) high containment facility. The Expert Committee of Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) gave Emergency Use Authorization to COVAXIN in January 2021.

"It has also been announced from your good office to increase the production of COVAXIN. It is learnt that at present the total manufacturing capacity of this vaccine doesn't cater to the country's requirement. It may take several months to get all vaccinated at this pace. Considering that the COVAXIN manufacturing is intended to be ramped up, we would request you to please direct Bharat Biotech to do technology transfer of manufacturing the COVAXIN and ICMR-NIV to provide the viral strain to whoever interested and capable of manufacturing the vaccine."

The CM also requested the PM to explore the possibility of involving all such production firms and enable them with the technology, IPR etc., to deliver the vaccine as quickly and as affordable as possible.

"This shall ensure that IPRs/Patents etc., if any, are not a hindrance. Anyone who can manufacture or is interested to manufacture the vaccine should be encouraged to do so in the larger public interest."

## No signalling KCR: Etala

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

Former minister and TRS senior leader Etala Rajendar denied the report published on Tuesday that he was trying for a meeting with Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao. He said the news about his "surrender" and trying to meet the CM were "far from the truth."

Rajendar said he was fighting for self-respect and "to report such uncon-



Etala Rajendar

firmed news is nothing but degrading my self-esteem. There is no truth

to it."

He said, "Despite giving clarifications many times in the last few days, writing a story that I surrendered was uncalled." He felt that the rumours could "damage his reputation and personality."

He said that the report had hurt him, and that he was registering his protest. He informed his followers and associates not to believe rumours about his "surrender."

## Shady traders loot paddy farmers

NARENDER PULLOR | DC  
NIZAMABAD/KAMAREDDY, MAY 11

Meantime, shortage of labourers and lorries are also adversely affecting the paddy procurement process in both the districts. Reportedly, a few transport operators demand extra money to shift paddy from villages to rice mills. Lack of coordination between officials and rice millers also worsened the situation.

Farmers are urging the state government to rescue them from clutches of PACS and rice millers.

Speaking to this newspaper, Nizamabad additional collector Chandrasekhar said they were keenly monitoring the paddy procurement in the district. "We slapped a penalty on transport contractors and warned rice millers for scheduled procurement of paddy," he said. Of 110 rice mills, 70 mills opted for boiled rice and 40 mills for raw rice,

he added. "There are regular complaints of under-weighting, soaked paddy, loading/unloading and others, but we are trying to resolve them," he said.

Kamareddy district rural development officer Venkata Madhava Rao said paddy procurement was continuing smoothly in the district. He said that no complaint was received against anyone including primary agriculture cooperative societies. "We will initiate action against primary agriculture cooperative societies, if we receive any specific complaint," he said.

## Jagan announces ex gratia of ₹10L to kin of deceased

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 11

## Navy team checks O2 lines in hosp

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, MAY 11

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced ₹10 lakh as ex gratia to the kin of the deceased in the unfortunate incident at the Tirupati RUIA hospital, where 11 Corona patients have died due to the absence of oxygen.

The Chief Minister said he was deeply saddened by the deaths. He held a review meeting with district collectors and SPs on tackling the Corona situation and directed them to be more vigilant and ensure such unfortunate incidents do not recur. "Initiate measures immediately for the smooth supply of oxygen and for availability of beds to Corona patients," he told them.

The CM advised district collectors to oversee the functioning of the 104 call centres and ensure their effective functioning. "The number should be registered in the minds of the people as a one-stop solution for all issues related to Covid-19. Every day, some 16,000 to 17,000 calls are being received at the 104 call centre."

Jagan Mohan Reddy said collectors have identified a total of 648 hospitals that were empaneled in the state list for Covid treatment with a total bed capacity of 47,947. Of these, 41,315 beds are occupied, he said, and added that treatment in these hospitals is completely free and medicines should also be given for free. He asked officials to arrange temporary German hangars on the hospital premises to help the people in waiting mode.

The CM said officials must focus attention on supply of oxygen concentrators at all Covid Care Centres.

## TD COMMITTEE TO PROBE DEATHS AT RUIA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 11

The Opposition Telugu Desham has constituted a fact-finding committee with seven members to probe the tragic deaths of many Covid patients due to lack of oxygen supply at SVR Ruiya Hospital in Tirupati.

TD leaders have alleged that AP government is not taking sufficient measures to save lives of people. The unfolding of human tragedy at Ruiya is an example, they maintain.

TD AP president K. Atchannaiaidu said the government has abdicated its responsibility at a very critical time when Covid second wave has shaken up lakhs of people all over the state. He charged that no proper treatment is being provided to infected patients.

Atchannaiaidu said the fact-

finding committee, constituted on orders of TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu, will comprise Tirupati parliamentary constituency party president G. Narasimha Yadav, former minister N. Amarnath Reddy, party national general secretary Nallari Kishore Kumar Reddy, former MLA M. Sugunamma, Chittoor parliamentary constituency party president Puliyarthy Nani, Bathyalai Chengalrayudu and Mabbu Devanarayana Reddy.

The TD state president said already, many Covid patients have died due to lack of oxygen at different hospitals in all parts of AP. He accused the government of not revealing actual details of deaths, including at the Ruiya hospital. He said TD's fact-finding committee will go into all these aspects to find the factual reasons behind the human tragedy.

TD AP president K. Atchannaiaidu said the government has abdicated its responsibility at a very critical time when Covid second wave has shaken up lakhs of people all over the state. He charged that no proper treatment is being provided to infected patients.

Atchannaiaidu said the fact-

## 3 killed, 4 injured in gas leak at factory

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, MAY 11

Three persons died and 4 others took seriously ill following leakage of gas at Venkata Narayana Active Ingredients Private Limited, formerly Nutra Specialties Private Limited, at Chandrapadua village in Vinjamuru mandal, Bellamkonda Srinivasa Rao, 28, a senior executive belonging to Vinjamuru.

The injured are also employed at the factory and they have been identified as S.K. Sharifuddin, 43, M. Nagarjuna Reddy, 38, and Usha Sravan, 32, all senior staff. Another injured M. Balakrishna is working at the office. All of them are being treated at private hospitals in Nellore and Atmakur.

Incidentally, one person was killed and four others injured critically when a blast took place at the same plant in July last year.

After the blast in July

last year, district officials halted the production and restored permissions after 3 months.

Nutra Specialties which was started in 2006 was subsequently renamed Venkata Narayana Active Ingredients. The company is at present making 19 varieties of drugs and employs over 350 workers. Local people have been raising a hue and cry and staging protests for a long time, citing the release of pollutants by the unit.

District Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu, Atmakur R.D.O. A. Chaitravarshini, Kavali D.S.P. B. Prasad and officials from factories department and

Pollution Control Board rushed to the spot to assess the situation and oversee relief operations.

Chaitravarshini said human error appeared to be the reason for the gas leak and deaths of 3 persons. She said they were still uncertain about the type of gas responsible for the incident. She said a comprehensive probe would be conducted into the incident and a report would be submitted to the Collector soon. She also said the MD of the unit gave an undertaking that such kind of instances would not recur in the future and he assured to follow all safety standards.

Meanwhile, the

Telangana State Election Commission on Tuesday announced that it would put on hold the process of announcing the poll schedule to the posts of sarpanches and members of Mandal Praja Parishad (MPP), Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency (MPTC) and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency (ZPTC) in rural areas due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Municipal polls claim lives of five teachers

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 11

Elections to two municipal corporations and five municipalities that took place in the state on April 30 have so far claimed the lives of at least five government school teachers, confirmed Telangana State United Teachers Federation (TSUTF) general secretary Chava Ravi.

The government teachers, two from Warangal, two from Nalgonda, and one from Khamman passed away after contracting Covid-19 virus, after executing duty as polling officers, confirmed Telangana State United Teachers Federation (TSUTF) general secretary Chava Ravi.

The elections that took place amidst Covid-19 second wave across the country, flouting all safety protocols during campaigning were even criticised by the High Court earlier.

TSUTF district units in

the state, as many as 500 teachers tested positive, mostly in Khamman,

Warangal, and Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly after the elections took place. During this second wave of the virus spread alone, more than 120 teachers have lost their lives," he said.

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Meanwhile, the Telangana State Election Commission on Tuesday announced that it would put on hold the process of announcing the poll schedule to the posts of sarpanches and members of Mandal Praja Parishad (MPP), Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency (MPTC) and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency (ZPTC) in rural areas due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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# DECCAN Chronicle

12 MAY 2021

## Get moving on vaccines as Indian lives do matter

The Union government's contention before the Supreme Court that its vaccine policy was made after several rounds of consultation and discussion with experts, state governments and vaccine manufacturers and hence calls for no judicial "interference" flies in the face of facts that are in the public domain. And the suggestion that the court was making "overzealous, though well-meaning" intervention reflects the government's attempt to play the victim card.

The court is grappling with a question as to why the Union government and the state governments get the vaccines at differential prices with the states paying almost double what the Union government does when the ultimate beneficiaries are the citizens of India. In layman's words, what makes the Centre force the state government to cough up more money to the vaccine manufacturers to inoculate the most productive segment of the population, that is those aged between 18 and 45 years, is the question on hand. That the Centre placed large purchase orders as the reason for cheaper price is hardly convincing as the states, put together, will have to make a similar-sized order.

**India claims to host the world's largest vaccine manufacturing unit but the government lost precious time in helping it augment its production facilities to meet the home requirements**

health workers in the first phase as it is a safeguard against the threat they face at their workplace. A couple of months later, the Election Commission of India ensured that all those officials who were part of the election process in four states and one Union territory were administered two doses of the vaccine. It is more than evident that being vaccinated is a precondition in these times of a devastating pandemic for the people to stay alive and go about earning their daily bread. It is a right available to every person, guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution. The court's efforts must be seen as an attempt to hold the government accountable to the Constitution, which is its mandate, and not as interference.

The government's plea that the current need for vaccination was both "emergent and urgent" does not appear to reflect the whole truth. India claims to host the world's largest vaccine manufacturing unit but the government lost precious time in helping it augment its production facilities to meet the home requirements. While the US government worked closely with manufacturers there and gave them funds in advance, the Serum Institute of India, which manufactures AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine, was waiting for a similar help this April.

A free universal vaccination programme is one of the best tools to remove the threat to life, and hence is a right of every citizen. The government should, instead of questioning the motive of those who question its non-action, get into the action mode. Indian lives matter.

## Uncertainty looms in Nepal

The defeat of Nepal Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli in a confidence vote last Monday is reflective of the tenuous political situation in the Himalayan state that can be exploited by China, which has been actively meddling in Nepal's affairs since the last general election in 2017 which brought Mr Oli to power in a power-sharing deal with Pushp Kumar Dahal Prachanda of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist.

While Mr Oli has lost the confidence of the House, his Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) remains the largest single political formation in the House. It is not considered unlikely that he would seek to manoeuvre various parties in the Pratinidhi Sabha (Lower House) to join him in a coalition under his leadership, although Nepali Congress, the main Opposition party, has rebuffed an approach.

Mr Oli first built up his nationalist credentials by mounting a cartographic coup against India by incorporating changes in the India-Nepal boundary (Kalapani area) through a constitutional amendment that was passed unanimously since no party wished to run the risk of being seen as less than nationalist. This would have pleased Beijing, the other power in contention in Nepal's affairs.

After strengthening his position on the map issue, Mr Oli's power-hunger led him to renege on internal arrangements made with Mr Prachanda to rotate the Prime Minister's post with the CPN (Maoist) leadership. Faced with the prospect of loss of support in the House, he dissolved Parliament with the connivance of President Bidya Kumari Bhandari and called for fresh elections. This unpopular move was thwarted by the Supreme Court. The PM was thus faced with a no-confidence motion.

