

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

WEATHER

Max: 39.8°C
Min: 27°C
RH: 29%
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Thunderstorms likely.
Max/Min temp. 40/27°C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Vaishakha Bahula
Padyami till 1.04 pm
Star: Jyeshta till 10.30 pm
Varjyam: 6.13 am to 7.38 am
Durmuhurta: 10.04 am to
10.55 am; 3.14 pm to 4.06 pm
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Shawwal 14,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.34 am
Zohar: 12.23 pm
Asar: 4.47 pm
Magrib: 6.51 pm
Isha: 8.05 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.44 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.41 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 6.47 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.20 AM

COUNTER POINT



We have to enforce lockdown more strictly... hike fuel prices!

SHORT TAKES

IMA's ₹1,000cr suit on Ramdev

Dehradun: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has served a defamation notice on Ramdev for alleged remarks against allopathic doctors, demanding an apology from him within 15 days, failing which it said it will demand a compensation of ₹1,000 crore from him. The notice describes Ramdev's remarks as damaging to the image of allopathy.

■ Full report on Page 7

Evaluate crime for bail, says SC

New Delhi: A court has to evaluate the seriousness of an alleged offence while granting bail to an accused and order without reasons is fundamentally contrary to the norms which guide the judicial process, the Supreme Court has said. A bench headed by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud made the observation while setting aside an Allahabad High Court order which granted bail to a man accused in a dowry death case.

Lanka prepares for major oil spill

Colombo: A Singapore-flagged cargo vessel, which caught fire near the Colombo beach last week, may sink, raising severe environmental concerns in the island nation, according to media reports on Wednesday. The *Colombo Gazette* reported that the *MV X-PRESS PEARL* was "unstable" and "expected to sink" and officials prepared for an oil spill.

■ Full report on Page 9

EU sues AZ for delay in vaccine

Brussels: The European Union on Wednesday asked a Belgian court to impose penalties on AstraZeneca for Covid vaccine doses it has failed to deliver to the bloc. The request came as EU countries and their executive, the European Commission, began legal action against the Anglo-Swedish pharma company for "flagrant violation" of its contract with Brussels.

■ Full report on Page 10



WORLD | 9

Pak wants to pivot US ties on economy



SPORTS | 12

Boxers punch big at Asian meet



TABLOID

Gun-toting girls in T-town

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KCR tells junior docs to join duty for public health

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, MAY 26

KTR WARNS OF ACTION AGAINST JUNIOR DOCTORS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MAY 26

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao on Wednesday asked the protesting junior doctors in the state to call off their strike in view of the overall public health and the existing Covid-19 situation, and advised them to join duties immediately.

The Chief Minister said the government was ready to resolve the issues if the demands of the doctors were genuine. "They can bring those demands to the government and get them solved. But it is not proper to abstain from duties now and then, under the pretext of strike without even understanding the time and situation and causing inconvenience to people time and again," Chandrashekhar Rao said during a review meeting on the overall medical situation and vaccination programme with the medical and health officials.

He further added that no one would appreciate the doctors going on strike during the present emergency situation due to Coronavirus.

Following the review, a late evening meeting between representatives of the Telangana Junior Doctors' Association and the director of medical education Dr K Ramesh Reddy, the junior doctors said no assurance on any of their demands was given by the officials. The junior doctors warned that with the officials not willing to provide any assurance on their demands, they had decided to boycott even emergencies.

TALKS WITH GOVT FAIL, JR DOCS TO INTENSIFY STRIKE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MAY 26

A marathon meeting between the Telangana Junior Doctors' Association and the Director of Medical Education here on Wednesday did not bear the expected results.

Even as CM Chandrashekhar Rao assured the protesting doctors earlier in the day that their demands will be met, the meeting did not have any positive outcome, T-JUDA members said.

■ Full report on Page 5

gencies services from Thursday. On Wednesday, the junior doctors stayed away from all services other than attending to emergencies and treatment of Covid patients.

The CM, however, agreed to meet another demand of the junior doctors on ex-gratia amount.

■ Page 5: Medicos to get better facilities at Nims: CM

Cyclone Yaas ravages coastal Bengal, Odisha

One crore displaced; four people dead; rivers in spate

DC CORRESPONDENTS with agency inputs BALASORE/KOLKATA, MAY 26



Cyclone Yaas, packing winds of up to 130-145 kmph, whiplashed the country's eastern coasts on Wednesday, dumping heavy rain, flooding several areas, damaging houses and farmlands, and leaving at least four persons dead — three in Odisha and one in West Bengal.

Thick sheets of rain blurred India's vast coastline in the East as the cyclone made landfall around 9 am near Dhamra port in Odisha, with surging waters swamping mud-and-thatch houses in the low-lying areas of various districts, where a massive evacuation drive has been undertaken to move more than 20 lakh people to safety.

Massive tides ranging from two to four metres high gushed into seaside villages resulting in marooning of innumerable households. Several rivers were also in spate owing to the phenomenal rise in water level — caused by the dual effect of storm surge and the astronomical tide due to the full moon.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who has stationed herself at the state secretariat Nabanna since Tuesday to monitor rescue and relief operations, claimed that her state is the "worst-affected" and said that three lakh houses and 134 embankments have been damaged due to the cyclone.

"At least one crore people were affected and three lakh houses have been damaged in West Bengal due to the rough weather conditions arising out of cyclone Yaas," Ms Banerjee said.

In certain areas, waves

pedestrians use their mobiles to capture the flooded road after the landfall of Cyclone Yaas, in Kolkata on Wednesday.

MANGROVES SAVED THE DAY FOR ODISHA

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, MAY 26

The long stretches of mangroves on the Odisha coast literally repulsed the ravaging fury and ferocity of cyclonic storm "Yaas" that made its landfall at Bahanaga on Wednesday morning with an alarming windspeed of 130-140 kmph. Experts said the mangroves took the steam out of the very severe cyclonic storm that steadily declined to a severe cyclone and then a depression.

"It's quite heartening to know that the mangroves on the Odisha coast, especially the stretches in Bhitarakanika National Park in Kendrapara district, stood a strong phalanx against Yaas. It absorbed a lot of wind force as a result of which the severity of the cyclone got drastically reduced," said H.R. Biswas, director of the Regional Met Centre, Bhubaneswar.

The IMD had initially predicted Yaas would have a furious landfall with high velocity windspeed of 150-165 kmph, gusting up to 185 km. Windspeeds of this velocity can turn any human habitation into a war-ravaged zone. However, before Yaas made landfall, its squally winds had hours of friction with thick layers of mangroves that flank the coast. Finally, Yaas ceded a part of its force and made landfall with 130-140 kmph squarely winds.

■ Page 2: Mangroves slowed ingress of high tides

State Cabinet to take call on extension of lockdown

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MAY 26

down further to check the spread of coronavirus.

The state cabinet will meet on May 30 to discuss and take a decision on the extension of lockdown.

The meeting to be chaired by Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao will discuss in detail about the impact of lockdown in the state since May 12 and the need to extend the lock-

imposed for 10 days until May 22 and subsequently extended till May 30.

Sources said the government was in favour of extending the lockdown by a week until June 7 initially and further by another week until June 14 depending on the situation after June 7.

■ Page 2: Health dept bats for lockdown's extension

as high as the coconut trees that line the popular beaches, were seen surging.

Cyclone Yaas, which spared Kolkata unlike last year, was followed by heavy rain in the districts of East Midnapore, South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas and Howrah.

In Odisha, seawater inundated several villages in Bahanaga and Remuna blocks in Balasore district, and Dhamra and Basudepur in the Bhadrak district, special relief com-

missioner P.K. Jena said.

Thousands of kutch houses in coastal villages in Bhadrak, Balasore and Kendrapara districts were washed away in the high tidal surge that accompanied the cyclone's roaring landfall.

The storm weakened during the afternoon but hollered on its destructive path towards Jharkhand. The state continued evacuating low-lying areas during the day amid the forecast that it would be hitting by midnight.

Choksi captured in Dominica



Antigua News Room reported.

The Yellow Notice is issued by the Interpol to track missing persons.

Choksi, who is wanted in a ₹13,500 crore loan fraud in the Punjab National Bank, was last seen going for dinner in his car in Antigua and Barbuda on Sunday. His staff had

reported him missing after his car was found. The businessman's lawyer Vijay Aggarwal had confirmed that Choksi had been missing since Sunday.

The reports of Choksi gone missing created flutter in the Caribbean island country after the opposition raised the issue in Antigua and Barbuda Parliament.

Responding to the opposition, Antigua Prime Minister Gaston Browne had said that his dispensation was "collaborating" with the Indian government, neighbouring countries and international police organisations to try and locate Choksi.

"Someone from his

household indicated that he is missing. Since then the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda put out a statement to that effect. That statement will be shared with the Interpol," he said.

Choksi and his nephew Nirav Modi allegedly siphoned off ₹13,500 crore of public money from the state-run PNB, using fraudulent letters of undertaking.

Modi is contesting his extradition lodged in a London jail after repeated denial of his bail by courts. Choksi had taken citizenship of Antigua and Barbuda in 2017 using the Citizenship by Investment programme before escaping India in the first week of January 2018. — PTI

WhatsApp says new digital rules violate statute, moves Delhi HC

DC CORRESPONDENTS with agency inputs NEW DELHI/CHENNAI, MAY 26

WhatsApp has filed a case in the Delhi High Court challenging the government's new digital rules that came into effect on Wednesday, saying that the rules will compel the company to break privacy protection of users.

The government has said that it is committed to ensure the right of privacy to all its citizens, but added that "at the same time it is also the responsibility of the government to maintain law and order and ensure national security."

In the petition filed on

Tuesday, WhatsApp maintained that the new rules require the message service provider to identify the first originator of any message and this is a violation of privacy rights provided by the Constitution.

Tuesday, WhatsApp maintained that the new rules require the message service provider to identify the first originator of any message and this is a violation of privacy rights provided by the Constitution.

However, a statement from IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said, "As per all established judicial dictum, no fundamental right, including the right to privacy, is absolute and it is subject to reasonable restrictions."

HEALING | TOUCH

Sonu Sood credits his upbringing for helping nature; says stories of migrant workers moved him

In bleak times, 'villain' Sood redefines 'real' heroism

SIRRAM KARRI | DC HYDERABAD, MAY 26

ing to help them, and as a second wave hits, responding to people from across India, reaching out to him with a trust they repose in him greater than in governments. And in film crazy Telugu states, gods of decades slide down the charts, downed by a virus, leaving only one real star.

Such a script would never have found a director accepting it. Even the audiences would have found it beyond plausibility, even for a story. But when life scripts stories and reality screens it, not for two hours but years, anything

is possible. Such has been the script starring Sonu Sood since Coronavirus spread its menacing tentacles and brought down every order of society and all semblances of sanity. But in dark times, heroes

arise from unexpected spots. Lending help, giving hope, sharing light, redefining love, and metamorphosing fan following.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle* about his inner motivations to emerge from the fringes of celebritydom to becoming a trusted icon of a ravaged nation's people, Sonu Sood, in a soft soothng voice of a healer, rather than a preferred negative actor of the movie screen, said, "Growing up in Moga, Punjab, I saw my mother, a teacher, give free tuition classes for decades. Outside my father's shop,

there would always be a langar, where I too would serve food. It was a lesson ingrained for life that you must always be there to serve in whatever capacity you have."

When asked about the incident that prompted him to emerge out of lockdown to become a frontline hero, Sood said, "Last year, when I started hearing stories of migrant workers, I knew I could no longer sit in the security and comfort of my home."

■ Page 2: Sonu Sood becomes India's superhero



Film actor Sonu Sood distributes lemon juice packs to Covid-affected people.

IN BRIEF

Extend lockdown:
Health department

From Page 1
The health department submitted a report to the state government stating that the night curfew and lockdown since April 20 had contributed to a significant reduction in corona positive cases in the state and to ensure that this benefit is not lost, it suggested extension of lockdown further. The cabinet will discuss the suggestions of the health department and take a decision on the extension of lockdown. This apart, the cabinet would also discuss agriculture, crops, the ongoing paddy procurement process, availability of seeds and fertilisers, curbing the supply of spurious seeds ahead of Kharif season set to begin on June 1.

Mangroves slowed damage

From Page 1
“We are fortunate that we have got huge stretches of thick mangroves along the coast in our district. We just cannot imagine the enormity of the devastation Yaas would have caused had it not been confronted by the towering mangroves,” said Dhruva Charan Sahoo, the local MLA from Rajnagar. Mr Dhruva Sahoo said that apart from absorbing the windspeed, the mangroves also considerably checked the ingress of high tides deep into the land mass. The mangroves are a group of trees and shrubs that live in the coastal intertidal zone. There are about 80 different species of mangrove trees. All these trees grow in areas with low-oxygen soil, where slow-moving waters allow fine sediments to accumulate. The felling of mangroves by unscrupulous people as well as government agencies in the name of building marine drives and undertaking other construction activities lead to the huge loss of life and property during sea storms.

Covid-19 surges ahead in Telangana districts

Lot of crowding in market areas as it is harvest season

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MAY 26

Though the authorities claim that the Covid-19 cases are decreasing fast, thanks to the ongoing lockdown, the fact seems to be the other way round.

More than 100 coronavirus positive cases have been reported daily from 11 districts each in the state for the past one week which means the number of cases is not falling despite the lockdown. Bhadravati, Kothagudem, Karimnagar, Mahabubnagar, Peddapalli, Nagarkurnool, Nalgonda, Siddipet, Suryapet, Vikarabad, Warangal Rural and Warangal Urban districts are witnessing more than 100 new cases every day.

Indian Medical Association (IMA) Telangana chapter which carried out a mask drive in districts said there was a lot of crowding in markets due to the harvest season. There are also traders, daily wage workers and migrant labourers who came back home due to the lockdown in the states where they were working. Heavy influx of people from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Odisha has been witnessed in these districts.

Dr Lav Kumar Reddy, president of IMA TS chapter says, “There were wedding ceremonies in the first week of May. Despite restrictions, more than 200 people attended these functions. The government is strict now but those who were infected earlier are coming to hospitals now. The IMA had a



People wait for check up at the ENT hospital on Wednesday as there has been an increase in eye ailments.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

meeting with sarpanches to sensitise them and it was found that there is one death every day in the districts with high caseload.”

Bhadravati, Kothagudem reported 120 cases on May 20 and 128 new cases were reported on Wednesday.

Caseloads in Karimnagar, Mahabubnagar and Siddipet have been constantly above 100. Karimnagar reported 170 new cases on Wednesday and in this week total caseload is 1,113. This district is also a shopping hub for people during the wedding season apart from the agriculture activities.

Mahabubnagar reported 158 new cases on Wednesday and the total caseload in the week is 891. In Siddipet, it was noted that there was no proper

social distancing maintained in huge agriculture markets. Experts say the concept of social distancing is not understood by farmers which shows that awareness about the disease at the ground level is limited or nil.

Siddipet recorded 131 new cases on Wednesday, showing the graph above 100 for a week. Total caseload for the week has been 766.

In Warangal Urban and Rural districts, during the first and second waves caseload has been high and experts attribute it to the agriculture and economic activities in both the districts. They also say that in districts, vaccination is very less which has led to the rise in positive cases.

Warangal Urban recorded 158 new cases on Wednesday and the total caseload for the week is 860. Warangal Rural recorded 102 new cases and there was a slight dip in the cases on May 23 with 61 new cases, yet the total caseload is 652.

Experts say that cases with mild symptoms have come down and with the strict implementation of lockdown, the numbers will reduce slowly. There were 3,762 new cases in the state and the total number of cases are 5,63,903. Total deaths are 3,189 of which 20 were reported on Wednesday.

Testing in the state has increased with 91,048 samples collected. Those in home and institutional isolation are 38,632.

KTR OPENS NEW COVID CARE CENTRE IN CITY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

Information Technology minister K.T. Rama Rao inaugurated a ‘Project Ashray’ Covid care centre here on Wednesday. Project Ashray was started by Cyberabad police in coordination with the Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC) and United Way of Hyderabad, on May 3.

