DECCAN (nicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

NELLORE | TUESDAY | 11 MAY 2021





Forecast: clear.

ASTROGUIDE

Plava; Uttarayana Tithi: Chaitra Bahula Amavasya till 12.29 am (Wednesday) Star: Bharani till 11.30 pm Varjyam: 7.15 am to 9.04 am Durmuhurtam: 8.22 am to 9.13 am; 11.05 pm to 11.50 pm Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm HIJRI CALENDAR

> Ramzan 28,1442 AH **PRAYERS** (SHAHI MASJID) Fajar: 4.27 am **Zohar:** 12.06 pm Asar: 4.34 pm Maghrib: 6.29 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.29 PM **SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.43 AM** MOONRISE TODAY 5.21 AM MOONSET TOMORROW 7.02 PM





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

SHORT

Indian envoy to

Kabul dies of CV

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

Nepal PM Oli loses Trust vote

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

Edible oils may

93 votes in the lower House

of Parliament during a spe-

get cheaper

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

Delhi riots: 3 week

bail to JNU student

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



WORLD 5

Dr Fauci: Vaccination only solution for India



SPORTS 8

Serena could miss Olympics

TABLOID

Kids most prone to onset of 3rd wave

Differential vax pricing

is right, Centre tells SC



PANDEMIC CONTROL

deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle

KCR closes border to AP Covid patients citing beds

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 10

High tension prevailed on the Andhra Pradesh-Telangana border since Sunday night as the latter refused entry of ambulances carrying Coronavirus patients seeking medical treatment at hospitals in Hyderabad. Those with bed bookings were allowed to proceed, though.

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

Accordingly, from 8 pm on Sunday, the police along the borders started stopping all ambulances from AP seeking entry to TS. Sources said that the Telangana government is aware that infected patients who are critically ill in AP are opting to reach Hyderabad for better medical care in top corporate hospitals. However, those among

them who fail to get a bed allocation in Hyderabad hospitals are moving from one hospital to another seeking admission and finally lose their lives. The Telangana government is not ready to accept blame for this, and hence blocked such incursions via the border to the state, TS reasoned. The Telangana police stopped nearly 30 ambulances from AP heading for Hyderabad at the Ramapuram Cross Road check post at Kodada mandal on Monday, and turned away patients who failed to produce proof or phone numbers relating to booking of beds in any

Page 2: Patient must show confirmation of beds

Jagan for global

vaccine tenders

Hyderabad hospital

DC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan

Mohan directed officials

to explore the possibility of purchasing Covid-19

vaccine by calling for

He held a review meet-

ing on Covid-19 manage-

ment and vaccination with ministers and senior

officials at his Camp

Speaking on the occa-

sion, he said that it was

the Centre, which was deciding the number of

vaccine doses to be sold by

their manufacturers and

also purchases made by

states. Reddy opined that

if Andhra Pradesh could

get one crore doses of the

vaccine per month, it

Office here on Monday.

VIJAYAWADA, MAY 10

global tenders.



Ambulances carrying patients to Hyderabad were

Critical patients also not allowed to pass

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL MAY 10

Kurnool, the Gateway for Rayalaseema, witnessed heart-rending scenes at the inter-state border between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh near Pullur toll plaza as the Telangana police stopped ambulances carrying critical care patients to hospitals in Hyderabad since Sunday.

The Jogulamba-Gadwal police under whose jurisdiction the toll plaza comes were stopping the ambulances from midnight last.

An ambulance carrying a Covid patient on oxygen support from Anantapur was stopped at the toll plaza. The patient, a sur-

veyor, had confirmed booking at a Hyderabad hospital. His attendant was seen questioning the Telangana police as to how

could complete vaccina-

tion of all people in six

months. But the reality

was that the state was get-

ting only 19 lakh doses on

an average per month. He underscored the need for

purchasing the doses after

calling for global tenders.

The CM criticised politi-

cal leaders who were try-ing to spread fear among

the people with misinfor-

mation campaigns. He

asked officials to explain

the facts to people. He

urged officials to ensure

that there is no rush at

Covid vaccination centres

by informing th-em through ANMs and Asha

workers about who would

Page 2: CM for curbing

blackmarketing of drugs

get the dose and when.

they could stop a patient in critical condition. She pleaded with chief minister Jagan, via TV chan-nels, to come to their rescue. She said that in Anantapur hospitals, there was a shortage of ventilators. The emotionally charged woman asked, "Is this for what we have supported you?"

She also pleaded with Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to allow them proceed to Hyderabad at least on humanitarian grounds.

Gadwal Jogulamba district SP Ranjan Ratan Kumar told *Deccan Chronicle* that they were stopping the ambulances as there was huge pressure on Hyderabad hospitals and less of beds. "We are allowing people with confirmed bookings

> Page 2: Situation under control, say cops

POLICE URGE PEOPLE WHO MUST TRAVEL TO TAKE E-PASSES

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 10

Director General of Police Goutam Sawang has advised those who plan travel to take e-pass for movement from state to state and also within districts in Andhra Pradesh during the times when Corona curfew is in force.

In a statement here, he said those who require travel for funerals, marriages or other important events and rituals would get e-pass if they submitted supporting documents as per norms set up by the government.

■ Page 2: People urged to cooperate with cops

Union govt defends incentivising private vaccine makers PARMOD KUMAR | DC TENSION AT RUIA HOSP AS 11 PATIENTS DIE NEW DELHI, MAY 10

DC CORRESPONDENT

The Centre has justified differential Covid vaccine **NELLORE, MAY 10** pricing, telling the Supreme Court that the three-slab "liberalised, market driven" rates for the Centre, states and private hospitals will incentivise demand, lead to higher production, competition and attract overseas investors. While it did not explain why the Centre was procuring the vaccines at one rate and states have to buy the same vaccines for double or more, it emphasised that citizens of all age groups will get free vaccination through-

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

out the country.

Tension prevailed at SVR Ruia Hospital in Tirupati following the death of 11 Covid-19 patients in the ICU allegedly because of drop in oxygen pressure while filling the gas in the storage tankers late on

within the executive domain, adding that judicial intervention may conseserious Standing firm on the dif-

ferential pricing of the two vaccines it has negotiated. the Centre told the top court in an affidavit submitted late on Sunday that differential pricing would "incentivised demand for the private vaccine manuMonday evening. Speaking to media late

on Monday night at the hospital, Chittoor district collector M. Harinarayana said that 11 persons died while adding that situation returned to normal.

> Page 2: Situation went out of control

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

"Any overzealous, though well-meaning judicial intervention may lead to unforeseen and unintended consequences in absence of any expert the top court, adding that in such a "grave and unprecedented" crisis, the wisdom of the executive should be trusted"

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

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

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

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, MAY 10

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

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

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

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



swearing-in ceremony, at the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata on Monday.

Shooting on poll day: 6 CISF men get notice

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MAY 10

Six Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel, including two officers, have been summoned by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the West Bengal police to appear physically at its headquarters in Bhawani Bhavan in Kolkata on Tuesday morning to face question-ing in the CISF shooting, which had left four villagers dead at a polling booth at Sitalkuchi in Cooch Behar of North Bengal during the fourth phase of the Assembly election in the state.

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

HIMANTA CALLS FOR TALKS WITH ULFA AFTER OATH

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, MAY 10

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

EASY I LIVING Authorities arrange wooden balls, ladders, swings, tubes and ropes

Animals get enriched in zoo environs

gorised animals into five

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 10

Forest authorities have come up with a series of measures to enrich environment in zoos in order to help them beat stress and not to become susceptible to diseases across zoos located in Visakhapatnam Tirupati following their closure from May 4 entry of visitors

barred in the entire state. The authorities are arranging wooden balls and ladders, swings, tubes, ropes and other amusement equipment for ani-

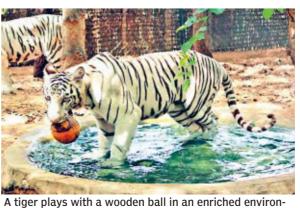
OFFICIALS SAID enclosure enrichments will help captive animals display their natural behaviour

mals to play as part of appropriate behavioural and mental activities. They maintained that

enclosure enrichments will help captive animals display their natural behavioural patterns so that those housed in natural enclosures will live longer. In Indira Gandhi Zoo Park, nearly 810 animals and birds are being housed at present and authorities have cate-

categories species-specific ment in all enclosures. Its curator Dr Nandani Salaria said, "We are arranging species-specific enrichment in all enclosures so that animals will not feel any stress and will be free from diseases. We have seen them play with the equipment arranged in open enclosures without any adverse bearing on their psychological and mental conditions.

