

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | 28 MAY 2021

## WEATHER



Max: 38°C  
Min: 26°C  
RH: 37%  
Rain: Trace

Forecast: Partly cloudy.  
Thunderstorms likely.  
Max/Min temp. 39/25°C

## ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana

Tithi: Vaishakha Bahula

Vidya till 9.38 am

Star: Moola till 8.05 pm

Varjyanam: 6.39 pm to 8.05 pm

and from 4.54 am (Saturday)

Durmuhurtham: 8.20 am to

9.12 am; 12.39 pm to 1.31 pm

Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

HJRI CALENDAR

Shawal 15, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.33 am

Zohar: 12.23 pm

Asar: 4.47 pm

Maghrib: 6.51 pm

Isha: 8.05 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.45 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.41 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 9.01 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 5.16 AM

## COUNTER POINT



Not cash... he has sent Coronil worth ₹1,000 crore, sir!

## SHORT TAKES

## Fuel price hiked

## 14th time in May

**New Delhi:** Petrol price was increased by 24 paise per litre and diesel by 29 paise a litre on Thursday, according to a price notification by fuel retailers. The increase – 14th this month – took petrol and diesel prices to an all-time high across India. The price of petrol, which had already crossed the ₹100-mark in several cities in Rajasthan, MP and Maharashtra, breached the barrier in Thane district on Thursday.

## RAW, IB chiefs get 1-yr extension

**New Delhi:** Research and Analysis Wing chief Samant Kumar Goel and Intelligence Bureau head Arvind Kumar were given a one-year extension in their services, an official order said on Thursday. Goel, a 1984-batch IPS officer from Punjab cadre, would continue to be the Secretary of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) for a period one-year beyond the present tenure which ends on June 30, the order said.

## World may breach 1.5°C temp rise

**Paris:** The world may temporarily breach the 1.5°C warming mark in the next five years, according to an updated assessment of global climate trends on Thursday. The World Meteorological Organisation said there was a 40 per cent chance of the annual average global temperature surpassing 1.5°C above pre-industrial temperatures.

## HEALTH CARE

## Ex gratia for all health staff to be decided on case-to-case basis

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The Telangana Junior Doctors Association called off its strike on Thursday though the issue of ex gratia for healthcare workers who died after contracting Covid-19 in the line of duty has not been resolved by the state government.

A verbal assurance has

been given to the association by the state government that dependents of healthcare workers will be given an ex gratia.

Junior doctors have been given a 15-per cent increase in stipend and a government order has been issued for the purpose.

Senior residents will get ₹80,500 per month instead of the ₹70,000 per month they were earning.

A GOVERNMENT order will be issued on increasing the stipend of junior doctors

SENIOR RESIDENTS will now get ₹80,500 per month instead of the ₹70,000 per month they were earning

In a meeting with health secretary S.M. Rizvi and director of health and med-

ical education Dr Ramesh Reddy, it was also agreed that there will be allocation of beds for doctors and their family members in Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences.

A junior doctor said, "We mention the ex gratia issue too be resolved but the government is of the opinion that it will differ on a case-to-case basis. They

have promised us that they will look into this. Due to the ongoing pandemic and keeping the patients in mind, we are calling off the strike. We will resume duty immediately."

Indian Medical Association Telangana chapter has appealed to junior doctors and the government on Thursday morning to resolve the issue amicably.



## WORLD | 9

## Hong Kong reduces direct public vote



## SPORTS | 12

## Villarreal win Europa title in epic shootout



## TABLOID

## Breathing technique to reduce anxiety

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## Twitter cannot dictate terms to largest democracy: Centre

### Tech giant terms it police 'intimidation'

**New Delhi, May 27:** Twitter on Thursday called the visit by Delhi Police to its offices a form of "intimidation" and said it was concerned about its employees and the potential threat to freedom of expression.

In its first official statement after the Delhi Police visited the company's offices in Delhi and in Gurugram, Twitter said it will continue to be strictly guided by principles of transparency and protecting freedom of expression. The company said it will "strive" to comply with applicable

law in India to keep its service available in the country. "Right now, we are concerned by recent events regarding our employees in India and the potential threat to freedom of expression for the people we serve," Twitter said.

"We, alongside many in civil society in India and around the world, have concerns with regards to the use of intimidation tactics by the police in response to enforcement of our global Terms of Service, as well as with core elements of the new IT rules." — PTI

Opposition to target the government over Covid-19 as containing 'manipulat-

ed media', which prompted the police to visit its offices late on Monday.

### Yaas downs bridge on river Kanchi



A bridge on river Kanchi collapsed due to heavy rain triggered by Cyclone Yaas, in the Tamar area of Ranchi, on Thursday. A day after the Yaas ravaged the east coast, a thunderous rain due to depression left five persons dead in West Bengal, while in Odisha the threat of floods loomed large. ■ More reports on Page 8 — PTI

The reference being of the alleged 'toolkit' — the one that Twitter, which uses fact-checking websites, tagged as 'manipulated media'. The Delhi Police is investigating it on a complaint by Congress of the 'toolkit' being fake.

The Ministry of Electronics and IT issued a statement saying India has a glorious tradition of free speech and democratic practices dating back centuries. "Twitter's statement is an attempt to dictate its terms to the world's largest democracy. Through its actions and deliberate defiance, Twitter seeks to undermine India's legal system," it asserted.

Stating that Twitter has refused to comply with new digital rules, the ministry said the purported commitment of the US-based firm to India not only sounds hollow but self-serving. — PTI

As regards the encroach-

### INTER SECOND YEAR PRACTICAL EXAMS PUT OFF

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) on Thursday announced the postponement of practical examinations for the second year general courses and first and second year vocational courses, in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. The exams were earlier scheduled from May 29 to June 7, and have now been postponed until further orders.

The circular released on Thursday added that a review meeting will take place in the first week of June, and the practical examination dates will be announced at least 15 days prior to the exams.

A decision will also likely be taken by the first week of June on the conduct of theory exams that were earlier postponed due to the Covid-19 spread. As per sources, the exams will likely take place between mid-July and September.

The CBSE had proposed the timeline in a meeting with the Union education minister earlier this week. The Telangana government is likely to go by the CBSE's decision, an official in the education department had told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Meanwhile, the Intermediate Board has opened admissions to the first year for the new academic year 2021-22.

## Probe report pins down Etala's kin

V&E, ACB report to be submitted within 2 days

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The probe by Vigilance & Enforcement (V&E) and Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) into the alleged encroachment of assigned and endowments lands in Masaipet and Devaryamjal by former health minister Etala Rajendar and his family members has been completed.

Officials are expected to submit their inquiry report to the state government by Saturday. With this, all eyes are on the state government again over its next moves against Rajendar.

The probe reports found several irregularities in the purchase and registration of these prohibited lands, it is learnt. Multiple teams from the two agencies conducted inquiries in Masaipet to come forward and give evidence. Of them, 61 farmers came in and the remaining 14 farmers submitted petitions seeking a re-survey of their land.

### TELANGANA HC DISMISSES PLEA OF ETALA'S WIFE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD MAY 27

In a jolt to former minister Etala Rajendar's family in the land row at Achampet village, the Telangana High Court on Thursday dismissed an interim application filed by E. Jamuna, one of the directors of Jamuna Hatcheries and wife of Rajendar.

Inquiries reportedly found that 160 illegal constructions, which include godowns and guest houses have come up on Devaryamjal temple lands, mostly owned by Rajendar's family members and his alleged benamis.

■ Page 2: Seven godowns built in name of Jamuna

## Rahul for PM role in L'dweep

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, MAY 27

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his urgent intervention in Lakshadweep. He demanded that "anti-people policies" being announced by the Lakshadweep administrator, Praful Khoda Patel, be withdrawn. He also claimed that the dilution in

quarantine rules by Patel in Lakshadweep has led to a "lethal spike in Covid cases".

Patel, a former MLA of Gujarat who served as a minister of state for home under Narendra Modi's chief ministership in Gujarat, was made administrator of the country's smallest Union Territory in December 2020. He is being blamed for the Covid-19 surge in Lakshadweep and is accused of creating social

tension in Lakshadweep where Muslims form nearly 97 per cent of the population and most are Scheduled Tribes.

Gandhi, has said that the "administration demolished structures used by the fisherfolk, fired contractual workers in various government departments". Calling the moves "draconian", Gandhi said these "regulations penalise dissent and undermine grassroots democracy".



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MAY 2021

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## ED probe establishes conspiracy, files prosecution plaint

From page 1

Officials said the ED investigations have established that Revanth Reddy, Venkata Veeriah and others had conspired to bribe Stephenson for securing his vote for Narender Reddy, the TD candidate in the Legislative Council election that was slated for June 1, 2015.

In pursuance of their conspiracy, the accused had contacted Stephenson and promised him a bribe of ₹ 5 crore. Stephenson made a complaint to the ACB police and a 'trap' was laid.

His meeting with the accused was secretly audio-video recorded.

A phone conversation between Stephenson and Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu was also verified by forensic experts and the voice was found to be that of Naidu. As per the case, the accused persons met the complainant at his house on May 30, 2015, and made the bribe offer.

The next day, Revanth Reddy, Harry Sebastian and Rudra Uday Simha came to the house of Malcolm Taylor, a friend of Stephenson, to hand over the advance bribe amount of ₹ 50 lakh in cash. This was when they were

trapped by the ACB and taken into custody along with the seized cash, officials said.

"The cash had been handed over to the accused by Krishna Keerthan, son of Narendra Reddy, to help his father win the election," officials said.

ED's investigation has established that the accused persons committed the scheduled offence as well as the offence of money laundering by dealing with the bribe money. ED therefore filed a prosecution complaint against the accused persons, with a prayer to hold trial against them for committing the offence.

"The cash had been handed over to the accused by Krishna Keerthan, son of Narendra Reddy, to help his father win the election," officials said. ED's investigation has established that the accused persons committed the scheduled offence as well as the offence of money laundering by dealing with the bribe money.

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# Jolt to Jamuna Hatcheries

High Court dismisses petition by Etala's wife on land survey

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD MAY 27

## Seven godowns built in name of Rajendar's wife

FROM PAGE 1

In a jolt to former minister Etala Rajendar's family in the land row at Achampet village, the Telangana High Court on Thursday dismissed an interim application filed by E. Jamuna, one of the directors of Jamuna Hatcheries and wife of Rajendar. The plea was to restrain the revenue and survey authorities from conducting a survey of the lands and prevent any further action on the survey notices issued by the deputy inspector of survey in Toopran division of Medak district.

Considering the lockdown constraints and the pandemic situation, the court directed the local tahsildar to fix another date for the survey in the second or third week of June.

The court of Justice B. Vijay sen Reddy was dealing with the petition.

Earlier, the petitioner and other partners in Jamuna Hatcheries had approached the High Court complaining that the revenue authorities had conducted the survey without following the procedure and rushed into their lands to threaten them in an unlawful manner.

At that time, the court directed the revenue authorities to follow the procedure and rules of rev-

lands for Jamuna Hatcheries owned by Rajendar's close relatives.

The Medak collector's report submitted to the government stated that Rajendar's family had possessed 66 acres illegally. The former minister's kin challenged this in the High Court, which however dismissed the report and directed the government not to initiate any action against Rajendar till further orders.

On May 2, the CM ordered another probe by a committee comprising four IAS

officials into alleged encroachment of endowment lands in Devaryamjal. Even that inquiry was questioned by the High Court while hearing a petition which sought a halt to the inquiry.

On May 23, the CM ordered a third probe against Rajendar following a complaint from Pitla Mahesh Mudiraj, a resident of Ravalkol village in Medchal mandal that the former minister's son Nitin Reddy had grabbed his land. This inquiry is still

on. Justice Reddy also said that the petitioner can approach the court if the resumption orders was passed against their land or if any adverse order was issued.

Justice Reddy also said that the petitioner can approach the court if the resumption orders was passed against their land or if any adverse order was issued.

He reminded the petitioner about the earlier court order, which directed the authorities to follow the procedure while doing the survey. How can the court stop the survey when due procedure followed, he asked.

Another petition filed P. Krishna Reddy, agriculturist hailing from Devarayamjal village in Shamirpet mandal, sought a court order to the endowments and revenue officials not to dispossess the petitioner from his land admeasuring seven acres and three guntas in the village in Medchal Malkajgiri district.

Justice Vijay sen Reddy asked the commissioner of the endowments department and the district collector of Medchal not to demolish sheds existing on the land and not evict the tenants from this land.

## APOLLO TARGETS 1 MILLION JABS EVERY WEEK

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

One million vaccines have been administered across 80 locations in India by Apollo Hospitals Group. Priority groups of frontline workers, high-risk population and corporate employees have been a part of the drive.

Apollo Hospitals Group is the largest vaccinator in the private sector and it will further ramp up the immunisation program.

The one million vaccination milestone was achieved in three weeks and now they intend to administer one million every week.

Efforts are underway to double the figure in July as it targets to complete 20 million jabs by

"We would like to thank the Union and state governments and manufacturers of Covishield and Covaxin for their support. We believe that no one is safe till everyone is vaccinated," stated Shobana Kamineni, executive vice-chairperson, Apollo Group of Hospitals.

Sputnik V of Russia, the third vaccine approved in India, will be available at Apollo Hospitals, from the second week of June.

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Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar inspects a checkpost near Secunderabad as police personnel keep 'Covid helmets' to create awareness of the disease on Thursday.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

## Lockdown paying off, says DGP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Director-General of Police M. Mahendar Reddy interacted with Cyberabad police staff and assessed the lockdown situation at the ground-level with Cyberabad police commissioner V.C. Sajjanar, who accompanied him to Kandlakoya, Suchitra and Kompa.

Cyberabad police booked 1,200 cases against viola-

tors on Thursday, including 51 four-wheelers, six three-wheelers and 51 two-wheelers.

The inter-state borders are closed except for the permitted vehicular traffic. We have been successful in curtaining vehicular traffic during the lockdown.

People must be partners in police efforts for the common good," the DGP said, adding that the police were working hard to ensure strict implementation of

#### lockdown rules.

Talking to the media he said barring a few stray incidents of violations, the sixteen days of lockdown had passed off peacefully. People are voluntarily observing lockdown with their self-imposed restrictions.

No amount of policing will work without the cooperation of the people, he said.

At least 5,000 personnel

are deployed to ensure that lockdown is implemented strictly. Sajjanar said.

"Covid-19 cases are on the decline and we must continue to carry forward the tempo in our own interest. Now that vaccines are also available and are being given, people must volunteer to take them. They shouldn't believe rumours about them as vaccines are the only weapons we have in the fight against the dreaded virus," he said.

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"Covid-19 cases are on the decline and we must continue to carry forward the tempo in our own interest. Now that vaccines are also available and are being given, people must volunteer to take them. They shouldn't believe rumours about them as vaccines are the only weapons we have in the fight against the dreaded virus," he said.

Instead of the normal plastic sack in which oxygen first goes into before entering the mask, a urosac bag that is much sturdier and can hold more oxygen under pressure has been used.

Another modification was a T-joint with a filter to the pipe through which the expelled air leaves, with the filter holding back any virus particles from escaping into the air.

"We found that the oxygen used for a patient has gone down by 50 per cent by using the modified mask," Dr. Veronica said, adding that the goal was to make the most out of the oxygen supplies and not let any part of it go waste.

"The first model was used

## HAJ APPLICANTS ASKED TO UPDATE DATA ON COVID-19 VACCINATION

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Pilgrims who have applied to go on the Haj this year have been advised to furnish the details of vaccination. B.

Shafiqullah, State Haj Committee executive officer advised the intending pilgrims to update their information about vaccination and their interest to proceed for Haj during the pandemic.

He said those who are interested to perform Haj have to furnish the details of immunisation like the number of doses taken

## SBI DONATES 10 OXYGEN CONCENTRATORS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The State Bank of India, Telangana Circle, donated 10 oxygen concentrators to help in the treatment of Covid-19 patients on Thursday.

The five-litre capacity concentrators were made available at the Rotary Club of Banjara Hills Charitable Trust-Sparsh Hospice, Centre of Palliative Care which will be lending them to those in need for free, after due process of vetting requests.