The fragile internal political situation in land-locked Nepal can render it helpless in dealing with the Covid pandemic, and drive it into the arms of Beijing. New Delhi needs to keep a careful watch on the unstable state of affairs. Negative developments in Nepal have a bearing on India's security.

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Dilip Cherian  
**Dilli Ka Babu**

## As deaths rise, Covid deals a body blow to the steel frame

**I**s India's fabled "steel frame" only creaking or is it screaming? The coronavirus pandemic surge has devastated big cities including the capital and brought the healthcare system to its knees. India has now been recording the highest number of new coronavirus cases in the world and the death toll is mounting.

The second wave of the pandemic has spared no one, not even the elite administrative services that are charged with oiling the wheels that run the nation. According to sources, more than 100 senior officers, including IAS, IPS, IRS and others, have lost their lives to Covid. The news of the deaths of senior babus including Bihar chief secretary Arun Kumar Singh and three of his 1985 batchmates — former CBI director Ranjit Sinha, former secretary, department of land resources, R. Bhuril and serving director of the panchayati raj department in Bihar and many oth-

ers — has got the babus rattled. Further, the president of the UP IAS Association Deepak Trivedi and additional secretary of health in Bihar R.S. Chowdhury too died, both within a week. In recent weeks, nearly two dozen top babus across central government ministries and departments, including the health ministry, have tested positive for the coronavirus.

The severity of the epidemic has hit home. When even the powerful in the land are not safe and anxious about their health and that of their families, they are pushing the panic button. The "System", normally a bulwark against the vicissitudes of fate that often visit upon the citizenry, has collapsed this time. It must be a novel experience for the nation's elite administrators. Clearly, the old trusted "networks" and reliable connections have failed.

Naturally, none of them can say this openly but India's once-fabled "steel frame" has bent and buckled

in the face of the pandemic headwinds. The creaking is audible, even if it actually feels like screaming.

### MAMATA BRINGS BACK COPS TRANSFERRED BY EC

After her hard-fought victory in the recently concluded state Assembly elections, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee is busy setting her house in order. This has primarily meant that she is bringing back a large number of senior IPS officers who had been transferred by the Election Commission during the campaigning. Sources say that within hours of taking oath for the third consecutive time, Didi brought back senior IPS officer Virendra as director general of police. Virendra will be retiring this month. Similarly, Vivek Sahay has been reinstated as director of security.

Sources say that the state government has decided to clean up the mess in police administration and

issued transfer orders to a large number of IPS officers whose role during the election period has been seen as not only doubtful but in violation of norms.

However, the return to "normalcy" may take longer. After reports about the violence that erupted in certain parts of West Bengal after the elections, the ministry of home affairs has deputed a team of top home ministry officials led by an additional secretary-level officer to undertake a fact-finding exercise in the state to assess the "ground situation". This again is likely to set off a fresh round of friction between Didi and the Centre.

### EC SPLIT DOWN THE MIDDLE

The Election Commission (EC) is split down the middle over its response to the censure by the Madras high court on its role in conducting elections during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. The EC has approached the Supreme Court against the cen-

sure, but its petition was swiftly rejected. One of the panel's counsel has resigned stating that his "values are not in consonance with the EC's".

After Sunil Arora's retirement as Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on April 12, the three-member Commission has Sushil Chandra as CEC and Rajiv Kumar as Election Commissioner. The position of the third EC is vacant.

Many remember what happened the last time when there was a schism within the Election Commission. In the 2019 general elections, the then Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa had opposed the clean chit given to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former BJP president Amit Shah on charges of violating the election model code of conduct. We all know how that went.

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipthecherian](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian). Let's multiply the effect.

Subhani



## Amid pandemic, Britain, EU eye India trade deals



**Sunanda K.  
Datta-Ray**

Reflections

**O**n the face of it, the time hardly seems propitious for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reach out to his foreign friends. His ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has suffered electoral setbacks in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh and been reprimanded by the courts. People blame his government for the mix of complacency and inefficiency that aggravated the fearsome second wave of Covid-19. But stricken India desperately needs the emergency medical aid that is pouring in from several richer countries.

Britain is one of them. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has a treaty with India, especially after Brexit, and also to highlight the failure of his predecessor, Theresa May, to secure one. Undaunted by a series of setbacks, he bubbles that the "Enhanced Trade Partnership" and the "memorandum of understanding on India-UK Migration and Mobility Partnership" that he and Prime Minister Modi had endorsed on May 4 "mark the beginning of a new era in the UK-India relationship".

Identifying and repatriating these illegals is bound to cause friction. If the "noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England!", to quote Samuel Johnson, the flight to Heathrow airport is beaten in attractiveness only by the flight to New York for many aspiring Indians. Very few Indians who go nowadays to a Western country to study ever return to the motherland, with its bleak employment opportunities.

The phenomenon isn't exclusively Indian. A special British scheme to facilitate the import of chefs from Bangladesh for so-called "Indian" restaurants at once attracted floods of Bangladeshi whose only aim was to migrate to the West. The scheme was quickly abandoned.

When migration was discussed during Theresa May's 2016 visit to India, London claimed that as many as 100,000 Indians lived illegally in Britain. New Delhi disputed this figure, throwing in the counter argument that tens of thousands of young Indians who go to Britain to study are denied job opportunities there. Another charge was that Britain is about the only country in the world that counts post-graduate Indian students staying on for a year or two's practical training as migrants.

That is only natural. Indians felt especially aggrieved when visa rules for Chinese students were greatly liberalised. One obvious explanation lies in the old saying: "Money talks!" With £8.6 billion in Chinese investment in the UK (with some of them being in public utility undertakings) and around 800 Chinese companies employing 71,000 people in the UK, Beijing could demand concessions. Moreover, Beijing's rigid controls guaranteed that all its students and trainees would sooner or later be recalled. Britain was not afraid of becoming a vast Chinatown.

The repatriation of Indian "illegals" is supposed to facilitate the legal movement of students and professionals and enhance cooperation in addressing illegal migration. But the late and much maligned right-wing British politician, Enoch Powell, was not alone in warning that "rivers of blood" would flow unless non-white immigration was checked. London is so acutely conscious of sensitivity about Commonwealth citizens from Asia and Africa that even Clement Attlee's Labour government back in the 1940s quietly set up a committee to examine how the British Nationality Act of 1948, which granted colonial status for the IT sector, market access and waiver of patent rights on Covid-related innovations — are important but are not explosive like migration.

Apart from a series of agreements on climate change, technology and pharmaceuticals, the Narendra Modi-Boris Johnson negotiations had finalised Indian investment worth £1 billion to create over 6,500 jobs in Britain. The other significant outcome was a commitment by both sides to begin trade talks this year to "negotiate a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement", remove

trade barriers, and double bilateral trade by 2030.

The partnership deal will lift all export barriers on goods ranging from British apples to medical devices and open up India's legal services to British firms. In return, Britain agreed to improve access to its fisheries and nursing sectors.

Mr Johnson probably hopes that Britain will upset the European Union and sign an FTA with India first. Negotiations with the EU, which started in 2007, have been stalled since 2013 but were resumed on May 8 when the 16th India-EU virtual summit was held at Porto, Portugal. India was represented by Mr Modi and the EU by Charles Michel, European Council president, and Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, besides all the 27 member countries. The unsurprising news was that they decided to restart talks on trade, investment protection and geographical indications.

The major sticking points in the India-EU negotiations — tariffs on automobiles, wines and spirits, restrictions on the free movement of professionals, data security status for the IT sector, market access and waiver of patent rights on Covid-related innovations — are important but are not explosive like migration. Ironically, Saturday's summit host, Portugal's Prime Minister, Antonio Costa, is an "Overseas Citizen of India."

Many assume that the presence of three ethnic Indians (Rishi Sunak, Priti Patel and Alok Sharma) in important positions in Mr Johnson's Cabinet will make it easier for other immigrants. But it's a worldwide trend for those who have boarded the gravy train diligently to ward off any newcomers. As home secretary, Priti Patel has already acquired a formidable anti-immigrant reputation.

The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

### LETTERS REDUCING GRAFT

Though the politicians, police, judiciary and media are corrupt in that order, they are Indians (*Check India's corruption, or insurrections will go up*, DC, May 11). Indians are impatient and want to get things done immediately and are happy to comply with the by now famous "formalities". The myriad rules and regulations give ample scope for corruption to thrive. By making procedures simple, granting permissions or sanctions online with transparency, supported by an efficient grievance redressal system, a beginning can be made towards ending or at least reducing this evergreen topic of conversation.

**S. Nageswara Rao**  
Hyderabad

### SYSTEM FAILURE

The authorities are baffled over the uncontrolled spread and consequent sufferings of people (*Humanity wins where system fails in times of the pandemic*, DC, May 11). The habit of recommendations and doing favour in return for some money is the biggest hurdle that is leading to failure of the system. Consequently, the persons responsible are ignoring the importance of the system and aggravating the pandemic. Here humanity is playing a role to replace the system.

**M.G. Sai Baba**  
Hyderabad

### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

#### High level meet on Telangana

NEW DELHI, May 11. The "fair" share for Telangana in the Plan funds of State is one of the issues expected to be resolved at the Prime Minister's half-yearly review here tomorrow.

The Chief Minister Mr. K. Brahmanna Reddi, the Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. J.V. Narasing Rao, and the Telangana Regional Committee Chairman, Mr. J. Chokka Rao, have arrived in the capital for the meeting. The issue to be resolved is between the claim of Mr. Chokka Rao for a 40 per cent share to Telangana of the State Plan funds and allocation by Mr. Brahmanna Reddi of a 35 per cent share on the basis of population plus 40 per cent of the funds earmarked for backward regions.



## SHORT TAKES

**C'GARH: COVID-19 CLAIMS LIVES OF TEN NAXALS**

RABINDRA NATH CHOWDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MAY 11

Outlawed CPI (Maoist) is currently witnessing desertion of its cadres and leaders in insurgency-hit Bastar in Chhattisgarh in the wake of sudden surge in Coronavirus cases in the region, documents seized in a Naxal camp by security forces have revealed.

Meanwhile, intelligence inputs have suggested that at least ten Maoist cadres in south Bastar districts of Sukma and Bijapur died of Covid-19 in recent times.

A two-page letter written in Gondi was among the Naxal materials seized during a raid by security forces in the Naxal camp established in Palnar jungle under Gangalor police limit in Bijapur district on Tuesday.

The letter, copy of which is in possession of this newspaper, has indicated mass desertion of cadres and leaders from their respective units of CPI (Maoist) after several cadres and leaders fell sick due to an 'unknown disease that has taken an epidemic form' in the region.

**MP REPORTS SIX FUNGAL INFECTION CASES**

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, MAY 11

Madhya Pradesh has reported six black fungus infection cases, a post-Covid-19 development in some patients, in the last 24 hours.

While four people suffering from black fungus infection have been admitted to state government-run Hamidia hospital, called Mucormycosis in medical terms, one each contracting the infection has been admitted to AIIMS, Bhopal and a private hospital here in the last 24 hours.

Doctors in the Hamidia hospital removed an eye of an elderly woman who has recovered from Covid-19 a couple of weeks ago following the fungal infection.

The patient suffered swelling in one of her eyes following the infection and the infected eye was removed in a surgery, head of department of ENT of Hamidia hospital Dr Smriti Soni said.

Doctors in AIIMS, Bhopal removed nine teeth and a part of the upper jaw bone of a man suffering from the infection, in a surgery.

He had recovered from Covid-19 two weeks ago and the infection was detected in his nose last week.

Another patient suffering from the infection has been admitted to a private hospital here.