> Page 3: No mood swings noticed in animals



ment at Sri Venkateswara Zoo Park in Tirupati. – C. NARAYANA RAO

Congress postpones poll to elect new prez

ASHHAR KHAN | DC NEW DELHI, MAY 10

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) met on Monday and for the third time postponed its presidential elections citing

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

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

given the Covid-19 crisis.

Insiders said that Mrs

IN BRIEF

PLAINT FILED IN HC **AGAINST KURNOOL** COLLECTOR

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, MAY 10

Irked by the apathy and indifference of the Kurnool administration in providing vaccination facilities to the citizens. an advocate filed a complaint in the AP High Court seeking action against district collector G. Veera Pandian and District Medical and Health Officer Dr Rama Giddaiah.

C. Nagendrantha, former president of Kurnool Bar Association, said that collector Veerapandian and DMHO Dr Rama Giddiah have failed in their duties to provide required vaccine on 8-5-2021 and to arrange vaccination following Covid-19 safety protocol at the vaccination centres and thereby deprived hundreds of beneficiaries second dose of Covaxin vaccination.

He said that due to lack of planning and coordination by the district administration, many people were on the hazard of exposure to the virus on May 8 at the vaccination centres and thus they are liable for action under the Disaster Management Act and under Section 166 of IPC and also for the violation of human rights of the public.

NO BIOMETRIC ATTENDANCE FOR **WARD VOLUNTEERS**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 10

The state government issued an order to dispense with the biometric attendance capture of all village/ward functionaries and volunteers and to fol-low the physical attendance

The state government in its order issued on Monday also postponed the biometric attendance linked salary to the village/ward Secretariat functionaries with effect from May

SITUATION WENT OUT OF CONTROL AT HOSPITAL

From page 1

According to sources, there are 135 ventilators-equipped beds of which 55 had been occupied by patients, and some others were on high-flow oxygen.
The patients became critical

as their condition deteriorated due to breathlessness after a sudden drop in the oxygen supply, much to the shock of their attendants. According to an eyewitness

account, paramedical staff attempted to save the lives by performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on some patients.

The situation, however, went out of hands with nearly 10 patients losing their lives and leaving 10 more patients in critical condition, according to unconfirmed reports.

Although the hospital officials denied the number of deaths and said they were assessing the situation, a top police official confirmed 10

Sources said the ward was under the grip of panic as the anguished attendants started damaging several items in the

Irate relatives of patients present in the hospital premises rushed into the ward and damaged some furniture after coming to know about the inci-

Fearing attack, the hospital staff, including doctors ran away from the scene. More people started reaching the hospital as some television channels flashed the news. An official in the hospital attributed the incident to the late arrival of oxygen from Chennai and said the oxygen supply was restored and the situation was well under con-

Taking serious note of the incident, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy gave orders to the officials to take immediate steps to protect the patients

He also sought a report on the incident.

Meanwhile, TD Tirupati president G. Narasimha Yadav demanded that the officials present the facts before the people and said the state government had to take responsibility for the incident.

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The CM also sought a report on the incident.



Ambulances coming from Andhra Pradesh are stopped by the Telangana Police at the checkpost in Kodad near

AP, TS chief secys hold talks to end impasse

Health dept getting ready to buy vaccines from abroad

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 10

Health principal secretary Anil Kumar Singhal has sounded confident that the issue of ambulances carrying Covid-19 patients being not allowed entry to Telangana from AP will be resolved. The official told the media on Monday that chief secretaries from the two states are holding discussions. Meanwhile, based on dir-

ection from the state government the health department is getting ready to purchase Covid vaccines from foreign countries, including Russia's Sput-nik, by calling global ten-ders. This is, if the state got the permission from the Centre. Referring to the number of Covid-19 vaccines being administered in the state, he said 73.49 lakh doses were received so far from the Centre. Of them, 73 lakh doses were already administered. The state government has placed an order for purchase of 16.85 lakh doses, of which 4.93 lakh doses have already reached the state. He said all vaccine doses are to be administered to those aged above 45 years. On the second dose, he said 6.90 lakh doses weon this count, and by May 15, the number would go up to 10.96 lakh doses. By May 31, some 17 lakh doses

would be administered. Though the state government was ready to pay ₹1,600 crore for purchase of four crore vaccine doses, the norms set by the Centre for purchase of the vaccine doses stood in the

way. Themanufacturing companies were to give away 50 per cent of their prowhile the remaining share could be sold to the states, that too as per direction from the Centre.

Situation under control, say cops WITH POLICE

FROM PAGE 1

town Mahesh said there was a problem of restrictions on the movement of ambulances from Ravalaseema passing through Pullur for a few hours. The situation has been brought under control and the seriously ill patients were allowed to proceed to Hyderabad.

Ambulances carrying less-serious patients were sent back. Some of them were admitted to Kurnool GGH and others at Anantapur and Kadapa,

When asked how could the police decide on the seriousness of a patient, the DSP said, "We can identify serious and the less serious patients, and based on our assessment, we took decisions."

An ambulance carrying Covid patients from Mydukuru in Kadapa district was stopped in the early morning hour. Its occupants pleaded that they had confirmed booking at a hospital in Hyderabad. Even then, they were not allowed to

Alampur circle inspector said they were only checking the vehicles and not stopping them. "There is no problem at the Toll plaza." But the sub-inspector on duty said that they have instructions not to allow vehicles in as there was a shortage of oxygen supply in Telangana.

CM FOR CURBING BLACK MARKETING DRUGS

FROM PAGE 1

He instructed them to give Karnataka. The officials priority to the second dose informed that if they for people aged above 45 years. He said there should be no compromise on supply of medicine kits to Covid patients staying at home isolation within three hours of getting information at the call centre. He sought an action plan for setting up PSA oxygen plants and said that out of 590 metric tonnes of medical oxygen that has been allotted, they could draw 571 MT only on May 8. He said that they had asked the Centre to allot 10 ISO cryogenic tankers and added that officials were making efforts to get more alloca-

tion of medical oxygen from Tamil Nadu and could get 60 MT of medical oxygen from Tamil Nadu and 130 MT from Karnataka, it would help meet the state's basic requirements. Reddy called for curbing black-marketing of remdesivir injections. The DGP was instructed to submit a district-wise report every day on implementation of curfew in the state.

The CM said that there was a need for the proper functioning of 104 call centre so that it would help patients to get beds. He also insisted on having an Arogya Mitra at every

PEOPLE URGED TO COOPERATE From page 1

The needy have been advised to visit the citizen service portal - http://ap police.gov.in, twitter APPOLICE100 Facebook ANDHRAPRADESH-STATEPOLICE, to get e-

Assuring the people that the AP police would be there for protection, the DG urged all to be cooperative to the police in the implementation of curfew and in effecting curbs on the movement of people in specific hours. "Please strictly comply with Covid-appropriate behaviour and avoid falling victim to the virus," he said.

FINANCE MIN TO SPEAK TO TS GOVT TO EASE PATIENTS

DC CORRESPONDENT

Reacting to the ordeal of patients in ambulances, who were stopped at the Pullur toll plaza from going to hospitals in Hyderabad, AP finance Bugganan minister Rajendranath Reddy said, "It has come to my notice just now.

The minister said he was initiating discussions with the officials concerned to ease the tension on the border.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, the minister said that medical emergency needs to be given utmost importance.

Patients must show confirmation of beds

FROM PAGE 1

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

"The patient can also

show any message about confirmation of bed availability in a hospital in phones. Else, we tell them to go back. We have no issue with other vehicles coming in from AP to Telangana," police said.

Meanwhile, AP BJP state general secretary S. Vishnivardhan Reddy Vishnuvardhan Reddy said, "This is an inhuman act. AP is having the right to treat Hyderabad as the

more years. Hyderabad is a medical hub. TS must immediately allow ambulances from AP to go to Hyderabad. The CMs from both AP and TS should respond and help patients reach Hyderabad for treatment.' Indian Medical

Association national chairman Dr D. Srihari Rao said, "AP people have been used to visiting Hyderabad for best treat ment in local hospitals for any health issue including the recent Coronavirus infection. Our infected patients are suffering a lot when their ambulances have been stopped at Telangana State borders is time the Chief Ministers from the two states hold discussion and help our patients to reach Hyderabad and get treat-

Mine owner ignored mines safety regulations

BALLEDA I DC KADAPA, MAY 10

Officials say the tragedy of 10 workers being killed in an explosion at the Konda Gangamma Thalli mine in Kadapa district was waiting happen, as its owner had been flouting all norms ever since get-ting permission to extract barytes in 2001.