The bank also undertook distribution of dry ration kits to Covid-19 affected families at Yousufguda, Rehman Nagar, Krishnamangal, Laxminagar, Yellareddyguda, Ameerpet, Srinagar, Mansoorabad through the NGOs Heaven Homes Society, Ashray Akriti and Amma Cheyutha Foundation.

THE BANK also undertook distribution of dry ration kits.

## Modified CPAP mask helps patients

SANJAY SAMUEL  
PAUL IDC  
HYDERABAD MAY 27



An alerted oxygen mask used by the patients at King Koti hospital turns out to be more effective and saves 50 per cent of oxygen consumption.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

based on the one developed by Dr Sanjeev Peter, a cardiologist from Hyderabad who works in Gujarat. "We are alumni from the Christian Medical College, Vellore. When I heard about his invention, I contacted him and he shared a video with details of how to go about making one."

"We found that the oxygen used for a patient has gone down by 50 per cent by using an NRB," she told Deccan Chronicle.

Dr. Veronica said she developed the first 'prototype' with the help of a plumber and it worked well. "The design itself was

based on the one developed by Dr Sanjeev Peter, a cardiologist from Hyderabad who works in Gujarat. "We are alumni from the Christian Medical College, Vellore. When I heard about his invention, I contacted him and he shared a video with details of how to go about making one."

"We found that the oxygen used for a patient has gone down by 50 per cent by using the modified mask," Dr. Veronica said, adding that the goal was to make the most out of the oxygen supplies and not let any part of it go waste.

"The first model was used

on a patient for 48 hours and with good results. We made three more, which looked a little more elegant than the prototype. We never thought we will use the three immediately but had to put them to work the same day," she said.

The biggest advantage with the modified masks, Dr. Veronica said, was not just the reduced wastage of oxygen, but the relief the patients experienced. They realised

## IN BRIEF

## 2 held for stealing bikes worth ₹14L

**Hyderabad:** The Meerpeta police nabbed two persons on charges of automobile theft and recovered 13 bikes worth ₹14 lakh from them. The accused were identified as Mohd Wajeed Khan, 30, who works at Kotahpet fruit market, and Zaki, 20, a daily wage labourer from Bapujinagar. "The two were involved in 20 cases at Sarornagar, Chaitanyapuram, Vasthalipuram, Hayathnagar, Meerpeta and Uppal among others. They were earlier arrested in an automobile theft case last year. After being released from prison, they continued to commit thefts in Meerpeta, Chaitanyapuram and other places," the police said in a statement.

## 3 women rescued from flesh trade

**Hyderabad:** Special teams of the Rachakonda police arrested three traffickers and rescued three victims, thereby busting an online interstate human trafficking racket. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU), along with the Balapur police, conducted a decoy operation after contacting the accused, Ramavathi Nageswar Rao alias Charan Naik, through an online application. After 'bargaining' a price, the accused shared a location in Balapur where they came to the place in a taxi along with two women. Immediately, the decoy team apprehended the traffickers, Obbilisetti Satish, Ramavathi Nageswar Rao and Karidgi Mahesh Goud, and rescued the two women. They later confessed that Shiva rented a house at Rehmangarh, Yousufguda, and was running the prostitution business through online/offline along with the others.

## 16 OF A FAMILY BOOKED FOR ATTACKING HOSP

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The management of a private hospital lodged a complaint against the family members of a patient, who allegedly succumbed to Covid-19 while undergoing treatment, for reportedly attacking the medical staff on Thursday. The Punjagutta police booked cases against 16 people, including family members of the victim.

The patient, V. Vamsi was admitted to Virinchi Hospital on May 7 after testing positive for Covid-19. His condition deteriorated and he died on May 22. "His body was handed over to the family but days after his cremation, the family returned to the hospital demanding an explanation for his death. Some doctors reportedly informed Vamsi's family that his death was due to medical negligence by the Virinchi doctors," said the police.

On Thursday afternoon, a group of 16 people attempted to attack the Virinchi doctor and damaged the computer and a glass door, claiming that the hospital was trying to save the doctor. "A criminal case has been registered and they will be sent to judicial remand," Punjagutta police said. The family has alleged negligence on the hospital management's part and said the victim was given an overdose of steroids and wrong dialysis. The man reportedly died after suffering a cardiac arrest. The family members alleged that the hospital has overcharged them and the final bill came to ₹8 lakh.

# Pvt. hosps ask for black fungus drug

Not enough amphotericin B vials for treatment

**KANIZA GARARI | DC**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Quantities of amphotericin-B vials for treating black fungus are insufficient in private hospitals and ENT doctors are urging that the state government must reflect the appropriate cases for the Centre to allot the medicine. A senior ENT doctor, on condition of anonymity, said, "When there are 30 patients, vials that are supplied can be used for treating a maximum of 18 of them. How are we to treat them? The alternative drug posaconazole is not effective and not at all helping in the recovery process. Amphotericin B is the first line of treatment and only that will help in dealing with black fungus."

Private hospitals want the government to increase the stock of medicine and ensure that there is sufficient supply like it is in the ENT Hospital. Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar and health secretary Syed Ali Murtaza Rizvi visited ENT Hospital Thursday evening. They advised doctors to work in two shifts and swiftly carry out surgeries so that there are early discharges.

A senior doctor at ENT Hospital explained, "We have sufficient stock of medicines to treat our patients. Most have invasion in the eyes. There are a minimum of 20 surgeries

- PRESENTLY THERE are 258 patients in government hospitals and they all are being administered amphotericin B.

Presently there are 258 patients in government hospitals and they all are being administered amphotericin B. Approximately 20 surgeries are performed every day. Around 20 patients have been recently shifted from Gandhi Hospital.

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar and health secretary Syed Ali Murtaza Rizvi visited ENT Hospital Thursday evening. They advised doctors to work in two shifts and swiftly carry out surgeries so that there are early discharges.

Private hospitals state that patients are also coming early with sinus problems. Clearing the nose region helps to save it from further spread but without the medicine the invasion will not stop. Amphotericin is an important aspect of the treatment process and without it the results will not be as expected, he said.

every day and it will be scaled up soon. The patients are in the 40-65 years age-group. Around 15 patients were discharged on Thursday.

A senior health official on condition of anonymity says, "Patients, by and large, are coming to the nodal centre. If there are more cases in private hospitals we are keen to verify before supplying medicines. There is a fear that there will be black marketing of the medicines for black fungus. For this reason, limited stocks are provided to private hospitals."

Private hospitals state that patients are also coming early with sinus problems. Clearing the nose region helps to save it from further spread but without the medicine the invasion will not stop.

Amphotericin is an important aspect of the treatment process and without it the results will not be as expected, he said.

## 5,895 BOOKED FOR LOCKDOWN VIOLATIONS IN HYDERABAD

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The Hyderabad city police booked 5,894 cases on Thursday for lockdown violations and seized 3,326 vehicles, a report published by the cops revealed. The data given was till 8.30 pm on Thursday.

Out of the total 5,894 cases, 894 were from east zone, 1,032 were from central zone, 1,109 were from west zone, 203 from north zone, 497 from south and 2,159 were booked by traffic officials.

The numbers also include 1,197 cases of no-mask violation, 332 cases of not maintaining social distance, 33 cases of large gatherings and 9 cases of consuming alcohol/tobacco in public places.

- OUT OF the total 5,894 cases, 894 were from east zone, 1,032 were from central zone, 1,109 were from west zone, 203 from north zone, 497 from south.

# AIG to administer drug cocktail on 65+ patients

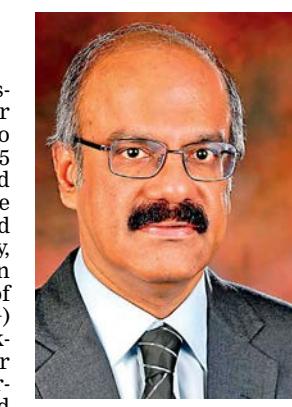
**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Monoclonal antibodies-based treatment for Covid-19 can be given to patients who are above 65 years of age, co-morbid conditions and immune compromised only, stated Dr D. Nageshwar Reddy, chairman of Asian Institute of Gastroenterology (AIG) Hospitals. This drug cocktail gained traction after it was administered to former US president Donald Trump. But is it really a wonder drug?

The real-world evidence for this drug cocktail is yet to be established. The New England Journal of Medicine has stated that it helps reduce hospitalisation or death by 70 per cent.

But Dr Reddy states that the timing and patient selection is very important.

"Patients aged over 65, obese, uncontrolled diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and those on immunosuppressants like cancer patients are ideal for this treatment," he said. The drug costs ₹70,000.



## AIG TO STUDY MEDS MIX ON DOUBLE MUTANT

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The Asian Institute of Gastroenterology (AIG) here has taken up the study of the efficacy of monoclonal antibodies on the double mutant B.1.617. So far the drug cocktail has proved to be effective against other variants in the world, according to reports in medical journals.

AIG is planning to use the drug cocktail on 100 patients if they agree to its use and fall in the age and time bracket of Covid-19 illness.

- SO FAR the drug cocktail has proved to be effective against other variants in the world, according to reports in medical journals.

## State logs 3,614 new Covid cases

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

there is not enough of an awareness of the disease.

The fall in the number of Covid-19 cases might be seen as an encouraging sign but public health specialists opine that the missing numbers mean more than what meets the eye.

It is found that more samples were collected from Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Medchal Malkajgiri and the major towns of the districts. In the rural areas, only those cases that come to the hospitals get tested. Random testing is a challenge in far flung areas, opined public health specialists.

The GHMC area has reported 504 cases, Ranga Reddy 192 and Medchal Malkajgiri 204. Ranga Reddy district has reported 1,455 cases from May 21 onwards and Medchal Malkajgiri 1,385.

The total number of Covid-19 cases stands at 5,67,517. Death reporting is done only from the government hospitals, public health specialists say. The deaths at private hospitals and at homes have not been included in the bulletin which puts the toll at 3,207.

A doctor from the Indian Medical Association stated: "There will have to be an independent analysis to ascertain the number of deaths. The World Health Organisation has revised death figures in their schedule and there were a large number of deaths in the first wave. A similar exercise will have to be taken up independently in districts and state-wise to ascertain the actual data on the number of people who died due to Covid-19," he proposed.

Testing in rural areas is not very high as

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- |                                          |                                                       |                                             |                                           |
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## Konda Reddy turns club into Covid-19 care centre

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27



Former MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy inaugurates the 10-bed Covid-19 care centre at the youth club run by the Justice Konda Madhava Reddy Foundation in Chevella. — DC

get admission for treatment. He asked mandal-level leaders irrespective of their political affiliations to inform the people of the availability of the youth club that offers treatment for Covid-19 patients with mild symptoms could

## SHORT TAKES

93 CR FISHLINGS,  
TO BE RELEASED  
INTO RESERVOIRSDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

About 93 crore fishlings and 10 crore prawns seedlings would be released into 28,000 reservoirs and irrigation tanks this year to benefit the fishermen community.

Animal husbandry minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav on Thursday reviewed the implementation of the scheme and told mediapersons that the government will spend ₹89 crore on fishlings and ₹25 crore prawns.

The minister directed officials to call for tenders soon to procure required fishlings and prawns seedlings.

He said that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao was encouraging traditional occupations to strengthen the rural economy and provide a source of livelihood to those dependent on these occupations.

He said that 34,024 tanks had been identified for fish and prawn farming of which 28,704 were geo-tagged and the rest were in the process of being geo-tagged. "This will enable the government to effectively monitor the fish and prawn farming," he said.

KAVITHA TELLS  
UN FOOD BODY OF  
TS GOVT WORKDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Kalvakuntla Kavitha, MLC and Telangana Jagruthi president, interacted with Bishow Parajuli, UN World Food Programme (WFP) representative and country director, India, on a virtual call on Thursday.

Parajuli stressed on the need to bring the government, the private sector and NGOs such as Telangana Jagruthi together to fulfil the vision of a hunger- and malnutrition-free India. He congratulated Kavitha and requested her to convey his appreciation to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao on their effort to end hunger and malnutrition in the state.

In particular, the WFP representative commended the state government on the Arogya Lakshmi initiative. The provision of mid-day meals at government hospitals for not just the mother and child but also attendants was a measure that was particularly appreciated by Parajuli.

Parajuli and the World Food Programme team also appreciated the efforts of Kavitha in her constituency to promote initiatives and build awareness to eradicate malnutrition among adolescent girls.

Kavitha spoke about the good work that the state government had done under the leadership of Chandrashekhar Rao in terms of increasing access to food and eradicating hunger, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. She also discussed the initiatives to fortify rice and other crops to combat malnutrition.

**PARAJULI STRESSED ON** the need to bring the government, the private sector and NGOs such as Telangana Jagruthi together to fulfil the vision of a hunger- and malnutrition-free India. He congratulated Kavitha and requested her to convey his appreciation to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao on their effort to end hunger and malnutrition in the state.

Etala receives  
Konda support

Ex-MP, Kodandaram say, stay as MLA

Peddi Reddy not  
for Etala in BJPDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Former MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy and Telangana Jana Samiti (TJS) president Prof. Kodandaram met former minister Etala Rajendar at his residence in Shamirpet on Thursday. The two leaders checked with the former minister about rumours he might join the BJP and discussed the political situation.

Both leaders expressed their moral support to Rajendar who was recently removed from the state Cabinet by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao. The leaders suggested to Rajendar to avoid taking future decisions in a hurry.

The former MP told Rajendar that if he resigned from the Assembly, it will send wrong signals to political circles. He must rather wait for the present inquiry over his land grab allegations to complete.

Sources said that the both leaders suggested to Rajendar to remain neutral for now so that he would be in a better position to expose the corruption of the present government before the public. They

extended their support to him in the present scenario where the Chief Minister is seen to be targeting him.

Vishweshwar Reddy alleged that Chandrashekhar Rao attacked the Rajendar in a rude manner. He asked the CM why he did not dare suspend Rajendar from the party. The former MP said Chandrashekhar Rao does not have the guts to do so. Vishweshwar Reddy urged Rajendar to join hands with him and fight against Chandrashekhar Rao's "dictatorial style".

After meeting Rajendar, both the leaders addressed the media. Prof. Kodandaram said the attack on Rajendar involved issues of self-respect and his party will also fight with the former minister if he continued to remain an independent. He said the CM treats other leaders in the party as his slaves. "KCR is not in a mood to save democracy. Let



Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy visited the ENT Hospital at Koti in Hyderabad on Thursday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

## 259cr vax doses will be ready by yr-end: Kishan

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy on Thursday visited the ENT Hospital at Koti, the facility dedicated to the treatment of mucormycosis, and the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (Nims). He inspected the wards and interacted with patients and took stock of the facilities.

Reddy also visited the Covid-19 ICU ward at Nims. He reviewed the availability of beds, ventilators, including those provided under the PM-Cares fund, oxygen and medicine supplies.

Speaking to the me-

ate governments had taken action on a warfooting, with 11 pharma companies producing the medicine.

He said three lakh doses would be produced by May 31 and two lakh would be made available from abroad in the first week of June. He said the Covid-19 vaccine would be produced in 16 companies in the country, of which three are in Telangana state.

Kishan Reddy said, "It's time to work together; we need to build confidence among the affected." He said that stern action will be taken against hospitals, which charge exorbitantly.

## Srisailam hydel power plant to be fully operational by next month

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The work on restoration of Srisailam hydel power plant's left bank hydro election station is nearing completion. Five of the six units damaged in the fire in August last have been restored. The six units together produce 900mw, these having a capacity of 150mw each.

The remaining unit is expected to become operational in a month's time.

A major fire broke out in the plant on August 20, damaging all the six units. Seven power department employees two persons from a private battery company died in the mishap.

A short circuit was said to be the reason but the state government had ordered a departmental inquiry as well as a CID probe. There is no clarity on the outcome of these inquiries. Officials refused to answer a question whether the probe reports were submitted to the government.

Of the damaged six units, the first and second units were restored within two months, in October. These plants resumed power generation of 300MW.

In December, a unit was

restored and in January another unit. Last week, officials restored the third unit. The trial run was successfully conducted under the supervision of Srisailam power plant chief engineer M. Prabhakar Rao. Around ₹10 crore was spent for restoration of this unit.