Speaking on the occasion, Rama Rao said, “Hyderabad is the vaccine capital of the world. It is a manufacturing hub of vaccines. Unfortunately, we don’t have sufficient vaccines to inoculate our own people.”

The Telangana state government has the capability to undertake one million vaccinations a day and vaccinate the entire state in 45 days, the minister said.

He reiterated that they had appealed to the Centre to allow them to source vaccines directly from the manufacturers.

Eight other states have also made a similar request and they were all awaiting the Centre’s nod.

The minister said “there is a peculiar situation in countries like the United States, Denmark, and Canada where vaccines are lying idle unused while we are in dire need of them. I urge the Centre to step in and help us.”

Project Ashray is a Covid-19 care centre meant exclusively for early stage Covid patients.

From being a 50-bed facility initially, it has now doubled to 100 beds with a 6-bed bridge ICU facility.

Insufficient stocks hits vaccination

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

schedules are drawn out, but the vaccination process for now is very slow.

Dr K. Hari Prasad, president of Apollo Group hospitals says, “We started today for the 18 plus age group for both Covishield and Covaxin. Number of doses is still being aggregated as it is being done at multiple locations.”

Other multi-specialty hospitals are waiting as there are too many requests for vaccination but without sufficient stocks they do not want to start it.

VACCINATION IN GHMC AREA

KAPRA, Kushtaguda Govt School	9154728424
Uppal, Ramanthapur Function Hall	9154299601

Hayathnagar, KBR Function Hall, Mansoorabad	9154032864
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LB Nagar	Huda Community Hall, Vanasthalipuram.
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Multipurpose Function Hall, Champapat	9849906787
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Saroornagar, Aliminati Madhava Reddy Function Hall, Prabhat Nagar, Chaitanyaapuri	7337557245
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Malakpet, Mumtaz College, Akberbagh, Moosarambagh Metro Station Lane	6309920618
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Santhosh Nagar: Mitra Sports Club, Gowlipura.	9177608271
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SRT Sports Ground, Rein Bazar.	6309920617
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Chandrayangutta, Suhna Function Hall, Talla Kunta Road,	6309920617
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Charminar, Sana Garden Function Hall, near Sardar Mahal Office	7331189762
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Falaknuma, QOSUDA Polytechnic College, Ramnaspura, Opp. Zoo Park	8008100417
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Rajendra Nagar, SNC Convention Hall, Beside Best Price, Shivarampally	6300316281
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Mehdipatnam, MP Garden	7993360261
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Karwan, Imperial Garden, Tolichowki	9989930159
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Goshamahal, Red Rose Function Hall, Opp. Public Garden	9154796619
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Musheerabad, Government High School, Musheerabad	8978901249
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Amberpet, Amberpet Indoor Stadium	9989930330
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Khairatabad, Sanathnagar Sports Complex	9491396877
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Jubilee Hills, Lake View Banjara Garden Function Hall, opp. Care Hospital	7995079814
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Yousufguda, Mahmood Paradise Function Hall, Yousufguda	7702304863
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Serilingampally, Gachibowli Stadium	9618249933
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Chandanagar, PJR Stadium	9963854999
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Patancheruvu, Multipurpose Function Hall, Chaitanya Nagar, Patancheruvu	9704990950
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Moosapet, NKNR Function Hall, Opp. Huda Truck Park, Y-Junction, Kukatpally	9849906845
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Kukatpally, Naina Gardens, Beside Metro Cash & Carry	9154686542
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Outhbullapur, Sarojini Garden, Jeedimetla	9989930422
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Gajularamaram, Maharaja Garden, Opp. Chitharama Temple	9989930195
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Alwal, VBR Gardens, Old Alwal	9989930479
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Malkajgiri, ZPHS Boys High School, Malkajgiri X Roads	9701230007
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Secunderabad, Multi purpose Function Hall, Seethaphalmandi	9000420691
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Begumpet, Multipurpose Function Hall, Bansilalp	9000113021
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DETAILS OF ZONAL COMMISSIONER

L.B.Nagar	7993444555
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Charminar	9989922091
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Khairatabad	9972017872
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Serilingampally	9154114996
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Kukatpally	9849905774
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Secunderabad	9963833488
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DETAILS OF OFFICERS AT HEAD OFFICE

Addl. Commissioner (H&S)	9963614041
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Chief City Planner	9849904768
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Addl. Commissioner (FIN & IT)	9849911735
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Addl. Commissioner (UCD & Electrical)	9866514545
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50% beds empty in hosp: Official

USE POSACONAZOLE FOR PATIENTS WITH BLACK FUNGUS: HEALTH OFFICIAL

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

Fifty per cent beds in government hospitals are empty – a sign that Covid cases are reducing. This was stated by state health director Dr Srinivas Rao. The new cases in the state will see a decline till June end, he said.

The government has started vaccination for those requiring the second dose of Covishield or Covaxin and sufficient stocks are available. Dr Rao says, “The government has identified the high-risk group of people, namely those who are in the essential services or others in close contact with people. They are the super spreaders. There will be a special drive to vaccinate them.”

There are 7.87 lakh individuals requiring vaccination on a priority basis, of which 80,000 are from civil supplies, 30,000 from fertilizer and pesticide shops, 20,000 journalists, 3,00,000 auto and cab drivers and 3,00,000 persons engaged in vegetable, meat, flower, kirana and saloon outlets.

This is being done as there are complications and complaints of breathing problems after recovery.

This is due to scarring of lungs and lung fibrosis. Dr Reddy said that special units are being set up to follow up on these cases.

Palities. The government is expecting 3.35 lakh doses of Covishield and 2.5 lakh doses of Covaxin in the first

week of June.

The vaccination programme would be strengthened and the goal is to reach out to the maximum.

CARRY OUT PROPER POST-COVID-19 FOLLOW-UP, STATE DOCTORS ADVISED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

Government doctors across the Telangana state, in government and teaching hospitals, have been advised to carry out a proper post-Covid-19 follow-up.

Dr Reddy said, “The vaccination programme would be strengthened and the goal is to reach out to the maximum.

The fever survey has been carried out in 33 districts of the state.

There are 244 private hospitals that have been given the permission for vaccination programmes in the state. Clearances will be issued to 1,200 private hospitals after checking their facilities in the state. Due to shortage of Covaxin doses, there are 3 lakh individuals waiting for the second dose.

In the first phase of the fever survey of the Telangana government, 2,41,108 persons were found to be symptomatic. In the second survey, there were 4,60,143 persons who were symptomatic.

Some 93,000 kits were distributed to them and the remaining are being followed up.

The fever survey has been carried out in 33 districts of the state.

You can't force a feeling of wanting to help people, says Bollywood actor

Sonu Sood becomes India's superhero

From Page 1

“As a migrant worker myself, though

SHORT TAKES

WATER SUPPLY TO BE HALTED IN MIYAPUR TODAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

There will be a shutdown of water supply in parts of Miyapur and its vicinity from 6 am on May 27 to 6 pm on May 28.

According to Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB), as a new storm water drain is being built in Miyapur and water pipelines are being replaced, water supply in those areas will be halted.

The areas where water supply will be temporarily stopped are Gangaram, Deepthi Nagar, KSR Enclave, Aparna Hills, Adarsh Nagar, Shanti Nagar, Miyapur, Mythri Nagar, Madinaguda, among others. The water board appealed to the consumers to use water conservatively in order to avoid inconvenience.

'GUNMEN' GANG MEMBERS GET THREE-YEAR RI

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

Seven members of the "Gunmen gang" have on Wednesday been convicted and sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment.

Police said this gang has been responsible for eight house burglaries in the limits of Rachakonda and Nizamabad areas of the state.

The gang members travelled to different cities as toys and bed-sheet sellers, living in tents on outskirts of the city. During late night, they would break into houses by smashing their doors and loot inmates at the point of deadly weapons, including guns.

Rachakonda police succeeded in cracking these cases with the initiative taken by sub-inspector V. Narasimha. Based on evidence gathered during investigations, the gang was charge-sheeted and a case filed in the court at Hayathnagar.

Authorities held a speed trial and the court sentenced seven of the accused persons to undergo three years' rigorous imprisonment and pay a fine of ₹1,000.

• THE GANG members travelled to different cities as toys and bed-sheet sellers, living in tents on outskirts of the city. During late night, they would break into houses by smashing their doors and loot inmates.

CYBER | WORLD

Many doubt if technology firms can trace huge amount of content in real time

New social media rules half-baked: Experts

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

As the social media giants and government are at loggerheads over the new Information Technology rules, 2021, intermediary guidelines issued by the Central government's cyber experts opine that balance should be ensured between both the parties.

Cybersecurity experts say that the government guidelines are half-baked. Speaking to this newspaper, digital wellness expert Anil Rachamalla of End

Now Foundation said, "Social media gave voice to voiceless people, now through the half-baked guidelines, the government is trying to infringe on the freedom of expression which is a fundamental right."

He further said some of these guidelines would help cybercrime police officers for quick removal of unlawful content that affects online safety, dignity of users.

redressal officer and a nodal contact officer, who should be an Indian and they should be available for the Indian government and should be in a position to acknowledge the issues raised by enforcement officials of Indian government within 24 hours and dis-

pose the case within 15 days.

The government, while issuing the guidelines, raised several issues regarding misuse of social media like spreading of fake news, abuse of social media to share morphed images of women and contents related to revenge porn which often threatened the dignity of women.

"Unlawful activities should be curbed, but in the name of curbing misuse of social media, the government is trying to create a surveillance soci-

ety. This shouldn't be encouraged," said Anil Rachamalla.

Sai Krishna, chairperson of the Global Cybersecurity Forum said, "There are high chances of misuse of data by social media as proven by the Cambridge Analytica scandal. It is important for the government to have power to direct social media giants. However, there should be a limit. It shouldn't act in an autocratic manner."

He further added that even social media compa-

nies did not have the technology to trace such a huge amount of content on a real time basis and filter the contents of billions of users.

"Social media can't be a mouthpiece of the government and at the same time it should act responsibly. Both of them should ensure that the freedom of expression of social media users is not infringed. Balance should be ensured among all three stakeholders — social media, government and users," said Krishna.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached immovable assets worth ₹1,67,85,200 held in the name of Seemakurthy Narasimha Rao, managing partner of Sri Sai Krishna Rice Industry at Aswaraopeta in Bhadravati-Kothagudem district. The attachment was made under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).

ED had initiated investigations in a cheating case based on an FIR and charge-sheet filed by Telangana Police against Rao for allegedly cheating the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state civil supplies corporation that is now known as the Telangana state civil supplies corporation TSCSCL. The alleged fraud was of the order of ₹1.95 crore, by way of not

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WANTED
RED ROSE GROUP OF COMPANIES
who are in the business for the last 33 years and having a variety of businesses including Real Estate, Pan Masala, Spices, Lights & Electricals, Convention Centre, Medical & Health, Milk Dairy, Import & Exports, require for their expansion programme in Hyderabad:
◆ In-house lawyer/legal liaison officer at Hyderabad:
Advocate with full time experience of 10-12 years, with drafting skills and indepth legal knowledge in land and revenue matters, ability to coordinate with our expert lawyers and to monitor our cases in various courts and fora including the Supreme Court.
◆ Chartered Accountant (CA) Inter Pass; MBA; M.Com., with 5-10 years of experience in Finance, Accounts, GST, Imports and Exports, TDS, Excise Duty, Income Tax. Only persons with strong knowledge in the above areas should apply.
◆ Retired MRO/RDO/Officer having strong knowledge of land and revenue records can also apply.
Email your resume with expected remuneration to: nazeerr@gmail.com response@rrmasala.com | Phone: +91 40 29554000

Water board puts 3K sanitation staff at risk

Workers not vaccinated, go without water at work

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) is putting the life of about 3,000 sewerage workers at grave risk. It has neither designated them as frontline warriors nor administered them the Covid19 vaccine even on a priority basis.

The pandemic has claimed the lives of about 50 such workers and infected over 50 per cent of the workforce, but the government is not taking any initiative to vaccinate the outsourcing workers. These workers hit the road every day to keep the city clean. Curiously, several of these workers are not aware of the gravity of the deadly Coronavirus.

And, fearful of the virus spread, the residents in the city limits have been not been offering water or tea to these personnel even when a request is made.

The board has listed about 100 private agencies to hire staff by way of outsourcing in the streets. They are not provided with HMWS&SB's identity card or uniforms, unlike GHMC staff. Field-level staff often intervenes



Water board sewerage staff work by putting their lives at risk in Hyderabab on Wednesday.

to lack of monitoring by the sewerage board, the outsourcing employees are even deprived of hand gloves, face masks and other safety gear.

Neither the sewerage board nor the private agencies owe any responsibility about these workers who have been keeping the city clean during the ongoing pandemic.

On the flipside, the outsourcing workers are facing harassment from the city police for their presence in the streets. They are even deprived of drinking water by residents. "We are even deprived of drinking water by residents." Due to the scorching summer heat, one or two litres of water is not sufficient for

us to quench our thirst," he pointed out.

Kishore, a second generation sewerage worker, said, "Most of us did not know the gravity of Covid19. So, we are spreading out on the city roads to do work. At least 40 per cent of the workers were infected and over 50 persons lost their lives fighting deadly Coronavirus".

He said that the government inaction also forced several workers to resign, fearing that they would succumb to Covid19.

A senior HMWS&SB official, requesting anonymity, told Deccan Chronicle that the issue has already been brought to the notice of managing director M. Dana Kishore. He in turn provided a few PPE kits, face masks and other safety gear to the workers and looked the other way.

The official said the higher authorities did not comment on considering sewerage workers as frontline workers for vaccination. "It is for the government to take a call and I would request it to take a decision at the earliest to save sewerage workers from contracting the deadly disease," the official said.

Cops rain lathi blows on vendors, rob them

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

In a brazen act of highhandedness, policemen on duty are resorting to physical assaults and intimidation in the name of stricter implementation of the ongoing lockdown, leaving poor vendors, hawkers and wayside sellers who struggle to make their both ends meet high and dry.

Videos going viral on social media platforms show chilling instances of policemen beating and abusing petty vendors and ransacking their wares while violating rules by themselves.

All these while the top brass of state police is boasting about how politely and cordially their men in uniforms implement the lockdown.

In a video doing rounds in the social media, the 'people friendly police', are seen threatening the hawkers and taking away fruits and other commodities which they sell for a day's bread. Ironically, the bike on which these policemen travel itself is in violation of the Motor Vehicle Act.

In the video, two constables can be seen on a bike with a broken tail light, bearing the number TS 09 PA 6148, threatening a pushcart vendor selling mangoes during the lockdown. They can be heard telling him not to come out next time saying 'main tumhare pet mein laat nahi maarunga' (I won't ruin your livelihood), as they pack about a dozen mangoes before zooming off on their bike. The bike involved in the video, registered on the Director General of Telangana police, according



(Top) Police personnel threaten a pushcart vendor in Attapur, Hyderabad, on Wednesday.



the man recording repeatedly states that he is a reporter, the constable is seen trying to snatch the phone while asking him to show the ID card and saying 'why would you take photos if you are a reporter?'.

When asked about this incident, the officials from Cyberabad police said since media people do not have a dress code, it is difficult to identify who is genuine and who is looking to spread such videos on social media. "The constables were asking the vendors to leave as they should not be out during lockdown," said the police official.

Money laundering: ED books rice firm MD

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

INTER DROPOUT HACKS MEESEVA BIOMETRIC ACCESS

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, MAY 26

A cyber criminal who hacked through biometric authentication of Telangana MeeSeva portal has been arrested by Rachakonda Cyber Crime police.

Police said the accused Kasani Jagan, 30, an intermediate dropout, learnt hacking skills using social media while working as a security guard.