According to details provided by mines safety officers, barytes was being extracted from this mine since past 20 years. It is mandated that after a lease is granted to an individual or company to extract a minor or major mineral, a representation has to be sent to the Mines Safety Officer concerned in Form-1 before starting mining operations.

Following this, the mines safety official will visit the relevant mine and examine the safety measures put in place for extraction of ore. Only then can mining operations start. However, in case of Konda Gangamma Thalli mine, no Form-1 was submitted or inspection carried out.

This suggests there were no safety measures put in place, though the department of mines approved the lease on November 2, 2001. All the operations at the Konda Gangamma Thalli mine were therefore illegal.

Yejerla Yohan, Deputy Director of Mines Safety in Nellore, speaking to Deccan Chronicle, said that they had not received any representation regarding safety measures undertaken at the mine involved in the accident. The mine owner had not even sent the Form-1 before commencing mining operations.

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CM, GOV EXPRESS GRIEF OVER DEMISE OF FORMER DGP

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 10

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed grief over the demise of former director general of police in united Pradesh Prasada Rao.

In a message, the CM conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family members on the demise of former DGP.

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan expressed grief and sadness on the sudden demise of former DG B. Prasada Rao due to ill health in the US. In a release from Raj Bhavan, the Governor parted for his soul to rest in peace and offered heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members.

The Governor parted for his soul to rest in peace and offered heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members.

₹10L sanctioned as compensation for victims' families

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, MAY 10

The state government ordered ex gratia of ₹10 lakh to the next of kin of each of the 10 deceased and ₹5.00 lakhs to those injured in the gelatin sticks' explosion that occurred at Konda Gangamma Talli mines, Mamillapalli village of Kadapa district on Saturday. District collectors Chemical Hosilians tor Chevuru Harikiran issued orders on Monday regarding the sanction of

ex gratia.

The government directed that the expenditure shall be incurred from the District Mineral Fund (DMF) available in the dis-trict and this immediate relief will be in addition to the compensation to be received by the affected

persons under any other persons under any other provision of Law. Meanwhile, Kadapa police have arrested two accused in the accident in which 10 workers were killed in a massive explosion at a barytes quarry in Mamillapalli village of Kalasapadu mandal on Saturday.

District Superintendent of Police Karur Karunapathi Nagendra Kumar Anburajan, at a press conference on Monday afternoon, said the mine operator Chilekampalli Nageswara Reddy (42) of Chenchaiah Gari Palli village in B.Mattam Mandal and the explosives supplier Yerragudi Raghunatha Reddy (62) from Pulivendula were arrest-ed. The duo was arrested Monday Amagampalle bus stand. He added that the

Deputy Superintendent of Police N. Sudhakar had been appointed as an investigation officer. "So far our investigation has revealed that the mine was using explosives without permits and was without running E n v i r o n m e n t a l attend the hearing.

PROBE COMMITTEE **APPOINTED**

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, MAY 10

The state government ordered that an inquiry committee be constituted under the chairmanship Joint (Revenue) and four other members from Police Revenue, Mines and Geology, Department of mines safety Department

Explosives. As per the directives of the government, the district collector formed the inquiry committee with the Chairmanship of Joint Collector (Revenue) Midde Gowthami, IAS A d d i t i o n a l Superintendent of Police Devaprasad, Rajampet Sub Collector Ketan Garg, from Revenue Deputy Director of Mines and Geology of Kadapa M.Balaji Naik, Deputy Director, Mines Safety from Nellore Yohan Yejerla and Deputy Chief Controller of Explosives Visakhapatnam B.Ravikumar as mem

The Director of Mines and Geology V.G. Venkata Reddy requested the committee to conduct a thorough investigation. The inquiry shall cover all aspects of the accident.

The committee has to identify the reasons for the explosion and persons/agencies responsible and identify the persons/agencies responsible for irregularities or

Penal actions have been proposed against the persons/agencies responsible for the explosion.

Permission."

He also added that the mine in the case had given notice to the original lessee and asked him to

Sajjala slams TD for false acquistion of vax

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 10

State government adviser Ramakrishna Reddy (public affairs) slammed Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu for spreading falsehood on procurement of Covid-19 vaccine doses. Speaking to the media-

persons here on Monday, he said the Centre had made it clear in its affi-davit submitted in the Supreme Court on essential supplies and services stating that it was the national task force, which was monitoring allocation and supply of vac-cine doses to the states based on guidelines issued by the Centre. He flayed the TD for cre-

ating panic among the people leading to their mad rush at Covid-19 Vaccination Centres and spread of the virus. He blamed the Opposition TD for trying to distort facts on vaccination, supply of medical oxygen and availability of beds in the hospitals.

He said the CM would write a letter to the Centre with a request to delicence Covaxin and to increase its production.

GORANTLA FOR MSP TO PADDY FARMERS

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, MAY 10

Rajamahendravaram Rural MLA Gorantla Buchaiah Chowdary wants the state government to take steps for pur-chasing paddy from farmers at the minimum support price (MSP) He complained that dur-ing the Rabi Season,

farmers have cultivated Bondalu variety (2636) of

But rice millers are purchasing it for ₹1,100 per 75-kg bag, against the

Patients can contact motor vehicle inspectors if ambulance operators charge more than fixed price

Ambulances fleecing Covid patients come under scanner

number AP26TL1973 was

intercepted during a spe-

DC CORRESPONDENT **NELLORE, MAY 10**

Prompted by news published in these columns on April 30 that ambulance operators are fleecing Covid patients, especially those bound for cities like Chennai, Transport Department has formed teams to keep a close watch on charges being demanded by these operators.

Nellore region Deputy Transport Commissioner Subba Rao announced that all ambulances are under their scanner. They will not spare any operator who is found exploiting Corona patients or their families by charging more than the rates fixed recently by the Transport Department. According to the com-

missioner, hire charges for ambulances to Chennai are ₹11,000 for Advanced Life Support System System Omnis (ALS)-equipped and ₹20,000 for ALS Tempos, the distance being approximately 400 km. For Tirupati (300 km), the rates are ₹9,000 for

ALS-equipped Omnis and

transport officials department booked a case against an ambulance operator under Section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act, read with Section 188 of IPC, for

Nellore: The

demanding ₹35,000 to shift a Covid-19 patient from Chennai to Nellore. The ambulance vehicle ₹16,500 for ALS Tempos

The same for Hyderabad

(900 km) are ₹23,000 and

₹45.000 respectively. In

cial drive to prevent ambulance operators from fleecing the hapless Covid-19 patients following instructions from joint-collector (health) N. Prabhakar Reddy on Monday. Deputy Transport Commissioner C.H.V.K. Subba Rao said

km).

case of Bengaluru (900 sive of driver batta. But the charges ₹21,000 and ₹40,000. The charges are inclu-

cle and handed it over to Nellore Sixth Town Police further action. Stressing that the ambulance operators should collect the charges fixed by the collector, he said they will continue the surprise checks to prevent overcharging.

oxygen rates are extra at ₹3 per km. Patients have to pay separately for ventila-

tor technicians if their services are needed. **DRIVER DEMANDS ₹35K FROM PATIENT, AMBULANCE SEIZED** With regard to transthey have seized the vehi-

portation of Covid-19 patients locally, the transport department has fixed ₹2,600 plus oxygen charges of ₹400 (if utilised) for distances ranging from 0 to 20 km for ALS Omni vehicles. The ceiling for such tempos is ₹4,000 and oxygen charges required). Transport

Commissioner Subba Rao said patients can contact motor vehicle inspectors in case ambulance opera-

er than those fixed by the department. Contact num-7382708999 9177216039 (Madhava Rao), 9246844242 (Bhaskar Rao) (Balakrishna). Referring to DC report of

tors demand charges high-

over ₹25,000 collected by an ambulance operator from a patient Siddique for taking him to Chennai for treatment, the officer said they have collected information from the victim to initiate action against the IN BRIEF

VASANTOTHSAVAM IN EKANTHAM AT SRI PADMAVATI

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MAY 10

TTD is organising the annual Vasantothsavam of Sri Padmavati Ammavari temple, Tiruchanoor, from May 25 to 27 with Ankurarpanam on May

The three-day fete will be held in Ekantham in view of the Covid-19 guidelines and the traditional Swarna Rathotsavam slated for May 26 will be replaced with Tiruchi

Utsavam.
On all the days, Snapana thirumanjanam will be performed for the utsava idols of Sri Padmavati in the afternoon and processions will take out inside the temple at night.