Interestingly, officials of the TS Power Generation Company (TSGenco) restored the power plant on their own without taking any help from others. This resulted in a savings of hundreds of crores for the state exchequer.

HC: CAN ADVOCATES,  
CLERKS BE EXEMPTED  
FROM LOCKDOWN?DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy directed Advocate-General B.S. Prasad to get instructions from the state government by May 31 as to whether advocates and advocates clerks can be exempted from the lockdown.

The judge was dealing with a petition stating that 40,000 advocates and their clerks are facing hardships in performing their legitimate duties during the lockdown.

Vishnuvardhan Reddy, senior counsel, appearing for the petitioner, furnished the proceedings issued by the Andhra Pradesh DGP exempting advocates from the lockdown restrictions. The Delhi, Karnataka and Kerala governments had provided similar exemptions, he said.

Justice Reddy observed that special e-passes should be issued to advocates as they were to attend courts, file petitions and meet clients.

The court also sought the government's view on the entry of advocates into Telangana from Andhra Pradesh. A petition was filed by M. Kishore Babu, advocate, who practices in both the Telangana and Andhra Pradesh High Courts, seeking a direction to the principal secretary and the DGP on preventing advocates and advocate clerks from entering Telangana state after completing work in Andhra Pradesh.

● **VISHNUvardhan REDDY**, senior counsel, appearing for the petitioner, furnished the proceedings issued by the Andhra Pradesh DGP exempting advocates from the lockdown restrictions. The Delhi, Karnataka and Kerala governments had provided similar exemptions, he said.

**HIS LOVE LIVES ON**  
"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." — 2 Timothy 4:7

**Rev. M Jayavarthana Joseph**  
Rtd DS/Pastor (MCI, HRC)  
DOB : 26.05.2021

We Deeply Mourn and Inform the Demise of Our Beloved Father, Grandfather and Uncle.  
May his Soul Rest In Everlasting Peace. Amen

With Love, Inserted By: Family Members, Relatives & Friends.

(S/2122/D00251)

## WOMAN TAKES LIFE; HER MARRIAGE HAD BEEN CANCELLED

Hyderabad: A 22-year-old woman died by suicide her home in Shamirpet on Thursday. Police said the

action followed the cancellation of her marriage with a man from MC Pally.

The victim, Anusha, was

reportedly upset with the decision. She took her life when her family was away, police said.

**Obituary**

Shri Madireddy Ranganatha Rao

Madireddy Ranganatha Rao passed on peacefully on 24th May 2021. Fondly referred to as 'Major' by his friends, he was a doting father, husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather and a wonderful friend to all. With his generous love and care, he always had an unforgettable exuberant presence. He was a pillar of support to those around him and always went out of his way to help others.

He will forever remain in our hearts, thoughts and prayers. May his soul rest in peace with the divine presence.

From his family and friends

(CA-3626)

**Sad Demise**

"The best portion of a man's life is his little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love" — W. Wordsworth

**MAHENDER KUMAR BHAGWATH**  
DOB: 23.02.1942 Funeral & DOD: 27.05.2021

To us you were more than a person, you were a place where we always felt happy, safe and at home.

Fondly remembered by  
Wife : Alice Bhagwath  
Daughter : Sanjeevitha  
Son-in-law : Ajay  
Grandson : Rahul  
Neice & Nephew's : Deepanjali, Maheesh, Rakesh & Gautham  
Ph : +91 93488 83636

**IN FOND REMEMBRANCE OF**  
**Mrs. Jyotsna Paul Elamala**  
(19.12.1949 - 28.05.2017)

**WE LIVE TOGETHER**

**ALETHEA (DAUGHTER)**  
**AMADEUS (GRAND SON)**  
**CHRISTOPHER PAUL (HUSBAND)**  
**SUMAN (SON-IN-LAW)**

**HOME CALL**

I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 2 Tim: 4:7

**BRO. JAYAKAR CHAISE**  
A Prisoner of Hope  
Anchored to the same hope  
Son: DAVID SUDHIR  
Daughter: ESTHER RUBY  
Daughter in law: SUSAN  
Son in Law: SOLOMON  
Grand Children: ASHRAY, AIDEN & MORIAH & CHAISE Family  
Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for He (Jesus) who promised is faithful. Heb 10:23

DOB 19/07/1934 DOD 27/05/2021  
9000130797, 9916516611

**5th ANNIVERSARY**

**KOTHANATH KRISHNAN UNNI NAIR**  
DOB: 15.05.1935 DOD: 28.05.2016  
Though you are not with us, you are always in our hearts  
Fondly Remembered by:  
Children: Mallika, Nandhu, Nalinji, Gopa Kumar, Venu Gopal, Reghu, Sindhu Vijaya, Nidhi, Rahul and Rohini

(S/2122/D00238)

**11th ANNIVERSARY**

**LATE SMT. GILLALA DEVAMMA**  
W/o Late G. Sathya  
DOB: 28-05-1961  
Your memories are always with us.  
Gillala Family - 9848050627

(S/2122/D00238)

**OBITUARY**

**SRI GS KUMAR**  
Former Director, Survey of India, Passed away on 27 May 2021.  
Cremation at Mahapraanthanam 7 am on 28 May, 2021  
Inserted by: Family Members Contact: 9849047827

**5th Day Remembrance**

**HENRY JOSEPH (BABA)**  
S/o Late J. M. Alexander & Molly Alexander  
DOB: 29.10.1970 DOD: 24.05.2021  
Today 28th May, Mass on Divyavani TV at 12 Noon & on GMET at 6.00 pm  
https://meet.google.com/ztxs-mnqk-yia

**BATTULA SUKUMAR**  
DOB: 25.02.1955, DOD: 28.05.2018  
We remember and miss you every second of the day, your memories will be with us always.  
Inserted By: Loving family members Ph.: 7660004556, 984721461

**3rd Death Anniversary in the Loving Memory of**

**S. Nand Kumar**  
(S/o S. Prakash Rao)  
Passed away on 18th May 2021  
11th Day Ceremony Today 28th May 2021  
You will always be remembered in our hearts forever.  
Shree Ganesh Enterprises  
Shree Venkateshwara Enterprises  
M : 9849707038, 9550949453

**11th Day Ceremony**

**SRI LATE GUDAVALLI RAM MOHAN RAO**  
DOB: 24-11-1956 DOD: 12-5-2021  
Inserted by: Family Members  
Ph: 97981725 0627 Pass Code: VIJAY 9963782797/9701550677

## SHORT TAKES

SEER SEETHES  
OVER TTD CLAIM  
ON HANUMANAVINASH P.  
SUBRAMANYAM | DC  
TIRUPATI, MAY 27

Govindananda Saraswathi Swami, head of the Sri Hanumad Janmabhoomi Tirtha Kshetra Trust, objecting to the TTD claims on Anjanadri Hills in Tirumala being the birthplace of Lord Hanuman, said on Thursday that the scholars committee set up by the TTD lacked authenticity and that their arguments were only causing confusion among the public.

The founder of the Karnataka-based trust termed the findings of the TTD scholars committee as baseless and shot off a letter to the TTD, dismissing its report. He claimed his trust had all the evidence to prove that Lord Hanuman was indeed born at Kishkindha hills at Pampa Kshetra in Koppal district of Karnataka.

In this regard, a debate on the birthplace of Hanuman took place between the scholars committee of TTD and Govindananda Saraswathi at the Sanskrit Vidyapeeth in Tirupati on Thursday.

Speaking to media persons after the debate, Govindananda Saraswathi disputed the evidence put forth by the TTD. "What is the need for a debate over the birthplace of Hanuman after all these Kalpali (4.32 billion years) and Manvantara (30.84,48,000 years) have passed?" he questioned, while stating that he was for a discussion on the issue in the presence of Sringeri Shankaracharya and Kanchi Kamakoti Peethapathi, Madhvacharyas, Tirumala Pedda Jeyar and Chinna Jeyar Swamis.

AP POSTPONES  
CLASS 10 EXAMS;  
REVIEW IN JULYDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 27

Under a mounting pressure from opposition, teachers, students and many sections of society, the AP government has once again postponed Class 10 exams in view of the Covid-19 crisis and will take a fresh decision on the exams after reviewing the situation in July.

The SSC exams were scheduled to start on June 7, but a huge surge in Coronavirus cases in the second wave has turned a big hurdle to conduct them. Minister for education Adimulapati Suresh said that SSC and Intermediate exams are must for the good future of students hence the government is keen to conduct the exams in the coming days after reviewing the pandemic situation.

The SSC exams are usually held in March every year but due to Covid-19 crisis, the AP government postponed the exams. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy reviewed the situation several times and announced summer holidays to the schools planning to conduct SSC exams from June 7 expecting containment of Covid situation. But things turned grimmer, forcing the government to postpone the exams.

Further several petitions are filed in the High Court, seeking cancellation of SSC exams. The teachers are also urging the government to administer Covid vaccine to all teachers without fail before conducting the exams. Further, teachers unions lamenting over the illnesses and deaths of teachers due to Coronavirus sought cancellation of exams, taking the second wave spread into account.

Main opposition Telugu Desham and other political parties have also been demanding cancelling of SSC exams to save the students from the clutches of Covid due to the surge in this second phase.

## Velvet glove, iron fist



Police personal give roses to motorists and seize their vehicle for violating the lockdown rules at Kavadi guda crossroads in Hyderabad on Thursday. Thousands of vehicles have been seized for lockdown rule violations.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

JUNIOR DOCS TO  
GET SENIOR  
RESIDENT  
STATUS IN APDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 27

Junior doctors in the state have received an assurance from the state government that their request for senior resident status to the PG final year students will be considered.

The junior doctors earlier threatened to boycott all duties if their request for senior resident status and hike in stipend for senior residents is not considered by the state government by May 27. They received a communication from the office of Director of Medical Examination that the PG final year students would be considered for getting senior resident status soon.

But, the PG final year students also want a hike in their monthly stipend for senior resident status to the tune of ₹80,000, which is currently very less at ₹40,000 at present. The junior residents of PG first year get a monthly stipend of ₹45,000, second year residents get ₹46,000 and those in final year are paid ₹48,000.

The PG first, second and some final year students are already attending all Covid and non-Covid duties at government, private hospitals and medical colleges at present following a spike in the caseload of Coronavirus to help the state government tackle the pandemic.

AP Junior Doctors' Association president Dr Rahul Roy said, "We have received a communication from the office of DME to consider PG final year students for giving senior resident status and we are thankful to the government. However, we want the government to consider a hike in stipend for senior residents also so that we will be helping the government to handle the Covid pandemic wholeheartedly with no issues at all."

**JUNIOR DOCTORS** earlier threatened to boycott all duties if their request is not met.

State warns against  
fleecing virus patients

Helpline receives multiple plaints against pvt hosps

2.1 lakh vax doses  
for superspreadersDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The state health department on Thursday warned that it would revoke all permissions and shut private hospitals overcharging or overfilling Covid-19 patients.

Director of Health Services Dr G. Srinivasa Rao told reporters that his office had issued 88 notices to 64 private hospitals, most of them in the city, following receipts of complaints related to patients being overcharged.

The helpline for receiving such complaints, he said, had received multiple complaints against some private hospitals.

As many as 2.1 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been kept ready for the kick-off of the drive to vaccinate superspreaders, targeted groups of people in the GHMC limits, while another 1.45 lakh doses were dispatched to the districts.

Director of Health Services Dr G. Srinivasa Rao said on Thursday.

A drive is being launched from Friday to provide the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine to people in what the state government has termed the superspreaders category, including civil supplies department workers, LPG delivery staff, petrol pump workers, dealers of fertilisers and pesticides, drivers of autorickshaws and cabs, fruits, vegetables and flower, meat, and fish vendors, liquor shop workers, kirana and general merchant shop workers, and print

**DR SRINIVASA RAO** said that the process of identifying and distribution tokens for vaccination for the superspreaders has begun and every effort will be made to ensure no one from these categories remains unvaccinated.

and electronic television employees.

Dr Srinivasa Rao said that the process of identifying and distribution tokens for vaccination for the super-spreaders has begun and every effort will be made to ensure no one from these categories remains unvaccinated.

He said the daily dip in fresh Covid-19 cases, the increasing number of patients recovering every day, the increasing availability of beds in hospitals, are all positive indications of the disease coming slowly under control in the state.

**THE HELPLINE** for receiving such complaints, he said, had received multiple complaints against some private hospitals.

the office of the Director of Health Services via WhatsApp at 9154170960, and upload images of the bills and the complaint, he added.

and upload images of the bills and the complaint, he added.

## 4 lakh found symptomatic

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

As many as 4,27,480 people have been found to be symptomatic cases, with some of them possibly infected by the Coronavirus, during the ongoing state-wide fever survey.

Not everyone who has been identified with symptoms is infected with the Coronavirus. But the basic medications for other health conditions including respiratory conditions such as severe

acute respiratory infection of various degrees, are the same as that of Covid-19, according to Director of Health Services Dr G. Srinivasa Rao.

He said that by identifying such symptomatic people early through the survey, not just Covid-19, but also other health conditions were being prevented from becoming issues that need additional medical interventions later.

He said the positivity rate of Covid-19 had been falling through May. While it was 8.69 per cent in the first week of this month, it fell to 7.22 per cent in the second week, to 6.13 per cent in the third week and currently during the fourth week as on May 27, stood at 4 per cent.

## IRRIGATION PROJECT

## Godavari diversion works gain pace

SAMPAT G.  
SAMRITAN | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 27

Marking a major milestone in the execution of the prestigious multipurpose Polavaram irrigation project, works to divert Godavari river from right to left canal from its main course by about 6.5 km to rejoin it again have commenced. The works will involve closure of the upstream cofferdam in a phased manner at Angaluru village in Devipatnam mandal in East Godavari district.

Water resources authorities say that for the construction of earth-cum-rock-fill dam of the project, cofferdams both upstream and downstream need to be built so that the dam will come up in between them.

The upstream cofferdam will be raised to a height of 42.5 metres and spread across the river bed for a length of nearly 2,480 metres. The entire length of cofferdam is divided into four reaches or gaps and these gaps which facilitate flow of water in its main course, are being

filled up at present one by one. So far, 7.56 lakh cubic metres of rock filling works in the gaps have been taken up.

Reach-1 started from zero point to 480 metres across the river and its present height is 35 metres. Reach-2, spread from 480 metres to 1,700 metres length, is raised to 38 metres. The heights of Reach-3 spread from 1,700 metres to 2,100 metres and also Reach-4, spread from 2,100 metres to 2,480, are being raised to 34 metres. By the end of June, the height of all four reach-

es will be raised to 38 metres and by the end of July, it will be 42.5 metres.

In first-of-its-kind diversion of the natural course of Godavari river by raising the upstream cofferdam, water will be routed through an approach channel to the spillway by lifting the crest gates to the pilot channel. The water will rejoin the main course of the original river downstream towards Dowleswaram near Rajahmundry. The works to raise the remaining 21 crest gates

will be completed by the first or second week of June.

Similarly, the cofferdam downstream will also be raised to a height of 30 metres. It has reached 22 metres and the works would be over by July.

Following a direction from Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to complete the Polavaram project by the end of 2021 and ensure supply of water for irrigation for the next kharif, the project executing agency MEIL has increased the pace of works.

Minor staffer at TRS  
man's house pregnantDC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, MAY 27

leader's house. Locals suspect the involvement of the leader and his driver in the incident.

Presently, officials of the child protection department have admitted the girl to a government hospital.

During a police investigation, the girl's parents informed that the 25-year-old driver at the leader's house molested their daughter in the name of love.

Her health was bad for the past few days. When she was taken to the hospital, doctors said that she was pregnant, they said. Police registered the case under PoCo Act and started further investigation.

On learning about the incident, TRS MLC K. Kavitha and Jagtial MLA, Dr Sanjay Kumar expressed shock and directed the officials concerned to take immediate action against the person who was responsible for the plight of the girl.

4-year-old giraffe  
dies at city zooT.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Babli's death leaves the zoo with 17-year-old Tsunami Basant, a male giraffe so named because he was born in 2004, the year of the tsunami, and Sunny, who is six. Babli was perfectly healthy when we got her to Hyderabad from Kolkata in 2019," a zoo veterinarian told Deccan Chronicle. She was brought as a potential mate for Tsunami Basant. She and Sunny had travelled 1,500 km from the Alipore Zoo on a flat-bed truck.