"He bypassed biometric authentication of MeeSeva portal ad used it to pay traffic e-challans and download encumbrance certificates from government portals, collecting money in the process," said the cyber police.

ED had initiated investigations in a cheating case based on an FIR and charge-sheet filed by Telangana Police against Rao for allegedly cheating the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state civil supplies corporation that is now known as the Telangana state civil supplies corporation TSCSCL. The alleged fraud was of the order of ₹1.95 crore, by way of not

supplying the required quantity of rice/paddy to the FCI/APSCSC. Investigations revealed that Narasimha Rao "fraudulently diverted the sale proceeds of boiled rice/paddy by selling it in the open market and generated an amount of ₹1.95 crore."

Subsequently, he used a part of the money ₹30 lakh, to square off a loan he had taken from the e-State Bank of Hyderabad, Aswaraopeta (now SBI). He siphoned off the remaining amount too for himself and his family members, as per the case.

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Further investigations are on.

Question hour



Police personnel question motorists after 10 am during the lockdown in Begumpet on Wednesday.

— S. SURENDRA REDDY

CYBER | WORLD

Many doubt if technology firms can trace huge amount of content in real time

New social media rules half-baked: Experts

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

Now Foundation said, "Social media gave voice to voiceless people, now through the half-baked guidelines, the government is trying to infringe on the freedom of expression which is a fundamental right."

He further said some of these guidelines would help cybercrime police officers for quick removal of unlawful content that affects online safety, dignity of users.

redressal officer and a nodal contact officer, who should be an Indian and they should be available for the Indian government and should be in a position to acknowledge the issues raised by enforcement officials of Indian government within 24 hours and dis-

pose the case within 15 days.

The government, while issuing the guidelines, raised several issues regarding misuse of social media like spreading of fake news, abuse of social media to share morphed images of women and contents related to revenge porn which often threatened the dignity of women.

"Unlawful activities should be curbed, but in the name of curbing misuse of social media, the government is trying to create a surveillance soci-

ety. This shouldn't be encouraged," said Anil Rachamalla.

Sai Krishna, chairperson of the Global Cybersecurity Forum said, "There are high chances of misuse of data by social media as proven by the Cambridge Analytica scandal. It is important for the government to have power to direct social media giants. However, there should be a limit. It shouldn't act in an autocratic manner."

He further added that even social media compa-

nies did not have the technology to trace such a huge amount of content on a real time basis and filter the contents of billions of users.

"Social media can't be a mouthpiece of the government and at the same time it should act responsibly. Both of them should ensure that the freedom of expression of social media users is not infringed. Balance should be ensured among all three stakeholders — social media, government and users," said Krishna.

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SHORT TAKES

ANJANI: LOCKDOWN IMPLEMENTED EFFICIENTLYDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

City police commissioner Anjani Kumar said lockdown in Hyderabad is being implemented efficiently with cooperation of people. He maintained that police too are being strict with those violating lockdown norms.

Nearly 7,000-8,000 cases are being registered on an average everyday against lockdown violators, Anjani Kumar said. 4,000 to 5,000 vehicles are also being seized on a daily basis in Hyderabad.

"Since the lockdown, all police personnel, including senior officers, have been on roads at various check posts established throughout Hyderabad to make sure that lockdown is implemented properly," the commissioner underlined. He warned people that they will be challaned and their vehicles seized if it is found that e-passes issued to them are being misused. Anjani said they are also taking strict action against those selling antiviral and antifungal injections in black market.

CHEATING CASE FILED AGAINST EX-COMPANY CEODC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

A case was booked against a 40-year-old man by the managing director of a private company in Jubilee Hills alleging that he had cheated the firm to the tune of ₹2 crore.

According to police, Chandrashekhar, MD of Goldfish Auto, lodged a complaint against Cheenupati Venumadhav, who had joined as the CEO of the company claiming that he would invest ₹10 crore but failed to do so.

"Chandrashekhar alleged that Venumadhav has also misused the company money and refused to return the official car, a Mercedes Benz, after he resigned," said the police.

Following the complaint, cheating cases were booked against Venumadhav and an investigation was taken up by the Jubilee Hills police.

RESENTMENT OVER NON-INCLUSION OF MUSLIMS AS VCDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD MAY 26

Some leaders of the Muslim community have expressed concern and resentment over the state government ignoring Muslims in the recent appointments to the positions of vice-chancellors for 10 universities.

The state government has also constituted a 7-member Telangana State Public Service Commission, in which too, none of the appointees is a Muslim.

President of the Muslim Students Organisation, Younis Parvez, said Muslims comprise more than 13 per cent of the state's population, but they are not getting their due share in the administration. "It was shocking and unbelievable that no Muslim found a place in the recent appointments. Such decisions send a wrong message to the community and create a sense of insecurity," he said.

State procures ₹11K-cr paddy

60 lakh metric tonnes of foodgrains procured from 8.82 lakh farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

Notwithstanding the adverse conditions prevailing in the state, the Telangana government has procured 60 lakh metric tonnes of food grains from 8.82 lakh farmers worth ₹11,414 crore in the ongoing rabi season.

Telangana State Civil Supplies Corporation, the nodal agency for procurement of food grains in the state, said 76 per cent of procurement had been completed, which is higher than 52.73 lakh metric tonnes procured during the same period last year, despite the Covid second wave and the ongoing lockdown.

Corporation chairman Mareddy Srinivas Reddy said, "In rabi season, paddy was sown in 52.76 lakh acres in the state. It was estimated that the average yield was 25 quintals per acre. We have set ourselves a target to procure 80 lakh metric tonnes of which 60.50 lakh metric tonnes amounting to 76 per cent was already procured. The procurement is going on as per our target."

Reddy said due to the steps taken by the corporation, the impact of Covid second wave and lockdown was not felt much on procurement. "Last year, 52.73 lakh metric tonnes were procured during the same period. This year, there is an excess of 8 lakh metric tonnes. We expect to purchase

another 20 lakh metric tonnes in the coming days," he added.

As many as 656 procurement centres in 12 districts, including Nizamabad, Nirmal, Mancherial, Kamareddy, Karimnagar, Jagtial, Siricilla, Peddapalli, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Yadadri and Wanaparthy have been closed as the procurement was completed, Reddy said.

He directed district collectors to put transport contractors who failed to arrange trucks for transportation of procured stocks from the centres to the godowns as per the agreement in 'black list'.

He said ration dealers across the state were not returning gunny bags to corporations after selling ration stocks.

India to be vaccinated by December: Kishan

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

Suraksha Jyothi, PM Suraksha Bima and Sukanya Samridhi passbooks at a function in Nampally here on Wednesday.

Kishan Reddy advised people to wear masks and take other precautions for tiding over the pandemic situation.

He clarified that PM insurance scheme will benefit families of all insured, whether they die owing to

Coronavirus, accident or natural causes.

Sukanya Samridhi will provide a golden future for the girl child and everyone should take part in this. The union minister asked voluntary organisations and NGOs to come forward and help or arrange food for the needy.

In this regard, he wanted the state government to take steps that prevent rise in prices.

Etala meets supporters

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

Former minister and TRS MLA Etala Rajendar on Wednesday held a meeting with his followers and close associates from across the state and took their opinions on the course of action to be taken in future.

Sources said that Rajendar informed his supporters that he had met several leaders of Congress and BJP seeking their support in case there is a by-poll in Huzurabad. He also shared information that BJP and Congress have welcomed him to join their party. While several leaders advised the former minister to tie up with BJP, some suggested that remaining independent and fighting against CM KCR's corruption with support of opposition parties will be a better choice.

Rajendar sounded out leaders he met about the ground situation at village levels and what the people expected from him. Several leaders said launching a political party and joining hands with TRS leaders who are dissatisfied would be best.

The former minister is learnt to have stated that he will take some important decisions in three to four days and announce them with the blessings of Huzurabad people.

TRS councillor claims he paid ₹3cr for wife's post

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

A TRS councillor at Chanduru municipality has created a flutter by openly stating that he "spent" ₹3 crore to make his wife the municipal chairperson, as was sought by the party leadership. He did not make clear who took the money from him — TRS party or some of its leaders(s).

Ward 1 councillor Kodi Venkanna made the shocking revelation in a letter he wrote to party working president K.T. Rama Rao. He also posted the letter on his Twitter account on May 18 and tagged the letter to KTR.

His letter went viral on social media with netizens demanding action

against the TRS party and its local leaders for violating the state election commission norms as regards the maximum expenditure limit for municipal polls.

Venkanna stated in his letter that, in the municipal elections held in January 2020, he and his wife Kodi Sushma had contested from Ward 1 and 3 respectively.

Although Venkanna won the election, his wife lost. He and his wife submitted election expenditure details to SEC stating that they spent ₹39,330 each.

Later, Sushma contested from Ward 1 in the farmers' cooperative society elections which she won and she, alternatively, was given the chairperson post.

In his letter, Venkanna

complained to KTR against TRS former MLC Karne Prabhakar, alleging that Karne colluded with his brother Kona Srinivasulu, a local Congress leader, and the two were trying to implicate him in false police cases.

Venkanna complained that though he spent ₹3 crore for the party and landed in a land debt trap, he was working sincerely for the party in Chanduru for the past several years. Yet, Karne was harassing him, he said.

He requested KTR to initiate action against Karne for "colluding with the Congress and sabotaging the interests of the TRS." It remains to be seen what action the TRS leadership will take against Venkanna.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

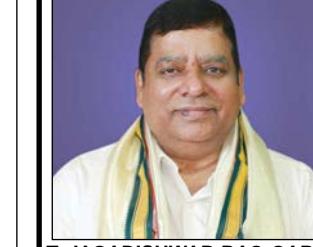
"Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." Proverbs 31:28-29

**Mrs. G. SANTOSHAM LUKE**

Mummy, your memories are etched on our hearts.

We love you and will miss you all the days of our lives.

Inserted by: DEEPIKA, MANORANJAN, VIKRAM & AJAY

OBITUARY**T. JAGADISHWAR RAO GARU**

General Manager (Finance) Retd. Bharat Dynamics Limited (Ministry of Defence)

DOD: 17.05.2021 Deeply Mourned by:

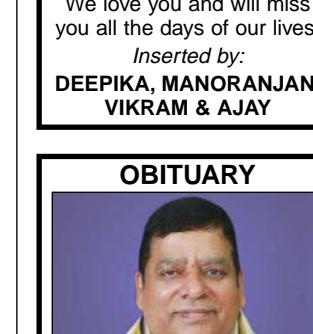
H.E. BHANU PRAKASH,

H.E. CHANDRA SEKHAR,

H.E. PRASHANTH Ph: 9959611158

(S/2122/D00249)

(The just shall live by Faith (Galatians 3:11))

11th DEATH ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE**R. SUKUMAR BENJMIN**

M.Sc. DMRT, ART (N) U.S.A.

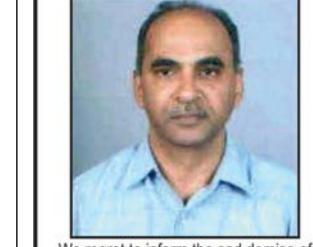
D.O.B. 21.02.1931 D.O.D: 27-05-2010

We continue to remember your goodness. Loving Parents, Sisters, Brother and their Families

Nephew: U. Benny,

P. Kumar - B.Sc. B.Tech. - JA ZPP R.R. Dist.

(S/2122/D00174)

OBITUARY**TADINADA SURYANARAYANA**

Retd. DGM (Geo Statistics) NMDC Ltd on

26-05-2021 Inserted by:

Son : T. Bhaskara Harish and Tadinada Family Members

Ph: 9848031447/9322 752609

(S/2122/D00249)

(We regret to inform the sad demise of

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(Late Sri Gorla Surender Yadav DOD : 10-05-2021 You will be dearly missed and we always love you)

Inserted by: **GORLA FAMILY**

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SHORT TAKES
CENTRE ALLOTS MORE VIALS TO FIGHT FUNGUS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

With increasing cases of mucormycosis in Telangana, as well as the rest of the country, the Central government on Wednesday said it was allocating 29,250 vials of liposomal amphotericin-B injections to various states, including 1,980 to Telangana and 1,930 to Andhra Pradesh. These are in addition to the 890 vials allotted to Telangana, and 2,310 to Andhra Pradesh on May 22.

According to Union minister of fertilizers and chemicals DV Sadananda Gowda, India had 11,717 reported cases of mucormycosis as on May 25. Of these, 744 were in Telangana and 768 were in Andhra Pradesh.

Mucormycosis, popularly referred to as black fungus infections, is a potentially deadly fungal disease which, according to many doctors, could result up to 50% fatalities among its victims if not detected early and treated quickly. Amphotericin-B injections are the drug of choice to treat mucormycosis with each patient requiring anywhere between six to 10 vials a day, depending upon the intensity of the infection.

BLACK FUNGUS CASES RISE IN UNANI HOSPITAL

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

The Unani Hospital at Charminar is witnessing steady streams of 30 to 40 cases of mucormycosis in its outpatient department each day, and the patients are provided with a 10-day course of Unani medicines to help them fight the disease, doctors at the hospital said.

Dr MA Faroqui, head of mucormycosis outpatient department, said, "Unani which is an ancient medicinal system, has been offering cure for many ailments. Our outpatient department is receiving 30 to 40 patients with ailments related to mucormycosis every day. We are seeing excellent results from the medicines we are giving to patients."

Dr Hyder Yamani, an assistant professor at the hospital, urged patients recovered from Covid and suffering from diabetes to watch out for the symptoms of fungal infection and consult the OP at the hospital if they had any doubts.

Dr Md Ismail, a retired senior medical officer at hospital, said, "The government should have given permission long back for use of Unani medications which could have reduced the load on allopathy practitioners."

50 COVISHIELD VACCINE VIALS GO MISSING

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

A week after the disappearance of 50 Covishield vaccine vials from the Kondapur Government hospital, the Gachibowli police are yet to unravel the mystery. Some 10 persons were questioned but cops are yet to establish any lead in the investigations, police said.

It was on Wednesday last week that the vials went missing from the hospital. Medical superintendent Dr Manchinella Dasaratha filed a complaint with the Gachibowli police a day after the theft. The total value of the vaccines stolen is about ₹75,000.

Police suspect that this is an insider's job. "There is no evidence of any forced entry into the room. The thief managed to escape without creating any suspicion," said Gachibowli Inspector of police G. Suresh.

Meanwhile, the hospital also launched an internal investigation to unravel the mystery. A ward boy was seen moving in the area where the vaccines were stored.

The vaccine should be stored at a refrigeration temperature of 2-8 degree celsius and any increase or decrease in temperature will damage the vaccine.

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Prayers for the Buddha



Buddhist monks offer special prayers for Buddha on the occasion of 2,565th Buddha Purnima at Mahabodhi Buddha Vihara in Hyderabad on Wednesday. — DC

IMD warns of gusty winds

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

The very severe cyclone Yaas, which ravaged parts of West Bengal and Odisha, has made an appearance over the state as well, say weather observers.

While the impact was not as damaging, the state, including Hyderabad, experienced strong gusts of wind blowing over it. The winds were such that the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a strong-wind warning for the state from Friday to Sunday.

It states, "Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning and gusty winds (30-40 KMPH) are very likely to occur at isolated places in and around districts of Telangana."

Meanwhile, IMD meteorologist A Sravani told

of the heat before letting it reach the earth's surface.

Concurring with IMD, independent weather observers like Rajanikanth Poola said that the city had been facing wind, which was travelling at speeds of 20 knots (37.04 kmph). "The winds did not last for a long time, but were intense whenever they blew," he said.

Denizens from the city also took to Twitter to share their experiences of the wind.

"Effects of #CycloneYaas being felt in Hyderabad just this minute as winds pick up and the sky is overcast."

In what can be considered a double-whammy, with the moisture or relative humidity siphoned away, the state might be in for hotter days from Thursday, cautioned IMD officials.

