

WEATHER



Max: 37.8°C  
Min: 27.5°C  
RH: 42%  
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Cloud sky.  
Rain likely in evening.  
Max/Min temp. 38/27°C

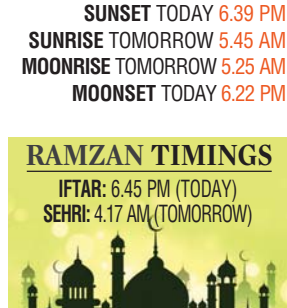
ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Chaitra Bahula Amavasya  
till 12.29 am (Wednesday)  
Star: Bharani till 11.30 pm  
Varjyam: 7.15 am to 9.04 am  
Durmuhurtam: 8.22 am to  
9.13 am; 11.05 pm to 11.50 pm  
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm  
HJRI CALENDAR  
Ramzan 28,1442 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 4.39 am  
Zohar: 12.22 pm  
Asar: 4.40 pm  
Maghrib: 6.45 pm  
Isha: 7.58 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 6.39 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.45 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 5.25 AM  
MOONSET TODAY 6.22 PM

RAMZAN TIMINGS

IFTAR: 6.45 PM (TODAY)  
SEHRI: 4.17 AM (TOMORROW)

COUNTER POINT



They are here for  
the second dose of  
the vaccine, sir!

SHORT TAKES

Indian Consul Gen  
in Kabul dies of CV

New Delhi: India's Consul General in northern Afghanistan Vinesh Kumar Kalra has died of cardiac arrest there after contracting Covid. Kalra, who was posted at the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, is the first Indian diplomat posted abroad to die after being infected with the deadly virus, sources confirmed.

Nepal PM Oli  
loses trust vote

Kathmandu: Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli lost a trust vote in the House of Representatives on Monday, in a fresh setback to the embattled premier seeking to tighten his grip on power after the CPN (Maoist Central) led by Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' withdrew support to his government. Prime Minister Oli secured 93 votes in the lower House of Parliament during a special session.

Edible oils may  
get cheaper

New Delhi: The Centre on Monday expressed hope that retail prices of edible oils will soften following the release of imported stock that was stuck at ports due to clearance issues. According to government data, retail prices have shot up by 55.55 per cent in over a year and are adding to woes of consumers reeling under the economic distress.

Delhi riots: 3 week  
bail to JNU student

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday granted bail to JNU student Natasha Narwal, arrested last year in May in connection with the communal riots in north-east Delhi to perform the last rites of her father who succumbed to Covid-19. A bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and A.J. Bhambhani granted interim bail to Narwal, a Pinjra Tod activist, for three weeks.

WORLD | 5

Dr Fauci: Vaccination  
only solution for India



SPORTS | 8

Serena could  
miss Olympics

TABLOID

Kids most prone to  
onset of 3rd wave



'Battle' of wits in TRS over in less than a week

## Weakened Etala sends KCR surrender signal

IREDDY SRINIVAS  
REDDY | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 10

It took just a week's time for Chief Minister and TRS head K. Chandrashekar Rao to win the battle of wits and prove beyond any doubt as to who calls the political shots in Telangana.

Barely a week after the sudden dismissal from the state Cabinet, former health minister and the perceived rallying point of the Opposition, Etala Rajendar, has decided to wave a white handkerchief and surrender before the chief minister by declaring he has no intention of waging a war against his leader, say sources close to him.

Speculation was rife all these days that Rajendar would wear the gauntlet, take on the TRS leadership and eventually step it up by forcing yet another by-election in the state. This has been the hope of many in the Opposition, be it the BJP or the Congress, both nursing their wounds of electoral defeats in the two graduate MLC polls and the Nagarjunasagar assembly bypoll. They hoped against hope that such a



K. Chandrashekar Rao

confrontation could snowball into a big game-changer and all forces opposed to the KCR-KTR leadership could forge a bond and inflict a lethal blow on the TRS party.

This, however, was not to be. The emphatic and anxious messages emerging out of the Etala camp are that the former minister will not resign from his legislative position or the party. This is not only because he is unsure of the verdict of a by-election, but also because no significant support was coming to him from any quarter within the TRS or from the Opposition. He stood virtually singled out.

Etala had hoped that several dissents within TRS would reach out to him after his exit from the ministry, but this has clearly not happened. This

● THE FORMER health minister decided to wave a white handkerchief and surrender before the chief minister by declaring he has no intention of waging a war against his leader, say sources close to him.

● THE OPPOSITION hoped for a bypoll from Huzurabad

has upset the former health minister.

From the start of his journey with the TRS, Rajendar knew how Chandrashekar Rao would deal with any potential dissenter, be it overt or covert. Rajendar has also witnessed the quiet burial of political careers of those who had entertained hopes of upstaging KCR.

It looks like, Rajendar overestimated his own strength and the depth of perceived anti-TRS sentiments among sections of the people. Buoyed by the recent good performance of the BJP in the Dubbak and GHMC polls in quick succession, Etala is said to have bit more than he could chew.

■ Page 2: TRS aware of Etala rapport with BJP

PANDEMIC CONTROL

## TS shuts door to AP Covid patients heading to Hyd

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 10

High tension prevailed on the Andhra Pradesh-Telangana border since Sunday night as the latter refused entry of ambulances carrying Coronavirus patients seeking medical treatment at hospitals in Hyderabad.

Those with bed bookings were allowed to proceed, though.

The Telangana government is learnt to have issued directions to the police to not allow ambulances carrying infected patients from AP to cross the border and reach Hyderabad for treatment.

Accordingly, from 8 pm on Sunday, the police along the borders started stopping all ambulances from AP seeking entry to TS.

Sources said that the Telangana government is aware that infected patients who are critically ill in AP are opting to reach Hyderabad for better medical care in top corporate hospitals.

■ Page 2: TS police stopped nearly 30 ambulances



Ambulances heading to Hyderabad being stopped at Pullur toll plaza on the Kurnool highway.

### 8 DIE AT TIMS AS O2 PRESSURE FALLS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 10

At least eight patients, all in one row of beds in an intensive care unit at the Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (Tims), died after a fall in pressure in the oxygen lines.

There was just one lucky patient in the same row who survived in the ICU on the second floor of Tims, thanks to the fact that this patient was not on non-invasive ventilation (NIV). The NIV means that patients could

be placed on CPAP or BiPAP machines that force air into their lungs at a certain required pressure. According to sources at Tims, internal checks revealed that since there were many patients on NIV at the hospital, the oxygen supply systems and lines are unable to maintain the required pressure. It may be recalled that Tims had been in the eye of another storm recently, over supply of food on time to patients who were left to starve.

NO | WARNING Met officials cite continuous presence of western disturbances

## State enjoys an unusually cool summer

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 10

In what is being called an 'unusually cool' summer, this year, the state which falls in the core heatwave zone has witnessed no heatwave warnings till date.

The highest number of alerts were issued in 2010, which saw 46 heat waves across the state in the months of April, May and June. It was followed by 2019, with 44 heatwaves. They had claimed the lives of 11 and 64 people respectively.

● THERE WERE four disturbances which subdued the heat which is mostly felt in the months of April and May

● HEATWAVE CONDITIONS in April 2021 were occasional and also for shorter periods over very smaller pockets. The major cause was wet spells regularly observed over the western Himalayan region and adjoining plains of northwest India and adjoining central parts of India in the month in many days due to movement of western disturbances (WDs)

However, the highest number of deaths was registered in 2015, with 541 dead in the state.

Officials of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said the absence of heatwave was

due to continuous presence of western disturbances in the area. "There were four disturbances which subdued the heat which is mostly felt in the months of April and May," IMD director K. Naga

Ratna told this newspaper. According to a report by IMD, heatwave conditions in April 2021 were occasional and also for shorter periods over very smaller pockets. The major cause was wet spells regularly observed over the western Himalayan region and adjoining plains of northwest India and adjoining central parts of India in the month in many days due to movement of western disturbances (WDs) at regular intervals as deep amplitude trough in middle and upper tropospheric westerly. Also, due to the pres-

ence of lower-level wind convergence on many days in the month, Maharashtra and adjoining parts of Peninsular India, experienced rainfall and thunderstorm activities at regular intervals. However, a few occasional shorter duration spells of the heatwave were reported at isolated pockets of a few meteorological subdivisions of the country.

It goes on to add that the month of April witnessed very heavy and heavy rainfall over South Peninsular India, which could have abated the heat.

PARMOD KUMAR | DC  
NEW DELHI, MAY 10

The Centre has justified differential Covid vaccine pricing, telling the Supreme Court that the three-slab "liberalised, market driven" rates for the Centre, states and private hospitals will incentivise demand, lead to higher production, competition and attract overseas investors. While it did not explain why the Centre was procuring the vaccines at one rate and states have to buy the same vaccines for double or more, it emphasised that citizens of all age groups will get free vaccination throughout the country.

The Centre also told the Supreme Court in no uncertain terms to stay away from the vaccination issue that squarely falls

### STRICTER RESTRICTIONS ON ANVIL IN TS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 10

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is likely to impose more restrictions on the movement of people while continuing to allow the economic activity as part of the revised containment

within the executive domain, adding that judicial intervention may have serious consequences.

Standing firm on the differential pricing of the two vaccines it has negotiated, the Centre told the top court in an affidavit submitted late on Sunday that differential pricing would "incentivised demand for the private vaccine manu-

strategy for Covid-19, the second wave of which turned more fatal, claiming hundreds of lives in the state. The CM will hold a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday to 'discuss the pros and cons of imposing lockdown'.

■ Report on Page 2

facturers" and added that its vaccination policy — response and strategy — is completely driven by expert medical and scientific opinion, leaving little room for judicial interference.

"Any overzealous, though well-meaning judicial intervention may lead to unforeseen and unintended consequences in absence of any expert

advice," the Centre told the top court, adding that in such a "grave and unprecedented" crisis, the "wisdom of the executive should be trusted".

In its April 30, 2021, judgment, the SC had asked the government to revisit differential pricing of the Covid vaccines it had negotiated. It had also asked the Centre to opt for centralised procurement and decentralised distribution of Covid vaccine while noting that the existing policy, which burdens states to individually source the vaccine, may lead to chaotic situations.

The Serum Institute on India, which is producing Covishield, is selling it to the Central government for ₹150 a shot. But state governments are paying ₹300 a shot, and private hospitals ₹600 a shot.

## WB Governor slams WB govt for not facilitating his visit to poll riot-hit area

RAJIB CHOWDHURI  
KOLKATA, MAY 10

In what appears to be his first confrontation with the third Trinamul Congress ministry in West Bengal, state governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday accused the Mamata Banerjee government of not arranging his visits to the post-poll violence-hit parts of the state.

Mr Dhankhar vowed to go ahead with his planned visits on his own as Nandigram BJP MLA Suwendu Adhikari took a swipe at the chief over the post-poll violence after he became the new Leader of the Opposition.

At Raj Bhavan, the governor alleged: "We are in a very deep crisis in the state. Post-poll retributive violence, acts of arson and loot have graded to intimidation and extortion. This is very worrisome. I therefore decided to visit the affected parts of the state as part of my constitutional duty. I asked the state government to make arrangements. Unfortunately, the response has not been very encouraging. I will go ahead with my schedule. This is the time for me to perform my constitutional duty to share the pain, agony and anguish of the suffering people, and will therefore make arrangements for such visits in the coming days."

He claimed: "The most alarming situation, the most concerning facet of this violence, is that in democracy the people are made to pay the price with their lives, rights and human rights because they chose to vote."



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee interacts with ministers during their swearing-in ceremony, at the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata on Monday.

— PTI

## Shooting on poll day: 6 CISF men get notice

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, MAY 10

Six Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel, including two officers, have been summoned by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the West Bengal police to appear physically at its headquarters in Bhawani Bhavan in Kolkata on Tuesday morning to face questioning in the CISF shooting, which had left four vil-

lagers dead at a polling booth at Sitalkuchi in Cooch Behar of North Bengal during the fourth phase of the Assembly election in the state.

Among the two CISF officers, one is a deputy commandant while another is a sub inspector. The rest are constables. The six CISF personnel were in charge of polling booth no. 126 in Sitalkuchi where the killings took place during a violent mob attack on April 10.

## HIMANTA TAKES OATH, CALLS FOR TALKS WITH ULFA

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, MAY 10

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who took the oath and assumed office on Monday, called upon the United Liberation Front of Asom (Independent) commander-in-chief, Paresh Baruah, to abjure the path of violence and come to the table for talks, saying the agenda of his government will be to maintain the peace and harmony.

## Congress postpones poll to elect new prez

ASHHAR KHAN | DC  
NEW DELHI, MAY 10

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) met on Monday and for the third time postponed its presidential elections citing the Covid-19 crisis prevailing in the country.

The Congress' election body had recommended that voting for a party chief should take place on June 23 and the deadline for nominations could be June 7. But the CWC, the party's top decision-making body, said the elections should be deferred

given the Covid-19 crisis. Insiders said that Mrs Sonia Gandhi read the riot act to the CWC members over the party's abysmal performance in the recently concluded Assembly elections. She said that the party should take note of the setbacks and put the house in order. "A small group will be set up to look at every aspect that caused the party's electoral reverses. We need to understand why the Congress failed to dislodge incumbent governments in Kerala and Assam," Mrs Gandhi said.



## OTHER STORIES

JUNIOR DOCS WARN  
OF STRIKE FOR  
SALARY HIKEDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 10

The Telangana Junior Doctors' Association (TJUDA) in a letter to Director of Medical Education Dr Ramesh Reddy said they would boycott all duties if their demands were not met by May 25. In their letter, addressed to the DME, the association demanded a hike in the pay of senior residents and other doctors.

They said that a 15 per cent hike for senior residents was pending finance approval. "We have regularly pursued approval of the hike with the officials for the last six months," the association said.

Also, a 10 per cent incentive was announced for all health-care workers (HCWs) by the government but still has not been implemented, the TJUDA said. HCWs infected by the Coronavirus and their families were unable to find a bed anywhere.

"Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences is always occupied. We urge you to increase the bed capacity there and issue a circular for free treatment to HCWs and their family members," the association said. It also demanded the ex gratia of ₹50 lakh for doctors and ₹25 lakh for supporting staff who die in the line of Covid-19 duty, which was promised by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao but was not implemented yet.

RAGOJIPET HIT  
WITH COVID AFTER  
18 MONTHSPULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC  
JAGTIAL, MAY 10

Persistent efforts by villagers, local communities and the village panchayat to prevent the entry of Coronavirus to the area in the past year-and-a-half had proven to be successful until now, but it emerged on Monday that the virus tore into their will and hit three members of the village.

The Ragojipet village in Medipally mandal of Jagtial district had ably stood out and won praise by not having even a single Covid-positive case there so far.

The small village with a population of 1,150 is divided into 350 households. Villagers led by the sarpanch Balasani Laharika took all precautionary steps from the beginning after the pandemic raised its lethal head across the world since the start of last year.

Right from the beginning, the village panchayat passed resolutions and imposed self-lockdown and controlled the virus' entry at its boundary by tying ropes across at entry points on all the four sides. The panchayat also deployed one villager at a time at each entry point as a guard to keep people from other areas away.

Mike-set announcements were made every morning, advising people about the steps to be taken to protect themselves from being infected.

Village sarpanch Balasani Laharika and other functionaries of the village panchayat, the municipal staff and the district administration regularly supervised the sanitation and drainage works and took up sprinkling of chlorine solution in the entire village.