The city zoo, in exchange for the giraffes, had given three pairs of mouse deer, a pair of jaguars and a pair of Asiatic lions to the Alipore Zoo.

## AP TEMP ZOOMS

**VISAKHAPATNAM:** Severe heat conditions prevailed in coastal AP for the second day on Thursday. IMD reports said eight divisions registered maximum temperature of around 40° Celsius and Tuni in East Godavari in West Godavari recorded 41.4° Celsius.

**Corrigendum No.04**  
Tender No. EL-CON-NFR-EPC-14-RE-RT published vide Tender Notice No. DY.CEEICON/RE/MLG/06/2021; Dated: 01-04-2021. Please read as: Closing date of tender is 07-06-2021 at 14:30 hrs. Instead of 28-05-2021. Physical Submission of Document: 14-06-2021 at 11:00 hrs. instead of 03-06-2021 and opening on 15-06-2021 at 16:00 hrs. instead of 04-06-2021. Other terms and condition will remain same.

Dy.CEEICON/RE/Malgonda  
Northeast Frontier Railway  
(Construction Organisation)

"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA TRIBAL WELFARE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**  
NIT NO. SETW/HYD/19/21/2021-22  
No of works (03) - Name of the works : 1) Construction of High Level Bridge on B1 Road for Pandion to Patel near Arunachalur Thanda of Srikonda (M) in Nizamabad District 2) Construction of Girjan Bhavan at Mahabubnagar (V&M) in Mahabubnagar District. 3) Construction of Girjan Bhavan at Vikarabad in Vikarabad District Total Cost for (03) Works Rs. 390.00 Lakhs. Bid Submission Starting Date : 01-06-2021 at 5:00 PM and Bid Submission Closing Date : 09-06-2021 at 3:00 PM. Further details can be seen at e-procurement market place at https://tender.telangana.gov.in/Ph.No:040-23315950. Sd/- Superintending Engineer DIPR.R.O. No.: 183-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22 Tribal Welfare, Hyderabad

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA TRIBAL WELFARE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**  
NIT.NO.SETW/HYD/22/24/2021-22  
No of works (03) - Name of the works : 1) Construction of Post Matric College Hostel for Boys at Medak (V&M) in Medak District 2) Construction of Post Matric College Hostel for Girls at Medak (V&M) in Medak District 3) Providing Additional Amenities to Residential School at Peddamandadi (V&M) in Mahabubnagar District. Total Cost for (03) Works Rs. 413.00 Lakhs. Bid Submission Starting Date : 02-06-2021 at 5:00 PM and Bid Submission Closing Date : 09-06-2021 at 3:00 PM. Further details can be seen at e-procurement market place at https://tender.telangana.gov.in/Ph.No:040-23315950. Sd/- Superintending Engineer DIPR.R.O. No.: 182-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22 Tribal Welfare, Hyderabad

**PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**  
Regd. Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001  
Corporate Identification No. U40109PB2010SGC033813 I website: www.pspcl.in  
(Contact 964618773)  
Tender Enquiry No.: Q-3999/21-22/PO-T/CE-MM  
Chief Purchase Officer/MM, Central Purchase Organization, PSPCL, 2nd Floor, Multi Storey Building, The Mall, PSPCL invites E-tender of 9,500 Nos. EEL-3 (Re-designated as EEL-2), ISI Marked, Three Phase, 63 KVA, oil immersed, CERGO/Amorphous core, Aluminium wound, distribution transformers complete with fittings as per PSPCL specifications & conforming to IS 1180 Part-1 (2014) & IS 2026 (with latest amendments). For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 28.05.2021 onwards.  
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C-204/21 RO No PR-Adv. No.: 76155/12/276/2021/4873

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACIES (PRIDE)**

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST  
Reference No. LARRDI-PRID/018/31/2021/PRIDE  
Dated: 22.05.2021

Lok Sabha Secretariat invites Expression of Interest (EoI) from Professional Communications Agencies for an outreach programme "Know Your Constitution" (KYC) for the school children, youth etc. The REOI document can be downloaded from [www.loksabha.nic.in](http://www.loksabha.nic.in) and <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> and <https://gem.gov.in>. Interested agencies can submit their EOIs as per the requirements indicated in the REOI documents before 15:00 hours on 14.06.2021 only at <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.

LARRDI-PRID/018/31/2021/PRIDE  
Director  
davp 31201/11/0002/2122

# DECCAN Chronicle

28 MAY 2021

## Stop govt repression of Lakshadweep residents

The quiet life of about 70,000 people in Lakshadweep, an archipelago of 36 islands in the Arabian Sea about 300 km off the Kerala coast, has been in turmoil for the last six months, in direct consequence to the efforts of Praful Khoda Patel, a BJP leader from Gujarat, who landed in the Union territory as administrator in December last year. Mr Patel has been working overtime to overturn, both through legal and administrative measures, every system that has been existing there — some for centuries, some recent — creating deep resentment among the people.

The administrator has taken over the powers of the local self-governments with respect to agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, health and education, virtually denuding the elected representatives of whatever little say they have in the administration of their society. The newly introduced Lakshadweep Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Regulation 2021 provides for preventive detention of people whom the administration feels engaged in or preparing for activities which include crimes are normally tried under IPC and Information Technology Act,

2000. That the goonda act, as the new regulation is called, is sought to be imposed in a place which has reported hardly a heinous crime in decades shows the intentions of the administrator in poor light. The Lakshadweep Animal Preservation Regulation 2021 the administrator has introduced seeks to ban cow slaughter and consumption or sale of beef in any form in a place where an estimated 65 per cent of the population consumes meat. The draft Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation 2021 virtually ends the rights of landowners once that land falls under the development plan of the administration.

Apart from the legal route, Mr Patel has launched a series of administrative actions that has left the islanders high and dry. Among them are the demolition of makeshift yards where the fishermen keep their boats to save them from the marauding cyclones which never fail to touch the island and the introduction of bureaucratic procedures for emergency evacuation of medical cases to Kerala, depriving the people of their assurance of emergency medical help.

Union territories are formed with a view to taking to tiny communities the benefits of the best of Indian democracy; it is undemocratic, unfair and unjust to serve them the worst of it. Every single act of Mr Patel is aimed at unsettling the lives of the people with little regard to their welfare or opinion. It is nothing less than an assault by the mighty Indian State on a hapless people and an attempt to impose its will and lifestyle on a society which is made up of 93 per cent indigenous people who have been classified as Scheduled Tribes.

The Union government must immediately recall Mr Patel and stop the process he initiated in the island at the earliest. The government must instead strengthen its local self-government system to administer the people taking the best of Indian democratic traditions.

Lakshadweep and its people are geo-politically and strategically important to India. Short-sighted, thoughtless and haphazard acts of administrators sent from Delhi should not be allowed to play havoc with it. The Union government must act, and act quickly and undo the damage the administrator has done.

## Minimise curbs on social media

The new IT laws that have kicked in seek to moderate content on social media and most major platforms are planning to fall in line. Accountability in hosting content in media is desirable but the grave danger is the government, in its zeal to thwart what it sees as content aimed at denigrating its leaders, might use the laws to abridge the freedom of expression which has been a great feature of Indian democracy.

The reaction to WhatsApp going to court on the premise that users will lose their privacy protection has been projected as a challenge to India's sovereignty, which it is not. As a platform that essentially enables communications, WhatsApp has apprehensions regarding its end-to-end encryption which ensures confidentiality of messages shared between individuals and groups. There is a need for further engagement on this count as over 500 million users, including many departments of the Government of India, use WhatsApp regularly.

If a law challenged is seen as an affront to official India it only betrays the authoritarian nature of government. What is needed is a more nuanced approach to find a balance between the right to privacy and the need to allow action against malicious content, like those which have harmed Indian society as in rumours spread on internet platforms leading to the exodus of northeastern people, the lynching of "child kidnappers", and denigration of minorities, etc.

As the country with the most recorded objections to social media content, India must realise it needs to liberalise laws on content that are way too draconian, respect the right to privacy in matters that do not transgress the laws of the land and face up to the Internet age freedoms without trampling upon them.

The knotty issue involving those wishing to establish a wholesome degree of control over social media just to aggregate more power and the millions of Indians who use global platforms for their sheer convenience must be resolved by placing the most reasonable restrictions on fundamental rights through fair grievance redressal mechanisms.

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Devi Kar

## Blame schools if India's kids can't show creativity or be innovative

We often hear educators lamenting the lack of creativity and innovativeness in Indians as a whole. Indeed, it is shocking that hardly any inventions have emerged from India in the past 50 years. However, we can't continue to blame our colonial shackles for the lack of creativity in terms of inventions and patents.

It is upsetting to learn from the latest data compiled by WIPO, the Geneva-based World Intellectual Property Organisation, that in 2019, companies like Samsung and Huawei filed more international patent applications each than the whole of India. India was responsible for less than one per cent of the total global applications for patents that year. It is also disturbing to know that unlike colleges and universities abroad, our higher educational institutions have no presence at all in this area. It has been inferred that not only do these figures indicate the sad state of innovative initiatives in India, they also confirm the low spending in research and development by our government. It is important to explore the reasons for this sad state of affairs.

There are many deep-rooted reasons

for this intellectual famine that our country has been experiencing. Most people cite rote learning in schools, which steadily destroys imagination and creativity in young minds, as the main culprit. This article will deal with a single major reason — that is the unconscious but constant reinforcement of plagiarism in our entire educational system.

First, the very concept and awareness of plagiarism is woefully absent in our school education. This year, when we announced in school that we would be tackling the issue of plagiarism, one of our senior students spoke up, saying: "No offence meant, but why is it we were not warned about this when we produced cut-and-paste projects and presentations in the lower classes?" She was spot on. Schools always looked out for factually correct and visually attractive presentations rather than original work. Unfortunately, our board examiners too reward students who produced attractive portfolios, the contents of which were gleaned from the Internet. Before the advent of the Information Age, the cut-and-paste jobs were carried out with the help of illustrated books and magazines, scissors

and glue.

Forget about projects and presentations, even answers to questions and essays have been written with the help of ready-made notes and guidebooks. Since these fetched enviable high scores, including in the board exams, they were in great demand, making it unnecessary for students to think for themselves and to do their own research or write their own notes. I remember an oft-repeated joke that you could write a good essay on almost any topic if you prepared just a single essay on God. So, if you were asked to write an essay on "a rainy day", you could write about God's natural creations, which included the sky and earth, sun and of course rain, and then move on to a rainy day. Moreover, students have always been encouraged to quote at length, to enhance the richness of an answer or essay. Even in undergraduate class, students quoted writers to support an argument, but seldom presented research-based evidence of his or her own.

In art class children have been made to copy images and patterns. Imaginative composition — if set as an assignment — was usually "corrected"

and modified to conform to the teacher's ideas. Where music is concerned, how many children are encouraged to compose their own tunes? It is a shame that creative writing is not part of the regular school curriculum. In language and grammar classes, a child's originality is killed at the primary level itself. A schoolboy, asked to write a sentence with "mother", had his simple sentence: "My mother has big eyes". But this was crossed out with a thick red marker and changed to: "My mother is a noble lady". The next sentence, "I hate drinking milk", using the word "milk", was rejected in favour of: "Milk is a nutritious drink". The poor boy was being set in a mould created by his unimaginative teacher.

Also, looking upon the prescribed textbook as the students' Bible causes considerable damage to creative minds. If an answer was based on the subject-related textbook, it was marked correct, but if certain "key" phrases and terms were not used but explained in the student's own words, it was more than likely that the student would be heavily penalised. This is what defeats the making of independent minds.

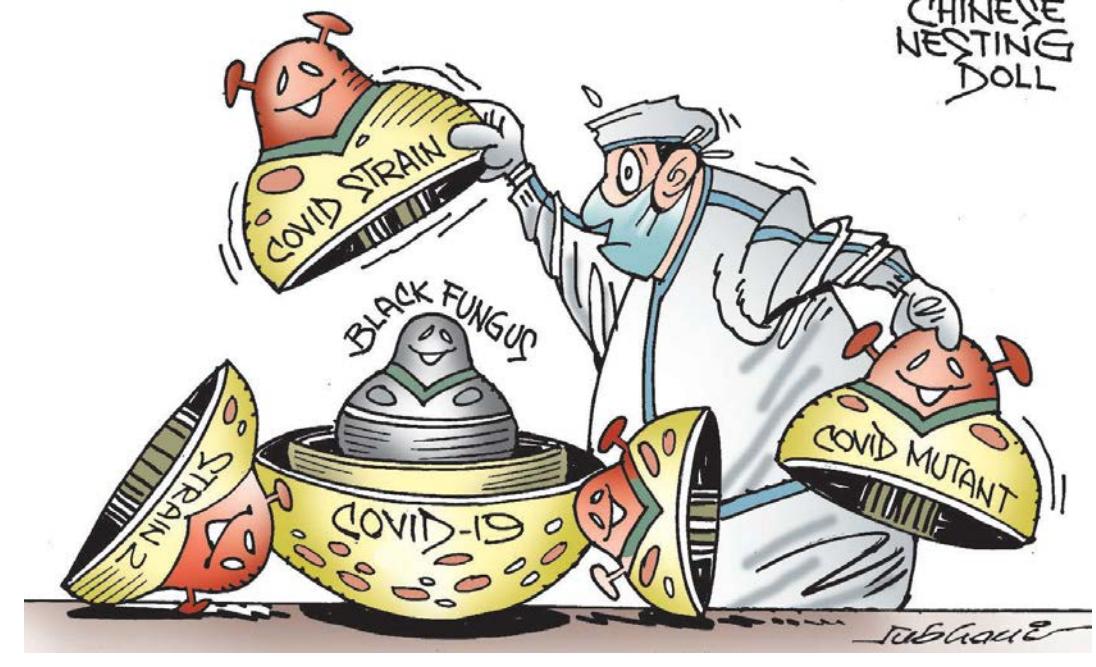
It is extremely urgent today that we

correct all these mistakes and the lacunae of the past and begin by introducing the concepts of plagiarism and intellectual property right from the junior classes. It is true that much of early learning happens by observing and imitating. But children are imaginative too. We teachers must learn to foster this natural gift and be less rigid about the need to conform. As Picasso said: "All children are born artists. The problem is to remain an artist as we grow up."

As children grow older, they could be taught to consciously acknowledge the sources from where they have taken content. This practice, if well inculcated in our young, will go a long way to making them intellectually honest. Apart from developing academic honesty, educators should encourage and celebrate original work. When our children join school in the kindergarten, they are curious, imaginative and creative. It is we adults who cramp their style and freedom by straitjacketing them. The fault that India does not produce inventors lies in ourselves.

The writer is a veteran school educator based in Kolkata

Subhani



## 7 yrs of PM Modi: Can he lead us out of the abyss?

Karan Thapar

As I See It

**A**s we approach Narendra Modi's seventh anniversary as Prime Minister I think I've realised why so many are disappointed with him. The one quality we looked for when we voted for him in 2014 — and which some believe they had found in the immediate years thereafter — is what is missing today when we most need it. And it's called Leadership.

Let me explain what I mean. I'm not simply referring to assertiveness and conviction. They are necessary but not sufficient. What I have in mind is the capacity to paint a vision for the future, convince the country to ascribe to it and then boldly lead towards its realisation. It might sound fanciful but it's not unlike Moses leading the Israelites through the parted waters of the Red Sea to the promised land he had committed himself to deliver.

Thinking back to 2014. Perhaps he was misunderstood but Dr Mammotha Singh was widely perceived as a paralysed Prime Minister. Not just silent but also a prisoner of his own coalition and, even, his own party. He was not his own man and, therefore, could not be our leader either. The country saw him as Mrs Sonia Gandhi's "poodle" and he did precious little to change that impression.

Mr Modi, on the other hand, presented himself as the chief minister who had worked miracles in Gujarat. Many accepted that as fact and refused to entertain any doubts because they wanted a saviour.