Meanwhile, IMD meteorologist A Sravani told

MEDICOS TO GET BETTER FACILITIES AT NIMS: CM

From Page 1

The Chief Minister directed the officials concerned to take measures so that the ex-gratia amount being extended as per the guidelines, gets handed over immediately as per the junior doctors' demand. He further instructed officials to provide better facilities to junior doctors and their family members at NIMS.

He also ordered to increase the honorarium paid to the senior residents by 15 per cent, also extending senior residents' honorarium to the medical students who are engaged in Covid-19 duties after their three years of medical course.

Addressing the media after the meeting with the DME late in the evening, the junior doctors said all they are asking for is for the government to protect their lives so they can save the lives of others. "Some ministers are also issuing threats to us. The DME said any doctor who falls sick will be accommodated at Gandhi Hospital. If this is so, then why are ministers, MLAs and others going to private hospitals? Make it mandatory for them to come to Gandhi Hospital where we will take care of them," said Osmania General Hospital said.

Addressing the media after the meeting with the DME, Telangana, the representatives of the junior doctors body were told that ex-gratia will only be provided as per the Central government guidelines. They were further told that their demands for the increased stipend will not be met, doctors said.

The government is not ready to put these assurances on paper. Only verbal promises are being made. We are

demanding that the government gives it in writing by releasing a circular that doctors and their families will be treated at NIMS, but they are accepting this demand as well. We are losing out on a year worth of arrears, something we have worked hard for, while putting our lives at stake. It is a shame that we are working for this government", a junior doctor at Osmania General Hospital said.

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Following what it described as their demands not being fulfilled, even after the Chief Minister's assurance, the T-JUDA said it has decided to escalate its protest by further boycotting emergency services as well from Thursday. Senior residents at all teaching hospitals have also decided to join the protest by boycotting services. However, the Association said as soon as the government addresses and agrees to its, the doctors will

Talks between junior docs, govt fail; strike to intensify

In such times, there are other ways to resolve issues, says min.

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

resume all their duties.

The junior doctors have four demands - to clear the stipend with 15 percent pay hike for junior residents, senior residents and interns due since January 2020, to clear 10 percent incentives for all healthcare workers announced by the state government, and to provide the promised ex-gratia of ₹50 lakhs for doctors and Rs. 25 lakhs for nurses and supporting staff that have lost lives in line of duty.

They also want the government to issue orders guaranteeing beds in NIMS hospital for healthcare workers infected by the Coronavirus.

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Balanced diet must for immunity

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

IMMUNITY BUILDING FOODS

1 Include locally grown, seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables in your daily diet.



2 Use of turmeric helps as it contains curcumin which boosts immunity.



3 Garlic is anti-inflammatory and has anti-viral properties



4 Vitamin A rich foods like carrots, strawberries, kiwi fruits help in increasing white blood cells and help to fight infections.

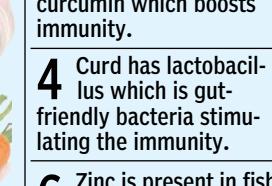
5 Vitamin C rich foods like amla, orange, lemon, mangoes, strawberries and there are also dark green leafy vegetables, adequate protein, fruits and nuts in their daily diet.



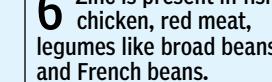
6 Dry fruits and nuts help build the immune system and are higher in calories, fat and protein and they must be consumed in moderation.



7 Curd has lactobacillus which is gut-friendly bacteria stimulating the immunity.



8 Zinc is present in fish, chicken, red meat, legumes like broad beans and French beans.



9 Best time to consume fruits, dry fruits and nuts is between meals like between breakfast and lunch or between lunch and dinner.

Compiled by Dr M. Gayathri, clinical dietitian at Apollo Hospitals.

preservatives which will not help.

Building cell immunity in different groups of people can take from two months to eight weeks. Nutritionist Fathima Taher Ali, senior dietitian at Care Hospitals, says, "Rebuilding cell immunity in Covid-19 recovered patients can take one to two months depending on their other comorbid conditions. In a patient who has controlled diabetes and hypertension cell immunity can bounce back in more than two weeks. In those who have uncontrolled diabetes, uncontrolled hypertension, unrecognised diabetic condition, it would take more than four weeks. For rebuilding cell immunity, a balanced diet, good sleep, proper hydration and stress management are very important. All these factors work together."

Children are found to take four to six weeks for immunity building, depending on their nutritional status.

The underlying problem of malnutrition and undernourishment is also coming to the fore with emerging disease patterns as they are also playing a major role in compromised immune systems.

Nutrition, 20 grams of nuts and oilseeds per day is recommended. Supplementation is required for those who have developed deficiency. Those who are recovering from the disease have to ensure that their food groups must be balanced. Like vegetarians require additional good quality proteins. Non-vegetarians require an adequate input of fruits in their diet for the supplementa-

tion of minerals. Goal must be for a balanced diet."

It is very important to understand the labels of supplement packs as they must not have hidden sugars which will lead to adding more sugar to the body. With a large number of Covid-19 recovered patients having fluctuating sugar levels, they must not consume junk and ready to eat foods as they contain sugars and

IN WHAT can be considered a double-whammy, with the moisture or relative humidity siphoned away, the state might be in for hotter days from Thursday, cautioned IMD officials.

The very severe cyclone Yaas, which ravaged parts of West Bengal and Odisha, has made an appearance over the state as well, say weather observers.

While the impact was not as damaging, the state, including Hyderabad, experienced strong gusts of wind blowing over it. The winds were such that the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a strong-wind warning for the state from Friday to Sunday.

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It states, "Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning and gusty winds (30-40 KMPH) are very likely to occur at isolated places in and around districts of Telangana."

In what can be considered a double-whammy, with the moisture or relative humidity siphoned away, the state might be in for hotter days from Thursday, cautioned IMD officials.

of the heat before letting it reach the earth's surface.

Concurring with IMD, independent weather observers like Rajanikanth Poola said that the city had been facing wind, which was travelling at speeds of 20 knots (37.04 kmph). "The winds did not last for a long time, but were intense whenever they blew," he said.

Denizens from the city also took to Twitter to share their experiences of the wind.

"Effects of #CycloneYaas being felt in Hyderabad just this minute as winds pick up and the sky is overcast."

In what can be considered a double-whammy, with the moisture or relative humidity siphoned away, the state might be in for hotter days from Thursday, cautioned IMD officials.

Meanwhile, IMD meteorologist A Sravani told

BJP state chief backs junior docs, calls for protests

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 26

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay has extended his support to the junior doctors but appealed to them to hold protests only in ways that will not affect the treatment of patients in the pandemic period.

He also ordered to increase the honorarium paid to the senior residents by 15 per cent, also extending senior residents' honorarium to the medical students who are engaged in Covid-19 duties after their three years of medical course.

However, on the issue of increase in stipend, the medical and health officials present in the meeting said that junior doctors in Telangana were already getting higher stipend compared to other states.

DECCAN Chronicle

27 MAY 2021

Protest in time of Covid needs urgent resolution

Thousands of farmers protesting against the three laws that will govern Indian agriculture henceforth on Wednesday observed a "black day", marking the completion of six months of their agitation at the gates of the national capital. "We are not going anywhere," they said and insisted that they have no plans to go home unless the government listened to them, repealed the three laws and offered them legal guarantee for minimum support price for their produce. They also want protection from the impact of the proposed Electricity Bill. Farmers in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and several other states also joined the protest, called by the umbrella organisation of farmers unions, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM).

The government has been playing hot and cold on the issue of the repeal of the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

It is curious that all the tall figures in the government, from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to agriculture minister Narendra Tomar to defence minister Rajnath Singh who tried to mediate with the farmers, have all declared their intention to alleviate the fears of the farming community but they have remained on the streets for the last six months despite 11 rounds of talks!

The farmers have been apprehensive of the intentions of the government when it legally and effectively opens up the Indian farm sector and leaves it for the market forces to control. They cannot be faulted given that the government's track record of planning and executing its ideas on the ground has been dismal. If its bungling or

demonetisation and the introduction of Goods and Services Tax is not enough, then the government's vanishing act while the nation fell prey to the second wave of the pandemic Covid-19 would add to the fear in the minds of the farming community.

The Opposition parties have also lent their support to the farmers' demands. The government must stop being obdurate and immediately resume talks with the SKM, they have stated in a letter to the Prime Minister this week, reminding the government that it will help "protect lakhs of our annadatas becoming victims of the pandemic so that they can continue to produce food to feed the Indian people".

While the government has been saying it had the welfare of the farming community at its heart, anti-social elements have been working overtime to malign the agitation. They almost succeeded in their mission with the drama played out on the Republic Day but for the dexterous move by the Bharat Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikaia. A similar attempt was made when a section of the media accused the protesters of stopping oxygen carriers to Delhi. That, too, was exposed in no time.

The government must realise that no agitation can be drawn this long unless there is a genuine cause. The government must resume talks at the earliest and convince the farmers about its earnestness or be convinced by their fears. Letting the annadatas go on an unending agitation does not behove a democratic government.

CJI plays a judicious hand

The fresh approach used in the selection of senior IPS officer S.K. Jaiswal, the current head of the CISF, as the new director of the CBI, commands itself.

In the selection meeting last Monday, the Chief Justice of India, N.V. Ramana, who is on the three-member panel to choose the CBI chief, besides the PM and the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, proposed that a Supreme Court judgment of March 2019 — that an officer should have at least six months' service remaining in order to be considered for the position of DGP — be extended to the post of CBI director as well. The panel accepted the view.

It is to be hoped that the criterion will henceforth be adopted in selecting the chief of the IB and the R&AW as well. In the case of the appointment of the CBI Director, the government could well have taken shelter behind the CVC Act if it wished to torpedo the CJI's well-considered suggestion.

But the notion is *ipso facto* sound. In too many cases, officers are selected for top slots with only days, weeks, or a couple of months remaining before their superannuation. This reinforces the impression of favouritism, the absence of neutrality at the highest levels of governance, and gives rise to the undue play of political factors. The ideals of transparency and fair play are undermined. In the event, the country is frequently deprived of the services of the most meritorious amongst those available.

The CBI chief has an assured two-year tenure. This is to reinforce the idea of autonomy and independence in decision-making in so sensitive a position. It is bad enough that the CBI has widely come to be seen as "a caged parrot" — the colourful description once supplied by the Supreme Court. It is now up to its new leader to disabuse us of this impression.

When the high-level panel accepted the CJI's suggestion, two high-profile officers, who had less than six months' service left but were deemed close to the powers-that-be, were taken out of contention. For reasons of good governance, this is just as well.

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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu

Did PM pep talk with DMs, others breach protocol?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pep talk to district magistrates on the Covid-19 issue in an online meeting has got some raising the issue of whether it was right for Mr Modi to interact directly with district magistrates and other officials while bypassing their respective ministers. Moreover, the event was telecast live when, just a few weeks ago, the Centre had objected sharply to Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal for a live feed during Mr Modi's meeting with chief ministers.

While seemingly there is nothing wrong with the Prime Minister addressing government officials whenever he chooses to, the question is about propriety and federalism. District officials work under elected state governments and chief ministers and report to them as well. Bypassing the state governments indicates thumbing one's

nose at the federal structure, which is problematic, it is being said.

Interestingly, Mr Modi's interaction follows a similar meeting organised by Union education minister Ramesh Pokhray who spoke directly with state education secretaries, overlooking the state education ministers. This was one reason why the Tamil Nadu government boycotted the meeting.

'DOCS' IN SERVICE DEPUTED TO ASSIST MEDICAL TEAMS
Taking a cue from Gujarat which took this step during the first wave of Covid last year, the Haryana government is using IAS and IPS officers who have a medical degree in the state's fight against the pandemic.

Sources say that five Haryana cadre IAS officers and three IPS officers who have MBBS degrees have been pulled off their administrative duties and directed to

assist medical teams running Covid hospitals in the state. They have been deputed to additional chief secretary for health Rajeev Arora for the creation and administration of 500-bed hospitals in Panipat and Hisar and other related districts.

The IAS officers are Dr Chander Shekhar Khare, Dr R.S. Dhillon, Dr Sangeeta Tetarwal, Dr Manoj Kumar and Dr Vaishali Sharma. The IPS officers are Dr Dheeraj Kumar, Dr Anshu Singla and Dr Arpit Jain. The state government has also deputed 22 senior IAS officers to oversee Covid preparedness in different districts.

No doubt, this is a temporary arrangement to combat the second wave of the pandemic. However, it also coincides with the growing demand by some medical experts and organisations that the government create a special all-India cadre of medical officers along the

lines of the IAS and IPS, etc. If this stopgap measure is successful, it might prod the Centre to seriously consider the demand for a specialised medical service.

TWO SENIOR COPS LOCK HORNS IN HARYANA

An intra-service battle has erupted in Haryana Police. IGP Y. Puran Kumar, a 2001-batch IPS officer, has filed a petition in the Punjab and Haryana high court against the state police chief Manoj Yadava for alleged "discriminatory behaviour" towards Mr Kumar.

Sources say that Mr Kumar has accused DGP Yadava of "partial attitude, discriminatory treatment and violation of service rules". He has sought directions from the court to direct the additional chief secretary for home to take immediate decision on his complaints submitted against Mr Yadava.

The spat does not seem to be new.

Mr Kumar has accused Mr Yadava of targeting him since July 2020 "in a vindictive manner" ever since Mr Kumar was posted to Ambala instead of another officer favoured by the DGP. Mr Kumar has also sought directions from the court to restrain Mr Yadava from writing his annual performance appraisal report until the petition is decided.

The feud at the top in the state's police service has happened at a time when the state is struggling with the Covid epidemic and also dealing with the farmers' agitation against Central laws, and which shows no sign of disappearing. And when two senior cops take on each other instead of the issues facing Haryana, it can't bode well for law and order in the state.

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

Subhani



Asymmetry of power & politics of revenge

Shikha Mukerjee



The asymmetry of power, resources and responsibilities between the Centre and the states in India's federal structure has been so overwhelmingly tilted that it was but natural for the BJP led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to assume that it was unchangeable and universally so, allowing him to try to scare and repress a puny *sic!* regional player, namely Mamata Banerjee and her Trinamul Congress party, after her splendid third-time victory. He and his party should have known better.

There is the power of the State, expressed through hundreds of articles in the Constitution of India, and then there is the power of the ultimate sovereign, the ordinary woman and man, who votes and delivers a verdict. In a statement that was unusually long and politically sagacious, CPI(M) West Bengal state secretary Surya Kanta Mishra delivered a summary of the attempt to induce turmoil and destabilise the Mamata Banerjee government as "revenge politics," adding, for good measure, that the "BJP should remember that the people of Bengal rejected their ideology in the Assembly elections".

That the CBI's sudden swoop and arrest on May 17 of three Trinamul Congress leaders, two of whom are ministers with responsibilities vital to bringing the Covid-19 surge and the six-week election administrative disarray under control, is vendetta politics is not any doubt in the minds of West Bengal's voters. The CBI's raid that netted three TMC leaders and one politician with no party affiliation in a case of bribery and corruption, aka the 2014 Narada sting operation, brought into sharper focus the "washing machine" policies of the BJP. Left out of the list of those arrested

were Mukul Roy and Union home minister Amit Shah's prize recruit Suvidhu Adhikari, prompting the public through the social media to question the exception. The outcome is a further boost to the Trinamul Congress' standing with the people and a further erosion of the BJP's already tarnished credibility. The courtroom drama has further incensed the man/woman on the street, regardless of what the Centre's lawyers may have argued, backed by the entirely irrelevant social media commentary by governor J.P. Dhanakhar.

There is no difference of opinion on what these antics are all about — first the tweets by the governor about the near breakdown of the state's constitutional machinery that were meant to signal that President's Rule could be imposed at any moment, overthrowing the just elected government, followed by the raids, have been identified by the Congress, CPI(M) and privately by some same BJP leaders as well. In repeating behaviour similar to cattle raiders to hit back at the Opposition parties, the Narendra Modi government used exactly the same tactics of using or perhaps misusing the power to awe and smear vested in the Centre that had failed; governments led by Arvind Kejriwal in Delhi, Pinarayi Vijayan in Kerala, Hemant Soren in Jharkhand, Uddhav Thackeray in Maharashtra and Ashok Gehlot in Rajasthan were all raided and pushed back and Narendra Modi and his party were the losers.