Early detection of infection in a person in the post-Covid-19 situation can be done through nasal endoscopy which helps in removal of fungus easily without harming the patient, experts say.

**RAHUL ASKS MODI TO REMOVE HIS TINTED GLASSES**

New Delhi, May 11: Attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Covid situation in the country, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said he should remove his rose tinted glasses through which he can see nothing but the Central Vista project.

The Congress has been demanding that the project, including a new Parliament building and a new residence for the prime minister, be dropped and the money be used on improving medical facilities and infrastructure in the country. "Countless dead bodies flowing in the rivers. Miles of lines in hospitals. Robbed people of their right to life. PM, take off those rose tinted glasses through which nothing is seen except the Central Vista," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi.

The former Congress president also asked people to join the 'SpeakUpToSaveLives' campaign to strengthen the fight against Covid-19, and urged them to provide a helping hand to the needy in these distressing times.

Gandhi shared a video of a little over a minute on the shortage of oxygen, ventilators, ICU beds and vaccines and people scrambling to get them.

The Congress has set up a control room at the All India Congress Committee headquarters and Pradesha Congress Committee offices to help people.

# Prioritise those due for 2nd dose: Centre

Health ministry urges states to minimise wastage of vaccine doses, undertake awareness campaign

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 11

The Centre, on Tuesday, asked the states and Union Territories (UTs) to ensure that all beneficiaries, who have taken the first dose, be prioritised for the second doses during the vaccination drives. The decision comes as a huge crowd was reported at several places after the government opened vaccination for the 18 plus population. Amid this, those needing the second dose of vaccines were not getting slots to complete their vaccination process.

During a meeting on the vaccination programme chaired by Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan and Dr R.S. Sharma, a member of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration of Covid-19, it was decided that states can reserve at least 70 per cent of the vaccines supplied to them from the government of India channel (free of cost) for the second dose vaccination while the remaining 30 per cent can be used for the first dose.

"This, however, is indicative. The states have the liberty to enhance this to as much as 100 per cent," a statement from the health ministry said.

"The states have been informed in a transparent manner in advance about the Covid vaccines being provided to them from the govt of India channel. The visibility for the forthcoming fortnight is conveyed to them in advance to enable better and more effective planning by them. States were urged to minimise vaccine wastage. While the overall levels have considerably reduced, the Union health secretary pointed out that there were many states that still needed to substantially reduce the wastage by retraining vaccinators to ensure judicious usage of the vaccines."

The national positivity rate at present is 21 per cent and the active caseload has come down to 37.15 lakh. According to Union health ministry, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand, Bihar and Gujarat are showing an increase in daily cases. Union health ministry officials added that there is an increase in the number of districts showing a



A health worker tries to adjust the oxygen mask of a Covid-19 patient at the BKC field hospital in Mumbai on Thursday. — AP



Amid pandemic, hindus offer prayers in front of their ancestors photos, during 'Amavasya' at the banks of River Sabarmati in Ahmedabad, Tuesday. — PTI



A Covid-19 patient receives free oxygen provided by a Sikh organization, in Indirapuram, Tuesday. — PTI

## Active cases down by 30,000

VINEETA PANDEY | DC  
NEW DELHI, MAY 11

Some respite seems to be in sight from the daily sharp rise in Covid-19 cases as India on Tuesday recorded nearly 3.30 lakh fresh cases — a decline of about 30,000 after nearly two months of tormenting spike.

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decline in fresh cases of Covid, even as there are allegations of reduced testing of Covid suspects.

Given the shortage of testing kits, the Union health minister has issued 'revised testing strategy' under which RT-PCR tests will be rationalised. The new policy says RT-PCR testing must not be repeated in any individual who has tested positive once either by RAT or RT-PCR and no testing is required for Covid-19 recovered patients in accordance with the discharge policy.

The ministry also said the requirement of RT-PCR testing for healthy individuals undertaking interstate travel may be removed. This comes after almost all states have started insisting for an RT-PCR negative report from incoming travellers. However, the government made it clear that all asymptomatic individuals undertaking essential travel must follow Covid appropriate behaviour.

The ministry further said that all symptomatic Rapid Antigen Test negative individuals should be retested with RT-PCR.

"The new policy is focused on improving access and availability of testing. RAT will be allowed at all government and private facilities and there should be 24x7 RAT booths at multiple locations such as healthcare facilities, RWA centres, schools, colleges and other available vacant spaces. Drive-through RAT testing facilities may be created at convenient locations," said ICMR chief Dr Balram Bhargava.

### TRAVEL CURB IN MUMBAI CANNOT BE RELAXED: GOVT

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, MAY 11

The Maharashtra government on Tuesday told the Bombay High Court that considering the current situation of pandemic when the Coronavirus is still spreading the restrictions on travelling in public transports like local trains, metro trains and monorails in Mumbai cannot be relaxed.

A division bench of Justice K.K. Tate and Justice Abhay Ahuja was hearing a plea filed by the Cooperative Banks Employees Union (CBEU) seeking permission to travel to work by local trains, metro, and monorail services in the city.

PP. Kakade, the counsel for the State government, told the bench that only frontline health workers and state government staff are currently allowed to use the services of suburban trains, the monorail, and metro trains.

There are two vaccine makers in the country currently — Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India — which are manufacturing Covaxin and Covishield respectively. The two vaccine manufacturers can be given royalty from the profit of other companies for the use of their original formulae, Kejriwal said.

Kejriwal said the entire country can be provided a "safety cover" by allowing more companies to manufacture the vaccines on a war footing ahead of the third wave of the pandemic. He said the Centre can also terminate the monopoly on vaccine production through the patent law.

## PM not to attend G-7 summit in UK

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not attend the forthcoming G-7 Summit in-person at Cornwall in Britain due to the Covid situation in India, the MEA said on Tuesday but there is a possibility that PM Modi may participate in Virtual format. Meanwhile, PM Modi spoke to his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering on Tuesday, with the two leaders noting that the "present crisis situation has served to further highlight the special friendship between India and Bhutan". Speculation is rife that despite the raging Covid crisis in the country, India will find a way for Bhutan to gain access to vaccines in view of the special bilateral ties.

In response to media queries on the upcoming visit of the Prime Minister to attend the G-7 Summit in Cornwall, the MEA said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation today with the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Lyonchhen Dr. Lotay Tshering. The Bhutan Prime Minister expressed solidarity with the Government and the people of India in their efforts against the pandemic. PM conveyed his sincere thanks to the people and Government of Bhutan for their support."

## Maha may discontinue vax for 18-44 age group

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, MAY 11

Facing acute scarcity of Covid vaccines, the Maharashtra Government has decided to suspend the vaccination drive for the 18-44 age group temporarily. The vaccines procured for this age group will now be used for giving second dose to 45-plus beneficiaries.

"There is a dearth of vaccines due to which we are considering holding off the vaccination drive for the 18-44 age group. So we will be giving vaccines right now only to 45-plus people. Administering the second dose is a

priority now," said State Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Tuesday.

● MAHARASHTRA TOPS the Covid vaccination drive in the country with the highest number of 1.84 crore doses administered so far.

people in Maharashtra are awaiting the second dose of Covaxin vaccine.

However, presently there are only 35,000 doses of Covaxin available in the state.

Besides, the State Government had procured 2.75 lakh Covaxin doses for the 18-44 age group. All these doses will now be used only for giving second dose to 45-plus beneficiaries.

The instructions have been issued accordingly to all the vaccination centres in the state. For this, we will have to slow down the vaccination drive for the 18-44 age group. All these doses will now be used only for giving second dose to 45-plus beneficiaries.

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**SHORT TAKES**  
**CIVIC WORKER SEIZES MOTHER'S VEGETABLE CART**

Pune, May 11: Leading by example, a municipal council employee in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district has seized vegetables being sold on a handcart by his mother in violation of the pandemic restrictions.

A video of Rashid Shaikh seizing the vegetables placed on the handcart parked near his house in Pathardi town and dumping them in the municipal council vehicle has gone viral on social media.

"As the restrictions are in place due to Covid-19, vegetable vendors are supposed to sell their produce by moving from one place to another. They are not supposed to set the stall at one place or sit in the market," said Shaikh who works as a conservancy staff with the Pathardi municipal council.

Shaikh said he had warned his mother who sells vegetables in advance about the rules.

"I had alerted my mother that all the vegetable vendors are supposed to sell their produce while on the move. During our drive, I found my mother had parked a handcart of vegetables outside our house in the main Bazar area. To send a stern message that violators will not be spared, I initiated the action and seized vegetables," said Shaikh.

**UDDHAV URGES RESERVATION FOR MARATHAS**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI, MAY 11

Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to provide reservation to the Maratha community by including them into the Social and Economic Backward Class (SEBC). The move has come after the Supreme Court's order striking down the quota for Marathas, calling it "unconstitutional".

Mr Thackeray led a delegation of Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders to meet Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari on Tuesday evening and submitted a letter addressed to the President Ram Nath Kovind and Mr Modi seeking their intervention for providing reservation to the Maratha community.

After the meeting, Mr Thackeray said he will also be meeting the Prime Minister to seek reservation for the community. The delegation included deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, chairman of the sub-committee of Cabinet on Maratha reservation issue Ashok Chavan, Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat, Home Minister Dilip Walase-Patil, Minister for Urban Development Eknath Shinde, minister for water resources Jayant Patil and state Congress chief Nana Patole.

**KERALA'S 'IRON LADY' K.R. GOWRI AMMA NO MORE**

**Thiruvananthapuram, May 11:** Legendary Marxist firebrand and former minister K. R. Gowri, one of the founding leaders of the Communist movement in Kerala and the lone woman member in the state's first cabinet, died at a private hospital here on Tuesday.

She was 102 and had been suffering from various age-related ailments for some time, party sources said.

The chief of Janadhipathy Samrakshana Samithi (JSS), the veteran politician breathed her last at 7 am while undergoing treatment in the ICU, they said.

One of the most powerful and tallest women leaders of Kerala politics, Gowri Amma, as she was fondly called, belonged to the erstwhile Communists who had toiled hard to build up the Left movement in the southern state battling police brutality under the colonial regime and stiff opposition from the then administrators.

Her vibrant political activism, fierce fights against the feudal system, strong stand taken for the women cause and exceptional administrative acumen have garnered her the nickname 'iron lady' and helped her carve an exclusive space in the male-dominated politics of Kerala.

She was the lone surviving member of the first Kerala legislative assembly headed by legendary Communist leader EMS Namboothiripad in 1957 and the only woman in the first state cabinet.

# ED lodges money laundering case against Anil Deshmukh

Cong dubs the ED's move as an attempt to cover up Modi govt's 'failure'

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI, MAY 11

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a money laundering case against Anil Deshmukh, the former home minister of Maharashtra, and others on the basis of FIR registered by the CBI. The CBI has booked Mr Deshmukh for allegedly asking police officers to collect Rs 100 crore extortion from hotel and bar owners in Mumbai every month.

In the first week of April, the Bombay High Court had directed the CBI to conduct a preliminary inquiry into the corruption allegations against Anil Deshmukh levelled by former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh.

Based on the conclusion of a preliminary inquiry into the matter, the CBI on April 24 had registered an

FIR against Mr Deshmukh and others. The CBI said that Mr Deshmukh had used his official position to obtain undue advantage and had also influenced the transfers and postings in the Mumbai Police, as alleged by former Mumbai Police commissioner Param Bir Singh.

On the basis of this FIR, the Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) has been registered in Mumbai and soon searches could be conducted by the agency.

The agency, however, has not specified the quantum of illegal gratification in its ECIR.

Now as per normal course of procedure summons could be issued to the ex-Maharashtra home minister and others in the coming days and ED officials will record their statements.