By seeing these steps in Ragojipet, the surrounding villages too took inspiration and followed suit.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, village sarpanch B Laharika said they took precautionary steps and have imposed a self-lockdown in the village. A penalty of ₹51,000 was imposed on those who violated the Covid-19 rules. Grocery stores were allowed to open only for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. Villagers remained at their homes from 8am to 6pm and this was followed by night curfew from 8pm.

With the help of municipal staff, the entire village was sanitized and sanitizer bottles were attached to each electricity pole in the village. Outsiders were not allowed to enter the village other than in an emergency. They had to enter their details in a register.

In the past few days, a fever survey was conducted in the village and 13 inhabitants were found suffering from mild fever. "We immediately shifted them to a hospital for a check-up. It was then found that three members who went to the neighbouring village to consume toddy (Kallu) got infected by the virus. As soon as the test reports were received, they were asked to remain in home isolation," she said, expressing her and the villagers' deep disappointment.

## Black Fungus: Time bomb ticking

Mucormycosis is emerging as a threat to lives of current and recovered Covid-19 patients

BALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 10

Telangana state, like rest of the country, already struggling with ever-worsening Covid-19 situation; is sitting on another time bomb. Though there has been no official word from the state government yet on this emerging threat to lives of current and some recovered Covid-19 patients, mucormycosis — or Black Fungus infection — within this group of people is making some blind and taking lives of others.

"It is scary," says Dr Suneetha Nareddy, a senior consultant for infectious diseases at Apollo Hospitals, Jubilee Hills, on increasing incidences of Black Fungus.

"This may end up being the next big disaster," says a former head of a large government hospital who, by virtue of being still in state government's service, has chosen to remain anonymous.

Senior doctors from some large private hospitals in the city have realised the gravity of emerging situation. They are in hectic consultations with each other to figure out what led to sudden emergence of Black Fungus infections which, during pre-Covid-19 times, had been a rarity.

"We are seeing more cases of this infection in Tims, Gandhi, King Koti, and Osmania hospitals," the senior government doctor said. "If not addressed immediately and urgently, Black Fungus infections could turn into another disaster for the state," the doctor warned.

According to unofficial estimates collected by this

There are several reasons why we are seeing more and more mucormycosis cases. They are mostly among those suffering from diabetes and those immunocompromised. There appears a link between diabetes and susceptibility to this fungus infection among Covid-19 cases. We are trying to figure out these mechanics. But longer a hospital stay, or lack of monitoring after recovery and returning home, and not realising that an infection has set in, could complicate the situation.



— Dr Suneetha Nareddy  
Senior Consultant, Infectious  
Diseases, Apollo Hospitals,  
Jubilee Hills.

## SYMPTOMS

- Sinusitis — blocked nose or congestion, blackish or bloody discharge from nose;
- Blackish discoloration over bridge of nose/palate;
- Local pain on cheek bone, one-sided facial pain, numbness or swelling;
- Loosening of teeth, jaw involvement;
- Blurred or double vision with pain.

## WHAT ICMR SAYS:

**RISK FACTORS:** Uncontrolled diabetes mellitus, immune-suppression by steroids, prolonged ICU stay, malignancy and voriconazole therapy.

**PREVENTION:** Blood glucose level should be monitored post-Covid discharge. In those who are diabetic, steroids should be used judiciously with correct timing, dose and duration. Clean sterile water should be used in humidifiers during oxygen therapy; and proper use of antibiotics and antifungal medicines.

correspondent from several doctors of various hospitals, Hyderabad alone is seeing anywhere up to 10 or more cases of mucormycosis a day.

Caused by a fungus found everywhere — in soil, above false roofing, in construction dust because construction requires soil, and in vegetables and fruits that start rotting — mucormycosis, if detected early, can at best end with the patient suffering from a feeling of heavy head, blocked nose and fever.

If delayed, the fungus, which enters the human body through nose while

breathing, begins to eat away anything inside the body — bones around sinuses, hard upper palate in the mouth, and then make way through blood vessels to the eyes.

"It eats through everything," Dr Suneetha Nareddy told *Deccan Chronicle*. "And we are seeing more and more cases every day. But the drugs, which treat this infection and cost ₹25,000 a day, are in very much in short supply. It is becoming very hard to replenish their stock," she said.

If the infection takes hold, the fungus begins to

eat away the eyeball leaving no other option than to remove the infected eye and then hope for the best that it has not reached the brain. For once it enters the brain, chances of a patient recovering are very slim.

The first line of defence, along with administering drugs that can treat the condition, is to surgically drain the sinuses. Then begins the wait to see if it has worked. If not, then further debilitating surgical options, including excising the infected eye or upper palate may be called for.

small 'wish list' to end the confrontation. He would continue in the party as an MLA if the party chief called him back and sought an explanation about the land grab allegations. He is not insisting on an 'impractical' demand like getting back his cabinet post.

"The best he can get is the equivalent of former deputy chief minister Rajaiah, who lost his cabinet berth in the TRS's first government 2014 and stayed on despite being side-lined. Having to choose between a Devender Goud and a Rajaiah, it seems Rajendar has chosen to eat a humble pie and surrender," they said.

Revenue officers, when contacted by *Deccan Chronicle*, said that the probe committee slowed down its work after the high court questioned on the urgency of the matter. Sources also revealed that two key leaders and a close aide of the chief minister were collectively trying to convince him over the next course of action in the Etala Rajendar episode. Having convinced the CM that Etala has surrendered, they are requesting him to give truce a chance.

All leaders including those of the Opposition parties are also waiting for the next move of the chief minister in the Etala episode.

## TRS aware of Etala-BJP rapport

From Page 1

Etala began to give out sporadic statements, timed for maximum impact, to showcase himself as the "outsider-within" the ruling establishment and "a rebel" with a cause. KCR lost no time and struck when the iron was hot.

TRS sources, closely aware of the minutest developments related to the affair Etala, said, "The party is filled with josh after the victory at the MLC and Nagarjuna Sagar polls. When a veteran like Jana Reddy was forced to bite the dust, what chance does Etala have? A week away from the government, by now, must have helped wisdom dawn on him. He dare not fight a by-poll against the TRS, which enjoys popular support. Across Telangana, there is confidence in KCR's rule. His schemes are popular and his handling of the Coronavirus pandemic situation has been better than that of any other state or CM."

TRS sources say Pragathi Bhavan was aware and keeping track of how Rajendar has steadfastly worked on maintaining a good rapport with the BJP high command and the Delhi leaders. He was working to launch a political party with its backing. If BJP had won the polls in West Bengal, it

would have set its eyes next on Telangana.

"The reason as well as the timing for the sacking of Rajendar was that the TRS chief was waiting for the results of the Bengal elections. The moment it became clear the BJP was losing in Bengal, Etala was axed from the cabinet. His portfolio was taken away first to set the ball rolling. BJP's poor performance in Bengal led to its central leaders abandoning the idea of supporting Etala for now," they said. Rajendar realised that without the BJP's support, it was nearly impossible for him to start or build a new regional party. A perusal of the history of Telangana dissenters breaking away from powerful parties to establish new parties must have prompted Rajendar to realise the futility of such a misadventure.

Many would recall how TD leader and former home minister T Devender Goud launched the Nava Telangana Party only to merge it shortly thereafter with Tollywood megastar's Praja Rajyam party, which itself got defeated in the assembly election in 2009 and merged into the Congress subsequently.

Not wishing to turn into a Quixote, Rajendra — a careful politician and a meticulous businessman — con-

ducted a survey on his chances if he quit and created conditions for a by-poll in Huzurabad. The results he got, according to sources in his camp, were shocking to him. Most respondents gave a thumbs up for the TRS and very few declared an intent to vote for Rajendar. Even the large numbers of those who sympathised with him were not in a mood to vote against the TRS, revealed his associate and former market committee chairman of Karimnagar district.

The Election Commission too seems to have decided against conducting any bypoll until the Covid pandemic situation is brought under control.

According to Rajendar's followers, since there is no chance for a by-poll within the next six months or so, there is little point for him to resign from his MLA post.

Being in the middle of an ongoing investigation, and of a larger pandemic and economic crisis, Rajendar is unsure of how to raise the financial resources to run a party if he were to exercise the option, or even fight the by-poll, set against the night of the TRS.

Confirming the "beginning of the end" of the saga, senior TRS leaders revealed that Rajendar had sent enough signals with a



Minister Gangula Kamalakar in a review meeting with the leaders of Huzurabad constituency at MLA camp office in Karimnagar on Monday.

responsibility has been entrusted to the only minister from Karimnagar district, Kamalakar.

As part of this exercise, Kamalakar held a meeting with the party cadre and second-rung leaders from the constituency to impress upon them the need to stay loyal to the party.

He said that for the past seven years there is not

even a single remark against the TRS and the recent thumping win at Nagarjuna Sagar, proves that people were with TRS and Chandrasekhar Rao.

Even in the MLC elections, more than 70 per cent of the youth backed TRS party, which clinched both seats that went for by-elections.

The massive wins in the municipal elections were

‘Steroids causing  
mucormycosis’DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 10

Calling mucormycosis "a very serious and life-threatening infection with mortality rate of 40-60 per cent", Dr K. Rambabu, senior ENT Consultant, Apollo Hospitals, says the disease is striking Covid-19 patients and pushing them back into operation theatres and ICUs.

"Working at a tertiary care centre during last one month, we have seen more than 50 mucormycosis cases. Six of these patients have died, 28 are battling it out in ICUs and wards, while 16 are showing good progress," Dr Rambabu stated.

According to him, mucormycosis starts spreading within days if not recognised and treated at early stages, ideally within the first 48 hours. Treatment includes aggressive surgery and long-term follow-up along with anti-fungal medications. Cost of such medicines runs into lakhs for prescribed quantity and duration.

The ENT consultant said the primary reason for exponential rise of this fungal infection among Covid-19 patients is excessive usage of steroids. "Steroids are leading to extremely uncontrolled sugar levels, enabling Black Fungi to grow, multiply and invade at rapid



Steroids are leading to extremely uncontrolled sugar levels, enabling Black Fungi to grow, multiply and invade at rapid rate. Though usage of steroids is invariably necessary on many occasions, its dosage and duration needs reconsideration, especially among diabetic patients..

— Dr K. Rambabu  
ENT Consultant,  
Apollo Hospitals,

rate. Though usage of steroids is invariably necessary on many occasions, its dosage and duration needs reconsideration, especially among diabetic patients," the doctor said.

He said the entire supply chain of medicines for this condition stands disrupted. Pharma companies are unable to provide in-time medication to patients being treated in smaller hospitals, as they are not even aware of the need.

TS police stopped  
30 ambulances

FROM PAGE 1

However, those among them who fail to get a bed allocation in Hyderabad hospitals are moving from one hospital to another seeking admission and finally lose their lives. The Telangana government is not ready to accept blame for this, and hence blocked such incursions via the border to the state, TS reasoned.

The Telangana police stopped nearly 30 ambulances from AP heading for Hyderabad at the Ramapuram Cross Road check post at Kodada mandal on Monday, and turned away patients who failed to produce proof or phone numbers relating to booking of beds in any Hyderabad hospital.

A local police officer said, "We are not asking for any letter from hospitals. We are asking for at least a telephone number of a doctor or a hospital in Hyderabad in their possession to confirm the availability of bed. If the hospital confirms it can admit the patient, we allow them to proceed."

"The patient can also show any message about confirmation of bed

availability in a hospital in Hyderabad on their phones. Else, we tell them to go back. We have no issue with other vehicles coming in from AP to Telangana," police said.

Meanwhile, AP BJP state general secretary S. Vishnuvardhan Reddy said, "This is an inhuman act. AP is having the right to treat Hyderabad as the common capital for three more years. Hyderabad is a medical hub. TS must immediately allow ambulances from AP to go to Hyderabad. The CMs from both AP and TS should respond and help patients from AP to reach Hyderabad for treatment." Indian Medical Association national chairman Dr D. Srihari Rao said, "AP people have been used to visiting Hyderabad for best treatment in local hospitals for any health issue including the recent Coronavirus infection. Our infected patients are suffering a lot when their ambulances have been stopped at TS borders. It is time the CMs from the two states hold discussion and help our patients to reach Hyderabad and get treatment."

MNREGS has no  
takers due to virusDC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, MAY 10

Attendance at ongoing MNREGS works in Khammam is showing an inverse relationship with Covid-19 situation in the district.

While attendance of workers involved in jobs related to MNREGS being implemented in various villages of Khammam district had been 60,300 on May 8, 2021, the number was 1,12,232 on May 8, 2020. In other words, about 50 percent workers in the district are either Coronavirus positive or are occupied in taking care of family members affected by the virus.

The pressure is so much that people are foregoing income they would get in case they perform duties under MNREGS. Such a state of affairs is prevalent in almost all mandals.

Santosh, a social activist in Kusumanchi, says no worker has been

left without experiencing Covid-19 directly or indirectly during the second wave. He said, "Some workers have themselves tested virus positive. In other cases, their family members have been affected. Only those for whom it is imperative are working. That is the reason why attendance at MNREGS works is down by 50 percent. There are also cases of people keeping away from fear of contracting the virus."

In Penuballi and Kusumanchi mandals, there are 10-15 cases of Coronavirus in each village. Four persons have reportedly died due to the virus in these two mandals. Though the deaths are suspected to be more, it is alleged they are being under-reported.

It is stated government officials are, however, happy that lesser workers are reporting for MNREGS works. This way, there would be more physical distancing.

FARMERS START  
PREPARATIONS  
FOR KHARIF  
SEASONDC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, MAY 10

Farmers have started agriculture operations for Kharif in isolation in the rural areas despite the Covid-19 pandemic is at its peaks in the old Adilabad district.

Farmers mainly cultivate cotton redgram, soya, Jowar and maize while paddy in the canal area and also where water facility is available in the old Adilabad district.

The tradition is that farmers sow the seeds on the day of 'Mirug' with the onset of rains since they consider it as auspicious day for Kharif season.

Family members are cleaning their agricultural fields and burning the dried up residual plants as part of preparing the field for tilling and sowing.

However, people are not moving in groups in the villages, and farmers are not hiring agricultural labourers for the initial agricultural operations. Certainly, the farmers would engage the agriculture laborers for weeding after sowing the seeds.

CM MAY IMPOSE  
STRICTER  
NORMS IN TS  
TO CURB COVIDDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 10

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is likely to impose more restrictions on the movement of people while continuing to allow the economic activity as part of the revised containment strategy for Covid-19, the second wave of which turned more fatal, claiming hundreds of lives in the state.

The Chief Minister will hold a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday to 'discuss the pros and cons of imposing lockdown' amidst divergent views on the move and the adverse impact it will have on paddy procurement, according to an official press release. There were reports that suggested that cases did not decrease despite a lockdown while some sections were arguing in favour of imposing the shutdown, said the press release.

According to sources, the government was considering extending the curfew hours and total shutdown during week-ends. While restrictions will be more in Hyderabad and other urban agglomerations, a liberal approach would be adopted in rural areas to ensure smooth transportation of paddy to the procurement centres.

The neighbouring Andhra Pradesh has clamped curfew from 12 noon to 6 am and the state for the first time saw a decline in the number of positive cases. There are different options on curfew timings and a final decision would be taken in the Cabinet meeting, a senior official said adding that there would not be total lockdown in the State as it would derail the economy which had been witnessing revival.