In the preceding decades the capacity to push back, a complex mix of regional political culture and history that shaped the popular perception, was weaker than it is now.

In West Bengal, the capacity to fault the Centre and winkle out vendetta politics against the legitimately elected and popular government has been honed over decades, when the Congress used Article 356 to impose President's Rule against the rickety coalitions of the United Front in the 1960s. Over years of experience of the politics of discrimination and the consequences of the asymmetry of power between the Centre and the state, the average man in the street and especially in the rural areas, is politically well educated.

If these were diversionary tactics as has been argued in some quarters, it was politically foolish. The frantic family members of all those who died because the Modi government had not taken steps to ensure adequate supplies of oxygen to meet the surge that every expert said was coming are not diverted or deceived. The scandalous incompetence of the ruling establishment to handle the crisis is evident in the number of deaths across the country — three lakhs and counting.

If these were tactics to assert the power of the Centre over the state, it was so badly timed that it has been described by BJP insiders as politically suicidal. Neither West

Bengal's electorate nor voters across the country are impressed by the display of power when the lives of loved ones have been sacrificed to feed the Modi government's hubris. There is so much traffic on the social media on this that there can be no room to challenge how the people have interpreted these shenanigans.

What is worse is that the judiciary has now been embroiled in what for the BJP is nothing more than a game that has gone wrong. A split decision on granting bail to the arrested leaders says it all. The simple conclusion, regardless of the complex interpretations by the Centre's lawyers, is that the decision to arrest by the CBI is doubtful in law. No matter how long these hearings last, it is not possible to repair the political damage that the BJP has inflicted on itself in the people's court.

The BJP's wizards have created a bigger problem for themselves out of the West Bengal defeat. The queue of defectors pleading to rejoin the Trinamul Congress is the best indicator.

As is the letter from a defeated BJP candidate, Locket Chatterjee...

LETTERS

LOCKDOWN

The government must stop testing the patience of the common man (*Lockdown likely to get extended, DC, May 26*). It must provide fiscal relief and provisions to people first. Otherwise, extending the lockdown is not wise.

Nouman Ahmed Khan
Hyderabad

VACCINATION

Why did state governments delay the requisition and allow the Centre to send vaccine to other countries? (*Vaccines: Fix schedule, focus on procurement, DC, May 26*). Why did they wake up late? There is no coordination or steps to curb the virus spread in villages. At least now they must coordinate and complete vaccination.

Mangalampalli Satya Mohan Singh
Secunderabad

PRIVATE HOSPITALS

When the vaccination started for the 60+ age group and then 45+ from April 1, many private hospitals were roped in. It was needlessly stopped by the state (TS ropes in pvt hosps to vaccinate over 18-olds, DC, May 26). When the government fixed a market price and allowed private hospitals to buy directly from vaccine makers, why was it stopped? The problem with our government is that they they will neither conduct the vaccination efficiently nor allow private hospitals to do so.

N.S. Rajan
Begumpet

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN CHRONICLE

Nations urged to intervene in Bangla Desh

NEW DELHI, May 26. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today asked the countries of the world to intervene in the situation in Bangla Desh and to see that peace and security was re-established and maintained there.

Mrs. Gandhi was replying to an eight-hour debate on the genocide in Bangla Desh and the attacks of Pakistani military forces in the border areas of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. The Prime Minister said the international community must associate with the very critical character of the situation that had now developed.

"Any failure to do so may well indeed lead to disastrous consequences for what was happening in Bangla Desh is not a political or economic problem but the problem of the very survival of the people," she said.

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist in Kolkata

SHORT TAKES

CASES DIP FURTHER IN DELHI, MUMBAI

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, MAY 26

Delhi, the nation's capital, on Wednesday recorded a positivity rate lower than two per cent as fresh Covid-19 cases dipped to 1,491.

This is the first time in nine weeks that the cases were so low as fatalities due to Covid-related complications remain high, at 130 on a single day. Wednesday's fatality figures are, however, the lowest since April 15.

Another megacity, Mumbai, the nation's financial capital, also saw a significant drop in its daily count — with 1,362 new positive cases and 34 deaths, as 1,021 were discharged from medical supervision in 24 hours.

Across India, the daily cases showed a rise in the last 24 hours after a brief dip on Tuesday. In the last 24 hours, about 2.05 lakh fresh cases were detected while the deaths crossed 4,000.

Union health ministry officials said Covid-19 cases are on a declining trajectory for the last 10 days and the country's active caseload had come down to 24.95 lakhs — a fall of 91,191 in active cases in the last 24 hours, with nearly three lakh recoveries.

India's recovery rate is now 89.66 per cent, while the weekly positivity rate is 11.45 per cent.

Officials said the daily positivity rate was 9.42 per cent and was less than 10 per cent for two consecutive days.

FREEDOM FIGHTER DORESWAMY NO MORE

Bengaluru, May 26: Centenarian Gandhian and freedom fighter H.S. Doreswamy on Wednesday passed away due to a cardiac arrest at the Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases, family sources said.

"He died of heart attack at about 1.40 PM at the Jayadeva Hospital," his close confidant Sirimane Nagaraj said.

According to him, Doreswamy, 103, had contracted Covid-19 on May 8 and was admitted to the Jayadeva Institute for treatment and was discharged on May 13.

"However, on May 14, Doreswamy complained of severe weakness. So he was again admitted to the hospital and was there till he breathed his last," Nagaraj said.

He added that the centenarian had asthma and was undergoing treatment for lungs-related ailment. Doreswamy is survived by a son and a daughter.

Born on April 10, 1918, Harohalli Srinivasa Doreswamy took a plunge into the freedom struggle by taking part in the Quit India movement and was jailed for 14 months from 1942 to 1944.

The Gandhian had also participated in the Mysuru Chalo movement to compel the Mysuru Maharaja to accede to the Indian State post-Independence.

1.77 CR DOSES STILL AVAILABLE WITH STATES

New Delhi, May 26: More than 1.77 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses are still available with states and Union Territories, and they will receive one lakh more within the next three days, the Union health ministry said on Wednesday.

The Centre has so far provided, both under the free of cost category and through the direct state procurement category, more than 22 crore vaccine doses (22,00,59,880) to states and UTs, it said.

Of this, the total consumption including wastages is 20,13,74,636 doses, the ministry said, citing data available at 8 am Wednesday.

More than 1.77 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses (1,77,52,594) are still available with the states and UTs to be administered. Furthermore, 1,00,000 doses are in the pipeline and will be received by the states and UTs within the next three days, the ministry said.

As part of the nationwide vaccination drive, the Centre has been supporting states and UTs by providing Covid-19 vaccines free of cost, and by also facilitating direct procurement by them, the ministry said. Vaccination is an integral pillar of the Centre's comprehensive strategy for the containment and management of the pandemic, along with test, track, treat and Covid-appropriate behaviour, the ministry underlined.

SENA: BJP MORE CONCERNED ABOUT ELECTIONS THAN COVID-19

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, MAY 26

The Shiv Sena on Wednesday said that even while the whole country is fighting the Coronavirus pandemic, BJP's priority is elections. The Uddhav Thackeray-led party claimed that after its defeat in West Bengal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are working for a mission of Uttar Pradesh Assembly election, which will be held in 2022.

The Sena also warned the BJP that if the priority is not given on tackling the pandemic, the pious Ganga river would become a carrier of dead bodies of Hindus.

The Sena, in an editorial in its party mouthpiece *Saamana*, said that the BJP has been working for the elections of four states including Uttar Pradesh, which are scheduled next year. The people of West Bengal have rejected the BJP and now the BJP is planning to work towards Uttar Pradesh elections.

Slamming the BJP-led government in Uttar Pradesh for not handling the second wave coronavirus properly, the Sena said that the farmers' protests in western Uttar Pradesh is also proving troublesome for the BJP. "In such a situation, the BJP is likely to suffer a major setback in the upcoming Assembly election of Uttar Pradesh and Lok Sabha election in 2024," the editorial claimed.

Referring to the recently concluded Panchayat polls in last month, the Sena said that as the BJP had not done well in the panchayat elections, the ruling party in UP is working on how to improve its image.

"The image of the BJP has been tarnished. There is now a lot of thinking and brainstorming on what to do to improve the image and win the Uttar Pradesh elections," the editorial said.

● **THE SHIV SENA** also warned the BJP that if the priority is not given on tackling the Coronavirus pandemic, the pious Ganga river would become a carrier of dead bodies of Hindus.

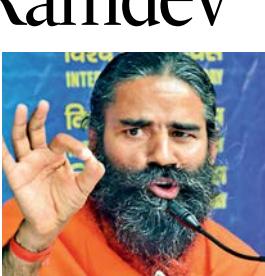
Now, IMA serves defamation notice on Baba Ramdev

Dehradun, May 26: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has served a defamation notice on Ramdev for alleged disparaging remarks against allopathy and allopathic doctors, demanding an apology from him within 15 days, failing which it said it will demand a compensation of ₹1,000 crore from the yoga guru.

The six-page notice served on behalf of IMA (Uttarakhand) secretary Ajay Khanna by his lawyer Neeraj Pandey describes the remarks by Ramdev as damaging to the reputation and the image of allopathy and around 2,000 practitioners of it who are part of the association.

Terming the remarks of the yoga guru a "criminal act" under section of 499 of the Indian Penal Code, the notice demanded a written apology from him within 15 days of its receipt, saying a compensation of ₹1,000 crore will be demanded from him at the rate of ₹50 lakh per member of the IMA if he failed to do so.

The notice has also asked Ramdev to make a video clip contradicting all his allegations and circulate it on the social media platforms where he had uploaded his earli-



Ramdev Baba

er video levelling them.

It further asked the yoga guru to withdraw a "misleading" advertisement from all platforms endorsing "Coronil kit", a product of his firm, as an effective medicine for Covid-19, failing which an FIR and a criminal case will be lodged against him by the IMA.

On Sunday, Ramdev was forced to withdraw a statement made in a viral video clip in which he is heard questioning some of the medicines being used to treat the coronavirus infection and saying that "lakhs have died from taking allopathic medicines for Covid-19".

The remarks were met with vociferous protests from the doctors' association, following which Union health minister Harsh Vardhan asked him to withdraw the "extremely unfortunate" statement.

— PTI



Guest workers arriving from Maharashtra wait in a queue for Covid-19 test at Patna railway station on Wednesday.

NIGHT CURFEW RELAXED IN 36 CITIES OF GUJARAT

Ahmedabad, May 26: Considering a significant drop in the new Coronavirus cases in Gujarat, the state government on Wednesday decided to relax the night curfew timings by an hour in 36 cities, while the day time restrictions will remain in place.

Chief Minister Vijay Rupani made the announcement regarding the revised curfew timings after a cabinet meeting in Gandhinagar.

From Friday, the night restrictions on people's movement will be effective from 9 pm to 6 am in 36 cities, the Chief Minister said.

Currently, the night curfew is being enforced from 8 pm to 6 am.

"Coronavirus cases are decreasing in Gujarat. From nearly 14,600 new cases, the highest daily peak registered on April 30, about 3,200 cases are currently emerging every day. Hence, we have decided to relax the night curfew. The curfew will now be from 9 pm to 6 am," Rupani said.

A notification in this regard will be issued on Thursday he said.

The night curfew is currently in place in 36 cities, including Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot.

The Chief Minister also said there will not be any change in the day time restrictions currently in place in these cities. He also said the state government is alert about the possibility of a third wave of Covid-19 and a detailed action plan to deal with it will be announced soon.

On Tuesday, Gujarat reported 3,255 new Covid-19 cases and 44 fatalities, raising the infection tally to 7,94,912 and the death toll to 9,665, as per official data.

On April 30, Gujarat reported 14,605 new coronavirus cases, the highest in the state so far. — PTI

Total lockdown results not satisfactory, says Stalin

Hints at govt extending lockdown that is now in place all through TN

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, MAY 26

China-like discipline not possible in India: Guj. HC

Ahmedabad, May 26: The Gujarat High Court on Wednesday said the state government should ramp up health infrastructure keeping in mind that there could be a third or even a fourth wave of the pandemic. "The total lockdown so far has yielded some results but that is not satisfactory. So, we shall decide what to do next later," Stalin told the media after inspecting a vaccination camp at a Public Health Centre at Nemam village in Thiruvallur district on Wednesday.

Observing that discipline enforced in China cannot be implemented in India, a division bench of Justices Bela Trivedi and Bhargav D. Karia asked the Gujarat government to ramp up infrastructure for medical facilities to deal with any fresh wave of the pandemic. The bench made the observa-

tions while hearing a suo motu PIL on the Covid-19 situation and other related issues in Gujarat. It said ramping up of health facilities, especially in rural Gujarat, should be on a long-term basis and not on short-term to address just the ongoing second wave of the pandemic.

"What about this type of third or fourth wave? The third wave will be followed by the fourth wave, because the people of the state are not going to follow, to put on masks, to have social distancing or sanitise. Nobody in this country is going to do that, so every six month there will be a wave," the court observed.

— PTI

them all to go for vaccination, which was the only shield from Coronavirus.

He spoke about the strengthening of medical infrastructure after his government took over by

increasing the number of beds with oxygen supply and procuring more vaccines to inoculate the population between 18 and 44 years.

Besides the stock of

group. Another 11.50 lakh vials were expected soon, he said. The government had taken up the vaccination programme on a war footing and was also creating awareness on it. The twin objectives of the government was to prevent the spread of the virus and to save the infected persons, he said.

More RT-PCR tests were being conducted now, about 50,000 per day, than between April 8 to May 7, Stalin said, adding that there was no shortage of beds or oxygen supply.

He said the number of cases in Chennai was coming down, though in places like Coimbatore it was going up and said that the government was addressing all the complaints on lack of medical facilities in the state.

Besides inspecting the vaccination camp at the PHC, the Chief Minister also visited a vaccination programme conducted at the Daimler India Plant and also the oxygen plant of INOX. Apart from these visits, Stalin flagged off truckloads of oxygen cylinders and other accessories like regulators, flow meters, concentrators and so on to various hospitals in the districts.

TRIPURA GOVT EXTENDS CURFEW TILL JUNE 5

Agartala, May 26: The Tripura government has announced extension of the corona curfew in Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) areas and all urban local bodies (ULB) till June 5 to contain the spread of the pandemic.

Earlier, a corona curfew was imposed in AMC areas and ULBs across the state on May 17, and a night curfew in other parts of Tripura till May 26.

State education minister and government spokesperson Ratan Lal Nath said the council of ministers on Tuesday resolved to extend the corona curfew given the Covid-19 surge in the state.

"Strict measures will be taken to implement the restrictions imposed by the administration," Nath said.

In addition, the corona night curfew will continue from 4 pm to 5 am in all areas till June 6. — PTI

MP: 12 doctors die during 2nd wave

RABINDRA NATH CHOWDHURY | DC
BHOJPAL, MAY 26

As many as 12 doctors died of Covid-19 in Madhya Pradesh during the second wave of the pandemic that hit the state in the first week of April-May in the state", president of MP medical officers' association Dr Devendra Goswami said.

With this, the number of doctors who succumbed to Covid-19 since the pandemic hit MP in March, 2020, rose to 22.

Meanwhile, the state has witnessed a sharp decline in fresh positive cases in the last couple of weeks, although, there is no perceptible change in fatalities.

The districts which reported deaths of doctors are Bhopal (2), Gwalior (4), Ujjain (1), Indore (1), Hosangabad (1), Jabalpur (1), Khandwa (1) and Dhar (1).

"As many as 12 doctors died due to Covid-19 in

April-May in the state", president of MP medical officers' association Dr Devendra Goswami said.