Here was a self-made man who had risen by his own efforts and talent. He didn't carry the burden of family nor the taint of compromise. He also had the gift of oratory and thus knew how to pre-

sent himself. During the 2013-14 campaign he sold himself to us and we readily bought him.

Yet behind this truth lies another and it's possibly more important. Each of us saw in him what we wanted to see even if it wasn't there. The Narendra Modi that we voted for was probably more our creation and less of his own making.

So you could say disappointment and disillusionment were perhaps inevitable. The real Narendra Modi was bound to be different from the image we had created and convinced ourselves we were acquiring. But in the early years so strong was our belief in him that we overlooked — foolishly and myopically — the first signs our faith had been misplaced. We found excuses for his impetuous and thoughtless demonisation. We accepted his silence when Muslims were baited and lynched or dalits thrashed for being uppity, on the grounds that the Prime Minister can't speak on every occasion. Indeed, most people didn't even pay heed when he mistook mythology for science.

Finally, the way the diaspora cheered him and foreign leaders like Barack Obama, Theresa May, the ASEAN heads of government and Middle Eastern potentates courted him convinced us that this was

quite a man.

Even when the scales began to drop — and for some they did fast and furiously — there was a reluctance to accept that the Prime Minister lacked the one quality we so badly wanted: Leadership. His promises of a \$5 trillion economy or doubling farmers' incomes in five years were a beguiling illusion many refused to see through. His boast of standing up to Pakistan and making India feel good again was bombast but we failed to recognise it as hot air. His talk of reform was tantalising — because we knew we needed it badly — but he didn't deliver, yet many kept hoping that he would.

Of course, there's no doubt on some things he has made a difference — Swachh Bharat, Jan Dhan, Ujjwala Yojana, rural roads and houses, medical insurance and electricity in villages.

We applauded him for this, forgetting that it's what governments are elected to do. These aren't extraordinary achievements.

They are just the simple expectations of needy people. Perhaps this is why he gets little credit for them today.

Now the only question is this: Is Mr Modi the Prime Minister to lead us to the other shore? The truth is that we have no other. We have to believe in him. We have three years to find out, but for all our sakes I hope he has it in him. We can't change captains mid-sea, particularly when we don't know if there is another cyclone heading our way. But when we reach dry land, we must ask ourselves two simple questions: Why did we err in our judgment? And can we be certain it won't happen again?

The writer is a television commentator and anchor

## LETTERS

### CRUEL POLICE

Pavement vendors and hawkers lead a hand-to-mouth existence (*Cops rain lathi blows on vendors, rob them, DC, May 27*). Their paltry income is hardly enough to run their family when the lockdown is relaxed. Policemen must have showed compassion on them instead of being so inhumane.

**Farhana Nikhat**  
Hyderabad

### LOCKDOWN FORMAT

The lockdown format adopted last year allowing sellers of essential goods like vegetable vendors, kirana and supermarkets to be open from 6 am to 6 pm was far more effective in controlling the pandemic as there was no crowding (*Covid-19 surges ahead in Telangana districts, DC, May 27*). The authorities must consider that again.

**Anil R.**  
Secunderabad

### COVID VACCINE

I appreciated the way Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to review the production of vaccines in November 2020 and our finance minister allocated ₹35,000 crore for the same. But I am really disappointed now with the states being told to arrange vaccination on their own. I urge the Centre to take over procurement of vaccines and use the RBI bonanza of ₹99,122 crore for the medical emergency and vaccinate every Indian free.

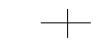
**Lal Melwani**  
Hyderabad

### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

#### More powers to States demanded

**MADRAS, May 27.** The Rajamannar committee on Centre-State relations, appointed by the Tamil Nadu Government has recommended the setting up of a high power commission for re-distribution of powers between the Centre and the States.

The committee has also recommended the transfer of a number of subjects like development of oilfield and mineral resources and lotteries from the Union List to the State List, and the inclusion of corporation tax, customs and export duties and tax on the capital value of assets in the divisible pools to be shared by the centre and the states.



## SHORT TAKES

**ODISHA: 816 INMATES TEST POSITIVE IN MAY**

**AKSHAYA KUMAR**  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, MAY 27

As the second wave of Covid-19 infections sweeps Odisha, as many as 816 prisoners have tested positive for disease in the state in May, a statement released by the state prison headquarters revealed on Thursday.

As per the release, at least 420 prisoners have recovered from the virus while others are under treatment as per the protocols of the Odisha health and family welfare department.

Till May 26,658 prisoners were shifted from over-congested jails with permission of trying courts to Covid care centres, said the prisons department statement. 54 out of 87 jails in the state have not been touched by the Covid pandemic which is a major relief for the government.

As a precautionary measure, the government has released an amount of ₹15,000 to each sub-jails and ₹25,000 to each district and special jails towards procurement of Covid kits, preventive medicines.

According to the data furnished by the prisons headquarters, the prisoner population in the state had surged to 20,150 in comparison to the scheduled capacity of 19,824 as of May 1, 2021. Citing serious concerns on the overcrowding of jails amid the second wave of the pandemic, a High Power Committee had suggested several measures for decongestion of jails.

**RAJNATH LAUNCHES ONLINE OPD PORTAL**

**New Delhi, May 27:** Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday formally launched an online medical consultation platform to facilitate hassle-free health services for armed forces' personnel, veterans and their families.

Singh said the online outpatient platform will ensure widespread access to quality health services in remote areas besides reducing the load on the hospitals. "This is a very important step taken at a very critical time for the health of service personnel," the defence minister said launching the service at a virtual event. The defence ministry said the services can be availed by registering on the website <https://chatopd.in/>.

The trial version of the platform was made functional in August last year and over 6,500 medical consultations have been already carried out through it. The defence minister said the 'SeHAT OPD' portal reflected the government's commitment to 'Digital India' and 'e-governance'.

"It has always been our endeavour to provide better, faster and transparent facilities to our countrymen," he said describing the launch of the portal as a great example of innovation, especially at a time when the nation is fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

**HC ASKS MAHA TO PROBE HOW CELEBS GOT VIRUS DRUGS**

**Mumbai, May 27:** The Bombay High Court on Thursday directed the Maharashtra government to investigate how celebrities and politicians procured anti-Covid-19 drugs and injections to help those in need when the same were available only in scarce quantities across the country.

A vacation bench of Justices Amjad Sayyad and G.S. Kulkarni said such celebrities might have had the noble intention of helping others, but only the Union government was authorised to allocate those drugs.

These people (celebrities) might not realise that they are acting in defiance of the legal set up, it noted.

Therefore, an inquiry must be conducted to rule out issues such as illegal procurement, hoarding, black-marketing and providing spurious drugs.

The court's order came after Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni, who appeared for the Maharashtra government, submitted that the state had issued show cause notices to Mumbai Congress MLA Zeeshan Siddique, actor Sonu Sood's charity foundation, and some others over the matter.

Kumbhakoni said Siddique and Sood had sent their replies saying they neither purchased nor stocked the medicines and injections.



A municipality worker sanitises the area before a special Covid-19 vaccination drive for boatmen at the banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar on Thursday. — PTI

**Controlling Covid-19 is my only focus, says BSY**

**Bengaluru, May 27:** With speculations rife that some attempts were on within the ruling BJP to replace him, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Thursday said controlling the Covid-19 pandemic and protecting the interests of the people were his only priorities now. In a veiled attack on those trying to exert pressure for unseating him, he said those who had gone to Delhi have been sent back with answers as he asserted that addressing the Covid situation should be the priority of all ministers and legislators.

Yediyurappa said,

Speaking to reporters here, he said when people are in distress and deaths are increasing due to Covid, controlling it together should be the priority of legislators, ministers and everyone.

"We should focus towards it (controlling Covid), there is no other matter in front of me, facing Covid is my first priority," he added.

Asked whether he will call a legislature party meeting, the Chief Minister merely said, "there is no need to discuss it with you (media)."

Even as the state is bat-

tling the second wave of Covid-19, speculations were rife on Wednesday that some efforts were on within the ruling BJP for replacing Yediyurappa. Some ministers and MLAs, for the first time, have openly admitted to such moves to exert pressure to unseat the Karnataka BJP strongman.

Several legislators considered close to the Chief Minister have rallied around him, questioning the need for such a change and asserted that the 78-year-old veteran will complete the term and will even lead the party during the next Assembly polls two years away.

Citing certain decisions taken by the government, its handling of the Covid crisis, alleged instances of corruption, a few legislators are said to be pushing for convening a legislature party meeting after June 7, the last day of the lockdown. — PTI

**STALIN WRITES TO MODI ON VAX COMPLEX**

**T. SUDHEESH | DC**  
CHENNAI, MAY 27

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding that the Centre hand over the now-defunct multi-crore Integrated Vaccine Complex (IVC) at Thirukazhundram in Chengalpattu district on lease.

The state government will make the facility, with an annual production capacity of 585 million doses, operational to produce Covid vaccine, he said in the letter.

The development comes close on the heels of Stalin's visit to the IVC on Tuesday.

*Deccan Chronicle* had published a series of reports on the necessity of reviving the IVC ever since the pandemic outbreak reported in the state in March last year.

"The state is ready to take over the facilities on lease without bearing past liabilities," Stalin wrote to Modi.

**States continue to extend curbs**

**WB extends lockdown, TN may follow suit**

**Covid containment norms unchanged**

**VINEETA PANDEY | DC**  
NEW DELHI, MAY 27

Even as the nationwide trend of decline in fresh cases continues, several states are not ready to take any chance and have decided to continue with restrictions albeit with some relaxations.

The Mamata Banerjee government on Thursday extended the restrictions due to the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic in West Bengal for another two weeks from May 31 till June 15. It also declared the fresh schedule of the higher secondary and secondary examinations, which were recently postponed, in July and August respectively.

Announcing another round of extension of the curbs, the chief minister said, "We are not calling it lockdown. Punjab has been requesting us to increase the ceiling in the jute industries due to a demand. So the workforce attendance for daily production in the jute industries will be allowed from 30% to 40% in a shift. The construction workers can also start their job if they are vaccinated even in private."

The construction workers can also start their job if they are vaccinated even in private. We are now focussing on superspreaders like hawkers, rickshaw-pullers, fish-sellers at markets in a model."

Similarly, certain minor relaxations to the total lockdown that is now in force could be expected from next week in Chennai and other districts that have shown a decline in the number of daily infections when the government formally makes the announcement on Friday or Saturday.

At a meeting of high level officials and Ministers at the Secretariat, presided over by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, on Thursday, to take stock of the Covid-19 situation and chalk out plans to contain the spread of the virus, there was a suggestion for the relaxations, sources said.

However, with the numbers shooting through the roof in many parts of the state, particularly

and North East India. He, however, said that in spite of the declining trend, the number of active cases presently is still very high which is why containment measures need to be implemented.

With Covid-19 cases still significantly high and the virus now spreading into rural areas, the Centre on Thursday directed states and Union Territories to continue the ongoing Covid-19 guidelines till June 30 and go for 'intensive and local containment measures' in districts reporting high cases. In the last 24 hours 2.11 lakh fresh cases of Covid-19 and 3,847 fatalities from the deadly virus were recorded.

In a fresh order, Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla said strict implementation of containment and other measures has led to a decline in new and active cases in majority of states and UTs barring some areas in South

where cases are declining but not in the entire state. The guidelines will be issued in a few days," Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said.

Madhya Pradesh government on Thursday decided to unlock the state partially from June 1.

The decision was taken following recommendation by a ministerial panel constituted by chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to study the current pandemic situation in different districts in the state and suggest if restrictions imposed in the districts could be relaxed from June one.

Meanwhile, the Chhattisgarh government has opened up partially 15 out of 27 districts in the state following dip in positivity rates in these districts. Sources said the state government was seriously contemplating to partially lift restrictions imposed in the rest 12 districts from June one.

It is expected that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal may announce graded opening up of lockdown from June 1.

Maharashtra, which has witnessed the worst of the pandemic, has decided not to lift all Covid-19 restrictions as 21 districts in the state still have more than 10% positivity rate.

"Relaxations could be given in the districts

**No safety**

Beneficiaries do not adhere to social distancing norms as they wait to receive the Covid-19 vaccine dose at Badshah Khan hospital in Faridabad on Thursday. — PTI

**FIGHTING TERROR****Many policemen, security personnel test positive for virus****J&K: Covid hampers anti-militancy ops**

**YUSUF JAMEEL | DC**  
SRINAGAR, MAY 27

roads and other public places to enforce lockdown which entered the 28th day on Thursday.

Singh, while speaking to reporters in southern Kulgam district, said, "Covid pandemic has affected anti-militancy operations to some extent. But it is not like we are leaving areas free for terrorists to roam around".

He said "many policemen and security forces personnel have tested positive for the virus. But despite the fact that the J&K police are fighting Covid pandemic and enforcing lockdown through their deployments on roads and streets across the Valley, specific lead based anti-militancy

operations are being conducted in South Kashmir and other parts of Kashmir".

Asked if it was true that the recruitment into militant outfits from among the local youth has plummeted in the recent past, the police chief said, "Unfortunately, the recruitment is still taking place, but the graph is very less compared to previous years. The J&K police have been doing a lot on this front and making concerted efforts to plug it completely. I believe more steps need to be taken to stop it fully."

He, however, also said "we don't want local youth to turn to guns. The police have been working hard to prevent misguided youth who have joined various terror outfits to return and live peaceful and dignified lives. Here in Kulgam itself a group of youth which was about to join militancy was brought back and each of the boys was united with their family." He added, "Likewise, in other districts too many such youths were stopped from treading on the wrong path."

Singh said that the police authorities have in many instances succeeded in persuading militants to lay down their arms and surrender before the security forces even during live encounters. "Young boys do agree to surrender but older ones aren't ready. From our end, efforts are on to reach out to misguided youth to help them come back," he asserted.

Replying to another question, the DGP said that the number of active militants keeps fluctuating and, as of now, intelligence reports suggest there are about 100 of them active in the four districts of south Kashmir - Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama and Anantnag.

## SHORT TAKES

**PENPA IS CHIEF OF TIBETAN GOVT-IN-EXILE**

Dharamshala (HP), May 27: Penpa Tsering was on Thursday sworn-in as president of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the Dharamshala-based Tibetan government-in-exile, and said he will reach out to the Chinese government to find a mutually beneficial and non-violent solution to the Sino-Tibet conflict.

Chief Justice Commissioner Sonam Norbu Dagpo administered the oath to Penpa Tsering, the second democratically-elected Sikyong (president) of the 17th Parliament-in-Exile of the Central Tibetan Administration, at a small ceremony held here amid the restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Penpa Tsering succeeded Lobsang Sangay.

He said his government will tread the path of middle way espoused by the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Based on which, we will reach out to the Chinese government to find a mutually beneficial, negotiated, non-violent solution to the Sino-Tibet conflict. We hope that this in turn shall set a good example in resolving conflicts around the world, Penpa Tsering said.

He said the main responsibility of his 'Kashag' (Cabinet) will be to address the critical challenges being faced by endangered Tibet and sufferings of the Tibetan people.

**YOUTUBER HELD FOR VIDEO OF DOG FLYING**

New Delhi, May 27: A 27-year-old YouTuber was arrested for cruelty against animals after he uploaded a video, showing his pet dog floating in the air with helium gas balloons tied to its collar, police said on Thursday.

The accused, Gaurav Sharma, who has 4.15 million subscribers on his YouTube channel, is a resident of Panchsheel Vihar in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar, they said.

In the video shot on May 21, Sharma can be seen with his pet dog in a park. The dog is strapped to a bunch of balloons and is set loose to fly.

A case was lodged against Sharma under section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the Indian Penal Code, the Disaster Management Act and relevant sections of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act on the complaint of Gaurav Gupta, a member of People for Animals Society, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said, adding the footage was deleted.

After receiving criticism for the video, the accused uploaded another one with apologies the next day.

He said that he took adequate safety measures while shooting the video featuring his pet dog, Dollar, and assured his viewers that he would not repeat it in the future.

**HC SEEKS MAHA REPLY ON ADAR SECURITY**

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MAY 27

The Bombay High Court on Thursday directed the Maharashtra government file reply to the petition filed by a city based lawyer regarding Z+ security for Adar Poonawalla, Chief Executive Officer of the Serum Institute of India (SIID) that manufactures the 'Covishield' vaccine, one of the important vaccines to fight Covid-19. The court also noted that the proceedings may have international impact.