Meanwhile, in a major decision on Monday, the Chief Minister directed the police not to allow Covid patients from the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh to enter into the state as the city hospitals were clogged with 'outsiders'.

Ambulances were intercepted on all the inter-state borders and those patients who secured admission in city hospitals alone were allowed leaving many with no option but to go back to their respective places.



## OTHER STORIES

PMSSY HOSPS  
TO BE USED FOR  
NON-COVID SERVICESDC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MAY 10

The 250 bedded super specialty hospital set up at a cost of ₹150 crore under the PMSSY scheme on the premises of Kakatiya Medical College in Warangal, would soon be fully functional and provide corporate level non-covid health services to the poor in erstwhile Warangal and surrounding districts, said Minister for Panchayat Raj, Errabelli Dayakar Rao.

He thanked Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for sanctioning ₹8 crore required to make the hospital fully functional and take up the appointment of staff including 363 doctors and paramedical staff.

The OP services have recently begun at the Super Specialty Hospital. Henceforth, the MGM Hospital would fully be utilized for covid-19 services.

The minister also thanked CM KCR for appointing MBBS doctors in the State Medical and Health Department to work as front line warriors and reduce the work pressure.

5 HELD FOR  
SELLING COVID  
DRUG ILLEGALLYDC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MAY 10

The Geesugonda police on Monday arrested five persons for illegally selling Remdesivir injections in the black market and seized 42 doses of the medicine from them.

The arrested have been identified as Chanda Vijay Kumar, a lab technician from Hyderabad, Ch Rajesh, a resident of Oorugonda village in Damera mandal, M Gopal, a medical representative in Hanamkonda, G. Avinash, a lab technician in Warangal, and V. Suresh, who runs a medical shop in Hanamkonda.

The police seized 42 vials of remdesivir, ₹69,000 cash, a car, a two-wheeler and five mobile phones from the accused when they were trying to sell them to customers at an exorbitant price. Warangal East Zone DCP Venkatalakshmi said five persons formed a team and purchased remdesivir from Hetero Drugs, Hyderabad, for ₹2,800 per vial and sold at ₹3,490 per vial but later sold it at ₹28,000.

"Taking advantage of pandemic situations, some hospitals are selling remdesivir vial injection at abnormal rates which are beyond the reach of the common public," said Venkatalakshmi.

She said the accused were waiting near the Katamallanna temple to hand over remdesivir injections to a person in Gorrekunta village under the Geesugonda police station limits.

Following the instruction of police commissioner Tarun Joshi, the Geesugonda police visited the spot. Seeing the police, the accused tried to escape. The police arrested them and seized Remdesivir injections from them, Venkatalakshmi said.

● **THE POLICE** seized 42 vials of remdesivir, ₹69,000 cash, a car, a two-wheeler and five mobile phones from the accused when they were trying to sell them to customers at an exorbitant price.

## City witness rise in Covid cases after GWMC polls

Several officials, staff, party activists and their Kin test +ve

ANUDEEP  
CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, MAY 10

The spread of Coronavirus has reached dangerous proportions in erstwhile Warangal district following the conduct of Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC) election by the state government while ignoring public health. The State Election Commission's directions to take all safety measures to avoid the spread of Covid-19 were ignored. Campaigning was carried out in huge groups with zero regard to physical distancing.

The notification for the election was released on April 16 and the exercise continued till May 3 when results were declared. For 10 days, hundreds of activists conducted electioneering in 66 divisions in Greater Warangal. Eight newly elected corporators including GWMC commissioner Pamela Satpathy tested positive for the virus after the elections. Several municipal corporation officials, staff, a large number of party activists and even their family members are now testing positive for the virus.

According to official figures, the maximum number of Coronavirus positive cases in a single day in March did not exceed 15. No deaths were reported. On March 1, 61 RT-PCR and 2,398 rapid antigen tests (RAT) were conducted and only eight positive cases were

## TS-MH border closed to prevent Covid-19 spread

NARENDER  
PULLOOR | DC  
NIZAMABAD, MAY 10

The Telangana state government on Monday finally closed the border with Maharashtra, which has been severely affected by the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Sangareddy-Nanded-Akola (SNA) National Highway was closed at Salabathpur in Madnoon mandal of Kamareddy district. Police and revenue officials set up barricades on the highway and prevented vehicle movement.

Covid-19 cases have surged in the neighbouring Nanded district of Maharashtra for the last two months. Covid-19 cases increased abnormally in Telangana state, especially the districts of Kamareddy and Nizamabad which border

reported.

During March, an average of 10 positive cases were reported after tests were conducted at a rate of 2,000 per day.

However, in April, the number of positive cases increased from tens to hundreds as electioneering for GWMC elections was on. On April 26, 3,893 tests were conducted and

Maharashtra. However, movement between the two states continued unhindered.

On the other hand, an abnormal delay in Covid-19 tests results is worrying the people. Covid-19 tests in Government hospitals and primary health centres decreased since last week of April. Covid-19 suspects forced to approach private laboratories for the less-reliable Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and the gold standard RT-PCR test.

Private laboratories owners are collecting ₹1,100 to ₹1400 per RT-PCR test and the result is available in three to four days. The delay is causing worry among the disease suspects. In the latest Covid-19 protocol, the government suggested people to take medication for Covid-19 if they experience symptoms and not

wait for the test results. There are a lot of doubts among people over medication. A few people sought test results to start the medication and others followed the government advice.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Kiran Kumar lab technician said that there is a huge rush for Covid-19 tests and reports were delayed. "It is better to adopt the HD Rapid test to get immediate results," he said. The RT-PCR test is required for a few patients.

Meanwhile, of the 2,650 Covid-19 tests conducted on Monday, 1,847 (70 per cent) were conducted in 47 centres and five mobile testing centres. In these, 236 persons tested positive for Covid-19. In addition, 59 RT-PCR tests were conducted at Government General Hospital in Nizamabad.

ed and 345 were found to be positive and 12 were dead. Of the 3,004 people tested on May 9, 378 tested positive and 14 died, indicating clearly that electioneering led to Covid-19 exploding.

No restrictions were imposed on areas where people were likely to congregate allowing people to roam freely.

ed and 345 were found to be positive and 12 were dead. Of the 3,004 people tested on May 9, 378 tested positive and 14 died, indicating clearly that electioneering led to Covid-19 exploding.

No restrictions were imposed on areas where people were likely to congregate allowing people to roam freely.

TEACHING WITH  
TECH IS NEW  
ERA: NITW CHIEFDC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MAY 10

A five-day Faculty Development Programme (FDP) under Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), National Institute of Technology, Warangal (NITW) was organised virtually on 'Machine learning and cognitive computing' on Monday.

Prof. N. V. Raman Rao, NITW Director interacted with participants and said a new era in teaching is redefining the modern role of teacher.

Education system has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. Learning is becoming more mainstream, multiple opportunities have opened up today for teachers in online mode.

Anyone who wants to teach can simply utilize the digital medium and start teaching without moving anywhere. Online education has provided an opportunity to create a huge talent pool of teachers. This might be the basis of the online education systems for the next generation.

One can strongly believe that using visuals, audio, animated videos and game-based quizzes, puzzles made a better teacher for today's environment.

## Shoppers ignore Covid norms, officials fear spread of virus

**Adilabad:** There is a huge rush at almost all shopping malls and textile showrooms as hundreds of people are coming out for shopping for marriages and Ramzan festival. However, most of them are without face masks and none maintain physical distance in old Adilabad district.

Such a scene prevails in Adilabad town and this may lead to a mindboggling spread of coronavirus. Even more worrying is that parents are bringing along their children for shopping and exposing them to the danger that lurks in the corner. There are no restrictions on the movement of the public at malls and showrooms. For this, apart from the general public, even shopkeepers have to be blamed. Most places do not even have a security guard to man the rush.

A sorry situation also prevails on the other side of the spectrum. Families are making arrangements for marriages without any respect for the Covid protocol. In fact, there is no restriction on the invitees, which is a direct violation of government guidelines. There is no supervision by the government officials on the number of guests attending

marriage functions. Marriage parties of bride and groom are inviting their guests as usual in villages, though there is a semblance of order in towns.

Raghavender of Adilabad said 'it is time the police department deploys personnel at shopping malls and business centres where a large number of people are turning up and are violating Covid norms'.

There was traffic congestion from Ambedkar chowk to Ashok road when hundreds of people were busy purchasing food dishes and other goods from street vendors.

## State, Centre has no value for lives of people: Seethakka

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MAY 10

Despite people in large numbers succumbing in the Coronavirus pandemic, the state and Central government are acting selfishly and giving priority to elections and economy over lives of the people, said Mulugu MLA and Mahila Congress state general secretary, Danasari Anasuya alias Seethakka.

In a video statement, she said the state and Central governments do not give value to the lives of the people and hence they have no sense to protect their lives. She questioned if these governments have the right to rule the people. She urged people to think and act instead of suffering in silence.

"Public health is a constitutional right. However, the government is more focused on building mansions. It is atrocious that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao said since the economy would be affected, there would

Danasari Anasuya  
Aka (Seethakka)

be no lockdown in the state," she stated.

Seethakka asked Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, if not now when will the CM give free treatment to the people of Telangana state.

"All the people, especially the youth must speak up and demand free health services in the Telangana state. The TRS government boasts of being a role model to the entire country with its welfare schemes. Take another such decision and include treatment of Coronavirus under aarogya sri," she demanded.

## CLASSIFIEDS

## EDUCATIONAL

## DISTANCE EDUCATION

✓ **CONTACT FOR NCERT-Recognised: B.Ed./M.Ed. No Advance Fee. Only For Educational Consultants. Students Please no call. Contact regarding any Educational Problem/ Guidance. Shiksha Bharti, Varanasi. Email: shikshabharti88@yahoo.com Mob: 9519759663, 9915103781. (HYMM/2122/C01182)**

## NOTICE

Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries while responding to advertisements in these columns. Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. does not vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers. The Printer, Publisher, Editor and Owner of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. shall not be held responsible / liable for any consequences, in case such claims are found to be false.

**Deccan Chronicle**  
BOOK YOUR CLASSIFIED /  
DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS at  
EDITION CENTRE :-  
**KARIMNAGAR**  
H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabhukur Road,  
Mugdumpur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186  
**9000650508**  
e-mail: krmadvtr@deccanmail.com  
**9121183123**

**Muthoot Finance GOLD AUCTION NOTICE** GSTN - 36AABCT0343B1ZZ

Registered Office: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Muthoot Chambers, Banerji Road, Kochi - 682 018, Kerala, India.  
CIN: L65910KL1997PLC011300, Ph: +91 484 2396478; 2394712; Fax: +91 484 2396506.  
Email: mails@muthootgroup.com. Website: www.muthootfinance.com

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold Ornaments pledged with under mentioned branches of the company, which were overdue for redemption and which have not been redeemed so far in spite of repeated notices, will be auctioned at the concerned branches on **15.05.2021 at 10.00 AM**. In any case if the auction could not be conducted on the above said date, the Auctioneer is having the right to postpone the auction to following 2nd auction dates or on subsequent dates at given centres without any further notice. Any change in auction date will be published at the place of auction. Spurious/Low quality accounts details

**2<sup>nd</sup> Auction Date:- 29.05.2021,10:00AM Auction Centre:- Muthoot Finance Ltd, 1-4-249/154/D, D1,E And F, Shivasai Complex, Kudakuda Road, Suryapet, 508213 (Suryapet District)**  
Spurious / Low Quality Accounts Details:- SURYAPET-NALLALABHAVIROAD(3517)-MSL-26589,  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Auction Date:- 31.05.2021,10:00AM Auction Centre:- Muthoot Finance Ltd,1-1-1 To 1-1-3,First Floor, Rajiv Gandhi Chowk,Adilabad-504296 (Asifabad District)**  
Spurious / Low Quality Accounts Details:- ASIFABAD-(TE)(4792)-MSL-1710,2121,2202,2369,  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Auction Date:- 28.05.2021,10:00AM Auction Centre:- Muthoot Finance Ltd., # 8-7-152 To 158, First Floor, Beside Sunil Theatre, Station Road-506002 (Warangal District)**  
Spurious / Low Quality Accounts Details:- HANMAKONDA-ENUGULAGADDA(2469)-MSL-28344,  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Auction Date:- 28.05.2021,04:30PM Auction Centre:- Muthoot Finance Ltd., Building No.11, 1st Floor, Nr. Inspection Bungalow, N.H Road No.7, Mancheriyal-504208 (Mancherial District)**  
Spurious / Low Quality Accounts Details:- MANCHERIAL-(AP)(2488)-MHP-137,MSL-20317,  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Auction Date:- 28.05.2021,01:00PM Auction Centre:- Muthoot Finance Ltd., No: 3-1-879 To 884, First Floor, C.V.R.N Road, Karim Nagar-505001 (Karim Nagar District)**  
Spurious / Low Quality Accounts Details:- KOTHIRAMPUR-(TE)(4709)-MAL-2001,

Note: Customers can release the gold ornaments before the auction date (15.05.2021).  
Note: Bidders are requested to produce Identity Card/ Pan Card No/ GST Certificate.  
(In case Registered Dealers) Successful bidders should transfer the full auction amount by RTGS.

**Place: Warangal  
Date: 11.05.2021**

For Muthoot Finance Ltd,  
M/s. SSR & Co., Law Associates,  
1-19-72/1/2, Rukminipuri Colony,  
Behind Spencers, ECIL Post, Hyderabad – 62

**“Never click on suspicious links that you receive via SMS, email or social media platforms”**

**RBI Kehta Hai... Jaankaar Baniye, Satark Rahiye!**

For more details, visit <https://rbikehtahai.rbi.org.in/>  
For feedback on this advertisement, write to [rbikehtahai@rbi.org.in](mailto:rbikehtahai@rbi.org.in)

Issued in public interest by  
**भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक**  
**RESERVE BANK OF INDIA**  
[www.rbi.org.in](http://www.rbi.org.in)



## SHORT TAKES

## U.P. MAN HELD FOR DUPING COVID-HIT PEOPLE

**Noida (UP):** The Noida Police on Monday arrested a Ghaziabad resident accused of duping people by taking exorbitant amounts of money in advance from them for providing oxygen cylinders or concentrators and crucial medicines needed for Covid-19 patients.

The accused had floated his phone numbers on social media sites on pretext of providing these resources amid their shortage due to increased demand, officials said. "When approached by needy people, accused Vishal alias Nishant Singh would ask them to make an advance payment online for oxygen cylinders or concentrators or the medicines, as per the requirement. He would charge them anything between Rs 20,000 to Rs 1,00,000 but not deliver the product," a police spokesperson said.

After the money was transferred to his account, Singh would go inaccessible by either changing phone numbers or blocking them, leaving the people hit by the pandemic in the lurch, the official added.

The Noida Police said they had got several complaints regarding the matter and an FIR was lodged at the Sector 20 police station after which the accused was tracked down and arrested from his residence in Ghaziabad's Vaishali on Monday.

## COVID BODIES FOUND FLOATING IN RIVER GANGA

**DAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, MAY 10**

Several bodies of suspected Covid-19 victims were found floating in river Ganga near Chausa village in Buxar district of Bihar. Sources from Buxar said that officials rushed to the spot after local people raised alarm on Monday.