"The ED will soon con-

duct searches as part of its investigation into the case. Summons will also be issued to the former home minister and others in the coming days and their statements will be recorded by the ED officials," sources said.

The NCP and Congress alleged that the ED's case against Mr Deshmukh was politically motivated.

"Right from Singh's allegations to the filing of the case by the ED, it is all politically motivated and aimed at defaming him (Deshmukh) by misusing power. It is clear that the BJP is playing politics using the CBI, ED and other Central agencies,"

NCP spokesman Nawab Malik said.

The Congress dubbed the ED's move as an attempt to cover up the Modi government's "failure" to manage the pandemic by diverting the public attention. "Why the ED has come into picture when there was no money transaction. Actions of Central agencies have become a joke," Congress spokesman Sachin Sawant said.

Former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh on March 20 had written a letter to chief minister Uddhav Thackeray alleging that Mr Deshmukh had asked accused assistant inspector Sachin Waze and ACP Sanjay Patil to collect Rs 100 crore for him every month. Of this 100 crores, Rs 40-45 crores were to be extorted allegedly from hotels, bars and restaurants.

Waze has alleged that Mr Deshmukh had asked him to pay Rs two crore for his reinstatement with the Mumbai Police. The court however, has not taken his letter on record.

Relying on details published in news reports about the contents of Mr Singh's letter, a city based lawyer Jaysree Patil had filed a petition in the Bombay High Court seeking inquiry into this matter. She had stated that first she had approached the police but no action was taken on her complaint following which she moved the HC. Allowing her plea the HC had directed the CBI to conduct preliminary inquiry against Deshmukh and register FIR only if required after the inquiry.

CBI officials questioned various people including Deshmukh and then registered the FIR.



The newly appointed Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma chairs first meeting of the cabinet in which the 13-member council of ministers on Tuesday.

## New Assam Cabinet reviews Covid situation

**MANOJ ANAND**  
GUWAHATI, MAY 11

announced in case further strict steps would be required to take to contain the spread of Covid.

Earlier during the day the chief minister held a meeting with ministers and senior officers to assess the Covid situation in Assam and stressed the need to intensify containment measures. In the wake of escalating numbers, he also directed officers to ensure strict enforcement of restrictions to bring down the positivity rate.

He directed the ministers and senior officers to extensively travel all corners of the state to contain the spread of the pandemic.

The chief minister also reviewed the vaccination status, vaccine stock, availability of oxygen, and essential medicines.

He further stressed on the importance of creating mass awareness to ensure strict adherence to Covid protocols by all sections of the society to arrest the rising number of cases and directed to ensure rapid vaccination in big cities to restrict the spread of the pandemic to the villages.

The cabinet also decided to increase Assam government's stake in Numaligarh Refinery to 26 percent. Announcing this, Mr Patowary said that people of Assam's sentiments are involved with NRL as it was set up as per provisions of the Assam Accord of 1985.

Earlier Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma distributed portfolios to 13 cabinet ministers which had Ms Ajanta Neog as first woman finance minister of Assam.

— PTI

### BJP CHIEF DEFENDS HUGE POLL RALLIES

From page 1

Mr Nadda also accused Congress leaders, including a chief minister, of trying to actively create vaccine hesitancy during the "once-in-a-century" pandemic.

Mr Nadda accused the Congress of "misleading people, creating false panic and even contradicting their stands just based on political considerations".

Hitting back over the criticism of his party for holding huge poll rallies in April even as Covid-19 cases surged across the nation and also over the construction of the Central Vista project, Mr Nadda said the Congress leaders too held massive election rallies in Kerala, causing a spike in the Covid cases and were now "grandstanding" about poll rallies elsewhere.

Responding to the CWC's charge of the Modi government abdicating its responsibilities on vaccinations, Mr Nadda alleged there seemed to be a "communication gap between the Congress Party and the states it shared power" as in April, the Congress top brass were seeking decentralisation of vaccinations.

"Even when the second wave was on the rise, your party's leaders were happier being seen at super-spreader political events in North India where there was no regard for masks or social distancing. This is not the era when such information can be erased from public memory," wrote Mr Nadda.

The BJP leader said the Centre had so far distributed 16 crore vaccines to the states and 50 per cent of them were being provided even now free of cost, and asked Mrs Gandhi if the states where her party was in power would also give free jabs to people as those ruled by the BJP and its allies have done.

He also said the poor had been provided with food and DBT (direct benefit transfer) distribution.

### Rain struggles



Pedestrians wade through a water logged road, after heavy rain in Kolkata, on Tuesday.

— PTI

## SC agrees to hear Centre's Char Dham plea on May 14

**PARMOD KUMAR | DC**  
NEW DELHI, MAY 11

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear on May 14 the Centre's plea for widening the highway in Uttarakhand linking the Char Dhams — the Hindu pilgrimage sites.

The Centre has approached the court seeking its permission for widening of the 900-km Char Dham highway, not just for facilitating the travel of devotees going on pilgrimage but for defence requirements, to enable the movement of troops and military equipment up to the India-China border.

Agreeing to take up the Centre's plea for an urgent hearing, a bench of Justices Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari said that the matter was of national importance and had to be examined at the earliest.

The court rejected a plea by an NGO, Citizens for Green Doon, which is opposing the widening of the highway on environmental grounds.

mental grounds, for a three-week adjournment, saying it will decide the matter after hearing all the sides.

Attorney-general K.K.

Venugopal, appearing for the Centre, pleaded that the road width has to be seven meters to enable the easy movement of heavy military vehicles. He was pleading against the Supreme Court order in September last year to limit the road width of the entire Char Dham route to not more than 5.5 meters as was earlier proposed by the ministry of road transport and highways in its circular in 2018.

A bench headed by Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman had allowed the width of 5.5 meters. The A-G told the court the min-

istry has since amended its 2018 circular, noting that the roads are to be used for different purposes, going right up to the India-China border.

Posting the matter for hearing on Friday, the court sought all documents, including its earlier orders, by Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning at the latest.

The matter relates to the Char Dham project to improve access to four

Hindu pilgrim sites in Uttarakhand, but NGOs, including Citizens for Green Doon, are up in arms over the possible landslides and floods as cutting the mountains for the highway may cause devastation and heavy loss of lives.

The Centre earlier asked the Supreme Court to go by the majority view of the high-powered committee that favoured a 10-meter wide road for the Char Dham project, which was rejected by the bench headed by Justice Nariman.

A-G told the court the min-

### X-CATEGORY SECURITY GIVEN TO 77 BJP MLAs

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, MAY 11

A day after Union home ministry decided to provide X-category security over to all 77 BJP MLAs in West Bengal, the Central intelligence agencies, sources said, will also closely monitor threat perception to other senior party functionaries and submit regular updates on the same to the ministry for an appropriate follow-up action.

There has been considerable tension between the Centre, governor and newly-elected Mamata Banerjee government in West Bengal ever since she came back to power with a thumping majority on May 2. Fearing possible violent retaliation from Trinamul cadre, the Central agencies will keep a close watch on the possibility of attack or violence not just against senior functionaries of the state BJP but also middle-level leaders in various districts and blocks.

## 2 BJP MLA-elects to remain MPs

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC**  
KOLKATA, MAY 11

Two first-time BJP MPs Nishith Pramanik and Jagannath Sarkar, who won in the West Bengal polls, which I won. Since two posts cannot be held simultaneously, I have been asked by our party central leadership to resign from my Assembly seat. This will bring down the BJP's strength in the Assembly from 77 to 75.

The BJP central leadership, sources said, accepted the two MPs' request to retain their Cooch Behar and Ranaghat parliamentary seats and not enter the Assembly. Their absence at the May 7 swearing-in of new MLAs led to speculation about

their intentions. On Tuesday, Mr Pramanik said: "The party fielded me in the Assembly polls, which I won. Since two posts cannot be held simultaneously, I have been asked by our party central leadership to resign from my Assembly seat. I accepted their decision and will abide by them." Mr Sarkar said: "I will follow our party's decision. An MP cannot become an MLA."

A BJP insider said the party gave more importance to the MP posts due to the huge votebank in seven Assembly segments of each parliamentary seat it won in 2019.

### 3 LeT militants killed in encounter

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
SRINAGAR, MAY 11

Three Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) militants were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Vailoo village of Jammu and Kashmir's southern Anantnag district early Tuesday.

The police said that all the slain were local Kashmiris and identified them as Ilyas Ahmad Dar alias Sameer, Ubaid Shahi alias Abdullah and Aqib Ahmad Lone alias Sahil.

A statement issued by it here said that fighting broke out at around 4 am

### STRUGGLE IS REAL Petrol, diesel prices rise again

after a joint team of J&K police's counterinsurgency Special Operations Group (SOG), the Army's 19th Rashtriya Rifles and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on receiving information about the presence of militants in the village laid siege to it.

It said that when the presence of militants in a private house was established, they were given an opportunity to surrender. "However, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated.

The price hike was noticed by 27 paise a litre and diesel by 30 paise per litre, according to a price notification by state-owned fuel retailers.

The increase took petrol and diesel prices to their highest-ever level across the country. In Delhi, petrol now comes for Rs 91.80 per litre and diesel is priced at Rs 82.36.

This was the sixth increase in prices since May 4, when the state-owned oil firms ended an 18-day hiatus in rate revision they observed during assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

The price increase led to petrol rates crossing the Rs 100-mark in more places of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added tax (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh.

Sri Gangangar district of Rajasthan had the costliest petrol and diesel in the country at Rs 102.70 per litre and Rs 95.06 a litre respectively. Also in Rajasthan, petrol crossed the Rs 100-mark in Jaisalmer (Rs 100.71) and Bikaner (Rs 100.70) while it neared that mark in Barmer (Rs 99.82).

Petrol in several districts of Madhya Pradesh, including Shahdol (Rs 102.06), Rewa (Rs 102.04), Chhindwara (Rs 101.67) and Balaghat (Rs 101.98) crossed the physiological mark. It neared that mark in Indore (Rs 99.90 a litre) and Bhopal (Rs 99.83). If rates continue to rise, Bhopal will be the first state capital to see petrol at Rs 100.10.

In Nanded district of Maharashtra, petrol was being sold at Rs 100.30.

In six increases, petrol price has risen by Rs 1.41 per litre and diesel by 74 paise per litre effected between March 24 and April 15. Oil companies, who have in recent months resorted to unexplained freeze in rate revision, had hit a pause button after cutting prices marginally on April 15.

After raising petrol price

— PTI

**SHORT TAKES**  
**UZBEKISTAN JAILS ANTI-CORRUPTION BLOGGER**

Tashkent: A court in Uzbekistan has sentenced a blogger known for speaking out on corruption to 6.5 years in jail on extortion and libel charges, his lawyer said on Tuesday.

The case of Otabek Sattori, a popular video blogger from the southern town of Termez in the Central Asian country, was widely viewed as a test for authorities who according to rights groups have been clamping down on free speech ahead of a leadership election in October.

A court in the southern Surkhondaryo region sentenced Sattori to six years and six months in jail on Monday, lawyer Umidbek Davlatov said, calling the verdict "completely unfair" and pledging to appeal.

"We don't know for the moment on what precise basis the court ruled to send him to jail," Davlatov said by telephone.

**THAILAND SEEKS HUMANITARIAN FIX FOR JAILED SCRIBES**

Bangkok: Thailand said on Tuesday it was seeking a "humanitarian" solution for three Myanmar journalists arrested after fleeing across the border to escape a junta crackdown.

The trio's employer — the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) — and the Thai foreign correspondents' club urged the authorities not to deport them, warning their lives could be in danger if they returned to the coup-hit country.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1, triggering a mass uprising as large swathes of the population take to the streets to demand democracy.

The junta has responded with force — shooting protesters, arresting suspected dissidents in night raids, and targeting journalists and news outlets by shutting them down.