TTD has cancelled the arjita seva of Kalyanotsavam from May 24-27 and Unjal seva on

As part of Vasantothsavam celebrations at Sri Padmavati temple, TTD plans to perform the Koil Alwar Thirumanjanam fete on May 18 morning, and allow Sarva Darshan from 10.30

Consequently, the TTD has cancelled the break Darshan in the morning and evening and also the arjita sevas of Kalyanotsavam and Unjal Seva at Šri Padmavati temple on

80 MORE BEDS FOR EMERGENCY CARE

DC CORRESPONDENT

In a bid to ensure the availability of beds for patients needing emergency care, Prakasam district administration is adding 80 beds on a temporary basis at RIMS Hospital in Ongole.

During a review with officials at RIMS on Monday, Collector Pola Bhaskar said they are already providing medical aid to Covid patients in seven government hospitals and 26 private hospitals in the dis-

RIMS hospital alone, 1,000 oxygen beds have been allotted to the patients and there are no issues with regard to oxygen supply," Collector said adding that they are conducting patient audit and oxygen audit to further improve the services.

Referring to 1,650 beds arranged at 14 Covid Care Centres, he said that Covid infected with moderate symp toms are being shifted to these centres for treatment under the supervision of medical

YSRC LEADER DR JYOTHSNALATHA **PASSED AWAY**

DC CORRESPONDENT **NELLORE, MAY 10**

YSR Congress leader Dr Bathala Radha Jyothsnalatha 51 succumbed to Covid-19 in a Corporate Hospital in Chennai during the early hours of Monday. She was under treatment for Covid since last 15 days and her condition deteriorated on Sunday night.

Before joining in YSR Congress, Dr Jyothsnalatha was in Telugu Desam and she unsuccessfully contested for Gudur assembly seat in 2014 general elections on TD ticket. She was Chairman of the Development Committee of the Government Area Hospital in Gudur for two years.

Sr citizens desperate for second dose vax

They are anxious as already 50 to 60 days have passed

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, MAY 10

Many senior citizens, suffering from hyper-ten-sion and diabetes and other chronic diseases are having a nightmarish time in their desperation for the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine, particularly with regard to Covaxin.

When the government accorded priority to them in March, many of them got the first dose of Covaxin. But, now, they are anxious as already 50 to 60 days have passed, and they are unsure about when they will get the second dose.

According to sources, supply of Covaxin is limited and officials are unable to cover all those who took it as the first dose. Due to its shortage, those with clout managed to get the second dose while most aged persons have been left in the lurch. After officials announced exclusive Covaxin centres, many have been visiting such vaccine centres but are

returning disappointed. Recently, East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy introduced a 'token system'. Even this has been creating problems for senior

On being informed by ward volunteers, some senior citizens went to their nearest centres to get tokens. There they were informed by the staff that they would give since he took his first vaccines only to token dose. It would be ren-

DC CORRESPONDENT

In a massive crackdown,

Anantapur One Town

police arrested 11 per-

sons over black market-

ing of remdesivir injections on Monday. Police seized 16 remdesivir vials and ₹94,000 in cash.

Two MNOs of a super

specialty hospital and

some owners of medical

stores and two outsourc-

ing women employees at

the General Hospital

were among the arrested.

Seven of these had been

detained a couple of days

ago while four others

were arrested on Monday

in follow-up investiga-

COVID | HELP

ANANTAPUR MAY 10

Covid caseload dips to 14,986

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MAY 10

Andhra Pradesh witnessed steep fall in number of fresh cases of Covid-19 infections to 14,986 in the last 24 hours when the caseload peaked to 23,920 on May 1 during the second wave in the state, giving much relief to the state govern-

state health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin on Monday reporting that out of 60,124 samples tested, 14,986 persons were found infected with Covid-19 and 84 deaths. However, out of 1,14,299 samples tested, 23,920 found were persons infected with the virus on May 1. The difference between the caseload

holders.
"The staff told us that

tokens would be issued When we contacted volunteers, they replied that nobody had given tokens to them and their only duty was to inform people about the availability of the vaccine," said a senior citizen, M. Narayana Rao. He said that it has been 55 days

DSP V. Raghava

Reddy told the media

also vigilance teams

were on the alert over

tions in black market.

sale of remdesivir injec-

DSP V. Raghava Reddy

told the media that the police teams led by CI

Prathap Reddy and also

vigilance teams were on

the alert over sale of

remdesivir injections in

Among the arrested,

Reddy of

Rajesh of Kesepalli,

black market.

Viswanath

that the police teams led

by CI Prathap Reddy and

reported on May 1 and 10, was 8,934.

With regard to daily Covid-19 cases, East Godavari reported the highest at 2,352 followed 1,618 Visakhapatnam, 1,575 in Guntur, 1,543 in Chittoor, 1,432 in Nellore, 1,298 in Srikakulam, 1,224 in Kadapa, 948 in Kurnool, 666 in Krishna, 639 each Anantapur Prakasam, Vizianagaram and 423 in

West Godavari. East Godavari was found to be the worst affected with regard to the cumulative active cases with 24,903 followed by 20,021 in Chittoor, 19,120 in Visakhapatanm, 18,923 in Srikakulam, 17,575 in Guntur, 16,000 in Nellore, 14,694 in Prakasam.

dered useless if he does not get the second dose within the stipulated

They have appealed to joint collector Keerthi Chekuri, who is supervising the vaccination programme. Some senior Covaxin is sold in hospitals or health centres, they would shell down the price that has been prescribed by the govern-

Rajednra of Adarsha

outsourcing employees at the GGH while

Satyanaryana were in the marketing field. Two more women outsourcing

employees at General

Hospital formed into a

gang and engaged in the

sale of remdesivir vials

following the huge demand for it in treat-

ment of the Covid-19

Forming into gangs,

they were selling injec-

tions at huge prices

stores. After they were

patients.

in Anantapur working as

Naidu and

1.22 L PEOPLE WAIT FOR 2ND DOSE IN CHITTOOR

DC CORRESPONDENT **NELLORE, MAY 10**

Collector Harinarayanan that they have to provide the second round of vaccination to 1.22 lakh people and they have 24,000 doses available as of date.

Addressing media persons at Chittoor on Monday, the Collector said, "We would collect the data of the people requiring second dose of vaccination from the Central Government's Covid App and prepare a list of beneficiaries in serial order by taking completion of six weeks after the first dose as the bench-

The list will be sent to the mandals and municipalities for inoculation based on seniority. Tokens containing the date, time and location of vaccination centre will be distributed to those waiting for the second dose." Harinarayanan said that they have administered the second dose of vaccination to 1.82 lakh people and first dose to 5.23 lakh people in the district

ed, four more persons

were found involved in

the black marketing of

injections. Sheik Mansur

and Sheik Shameer

Bhasha who were MNOs

at the Super Specialty

Hospital in Anantapur, Life Care Hospital

Medical Stores owner

Gangachari, Sri Lakshmi

Medical Stores owner

Ambati Venkateswara

Prasad were among the

Instead of treating the

patients at the hospital,

documentation and sell-

ing injections at huge

also seized a total 16

arrested.

through the medical prices. Police said, "We

Most villagers have

Prolonged curfew in wake of second wave means there is traffic between villages or from villages to towns only between 6 am and 12 noon. However, due to fear of contracting Coronavirus, people are avoiding autorickshaws too. With no income, auto drivers are finding it difficult to even pay the rent their vehicles. Nearly 40 per cent of drivers plying autorickshaws in the district take them

Sheikh Moulana, an

 ACCORDING TO transport department officials, there are about 28,000 autorickshaws

plying in Kadapa district; 8,645 of them in Kadapa city alone and the rest in Rajampet, Railway Kodur, Badvel, Rayachoti, Jammala-madugu, Mydukur, Pulivendula and Proddatur constituencies.

Kadapa, says he used to earn ₹800 to ₹1,000 if he worked throughout the day and night. As they are now plying autos only from 6 am to 12 noon, he is finding it difficult to get even ₹300 to ₹400, as people are not coming out like in the past. Sheikh Moulana says after paying rent to auto and bearing expenses, he is owner left with any money. Staying in rented houses is making life all the more difficult, he

Autorickshaw workers in Railway Koduru, Rajampet, K Jammalamadugu other towns stay in rented houses before returning to their villages with their earnings. Raja Naik, another auto driver, says he is facing severe financial difficulties. So is Janardhan from Chennur who says it is difficult to manage his family after for rent and for diesel, particularly as prices of essential commodities too

rued.