Local officials believe that the bodies may have floated from neighboring Uttar Pradesh and belong to Covid patients. According to a social activists here, "The long queue and exorbitant cost of cremation may have compelled the relatives of victims to immerse the bodies in the river."

Officials were informed about the incident by the local people and chowkidars. Reports suggest that around 15 bodies have been recovered and none of the deceased belongs to the district.

"It is not yet confirmed whether or not the bodies belong to those who died due to Covid-19 infection. Uttar Pradesh is just across the river. It seems that the dead bodies found floating in the river could be three or four days old. We are trying to dispose them of properly," district administration said in a statement on Monday.

Later the video of dead bodies and stray dogs roaming around them went viral on social media which sparked outrage and panic in the area.

"The officials also believe that several bodies could be of those who may have died due to Covid-19. They have assured us to conduct an inquiry into the matter and we have also asked the officials to ensure that cremation is done properly", sources from Buxar said.

## COVID +VE WIFE NOT ADMITTED FOR 3 HRS: MLA

**Firozabad (UP), May 10:** An Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA has claimed that his coronavirus positive wife was not admitted to an Agra hospital for over three hours, with officials citing non-availability of a bed.

Upset over this, Firozabad's Jasrana MLA Ramgopal Lodhi made a video over the issue and posted it on social media.

His wife was given a bed at the hospital following the district magistrate's intervention, the MLA claimed.

Lodhi, however, alleged that his wife was not given medicine and water on time.

The MLA's video had surfaced on social media on May 8 when his wife was referred Agra's SN Medical College.

"What would happen to a common man when an MLA's wife cannot be given proper care," Lodhi said in the video, alleging that his wife had to lie on the floor and was not admitted to the hospital for over three hours.

Lodhi had too tested positive for Coronavirus and had returned home after recovering from the infection on May 7.

## Home ministry rules out national lockdown

Official says each state can decide on what kind of lockdown it needs, based on ground situation

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 10**

Home Ministry has ruled out any possibility of a nationwide lockdown saying only "local lockdown and containment" zones will be identified and imposed by respective State Governments. Sources said the issue of nationwide lockdown was discussed at the highest level but Govt decided against it as it would have dealt a severe blow to the economy. Instead, it was decided to let State Governments decide on the issue.

Sources said apart from the economic considerations it was also felt that Corona situation in every region or State was different from the others. Thus, in areas where positivity rate was less there was no pointing in disrupting the economic activity. In fact, officials added, even with one particular States there was lot of variation in Corona rate from one region to another.

Hence, officials added, after lot of deliberations at the "highest levels in the Government" it was decided that this time during the second wave it would be best to leave the decision on lockdown or local containment zones to the States. Each State can decide on what kind of lockdown or restrictions they need to impose keeping in view their local ground situation.

Apart from local considerations, Centre was also keen that economic activity should not be disrupted this time unlike the nationwide lockdown last year. At a time when economic activity was beginning to expedite again, a complete lockdown would have "wrecked havoc" with the economy affecting almost all sections of the society.

Home Ministry officials also argued that last year the nation-wide complete lockdown was necessitated as no one had any clue about the Corona virus, how it would react or spread and further there was no vaccine available also. So this time Centre has tried strike a "fine balance" between economic activity as well as localised lockdowns or restrictions.

**VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, MAY 10**

India on Monday recorded 3.05 lakh fresh cases of Covid-19 and 3,493 deaths. The numbers were less than the previous days, possibly due to fewer testing on Sunday. But Union health ministry officials said some places have started seeing a decline in new cases.

Delhi, which has been reporting very high daily cases for the past several weeks, recorded a positivity rate of less than 20 per cent (19.10 %) while its new cases too came down to 12,651. Delhi had increased testing on Sunday than the previous day.

With oxygen supply from the Centre more or less

stable, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said his government is increasing oxygen beds on a daily basis and the challenge is to upscale health infrastructure in the city to tackle the "third wave" as and when it comes.

"The scale at which we are creating infrastructure, we will be able to deal even if 30,000 daily cases are reported in the next wave," Mr Kejriwal said. Delhi in the second wave had the highest 28,000 cases in a day.

However, a bigger challenge for the Delhi government is to vaccinate its younger population. The Delhi government said there is a shortage of vaccines and several people in the 18-plus and even 45-

plus categories are struggling to get vaccine slots. The Delhi government accused the Centre of allotting lesser vaccines compared to the high requirement of the city.

"We are left with vaccine stock for 3-4 days. We have placed orders with companies but I think the Central government too is allocating the vaccines. We request the Centre to give us more vaccines," Mr Kejriwal said.

However, the BJP accused the AAP government of placing lower orders for vaccines. Responding to this Delhi's deputy CM Manish Sisodia said, "Today BJP alleged that Delhi government ordered only 5.50 lakh doses of vaccine. The

Government of India decided in April that the two companies can sell vaccines to states directly, states were also told the same. We ordered 1.34 crore doses for Delhi for people above 18 yrs. Right after our order, the Centre sent us a letter that Delhi can get only 92,840 doses of Covaxin and 2,67,690 doses of Covishield in May. The vaccines companies we wrote to had not responded by then." He alleged that the Centre was cutting short the number of vaccines demanded by the states and selling that to foreign countries. "In what greed were 6.50 crore vaccines supplied to foreign countries when people in our own country are dying?" Mr Sisodia said.

Huge rush for vaccines was seen in several other states like Andhra Pradesh and Odisha too.

The National Task Force set up by the Supreme Court to manage the Corona crisis at its first meeting on Sunday held discussions for increasing oxygen production and availability. It also discussed how to manage the demand for medical oxygen, and the parameters on which healthcare centres and hospitals could use medical oxygen.

Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan has sent a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying his state cannot afford to send out oxygen to others as their own demand is increasing.

## NCP DEMANDS 'ONE NATION ONE POLICY'

**BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, MAY 10**

Alleging that the Narendra Modi Government has failed miserably to tackle Covid pandemic, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has called for a 'one nation one policy' for the eradication of coronavirus from the country.

If the entire country doesn't have a uniform policy, the coronavirus will not be eradicated. For this, the Modi Government should convene an all-party meeting to chalk out the policy, said senior NCP leader Nawab Malik on Monday.

"There is no doubt in everyone's mind that the Centre is not being able to handle the Covid situation in the country. The various high courts have acknowledged this by giving diverse verdicts. The Supreme Court too has decided to form a task force. The courts are giving directions because the Centre has failed to perform its duty," said Mr Malik, who is also a minority affairs minister in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra.

The Supreme Court has constituted a 12-member National Task Force of top medical experts to formulate a methodology for oxygen allocation to states and Union Territories and to facilitate a public health response to pandemic.

## MP MULLS PAEDIATRIC, ICU WARDS IN HOSPS

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MAY 10**

The Madhya Pradesh government has stepped up efforts to strengthen health infrastructure on war footing to tackle a possible third wave of Coronavirus pandemic.

State medical education minister Viswas Sarang on Monday announced his government's decision to set up 366 paediatric ICU wards in district hospitals following the apprehensions that the children may be affected in the third wave of pandemic.

The paediatric ICU wards would be centrally air conditioned and provided with facilities of ventilator, and oxygen points, he added. The government has also decided to establish 1,100 more ICU wards in different government hospitals. It has started building 1,000-bed make-shift Covid care centres in Bhopal and Bina in MP.

A 2,000-bed make-shift Covid care Centre has already started functioning in Indore. Meanwhile, the government has cleared the proposal to build a 20-bed balloon ICU wards, made of PVC tarpaulin with plywood and aluminum frame, each in Bhopal, Jabalpur and Sehore. The make-shift ICU ward being built by a private company is said to be cost-effective and is stated to last eight years.

## Sr Indian diplomat dies of Coronavirus

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, MAY 10**

India's Consul General in northern Afghanistan Vinesh Kumar Kalra has died of cardiac arrest there after contracting Covid. Mr. Kalra, who was posted at the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, is the first Indian diplomat posted abroad to die after being infected with the deadly virus, sources confirmed.

Expressing his condolences, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar tweeted, "Deeply grieved at the passing away of Shri Vinesh Kalra, Consul General, Mazar-e-Sharif. A conscientious and dedicated colleague, he will be missed by us all. Sincerest condolences to his family."

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted, "@MEAIndia sincerely condole passing away of Shri Vinesh Kalra, Consul General,

Mazar-e-Sharif. A sincere, hard working & reliable officer, he showed exemplary commitment & dedication to the national cause by volunteering for a posting under difficult conditions to Afghanistan. He will be remembered fondly and missed by one & all. @MEAIndia will extend all possible support to his family."

Mr. Kalra had earlier served in various Indian Missions abroad in Muscat (Oman), Hanoi (Vietnam), Pretoria (South Africa), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and Beijing (China). During "his stints at the Headquarters in New Delhi and Missions abroad, he has gained wide work experience in various fields like Administration, Establishment, Finance, Commerce, Consular, Political, etc". He also "underwent his Chinese language training while serving at Embassy of India, Beijing".

## INDIAN NAVY BRINGS MEDICAL SUPPLIES FROM ABROAD

**New Delhi, May 10:** Three Indian Navy warships are bringing to India on Monday 80 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 20 cryogenic oxygen tanks, 3,150 cylinders and a large amount of other medical supplies from abroad as the country reels under a severe second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

The medical supplies being brought by the ships included 900 oxygen-filled

cylinders and 10,000 rapid antigen Covid-19 test kits, 54 oxygen concentrators, 450 PPE (personal protective equipment) kits, Indian Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said. Indian Navy ship Airavat is reaching Visahapatnam from Singapore carrying eight cryogenic oxygen tanks each having a capacity of 20 metric tonnes of oxygen and other supplies. Another warship, INS

Kolkata, is arriving at New Mangalore port carrying 40 metric tonnes of liquid oxygen, 400 Oxygen cylinders and 47 oxygen concentrators from Qatar and Kuwait, Commander Madhwal said.

INS Trikanth is reaching Mumbai with 40 tonnes of oxygen from Qatar, he said. Last week, the Indian Navy deployed nine warships to bring liquid medical oxygen and other supplies. — PTI

## Maha vax unit to produce Covaxin: HC

**SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MAY 10**

The Bombay High Court has permitted Biovet Private Limited, an associate company of Bharat Biotech, to take possession of a fully operational and ready-to-use vaccine manufacturing plant on a 12-hectare plot in Pune to produce Covaxin. The HC directed the concerned state authorities to handover peaceful possession of the ready-to-use vac-

cine manufacturing facility. The state had earlier refused to transfer the facility on the ground that the said land was reserved for forest.

The unit was being used by Intervet India Pvt Ltd, a multinational and subsidiary of Merck & Co, after land was granted to it in 1973 to manufacture vaccine for Foot and Mouth Disease.

Intervet is exiting business operations in India and entered into an agree-

ment with Biovet to transfer the land and manufacturing unit to the latter.

When Biovet sought the government's approval for the transfer, the deputy conservator of forests (Pune division) pointed out that it was a reserved forest and the initial 1973 grant itself was bad.

Biovet then approached HC in challenge and, in an interim application, also sought direction to the government to grant it licences and permissions

to enable the manufacture of vaccine for Foot Mouth Disease as well as Covaxin.

A division bench of Justices K.K. Tated and N.R. Borkar on May 6 heard an application filed by Karnataka's Biovet Private Limited, which produces Covaxin, a vaccine against Covid, seeking direction to the government to hand over possession of the manufacturing unit at Manjari Khurd village in Pune.

Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni told the court the Maharashtra government had no objection if the company used the unit for manufacturing life saving vaccines, including Covaxin, but it should not claim any right, title and interest in future. Mr Kumbhakoni further told the court if the company filed applications seeking permissions, the state government shall consider the same expeditiously.



A Covid-19 patient, on oxygen support, being taken to a government hospital in Jammu, Monday. — PTI



Police officers seize a vehicle violating Covid-induced lockdown norms in Hubballi, Karnataka. — PTI



Family members mourn the death of a Covid-19 patient at Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH), in Patna. — PTI



Health workers give a dose of Covid-19 vaccine to a man and a woman during drive through vaccination at Sardar Patel cricket stadium in Ahmedabad. — PTI



Naval vessel INS Trikanth carrying a shipment of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) cryogenic containers from Qatars Hamad Port, as part of Samudra Setu II, arrives at the naval dockyard in Mumbai. — PTI

## COVID | BLUES

Opposition party slams Centre for going ahead with Central Vista project

## Country needs breath, not PM's residence: RG

**New Delhi, May 10:** Hitting out at the Centre for continuing the construction work for the Central Vista redevelopment project amid the raging Covid-19 pandemic, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said the country needs breath and not the prime minister's residence.

The redevelopment project of the Central Vista — the power corridor of the country — envisages a new triangular Parliament building, a

common Central Secretariat, the revamping of the three-km-long Rajpath from the Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate and new residences for the prime minister and the vice president.

The government has brought the construction work for the ambitious project under the ambit of "essential services" to ensure smooth movement of labourers during the ongoing lockdown in Delhi.



Rahul Gandhi

"The country needs breath, not the prime

minister's residence," Gandhi said in a tweet, sharing pictures of people standing in a queue for refilling oxygen cylinders and the construction work for the Central Vista project on Rajpath.

Amid rising Covid-19 cases, several states have been facing a crippling shortage of oxygen, leaving hospitals and family members of patients scrambling to ensure a steady supply.

Gandhi and his Congress party have been

asking the government to shelve its plans on the Central Vista project and give priority to improving the country's medical infrastructure amid the Covid-19 pandemic to save people's lives.

The opposition party has also criticised the Centre for according the construction work for the Central Vista project the "essential services" tag and accused the government of having its priorities wrong. In another tweet,

Gandhi said the pandemic is spreading fast in rural areas.

"After cities, now villages are also dependent on God," the former Congress president tweeted in Hindi.

On Sunday, India recorded 4,03,738 fresh Covid-19 cases that pushed the tally to 2,22,96,414 while 4,092 more fatalities took the death toll to 2,42,362, according to the Union health ministry. — PTI



## SHORT TAKES

**5 MIGRANTS  
DROWNED OFF  
LIBYA, SAYS UN**

**Cairo:** At least five people, including a woman and a child, drowned when a boat carrying at least 45 Europe-bound migrants capsized off Libya, a UN migration official said on Monday.

The wreck was the latest disaster in the Mediterranean Sea involving migrants seeking a better life in Europe.

Safa Msehlhi, a spokeswoman for the International Organisation for Migration, said the wreck took place on Sunday. She said fishermen rescued 40 migrants and returned them to the shore. Msehlhi said the boat was among nine others carrying more than 700 migrants intercepted Sunday by the Libyan coast guard off the coast of the North African country.

**MAN KILLS 6,  
THEN SELF, AT  
BIRTHDAY PARTY**

**Colorado Springs (US):** A gunman opened fire at a birthday party in Colorado, slaying six adults before killing himself Sunday, police said.

The shooting happened just after midnight in a mobile home park on the east side of Colorado Springs, police said. Officers arrived at a trailer to find six dead adults and a man with serious injuries who died later at a hospital, the Colorado Springs Gazette reported.

The suspected shooter was the boyfriend of a female victim at the party attended by friends, family and children. He walked inside and opened fire before shooting himself, police said. The birthday party was for one of the people killed, police said.

Neighbor Yenifer Reyes told The Denver Post she woke to the sound of many gunshots. "I thought it was a thunderstorm," Reyes said.