Thai authorities on Tuesday confirmed the arrests, while foreign ministry spokesman Tanee Sangrat said they were seeking a way out of the case.

**TEXAS COPS SHOOT MAN FOR FIRING GUN IN HOME**

Lancaster (US): Officers in a Dallas suburb fatally shot a man firing a gun in a home on Monday, hours after he was released from a hospital where he had a mental health evaluation.

Officers were dispatched to a home in Lancaster on Sunday night after receiving a report of a man refusing to let a woman leave. They found Kalon J. Horton, 29, who appeared to be intoxicated and in an altered mental state. He was taken to a hospital for evaluation and was later released, according to a police statement.

On Monday, police in the city about 16 miles (26 kilometers) south of downtown Dallas received a shooting report and arrived to find Horton firing a gun in a different home occupied by two children, police stated.

Police Chief Samuel Urbanski said officers confronted and shot Horton, who was later pronounced dead at a hospital. He said the others in the home were not injured. Urbanski said the shooting remained under investigation.

**OZ PLANS BIG DEFENCE, SECURITY INVESTMENTS**

Canberra: The Australian government released a big-spending economic plan for the next fiscal year on Tuesday that includes hefty investments in defence and national security as relations with China worsen.

The government plans to spend 270 billion Australian dollars (USD 212 billion) over the next decade on upgrading defence capabilities to "promote an open and peaceful Indo-Pacific," Treasury Department documents say.

This includes AU\$ 747 million (USD 585 million) to upgrade four military training areas in the Northern Territory where U.S. Marines have a temporary base.

The government announced in March that it would begin building its own guided missiles in close collaboration with the United States. The AU\$1 billion (USD 784 million) project would produce the first Australian-manufactured missiles since the 1960s.

The government also plans to spend AU\$1.3 billion (USD 1.02 billion) over a decade to enhance the ability of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation.

# US accepts Pfizer shot for 12-15 year olds

**It is a way to protect adolescents before they go back to school; vaccination to begin on Thursday**



Queen Elizabeth II reads the Queen's Speech on the Sovereigns Throne, as Britain's Prince Charles, Prince of Wales (right) listens, in the House of Lords chamber, during the State Opening of Parliament at the Houses of Parliament in London on Tuesday, which is taking place with a reduced capacity due to Covid-19 restrictions. — AFP

## England, N. Ireland, Scotland record zero Covid-19 deaths

**United Kingdom, May 11:**

England has recorded zero daily Covid deaths for the first time since July, in a situation welcomed by experts who said it reflected the impact of lockdowns and vaccination against the disease.

Monday marked the first time since 30 July last year that no deaths within 28 days of positive Covid test were reported in England, following Monday 3 May's

report of a single death by the same metric. No deaths were recorded in Scotland or Northern Ireland on Monday. However, four Covid-related deaths were recorded in Wales.

While experts cautioned that the figures were only one measure of Covid-related deaths, and were often affected by time lags in reporting, they said the declining death toll was promising.

## W.H.O DENIES 'LYING' TO ITALY OVER UN REPORT

**Rome, May 11:**

A top World Health Organisation official has strongly denied making false statements to Italian prosecutors about a spiked UN report into Italy's Covid response, doubling down on his assertions in court documents.

Dr Ranieri Guerra, a WHO special adviser, outlined his position in a 40-page response, with a 495-page annex, to prosecutors who placed him under investigation last month for having allegedly made false statements to them when he was questioned November 5.

The prosecutors' claims create a picture that is quite different from the reality of the facts and above all, are imprecise and don't adhere to the reconstruction of events that Dr Guerra provided, said the response signed by his Rome-based attorney.

"Having a vaccine authorised for a younger population is a critical step in continuing to lessen the immense public health burden caused by the Covid-19 pandemic." Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech recently requested similar authorisation in the European Union, with other countries to follow.

The latest news is welcome for US families struggling to decide what activities are safe to resume when the youngest family members remain unvaccinated. "I can't feel totally comfortable because my boys aren't vaccinated," said Carrie Vittitoe, a substitute teacher and freelance writer in Louisville,

Kentucky, who is fully vaccinated, as are her husband and 17-year-old daughter. The FDA decision means her 13-year-old son soon could be eligible, leaving only her 11-year-old son unvaccinated. The family has not yet resumed going to church, and summer vacation will be a road trip.

— AP

## China: 2 plead guilty in web control case

### CHINA WARNS BANGLA OVER JOINING U.S.-LED QUAD ALLIANCE

**Dhaka, May 11:** China has warned Bangladesh against joining the US-led Quad alliance, saying that Dhaka's participation in the anti-Beijing "club" would result in "substantial damage" to bilateral relations.

The unusual warning from Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming came weeks after visiting Chinese Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe emphasised to Bangladesh President Abdul Hamid that Beijing and Dhaka should make joint efforts against powers from outside the region establishing a "military alliance" in South Asia and practising "hegemonism".

"Obviously it will not be a good idea for Bangladesh to participate in this small club of four (Quad) because it will substantially damage our bilateral relationship," Ambassador Li said at a virtual meeting organised by the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh on Monday.

— PTI

**Moscow, May 11:** At least nine people including eight pupils were killed on Tuesday after two unidentified attackers opened fire at a high school in the central Russian city of Kazan, news agencies reported.

"Eight school children and a teacher were killed," a source told the Interfax news agency. Ten more people were injured.

Spokespersons for police and the emergencies ministry refused to comment.

News agencies reported that two unidentified people had carried out the shooting and one, a 17-year-old, had been detained.

Images broadcast on state television from the scene showed dozens of people outside the school building with fire services and police vehicles lining nearby streets.

A source told the Interfax news agency that a second shooter had barricaded himself in on the fourth floor of the building.

The TASS state news agency, citing sources in the emergency services,

**Nine killed, 10 injured in high school shooting in Russia**

said that 10 people had been injured and were rushed to hospital.

"I was in class, I first heard an explosion, then gunshots," TASS quoted a teacher as saying.

The city administration was cited as saying that children were evacuated from the school and that

security had been bolstered at other educational facilities in the city.

Another source cited by the RIA Novosti agency said they had heard an explosion and could see smoke rising from the building.

Tatarstan President Rustam Minnikhanov had

arrived at the scene of the shooting, news agencies reported.

Russia has relatively few school shootings due to normally tight security in education facilities and the difficulty of buying firearms legally, although it is possible to register hunting rifles.



Ambulances seen at the scene of a shooting at School No. 175 in Kazan, the capital of Russia's republic of Tatarstan, on Tuesday.

**CHANGING CURVE**

## As per 7th census, nation recorded increase of 5.38% from 2010 Chinese population rises at slow pace

**Beijing, May 11:** China's

population grew at its slowest pace to reach 1.41178 billion up by 5.38 per cent or 72.06 million from 2010. The figures do not include Hong Kong and Macao. "Data shows that China's population has maintained slow growth in the past decade," Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) told the media here while releasing the census results.

According to the seventh national population census released by the Chinese government on Tuesday, China's population in all the 31 provinces,

autonomous regions, and municipalities reached 1.41178 billion up by 5.38 per cent or 72.06 million from 2010. The figures do not include Hong Kong and Macao. "Data shows that China's population has maintained slow growth in the past decade," Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) told the media here while releasing the census results.

China has conducted a national census every 10 years since the 1990s. The country's population on

**AS CHINA faced population decline, India, whose population was pegged around 1.366 billion in 2019 is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country around 2027.**

the mainland has reached 1.41178 billion, up by 5.38 per cent or 72.06 million from 2010, the latest census data shows. As China faced population decline, India, whose population was pegged around 1.366 billion in 2019 is projected

to surpass China as the world's most populous country around 2027, according to a UN report released in June, 2019.

According to the data released by the NBS, the new census figures reveal that the demographic crisis China faced was expected to deepen as the population above 60 years grew to 264 million, up by 18.7 per cent last year.

"Data shows the aging of the Chinese population has further deepened, and we will continue to face the pressure to achieve

long-term balanced population development," Ning said. China's working-age population, or people aged between 16 and 59, stands at 880 million, Ning said, adding the average age of the Chinese population is 38.8, almost the same as the US' 38, he said.

The growth rate of the population was 0.53 per cent annually on average in the 7th census conducted last year in comparison to 0.57 per cent in the 6th census in 2010 and 1.07 per cent in the fifth census held in 2000.

## SHORT TAKES

**7 KILLED, 1 MISSING IN INDONESIA GOLD MINE LANDSLIDE**

Jakarta: At least seven people were killed and one reported missing after a landslide at an Indonesian gold mine, authorities said Tuesday.

Torrential rains triggered a landslide on Monday, inundating the mine with mud mixed with stones and debris in South Solok regency, West Sumatra, said the local emergency department head Fikri, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.

In a statement, the department said "at least seven killed and one is missing".

Rescuers managed to save nine survivors from the mud and were combing the area to find the missing miner, Fikri said. "Initially, rescuers were having difficulties to evacuate victims to a rescue vehicle because the terrain at the site was challenging," Fikri said, but in the end all survivors went to hospital for emergency treatment.

**BRITISH ACTIVIST CLEARED IN THAI PINEAPPLE CASE**

Bangkok: A rights activist hit with almost a decade of lawsuits after raising concerns about labour conditions at a Thai pineapple company received a court decision on Tuesday clearing him in the final case against him.

Andy Hall faced a series of defamation charges after contributing to a 2012 report on alleged poor working conditions, low wages and child labour at Natural Fruit's factory.

In 2016 the Briton was found guilty of criminal defamation and given a suspended three-year prison sentence before the conviction was overturned in June last year. The company later launched a 300-million-baht (\$9.6 million) civil defamation case but dropped the case before it went to trial last year.

Hall was informed on Tuesday of the Thai Supreme Court's verdict in the final case over separate civil defamation charges relating to a 2013 interview he gave.

The court ruling was made in June 2020 but Covid disruptions meant Hall's lawyer only received it on Tuesday.

**JAPAN LAUNCHES FIRST JOINT DRILL WITH US, FRANCE**

Tokyo: Japanese, US and French troops kicked off their first-ever joint military drill Tuesday in southwestern Japan, as concerns rise over China's growing assertiveness in the region.

An Australian naval ship is also taking part in the week-long air, land and sea exercises involving 300 ground troops from the three countries.

It comes as Tokyo looks to deepen defence ties beyond its key US ally and with eyes on Beijing's moves in the East and South China seas.

"The drill is no doubt a deterrent to China's increasingly aggressive behaviour in the region," Takashi Kawakami, head of the Institute of World Studies at Takushoku University, said.

The drills, which include fighter jet and amphibious operation exercises, will be held in the Kyushu region and at sea with virus countermeasures.

A Japanese submarine and 10 surface ships will be used, a French naval official said.

**IRAN REJECTS U.S. CLAIM OF CLASH DUE TO SPEEDBOATS**

Tehran: Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard on Tuesday rejected the US Navy's claim that fast-approaching Iranian speedboats in the Strait of Hormuz sparked a tense encounter in the already sensitive region.

The Guard's website, *sepahnews.com*, published a statement on Tuesday saying Americans were guilty of using "false narratives and unprofessional behavior" and should more strictly "abide by international regulations." Specifically, the statement said the Guard's navy warned the US vessels to stop their "provocative and aimless shooting."

A day earlier, the US said the Revolutionary Guard sent 13 armed speedboats too close to US Navy vessels in the Strait of Hormuz on Monday. The Americans said a Coast Guard cutter fired warning shots when two of the Iranian boats came dangerously close.

The exchange comes as the United States and Iran engage in indirect talks in Vienna aimed at reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which the United States left in 2018.