Agonising wait



People take rest under the shade of a lobby near CSR Block of King George Hospital as they wait for their relatives who were undergoing Covid treatment at KGH in - P. NARASIMHA MURTHY Visakhapatnam on Monday.

Covid-19 hits lives of auto drivers

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, MAY 10

Lives of autorickshaw drivers have been severely threatened by the second wave of Coronavirus. They had been devastated during the first wave of Covid-19 itself, but breathed a sigh of relief after lockdown was relaxed and later removed. But the second wave of the virus has pushed them back into serious financial difficul-

According to transport department officials, there are about 28,000 auto rickshaws plying in Kadapa district; 8,645 of them in Kadapa city alone and the rest in Rajampet, Railway Kodur, Raya-choti, Jammala-madugu, Mydukur, Pulivendula and Proddatur constituen-

autorickshaws as the best alternative for travelling to nearby villages.

on rent.

autorickshaw worker in

BATHYMETRIC SURVEY FINDS 14.6 MN CUBIC **METRES OF SAND**

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, MAY 10

East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy disclosed that a bathymetric survey conducted by Irrigation Department has found 14.6 million cubic meters of silt in the Dowleswaram reservoir. He said that if this sand is mined, it could be used in various construction projects or by people in building their houses

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Hospitals to treat without any charges

Ramachandra Nagar and detained and interrogat- remdesivir vials.

Pvt hosps warned over Aarogyasri

16 remdesivir vials seized, 11 arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, MAY 10

West Godavari district administration has initiated urgent steps to streamline the functioning of private hospitals, particularly with regard to treatment given to Arogyasri card holders.

District collector Karthikeya Mishra said that private hospitals should provide treatment without collecting any charges. Those found guilty would be subject to

• KARTHIKEYA MISHRA said that private hospitals should provide treatment without collecting any charges. Those found guilty would be subject to stringent punishment, he cautioned. He was interacting with district officials through a video conference at Eluru on Monday.

stringent punishment, ous offence. he cautioned.

He was interacting with district officials through video conference at Eluru on Monday. He was told that some hospitals have not allotted ICU beds to Arogyasri patients. He said this would be taken as a seri-

He instructed Eluru and Jangareddygudem RDOs to ensure that private hospitals will earmark 50 per cent of ICU and oxygen beds to Arogyasri patients. If any negligence is found on this count, criminal cases would be

booked against them, he warned.

He said that 42 hospitals have been given permission for Covid-19 L Co out treatment which hospitals are no empanelment and three have temporary Aarogyasri empanelment. He said that the remaining 13 hospitals should also be given temporary empanelment. Mishra said that there was a need to increase vaccination centers and tahsildars should supervise it.

3 MORE HOSPITALS FOR COVID CARE UNDER AAROGYASRI

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MAY 10

District administration has accorded permission hospitals more Kavali town treating the Covid-19 patients under the Aarogyasri scheme. They have

offering treatment for Covid-19 patients already and they would extend treatment to beneficiaries of the Aarogyasri henceforth. scheme **GOVT. OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

O/o. Controller of Communication Accounts AP Circle, 2nd Floor, Microwave Building , P&T Gandhi Colony, M.G.Road, Vijayawada-520010, Phone No:0866-2484047;Toll Free No:1800-425-4405

PRESS NOTE

CCA, AP Circle 'Quarterly Pension Adalat 2021' will be held on 25-06-2021(Friday) Office of the Controller of Communication Accounts, Department of Telecommunications, Andhra Pradesh Circle's Quarterly Pension Adalat 2021 will be held on 25-06-2021(Friday) from 1100 hrs to 1330 hrs through video conferencing. DoT and BSNL pensioners may submit their grievances, if any

Telecommunications. 2^{n d} Floor, Microwave Building, P&T Gandhi Colony, M.G.Road, Vijayawada 520010. Alternatively, the grievances may also be sent to email id: ccavja.apdot@gov.in on or before 28-05-2021. Grievances received thereafter will not be placed before Adalat. The representations received from the pensioners will only be accepted.

to Accounts Officer (Pension), O/o.CCA, Andhra Pradesh Circle, Department of

Pensioners are requested to mention their PPO number, date of retirement. Unit retired from and mobile number in their grievance and also indicate 'Quarterly Pension Adalat 2021' on the top of the letter and forwarding envelope.

Date:07-05-2021

Dy. Controller of Communication Accounts



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SHORT TAKES

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

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

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

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

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

COVID BODIES FOUND FLOATING IN RIVER GANGA

NAYEAR AZAD I DC PATNA, MAY 10

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Upset over this, Firozabad's Jasrana MLA Ramgopal Lodhi made a video over the issue and posted it on social media. His wife was given a bed at the hospital following the dis-

trict magistrate's intervention, the MLA claimed. Lodhi, however, alleged that

his wife was not given medicine and water on time. The MLA's video had sur-

faced on social media on May 8 when his wife was referred Agra's SN Medical College.

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

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

Home ministry rules out national lockdown

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

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 10

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

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

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

ground situation.

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

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

Three Indian Navy war-

ships are bringing to

tonnes of liquid oxygen,

tanks, 3,150 cylinders and

a large amount of other

medical supplies from

abroad as the country

reels under a severe sec-

ond wave of the coron-

being brought by the ships

included 900 oxygen-filled

The medical supplies

20 cryogenic

avirus pandemic.

Monday 80

oxygen

India sees 3,05 L cases, 3,494 deaths

VINEETA PANDEY | DC

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

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

With oxygen supply from the Centre more or less

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC

India's Consul General in

northern Afghanistan

died of cardiac arrest

there after contracting

Covid. Mr. Kalra, who was posted at the city of

Mazar-e-Sharif, is the first

Indian diplomat posted

abroad to die after being infected with the d eadly virus, sources con-

Expressing his condo-

lences, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar tweeted, "Deeply grieved

at the passing away of Shri Vinesh Kalra, Consul

General, Mazar-e-Sharif.

A conscientious and dedi-

cated colleague, he will be

missed by us all. Sincerest

condolences to his fami-

Ministry of External

"@MEAIndia

Affairs (MEA) Spokes-person Arindam Bagchi

sincerely condoles passing away of Shri Vinesh

Kalra, Consul General,

INDIAN NAVY BRINGS MEDICAL SUPPLIES FROM ABROAD

antigen Covid-19 test kits,

54 oxygen concentrators,

450 PPE (personal protec-

tive equipment) kits, Indian Navy spokesper-

son Commander Vivek

Madhwal said. Indian

Navy ship Airavat is rea-

ching Visahapatnam from

Singapore carrying eight cryogenic oxygen tanks

each having a capacity of

20 metric tonnes of oxy-

Another warship, INS

gen and other supplies.

firmed.

tweeted.

New Delhi, May 10: cylinders and 10,000 rapid

⁷inesh Kumar Kalra has

NEW DELHI, MAY 10

Sr Indian diplomat

dies of Coronavirus

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

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

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

Mazar-e-Sharif. A sincere,

hard working & reliable

officer, he showed exem-

plary commitment & dedi-

cation to the national

cause by volunteering for

a posting under difficult

Afghanistan. He will be remembered fondly and missed by one & all.

@MEAIndia will extend

all possible support to his

Mr. Kalra had earlier served in various Indian

Missions abroad in Muscat (Oman), Hanoi

(Vietnam), Pretoria (South Africa), Kuala

Lumpur (Malaysia) and

Beijing (China). During

abroad, he has gained

wide work experience in various fields like Adm-

inistration, Establishm-

ent, Finance, Commerce, Consular, Poliical, etc".

He also "underwent his

Chinese language train-

ing while serving at Em-

Kolkata, is arriving at

New Mangalore port car-

rying 40 metric tonnes of

liquid oxygen, 400 Oxygen cylinders and 47 oxygen

concentrators from Qatar

and Kuwait, Commander

INS Trikand is reaching

Mumbai with 40 tonnes of oxygen from Qatar, he

said. Last week, the

Indian Navy deployed

nine warships to bring liq-

uid medical oxygen and

Madhwal said.

other supplies.

New

Missions

stints

and

Headquarters

Delhi

conditions

family."

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

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

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

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

dying?" Mr Sisodia said.

was seen in several other states like Andhra Pradesh and Odisha too. The National Task Force

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

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

A Covid-19

patient, on

oxygen

support,

taken to a

govern-

ment hos-

pital in

Jammu,

Monday.