**MAN HURLS SLUR,  
KICKS INDIAN  
WOMAN IN S'PORE**

**Singapore:** In an apparent incident of hate crime, a man hurled racial slurs and kicked a 55-year-old Indian-origin woman in Singapore for not wearing a mask while she was brisk walking.

Hindocha Nita Vishnubhai, a private tutor, was brisk walking on Friday morning when a man approached her and asked her to pull her mask up from her chin, her daughter Parveen Kaur was quoted as saying by the Channel News Asia on Monday. Nita was walking along Choa Chu Kang Drive when the man came up to her near a bus stop outside Northvale condominium, according to the Channel report.

"She explained that she was brisk walking but he didn't care. He hurled vulgarities and racial slurs at her," Kaur said in a widely circulated Instagram post. "My mum responded with a 'God bless you' and the guy kicked her in the chest. My mum landed on her back and hurt herself," she said. The man, whose identity is not yet known, ran away while the woman was left bleeding.

## China opposes Taiwan joining WHO meeting

**Beijing, May 10:** China's government criticised U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday for urging the World Health Organisation to invite Taiwan, the island democracy claimed by Beijing as part of its territory, to participate in a meeting this month.

Blinken's statement on Friday adds to a similar joint appeal by foreign ministers of the Group of Seven major economies this month in London. That irked the Communist Beijing government, which insists Taiwan has no right to conduct foreign relations or join global bodies.

Blinken's appeal "seriously violates the one-China principle" and joint US-Chinese declarations, said a Foreign

Ministry spokesperson, Hua Chunying. "China firmly deplores and rejects it."

Taiwan split with the Chinese mainland in 1949 after a civil war. The two sides have extensive trade ties but no official relations. The US and other major governments have no official ties with Taiwan, but Washington and some others have expressed growing support for Taiwan during the Coronavirus pandemic and in response to Beijing's increasing assertiveness abroad. Blinken called Taiwan a "force for good in the world" and said it should be invited as an observer at the meeting of the World Health Assembly, the WHO decision-making body. — AP



Palestinian man runs away from tear gas during clashes with Israeli security forces in front of the Dome of the Rock Mosque at the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City on Monday. — AP

## 305 Palestinians injured in clash with Israeli police

**Jerusalem, May 10:** Israeli police firing tear gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets clashed with stone-throwing Palestinians at a flash-point Jerusalem holy site on Monday, the latest in a series of confrontations that threatened to push the contested city toward wider conflict.

More than a dozen tear gas canisters and stun grenades landed in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest sites, as police and protesters faced off inside the walled compound that surrounds it, said a photographer at the scene. Smoke rose in front of the mosque and the iconic gold-domed shrine on the site, and rocks littered the nearby plaza. Inside one area of the compound, shoes and debris lay scattered over ornate carpets.

More than 305 Palestinians were hurt, including 228 who went to hospitals and clinics for

treatment, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent. Seven of the injured were in serious condition. Police said 21 officers were hurt, including three who were hospitalized. Israeli paramedics said seven Israeli civilians were also hurt. The confrontation was the latest after weeks of mounting tensions between Palestinians and Israeli troops in the Old City of Jerusalem, the emotional center of their conflict. There have been almost nightly clashes during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, already a time of heightened religious sensitivities.

Most recently, the tensions have been fueled by the planned eviction of dozens of Palestinians from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of east Jerusalem where Israeli settlers have waged a lengthy legal battle to take over properties. — AP

# Getting people vaccinated only solution for India: Fauci

Biden's Chief Medical Adviser suggests additional resources from outside India too

**Washington, May 9:** Getting people vaccinated is the only long-term solution to the current Covid-19 crisis in India, America's top public health expert Dr Anthony Fauci said on Sunday as he called for scaling up manufacturing of Coronavirus vaccines both domestically and globally to fight the deadly pandemic.

The endgame of this all...is going to be to get people vaccinated... India is the largest vaccine-producing country in the world. They've got to get their resources, not only from within, but also from without, Fauci, who is the Chief Medical Adviser to U.S. President Joe Biden, told the ABC News in an interview.

That's the reason why other countries need to chip in to be able to get either supplies to the Indians to make their own vaccines or to get vaccines donated. One of the ways to do that is to have the big companies that have the capability of making vaccines to really scale up in a great way to get literally hundreds of millions of doses to be able to get to them, he said. Responding to a question, Dr Fauci said that India needs to immediately build makeshift field hospitals like what China did a year ago.

You've got to get that. You can't have people out in the street not having a hospital bed. The oxygen situation is something that was really critical. I mean, to have people not have oxygen is really tragic, what's going on over there, he said.

The 80-year-old physician and immunologist, who serves as the director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases said there is an immediate problem of hospital beds, oxygen, PPE and other supplies.

Then there's the problem of looking forward to how are you going to shut this down, how are you going to turn it around, how are you going to break the chain of transmission? he said, underlining the need for a



Staff member cleans the terrace outside a cafe in Paris on Monday as France is set to reopen its trademark sidewalk cafes and restaurants on May 19. — AFP

## Oz dismisses plea against ban on India returnees

**Melbourne, May 10:** An Australian court in Sydney on Monday dismissed the legal challenge filed by a 73-year old citizen stranded in Bengaluru against the federal government's controversial decision to temporarily ban the return of its citizens from Covid-19 stricken India.

In its first hearing, Justice Thomas Thawley, who presided over the case, said the law was drafted with an appreciation that biosecurity emergencies might take a wide variety of forms and the

precise nature of future threats could not be known. "It is tolerably clear that the chief medical officer thought further relief would come to Australia's quarantine endeavour by preventing further entry, even for those travelling indirectly through transit hubs," the judge said.

The application was filed by lawyers acting for Gary Newman last week, seeking to overturn an emergency declaration made by Health Minister Greg Hunt last month under the Biosecurity Act. Newman,

who is stranded in Bengaluru since March last year, has said that the ban was "unconstitutional". The declaration had taken into effect last Monday making it punishable with a maximum USD 66,000 fine, five years' jail term, or both, for those who tried to return back to Australia and have been in India in the past 14 days.

The temporary suspension was aimed to reduce the public health risk posed due to massive Covid-19 cases in India, the government said. — PTI

countrywide lockdown to arrest the spread of the virus.

Vaccines is one of them but there are other ways too, like shutting down the government. I have advised them in the past that they really need to do that. You've got to shut down. I believe several of the Indian states have already

done that, but you need to break the chain of transmission. And one of the ways to do that is to shut down, the top American doctor said. Fauci, in an interview last week, had termed the situation in India very desperate and suggested that the government marshal all its resources, including the

armed forces, to immediately build makeshift field hospitals, and urged other countries to help with not only materials but also personnel. He called for a nationwide lockdown, not necessarily for six months but for a few weeks to break the continuity and transmission of infection. — PTI

## Boris probed over Caribbean holiday of 2019



Boris Johnson

**United Kingdom, May 10:** Boris Johnson is under investigation over who paid for his Caribbean holiday with Carrie Symonds during Christmas 2019.

The parliamentary standards commissioner, Kathryn Stone, confirmed on Monday morning that she was investigating a possible breach of the MPs' code of conduct.

It is the latest allegation of impropriety faced by the prime minister, as the Electoral Commission continues its inquiry into the Conservative party over claims that a loan to cover works to Johnson and Symonds' Downing Street flat were not properly declared.

The "sleaze" attacks deployed against the prime minister in the run-up to last week's local elections seem not to have substantially

damaged his reputation among voters, given the gains made by the Tories in the Hartlepool byelection and councils across England.

But some Conservatives are privately dismayed the party is being more opaque than they think it should be on issues of funding and declarations.

The investigation into Johnson's holiday comes after he took a trip to Mustique to celebrate new year at the start of 2020. — Agencies

## New letter by military warns Macron over France's survival

**Paris, May 10:** A group of serving French soldiers has published a new open letter in a conservative magazine warning President Emmanuel Macron that the "survival" of France is at stake after he made "concessions" to Islamism.

The letter published in the conservative Valeurs Actuelles magazine published late on Sunday echoes the tone of a similar letter printed in the

same magazine last month which also warned a civil conflict was brewing.

The previous letter, signed by a handful of officers and some 20 semi-retired generals, sparked a furore in France with the prime minister calling it an unacceptable interference and France's top general vowing those behind it would be punished. It is not clear how many people are behind the current letter or what their ranks are.

"We are not talking about extending your mandates or conquering others. We are talking about the survival of our country," said the letter, which was addressed to Macron and his cabinet.

The authors described themselves as active-duty soldiers from the younger generation of the military, a so-called "generation of fire" that had seen active service. — AFP

## TURNING | POINT

### 46-member scientific integrity task force to meet for first time

## White House panel to split science, politics

**Washington, May 10:** Eager to turn the page on the Trump years, the Biden White House is launching an effort to unearthen past problems with the politicisation of science within government and to tighten scientific integrity rules for the future.

A new 46-person federal scientific integrity task force with members from more than two dozen government agencies will meet for the first time on Friday. Its mission is to look back through 2009 for areas

where partisanship interfered with what was supposed to be decisions based on evidence and research and to come up with ways to keep politics out of government science in the future.

The effort was spurred by concerns that the Trump administration had politicised science in ways that put lives at risk, eroded public trust and worsened climate change.

We want people to be able to trust what the federal government is telling you,

● **SCIENTISTS AND others have accused the Trump administration of setting aside scientific evidence and injecting politics into issues.**

whether it's a weather forecast or information about vaccine safety or whatever, said Jane Lubchenco, the deputy director for climate and environment at the White House Office of Science and Technology

Policy. People need to know "it's not by fiat, somebody's sort of knee-jerk opinion about something, added Alondra Nelson, the science office's deputy director for science and society. Nelson and Lubchenco said ahead of a Monday announcement about the task force's first meeting and part of its composition. It stems from a January 27 presidential memo requiring evidence-based policy-making. Scientists and others have

accused the Trump administration of setting aside scientific evidence and injecting politics into issues including the Coronavirus, climate change and even whether Hurricane Dorian threatened Alabama in 2019.

Naomi Oreskes, a Harvard University historian said politicisation of science undermines the nation's ability to address serious problems that affect Americans' health, their well-being and the economy. — AP

**GOLD AUCTION NOTICE**
GSTN - 36AABCT03438122

Registered Office: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Muthoot Chambers, Banerji Road, Kochi - 682 018, Kerala, India. CIN: L65910KL1997PLC011300, Ph: +91 484 2396478; 2394712, Fax: +91 484 2396506. Email: mails@muthootgroup.com. Website: www.muthootfinance.com

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold Ornaments pledged with under mentioned branches of the company, which were overdue for redemption and which have not been redeemed so far in spite of repeated notices, will be auctioned at the concerned branches on **15.05.2021 at 10.00 AM.**

BHOOPALAPALLY - (AP)(4201)- MAL- 10912, 11200, 11336, 11436, 12068, 12459, 13067, MBL- 3205, MSL- 5603, 5668, 5770, 7407, 8133, 8251, 8425, 9275, 9489, 9553, 9658, 9793, 10250, 10386, 10473, 10622, 10699, 10811, 11055, 11216, 11314, 11428, 11442, 11538, 11546, 11628, 11940, 12015, 12200, 12367, 12388, 12395, 12924, 14485, 14490, 14511, 14593, 14594, 15685, 15887, 15997, 18786, 18839, 20521, 20594, 20620, 20624, 20654, CHENNOOR - (AP)(3700)- MSL- 5538, 11588, 11699, 11731, 11735, 11751, CHOPPADANDI-(AP)(4440)- MSL- 2537, 2949, GANGADHARA X ROAD-(AP)(4025)- MAL- 3897, MSL- 5572, 7132, 7764, 7837, GODHAVARIKANI - (AP)(3085)- MAL- 3573, MSL- 12060, 13742, 14107, 21025, 21026, 21131, HANMAKONDA-ENUGULAGADDA(2469)- MAL- 3711, 3992, 4361, 5066, 5582, MSL- 18016, 18148, 18459, 19367, 19400, 19445, 19553, 19727, 19848, 19926, 19986, 20333, 20940, 20987, 21002, 21792, 22263, 22489, 22654, 23502, 24793, 24995, 25178, 29740, 29874, 29876, 29889, 29991, 30012, 30013, 30014, 30016, HANMAKONDA-NAIM NAGAR(2257)- MSL- 15539, 15917, 17946, 12158, HANUMAKONDA- SUBEDHARI(3794)- MAL- 4278, 4283, MBL- 1287, MSL- 7994, 9172, 9209, 9313, 9540, 9573, 9785, 12003, 15101, 15113, 15114, 15192, HUSNABAD-(AP)(2666)- MAL- 7603, 8609, 9361, 9585, 9786, 9806, MSL- 12026, 12330, 12447, 12571, 13451, 13452, 13930, 14072, 17951, 19145, 19197, 19199, 19203, 19217, HUZURABAD-(AP)(2936)- MAL- 5222, 5337, 5526, 6193, 6327, MSL- 9182, 11069, 11245, 11559, HUZURNAGAR - (TE)(4788)- MSL- 1232, JAMMIKUNTA (AP)(4044)- MAL- 7126, 7621, 7671, MSL- 6054, 7860, 12331, JANGOAN - (AP)(3302)- MSL- 6979, 6980, 6989, 7092, 7279, KARIM NAGAR-CLOCK TOWER(2611)- MSL- 9382, 9453, 10513, 10629, 11103, 14138, 15122, KARIM NAGAR-CVRN ROAD(2260)- MSL- 14296, 14521, 14976, 15602, 16079, 16100, 16141, 17016, KARIM NAGAR-MANKAMMA THOTA(2335)- MSL- 14629, 15484, 16171, 17205, 19177, 19828, 19839, KASIBUGGA - (AP)(4435)- MAL- 3616, 4278, 4508, 4552, 4619, 4703, MSL- 2709, 3529, 3939, KOTHI RAMPUR - (TE)(4709)- MSL- 1306, LUXETTIPET - (AP)(4334)- MSL- 1826, 3802, MAHABOOBABAD - NEHRU CENTRE(3176)- MAL- 9346, 9610, 9770, 11386, 11643, 11854, 12301, 12391, 12511, 12719, 12736, 12746, 12810, 13010, 13159, 13229, 13302, 13651, 14159, 14264, 14507, MSL- 6817, 7812, 9127, 9681, 9730, 9767, 10250, 10378, 10585, 10921, 11107, 12728, 12842, 12864, 13135, 13136, 13202, 13395, 13912, 14020, 17949, MANCHERIAL- INSPECTION BUNGLOW(3594)- MSL- 6295, 7518, 9293, 9309, 9788, 9803, 10072, 11713, 11804, 12057, 12669, 17780, 17833, MANCHERIAL-(AP)(2488)- MAL- 4850, 6085, MSL- 9895, 10789, 11832, 12794, 12851, 13545, 13632, 13751, 14958, 15463, 15900, 19323, 19419, 19434, 19435, 19436, 19437, 19513, 19537, 19538, 19545, 19546, MARIPEDA BUNGLOW - (TE)(4713)- MSL- 590, 797, 1029, 1068, 1358, 13722, 3356, 5156, MOTHKUR-(AP)(4301)- MAL- 3763, MSL- 3721, 4244, 5057, MULUGU - (TE)(4758)- MSL- 168, 209, NARSAMPET (AP)(3997)- MAL- 3471, 4046, MBL- 1461, MSL- 3875, 4587, 4877, 4909, 5955, 6094, 9218, NEREDUCHERA -(TE)(4479)- MSL- 1900, 2282, 2626, 2885, PARKAL - (AP)(3371)- MAL- 9178, MSL- 9657, 9791, 10105, 10193, 10214, 10342, 10431, 10828, 11105, 12489, 12600, 12996, 13034, 15269, 15442, 16749, 16788, PEDDAPALLI (AP)(4005)- MAL- 3509, 3592, 3681, 4267, MSL- 5409, 5737, 5838, 6301, 6302, 6472, 8019, 8509, 8518, 10996, 11152, RAMAGUNDAM - (AP)(3864)- MAL- 3313, MSL- 5230, 5546, 6375, 6842, 6873, 7169, 8076, 8579, 8658, 10296, 11819, 11820, 11821, 11828, SIRPUR-KAGAZ NAGAR(2700)- MAL- 5190, 5700, MSL- 9658, 10225, 10321, 10530, 10531, 10664, 11057, 11197, 11211, 11448, 11724, 11761, 11860, 11921, 12421, 12690, 14344, 14641, 14766, 14941, 19085, 19166, 19169, 19209, 19281, STATION GHANAPUR-(AP)(2860)- MAL- 6451, 6502, 6568, 8050, MBL- 3721, MSL- 10055, 10404, 15302, 15306, SURYAPET - (AP)(3483)- MAL- 7645, 8302, 8362, 8955, 9119, 9747, 9761, 9785, 10095, 10190, 10731, 10831, MSL- 9997, 14758, 15100, 15353, 15387, 15577, 15799, 16237, 16482, 16654, 16767, 16892, 16969, 17000, 17229, 17242, 17572, 17690, 17719, 17721, 17739, 17894, 18180, 18348, 18412, 18421, 18582, 18710, 18901, 19199, 19437, 19463, 19965, 20308, 20763, 25892, 25905, 25906, 25928, 25950, SURYAPET - LALLABA BHAVI ROAD(3517)- MAL- 6303, 6683, 7849, MSL- 9699, 10619, 11811, 12878, 14139, 15126, 15636, 16336, 16399, 16400, 16401, 16675, 17031, 17043, 17128, 17548, 17612, 17651, 18146, 18148, 18275, 18785, 19043, THORRUR - (AP)(3758)- MAL- 4549, MSL- 4910, 5273, 5579, 5772, 6010, 6328, 6515, 6628, 6987, 7045, 7651, 10707, 10724, 10725, 10726, 10729, 10730, 10751, WARANGAL-HANAM KONDA-NGO COLONY(2780)- MAL- 2896, MSL- 16498, 16605, 17444, 17521, 17934, 18145, 18363, 18571, 20710, 24505, 24541, 24564, 24624, WARANGAL-STATION ROAD(2241)- MAL- 4571, 4745, 4787, 4932, 4954, 5425, MSL- 8600, 9043, 10269, 10502, 10512, 10517, 10518, 10582, 10689, 10739, 11060, 11175, 11886, 12116, WARANGAL-SVN ROAD(2240)- MAL- 5843, 6628, 6729, 7002, 7726, 9483, WARANGAL-UNDER BRIDGE ROAD(2253)- MAL- 4988, 5322, 5941, MSL- 11521, 13363, 13428, 13482, 13726, 14124, 14162, 14246, 14274, 14352, 14364, 14610, 14665, 14752, 14805, 14933, 15101, 15214, 15265, 15314, 15632, 15698, 15716, 16858, 17029, 17626, 20713, 22564, 22686,