Vehicles set ablaze after a rocket launched from the Gaza Strip, controlled by the Palestinian Hamas movement, landed in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon on Tuesday. — AFP

**Israel: Hit 130 Gaza military targets, 15 'operatives' killed**

**Clashes erupted after Palestinians hurled projectiles at Israeli security forces**

**Israeli PM vows to step up Gaza strikes as 28 get killed**

Jerusalem, May 11:

Israel's army said on

Tuesday that it had hit 130 "military targets" in Gaza, killing 15 "Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives"

in retaliatory strikes after

Palestinian militant

groups launched a flurry

of rockets towards Israel.

"We have struck 130 mil-

tary targets belonging mostly to Hamas," the Israe-

list group that controls the

blockaded Gaza strip,

Israeli army spokesman

Jonathan Conricus said.

"According to our cur-

rent estimates we have kil-

led 15 Hamas and Islamic

Jihad operatives," he said.

Violence has spiralled

since clashes with Israeli

police in the flashpoint Al

Aqsa mosque compound

wounded hundreds of

Palestinians.

The clashes started after

Palestinians hurled projec-

tiles at Israeli security

forces.

Hamas gave Israeli

forces a 1500 GMT on

Monday deadline to vacate

Al Aqsa, Islam's third holiest site.

Shortly after the

deadline expired, Hamas

and other armed groups in

the Israeli-blockaded

Gaza strip unleashed a

barrage of rockets

towards Israel, including

Jerusalem.

Conricus said more than

200 rockets had been fired

from Gaza since Monday,

with more than 90 percent

of those intercepted by

Israel's Iron Dome defence

system.

Health authorities in

Gaza have put the death

toll from the air strikes

strikes at 28, including

Conricus said Israel

could not yet confirm or

deny that its strikes

caused civilian casualties

in the strip.

He said Hamas was try-

ing to "nurture a narrative

of damage to non-combat-

ants done by Israel. That is

not true."

Israel's army estimated

that roughly a third of the

rockets launched by

militants had "fallen

short," landing inside

Gaza, and may be

responsible for Palesti-

nian casualties, Conricus

said.

He told reporters that

sites targeted so far

included weapons manu-

facturing and storage

facilities, training sites

and military bases in

Gaza. — AFP

On the Palestinian side,

10 children were among 28

people killed in the block-

aded Gaza Strip, and over

150 people there were

reported wounded, many

rescued from the

smouldering ruins of

buildings hit in the crowd-

ed enclave.

On the Israeli side, rock-

ets killed two women in

Ashkelon, just north of

Gaza ... a coastal city

which Hamas threatened

to turn into a "hell", at one

stage claiming to have

fired more than 100 rock-

ets in under five minutes

to overwhelm air defences.

Netanyahu warned that

the Israel Defense Forces

would now intensify their

attacks, which the army

said have targeted mili-

tary sites and claimed the

lives of at least 17 Hamas

and Islamist Jihad com-

manders.

"Since yesterday, the

army has carried out hun-

dreds of attacks against

Hamas and Islamic Jihad

in Gaza ... and we will fur-

ther intensify the power of

our attacks," Netanyahu said.

Hamas, which rules the

Gaza Strip, "will be hit in

ways that it does not ex-

pect," the prime minister

warned. — AFP

Geneva, May 11: The

United Nations rights

office said on Tuesday it

was "deeply concerned" by

the escalation of violence

in the occupied Palestinian

territories, east Jerusalem

and Israel.

The Office of the UN

High Commissioner for

Human Rights appealed

for calm after several days

of unrest.

Tensions in Jerusalem

have flared into the city's

worst disturbances since

2017 after Israeli riot police

clashed with large crowds

of Palestinian worshippers

on the last Friday of the

Muslim holy fasting month

of Ramadan. — AFP

**Qatar ruler visits Saudi for 1st time since rift eased**

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani

level Gulf Arab summit that took place in January and which concluded with a declaration to ease the rift. It was his first visit to the kingdom since ties had frayed in mid-2017.

Qatar, which is hosting the FIFA soccer World Cup next year, emerged from the spat largely unscathed and resolute in the face of the assault. The campaign, led by Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Bahrain, achieved little in the face of forcing Qatar to change its policies and pushed the gas-rich nation in closer alliance with Turkey and Iran. — AP

## quick BITES

### INDICATORS %

Sensex	49161.81	-0.69
Nifty 50	14850.80	-0.61
S&P 500*	4,144.59	-1.05
Dollar (₹)	73.34	0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.65	-0.28
Euro (₹)	89.22	-0.003
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,308 ▲212	0.44
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	68.32	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.008	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.616	0.014

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

### Moody's cuts India growth forecast to 9.3%

Moody's Investors Service slashed India's growth forecast for the current financial year to 9.3 per cent, from the 13.7 per cent projected earlier, on account of the negative impact of the Covid second wave. India is experiencing a severe second wave of coronavirus infections which will slow the near-term economic recovery and could weigh on long-term growth dynamics, the rating agency said.

### Ruchi Soya to acquire biscuits biz from Patanjali



Ruchi Soya Industries announced the acquisition of biscuits business from Patanjali Natural Biscuits Pvt Ltd in a slump sale at ₹60.02 crore. The company, in a regulatory filing, said its board on May 10 approved the signing of a Business Transfer Agreement in this regard with the PNBPL. The acquisition will be completed in the next two months, it added. The sale consideration is payable in two tranches.

### HUL to provide 4,000 oxygen concentrators

Hindustan Unilever Ltd said it will provide 4,000 oxygen concentrators to India to address the acute shortage of medical oxygen. Under its Mission HO2PE, HUL will send 4,000 concentrators to the worst affected cities which includes Delhi, Lucknow, Bengaluru, etc., it said. "Patients can avail of this service by calling the Mission HO2PE helpline number and request for oxygen concentrators," it added.

### 3 private telcos add new users in February

India's largest telecom operator Reliance Jio widened its mobile subscriber base to 414.9 million in February, with healthy addition of 4.2 million users, as it managed a comfortable lead in the market, according to TRAI data. In fact, all three private operators Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea added subscribers during the month, as per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

■ New dividend rules for top 1,000 firms

## Sebi makes policy on dividend a must

New Delhi, May 11: To strengthen corporate governance practices and disclosure requirements, Sebi has notified new rules, including that top 1,000 listed firms will have to formulate a dividend distribution policy.

The regulator has also put in place a framework in relation to applicability, constitution and role of the Risk Management Committee (RMC) and eased norms for reclassification of a promoter as a public shareholder, according to a notification dated May 5.

In addition, requirement to constitute the RMC has been extended to the top 1,000 listed entities by market capitalisation from the existing top 500 listed entities.

The RMC needs to have a minimum three members with the majority of them being members of the board of directors, including at least one independent director.

The quorum for a meeting of the RMC needs to be either two members or one third of the members of the committee, whichever is higher, including at least one member of the board of directors in attendance.

"The meetings of the RMC shall be conducted in such a manner that on a continuous basis not more than 180 days shall elapse between any two consecutive meetings," as per the notification.

The role of the RMC has been specified which includes formulation of a



a web-link in their annual reports.

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"The meetings of the RMC shall be conducted in such a manner that on a continuous basis not more than 180 days shall elapse between any two consecutive meetings," as per the notification.

The role of the RMC has been specified which includes formulation of a

detailed risk management policy and monitoring its implementation; periodic review of such policy; review of the appointment, removal and terms of remuneration of the chief risk officer (if any).

Further, the regulator has rationalised the existing framework pertaining to reclassification of promoter/ promoter group entities.

This includes exemption from existing requirements, in cases of reclassification pursuant to an order of the regulator under any law in line with existing exemption already available in cases of resolution plan approved under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

The exemption has also been provided from the requirement of seeking approval of shareholders in cases where the promoter seeking reclassification holds shareholding of less than one per cent, subject to the promoter not being in control, Sebi said.

### PROMOTERS PLEDGED STAKE DIPS TO 1.64% FROM 2.09%

Mumbai, May 11: Faster-than-expected recovery from the pandemic induced disruptions and the resultant improvement in balance sheets in the second half of FY21 have helped India Inc promoters to redeem their pledged shares, according to a brokerage analysis.

The pledged holding of the BSE-500 index shows that the value of pledged promoter holdings as a percentage of promoter holding declined to 1.64 in the March quarter from 2.09 in the December 2020 quarter, according to a Kotak Institutional Equities analysis.

When looked at from a percentage of the overall promoter shareholding and the pledged holding, GMR Infrastructure (72.8), Omaxe (63.8) and Sterling & Wilson (53.7) were leading the chart. Companies with the highest promoter pledged holdings as of March 2021 include Suzlon Energy (88.5 per cent), Future Consumer (88.4) and Max Financial Services (88.4), GMR Infrastructure (72.8), and Omaxe (63.8).

Similarly, there was a widespread decline in pledged promoter holdings in almost all the Nifty-50 companies, except for IndusInd Bank where it increased.

However, it has to be kept in mind that pledging of shares does not necessarily imply that a company or a promoter is under financial stress. —PTI

## French auto major Citroen begins C5 Aircross delivery

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MAY 11

French automobile major Citroen has commenced delivery of the new Citroen C5 Aircross SUV in Hyderabad. The company's flagship SUV is assembled in India in the company's plant in Thiruvallur, near Chennai.

This 'Comfort Class SUV' has a distinguished dynamic design and is available in four body colours and an optional black roof, for a personalised look.

Globally, the brand's leadership is illustrated by its "unique comfort" signature and embodied by the five key aims of the Citroen Advanced Comfort Programme illustrated in the new Citroen C5 Aircross SUV.

The vehicle comes in three models and is priced (ex-showroom, Hyderabad) between ₹29.9 lakh and ₹31.9 lakh.

To make the Citroen ownership extremely com-



French automobile major Citroen begins delivery of the new Citroen C5 Aircross SUV in Hyderabad.

fortable, the company has launched Citroen Future Sure for Indian customers.

This comprehensive package allows customers to own a Citroen with an easy monthly payment of ₹49,999, including an assured future value on the new Citroen C5 Aircross SUV.

Business NOTE includes Routine Maintenance, Extended Warranty, Roadside assistance and an on-road financing for upto five years.

## Markets tumble on inflation fears

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MAY 11

Indian equity market corrected after four sessions of gains in line with global market on expected US inflation spike fear and US Fed's monetary policy tightening sooner than later which led to overnight sell off in the technology sector stocks in the US market.

Nasdaq Composite index was down 1.34 per cent on Tuesday night too at the time of going to press after falling 2.34 per cent on Monday on rising inflation and soaring global commodity prices.

The Sensex closed 340.60 points or 0.69 per cent down at 49,161.81 making a partial recovery from intra-day dip by over 600 points to 48,988.18 and gap down opening at 49,066 on weak global cues.

The Nifty-50 index closed at 14,850.75 down by 91.0 points or 0.61 per cent.

However, the broader market was quite resilient with BSE Mid-cap index

up 0.60 per cent and BSE Small-cap index up 0.80 per cent. PSU stocks were in big demand as BSE PSU index gained 2.44 per cent BSE CPSE index gained 3.16 per cent. "Rising inflation threatens the long-term revenue outlook of tech stocks. The run-up in commodity prices has stoked fears of the US Federal Reserve tightening its monetary policy much sooner than expected," said Deepak Jasani, head of retail research, HDFC Securities.

MF INVESTORS TURN CAUTIOUS IN APRIL, BET ON HYBRID FUNDS



RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MAY 11

The second wave of Covid impacted mutual investors' fresh allocations in April in equity mutual funds as inflows fell to ₹3,437.37 crore compared to ₹9,115.12 crore in March 2021.

Investors preferred investing in hybrid MF schemes with ₹8,641 crore inflows in April, higher than ₹6,210.05 crore in the previous month.