- PTI

NCP DEMANDS 'ONE NATION ONE POLICY'

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, MAY 10

Alleging that the Narendra Modi Government has failed miserably to tackle Covid pandemic, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has called for a 'one nation one policy' for the eradication of coronavirus from the country. If the entire country doesn't have a uniform policy, the coronavirus will not be eradicated. For this, the Modi Government should convene an all-party meeting to chalk out the policy, said senior NCP leader Nawab Malik on Monday.

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

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

MP MULLS PAEDIATRIC, ICU **WARDS IN HOSPS**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY I DC

The Madhya Pradesh government has stepped up efforts to strengthen health infrastructure on war footing to tackle a

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

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

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



Family members mourn the death of a Covid-19 patient at Patna Medical College and





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



Hospital (PMCH), in Patna.

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

26.48L PATIENTS TREATED FREE OF **COST IN MAHA**

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MAY 10

The Maharashtra gov ernment on Friday told the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court that 26.48 lakh patients have been treat ed free of cost in Covid Care Centres through various measures under the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Aarogya Yojana (MJPJAY), a public health scheme the underprivileged.

The state government has filed the affidavit after the court, during an earlier hearing, told the state that Covid patients from weaker sections of the society should get all medical facilities to the "optimum" level and that it is "high time" the state strictly implement the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Aarogya Yojana, which is designed to offer free medical care to the underprivi-

Advocate Girase on behalf of the petitioner argued that the scheme "laudable objective" was not properly

Maha vax unit to produce Covaxin: HC SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MAY 10

The Bombay High Court has permitted Biovet Private Limited, an associate company of Bharat Biotech, to take possession of a fully operational and ready-to-use vaccine manufacturing plant on a 12-hectare plot in Pune to produce Covaxin. The HC directed the concerned state authorities to handover peaceful possession of the ready-to-use vaccine manufacturing facility. The state had earlier refused to transfer the facility on the ground that the said land was reserved for forest.

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

Intervet is exiting business operations in India and entered into an agreement with Biovet to transfer the land and manufacturing unit to the latter.

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

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

to enable the manufacture of vaccine for Foot Mouth Disease Covaxin

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

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

A 2,000-bed make-shift eight years.

COVID BLUES

Opposition party slams Centre for going ahead with Central Vista project

Country needs breath, not PM's residence: RG

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

The redevelopment project of the Central Vista the power corridor of the country - envisages a triangular Parliament building, a Secretariat, the revamping of the three-km-long Rajpath from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate and new residences for the prime minister and the vice presigovernment has

brought the construction project under the ambit of 'essential services" to ensure smooth movement of labourers during the ongoing lockdown



Rahul Gandhi

"The country needs breath, not the prime

minister's residence," Gandhi said in a tweet, sharing pictures of people standing in a queue for refilling oxygen cylinders and the construction work for the Central Vista project on Rajpath. Amid rising Covid-19

cases, several states have been facing a crippling shortage of oxygen, leaving hospitals and family members of patients scrambling to ensure a

scramums steady supply. Congress party have been

Covid-19 pandemic to save people's lives. The opposition party has also criticised the Centre for according the construction work for the

give priority to improv-

ing the country's medical

infrastructure amid the

Central Vista project the "essential services" tag and accused the government of having its priori-

ties wrong. another

asking the government to Gandhi said the pandemshelve its plans on the Central Vista project and ic is spreading fast in rural areas.

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

On Sunday, India recorded 4,03,738 fresh Covid-19 cases pushed the tally to 2,22,96,414 while 4,092 more fatalities took the death toll to 2.42.362. according to the Union

health ministry.



SHORT **MAN KILLS 6,** THEN SELF, AT

BIRTHDAY PARTY Colorado Springs (US): A gunman opened fire at a birth day party in Colorado, slaying six adults before killing him-

self Sunday, police said.

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

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

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

MAN HURLS SLUR. KICKS INDIAN WOMAN IN S'PORE

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

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

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

5 MIGRANTS DROWNED OFF LIBYA, SAYS UN

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

The wreck was the latest disaster in the Mediterranean Sea better life in Europe.

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

The migrants were taken to overcrowded detention centers. where the UN migration agency fears more threats to their lives and violations of

their rights, she said. Libya has in recent years emerged as the dominant transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East.

S.KOREAN POLICE **SUMMON ACTIVIST OVER LEAFLETS**

Seoul: South Korean police on Monday summoned an activist who said he flew hundreds of propaganda leaflets toward North Korea in defiance of a new law that criminalises such

activities.

The questioning of Park Sang-hak came hours after President Moon Jae-in in a nationally televised speech issued apparent criticism toward Park without naming him, saying it's "never desirable" to dampen relations with the North by violating inter-Korean agreements and South Korean laws. While South Korea has faced criticism over the anti-leafleting law, which some human rights advocates see as an attack on democratic freedoms and efforts to break the North's information blockage. Moon stressed that his government has "no choice but

to strictly enforce laws. Police had searched Park's office last week after he announced that his group launched balloons carrying 500,000 leaflets, 5,000 one-dollar bills and booklets about South Korea's economic riches across the border during April 25-29.

China opposes Taiwan joining WHO meeting

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

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

or join global bodies. Blinken's appeal "seriously violates the one-China principle" and joint US-Chinese declarations, said a Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Hua Chunying. "China firmly deplores and rejects it."

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



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

305 Palestinians injured in clash with Israeli police

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

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

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

the Palestinian Red Crescent. Seven of the injured were in serious condition. Police said 21 officers were hurt, including three who were hospitalized. Israeli paramedics said seven Israeli civilians were also hurt. The confrontation was

the latest after weeks of mounting tensions between Palestinians and Israeli troops in the Old City of Jerusalem, the emotional center of their conflict. There have been almost nightly clashes during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, already a time of heightened religious sensitivi-

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

Getting people vaccinated only solution for India: Fauci

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

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

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

That's the reason why other countries need to chip in to be able to get either supplies to the Indians to make their own vaccines or to get vaccines donated. One of the ways to do that is to have the big companies that have the capability of making vaccines to really scale up in a great way to get literally hundreds of millions of doses to be able to get to them, he said.

Responding to a question, Dr Fauci said that India needs to immediately build makeshift field hospitals like what China

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

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

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

accines is one of them but there are other ways too, like shutting down the government. I have advised them in the past that you really need to do that. You've got to shut down. I believe several of the Indian states have already done that, but you need to break the chain of transmission. And one of the ways to do that is to down, the top American doctor said. Fauci, in an interview last week, had termed the situ-



NORWAY PANEL: Oz dismisses plea against DROP ASTRA, J&J

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

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

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

ban on India returnees

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

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

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

 $\stackrel{ ext{a.}}{-}_{PTI}$ FRANCE ACCEPTS **EU CURB ON**

ASTRA VACCINE

VACCINATION

Oslo, May 10: An expert

committee set up by Norw-

ay's government to evaluate AstraZeneca's

and Johnson & Johnson's

Covid vaccines said on Mo-

nday that both should be

abandoned over risks of

rare but serious side

In order to avoid a slow-

down of the vaccine roll-

out the committee recom-

mended that the two jabs

should be made available

for people on a voluntary

effects.

Paris, May 9: French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed the decision from the European Union not to renew its order for the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine.

Macron said the EU policy is aiming at responding in particular to the vari ants... We see that some other vaccines are more efficient.

rry Breton, said on Śunday the EU Commission has not ordered AstraZeneca shots for after June. Two weeks ago, the EU launched legal proceedings against the pharmaceutical group for allegedly fail-

VACCINES IS one of them but there are other ways too, like shutting down the government. I have advised them in the past that you really need to do that, said Dr

ation in India very ate and suggested that the government marshal all its resources, including the armed forces, to immediately build makeshift field hospitals, and urged other countries to help with not only materials but also personnel.

He called for a nation-

Fauci.

wide lockdown, not necessarily for six months but for a few weeks to break the continuity and transmission of infection.

London launches tourism campaign London, May 10: London have been badly hit by

Sadiq Khan launched a campaign on Monday to bring tourists back to the British capital. ahead of a planned easing restrictions England. The 6 million (\$8.4 mil-

lion, 7 million euro) campaign by Khan's office with the capital's tourism and transport bodies will look to drive domestic tourism to hospitality, culture, nightlife and retail venues in the

The plans are designed to boost the sectors, which months of closures and lockdown curbs during the pandemic.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected on Monday to confirm the next stage of his government's roadmap out of lockdown from next week. including a return to indoors mixing, and the reopening of cinemas and theatres.