In case we unable to conduct the auction at the branch on the notified date, the same will be conducted through **Shriram Automall India Ltd., (SAMIL)** on their online auction platform <https://gold.samil.in> on 27.05.2021 between **12:30 PM to 3:30 PM** for recovering the outstanding amount. In case the auction process is not completed on 27.05.2021, the same will be re-auctioned within 7 working days on the same terms and conditions without any further notice.

For further information, Terms & Conditions and getting registered to participate in auction, interested buyers may login to the website or contact the auction portal.

Note: Customers can release the gold ornaments before the auction date (15.05.2021).

**Place: Warangal  
Date: 11.05.2021**

**For Muthoot Finance Ltd,  
Shriram Auto Mall India Ltd.,  
Board Approved Auctioneer**



# DECCAN Chronicle

11 MAY 2021

## Himanta faces a new test, but choice is no surprise

Few are likely to be surprised at Himanta Biswa Sarma being officially chosen by the BJP as Assam's new chief minister and his taking the oath of office on Monday. The BJP is where it is today in Assam, and in the Northeast as a whole, due to Mr Sarma's tactical and organisational skills in political affairs, and indeed his ability to play the communal card with a rare deftness in the Assamese context, surpassing by far master tacticians like Narendra Modi and Amit Shah.

Back in 2014 when Mr Modi was on the stump, hoping to be Prime Minister, he would speak of letting in Hindu Bengali migrants from Bangladesh while leaving the Muslim migrants out. Herein lay the seed of the Citizenship Amendment Act. This particular aspect of Mr Modi's campaign was with an eye on capturing West Bengal in future, but he felt it had its uses in Assam too and used it in his Assam speeches as well.

When the CAA did eventually come and led to an anti-BJP backlash among caste Hindu society in Assam, on which the BJP based its political ambitions, it literally ran up against a wall. Assamese Hindu society did not want even Bengali Hindu migrants, unlike the BJP. But the skills of Mr Sarma, who left Congress in 2015 to join the BJP, managed to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the saffron party.

Mr Sarma worked on two tracks. He harped on Assam's neo-Vaishnavism linked to the great personality of Srimanta Sakardev as being the essential Assamese identity, and pitched this against the "miyan", the derogatory name for Muslim migrants from erstwhile East Bengal (later East Pakistan and subsequently Bangladesh). This became an instant hit in an already somewhat polarised world.

It was communal to the core, of course, and yet its emphasis was on the so-called Assamese identity and not on the Hindu-Muslim binary that the BJP usually pitches. In defining this identity, those not from Assam's Hindu society are wholly overlooked — such as the various tribal people, and Bengalis. But this worked as an election strategy to blunt Assam's intense anti-CAA movement.

Mr Sarma took no chances. The second prong of his strategy was to split the anti-CAA vote by being somewhere instrumental in encouraging the Rajior Dal and the Assam Jatiya Party.

Mr Sarma has so far displayed political energy, political savvy and ambition of a very high order — qualities that will be an asset to any party he may be in. He has by now also gained considerable administrative experience, having been the most important minister in his predecessor Sarbananda Sonowal's Cabinet and earlier in the Cabinet of stalwart Congress chief minister Tarun Gogoi.

However, in Assam this has not exactly been in play in the past five years which were consumed by the politics of the NRC/CAA and the agitations around these themes. As chief minister, Mr Sarma will have to wrap his mind around development, and the first charge on him cannot but be the pandemic that is ravaging every part of India. Even so, the NRC remains a live issue. Its consequences have brought this country the condemnation of the world and impacted ties with neighbouring Bangladesh in some measure. Mr Sarma will be on a different kind of test than previously.

## Afghan terror: Little hope ahead

The last vestiges of civilisation are fast disappearing from Afghanistan. The Taliban and other insurgents attack maternity hospitals, ambulances and kill innocent schoolchildren as they leave the citadels of learning. Inured to a life of fear, they may live on not knowing where the crazed militants will strike next. There is no rationale for the Afghan terror, invariably stemming from Afghans taking aim at Afghans, especially at the ethnic Hazaras, who are Shias and thus invariably the target of avowed Islamic State affiliates. Barbarous attacks on girls who attend school in the afternoons after the boys are done with their classes lays bare the barren conscience of the attackers.

Truth to tell, the attack on the Darst-e-Barchi neighbourhood of Afghan capital Kabul is only a precursor of the "bad possible outcomes" of the planned withdrawal of 2,500 to 3,500 American and Nato troops. The foreign soldiers will be leaving the "forgotten war" that has raged over decades without clarity on what the Taliban or other Afghan rebels expect to gain from the savagery of their brand of terror in attacks not only on Afghan troops and policemen but also on the civilian population. If the foreign troops aiding the Afghan forces in ensuring security pull out by September 11, the target date set by President Joe Biden and the US government, they will be leaving behind a land that will be open for exploitation by militants.

The families of the 70 schoolgirls who were killed on Saturday by blasts from three bombs are turning against the Afghan government as well as its international backers for their failure to put an end to the violence. The fear is over security levels that the government can guarantee when Afghanistan is left to the mercy of the Taliban, waiting to try and take the reins of power after 20 years. With the United States not inclined to even leave a small counter-terrorism force in Afghanistan, it would be solely up to the Ashraf Ghani government to end the violence, though multilateral talks may go on in search of a peaceful solution. The history of Afghanistan holds out little room for optimism.



Subhani

## Check India's corruption, or insurgencies will go up



Mohan Guruswamy

Corruption is India's favourite conversation topic. We love discussing it and bemoan it's all-pervasiveness. Whenever two or more Indians meet, the conversation inevitably moves to corruption. Sometimes I wonder what we would say to each other if there were no corruption to talk about. We are all near experts at it and have all experienced it in one way or another and at all levels. Yet, with so much collective experience, it is an elusive topic to write about. Like our gods, it takes so many myriad forms. It defies a simple definition. But we all know what it is.

Economists prefer to bandy about a different term when referring to corruption. They call it "economic rent". According to the International Monetary Fund, "it is the extra amount paid (over what would have been paid for the best alternative use) to somebody or for something useful whose supply is limited either by nature or through human ingenuity". Quite clearly, this definition excludes the moral dimension. But then our problems get even more compounded when we realise that morality itself is very elastic and varies depending on time, place and context.

Economic rent takes other forms, which tax the common good much more. High import duties, for instance, meant to restrain imports, actually serve to increase prices and profits for domestic manufacturers.

Did you notice how all car tyres or batteries cost about the same? Or how all similar sized air-conditioners and refrigerators cost about the same? Or, till recently, how all air tickets cost

the same and an arm and a leg at the same time? Adam Smith explained it best by noting that: "People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public."

Opinion polls show that there are some professions that are believed to be entirely corrupted. Politicians and policemen top this list. Much of the corruption we see in everyday life is a result of their unnecessary exertions. Some years back I had the opportunity every morning to contemplate a vacant plot of land in the Gurgaon neighbourhood I lived in. Roads bound the plot on all four sides and naturally people walking take a short cut across it. Some soul with a penchant for orderliness has taken upon him to put an end to this practice. First a sign came up demanding that people not do the most rational thing, which is taking a short cut. The sign was ignored, and my dog Charlie has been using the signpost to leave his signature. Then a small length of barbed wire pegged between two poles appeared astride the path at both ends. The people who use the path still find it convenient to go around the poles and take the not-so-short shortcut. Good old Charlie just slips under the wire and seems quite happy that he has two more poles to leave his daily markers on.

The nature of most of our lawmaking is just like this. They are irrational and people will respond rationally to them, by circumventing them if not completely ignoring them. Now the only way that plot can be prevented from being used as a short cut is to build on it. If the empty

plot is just walled up, the walls will encourage another use, which will be odious to boot. Laws that conflict with common sense just do not work. Which brings me to another aspect. We have laws that prohibit urinating in public and on walls, private and public. Urinating is meant to be a private business. But where are people to urinate when you just don't have enough urinals? Therefore, a law against urinating in public makes sense only when you have enough public urinals.

Thoughtless laws corrode a state thoroughly. This is why states built around tight regulation and appeals to a higher human ideal always fail. Corruption is all-pervasive and a worldwide phenomenon. It comes built in with nature. Animals steal food from each other just as humans extort from others. But human beings live in organised societies and societies are simply systems based on laws. For laws to work, it must be clear that if caught, the trial will be swift, and if found guilty the retribution will be commensurate.

That's where we have serious problems. Who makes the law? Politicians. Who enforces the laws? The police. Both are believed to be overwhelmingly corrupt. And can we expect anything better from the courts? Corruption in the judiciary and the need to uproot it were intermittently discussed in the past few years. Judges themselves have provoked these discussions. Former Calcutta high court judge Soumitra Sen became the first judge in the

country to be impeached by the Rajya Sabha for misappropriation of funds in 2011. P.D. Dinakaran, the former chief justice of the Sikkim high court, had to resign in July 2011 in the wake of graft allegations. The next year, former Chief Justice of India and National Human Rights Commission chief K.G. Balakrishnan faced allegations that his family members had amassed wealth disproportionate to their known sources of income.

In 2003, the CBI arrested Shomit Mukherjee, a former Delhi high court judge, for his alleged involvement in a land scam. In 2008 the Punjab and Haryana high court was rocked by a different type of controversy after a bag containing ₹15 lakhs was delivered at the residence of Justice Nirmaljit Kaur on August 13, 2008. The money was allegedly meant for another judge, Nirmal Yadav. Justice Yadav, who had to quit later, is still facing trial. The judicial process seems to be working for her, as it works for most of the well connected by lingering endlessly.

A just and relatively honest society requires a system that inflicts swift and commensurate retribution on transgressors. It is apparent that we quite clearly do not have that and will not have in the foreseeable future. The only way we can get that for ourselves is a vigilant media that relentlessly probes, investigates and informs the public. The fellows who still call the shots in our media businesses are the ones who have turned a calling into a business, like the fellows who got themselves farmhouses in Mehrauli. That then leaves the people to fend for themselves. Which is what they are doing in many parts of the country that are increasingly being gripped by insurgencies.

*The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.*

## LETTERS

### INSENSITIVE FM

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's reasoning that cost of Covid-19 vaccines will go up if GST is exempted, shows the insensitivity of our leaders to people's sufferings (*GST waiver on vaccines will make it costly: FM, DC, May 10*). The government can permit companies to claim input subsidy even if no GST was paid as the revenue loss will be small. By this gesture, people will feel that they have a government which cares for them.

K.A. Raju

Secunderabad

### GOOD CARTOON

I salute Subhani for his cartoon about the Central Vista construction when thousands of citizens are dying due to lack of oxygen. No doubt Vista is being built over the dead bodies of innocent citizens. It is fitting that Subhani is writing the names of people who are dying on the walls of the Vista. I wish Prime Minister Narendra Modi stop the construction work at least during this pandemic. Instead of spending ₹20,000 crore on this needless project, we can build more hospitals in the country.

Michael Peria

Secunderabad

## 50 YEARS AGO IN

### DECCAN Chronicle

#### Weight of rare gold coins

HYDERABAD, MAY 10.

The City Crime Branch officials investigating the discovery of 200 rare gold coins by 45-year-old Yelliah a waddar in Mubarakpur village, in Vikarabad, said normally ancient coins of copper and brass were found. Hence the finding of gold coins which is very rare, is a great and important discovery. The coins belonged to the periods of Sri Krishnadevaraya, Achuta-devaraya and Sadasivaraya.

A team of State and Central Archaeologists are likely to proceed to Mubakarpur and examine the spot for further investigations and excavations, if necessary.

The total weight of the button-sized gold coins and the gold ingots was determined to be about 50 tolas.

The rare gold coins are worth lakhs of rupees considering its historical importance, according to official sources.