However, the start to fiscal 2021-22 has been quite positive with mutual fund industry average asset under management at all time high of ₹32,424 lakh crore due to inflows in all MF scheme categories – be it debt, equity, hybrid or other schemes and monthly SIP contribution at ₹8,591 crore, April month data released by Association of Mutual Funds in India showed.

The quantum of redemption was almost the same as last month, the fund mobilised was lower than that in March suggesting some of the investors would have preferred to stay on the sidelines until more clarity emerges around the impact of the second wave of the pandemic on the economy. Additionally, few investors would have also held back their investments in anticipation of market correction given the ongoing concerns." Himanshu Srivastava, associate director (Research), Morningstar India said. "The flows during April 2021 were driven by liquid, overnight and money market schemes on the fixed income side, thematic/sectoral schemes and arbitrage and dynamic asset allocation schemes in the equity and hybrid segment," N S Venkatesh, CEO, AMFI said.

## HUL's Sudhir to join Godrej as MD



Sudhir Sitapati

New Delhi, May 11: FMCG major Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) on Tuesday said Sudhir Sitapati will take over as its managing director and CEO in October this year.

Sitapati is presently executive director, foods and refreshments, at Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL).

His appointment would be effective from October 18, 2021, following which Nisaba Godrej, who is currently the chairperson and managing director, will serve as executive chairperson, GCPL said in a regulator filing.

"The Board of Directors at its meeting held today, appointed Sudhir Sitapati as the managing director & CEO of the company for a period of five years with

effect from October 18, 2021, subject to the approval of the shareholders in the ensuing Annual General Meeting," it said.

On Monday, HUL had informed that Sitapati is stepping down. Srinandan Sundaram was named as his replacement.

According to the Godrej group firm, the appointment of Sitapati, who has spent 22 years at HUL, will

enable GCPL to leverage his significant experience in building sustainable and profitable businesses to guide the growth strategy going forward.

Last year in June, Vivek Gambhir had stepped down as the MD and CEO of GCPL. Nisaba Godrej, who was then executive chairperson, had assumed additional charge as MD and CEO.

Commenting on the development, Nisaba Godrej said, "I am delighted to be welcoming Sudhir to Godrej."

His significant experience and passion for building sustainable and profitable brands and businesses aligns very strongly with our purpose at GCPL. Sudhir's value-based leadership also makes him a great fit with the Godrej culture." —PTI

## MFIs send SOS to RBI on Covid

New Delhi, May 11: The microfinance industry has sought additional support, including an extension of the emergency credit line, from the Reserve Bank of India to combat the challenges arising out of the second COVID-19 wave.

Just when we were coming out of the effects of the first wave of the pandemic, the second wave

has descended on us with a vengeance.

In view of the fresh challenges brought on by the pandemic, Sa-Dhan executive director P. Satish said MFIs may be supported with an emergency credit line of up to 25 per cent of their outstanding with their lending banks.

— PTI

## Infection among staff halves Apple phone's production in India



More than 50 per cent of the plant's capacity had been cut, both sources said, declining to be named as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

They did not specify the plant's capacity and it was unclear how many workers were at the facility, which provides dormitory accommodation for employees.

Taipei-based Foxconn, the world's largest contract electronics maker and a major supplier to Apple, said a small number of employees at one of its facilities in India tested positive for Covid-19 and the company was providing them with support, including medical assistance.

Foxconn places the health and safety of our employees as our highest priority and that is why

we have been working closely with local government and public health authorities in India to address the challenges that we and all companies are facing in dealing with the Covid-19 crisis," it said in a statement to Reuters.

Foxconn's shares fell as much as 6.2 per cent after the Reuters report. The stock closed down 5.31 per cent, outpacing a 3.8 per cent fall in the broader market on concerns about rising Covid-19 cases in Taiwan.

India has benefited from Apple's move to shift some areas of production from China to other markets as it navigates a trade war between Washington and Beijing, with Apple announcing in March it had started the assembly of the iPhone 12 in India. — Reuters

### CG POWER OKAYS DEBT SETTLEMENT WITH STANCHART

New Delhi, May 11: CG Power and Industrial Solutions on Tuesday said its board has approved a proposal to allot 1.38 crore shares for ₹101.20 crore to Standard Chartered Bank (Singapore) on a preferential basis for settlement of liability toward the latter.

The board has approved the issuance and allotment of 1,38,45,000 shares of the company of face value of ₹2 each on preferential basis at a price of ₹73.10, including premium of ₹71.10 per equity share, aggregating to Rs 1,01,20,69,500 for consideration other than cash, the company said in a filing with the Bombay Stock Exchange. —PTI

Bengaluru, May 11: Production of the Apple iPhone 12 at a Foxconn factory in India has slumped by more than 50 per cent because workers infected with Covid-19 have had to leave their posts, two sources told Reuters.

The Foxconn facility in the southern state of Tamil Nadu produces iPhones specifically for India, the world's No.2 smartphone market.

Tamil Nadu is one of the worst hit states in the second coronavirus wave engulfing India. Officials imposed a full lockdown in the state from Monday, closing public transport and shuttering shops, to try slow surging infections. "Employees are only allowed to leave but not to enter the facility since yesterday," the person said. "Only a small part of output is being kept."

More than 100 Foxconn employees in the state have tested positive for Covid-19 and the company has enforced a no-entry ban at its factory in the capital of Chennai until late May, one of the sources said.

**SHORT TAKES**  
**Anand to feature in Covid fundraiser**

New Delhi: Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand and four other Indian Grandmasters will play simultaneous online exhibition matches against other chess players on Thursday to raise funds for Covid-19 relief work in the country. Any player who has a Chess.com blitz or FIDE standard rating of under 2000 can play with former world champion Anand by donating \$150 and with the other four GMs by paying \$25 as registration amount. Donations will also be accepted during the exhibition matches to be broadcast on Chess.com at 19.30 IST. The website said it will match all donations up to a total of \$10,000. All the proceeds from the simultaneous exhibitions involving Anand, Koneru Humpy, Dronavalli Harika, Nihal Sarin and Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu will go to RedCross India and the Checkmate Covid initiative of the All India Chess Federation (AICF). — PTI

**Pacer Bumrah gets vaccinated**

Mumbai: India's star pacer Jasprit Bumrah and women's national team opener Smriti Mandhana on Tuesday said they received their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. Joining the duo was veteran wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Karthik. All three cricketers posted pictures of themselves on their respective social media accounts while urging everyone to get inoculated. Several of his teammates, including skipper Virat Kohli, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma, had got their first jab in various vaccination centres across the country. Head coach Ravi Shastri was the first from the Indian cricket team to receive the vaccine. He got his first jab in the first week of March. — PTI

**Don't break Covid protocols: Rijiju**

New Delhi: Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday cautioned Indian sportspersons against breaking Covid-19 protocols of foreign countries while travelling for training or competition. Rijiju posted the comment while wishing Olympic-bound shooters a successful trip to Croatia, for which they left earlier in the day.

"Safe journey! Never break the Covid-19 protocols of other countries. Focus on training, take care and stay safe. Will provide all necessary support to our athletes and the coaches. All the best," Rijiju tweeted. The remark came in the backdrop of Bengaluru FC's AFC Cup play-off against Eagles FC in Malé being postponed after the visiting team had to tender an apology for violating quarantine protocols in the host city. Maldives sports minister Ahmed Mahloof had asked BFC to leave the country. — PTI

**Fulham relegated from top flight**

London: Relegation, promotion, and now relegation again. Fulham's rollercoaster ride between the top two divisions of English football has taken the London club back out of the Premier League, their fate sealed by losing to Burnley 2-0 on Monday. Fulham joined Sheffield United and West Bromwich Albion in going down to the Championship, wrapping up the Premier League's relegation battle at the earliest ever stage with three rounds still to go. "I'm bitterly disappointed, I'm hurt, I'm gutted," said Fulham manager Scott Parker, who also presided over the team's relegation two seasons ago when he was in charge on an interim basis. — AP

**Westbrook sets record in NBA**

Los Angeles: Russell Westbrook wrote his way into NBA history on Monday, bagging the 182nd triple-double of his career to break Oscar Robertson's 47-year-old record. Washington Wizards star Westbrook, who had equalled Robertson's record of 181 triples on Saturday, sealed his record-breaking triple with 8 minutes and 33 seconds remaining in Monday's 125-124 defeat to the Atlanta Hawks. Westbrook's 36th triple-double of the season included 28 points, 21 assists and 13 rebounds. A triple-double occurs when a player makes double-digit tallies in three of the five major statistical categories in a game — points, rebounds, assists, steals and blocks. — AP

# TWO-HORSE RACE

Dhawan, Pandya in contention to lead second-string team

New Delhi, May 11: Veteran opener Shikhar Dhawan and flamboyant allrounder-turned specialist batsman Hardik Pandya will be locked in a two-way fight for India captaincy if Shreyas Iyer doesn't get fit in time for the white-ball tour of Sri Lanka in July. India's limited overs specialists will be playing three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs in the island nation during the second half of July, when big guns like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will be in England for a marquee five-match Test series.

"It is still not clear if Shreyas will recover fully and will be match-fit in time for tour of Sri Lanka. Normally, a surgery of this scale along with rest, extensive rehab and training to get back in shape takes around four months," a senior BCCI source privy to selection matters said on conditions of anonymity.

"In case Shreyas was available, he would have been the automatic choice for captaincy."

It's only logical that the two contenders for captaincy are 35-year-old Dhawan, who has had good "one and half IPLs" in last two seasons and Pandya junior, who is one of the most accomplished match-winners.

"Shikhar has had two very good IPL including this curtailed one and being the senior most among those who are available for selection, he is a very strong contender. Also he has been a solid performer for India for past eight years," an official said.

As far as Hardik is concerned, his reputation as a white-ball match-winner can't be discounted either.

"Hardik hasn't been regularly bowling for MI or India in recent times. However, he is the man with x-factor and among options available. He is miles ahead of his peers in terms of being an impact performer," the official said. — PTI