Khan, who on Saturdav was re-elected for a second term as mayor, called the domestic tourism campaign London has ever

The bloc's Internal Market Commissioner, Thie-

ing to respect the terms of its contract.

New military letter warns Prez over France's survival

Paris, May 10: A group of serving French soldiers has published a new open echoes the tone of a similar letter printed in the same magazine last month letter in a conservative Emmanuel President Macron that the "survival" of France is at stake after he made "conces-

sions" to Islamism. The letter published in the conservative Valeurs Actuelles magazine published late on Sunday

which also warned a civil conflict was brewing.

The previous letter, signed by a handful of officers and some 20 semi-retired generals, sparked a furore in France with the prime minister calling it an unacceptable interference and France's top general vowing those behind

It is not clear how many people are behind the current letter or what their

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

Labour min. swaps team post UK polls

opposition Labour Party shook up his top team after disappointing election results, moving his economy spokeswoman and chief whip in an attempt to exert control over a fractious membership. But the moves by Labour leader Keir Starmer spurred new recriminations in a party that has not been able to

London, May 10: The make a breakthrough leader of Britain's main against Prime Minister Boris Johnson's govern-

ing Conservatives. Starmer late on Sunday fired deputy party leader Angela Rayner from the post of party chairwoman and named Rachel Reeves his new Treasury spokes-Anneliese Dodds. Longserving chief whip Nick Brown was replaced by Alan Campbell.

Boris probed over Caribbean holiday

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

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

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

erly declared. The "sleaze" attacks deployed against the prime minister in the run-up to last week's local elections seem not to have substantially damaged his reputation among voters, given the gains made the Tories in the Hartlepool by-election and councils across

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



Boris Johnson

funding and declarations. The investigation into Johnson's holiday comes after he took a trip to Mustique to celebrate new year at the start of 2020. The Daily Mail reported Johnson spent 10 days on a luxury villa break worth £15,000 – provided courtesy of the Carphone Warehouse founder and Conservative

donor David Ross. Johnson did record a "benefit in kind" from Ross worth £15,000 for "accommodation for a private holiday for my partner and me" in St Vincent and the Grenadines from 26 December 2019 to 5 January 2020. It was submitted to the register of members' interests on 27

TURNING | POINT 46-member scientific integrity task force to meet for first time

White House panel to split science, politics

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

A new 46-person federal scientific integrity task force with members from more than two dozen government agencies meet for the first time on Friday. Its mission is to look back through 2009 for areas where partisanship interfered with what were supposed to be decisions based on evidence and research and to come up with ways to keep politics out of government science in the future.

The effort was spurred concerns that the Trump administration had politicised science in ways that put lives at risk. eroded public trust and worsened climate change. We want people to be

able to trust what the fed-

others have accused the Trump administration of setting aside scientific evidence and injecting politics into

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

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

aside scientific evidence and injecting politics into issues including the Coronavirus, climate change and even whether Hurricane Dorian threatened Alabama in 2019. Oreskes, Harvard University histo-

administration of setting

rian said politicisation of science undermines the nation's ability to address serious problems that affect Americans' health, their well-being and the economy.

Chronicle

Himanta faces a new test, but choice is no surprise

11 MAY 2021

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

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

When the CAA did eventually come and led to an anti-BJP backlash many costs Hindu secitary in Assam, which the PLP backd its political

among caste Hindu society in Assam, on which the BJP based its political ambitions, it literally ran up against a wall. Assamese Hindu society did not want even Bengali Hindu migrants, unlike the BJP. But the skills of Mr Sarma, who left Congress in 2015 to join the BJP, managed to pull the on the sarma worked on two tracks. He harped on Assam's neo-

Vaishnavism linked to the great personality of Srimanta Sakardev as being the essential Assamese identity, and pitched this against the "miyan", the derogatory name for Muslim migrants from erstwhile East Bengal (later East Pakistan and subsequently Bangladesh). This became an instant hit in an already somewhat polarised world.

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

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

Raijor Dal and the Assam Jatiya Party.

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

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

Afghan terror: Little hope ahead

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

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

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

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pandemic has turned into a story. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, an independent research centre in the United States, has estimated that by September 2021, which means in just four months, another million Indians will die. And this is based on the official numbers, which are anyway difficult to accept given what has been revealed by the scenes in the crematoria across states and in our major cities, and also by the numbers that the newspapers have put out. A newspaper in Gujarat reported on May 6 that 17,822 bodies had been cremated or buried with Covid-19 protocols in villages, the chances of those being tested and treated are even fewer. This is, of course, not only about

Gujarat. On May 3, a newspaper had reported that Bhopal had acknowledged only 104 deaths from Covid-19 while reports from the crematoriums and cemeteries spoke of 2.557 Covid patients among the total of 3,811 who were cremated or interred.

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

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

and has been borne out by the saddening and shameful and horrific visuals that the entire world has

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

is dangerous for us all. ment should come clean and say that its numbers are an undercount is public safety. If people are fed nonsense like "recovery rate" (a meaningless number for a disease that has no cure), then they will be less alert and more prone to carelessness about masking and social distancing. If they knew that many more people are dying after being

think they were personally safe. The second reason is our shortage of oxygen. After Delhi, now two BJPrun states, Gujarat and Karnataka, have said that they are not getting enough oxygen from the Narendra Modi government. Guiarat has said it needs 1,400 tons a day and will need 1,600 tons a day by May 15 but is currently getting only 795 tons. Karnataka had asked for 1,200 tons instead of the 962 tons allocated by the Centre. The Central government says that it has enough oxygen but this is untrue. We do not. And we

we continue to be in denial.

and may finally prove to be a futile exercise.

K. Nehru Patnaik Visakhapatnam

MINING MISHAP

While Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan change. The Chief Minister himself should step in and take suittoo is in cahoots with the "crimi-



Weight of rare gold coins HYDERABAD, MAY 10.

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

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

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

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

lakh and easily the highest in the world. This will not surprise anyone

now seen from India. I should clarify that the fudging of

The first reason why the govern-

infected, especially because the government cannot manage hospitals at this point in time, they would not

will make our jobs more difficult if

The third reason is credibility.

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

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

> The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist



Check India's corruption, or insurgencies will go up

CHINA



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

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

time, place and context. Economic rent takes other forms, which tax the common good much more. High import duties, for instance, meant to restrain imports, actually serve to increase prices and profits for domestic manufacturers. Did you notice how all car tyres or batteries cost about the same? Or how all similar sized airconditioners and refrigerators cost about the same? Or, till recently, how all air tickets cost

the same and an arm and a leg at the same time? Adam Smith explained it best by noting that:
"People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the Opinion polls show that there are some pro-fessions that are beli-eved to be entirely corrupted. Politicians and

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

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

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

by the Rajya Sabha for

misappropriation of funds in 2011. P.D.

Dinakaran, the former chief justice of the

Sikkim high court, had

to resign in July 2011 in

the wake of graft allega-

tions. The next year, for-

mer Chief Jutice of India and National Human

Rights Commission chief

K.G. Balakrishnan faced

allegations that his fami-

ly members had amassed

wealth disproportionate to their known sources

In 2003, the CBI arrest-

ed Shamit Mukherjee, a

former Delhi high court

judge, for his alleged involvement in a land scam. In 2008 the Punjab

and Haryana high court

was rocked by a different

type of controversy after

a bag containing ₹15 lakhs was delivered at

the residence of Justice

Nirmaljit Kaur on Au-

gust 13, 2008. The money was allegedly meant for another judge, Nirmal Yadav. Justice Yadav,

who had to quit later, is still facing trial. The

judicial process seems to

be working for her, as it works for most of the well connected by linger-

A just and relatively

honest society requires a system that inflicts swift

and commensurate retri-

bution on transgressors.

It is apparent that we

quite clearly do not have

that and will not have in

the foreseeable future.

The only way we can get

that for ourselves is a

vigilant media that

investigates and informs

the public. The fellows

who still call the shots in

our media businesses

are the ones who have

turned a calling into a

business, like the fellows

who got themselves

farmhouses in Mehrauli.

That then leaves the peo-

ple to fend for them-

selves. Which is what

they are doing in many

parts of the country that

are increasingly being

gripped by insurgencies.

analyst studying econom-

The writer, a policy

ic and security issues,

held senior positions in

government and indus-

the Chinese economy.

try. He also specialises in

ing endlessly.

relentlessly

of income.

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

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

A relatively honest society requires a system that inflicts swift and commensurate retribution on transgressors. It is apparent that we quite clearly do not have that and will not have in the foreseeable future.