When the petition came up for hearing, a vacation bench of Justice S.S. Shinde and N.R. Borkar raised the question if the petitioner has the locus to file such a petition. Following this petition, advocate Datta Mane's lawyer Deepak Havur replied that any citizen in country could set the wheels of criminal laws into motion.

Following this, the court warned Mane to bear in mind while arguing that such proceedings "will have an international impact" and may hamper the good reputation that India enjoys internationally.

Apart from Z+ category security cover for Poonawalla, advocate Mane has also sought registration of FIR against persons who allegedly threatened Poonawalla in relation to supply of the vaccine. The bench was also informed that Poonawalla had been granted Y' category security cover.

**Highway landing**

A two-seater training aircraft made an emergency landing on Thursday on the Yamuna Expressway near Mathura after developing a snag. Both the trainee pilot and the instructor were safe after the aircraft landed in the afternoon. The Aligarh-bound Cessna-152 touched down as vehicles ran on the highway, one of the most modern in the country. The small plane was returning from Narnaul in Haryana. — PTI

**Didi pegs Yaas loss at ₹15K-cr, announces ₹1,000 cr as relief****Chief Minister to hold review meeting with Prime Minister today****Odisha: As water levels rise, threat of flood looms large**

plant brinjal saplings in his field. He was caught in a heavy rain while working. Suddenly lightning struck him. Fatally injured, Burman was rushed by the villagers to Bethuadahari Hospital where he was declared brought dead.

At the state secretariat Nabanna, the CM said, "A preliminary assessment estimates the damage caused by the cyclone at ₹15,000 crore. We are allocating ₹1,000 crore for immediate relief to house building and to meet the agricultural losses among others. Once the water recedes in the villages in the next seven days, our government will run Duare Traan camps like Duare Sarkar for the enrollment of the affected from June 3 to 18 and verify their claims of losses from June 15 to 30. From July 1 to 8 the funds will be distributed to the beneficiaries through the direct bank transfer mode. No one else can conduct the relief work."

The Trinamul Congress supremo, who embarks on two-day aerial survey of the devastated areas in three districts from Friday, will also meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the afternoon when he lands at Kalaikunda Air Force Station in West Midnapore after taking stock of cyclone-hit Odisha.

"From Odisha, the PM will fly over Digha to take stock of the extent of the damage before returning to New Delhi via Kalaikunda. I will discuss the situation with him at a review meeting there at around 2.15 pm," she said.

Asked if she would demand any special relief package from the Prime Minister, Banerjee, who often alleges of no financial assistance from the Centre, however, kept it secret. "How can I tell you beforehand about what I would tell him?" she said.

The villagers rescued and rushed them to Hariharpara Hospital. Two among the injured, Sahabul Sheikh (17) and Saidul Sheikh (16), were declared dead there. The five other injured were later admitted to Murshidabad Medical College & Hospital.

The fifth deceased, Sanatan Burman (48), was a resident of Kalibas at Bilkumari village in Nadia's Nakashipara. At around 10 am he went to

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BALASORE/ KENDRAPARA, MAY 27

As the cyclone-hit people in Odisha's coastal districts tried to collect their belongings buried deep under the rubble of their houses that collapsed on Wednesday under the influence of cyclone Yaas' 150 km per hour gusty winds, threat of flood loomed large over the state as water levels in major rivers increased on Thursday.

The rivers are in spate since Wednesday due to cyclone-induced heavy downpours in their

upper catchments and basins.

According to reports, water levels in Budhabalang, Salandi, Subarnarekha and Baitarani were rising, causing inundation of low-lying areas, including farmlands.

While majority of the rivers were still flowing below their danger marks, the Baitarani touched the red level at Anandpur in Keonjhar district.

"Water levels in some major rivers is rising. But there is no reason to panic as it is the peak summer and the water will flow down to the sea in the river beds without

causing any harms to embankments," said Special Relief Commissioner PK Jena.

He, however, assured that engineers of water resources department were at work to ensure that no breaches occur at places.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday made an aerial survey of the cyclone-hit areas and later reviewed post cyclone relief and restoration work at a high level meeting.

The Chief Minister has asked collectors of the affected district to submit their cyclone damage reports by Friday evening.

**PM TO VISIT ODISHA, WEST BENGAL TODAY**

New Delhi, May 27: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Odisha and West Bengal on Friday to review the impact of cyclone Yaas on the two coastal states.

Government sources said Modi will first hold a review meeting in Bhubaneswar and then proceed for an aerial survey in the affected areas of Balasore, Bhadrak and Purba Medinipur.

He will then hold a review meeting in West Bengal.

Cyclone Yaas pounded parts of India's eastern coast on Wednesday, killing at least four people and forcing more than 21 lakh people to be evacuated to safe shelters in West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand.

— PTI

Kendrapara district delivered a baby girl during the cyclone while the infant was named after the cyclone.

The state government had shifted pregnant women of the vulnerable areas to cyclone shelters and nearest hospitals before the storm.

According to reports, Sonali Maiti, wife of Badal Maiti of Parakhi area of Balasore district, gave birth to a baby boy on Wednesday evening.

Family members of the newborn have named him 'Yaas', the very severe cyclonic storm that battered the coastal parts of Odisha on Wednesday, leaving thousands of people marooned and homeless.

The cyclone names are given by countries on a rotational basis. Yaas got its name from Oman. The word 'Yaas' has its origin in the Persian language and means Jasmin in English.

Similarly, Saraswati Bairagi, wife of Soumya Ranjan Bairagi of Harinapokhari village of

Babes named after cyclone

DC CORRESPONDENT Bhubaneswar, MAY 27

Two babies in Odisha who were born during cyclone Yaas on Wednesday have been named after the storm.

The state government had shifted pregnant women of the vulnerable areas to cyclone shelters and nearest hospitals before the storm.

As many as 95 babies were born during the cyclone in various districts of Odisha under active surveillance of state health and family welfare department officials.

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## SHORT TAKES

## ARMENIA: SIX SOLDIERS HELD BY AZERBAIJAN

Yerevan, May 27: The Armenian military said Thursday that six of its troops have been taken prisoner by neighbouring Azerbaijan, an incident that further exacerbates tensions between the two ex-Soviet nations in the wake of an outbreak of hostilities over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry claimed that the Armenian soldiers were seized early Thursday when they attempted to cross the border and place mines on supply routes leading to the Azerbaijani positions.

The Armenian authorities insisted that its soldiers were captured on Armenia's side of the border while conducting engineering works, and demanded their immediate release. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told a government meeting that the soldiers were planting a minefield with warning signs on Armenian territory near the border.

## TALIBAN LEADER KILLED IN BALOCHISTAN

Karachi, May 27: A top commander of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, who was believed to be involved in the deadly attack on the Civil Hospital in Quetta in 2016, has been killed, along with three members of the banned militant outfit in Balochistan province, police said on Thursday.

Based on a tip-off, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) launched an operation in Agbara area of the restive Balochistan province on Tuesday and killed Riaz Thekedar. "Four of the terrorists were killed in heavy firing, while two of them managed to escape," police said. A large cache of guns, ammunition and weapons was seized from the spot.

A CTD spokesman said top Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan leader Thekedar was killed in the encounter. "Thekadar was involved in several attacks on security forces and the attack on the Civil Hospital in Quetta in 2016," he said.

## REVIEW CASE OF FEMALE ACTIVIST, EU ASKS IRAN

Dubai, May 27: The European Union on Thursday called on Iran to review a case of a prominent female human rights activist who was sentenced to 30 months in prison and 80 lashes on charges of protesting against the killing of protesters during the country's 2019 unrest.

A spokesperson for the bloc urged Iran to look into the case of Narges Mohammadi under "applicable international human rights law and taking into account her deteriorating health condition." Earlier this week, Mohammadi confirmed her sentence in an Instagram post and said she does not "accept any of these sentences." "The recent sentencing of the Iranian human rights defender Mrs Narges Mohammadi to prison term and flogging is a worrying development," the EU said.

In the post, Mohammadi said one of the charges against her is having a party and dancing in jail. She was released from jail in October 2020, after serving eight and a half years in prison.

## TIGRAY REBELS KILL 22 OFFICIALS IN ETHIOPIA

Johannesburg, May 27: Rebels have killed 22 officials of the war-hit Tigray region's interim administration, Ethiopia's government said on Wednesday.

An additional 20 interim officials had been "kidnapped" by forces loyal to the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, which ruled the region until it was toppled by an offensive ordered by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in November.

A further four have been "wounded and hospitalised", said the statement issued on Twitter. Abiy declared victory four weeks after the offensive began and replaced the TPLF's regional administration with an interim one headed by officials appointed by the federal government based in Addis Ababa. But six months on, fighting continues in Tigray as pro-TPLF fighters wage an insurgent campaign in the region's countryside.

The attacks on the officials have been carried out by TPLF fighters who claim to fight for the people of Tigray but have rather been killing members of the administration that are tasked with bringing stability," the statement said.

## New taxiway at NY airport



A Southwest aircraft moves along a new taxiway at LaGuardia Airport, in New York, on Thursday, becoming the first aircraft to pass beneath the pedestrian sky bridge that connects gates with the new Terminal B. — AP

## Rwanda genocide: Macron stops short of an apology

Says France has to recognise suffering inflicted on Rwandans

## Speech 'more valuable' than atonement: Kagame

## SURVIVORS' GROUP DISAPPOINTED

Kigali, May 27: Rwandan President Paul Kagame on Thursday hailed a speech by his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron recognising France's role and responsibility in the 1994 genocide. "His words were something more valuable than an apology. They were the truth," he told a joint press conference after the two leaders met in Kigali.

Macron said he "recognises" France's role which included backing the former genocidal regime in Rwanda and ignoring warnings of the impending massacres which left some 800,000 mostly Tutsis dead. His highly anticipated speech did not contain a formal apology, but he went further than his predecessors and said that

only those who had survived the horrors "can maybe forgive, give us the

gift of forgiveness." Macron's visit is aimed at turning the page on decades of diplomatic tensions over the genocide and Kagame said relations would only strengthen going forward. "France and Rwanda are going to relate much better to the benefit of both our peoples, economically, politically and in terms of culture," he said.

"But the relationship between our two countries will never be entirely conventional. There is a special familiarity resulting from the complex and terrible history we share, for better or for worse. We have chosen to make it for the better. We wish to form a strong and sustainable relationship, based on priorities that matter to both Rwanda and France." — AFP

victims." France's failures contributed to "27 years of bitter distance" between the two countries, he said.

"I have to come to recognise our responsibilities,"

Macron said. He arrived in Kigali early Thursday

and met President Paul Kagame at the presidential residence. — AP

## CHINA TRYING SINO-OZ WRITER OVER ESPIONAGE

## EU could hit key Belarus exports

Beijing, May 27: China on Thursday put a Chinese-Australian writer on trial for alleged espionage and denied the Australian ambassador in Beijing access to the hearing.

Yang Hengjun has been held since arriving in China in January 2019 and has had no access to family and only limited contact with his lawyer, the Australian government has said.

Ambassador Graham Fletcher walked to the court complex gate in Beijing and returned after he was denied entry, telling journalists it was "regrettable" that diplomats were prevented from observing the trial.

His government had been told earlier that a representative would not be allowed to attend the trial because it is a national security case. — AP

in Europe via Belarus could come to Europe via another pipeline, and Belarus would lose the transit fees, which is not negligible," he added.

Lukashenko sparked international outrage by dispatching a fighter jet Sunday to intercept a Ryanair flight from Athens to Vilnius carrying dissident reporter Roman Protasevich, 26, and his girlfriend Sofia Sapega.

EU leaders hit back at Minsk, agreeing to ban Belarusian airlines from the bloc and urging EU-based carriers not to fly over its airspace.

The leaders also tasked Borrell with coming up with further "targeted economic sanctions" against the Belarusian authorities to add to the 88 regime figures and seven companies already on a blacklist over a crackdown on the opposition.

"One can also imagine that the gas which arrives

— AFP

in Britain on Thursday detailed plans to scrap a restriction that deprived expats of their right to vote after 15 years of living abroad, calling it outdated in a globalised world.

Long a bane of expatriate Britons, the limit will be replaced with "votes for life" in forthcoming legislation that will also controversially introduce voter identification for the first time in UK elections.

"In an increasingly global and connected world, most British citizens living overseas retain deep ties to the United Kingdom," Cabinet Office minister Nicholas Boles said in a statement.

"These measures support our vision for a truly global Britain, opening up our democracy to British citizens living overseas." — AFP

## CLIMATE | TRENDS

## Chances of tropical cyclones in the Atlantic, increased rainfall in high-latitude regions

## World may breach 1.5°C warming within 5 years: WMO

Paris, May 27: The world may temporarily breach the 1.5°C warming mark within the next five years, according to an updated assessment of global climate trends released Thursday.

The World Meteorological Organisation and Britain's Met Office said there was a 40 percent chance of the annual average global temperature surpassing 1.5°C above pre-industrial temperatures — the aspirational warming limit of the Paris climate accord.

According to the Met Off-

ice's updated global 10-year climate prediction, there is a 90 percent chance of at least one year between 2021-2025 being the hottest on record.

The annual average global temperature over the next five years is likely to be at least 1°C warmer than pre-industrial levels, within a range of 0.9°C-1.8°C warmer, it said. "These are more than just statistics," said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.

"Increasing temperatures mean more melting ice,

higher sea levels, more heatwaves and other extreme weather, and greater impacts on food security, health, the environment and sustainable development."

The landmark 2015 Paris climate deal saw nations commit to limit global temperature rises to "well below" 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

The accord strives towards a safer cap of 1.5°C, but pledges made by nations under the Paris accord to date leave Earth on the path to warming roughly

twice as much by the end of the century. Experts greeted Thursday's announcement with caution.

Joeri Rogelj, director of research at the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London, said a single year above 1.5°C would not mean the Paris goals had been breached.

"But this is nevertheless very bad news," he said.

"It tells us once again that climate action to date is wholly insufficient and emissions need to be reduced urgently to zero to halt global warming."

## HK Bill amends poll law, reduces direct public vote

Hong Kong, May 27:

Hong Kong's legislature on Thursday passed a bill amending electoral laws that drastically reduces the public's ability to vote and increases the number of pro-Beijing lawmakers making decisions for the city.

The new law empowers the city's national security department to check the backgrounds of potential candidates for public office and a sets up a new committee to ensure candidates are patriotic.

THE NEW law empowers the city's national security department to check the backgrounds of potential candidates for public office and a sets up a new committee to ensure candidates are patriotic.

THE NUMBER of seats in Hong Kong's legislature will be expanded to 90, with 40 of them elected by a largely pro-Beijing election committee.

Authorities have arrested and charged most of the city's outspoken pro-democracy advocates, such as Joshua Wong and media tycoon Jimmy Lai.

ment protest and political strife in 2019.

Authorities have arrested and charged most of the city's outspoken pro-democracy advocates, such as Joshua Wong, who was a student leader of 2014 protests, as well as media tycoon Jimmy Lai, who founded the Apple Daily newspaper.

China's rubber-stamp parliament in March endorsed changes to the city's electoral system, which then led to Hong Kong's proposal.

They are the latest in a string of moves to ensure people elected to office or serving the city are loyal to Beijing. An amendment the legislature approved earlier this month requires the city's over 400 district councilors who mainly deal with municipal matters to take an oath pledging loyalty to Hong Kong and to uphold its mini-constitution.

The changes to Hong Kong's elections come as Beijing further tightens control over the semi-autonomous city that saw months of anti-government protest and political strife in 2019.

The oath was previously required only of legislators and government officials such as the chief executive.

## CONSTITUTIONAL BENCH TO HEAR NEPAL PLEAS

Kathmandu, May 27: Nepal's Supreme Court on Thursday sent all the 19 petitions challenging the dissolution of the House of Representatives by the President to the Constitutional Bench.

As many as 30 petitions, including one by the Opposition alliance, have been filed at the Supreme Court, challenging Friday's House dissolution by President Bidya Devi Bhandari and rejection of Opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba's claim by the President for the post of prime minister.