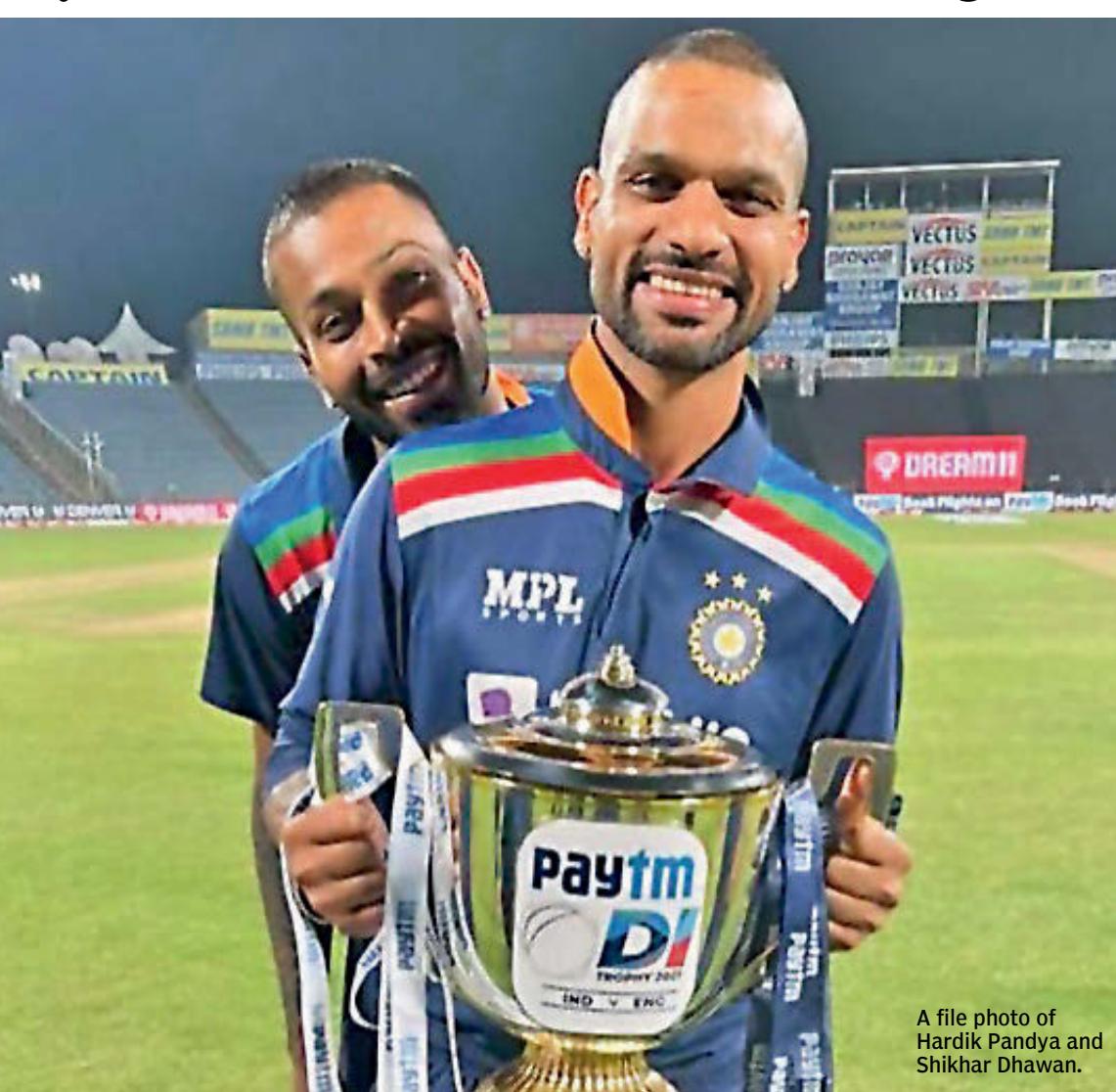
## JUVENTUS ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING RONALDO

Rome, May 11: With their nine-year reign in Serie A ended and club president Andrea Agnelli roundly criticised for his role in the aborted European Super League, Juventus now risk missing out on next season's Champions League.

Juventus were knocked out of Italy's top four last weekend following a 3-0 home defeat by AC Milan, leaving coach Andrea Pirlo's position increasingly under threat entering the final three games.

Juventus last missed out on the Champions League in 2011 while Cristiano Ronaldo, the competition's all-time leading scorer with 134 goals, has featured in every edition since 2003. Failing to qualify would see Juventus lose out on roughly 80 million euros, jeopardising their ability to retain Ronaldo and afford his reported pre-tax annual salary of 54 million euros.

It would likely spell the end of Ronaldo's Turin spell, who despite turning 36 in February is the leading scorer in Serie A this term with 27 goals. That could though free up opportunities for others to emerge. — AFP



A file photo of Hardik Pandya and Shikhar Dhawan.

## A FEW INDIANS DIDN'T LIKE RESTRICTIONS: PAMMENT

Auckland, May 11: Mumbai Indians fielding coach James Pamment has claimed that some senior Indian players did not like being subjected to restrictions inside the currently-suspended IPL's bio-bubble but it felt completely safe till the time cases from participating teams hadn't come to light.

Pamment did not elaborate on his assertion about the Indian players and did not take any names either. The IPL was suspended on May 4.

"Some of the senior Indian guys don't like being restricted and told what to do," he was quoted as saying by *stuff.co.nz*. "But we did feel safe, at no point did we feel the bubble would be compromised... We felt the travel was always going to be a challenge," he said.

The New Zealander, a former Northern Districts coach, said he and the MI players started to feel apprehensive shortly before the competition was halted.

"It was when cases started to come with the teams. They were a little more fearful, a little more apprehensive," said the 52-year-old, who returned home on Saturday.

"Chennai (CSK) announced their cases and we'd played Chennai at the weekend, so straight away, the dynamic changed. I certainly noticed from within my group. I'd spend most of my time with the Kiwis and the Aussies, their

mindset had changed. "We started to get Indian guys in our environment whose families were sick. There were bereavements as well and we were taking a bit of a cue from those guys who were saying 'no, we want to carry on' and the messages were coming back that this is a good distraction."

Pamment said at no stage did he feel his health was going to be put in jeopardy within the bubble set up by MI at a Mumbai hotel. — PTI

## No England stars for IPL phase 2

London, May 11: England have a busy international schedule from June onwards and the players are unlikely to be available for the remainder of the suspended IPL if the T20 tournament is rescheduled this year, says ECB Director of Cricket Ashley Giles.

The IPL was suspended last week after multiple COVID-19 cases inside its bio-bubble. There are two windows for the T20 event to be resumed this year — one is in the second half of September and before the T20 World Cup (October-November) and the other is after mid-November.

But England's top players will be in action at both times. They have tours to Bangladesh and Pakistan in September and October, while they will compete with Australia at the Ashes right after the T20 World Cup.

"We're planning on involvement of England players in England matches. We've got a full FTP schedule. So if those tours to Pakistan and Bangladesh are going ahead, I'd expect the players to be there," Giles said as quoted by *ESPNcricinfo*.



England's Sam Curran (left) and Moeen Ali represent Chennai Super Kings in IPL. — Twitter

There were 11 Englishmen in various franchises in the suspended IPL.

"None of us knows what a rearranged IPL looks like at the moment, where it's going to be or when. But from when we start this summer against New Zealand, our programme is incredibly busy," Giles said.

"We've got a lot of important, high-profile cricket including the T20 World Cup and the Ashes. And we're going to have to look after our players." — PTI

## WINDIES CAN'T RECLAIM LOST GLORY: CURTLY

Kingston, May 11: Pace legend Curtly Ambrose believes the current lot of Caribbean youngsters doesn't really understand what cricket means to the West Indies and so the two-time world champions will never be able to relive the glory days again.

West Indies had lifted first two World Cup titles in 1975 and 1979 and it took 33 years for the team to claim another ICC title in 2012 (T20 World Cup).

"Most of the youngsters we have now probably don't quite understand what cricket means to West Indians in the West Indies and abroad because cricket is the only sport that really unites Caribbean people," Ambrose said, adding.

"This is no disrespect to the players we have now because we have a couple of guys who have some quality in them and can become great. I don't think we will ever see those great, exceptional glory days again." — PTI

**COVID SCARE**

## Doubts raised over Olympics

Tokyo, May 11: Japanese superstar Naomi Osaka has admitted she is "not really sure" the coronavirus-hit Tokyo Olympics should go ahead, as doubts grow about the Games just weeks before the opening ceremony.

The four-time tennis Grand Slam winner joined fellow Japanese player Kei Nishikori in raising concerns as Tokyo and other parts of Japan remain under a virus state of emergency.

A top politician also warned that Japan still had to make a "careful decision" about whether to hold the Games, which have scant public support, according to opinion polls.

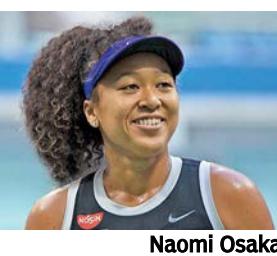
Scraping the 2020 Olympics, postponed last year as the pandemic advanced, is an idea that has never quite gone away, despite repeated assertions from officials that they will proceed.

A survey by a leading Japanese daily released on Monday found 59 percent of respondents want the Olympics cancelled, underlining persistent public concerns over the risk of infection.

Osaka, Japan's biggest sports star and a major gold-medal prospect, said "to be honest, I'm not really sure," when asked if the Olympics should take place as planned.

"I'm an athlete, and of course my immediate thought is that I want to play in the Olympics," the four-time Grand Slam winner told the BBC.

"But as a human, I would say we're in a pandemic, and if people aren't



Naomi Osaka

I would say we're in a pandemic, and if people aren't healthy, and if they're not feeling safe, then it's definitely a really big cause for concern.

— NAOMI OSAKA

Japanese tennis star

healthy, and if they're not feeling safe, then it's definitely a really big cause for concern."

Nishikori said there "definitely should be a discussion" on whether Tokyo should plough ahead. "I don't know how much they are thinking about how they are gonna make (a) bubble, because this is not like 100 people," he said.

Nadal 'NOT SURE'

World number three Rafael Nadal admitted he is unsure if he will take part in the Summer Olympics.

"In a normal world, the Olympic Games were always my main priority. In the current world, the Olympic Games are still a priority, but things have changed. We have been for almost year-and-a-half under this pandemic and under the BBC.

"But as a human, I would say we're in a pandemic, and if people aren't

— AFP

## TORCH RELAY PULLED OFF STREETS IN JAPAN

Tokyo, May 11: The Tokyo Olympic torch relay is being pulled off the streets in Hiroshima prefecture as Covid-19 cases rise in Japan barely 10 weeks before the opening ceremony. Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki said that a ceremony next week without the relay is likely to still take place. This is at least the sixth change to the relay — from rerouting to cancellation — in the last several weeks.

Organisers warned before the relay began that changes and delays were expected. "It is certain there will be no relay on public streets since we are all trying to reduce going out, and how to do the ceremony without the relay on the streets is still being discussed with the organisers," Yuzaki.

The relay began on March 25 in northeastern Japan and is to end on July 23 at the opening ceremony of the Olympics. Tokyo and other areas are under a state of emergency until May 31.



Indian shooters Elaveni Valarivan (left) and Sanjeev Rajput take a selfie. — Twitter

## Indian shooters leave for Croatia

New Delhi, May 11: The Olympic-bound Indian shooting team on Tuesday left for Croatia for a two and a half months training-cum-competition tour, its final tune-up to the upcoming Tokyo Games.

With coaches and support staff in tow, a 13-member Indian shooting team took off for Croatian capital Zagreb, where it will undergo a training camp before leaving for Osijek to take part in the European Championships (May 20 to June 6) followed by the combined ISSF World Cup (June 22 to July 3).

"Team India takes off in 20 mins. Bon Voyage, Get the nose to the ground and work hard for your

inevitable success team," Raninder Singh, National Rifle Association of India president tweeted before the team's departure.

The two Olympics bound skeet shooters Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Mairaj Ahmad Khan will be based in Italy. The Indians, including Gurjot Singh Khangura, took part in the ongoing shotgun World Cup in Lonato, where they could not make the final of the men's skeet event on Monday. The team left in a chartered flight arranged by the NRAI. After the stint in Croatia, the team will directly leave for Tokyo to participate in the Olympics, beginning on July 23.

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A study by University of Cambridge suggests bats made from bamboo are economically sustainable. The blade, except in junior bats."

The researchers found the bamboo bat to be "stiffer, harder and stronger than those made of willow, although more brittle" and also supposed to have a larger "sweet spot, closer to the toe of the bat."

"The sweet spot on a bamboo bat makes it much easier to hit a four off a Yorker for starters, but it's exciting for all kinds of strokes," Shah had said in the report.

MCC, however, said it needs to tread carefully to ensure that the balance of bat and ball remains intact. "MCC's role as Guardian of the Laws includes maintaining the balance between bat and ball, and any potential amendments to the Law would need to carefully take this into consideration, particularly the concept of the bat producing greater power."

The apex body said it will discuss the matter as finding alternatives to willow in a relevant issue. — PTI

be recognised as a wood, this would still be illegal under the current law, which bans lamination of

A triple-double occurs when a player makes double-digit tallies in three of the five major statistical categories in a game

— points, rebounds, assists, steals and blocks. — AP