Aakar Patel



## Don't fudge Covid data, that'll make crisis worse

The world is worried about its "Vishwa Guru" as our mismanagement of the Covid-19 pandemic has turned into a global story. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, an independent research centre in the United States, has estimated that by September 2021, which means in just four months, another million Indians will die. And this is based on the official numbers, which are anyway difficult to accept given what has been revealed by the scenes in the crematoria across states and in our major cities, and also by the numbers that the newspapers have put out. A newspaper in Gujarat reported on May 6 that 17,822 bodies had been cremated or buried with Covid-19 protocols in one month in the state's seven major cities — Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Baroda, Surat, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Bhavnagar. But the government had acknowledged only 1,745 deaths officially from Covid-19, or 10 per cent. And remember that these cities are only about a third or less of the state's total population. In the

villages, the chances of those being tested and treated are even fewer.

This is, of course, not only about Gujarat. On May 3, a newspaper had reported that Bhopal had acknowledged only 104 deaths from Covid-19 while reports from the crematoriums and cemeteries spoke of 2,557 Covid patients among the total of 3,811 who were cremated or interred.

That is a ratio of 1:25. A report on May 4 from Haryana said that the difference between the official death toll and the number from crematoria was 1:2. This is similar to the number reported for Bengaluru for the last one month (1,422 official toll; versus 3,104 cremated with Covid-19 protocols). In Uttar Pradesh, a report from Meerut said the difference was 1:7.

If we remove the outliers and look at the data, it seems like a figure of twice and perhaps three times the official one is not unreasonable. If we take that into account, our official death toll of 2.3 lakhs, the third highest in the world, actually looks like 5.6 lakh or more than seven

lakh and easily the highest in the world. This will not surprise anyone and has been borne out by the sad-dening and shameful and horrific visuals that the entire world has now seen from India.

I should clarify that the fudging of the numbers is not entirely because of governmental fraud. It has happened in part because most people are dying at home, unable to access medical facilities or unable to afford them and they have not been tested. Second, how a death is classified depends a lot on the state government and the people making out the certificate. A person who has Covid-19 but also has another disease can be classified either as a Covid death or as something else. It serves the immediate purpose of the government to pretend that the official number is low because it makes it appear less incompetent and helpless than it really is. But hiding the number and not actively promoting the fact that things are much worse is dangerous for us all.

The first reason why the government should come clean and say

that its numbers are an undercount is public safety. If people are fed nonsense like "recovery rate" (a meaningless number for a disease that has no cure), then they will be less alert and more prone to carelessness about masking and social distancing. If they knew that many more people are dying after being infected, especially because the government cannot manage hospitals at this point in time, they would not think they were personally safe.

The second reason is our shortage of oxygen. After Delhi, now two BJP-run states, Gujarat and Karnataka, have said that they are not getting enough oxygen from the Narendra Modi government. Gujarat has said it needs 1,400 tons a day and will need 1,600 tons a day by May 15 but is currently getting only 795 tons. Karnataka had asked for 1,200 tons instead of the 962 tons allocated by the Centre. The Central government says that it has enough oxygen but this is untrue. We do not. And we will make our jobs more difficult if we continue to be in denial.

The third reason is credibility.

The world is reporting the Indian numbers and saying that these cannot be believed. And the world cannot be blamed for feeling this, because it is true — based on what our own media is reporting. The damage to India has already been considerable in terms of reputation, but that is not important. What will happen is that more countries will ban the entry of Indian travellers. Already that list is quite large. In time the wave will recede, but another one is likely to come. At that point, the world will look at our official numbers and try and add a factor of their own to arrive at the real number if they think that we are still fudging. This will harm Indians on work visas, families who are separated and Indian business in general.

That is why in our self-interest we should actively make attempts to find out the real fatality rate as the first step towards trying to curb this deadly Covid-19 pandemic.

*The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist*



quick  
BITES

## INDICATORS

		%
Sensex	49,502.41	0.80
Nifty 50	14,942.40	0.80
S&P 500*	4,229.49	-0.07
Dollar (₹)	73.35	0.23
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.35	-1.01
Euro (₹)	89.22	0.49
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,452▲179	0.37
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	68.35	0.10
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.014	-0.02
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.568	-0.011

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Ahluwalia settles  
dispute with  
A2 Interiors

Ahluwalia Contracts Ltd has entered into a settlement agreement and resolved the payment issues with its operational creditor, A2 Interiors Products Pvt Ltd, and is filing an application to withdraw the insolvency proceedings. On May 5, the Delhi bench of the NCLT had allowed the insolvency plea filed by A2 Interiors against Ahluwalia Contracts claiming default of Rs 14.10 crore and had appointed an interim resolution professional.

Eli Lilly in ties with  
Sun, Cipla & Lupin  
for baricitinib

US drug firm Eli Lilly and Company said it has inked voluntary licensing agreements with Indian drug firms Sun Pharma, Cipla and Lupin to expedite availability of its arthritis drug baricitinib for treatment of Covid-19 patients in India. The company "has issued royalty-free, non-exclusive voluntary licences to established Indian pharmaceutical manufacturers of generic medicines," Eli Lilly said.

RBI appoints  
Kattoor as  
exec director

The Reserve Bank of India has appointed Jose J. Kattoor as executive director (ED). Prior to this, Kattoor was heading the Bengaluru Regional Office as RBI's regional director for Karnataka. He will look after human resource management, corporate strategy, budget department and Rajbhasha departments.

IOC converts  
LNG tankers to  
carry oxygen

Indian Oil Corporation is converting 14 liquefied natural gas (LNG) tankers into medical grade oxygen carriers. It had diverted high-purity oxygen used in its monoethylene glycol (MEG) unit to produce medical-grade liquid oxygen at its Panipat refinery complex. It is supplying 270 tonnes of LMO per day to the hospitals in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab. IOC is also converting 14 LNG tankers of 17 tonnes each.

■ Govt expects prices to soften soon  
Cooking oil prices  
rise 50% in a yearSANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, MAY 10

Edible oil prices have shot up more than 50 per cent in a year's time on supply constraints. Production shortages, delay at the ports and lower imports have led to cooking oil burning a hole in consumers' pockets.

However, the government is hopeful that the prices would soften in the days ahead.

According to government data, retail prices of edible oils have shot up by 55.55 per cent in over a year.

The retail price of vanaspathi has increased by 55.55 per cent to Rs 140 a kg on May 8 this year from Rs 90 per kg a year ago. The retail price of palm oil has risen by 51.54 per cent to Rs 132.6 per kg from Rs 87.5 per kg, soya oil by over 50 per cent to Rs 158 per kg from Rs 105 per kg, while that of mustard oil by 49 per cent to Rs 163.5 per kg. The retail price of groundnut oil has gone up by over 38 per cent to Rs 180 per kg from 130 per kg during the one-year period.

"The global demand-supply situation has been leading to price rise. Production has been down last year due to the pandemic. However, the demand started improving with the progress of vaccination," said Ajay Kedia, managing director, Kedia Commodities.

Further, the labour issues in Malaysia and Indonesia have been



Flaring oil

Oil price change compared with year-ago period			
Items	Price last year	Current price	% increase
Vanaspathi	90.00	140.00	55.55
Palm oil	87.50	132.60	51.54
Soya oil	105.00	158.00	50.00
Mustard oil	110.00	163.50	49.00
Groundnut oil	130	180.00	38.00

Price per kg

affecting production of palm oil and sunflower oil. Last week Malaysian palm oil futures touched their highest level since 2008. Soybean futures in Chicago too are trading close to multi-year highs.

"In India, we had good production of edible oil seeds. But this did not help prices much," said Kedia.

Indian edible oil refiners also had curtailed palm oil imports for May and June as most states have imposed curbs on hotels and restaurants.

However, the government expects that release of imported stock, stuck at key ports, will help cool

prices in the coming days.

According to food secretary Sudhanshu Pandey, there was holding of some stock at Kandla and Mundra ports due to delay in clearances. Before clearing, tests were done by various agencies as part of the general risk analysis in view of the Covid situation.

"That problem has been addressed along with customs and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. With that stock getting released in the market, we hope to see the softening impact on the oil prices," he said in a virtual press conference on Monday.

ISUZU DRIVES IN  
D-MAX V-CROSSMICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, MAY 10

The Japanese carmaker Isuzu Motors on Monday launched its BS VI compliant D-Max V-Cross, the lifestyle pick-up. Prices of the passenger versions of Isuzu D-Max start from Rs 16.98 lakh for the Isuzu Hi-Lander and go up to Rs 24.49 lakh at Tamil Nadu showroom for the V-Cross 4x4 automatic in top-spec Z Prestige guise. The base 4x2 automatic V-Cross starts from Rs 19.98 lakh.

JAPAN AND UNDP TO  
SUPPLY O2 TO N-ERAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, MAY 10

The Government of Japan and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India have partnered to provide oxygen generation plants to the North Eastern Region. "The support from the people of Japan has enabled UNDP in procuring and installing eight Pressure Swing Absorption oxygen generation plants in the States of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura," said a joint release.

BLACKSTONE  
ACQUIRES EMBASSY  
INDUSTRIAL PARKS  
IN ₹5,250-CR DEAL

New Delhi, May 10: Global investment firm Blackstone on Monday announced the acquisition of Embassy Industrial Parks from Warburg Pincus and realty firm Embassy group in a big ticket deal estimated to be worth Rs 5,250 crore.

Blackstone and Embassy group did not disclose the value of the deal, which is one of the largest in the Indian logistics and warehousing segment.

In 2015, the Bengaluru-based Embassy Group had formed a joint venture with private equity firm Warburg Pincus to build industrial parks.

Warburg Pincus had a 70 per cent stake while Embassy has a 30 per cent shareholding in the joint venture, Embassy Industrial Parks.

NYSE-listed Blackstone said funds managed by Blackstone Real Estate have acquired Embassy Industrial Parks from Warburg Pincus and Embassy Group. Sources said the deal will be concluded in two stages.

In the first stage, Blackstone is buying Embassy Industrial Parks, having a portfolio of nearly 11 million sq. ft., at an enterprise value of around Rs 1,750 crore.

In the second stage, Blackstone, through its newly acquired firm Embassy Industrial Parks, would buy few land parcels directly from the Embassy group comprising another 11 million sq. ft. area, the sources said.

—PTI

Passenger vehicle sales dip  
14% in FY21: Dealers bodyMICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, MAY 10

Passenger vehicles (PV) sales declined 13.96 per cent at 23,86,316 units last fiscal, compared with 27,73,514 units sold in FY20 while total vehicle registrations in the country fell by 29.85 per cent to 1,52,71,519 units in FY21, the lowest in the last eight years, impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations, or Fada, said on Monday.

Total vehicle registrations were at 2,17,68,502 units in fiscal year 2019-20.

All categories of vehicles, except tractors were in the red in FY21 with two-wheeler (2W), three-wheeler (3W), commercial vehicles (CV) and passenger vehicles (PV) falling by 31.51 per cent, 64.12 per cent, 49.05 per cent and 13.96 per cent respectively, the lowest in last eight years and way below the FY13 levels, Fada said in a statement.

Sales of two-wheeler also dipped 31.51 per cent to 1,15,33,336 units as compared to 1,68,38,965 units in the previous fiscal.

Three-wheeler registrations in FY21 were down 64.12 per cent at 2,58,174

Mall footfalls reduce,  
recovery seen in Q3SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, MAY 10

After recovering to 75 per cent, footfalls in malls are once again down to nil. The mall revenues had declined around 40 per cent last year. This time the industry expects a full recovery by the third quarter.

"After the lockdown, different states started opening up in different months—some in July, some in August and some others later. Overall, in FY21, the mall business would have been 60 to 65 per cent of FY20," said Mukesh Kumar, chairman, Shopping Centres Association of India and CEO of Infiniti Malls. By Diwali time, there was a quick recovery in mall businesses.

For mall owners the impact of the pandemic in FY21 was around 50 per cent, mainly due to loss of rent, and operational costs, says Shubhranshu Pani, MD (retail services), JLL India. Revenues from multiplexes, which contribute 15 per cent to the overall rental income of mall owners, were almost wiped out.

From nil levels during the lockdown, footfalls had recovered to 75 per cent by March 2021. However, after March 15 once again footfalls started dwindling.

On an average during pre-Covid days, the industry was clocking a revenue of Rs 15,000 crore per month and had reached the same during mid-March 2021, but, with the local restric-



## DECLINE IN MOBILITY HITS RETAIL

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, MAY 10

India had high levels of mobility decline in the first week of May in places such as retail and recreation, groceries and pharmacies, parks, transit stations, workplaces, says a Google survey.

According to the Google Community Mobility Report, when compared to a pre-Covid baseline, the movement of people on May 5, 2021 was far less. The mobility in retail and recreation was down 59 per cent, groceries 20 per cent, parks 44 per cent, transit stations 44 per cent and workplaces 48 per cent. At the same time in residential places it was 24 per cent up.

tions, almost 50 per cent revenue got reduced.

"April has been a wash-out. We don't expect much from the first quarter. By the second quarter, things will start improving and we expect footfalls to return to FY20 levels in the third quarter," said Kumar.

By then, vaccination would cover a large section of the society and provide people the confidence to venture out.

Mobility of people has been affected the most in India among the top 10 countries with Covid caseloads, the report said.

"Mobility has fallen by high rates in five of the six parameters for India and was the highest on the one relating to being at home. Mobility has been impacted across the world, but India has probably witnessed the sharpest decline due to the recent restrictions imposed by various states," says Care Ratings.

For grocery, India is the only country which had a decline in mobility, indicating that the restrictions put by the government on shopping for just four hours a day had hit visits to the stores.

Moreover, some of the states have started using malls as vaccination centres.

While last fiscal revenues were severely affected, this year the impact is expected to be lower. "Last year, there were massive job losses and salary cuts. This time the incomes have not been affected much and the GST collections also are at record high," he added.

HUL'S SITAPATI  
MAKES WAY  
FOR SUNDARAM

New Delhi, May 10: F M C G major HUL on Monday said its executive director (foods and refreshment) S u d h i r



Sitapati is leaving the organisation and will be replaced by Srinandan Sundaram as part of top level management changes.

"Srinandan Sundaram replaces Sudhir Sitapati, who is leaving the organisation to pursue an external opportunity," HUL said in a statement.

Sundaram is currently executive director (customer development) at HUL.

The changes in the Management Committee would be effective from July 1, 2021, it added.

"I would like to thank Sudhir for his immense contributions to the company over the last two decades.

"We cherish iconic ad campaigns like Daag Acche Hain and Swad Apnepan Ka that were created under his leadership," HUL CMD Sanjiv Mehta said.

—PTI

## HALTING | DEFLECTIONS

## Bank to pay sign-on bonus to associates

## UBS promotees get \$40,000 bonus

CATHY CHAN  
MAY 10

UBS Group AG will pay a \$40,000 one-time bonus to its global banking analysts when they are promoted, doubling what some competitors are offering, as lenders seek to reward and retain younger employees weighed down by a surge in business and a prolonged work-from-home grind.

Starting as soon as this month the Swiss bank will pay the sign-on bonus to analysts promoted to associates on top of any regular salary increases, said people



familiar with the move who asked not to be identified because the information is private. The amount represents about 30 per cent of the annual base pay of a newly promoted associate, one of the people said.

Banks are raising pay for junior employees to prevent defections and ease discontent amid a jump in deals and an intensifying focus on work-life issues sparked by the pandemic. Wall Street was set abuzz earlier this year by a leaked presentation from junior analysts at Goldman Sachs Group Inc that detailed their gruelling workload and punishing hours.