With this, the number of doctors who succumbed to Covid-19 since the pandemic hit MP in March, 2020, rose to 22.

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witnessed a sharp decline in fresh positive cases in the last couple of weeks, although, there is no perceptible change in fatalities.

The toll which was 88 on

May 20 has dipped marginally to 72 on Wednesday.

Significantly, it is seen during the second wave that the patients are tak-

ing more time to recover than they were during the first wave. Besides, many of them are facing post-corona complications which in many cases proved fatal, doctors say. "The development contributed to the rise in the number of deaths during the second wave", doctors say.

"The patients admitted to the intensive care unit are taking time to recover. The number of deaths due to Covid-19 may come down in coming days", director of AIIMS, Bhopal, Sarman Singh said.

Wednesday. But, the state has been recording a toll of 70-80 every day during the second wave of pandemic.

The fresh positive cases which had reached a peak of 12,500 three weeks ago, came down to 2,189 on

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SHORT TAKES

ASSAM TO HAVE GUARDIAN MINISTERSMANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, MAY 26

In an obvious attempt to improve the governance and create a pro-people image of the government, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday embarked upon an innovative idea of appointing guardian ministers for all the districts to implement government policy decisions, administrative reforms, and other welfare schemes for the public.

The decision was taken at the cabinet meeting on Wednesday. The Panchayat and Rural Development Minister and Assam BJP president Ranjeet Kumar Das has been given the responsibility of Barpeta, Bongaigaon, and Dhubri districts.

Agriculture minister Atul Bora will be the guardian minister of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia while minister Urkha Gwra Brahma has been allotted the responsibility of Baksa and Chirang districts.

Transport, industries, and commerce minister Chandra Mohan Patowary has been given the responsibility of Darrang, Kamrup (R), and Kamrup (M) districts.

Environment minister Parimal Suklabaitya will be the guardian minister of Karimganj, Hailakandi, and Hojai. Health and family welfare minister Keshab Mahanta has been given the responsibility of the Golaghat and Morigaon districts.

JEE-ADVANCED POSTPONED DUE TO COVID-19

New Delhi, May 26: The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Advanced scheduled for July 3 has been postponed in view of the Covid-19 situation, according to officials at IIT-Kharagpur, the institute which is conducting the exam this year.

The exam is conducted for admission to the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology and the National Institutes of Technology.

"Considering the prevailing pandemic situation due to Covid-19, JEE (Advanced) 2021 which was scheduled to be held on July 3 stands postponed. The revised date of examination will be announced at an appropriate time," an official said.

For the JEE-Advanced, the JEE-Mains is considered as a qualifying exam and it is conducted for admission to engineering colleges across the country.

For admissions to IITs, apart from qualifying the JEE-Advanced, candidates are required to secure either minimum 75 per cent marks in their class 12 board exams or a rank among the top 20 percentile in their qualifying examinations.

The requirement pertaining to class 12 scores has been waived in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

FARMERS' STIR COMPLETES SIX MONTHS

Chandigarh, May 26: Farmers in Punjab and Haryana put up black flags atop their houses, burnt effigies of the central government and held protests on Wednesday, joining a 'black day' call given by farmer unions to mark six months of their agitation at Delhi borders against the Centre's three contentious farm laws.

In Punjab, protesting farmers burnt effigies of the BJP-led central government at many places.

Shromani Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal also raised a black flag at his house in Badal village in Muktsar district and urged the central government to accept the demand of protesting farmers. In Haryana, state Bharatiya Kisan Union chief Gurnam Singh Chaduni said farmers at many places hoisted black flags atop their houses and vehicles to register their protest. Several political parties including the Congress, SAD and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have extended their support to the farmers' call of observing the day as 'black day'.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of protesting unions, had announced that farmers will observe May 26 as 'black day' to mark the completion of six months of their protest. Farmers carrying black flags while women wearing black chunris held protests in villages.



Police officers distribute food to the needy people during landfall of cyclone Yaas in Kolkata on Wednesday.



Residents take shelter inside a primary school building in Balasore district of Odisha state as cyclone Yaas barrels towards eastern coast in the Bay of Bengal.

— AFP

Yaas leaves a trail of devastation

Thousands of kutcha houses washed, trees uprooted; standing crop lost in Odisha

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BALASORE, MAY 26

The cyclonic storm Yaas on Wednesday morning made its landfall at Bahanaga in Odisha's Balasore district with a wind speed of 130 to 140 kilometre per hour (kmph) and left a trail of devastation in the coastal districts.

Initial reports suggest an elderly person named Purnachandra Naik in Keonjhar died as a tree collapsed on him while he was going to a temple near his house for his morning prayers. Similarly, a youth in Balasore district died as a large branch of a tree fell on him.

Thousands of kutcha houses in coastal villages in Bhadrak, Balasore and Kendrapara districts were washed away in the high tidal surge that accompanied the roaring landfall. Massive tides ranging from 2 to 4 metres high gushed into seaside villages resulting in marooning of innumerable households in Basudebpur and Chandabali areas in Bhadrak district.

In Balasore district, Chandipur, Baliapal, Bahanagar, Talasari and Bhograi areas were severely hit by the disaster. Kutcha houses and houses with asbestos roofs could not withstand the gusty winds and heavy downpour and collapsed.

Several areas in Rajanagar area in Kendrapara district also witnessed tidal ingress that led to complete disruption of road communication.

"Four to five feet high sea water was seen flowing over the roads connecting Kendrapara district with Bhadrak.

Farmers, especially the paddy growers, vegetable and betel-leaf growers, were worst hit as the squarely wind and incessant downpours destroyed the standing crops.

hours. It also precipitated heavy downpours in the adjoining districts of West Bengal," India Meteorological Department (IMD) director general Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said.

He added that the cyclone was moving further north and northwestwards and it would enter Jharkhand on Thursday morning after weakening into a deep depression.

"From a severe cyclonic storm, Yaas will gradually weaken into a deep depression and enter Jharkhand with a wind speed of 50 to 60 km per hour," the IMD chief said.

Speaking to reporters after the cyclone passed the Odisha coast, state Special Relief Commissioner P.K. Jena efforts were being made to restore the road communica-

tion, power supply and drinking water systems.



A priest shifts an idol of Lord Jagannath from a seafront temple to a safer place in Balasore district in Odisha as cyclone Yaas barrels towards eastern coast in the Bay of Bengal.

● **FARMERS**, especially the paddy growers, vegetable and betel-leaf growers, were worst hit as the squarely wind and incessant rain destroyed the standing crops.

"Till now, we have not received any reports of any major mishaps except loss of a couple of lives which unfortunately happened as they did not obey the government's order not to venture out during the cyclone. Now, we are focusing on restoration of essential services. We have asked collectors to submit the loss assessment reports as early as possible," said the SRC Mr Jena.

The SRC informed that Mayurbhanji, Balasore's adjoining district in the north had received heavy rainfall and it is likely to cause flash flood in Budhabalanga river which originates from the Similipal National Park in the district.

Meanwhile, exhibiting their high-skilled rescue expertise and daredevilry, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Odisha police personnel on Tuesday night rescued at least 10 fishermen whose boat capsized near Japa village in Odisha's Jagatsinghpur district.

According to reports, after the fishermen sent

distress calls about the imminent danger they faced in the sea, the NDRF jawans immediately reached the spot and evacuated them from the ill-fated vessel to a rescue boat.

Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik praised the efforts of the rescue teams. The jawans also rescued hundreds of domestic animals in Odisha and West Bengal from drowning or getting swept away in tidal waves.

Apart from rescue activity, the NDRF personnel served cooked food to evacuees accommodated in various cyclone shelters.

The NDRF jawans also cleared almost all major roads in Odisha and West Bengal which were blocked by uprooted trees.

"The NDRF focused on saving lives of the people, domestic animals and evacuation of people during the cyclone. Post the landfall of the storm our men have begun the restoration work. We are also taking care of people in shelters," NDRF director general Satyanarayan Pradhan said.

"The NDRF focused on saving lives of the people, domestic animals and evacuation of people during the cyclone. Post the landfall of the storm our men have begun the restoration work. We are also taking care of people in shelters," NDRF director general Satyanarayan Pradhan said.

Meanwhile, it was learnt that six deer that strayed into residential areas from the Sundarbans, amid the cyclone were rescued and sent back to their habitat.

Officials are yet to assess the damages caused by the storm in the two districts but said that it appears that devastations have

MASSIVE RESCUE AND RELIEF OP. ON IN BENGALRAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, MAY 26

In a large scale rescue and relief operation in cyclone-hit West Bengal the Indian Army and Indian Coast Guard on Wednesday evacuated around 800 villagers stranded in East Midnapore and Howrah, which are among the worst-affected districts.

Eastern Command spokesperson Wing Commander Mandeep Huda said that around 700 villagers were rescued by the Army soldiers from the flooded areas of the two districts. Most of the rescued are from East Midnapore.

At Bodhra, more than 500 people were rescued while 50 more were evacuated from New Digha Market apart from 32 others from Old Digha Natun Kali Temple and 15 from another place in Old Digha. In Howrah the Army jawans conducted evacuation at Orphuli.

The Indian Coast Guard informed that it shifted around 100 people to safer places in its hovercraft after the group was found stranded at Nayachar Islands near Haldia in East Midnapore.

It stated, "Headquarters, Coast Guard Region (North East) at Kolkata is monitoring the overall situation and directing the Coast Guard Commanders/Stations of both the states to execute the relief operations on ground. Three Coast Guard ships along with onboard helicopter, already on operational mission in the Bay of Bengal, have been diverted to coastal areas of both states with fastest speed to assess the situation in area and render appropriate assistance to any mariner in distress."

They will be joined by two more ships to augment the efforts at sea. Coast Guard Dornier aircraft will be carrying out aerial recce of the affected areas on improvement of weather."

It added, "Two inflatable boats have been dispatched to Contai/Digha area."

CYCLONE IN FIGURES**15,04,506**

No. of people evacuated in West Bengal

5.80 lakh

No. of people in vulnerable areas of Odisha shifted to safe shelters

1 crore

No. of people affected in West Bengal

3 lakh

No. of houses damaged in West Bengal

6

No. of flights cancelled by Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in view of cyclone Yaas

17

No. of columns deployed by the Army to assist the WB administration

969 tonnes

Of liquid medical oxygen moved to six states and a Union Territory through 12 Oxygen Express trains in a span of 24 hours

404

No. of rescue teams been deployed in Odisha

+

Cyclone Yaas: Tidal water flows into Haldia dock; assets safe

Kolkata, May 26: The cyclone Yaas has put the Kolkata port authorities on tenterhooks for some time as the rising water of the Hooghly river surpassed the height of the external lock gate of its Haldia Dock System, leading the draught level to go up to around eight metres on Wednesday, an official said.

However, water entered into the lock barrel the area between external and internal lock gates for not more than 30 minutes and no damage was done to ships or assets of the

Haldia Dock system in Purba Medinipur district, port chairman Vinod Kumar said. Lock gates held Haldia dock to maintain the required draught level at berths.

Being a riverine port, the level of draught (the depth of water required to float a ship) is very crucial for ships coming in and going out of the facility.

Kumar, who was in Haldia Dock, said that they were on tenterhooks for some time but the problem was temporary. "There was no major problem. Pumps are pressed into service to

drain out the extra water," he said. Kumar said that he is not expecting any major damage in the port due to the cyclone.

"A clear picture would emerge after more reports come. Shipping operations will begin once the effects of the cyclone are dissipated," said the chairman of the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port.

Meanwhile, it was learnt that six deer that strayed into residential areas from the Sundarbans, amid the cyclone were rescued and sent back to their habitat.

Balasore, May 26: Trees and electric poles were uprooted, low-lying areas inundated while kutcha houses were badly damaged as cyclone Yaas left a trail of destruction in Odisha's coastal districts of Balasore and Bhadrak on Wednesday.

Residents of several parts of the two districts, which bore the brunt of the 'very severe cyclonic storm', are staying without power since Tuesday night while many people have been evacuated to safer places by the government.

"Now, there is intermittent rainfall, though the winds have subsided," said Mahajan, adding that his area was out of electricity since Tuesday night.

He said he would try to arrange a generator so that he can continue working from home.

Pradyut Mohapatra, a 60-year-old resident of Balasore town, also said that there has been no

electricity in his house and was apprehensive that the power supply might not be restored anytime soon.

Sangram Tripathy, a resident of Chababali in Bhadrak district, said that the tiled roof of his house got partly blown away in heavy wind and agricultural fields near his house got inundated due to the storm surge.

He said that there had been no electricity in his house since Monday night.

Special Relief Commissioner PK Jena said that the administration is yet to assess the damages in Balasore and Bhadrak district.

People living in darkness

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SHORT TAKES

SLOVENIAN PARL DEBATES MOVE TO IMPEACH PM

Ljubljana, May 26: Slovenian lawmakers on Wednesday debated whether to impeach conservative Prime Minister Janez Jansa, a month before the small Alpine nation takes on the EU's rotating presidency.

For the impeachment vote, expected later Wednesday, to succeed it has to be backed by at least 46 MPs in the 90-seat parliament — a scenario analysts say is unlikely.

If it were to succeed, it would likely see the 62-year-old removed from office and snap elections called.

Four centre-left opposition parties filed the motion in April, accusing Jansa of mismanaging the deadly Coronavirus crisis, such as by failing to acquire much needed extra vaccine doses.

They also accuse him of violating press freedom — attacking critical media and stopping the funding of the country's only news agency, STA.

JORDANIAN AUTHOR BAGS ABU DHABI PRIZE

Abu Dhabi, May 26: Jordanian author Jalal Barjas won a prestigious Abu Dhabi-funded prize for Arabic fiction for his novel "Notebooks of the Bookseller". He will receive \$50,000 and funds will also be provided to translate his book into English, the organisers of the International Prize for Arabic Fiction said on their website.

Published by The Arabic Institute for Research and Publishing, "Notebooks of the Bookseller" recounts a book lover's experience with schizophrenia and the crimes he commits when he assumes the identities of characters in novels he reads. Born in 1970, Barjas has published two collections of poetry as well as a series of novels and short stories that have won several awards.

"The author presents us with the darkest portraits of homelessness and poverty, where meaning has been lost and hope torn up by the roots, turning life into a realm of nightmares," said Chawki Bazih, chair of the judges panel.

SUSPECTED ADF MILITIA KILLS 13 IN DR CONGO

Beni, May 26: Thirteen people in the eastern DR Congo have been killed in a suspected attack by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a militia that the US says is linked to the Islamic State group, local officials said Wednesday. The massacre occurred late Tuesday in the village of Kisima-Vutoloja, 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the city of Beni on the highway leading to Uganda, said territorial administrator Donat Kibuna.

"The situation in Kisima is very tragic. There was a raid by the ADF around 7:00 pm last night. Thirteen people lost their lives," he said. "Several inhabitants are missing," he added. "We have already recovered 13 bodies. These people were bound and decapitated," an aid worker said.

Roger Masimango, a representative of civil society groups in the Rwenzi area, said the village chief in Kisima and his wife were among those who had been killed.

"Two children aged four and two months were found alive next to the corpses of their parents," Masimango said.

MALI'S PRESIDENT RESIGNS WHILE IN DETENTION

Bamako, May 26: Mali's transitional president has resigned while he and the prime minister are in detention after being arrested by the military earlier this week. The resignation by the leader of an 18-month civilian transitional government risks plunging the troubled nation into further instability and comes as representatives of the West African regional bloc are in Mali to mediate the political crisis, officials said Wednesday. The UN, the African Union and other international bodies have urged Mali's military to release the transitional leaders.

Transitional President Bah N'Daw dismissed Prime Minister Moctar Ouane Wednesday before handing in his own resignation letter to transitional Vice President Col Assimi Goita, who led the 2020 coup, according to a military official.

A West African diplomat who is involved in mediations also confirmed the resignation and dismissal. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not permitted to speak on the subject. It is not known the conditions under which the two transitional leaders are being held.