After a preliminary hearing on the 19 petitions, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Chandra Shumsher Rana decided to send them all to the Constitutional Bench, the Kathmandu Post reported. "A single bench of Chief Justice Rana has decided to send all the petitions related to the House dissolution to the Constitutional Bench," Kishor Poudel, a communication expert at the Supreme Court, told the newspaper.

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According to the constitutional provision, the government must present the federal budget at the federal Parliament on Jesta 15, which is May 29 this year. Since there is no Parliament, the government is planning to bring the budget through an ordinance.

PTI

## Efforts on to clean up Lankan coast: Officials

## Oz kids can't block coal mine expansion

Colombo, May 27: Sri Lanka's apex environmental body on Thursday

said a Singapore-flagged cargo vessel, which caught fire near the Colombo beach last week, is in the process of sinking, and that preparations are underway to tackle the resulting oil spill.

Top Marine Environmental Protection Authority (MEPA) official Turney Pradeep Kumara said the government would file

for damages to responsible parties for the damages done to the marine ecosystem. "The crew will be questioned and statements will be recorded.

There will be legal action through the Attorney General," Kumara said. All 23 crew members of MV 'X-PRESS PEARL' — of Indian, Chinese, Filipino and Russian nationality — were rescued on Tuesday after a fire alarm dispatched was sent.

"We have set in motion the process to manage the oil spill when it occurs. Equipment necessary is already in place," Kumara said. The National Aquatic Resource Research and Development Agency (NARA) said chemicals and other materials washed ashore from the ship along the western coast area from Colombo to

Marawila would be collected and analysed. Based on the analysis, the NARA officials would state the degree of damage done to the marine ecosystem.

bon dioxide being released into the atmosphere.

Ley did owe the children a duty of care under the law of negligence, the judge found, but said he was not satisfied that Ley would breach her duty of care to the children.

Bromberg found there was a "real" risk that the extension of the mine near the town of Gunnendah would likely cause a "tiny but measurable increase to global average surface temperatures."

AP

Apart from the 325 metric tonnes of fuel in its tanks, it was loaded with 1,486 containers carrying about 25 tonnes of hazardous nitric acid.

continue to rise, it is inevitable that we will continue to temporarily cross 1.5°C before we exceed it for more sustained periods," he said. "To limit global warming to 1.5°C — or what the parties to the Paris Agreement thought 1.5°C meant when they signed it — we need to hit the brakes on emissions now and stop global warming in the next 30 years or so," said Myles Allen, professor of geosystem science at the University of Oxford.

AFP

## SHORT TAKES

## BAGHDAD TENSE AFTER MILITIA COMMANDER HELD

Baghdad, May 27: Tensions mounted in Iraq's capital after the arrest of a militia commander on terrorism charges, prompting a dangerous showdown by the detainee's paramilitary supporters and the Iraqi government.

The confrontation began on Wednesday after Iraqi security forces arrested at dawn militia leader Qassim Mahmud Musleh based on a judicial investigation and arrest warrant on terrorism charges, Iraq's military said in a statement.

Musleh is the head of the Popular Mobilisation Forces in Anbar province. Shortly after the arrest, forces affiliated with the PMF, which maintains offices inside the heavily fortified Green Zone, were deployed surrounding Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi's headquarters. Tensions reached fever pitch when Iraqi security forces and the elite Counter-Terrorism Service were deployed to protect the government and diplomatic missions.

## HAWKING'S ARCHIVE, OFFICE ACQUIRED

London, May 27: London's Science Museum and the Cambridge University library said Wednesday they have acquired a large collection of items belonging to late physicist Stephen Hawking, from his personalised wheelchairs to landmark papers on theoretical physics and his scripts from his appearance on *The Simpsons*.

The entire contents of Hawking's office at Cambridge, including his communications equipment, memorabilia, bets he made on scientific debates and office furniture, will be preserved as part of the collection belonging to the Science Museum Group.

Hawking occupied the office at the university's department of applied mathematics and theoretical physics from 2002 until shortly before his death in 2018. Highlights will go on display at the London museum early next year. Museum officials are also hoping to create a touring exhibition in the UK before setting up a permanent display in London.

## 3 JAILED OVER '17 BARCELONA ATTACKS

Madrid, May 27: A Spanish court on Thursday imposed prison sentences ranging from 8 to 53 years on the three surviving members of an extremist Islamist cell that killed 16 people and injured 140 others in two consecutive attacks in and near Barcelona in 2017.

The three convicted by Spain's National Court were accused of forming part of the cell or aiding it, but not of directly carrying out the attacks. Two cell members, including a Muslim cleric believed to have been the ringleader, died in an apparently accidental blast at a country house while preparing explosives before the attacks.

Six more were shot and killed by police after driving vehicles into groups of bystanders in Barcelona and the nearby coastal town of Cambrils. The Islamic State group later claimed responsibility for their actions.

A panel of judges convicted Mohamed Houli Chelhal, a 24-year-old Spaniard who survived the explosion days ahead of the attacks, and Driss Oukabir, 32 and originally from Morocco.

## U.S. RESIDENT SOUGHT BY CHINA FREED IN DUBAI

Dubai, May 27: A permanent resident of the United States wanted by China was freed by Dubai on Thursday, taking off on a flight to Turkey after spending weeks in detention.

Beijing had sought Wang Jingyu over his online comments about a deadly confrontation between Chinese and Indian forces last year.

Activists and his supporters say plainclothes police officers arrested the 19-year-old student as he came off an Emirates flight in April at Dubai International Airport, trying to connect onto New York.

The State Department acknowledged his arrest, described the case as a human rights' concern and warned that he could have faced extradition to China.

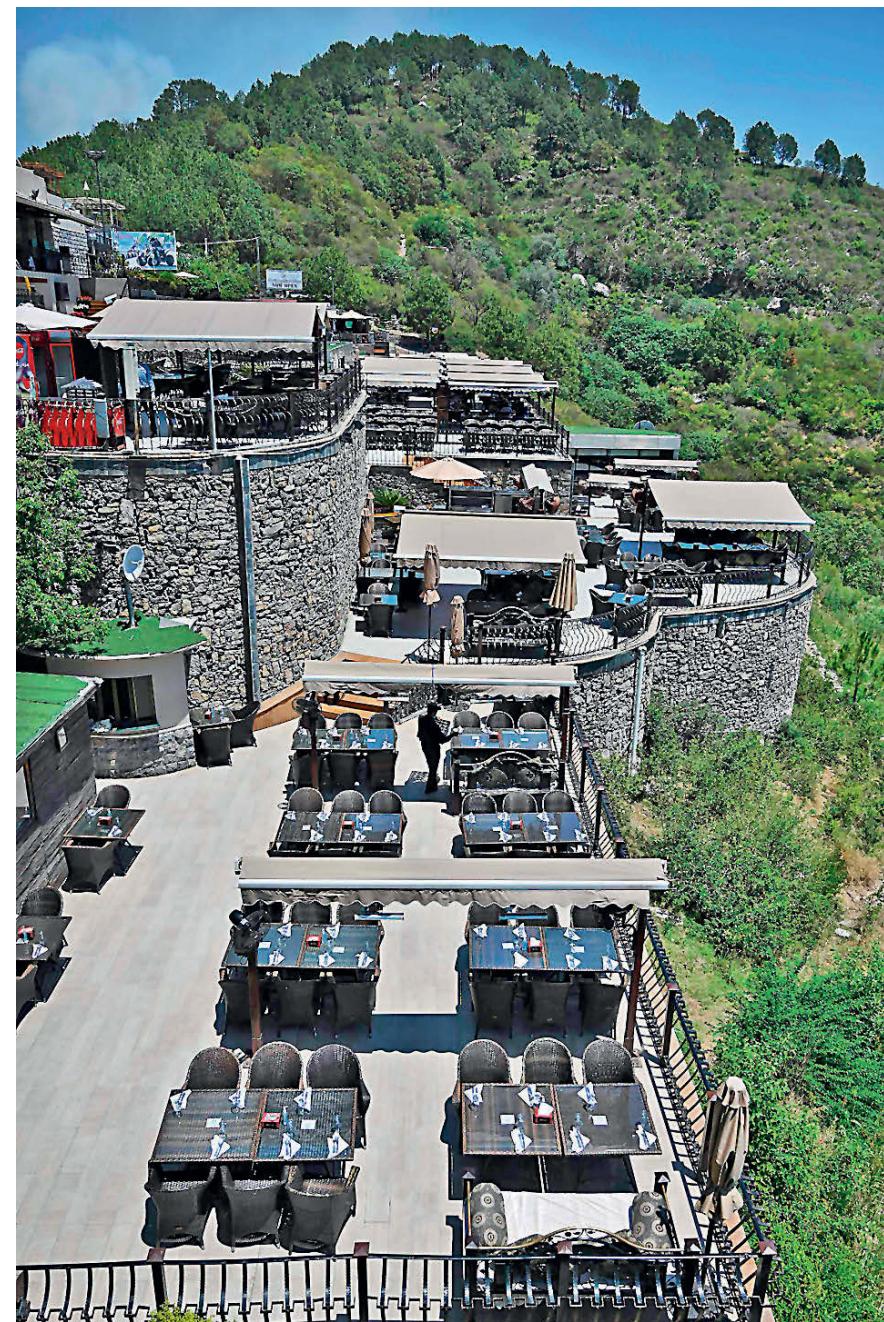
He was freed just hours after The Associated Press began asking questions about his case.

Wang's case comes as the United Arab Emirates, long a US defence partner in the Mideast, has drawn closer to China in recent years in trade and in efforts to combat the Coronavirus pandemic.

## POLITICAL TSUNAMI

## UK health min defends virus record

Hancock responds after ex-aide Cummins alleged govt's poor Covid response caused deaths



A waiter sets up tables at an outdoor dining area of a restaurant in Islamabad on Thursday as restaurants prepare to reopen for outdoor dining following a lift on a nationwide lockdown imposed to curb the spread of the Covid-19. — AFP

## Melbourne set for fourth lockdown as cluster grows

Canberra, May 27: Australia's second-largest city was set to enter its fourth lockdown Thursday as concern grew over the rapid spread of infections from a Coronavirus variant.

The seven-day lockdown for Melbourne and the rest of Victoria state comes after a new cluster in the city rose to 26 infections, including a person who was in intensive care.

Another 10,000 people have had some degree of contact with those already

infected. "Unless something changes, this will be increasingly uncontrollable," Victoria Acting Premier James Merlino said.

The federal government declared Melbourne a hot spot, which entitles the city to additional federal resources.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said 218 military personnel were in Victoria helping in pandemic operations and more would be sent if Merlino asked. Additional vaccine doses were also

being sent to Victoria.

Only 3.9 million vaccine doses have been administered among Australia's population of 26 million.

Health Minister Greg Hunt described the lockdown as "highly regrettable, but necessary restrictions under the current circumstances." People will only be able to leave home to shop for food and essential items, provide or receive care, exercise, work or study if they are unable to do so from home. — AP

## 3 cops wounded in Dallas shooting

Flower Mound (US), May 27: Three officers were shot and wounded Wednesday night while answering a report of a suicidal person in a Dallasm suburb, police said.

The three officers were responding to a 911 call about 7 p.m. Wednesday at a house in a Flower Mound residential neighbourhood about 25 miles (40.23 kilometres) northwest of Dallas. They were trying to contact the man, who was alone in the house, when gunfire erupted from inside.

Two officers were taken to hospitals in stable condition, while the third was treated at the scene of the shooting and cleared. No further information was immediately available. — AP

Two officers were taken to hospitals in stable condition, while the third was treated at the scene of the shooting and cleared. No further information was immediately available. — AP

Garcetti, 50, who served as the co-chair of Biden's presidential campaign,

was initially considered for the Cabinet.

Garcetti is the 42nd Mayor of Los Angeles, the second-largest city in the United States, after New

## Garcetti US 'envoy' to India

## PIO VENKATARAMAN NOMINATED TO KEY BIDEN ADMINISTRATION POST

Washington, May 27: US President Joe Biden has announced his intent to nominate Indian-American trade expert Arun Venkataraman to a key position in his administration related to foreign commercial service.

President Biden, a Democrat, is also expected to announce Nicholas Burns as the ambassador to China and Rahm Emanuel and Tom Nides as ambassadors to Japan and Israel respectively, the report in the American news website said on Wednesday.

Venkataraman is the nominee for Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service and Assistant Sec-

retary for Global Markets, Department of Commerce, the White House said on Wednesday.

With over 20 years of experience in advising companies, international organisations and the US government on international trade issues, Venkataraman is currently the Counsellor to the Secretary of Commerce. — PTT

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## quick BITES

■ Health crisis more pervasive and debilitating than financial crises  
**Near-term outlook clouded: RBI**

FALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, MAY 27

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	51,115.22
Nifty 50	15,337.90
S&P 500*	4,206.76
Dollar (\$)	72.59
Pound Sterling (\$)	102.49
Euro (\$)	88.49
Gold (10gm)* (\$)	48,223.319
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	69.16
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.987
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.617
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.043

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## US first quarter GDP unchanged at robust 6.4%

The US economy grew at a robust annual rate of 6.4 per cent in the first three months of this year, unchanged from the government's initial estimate. The recovery from last year's deep recession gained steam at the beginning of this year, helped by vaccines to combat the virus and trillions of dollars in government assistance. The rise in the GDP was the same as the government's first look one month ago.

## Sun Pharma Q4 net zooms over 2-fold to ₹894 cr



Sun Pharmaceutical Industries reported a more than two-fold jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 894.15 crore for the March quarter, from Rs 399.84 crore a year ago, mainly on a robust performance in the Indian market. Consolidated total revenue from operations stood at Rs 8,522.98 crore against Rs 8,184.94 crore. For the full year 2020-21, Sun posted a net profit of Rs 2,903.82 crore against Rs 3,764.93 crore.

## Ikea launches shopping app in India

Swedish home furnishing retailer Ikea announced the launch of its shopping app in India, in a bid to expand its omni-channel approach in the country. The Ikea app would be available on both iOS and Android platforms and will offer 7,000 home furnishing products, Ikea said in a statement. Customers from cities Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Surat, and Baroda will be able to buy products with the app, Ikea said.

## Bpcl says no plans to sell stake in Petronet, IGL

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) said it has no intention to sell a part of its stake in Petronet LNG Ltd and Inraprastha Gas Ltd (IGL) to help its new owner avoid making an open offer for the two gas companies. "We have no intention to pare down our stake in IGL or Petronet. Any paring down will be value destruction," BPCL director (finance) N. Vijayagopal said at an earnings call with investors.

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### FROM THE RBI ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

- **RBI balance sheet size increased by ₹3.72 lakh crore to ₹57.07 lakh crore as on March 31, 2021, up 6.99 % from ₹53.34 L cr on June 30, 2020**
- **Covid 2.0 biggest risk to growth forecast**
- **For a self-sustaining GDP growth trajectory post-Covid, a durable revival in private consumption and investment demand would be critical as they account for around 85% of GDP**
- **Services sector contraction unprecedented in Indian history**
- **Inflation remains a key concern, constraining monetary policy from using any available room to support growth**

of the Indian economy in 2020-21 and reviving it awaits a new environment in which 'animal spirits' are rekindled and entrepreneurial energies are released so that backward and forward linkages and multipliers prepare the ground for a durable investment

driven recovery. "Emboldened by new waves of infections and mutant strains of Covid-19, the slow pace of inoculation in several parts of the world and visceral vaccine protectionism, the global and domestic outlook has once again turned grim and

## Prices of edible oils, pulses to pressure inflation

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, MAY 27

The sharp price rise in edible oils and pulses had led to historically high inflation in March. Pressure from these food items is likely to persist in view of supply-demand imbalances, says the RBI.

Oils and fats went through a sharp price build-up, leading to a historically high inflation of 24.9 per cent in March 2021. Precautionary buying on account of the pandemic and rise in interna-

tional prices of edible oils led to this adverse development. In fact, international food prices firmed up from June 2020, primarily led by palm oil, sunflower oil and soybean oil prices, driven by supply shortages as well as depreciation of the US dollar, the RBI said in its annual report.