A Hong Kong-based spokesman at UBS declined to comment.

UBS is upping the stakes, offering one-time bonuses that are double the amount that Credit

Suisse Group AG and Wells Fargo & Co have agreed to give their junior bankers. Other lenders such as HSBC Holdings Plc are also moving to raise pay and shortening the path to promotion, while Houlihan Lokey Inc has even offered some workers all-expenses-paid vacations.

Banks are also beefing up staff to avoid burnout. JPMorgan Chase & Co said last month it plans to add almost 200 staff, joining Goldman Sachs and Jefferies Financial Group Inc in boosting headcount.

—Bloomberg



## SHORT TAKES

## Pakistan sweep Zimbabwe series

**Harare:** Pakistan quickly took the one wicket it needed Monday for another innings victory over struggling Zimbabwe in the second Test and a 2-0 series sweep. It took only five overs on Day 4 for Shaheen Shah Afridi to end it by having Luke Jongwe caught behind by wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan for 37. Pakistan won by an innings and 147 runs at Harare Sports Club to go with the innings and 116-run win in the first test at the same venue. Pakistan also claimed a slice of history with Afridi's 5-52 making him the third Pakistan bowler in the Test to take a five-wicket haul. He and Nauman Ali took five each in the second innings after Hasan Ali's five in the first. It's the first time Pakistan has had three bowlers with five wickets in a match, and the first time it has happened in tests since 1993. — PTI

## Chawla's father dies of Covid-19

**Mumbai:** Experienced India leg-spinner Piyush Chawla's father Pramod Kumar Chawla on Monday died after battling COVID-19. He was around 60 years old.

"With deepest grief, we announce that my beloved father, Mr Pramod Kumar Chawla, left for the heavenly abode on 10th May 2021. He was suffering from covid and post covid complications," Chawla wrote on his Instagram account. "We invite your kind thoughts and prayers in this difficult times. May his noble soul rest in peace." Chawla's latest IPL team Mumbai Indians too offered their condolences. — PTI

## Zverev clinches 2nd Madrid title

**Madrid:** Alexander Zverev continued his impressive form going into the French Open by winning his second Madrid Open title. After beating top-seeded Rafael Nadal in the quarterfinals and fourth-ranked Dominic Thiem in the semifinals, Zverev rallied to defeat Matteo Berrettini 6-7 (8), 6-4, 6-3 for his second title this season. The sixth-ranked German also won the Mexican Open in Acapulco in March. Zverev won his first Madrid title in 2018 in a final against Thiem. The win on Sunday gave him his fourth Masters 1000 title, and first in three years. Zverev will be trying to improve from his fourth-round exit last year at the French Open. "To do well at the French Open, you need to be playing well during the clay court season," Zverev said. — PTI

## Former footballer Franco no more

**New Delhi:** Fortunato Franco, one of the pillars of India's last Asian Games gold-winning football team in 1962, died in Goa on Monday. He was 84. The AIFF confirmed the news of his death but did not specify the cause of his demise. Franco is survived by his wife, son and daughter. One of India's finest mid-fielders, Franco was a part of Indian football's golden era between 1960-64. He was a part of the 1960 Rome Olympics squad but didn't get a game. However, he was an integral part of the 1962 Asian gold winning team in Jakarta. — PTI

## Shafali set to play for Birmingham

**New Delhi:** India's teen batting sensation Shafali Verma is set to play for Birmingham Phoenix in the inaugural edition of The Hundred and might also turn up for a Sydney franchise in the Women's Big Bash League later in the year. The 17-year-old, who is the world number one in ICC women's T20I rankings, thus will join her skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, vice captain Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues and Deepti Sharma in the 100-ball tournament involving eight men's and women's teams. "Shafali was approached by Birmingham franchise and the deal is about to be closed. She will be replacing New Zealand's Sophie Devine in the team," a BCCI source said. "She is also in talks with the Sydney franchise to play in the women's Big Bash," the source added. While The Hundred, which was postponed last year, is scheduled to start on July 21 with the women's match between the Oval Invincibles and Manchester Originals in London. — PTI

## PINNED TO MAT

## WFI says murder case against Sushil tarnished wrestling's image

**New Delhi, May 10:** At the peak of his prowess, Sushil Kumar single-handedly lifted Indian wrestling to unprecedented heights but as police looks for him in relation to a murder case, the sport's image has taken as much a beating as that of the trailblazing grappler.

Sushil's international success triggered a revolution and created an inspirational legacy. The reserved grappler from Najagarh's Baprola village is till date India's only world champion (2010) in the sport. He is also the only one to claim two individual Olympic medals, an exceptional feat for a country which has seen very limited success at the Games.

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) is concerned that the good reputation built over the years with stupendous international performances, many of them given by Sushil himself, has been ruined.

"Yes, I must say that the image of Indian wrestling has got hurt badly by this. But we have nothing to do with what wrestlers do away from the mat. We are concerned with their on-mat performance," WFI Assistant Secretary Vinod Tomar said.

Sushil's bronze medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics ended India's 56-year-long wait for an Olympic medal in wrestling.

The achievement had a tremendous impact as Indian wrestling witnessed the rise of Yogeshwar Dutt, Geeta and Babita Phogat, their cousin Vinesh, Rio bronze medalist Sakshi Malik and World medalists Bajrang Punia, Ravi Dahiya and Deepak Punia after that.

However, the fraternity is now shell-shocked as the police on Monday issued a 'Look-out Circular' (LoC) against the champion wrestler, who is untraceable since the brawl that led to the death of a young wrestler.



The Delhi Police has issued a lookout notice against two-time Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar in connection with the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl.

The incident has come at a time when Indian wrestling is celebrating its highest number of quotas — eight — for the Olympics. The anticipation of a best ever performance at the Tokyo Games is hard to miss.

The police is ascertaining the role of Sushil in a May 4 brawl that led to the death of 23-year-old Sagar Rana outside the Chhatrasal stadium.

"Not only this, but the incident that happened in February had also tarnished the image of Indian wrestling. The sport has struggled hard in earning a reputation because for long wrestlers were known only as a bunch of goons," Tomar lamented.

The WFI official was referring to coach

Sukhwinder Mor's involvement in the murder of five people, including a fellow coach Manoj Malik, in Jaat College in Rohtak district of Haryana.

Sukhwinder had allegedly gunned down five people due to his personal enmity with Malik and was arrested from New Delhi in a joint operation by Delhi and Haryana police.

Asked if WFI will remove Sushil from the annual contracts list, Tomar said they "were not mulling any such move as of now."

Sushil was handed an A grade contract in December 2018 along with four others for an annual financial support of ₹30 lakh.

However, he has not par-

ticipated in any international event since his first round defeat in the 2019 World Championship in Nur Sultan.

The image of Chhatrasal stadium, which has given India its finest wrestlers like Sushil, Yogeshwar, Bajrang and now Tokyo-bound Ravi Dahiya and Deepak Punia, has also taken a beating.

A source at the stadium said prominent wrestlers like Yogeshwar and Bajrang left the facility because "they were targeted by Sushil's camp for not toeing their line."

The 1982 Asian Games champion Satpal Singh, Sushil's coach and father-in-law, was in charge of the stadium till 2016 before he retired as additional director.

After that Sushil was

appointed an OSD and it is believed that the move was aimed at keeping the stadium in the tight grip of the family.

"Sushil, who is employed there on Railways' deputation, calls the shots. If you won't listen to him or do as he suggests, he would quietly start harassing you," the source said.

"People are scared to say anything. They come to make a career, not to indulge in politics. So they found it convenient to leave than tolerate the stadium politics," the source said.

The gravity of the current situation is enormous but Sushil is no stranger to controversy either.

In 2016, when WFI had chosen Narsingh Pancham Yadav to represent India at the Rio Games. He later failed a dope test and accused Sushil of having a role in spiking his food, a charge which was found to be false.

During the 2018 Commonwealth Games trials when Sushil beat Praveen Rana in the final, the supporters of the two camps traded blows outside the stadium.

Rana had later alleged that the bout was interrupted many times at the behest of Sushil and the officials were also threatened and finally it was awarded to the 2010 World Champion.

Sushil is also the President of the School Games Federation of India (SGFI), which was in news for all the wrong reasons.

He had alleged that SGFI secretary had forged his signature to change the by-laws of the organisation and also committed irregularities.

He filed an FIR against the secretary in December last year and was re-elected President of the body in March after fresh polls were held on the direction of the Sports Ministry.

— PTI

## KOHLI | GETS A JAB



Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli gets vaccinated in New Delhi on Monday.

— Twitter

## Recovered KKR duo back home

**New Delhi, May 10:** Kolkata Knight Riders' leg-spinner Varun Chakravarthi and pacer Sandeep Warrier, who were the first to test positive for Covid-19 in the currently-suspended IPL's bio-bubble, have returned to their respective home cities after completing 10 days of mandatory isolation.

Tamil Nadu's Chakravarthi was officially the first player in this edition of the IPL, who contracted the infection after going for some medical scans.

Subsequently, two of his teammates, Warrier and Prasad Krishna, were also infected by the virus.

The Chennai-based Warrier's interaction with Delhi Capitals veteran Amit Mishra led to the veteran being found positive as well, causing ultimately

the league's suspension.

"Yes, Chakravarthi and Sandeep have gone home. They have completed 10 days of mandatory isolation. However, KKR as a franchise will keep monitoring their health," a BCCI official said.

## CARIBBEANS RETURN

All the Caribbean players have reached home following concerted efforts by the BCCI and their respective franchises, Cricket West Indies CEO Johnny Grave has said.

Top West Indies players like their white-ball captain Kieron Pollard, Jason Holder, Sunil Narine, Andre Russell, Dwayne Bravo, Nicholas Pooran, Shimron Hetmyer, and Fabien Allen were a part of the league. In all, nine West Indies cricketers competed in the event. — PTI

## TRIBUNAL GIVES CLEAN CHIT TO GUNAWARDENE

**Dubai, May 10:** An independent anti-corruption tribunal of the ICC on Monday cleared former Sri Lanka player Avishka Gunawardene of corruption charges, allowing him to resume participation in cricket-related activities with immediate effect. Gunawardene was facing two charges under the Emirates Cricket Board's Anti-Corruption Code.

The tribunal upheld one charge (2.4.6) against Sri Lanka's Nuwan Zoysa but dismissed the other three charges. "The detailed decision will be announced to the parties in due course and remains subject to appeal," an ICC released said.

Gunawardene was charged with Article 2.1.4 that relates to — Directly or indirectly soliciting, inducing, enticing, instructing, persuading, encouraging or intentionally facilitating any Participant to breach Code Article 2.1.

He was also charged with Article 2.4.5 that relates to, "Failing to disclose to the ACU (without unnecessary delay) full details of any incident, fact, or matter that comes to the attention of a Participant that may evidence Corrupt Conduct under the Anti-Corruption Code by another Participant." — PTI

## SURGE IN | COVID CASES

## IOC chief puts off trip to Japan

**Tokyo, May 10:** IOC President Thomas Bach has cancelled a trip to Japan because of surging cases of COVID-19 in the country, the Tokyo Olympic organising committee said on Monday in a statement.

Bach was to visit Hiroshima next Monday and meet the torch relay and then probably travel to Tokyo.

Organising committee president Seiko Hashimoto said last week that the trip would be "tough" for Bach to make, which was interpreted in Japan as meaning it was cancelled.

The trip was made impossible because of a state of emergency in Tokyo and other parts of the country that has been extended until May 31. The state of emergency was to have ended on Tuesday.

The statement said Bach's visit would be made "as soon as possible."

The postponement is an embarrassment to the IOC and local organisers with the Olympics opening in just over 10 weeks.

**The trip was made impossible because of a state of emergency in Tokyo and other parts of the country that has been extended until May 31.**

Organisers and the IOC have repeatedly said the Olympics will not be cancelled, and will be "safe and secure."

Japan has attributed 11,000 deaths to Covid-19, better than many countries, but poor for Asia. Variants of the virus are spreading with reports of public health systems coming under pressure.

Public sentiment in Japan continues to run against holding the Olympics in the middle of a pandemic. Between 60-80% of Japanese people in polls have said the Olympics should be cancelled or postponed.

An online petition calling for the Games to be canceled gained 300,000 signatures in three days. — AP

## Neesham doubts IPL re-start



New Zealand's Jimmy Neesham represents Mumbai Indians in IPL.

**Christchurch, May 10:** New Zealand all-rounder Jimmy Neesham doesn't think that there is any chance of the remaining 31 matches of Indian Premier League happening in India this year, after the tournament got postponed due to COVID-19 cases inside the bio-bubble.

He also has serious doubts whether India would be able to host the 16-team T20 World Cup later this year.

India is in the midst of its worst ever health crisis in last 70 years with the country recording 400,000 cases on a daily basis with at least 4000 deaths on an average.

Both IPL and T20 World Cup are set to be re-scheduled to the United Arab Emirates.

"If it did start up again, I doubt the IPL would be in India again," said Neesham told Newshub.

"I think we've already seen plans for the T20 World Cup to move out of India later in the year and they're going to be ultra-cautious about that sort of thing," said Neesham, who was playing for Mumbai Indians in the now suspended league.

Neesham feels the bio-security lapses could be due to the fact that the

teams were travelling across the country.

"Even though we were flying on chartered planes, we have to go through customs, hand your details over to people, walk through terminals, so there were always going to be pinch-points there," he said.

Neesham said that it is difficult to comprehend how the bubble was breached.

"We obviously don't know yet exactly how teams were infiltrated, but... it's such a difficult

prospect to keep everything perfect and when you've got so many guys that are close to each other, there are going to be social interactions after games.

"Once one team has it, you start looking back through your last week at who you talked to and who you shook hands with. It certainly gets your mind racing."

However Neesham isn't averse to the idea of going back to India again and playing the IPL if it resumes. — PTI

## Returning Serena could miss Olympics



Serena Williams

**Rome, May 10:** Serena Williams raised doubts over her participation at the Tokyo Olympics on Monday, ahead of her return to the limelight this week at the Italian Open.

The 39-year-old, still ranked eighth in the world, has been absent from the courts since her semi-final defeat by eventual champion Naomi Osaka at the Australian Open in Melbourne in February.

Williams remains uncommitted about

whether she will join up with Team USA in Japan this summer, especially if it means time away from her three-year-old daughter Olympia.

"I haven't spent 24 hours without her (Olympia) so that kind of answers the question itself," said the American, who has won four Olympic gold medals, a record she shares with her sister Venus.

"I haven't really thought much about Tokyo, because it was supposed to be last year and now it's this year, and then there is

Grand Slams. It's just a lot. So I have really been taking it one day at a time to a fault, and I definitely need to figure out my next moves."

Williams says she is "ready" to get started again in Rome as preparation for the French Open which starts in Paris on May 24.

"It's good to start fresh but it's also hard to start fresh," she told a press conference on Monday.

"I feel like I'm good. I'm in Rome. I'm going to have some good matches here

hopefully and then I will be at another Grand Slam which always makes me excited. So I think either way I'll be ready."

Williams has been stuck on 23 major trophies, one behind Australia's Margaret Court, since winning the 2017 Australian Open while pregnant.

Since then she has given birth, returned to the tour, and finished runner-up at four major tournaments — after losing just six out of 28 finals before 2017. — AFP