Don probe: New jury convened

New York, May 26: New York prosecutors have convened a special grand jury to consider evidence in a criminal investigation into former President Donald Trump's business dealings, a person familiar with the matter told *The Associated Press* on Tuesday. The development signals that the Manhattan district attorney's office was moving toward seeking charges as a result of its two-year investigation, which included a lengthy legal battle to obtain Trump's tax records.

The person familiar with the matter was not authorised to speak publicly and did so on the condition of anonymity. The news was first reported by *The Washington Post*. Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr is conducting a wide-ranging investigation into a variety of matters such as hush-money payments paid to women on Trump's behalf, property valuations and employee compensation. The Democratic prosecutor has been using an investigative grand jury through the course of his probe to issue subpoenas and obtain documents. That panel kept working while other grand juries and court activities were shut down because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

"This is purely political, and an affront to the almost 75 million voters who supported me in the Presidential Election, and it's being driven by highly partisan Democrat prosecutors," Trump said in a statement. Vance's office declined to comment. The new grand jury is the latest sign of increasing momentum in the criminal investigation into the Republican ex-president and his company. — AP

SHORT TAKES

JAPAN BOAT,
RUSSIA SHIP
COLLIDE, 3 DIE

Tokyo, May 26: A Japanese fishing boat collided with a Russian ship off the northern island of Hokkaido on Wednesday, killing three crew members, Tokyo said.

Japan's coast guard was informed that five crew members from the fishing boat were recovered by a Russian cargo ship, government spokesman Katsunobu Kato told reporters.

"We have been told that three were confirmed dead, while the remaining two suffered non-life threatening injuries," he added.

Japan and Russia are locked in a sovereignty dispute over four islands administered by Moscow, which refers to them as the southern Kurils.

Tokyo claims the islands, which it calls the Northern Territories, and the dispute has prevented the two countries from signing a formal peace treaty since World War II.

Fishing vessels in the area have sometimes been involved in tensions.

U.S. CUTS MEXICO'S
AVIATION SAFETY
RATING

Washington, May 26: US regulators have downgraded Mexico's aviation safety rating, a move that prevents Mexican airlines from expanding flights to the United States just as travel is recovering from the pandemic.

The Federal Aviation Administration said Tuesday it downgraded Mexico after finding that the country does not meet standards set by a United Nations aviation group.

The downgrade means that US airlines won't be able to sell tickets on flights operated by Mexican airlines, a setback that will mainly hit Delta, which has a partnership with Aeromexico.

The FAA said it will increase scrutiny of Mexican flights to the United States, but the downgrade does not immediately affect current flights.

The FAA's decision to lower Mexico from "Category 1" to "Category 2" puts it in a group of countries including Bangladesh, Pakistan and Thailand.

ZUMA PLEADS
NOT GUILTY IN
GRAFT TRIAL

Pietermaritzburg, May 26: South Africa's former president, Jacob Zuma, pleaded not guilty on Wednesday in a much-postponed corruption case dating back more than two decades.

The 79-year-old faces 16 charges of fraud, graft and racketeering relating to a 1999 purchase of fighter jets, patrol boats and military gear from five European arms firms for 30 billion rand, then the equivalent of nearly \$5 billion.

Zuma — who at the time was president Thabo Mbeki's deputy — is accused of accepting bribes totalling four million rand from one of the firms, French defence giant Thales. Impeccably dressed in a dark blue suit and a red tie, wearing an anti-coronavirus mask, he was repeatedly asked by the judge, Piet Koen, to confirm in person the response of his attorney, given "the magnitude of what we're dealing with." "I plead not guilty," Zuma said without hesitating.

Zuma also pleaded not guilty to charges of corruption and money laundering.

PAK JOURNALIST
ATTACKED FOR
CRITICISING ARMY

Islamabad, May 26: A Pakistani journalist, known for his criticism of the armed forces, has been attacked by unknown assailants outside his home in Islamabad, in another series of assaults on media persons.

Asad Ali Toor, who is also a YouTuber, was tied, gagged, severely beaten outside his residence in the upscale F-10 sector late on Tuesday night, according to police. A video showed three men briskly walking away from the apartment building after thrashing Toor who was staggering and trying to recollect himself.

Another video showed Toor moving in a hospital with his shirt soaked in blood at his elbow but apparently out of danger. Talking about the details of the incident in the clip, Toor said the attackers had asked him about the source of his funds. He also revealed in a separate video that he was being threatened and was informed by a "well-wisher" of some attack after Eid. Last year, a case was registered against Toor, a known critic of the armed forces.

EU asks for big penalties against AZ

European Commission begins legal action as pharmaceutical company failed to give vax

Brussels, May 26: The European Union on Wednesday asked a Belgian court to impose penalties running to millions of euros per day on AstraZeneca for Covid-19 vaccine doses it has failed to deliver to the bloc.

The request came as EU countries and their executive, the European Commission, began legal action against the Anglo-Swedish pharmaceutical company for "flagrant violation" of its contract with Brussels.

The EU is suing AstraZeneca to force it to deliver 90 million more doses of its coronavirus vaccine before July, arguing that it failed in its contractual duty by handing over only a quarter of the shots it promised for the first three months of 2021.

The deadline for the contract is set for mid-June, according to the Commission, and the EU says the company should face financial penalties if it does not meet this deadline.

Its legal team demanded an upfront fine of 10 million euros (\$12 million) plus "10 euros per dose and per day of delay" in that event.

AstraZeneca delivered only 30 million doses in the first quarter, out of the 120 million it was contracted to supply. For the current quarter, which runs until June 30, it plans to deliver only 70 million of the 180 million doses initially promised.

A Commission official close to the case said this month that AstraZeneca was currently delivering doses at a rate of only 10 million per month, well below the planned pace.

The company's defence — articulated ahead of the court case in a series of media interviews by AstraZeneca's French-Australian boss Pascal Soriot — relies on a part of the contract that speaks of "best reasonable efforts" by AstraZeneca and declarations that production was hit by unavoidable delays.

But the lawyer for the EU, Rafael Jeffarelli, argued in court that the firm had prioritised supplies to Britain and beyond, while failing to make the best effort to step up production at its EU site in the Netherlands. — AFP

PAKISTAN
OPENS JABS TO
ALL ADULTS

Islamabad, May 26: Pakistan is offering jabs to its entire adult population in hopes of boosting Covid-19 vaccination rates, with only five per cent of the population inoculated so far.

Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar announced on Twitter that the registration of those ages 19 and above will begin from Thursday.

So far, the vaccination was open to those 30 years and above.

Pakistan has reported a steady decline in infections and fatalities from Covid-19 in recent days, but the vaccination response has been sluggish. The only shots given are three Chinese-made vaccines.

Pakistan has registered 908,576 confirmed cases and 20,465 deaths since last year. — AP

Better Access



A photograph taken on Wednesday shows placards stuck on buses windscreens reading "SOS coach operator in danger", "Who's our minister?", "Help" and "Silence we are sinking" during a slow-down operation in front of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, in Paris to protest against the lack of help by the French government concerning the professional situation of bus drivers due to the Covid-19 pandemic. — AFP

UK study finds long-term lung damage after Covid

London, May 26: Researchers in the UK have identified persistent damage to lungs in Covid-19 patients at least three months after they were discharged from hospital, and in some cases the duration is even longer.

The study, conducted by Sheffield and Oxford researchers using a cutting-edge method of imaging, said the damage was not detected by routine CT

scans and clinical tests, and the patients would consequently normally be told their lungs are normal. Early research by the team has shown that patients who have not been hospitalised with Covid-19 but who are experiencing long-term breathlessness may have similar damage in their lungs, and a larger study is needed to confirm this, a release by the Sheffield University said

on Wednesday.

In a paper published in Radiology, the world's leading radiology journal, the researchers from the University of Sheffield and the University of Oxford said that hyperpolarised xenon MRI (XeMRI) scans had found abnormalities in the lungs of some Covid-19 patients more than three months — and in some cases, nine months. — PTI

TWO INDIANS OF
FIRE-HIT SHIP
TEST VIRUS +VE

Colombo, May 26: Two Indian crew members, who were rescued from a container ship that caught fire off the coast of Sri Lanka last week, have tested positive for Covid-19, according to a media report on Wednesday.

All 25 crew members, including five Indians, of the container ship, MV 'X-PRESS PEARL', were rescued on Tuesday after a 'fire alarm' dispatch was sent.

Of the five Indians, two of them sustained injuries during the rescue operation and were hospitalised at the Colombo National Hospital. The two Indians tested positive with Covid-19 after undergoing a rapid antigen test (RAT) at a private hospital, reported newspaper Daily Mirror on Wednesday.

The Indians have not yet been identified. According to Johns Hopkins University, the Coronavirus has claimed 1,269 lives in Sri Lanka so far, along with 169,900 confirmed cases. Sri Lanka has received 500,000 doses of Sinopharm Coronavirus vaccine donated by China. — PTI

WHO asked to review Italy report, whistleblower case

Rome, May 26: Whistleblower protection groups urged the World Health Organisation on Wednesday to launch an independent review into the case of an Italian researcher who reported being pressured to falsify data in a now-spiked WHO report into Italy's Coronavirus response.

The groups, including Transparency International, Whistleblowing International Network and some 30 other public health

treatment for having reported the incident within WHO's internal ethics system.

Zambon resigned in March, saying he had been isolated and marginalised after he complained internally, and then publicly, about the scandal.

Zambon has said he was pressured by a then-assistant director general, Dr. Ranieri Guerra, to falsify data about Italy's preparedness going into the pandemic. — AP

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Zambon has said he was pressured by a then-assistant director general, Dr. Ranieri Guerra, to falsify data about Italy's preparedness going into the pandemic. — AP

Taiwan: China curbing vax deal

Taipei, May 26: Taiwan on Wednesday accused China of hindering its efforts to obtain Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines from Germany as it struggles with a sudden spike in Coronavirus cases and a slow inoculation campaign. For much of the Coronavirus pandemic Taiwan has had one of the world's best responses.

Authoritarian China regards democratic and self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and works to keep the island diplomatically isolated.

Taiwan is currently locked out of the World Health Organisation and its annual health summit which is meeting this week. Tsai's administration has not detailed why it believes China has been a stumbling block and Beijing has previously

denied putting up roadblocks. Pfizer-BioNTech's distributor for the Greater China region — which includes Taiwan — is Fosun Pharma based in Shanghai. Taipei has insisted it only wants to deal with the German firm, something which Beijing would likely balk at.

"Only by purchasing (the vaccines) from the original manufacturer can we obtain direct guarantee in quality and safety to avoid legal and political double risks," Tsai said.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian on Wednesday said "Taiwan's access to vaccines from the mainland is smooth," without elaborating further. He also included a swipe at Tsai.

"We don't recognise this so-called President, she is only the leader of a region of China," he added.

BioNTech's German office has previously said it still intends to provide Taiwan with vaccine doses and that discussions were ongoing. Fosun has also said it is willing to supply doses. But still no jabs have materialised.

Taiwan — population 23.5 million — has so far only received some 726,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine via the Covax global sharing scheme and from the manufacturer itself. It has pre-order deals with AstraZeneca, Moderna, the Covax scheme and local vaccine makers to get some 30 million doses. — AFP

Brussels also plans to present by the year end a draft regulation on political advertising

EU wants more from Big Tech against disinformation

Brussels, May 26: The EU on Wednesday tasked tech giants such as Facebook, YouTube and TikTok to do more against disinformation and provide much better access to their algorithms as well as beef up fact-checking.

The proposal is the EU's effort to strengthen its existing code of conduct against disinformation, which was launched in 2018 after revelations that platforms had facilitated and amplified false information in the ramp up to the Brexit vote and elec-

tions in the US in 2016. It was signed by Google, Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and in June 2020 by TikTok, as well as players in the advertising sector.

In the wake of the Covid pandemic, the EU executive is now asking the signatories to go even further in their commitments, which are non-binding and voluntary, at least for now. The pressure on the companies to deliver is great, given that the EU is also hammering out its Digital Services Act (DSA) that will give Europe power to

slap penalties on Facebook and others when they fail to demonstrate strong action against disinformation. European Commission Vice President Vera Jourová said the stricter and more detailed code of conduct was necessary to better root out "systemic risks" on platforms.

Jourová said that it was time for big tech companies "to stop policing themselves alone and stop allowing to make money on disinformation". "After the DSA will come into force, this code of

The Commission is also asking platforms for regular reports with clear benchmarks to assess the measures put in place.

In addition, the EU executive is seeking to create a designated task force composed of the code's signatories, representatives of the EU diplomatic service and media regulators from the member states.

The proposals will be discussed with the signatories, who will have to submit a first version of the revised code late this year so that it can be opera-

tional by the beginning of 2022.

Marisa Jimenez Martin, Facebook's director of EU Affairs, said that "the reality is that we think the code works".

"It just needs to be now strengthened and we will work with the other stakeholders to make that happen in the next months," she told reporters.

The code is one of the many EU workstreams to limit the reach of Big Tech. The DSA, along with a companion law, the Digital Markets Act, are

currently under negotiation at the European Parliament and among the 27 member states in wrangling that could take at least another year.

Those proposals, when approved, will give the EU unprecedented powers on defining how Big Tech can operate and do business in Europe. Brussels also plans to present by the end of the year a draft regulation on political advertising and the targeting of users based on their personal data.

— AFP

Ex-top aide: Boris thought Covid 1st wave 'scare story'



Boris Johnson

down earlier.

"The truth is, senior ministers, officials, advisers like me fell disastrously short of standards required by the public," he said. "When the public needed us the most, the government failed. I want to apologise to all those families who had people that died... In retrospect, it's completely obvious that many institutions failed," he said.

He also made a withering attack on UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock and claimed that he should have been sacked for 15-20 things including "for lying" to people, an allegation for which he was asked by the parliamentary committee chairs to submit further written evidence. During the questioning, Cummings was asked about the government's preparations for a pandemic in general and whether it was the intention of ministers to allow the virus to spread until there was so-called herd immunity.

He told the MPs the original plan had been for limited intervention, with the hope of achieving herd immunity, but that was abandoned when it became clear the scale of the death toll that would result. In reference to delayed lockdown, he claimed that by mid-March there was still "pushback in the system" against telling people to stay at home. — PTI

UK vax plan to cover over-30s

London, May 26: The UK's health service on Wednesday extended its Covid-19 age-based vaccination programme to the next cohort to cover everyone aged 30 and over," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

"The vaccine is our way out of this pandemic and recent data has shown the life-saving protection a second dose of the jab can give, especially against the new variant (B1.617.2) first discovered in India," he said.

On the advice of the government and Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), people aged 50 and over and the clinically vulnerable are having their second doses brought forward to counter the spread of the B1.617.2 variant.

The NHS said it has now delivered almost 32 million first doses of the jab, and well over 19 million of adults have had both doses.

— PTI

quick BITES

INDICATORS %

Sensex	51,017.52	0.75
Nifty 50	15,301.50	0.61
S&P 500*	4,201.23	0.31
Dollar (₹)	72.78	0.26
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.19	0.00
Euro (₹)	89.19	0.00
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,589▲527	1.08
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	68.59	-0.09
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.972	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.559	-0.005

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Mondelez to buy European snack maker Chipita

Mondelez International Inc, the packaged-food giant known for Oreo cookies and Ritz Crackers, agreed to buy European snack maker Chipita SA for about \$2 billion. Chipita had about \$580 million in revenue in 2020 and has "a proven track record of consistent growth from its portfolio of croissant and baked snack brands," Mondelez said. The European firm produces in 13 plants and its goods are delivered to over 50 countries.

PharmEasy completes Medlife acquisition



Online pharmacy PharmEasy said it has completed the acquisition of Medlife to become India's largest healthcare delivery platform. All the users of Medlife would be migrated to PharmEasy. "This acquisition significantly strengthens our position in the healthcare industry, and further helps us in providing quality healthcare to a greater number of households," PharmEasy co-founder Dharmil Sheth said.