In order to contain the price escalation, basic customs duty (BCD) on crude palm oil was revised down to 27.5 per cent from 37.5 per cent with effect from November 27, 2020. However, it got revised fur-

ther to 32.5 per cent when the agricultural infrastructure development cess was introduced in the budget.

Increasing global prices, increase in export levy on crude palm oil by Indonesia from December 2020 and imposition of 8 per cent export tax on crude palm oil by Malaysia from January 2021 kept prices high.

Similarly, prices of pulses recorded a 45-month high inflation of 22.8 per cent in April 2020 primarily led by tur and urad. Prices witnessed robust

growth during the months of April-May and September-November 2020, reflecting stockpiling by consumers, lockdown and rain related supply disruption and a decline in kharif pulses production, higher exports and lower imports during April-February 2020-21.

The government released 2 lakh tonnes of tur from the buffer stock through open market sales, extended the time limit for import of tur under an import quota of 4 lakh tonnes for 2020-21 as

on December 31, 2020, expedited imports of urad under the already issued import quota of 1.5 lakh tonnes and MoU with Mozambique for import of 2 lakh tonnes of tur for another five years. With pulses production rising by 6 per cent for 2020-21 over 2019-20, tur, gram and masur prices eased during December 2020-February 2021.

However, the RBI expects that pressures from pulses and edible oils might persist in view of supply-demand imbalances.

## Multiple events fuelling stock market 'bubble'

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, MAY 27

The RBI has warned of a bubble formation in the Indian equity market in the context of a sharp contraction in GDP in 2020-21 and soaring stock prices.

The widening gap between stretched asset prices relative to prospects for recovery in real economic activity, has emerged as a global policy concern, the RBI said in its Economic Review, as the central bank wondered if the bubble in stock markets rational?

"Prices of risky assets surged across the countries due to unparalleled levels of monetary and fiscal stimulus, and the turn in market sentiments following positive news on the development of and access to vaccines and the end of uncertainty surrounding US election results," RBI said.

"India's equity prices also surged to record highs, with the benchmark index (Sensex) crossing 50,000 mark on January 21, 2021 to touch

a peak of 52,154 on February 15, 2021, which represents a 100.7 per cent increase from the slump just before beginning of the nationwide lockdown (i.e., since March 23, 2020) and a 68.0 per cent increase over the year 2020-21. This order of asset price inflation in the context of the estimated 8 per cent contraction in GDP in 2020-21 poses the risk of a bubble," the apex bank noted.

"The stock price index is mainly driven by money supply and FPI investments. Economic prospects also contribute to movement in the stock market, but the impact is relatively less compared to money supply and FPI."

According to the RBI, the present stock market valuation, by comparing the price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio with its historical trend, the trailing P/E ratio of Sensex hovering between 30 to 35 (31.9 on Thursday) was at an all time high since the year 2000. "The deviation of the actual P/E from its long-run trend shows that the ratio is overvalued."

Measures of dividend

yield also signal that markets are getting overpriced, it said. A decomposition of changes in equity prices indicate that the rise in equity prices during 2016 to early 2020 was mainly supported by a decrease in interest rates and equity risk premium, with increase in forward earnings expectations contributing to a lesser extent.

Thereafter, a spike in ERP on Covid-19 concerns initially contributed to equity prices declining sharply to compensate for increased risks. However, equity prices registered an impressive recovery, subsequently, aided by easing of equity risk premium," the RBI said.

"Currently, dividend yields have fallen below their long-term trends. As such, two-way price movements are possible going forward."

The RBI attributed the record stock market rise to multiple events, including liquidity infusion by the central bank, government's ₹1.5 lakh crore PLI schemes for 10 sectors and record high FPI inflows, among others.

## BEZOS WILL PASS BATON TO NEW CEO ON JULY 5



Jeff Bezos Andy Jassy

New York, May 27: Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has picked a date to step down as CEO.

Bezos, who grew Amazon from an internet bookstore to an online shopping behemoth, said on Wednesday that Amazon executive Andy Jassy will take over the CEO role on July 5.

"We chose that date because it's sentimental for me," Bezos said during an Amazon shareholder meeting. He explained that it was exactly 27 years ago on that date in 1994 that Amazon was incorporated.

Seattle-based Amazon.com Inc announced that Bezos was stepping down as CEO in February, but didn't provide a specific date. Jassy, his replacement, currently runs the company's cloud-computing business.

— AP

## Cadila seeks human trial nod for antibody cocktail

### SANOFI, GSK KICK OFF PHASE III TRIAL FOR COVID SHOT

DOMINIQUE VIDALON  
MAY 27

France's Sanofi and Britain's GlaxoSmithKline launched a late-stage human trial for a recombinant Covid-19 vaccine candidate on Thursday which they hope to get approved by the end of 2021. The study is one of the first late stage trials that combines tests for boosters and variants. Their double-blind phase III study would include more than 35,000 adults in the US, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The treatment candidate, ZRC-3308, was earlier shown to reduce lung damage during animal trials, the drugmaker said, adding it was found to be safe and well-tolerated.

The therapy is a cocktail of two monoclonal antibodies, which mimic natural antibodies that the body generates to fight infection.

"At this juncture, there is a critical need to explore safer and more efficacious treatments to combat Covid," Zydus Cadila's managing director Sharvil Patel, said in a stock exchange filing.

The company is seeking permission to conduct early-to-late-stage human clinical trials from the Drugs Controller General of India.

The US FDA has given emergency use authorisation to similar treatments developed by Vir Biotechnology and GlaxoSmithKline as well as ones made

by Regeneron Pharmaceuticals and Eli Lilly.

Regeneron and Roche's antibody cocktail has also received emergency use approval in India, and will be distributed by drugmaker Cipla. The first batch of the cocktail became available in the country earlier this week.

— Reuters

### ASCI ASKS INFLUENCERS TO DISCLOSE PAID BRAND PITCHES



Mumbai, May 27: Come June 14, 'influencers' with wide following on social media who advertise brands from their accounts will have to disclose paid partnerships, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) said on Thursday.

The self-regulatory body pegged the size of the digital influencers industry at \$150 million, with digital marketing coming a long way over the past few years.

It has been engaged in stakeholder interactions since last year and released a draft of the influencer advertising guidelines in February 2021.

Dhruv Chitgopekar, founding partner of the Collective Artists Network and the chief executive of Bigbang.Social, who was among those consulted, told reporters that influencers started off as "guerrillas" on the marketing scene but are now at the forefront.

He exuded confidence that the guidelines will not result in any dip in revenues for such influencers and there will be better transparency.

Dolly Singh, a digital influencer, admitted that she has seen a dip in engagement ever since she started disclosing a paid partnership but urged everyone to be more optimistic.

ASCI secretary-general Manisha Kapoor said the organisation has hired technology firms to trawl content to identify non-disclosure.

Its chairman Subhash Kamat said so far it has seen 95 per cent compliance with its actions after flagging norm violations, and if nothing works, the body can also escalate it to the sectoral regulators. — PTI

### EXTRAORDINARY | YEAR Consumer staples, healthcare sectors generated highest listing gains

## IPOs give decadal high listing returns in FY21

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, MAY 27

The RBI annual report, released on Thursday, throws light on primary equity market dynamics as FY20-21 proved to be a year of decadal high average IPO listing returns at 36 per cent, which according to the RBI, might have been fuelled by oversubscription along with other factors in play, like underpricing of IPO as well as consumer-focused businesses attracting listing premium.

"The exuberance witnessed in the secondary market gripped the pri-

mary market, with the year 2020-21 turning out to be an extraordinary one for initial public offers (IPOs) by Indian companies, as 21 out of 29 IPOs have generated positive returns for investors on listing," the RBI said.

"A sector wise analysis of 201 IPOs over the last 10 years (2011-12 to 2020-21) indicates that IPOs from consumer staples and healthcare sectors generated the highest listing gains in India."

Main board IPO average listing returns in the last 10 years (sector-wise) were — consumer staples (27.5 per cent), healthcare (21.4

per cent), industrials (16.5 per cent), materials (15.4 per cent), information technology (15.2 per cent), consumer discretionary (14.6 per cent), financials (12.7 per cent) and communication services (4.3 per cent).

"The firm specific characteristics are found to be not statistically significant in explaining the price run-ups on the IPO listing day," RBI said and felt oversubscription as a major factor for the listing gains/returns.

"Thus, the decadal high average IPO listing returns of 36 per cent realised during 2020-21

cause of underpricing wherein the issuer deliberately under prices its IPO to attract uninformed investors. Other reasons are providing compensation to investors by the issuers for undertaking ex-ante uncertainty risk."

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Delving on underpricing of IPOs as one of the reasons for higher listing gains, the RBI said, "Information asymmetry is regarded as the root

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## SHORT TAKES

### Nadal, Djokovic & Roger in same half

**Paris:** Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer, the three most successful men in Grand Slam tennis history, were on Thursday all drawn in the same half of the French Open.

Having slipped to number three in the world, it was always likely that Nadal, the 13-time champion, would face top-ranked Djokovic before the final. The two great rivals could now meet in the semi-finals this year. Djokovic is top seed and could possibly face 2009 winner Federer in the quarterfinals. All three men are chasing history at the French Open which starts on Sunday. Nadal and Federer are locked on 20 Grand Slams each while Djokovic, who has 18, can become the first man in over half a century to win all four majors on more than one occasion. — AFP

### Nagal misses French Open cut

**Paris:** India's top player Sumit Nagal could not make a hat-trick of Grand Slam main draw appearances following a straight-set defeat in the second round of the French Open Qualifying event here.

The Haryana youngster crashed out of the Clay Court major with a 3-6, 3-6 loss to Alejandro Tabllo from Chile, last night. In the engrossing contest that lasted one-and-a-half hours, Nagal could break the serve of his rival, ranked 23 places below him at 146, only twice while he himself dropped his serve five times. With the defeat of the 23-year-old from Jhajjar, India's challenge has ended in the Qualifiers.

Ramkumar Ramanathan, Prajneesh Gunawan and Ankita Raina have already exited from the tournament. — PTI

### Osaka won't talk to media in France

**Paris:** Tennis star Naomi Osaka says she is not going to speak to the media during the upcoming French Open.

The world's highest-earning female athlete wrote in a Twitter post on Wednesday that she hopes the considerable amount that I get fined for this will go towards a mental health charity.

The French Open is scheduled to begin Sunday in Paris. Osaka heads into the clay-court tournament ranked No. 2 in the world. The 23-year-old Osaka has won four Grand Slam titles.

That includes last year's U.S. Open and the Australian Open this February.

"I've often felt that people have no regard for athletes' mental health and this very true whenever I see a press conference or partake in one," wrote Osaka. — AP

### Athletes to be vaccinated for Oly

**New Delhi:** Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Thursday said all the Tokyo Games-bound athletes and officials have got their first Covid-19 vaccine and they will get their second doses before their departure from the country for the multi-sporting spectacle. "The IOA is ensuring that all the participants through the IOA for the Tokyo Olympics including athletes, technical officials and delegate members will follow all precautions and will be vaccinated before leaving for Japan," the IOA said.

"...presently each of the above (athletes, technical officials and delegate members) has had the first vaccination and 2nd will happen as per vaccination protocols," IOA President Narinder Batra and Secretary General Rajiv Mehta said. — PTI

### 76ers exorcise Wizards 120-95

**Los Angeles:** Ben Simmons silenced the critics with a 22 point, nine rebound, eight assist performance as the Philadelphia 76ers routed the Washington Wizards 120-95 to grab a 2-0 playoff series lead on Wednesday. Joel Embiid also scored 22 points and grabbed seven rebounds while Tobias Harris garnered 19 points. Simmons too scored 12 points in 76ers win. — AFP

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Villarreal players celebrate winning the Europa League final against Manchester United in Gdansk, Poland, on Wednesday.

— AP

# WILL-A-REAL!

### Gutsy Villarreal kill Man U with last kick in sudden death



Villarreal players throw their coach Unai Emery into the air as they celebrate winning the Europa League final match against Manchester United in Gdansk, Poland, on Wednesday.

### RASHFORD FACES RACIST ABUSE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**Gdansk (Poland), May 27:** Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford said on Thursday he faced "at least 70 racial slurs" on social media after his team's loss on penalties to Villarreal in the Europa League final.

"At least 70 racial slurs on my social accounts counted so far," Rashford wrote on Twitter less than 90 minutes after the game finished.

"For those working to make me feel any worse than I already do, good luck trying," the tweet added.

Rashford added he was outraged that he was sent a mountain of monkey emojis in a message from a person using a profile which identified them as a teacher.

"Yes I'm a black man and I live every day proud that I am, he wrote at the time.

No one, or no one comment, is going to make me feel any different. So sorry if you were looking for a strong reaction, you're just simply not going to get it here," he further added. — AP

De Gea started ahead of Dean Henderson in goal, while Paul Pogba took up a more orthodox midfield role as Fred was only deemed fit enough for a spot on the bench.

An early collision between Juan Foyth and Pogba left the former Tottenham defender bloodied but both sides were slow to click into gear on a damp and chilly night on the Baltic coast.

Yeremy Pino scuffed wide on the counter, but Villarreal were soon ahead.

Dani Parejo swung in a free-kick from the left and Moreno peeled away from Luke Shaw and Victor Lindelof, steering beyond

Torres, the centre-back linked with a summer move to United, while Marcus Rashford tested Geronimo Rulli with a dipping effort from distance.

Yeremy Pino scuffed wide on the counter, but Villarreal were soon ahead.

Dani Parejo swung in a free-kick from the left and Moreno peeled away from Luke Shaw and Victor Lindelof, steering beyond

De Gea as the Swede desperately tugged at his shirt.

Moreno's 82nd goal for Villarreal equalled the club record of former Manchester United forward Giuseppe Rossi.

United continued to dominate possession as Villarreal soaked up the pressure, but the Spaniards remained a threat as Torres curled over at the end of normal time. — AP

Weariness and a raft of substitutions slowed the tempo in the closing stages as the rain intensified with penalties almost inevitable.

The first 21 penalties were successfully converted before De Gea had his attempt palmed away by Rulli as United lost for the sixth time in seven shootouts, handing Emery a record fourth Europa League crown.

— AP

### INTER MANAGER ANTONIO BIDS GOODBYE TO TEAM

**Milan, May 27:** Antonio Conte parted company with Inter Milan on Wednesday just days after lifting their first Italian league title in 11 years amid clashes with the club's cash-strapped Chinese owners on the way forward.

The ambitious Italian refused Suning's planned cost cutting which would have prevented him building the team he wanted to challenge at home and in Europe. The former Chelsea and Juventus boss took over in May 2019 on a three-year contract worth a reported 12 million euros (\$14 million) annually.

But the 51-year-old leaves the San Siro one year early, Inter confirming "an agreement has been reached with Antonio Conte for the termination of his contract by mutual consent".

"Antonio Conte will forever remain a part of our club's history," the statement added.

Severing Conte's contract has cost the club a reported seven million euros (\$8.5 million), while his final year's salary would have been around 12 million. As part of the deal Conte will not be allowed to coach another Italian league club next season, according to reports. — AFP

### Zidane resigns as R. Madrid coach with immediate effect

**Madrid, May 27:** Zinedine Zidane has resigned as Real Madrid manager with immediate effect, the Spanish club said Thursday just days after they were beaten to the La Liga title by Atletico Madrid.

The Frenchman's departure comes at the end of a disappointing campaign for the 13-time European champions, who also lost to Chelsea in the Champions League semifinals, as they failed to win a trophy for the first time in 11 seasons.

"We must now respect his decision and express our gratitude for his pro-

fessionalism, dedication and passion over the years and what he means to Real Madrid," a club statement said.

"Zidane is one of Real Madrid's great icons and his legacy extends beyond what he has achieved as a coach and player at our club," it added.

— AP

Only 10 days ago Zidane, who has a contract until 2022, denied press speculation he had already told his players he would be leaving at the end of the season.

"How am I going to tell my players that I am going now? It's a lie," he said after a 1-0 win at Athletic Bilbao.

"I'm focused on this season. There is a game left and we are going to give everything. I only care what happens in this finale," he said.

But, perhaps tellingly, he added: "The rest, we will see at the end of the season."

— AP

— AP