Cadila, Taiwan's TLC in pact for black fungus drug

Zydus Cadila and Taiwan-based specialty pharmaceutical firm TLC said they have signed a pact to market liposomal amphotericin B, a critical drug to treat mucormycosis (black fungus), in India. The companies have announced signing of an agreement to commercialise AmphoTLC (amphotericin B liposome for injection 50mg) in India, Zydus Cadila said. TLC will produce and supply AmphoTLC to Zydus.

REIT provides O2, BiPaP machines in Pune, Delhi

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■ MGM's 4,000-title film library to strengthen streaming

Amazon to buy MGM Studios for \$8.45 bn

KELLY GIBLUM & SPENCER SOPER
MAY 26

Amazon.com Inc agreed to buy the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer movie company for \$8.45 billion, a bet that a nearly century-old Hollywood icon can feed an insatiable demand for streaming content.

The proliferation of streaming services, including newer arrivals such as HBO Max and Disney+, has put pressure on Amazon to acquire more programming. Chief executive officer Jeff Bezos has made no secret of his desire for movie moguldom, and MGM's vast backlog provides an abundance of streaming material, not to mention an opportunity to mine the iconic James Bond and Rocky franchises for new films and television shows.

Moreover, with retail rivals like Walmart Inc rolling out more sophisticated online stores, Amazon must work even harder to keep its 200 million Prime subscribers loyal.

"This jumpstarts them by 50 years," said Michael Pachter, an analyst with Wedbush Securities. "That's really what it comes down to. They weren't going to be able to produce enough content to ever get close to Netflix."

Pachter said that Amazon's studios produce a few hundred hours worth of television shows and movies a year. MGM adds a back catalogue of 25,000 hours that Amazon could



divvy up between its Prime Video offering, or its free-to-stream, ad-supported IMDb TV.

The takeover is Amazon's biggest acquisition since it agreed to buy Whole Foods in 2017 for \$13.7 billion but follows investments of about \$11 billion on content for its streaming video and music services last year alone.

Mike Hopkins, senior vice president of Prime Video and Amazon Studios, in a statement pointed to MGM's "deep catalogue" as justification for the purchase.

MGM has been seen as a takeover target for years, but was never able to close a sale before. The company made a fresh push last year, when it reportedly hired advisers to seek offers.

For MGM, the studio that brought James Bond and Scarlett O'Hara to the big screen, the deal provides a finale to a bumpy era of hedge-fund ownership that began with a bankruptcy over a decade ago. MGM's lead shareholder is the Anchorage Capital Group LLC, which became an owner with three other investors as part of a 2010 bankruptcy agreement

that erased about \$4 billion in debt.

MGM's Ebitda rose 48 per cent to about \$307 million last year, lifted by profit from its 4,000-title film library. But with a lack of new releases, sales declined 3 per cent to \$1.5 billion.

Under Anchorage Capital the studio aspired to its old glory—a legacy that includes "Gone With the Wind," the top film of all time in ticket sales, and the biblical classic "Ben Hur," which shares the record for most Academy Awards at 11.

The new owners hired a moviemaker CEO in Gary Barber, a Hollywood heavyweight known for films such as "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" and "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective."

He oversaw a new James Bond movie, "Skyfall," that generated more than \$1 billion in ticket sales—the studio's biggest-grossing film ever—and partnered with Warner Bros on the blockbuster "Hobbit" films.

MGM also branched out into television. The studio took control of the pre-

um cable network Epix, and acquired the TV production company owned by famed producer Mark Burnett, known for creating "Survivor" and "The Apprentice." The studio also created the critically acclaimed series "The Handmaid's Tale" and "Fargo," adding to a lucrative library.

Hedge funds rarely hang on to such investments for more than a few years, and observers long thought that Barber was prepping the studio for sale. In 2017, reports suggested that MGM was in discussions with a Chinese company, though no deal materialised.

MGM traces its roots back to the 1920s merger of Marcus Loew's Metro films with a film company run by Hollywood legend Louis B. Mayer. The studio, while making great pictures like "Dr. Zhivago" and "2001: A Space Odyssey," drifted in and out of financial distress in the second half of the 20th century. Over the decades it was owned by Time Inc, CNN founder Ted Turner and more than once by the late billionaire Kirk Kerkorian.

Turner kept much of MGM's library, which is now owned by AT&T Inc's WarnerMedia, soon to be part of Discovery Inc. "I am very proud that MGM's Lion, which has long evoked the Golden Age of Hollywood, will continue its storied history," said Anchorage CEO Kevin Ulrich, who is chairman of the board of MGM.

—Bloomberg

GST: Centre has to borrow ₹1.58L cr more to pay states

VRIKSHI BENIWAL & SUBHADIP SIRCAR
MAY 26

India may need to borrow more for a second straight year to compensate its states for their revenue loss due to a shortfall in a nationwide consumption tax collection, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

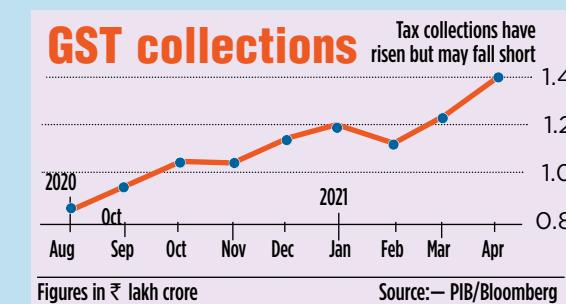
The additional borrowing requirement is estimated at Rs 1.58 lakh crore (\$21.7 billion) in the fiscal year started April 1, said the people, who asked not to be identified citing rules. A panel on goods and services tax will meet on Friday to discuss compensation to states, among other issues.

While the amount to be paid to states works out to Rs 2.7 lakh crore, the government is expected to muster only Rs 1.1 lakh crore, the people said.

Calls made to a finance ministry spokesperson weren't immediately answered.

The amount is part of a compensation that the central government agreed to pay states for any revenue loss on account of introduction of a nationwide GST.

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states was initially supposed to be for five years starting 2017, the central government last year extended its scope beyond 2022 to meet the revenue gap caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Government spending is key to sustaining the recovery of Asia's third-largest economy from a rare recession last year.

Although GST receipts have come in at more than Rs 1 lakh crore each month for seven successive months as of April, there are worries that it will slow amid regional lockdowns implemented by most states to curb the deadly second wave of the pandemic.

The economic costs of the recent surge in cases are rising rapidly with economic losses estimated at \$74 billion, all of it contained in the second quarter, Barclays Plc said in a report to clients on Tuesday. The bank lowered its economic growth forecast by 80 basis points to 9.2% for the fiscal year.

— Bloomberg

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NPS, APY AUM crosses ₹6L cr

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, MAY 26

Total assets under management (AUM) of the National Pension System (NPS) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) crossed Rs 6 lakh crore, after 13 years of NPS launch in 2004, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) said.

The AUM growth of last Rs 1 lakh crore has been achieved in just seven months, the PFRDA said.

The NPS was initially notified for new central government employees recruits with effect from January 1, 2004 and subsequently adopted by almost all state governments for its employees. NPS was later extended to all Indian citizens (resident/non-resident/overseas) on a voluntary basis and to corporations.

As on May 21, 2021, the total number of subscribers under NPS and Atal Pension Yojana has crossed 4.28 crore and the AUM has grown to Rs 603,667.02 crore.

Over the years, the number of NPS subscribers has grown to 74.10 lakh government employees and 28.37 lakh individuals from the non-government sector.

Cadila, Taiwan's TLC in pact for black fungus drug

Zydus Cadila and Taiwan-based specialty pharmaceutical firm TLC said they have signed a pact to market liposomal amphotericin B, a critical drug to treat mucormycosis (black fungus), in India. The companies have announced signing of an agreement to commercialise AmphiTLC (amphotericin B liposome for injection 50mg) in India, Zydus Cadila said. TLC will produce and supply AmphiTLC to Zydus.

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LIVE RICH

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 27 MAY 2021

Page 11

Financial Chronicle</p

SHORT TAKES

Milkha is stable, wife catches Covid

Chandigarh: Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh "continues to be stable on oxygen support" and he was on Wednesday shifted out of the Intensive Care Unit of the hospital where he is being treated for Covid pneumonia, indicating signs of improvement in his condition. However, his 82-year-old wife Nirmal Kaur, a former India volleyball captain, was on Wednesday admitted to the same hospital in Mohali after testing positive for Covid pneumonia.

"Mr Milkha Singh continues to be stable on oxygen support. However, he is weak and we are trying to persuade him to increase his food intake," Fortis hospital in Mohali said in an update. "Today, we have stepped him down from the ICU to a room which he is sharing with his wife who was admitted earlier in the day with Covid pneumonia," he added. — PTI

Former hoopster Jagan no more

Hyderabad: Basketball Federation of India referee M. Jagannatham, former AP state basketball player and of TSRTC and erstwhile APSRTC breathed his last on Wednesday morning. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

Jagan represented AP state which won the first Sub Junior National Championship at Kotagudem in 1975 and went on to represent AP in the Junior National championships, Osmania University in the South Zone Inter University Championships before joining the APSRTC.

The Telangana Basketball Association and Hyderabad District Basketball Association condoled the death of Jagan who was also the General Secretary of Medchal Malkajgiri District Basketball Association.

Ex-cricketter Rane passes away

Mumbai: Former Mumbai player and scorer Ranjita Rane died here on Wednesday after battling cancer.

She was in her mid 40s.

Deeply saddened to inform that ex-Mumbai cricketer and scorer Ranjita Rane has passed away," a senior Mumbai Cricket Association official said.

A well-known MCA scorer, who knew Rane, said she was admitted to a city hospital for the past fortnight. Rane, an all-rounder, who bowled medium pace, played 44 first class matches for Mumbai from 1995 to 2003. Another cricketer Prabhobhai Parmar, who had represented Saurashtra in domestic cricket, died due to Covid-19 on Tuesday. The 76-year-old had played four Ranji Trophy matches for Saurashtra in 1968-69. — PTI

Ankita out of French Open race

Paris: Ankita Raina's yet another attempt to qualify for the singles main draw of a Grand Slam failed as she bowed out of the French Open Qualifiers with a second-round defeat, here on Wednesday. Ankita, up against higher-ranked German Greet Minnen, could win only two games in the entire match that lasted one hour and 21 minutes. The 125th ranked Indian could convert only one of the three break points and eventually lost 2-6, 0-6. It was Ankita's seventh attempt to crack the singles main draw of a major. She had reached the final round of the Australian Open qualifying event early this year, falling at the final stage. — PTI

Davis, James pair too hot for Sun

Los Angeles: Anthony Davis and LeBron James delivered down the stretch on Tuesday as the NBA champion Los Angeles Lakers bounced back to beat the Phoenix Suns 109-102 and knot their playoff series at one game apiece. Davis had said he blamed himself after scoring just 13 points in the Lakers' 99-90 defeat in game one of the best-of-seven Western Conference first-round series. He wasn't about to let it happen again. Davis scored 34 points while LeBron James added 23 points as the Lakers gained the split of two games in Phoenix. — AFP

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TWEAKING TWINS

Kiwis wary of spinners Ashwin and Jadeja ahead of WTC final



Indian all-rounders Ravichandran Ashwin (left) and Ravindra Jadeja in this file photo.

Kohli, Rohit static in ODI chart

Dubai, May 26: India skipper Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma held on to their second and third positions respectively in the batting chart, while pacer Jasprit Bumrah remained static at number five in the bowling list of the latest ICC ODI player rankings issued on Wednesday.

Kohli and Sharma were sitting pretty with 857 and 825 points respectively in the batting list headed by Pakistan's Babar Azam with 865 points.

In bowling, Bumrah was at the 5th position with 690 points, while New Zealand's Trent Boult was

atop with 737 points, followed by Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan (725), Afghanistan's Mujeeb Ur Rahman (708) and Kiwi pacer Matt Henry (691).

Bangladesh off-spinner Hasan became only the third bowler from his

second position after returning figures of four for 30 and three for 28 bowling with the new ball.

All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan had grabbed the number one position in 2009 for the first time, while left-arm spinner Abdur Razzaq is the other Bangladesh bowler to have been in the top two, reaching the second position in 2010.

Left-arm fast bowler Mustafizur Rehman is another one from Bangladesh to move up the list, his hauls of three for 34 and three for 16 lifting him eight places to ninth position. — PTI

country to be ranked among the top two after a fine showing in the first two matches of their ongoing World Cup Super League series against Sri Lanka.

Hasan has advanced three places to reach the

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Umar pays hefty fine, to take part in ACU's rehab

Karachi, May 26: Controversial Pakistan batsman Umar Akmal has paid a hefty fine of 45 lakh (Pakistani) rupees fine in installments to pave the way for him to return to cricket after serving a ban since February 2020 for breaching clauses of the Anti-Corruption code of the board.

"But practically it will take some time before Akmal can resume his cricket career as his rehab program will take some time since the anti-corruption unit of the PCB is presently busy with the batsman and the PCB."

"Umar has deposited the

full amount of 45 lacs rupees (Pakistani) with the board which means he is now eligible to start the rehab program of the Anti-Corruption code of the board," the source said.

A source in the PCB confirmed that Akmal had deposited the fine imposed on him by the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) in February while disposing off cases filed by the batsman and the PCB.

"Umar has deposited the

source said. Earlier the board had rejected Akmal's request that he be allowed to pay a 45 lacs (Pakistani) rupees fine in installments to pave the way for him to return to cricket after serving a ban since February 2020 for breaching clauses of the Anti-Corruption code.

Umar Akmal, who will turn 31 this month, has not played for Pakistan since November, 2019 when he last appeared in a T20 series at Lahore against Sri Lanka. — PTI

MUSHFIQUR TON HELPS BANGLA CLAIM SERIES

Dhaka, May 26: Mushfiqur Rahim hit a gritty 125 to set up Bangladesh's maiden series victory over Sri Lanka across all formats with an emphatic 103-run win in the rain-hit second one-day international on Tuesday.

The wicketkeeper-batsman lifted Bangladesh from a precarious 74-4 to 246 all out after they elected to bat first at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka.

Sri Lanka managed just 141-9 in the tourists' revised chase of 245 in 40 overs as Bangladesh took an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Mustafizur Rahman claimed three wickets each while Shakib Al Hasan took two key scalps. Mushfiqur remained the hero as he recorded his eighth ODI century and put on a crucial 87-run fifth-wicket stand with Mahmudullah Riyad, who made 41.

Brief scores: Bangladesh 246 in 48.1 overs (Mushfiqur Rahim 125, Mahmudullah 41; D. Chameera 3/44) bt Sri Lanka 141/9 in 40 overs (M. Rahman 3/16).

England speedster Archer undergoes elbow surgery

London, May 26: England fast bowler Jofra Archer has undergone surgery on his right elbow to address a long-standing injury, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said on Wednesday, without specifying any time-frame on his return to action.

Archer had undergone a hand surgery in March and returned to first-class cricket earlier this month when his right elbow injury flared up.

England and Sussex seam bowler Jofra Archer had surgery to address his long-standing elbow

issues on Friday," the ECB said in a statement.

"Archer will now commence an intensive rehabilitation period working with the ECB and Sussex medical teams. His progress will be reviewed by his consultant in

approximately four weeks at which point further guidance will be provided as to when he can return to bowling," it added.

England hope that Archer is able to make a full and swift recovery to play a key role in both the T20 World Cup and the Ashes series in Australia later this year.

The elbow issue had been a recurring one for Archer, who has been trying to manage it over a year. It had led to him missing a number of matches on tours to South Africa in 2020 and India earlier this year. — PTI

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"You must want to support the cause, you must be willing to understand and see that something is wrong and this is

Holding feels that the gesture of "taking a knee" should be organic rather than a "tick the box" exercise but he doesn't believe in telling people what their choices should be.

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