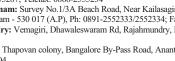
SC TASK FORCE

The National Task Force created by the Supreme Court is going holistically into the pandemic issues of second and third waves, availability of oxygen, hospital beds, drugs and the related scams by the unscrupulous people. This move is clearly a blot on Modi government for its inefficient dealings. But the situation being dynamic, it's hard to understand its efficacy

Mohan Reddy has been harping on corruption-free and transparent governance from Day One, the report of Kadapa district Collector proves that there is hardly any able action against all concerned and send a clear message that he means what he says. Otherwise, it would be construed that the CM nals" who circumvent rules, manage things at higher level and put lives of innocent workers at risk.

Govardhana Myneedu

Vijayawada



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

he world is worried about its 'Vishwa Guru" as our mismanagement of the Covid-19 one month in the state's seven major cities -- Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Baroda, Surat, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Bhavnagar. But the government had acknowledged only 1,745 deaths officially from Covid-19, or 10 per cent. And remember that these cities are only about a third or less of the state's total population. In the

FINANCIAL

DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | TUESDAY | 11 MAY 2021

quick BITES

INDICATO	RS	%
Sensex	49,502.41	0.60
Nifty 50	14,942.40	0.80
S&P 500*	4,229.49	-0.07
Dollar (₹)	73.35	0.23
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.35	-1.01
Euro (₹)	89.22	0.49
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,452▲179	0.37
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	68.35	0.10
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.014	-0.02
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.568	-0.011
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

Ahluwalia settles dispute with **A2** Interiors

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

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



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

RBI appoints Kattoor as exec director

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

IOC converts LNG tankers to carry oxygen

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



tankers of 17 tonnes each.

■Govt expects prices to soften soon

Cooking oil prices rise 50% in a year

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 10

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

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

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

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

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

Further, the labour issues in Malaysia and Indonesia have been

Oil price	change	compared	with year	-ago period
Items		Price last year	Current price	% increase

Items	Price last year	Current price	% increase	
Vanaspati	90.00	140.00	55.55	
Palm oil	87.50	132.60	51.54	
Soya oil	105.00	158.00	50.00	
Mustard oil	110.00	163.50	49.00	
Groundnut oil	130	180.00	38.00	
Duite man lan				

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

production of edible oil seeds. But this did not help prices much," said Indian edible oil refiners

"In India, we had good

also had curtailed palm oil imports for May and June as most states have imposed curbs on hotels and restaurants. However, the govern-

ment expects that release of imported stock, stuck at key ports, will help cool

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

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

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

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

Blackstone and Embassy group did not disclose the value of the deal, which is one of the largest in the Indian logistics and warehous-

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

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

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

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

newly acquired firm Embassy Industrial Parks, would buy few land parcels directly from the Embassy group comprising another 11 million sq. ft. area, the sources said. —PTI

Mall footfalls reduce, recovery seen in Q3

CHENNAI, MAY 10

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

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

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

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

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



DECLINE IN MOBILITY HITS RETAIL

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 10

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

says a Google survey.

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

revenue got reduced.

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

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

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

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

tions, almost 50 per cent

would cover a large section of the society and provide people the confiMoreover, some of the states have started using malls as vaccination cen

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

MFs change NFO tack after Sebi changes rules

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

After the Sebi overhaul of mutual fund scheme categories in October 2017, fund houses have changed their strategies are now busy launching new fund offers in the "other schemes–index funds, ETFs and fund of funds" category

the new fund offering (NFO) of a total of 27 open-end funds (including ETFs) and two closed-end Cumulatively, funds were able to garner Rs 11,826 crore at their inception stage, said Morningstar's domestic fund flows report for the fourth

quarter.
"The "other schemes" category, which typically has sub-categories of ETFs (other and gold), index funds, and funds of funds overseas, has been gaining a lot of traction recently. The "other schemes" category saw net inflows worth Rs 20,063 crore in the fourth quarter of fiscal year

2020-21," Morningstar

The other schemes category is likely to get more traction, as from July 1, 2021, a minimum of 20 per cent of the take home salary of the key employees of the asset management companies will be paid in the form of units of mutual fund schemes in which they have a role/ oversight, "The fourth quarter of according to a new Sebi fiscal-year 2020-21 saw rule, except for ETFs. index funds, overnight funds and existing closeended schemes.

The provisions of this circular shall not be applicable employees having role/ oversight only over ETFs, index funds, overnight funds and existing close ended schemes," a Sebi circular issued last month said.

At present, four NFOs, by Axis Mutual Fund (Axis Healthcare Fund and Axis Global Innovation Fund of Fund), ICICI Mutual Fund (ICICI Prudential Healthcare ETF) and SBI Mutual Fund (SBI Nifty Next 50 Index Fund) fall in 'other schemes' category.

ISUZU DRIVES IN D-MAX V-CROSS

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, MAY 10

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

JAPAN AND UNDP TO

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

SUPPLY 02 TO N-E

MUMBAI, MAY 10

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

Passenger vehicle sales dip 14% in FY21: Dealers body

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, MAY 10

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

Total vehicle registra-tions were at 2,17,68,502 units in fiscal year 2019-20. All categories of vehi-

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

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

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

Apr-Mar 2020-21: 1,52,71,519 -29,85 Vehicles Two-wheelers 1,15,33,336 Three-wheelers 27,73,514 Private vehicles 23,86,316 5,55,315 **Tractors** 16.11 8,81,114 Commercial vehicles

Figures do not include data for AndhraPradesh, MadhyaPradesh, Telangana, and Lakshadweep as they are not yet in centralised Vahan 4 Data gathered from 1,289 out of 1,493 RTOs Source: Federation of Automoble Dealers Association/KBK Infograhics

units, as compared to 7,19,594 per cent in FY20, while CV registrations were at 4,48,914 units as against 8.81.114 units, a decline of 49.05 per cent.

Tractor registrations, however, grew by 16.11 per cent last fiscal at 6,44,779 units as compared to 5,55,315 units in 2019-20, it added.

As for April 2021, FADA said since India was under complete lockdown in April 2020 and not a single vehicle could be sold, a year-on-year comparison is not possible.

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

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

were at 51,436 units in April as compared to 67,372 units in March, 23.65 per cent. down Tractor registrations also witnessed a dip of 44.58 per cent last month at

MAKES WAY FOR SUNDARAM New Delhi,

HUL'S SITAPATI

May 10: F M C G major HUL on Monday

executive director (foods and refreshment) Sundaram

Sudhir Sitapati is leaving the organisation and will be replaced by Srinandan Sundaram as part of top

management

changes. "Srinandan Sundaram replaces Sudhir Sitapati, who is leaving the organisation to pursue an external opportunity," HUL

said in a statement. Sundaram is currently executive director (customer development) at HUL.

The changes in the Management Committee would be effective from

July 1, 2021, it added. "I would like to thank Sudhir for his immense contributions to the com-

pany over the last two "We cherish iconic ad campaigns like Daag Acche Hain and Swad Apnepan Ka that were

created under his leadership," HUL CMD Sanjiv Mehta said.

Iron ore turns 'very, very hot' as prices jump 10% in minutes

May 10: Iron ore futures leaped higher as trading opened on Monday, extending a record run amid rampant Chinese demand and a wider surge in commodity prices as the global

economy recovers Futures in Singapore jumped more than 10 per cent to hit a fresh record high of \$226 a tonne. The steel-making raw material is surging as strong demand from top buyer China leaves supplies stretched. Prices breached \$200 for the first time only

last week. This sector is very, very hot, and just when China's steel demand impulse will ease is perhaps the biggest question of 2021," Vivek Dhar, commodities anaat Commonwealth Bank of Australia, said in Bloomberg Television interview. "Supply is still not able to meet that strong demand."

Iron ore is just one of a sweep of materials from copper to crops that have marched higher in recent Bloomberg's months. gauge of spot commodity prices finished last week at its highest in nearly a decade. Copper also extended its record rally Monday, soaring to \$10,500

a tonne in early trade.

Steel prices have jumped

in China as heavy users like the construction and manufacturing sectors enjoy a busy period, as well as enjoying tailwinds from stimulus measures. Steel-makers in the rest of the world such as ArcelorMittal SA are also enjoying a boom as markets bounce back from the pandemic.

"There is a chance that ex-China demand can come back to such an extent that we still see steel demand pick up globally and that will see iron ore demand remain at these elevated levels," CBA's Dhar said

Bloomberg

HALTING | DEFECTIONS | Bank to pay sign-on bonus to associates UBS promotees get \$40,000 bonus

CATHY CHAN

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

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



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

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

hours. A Hong Kong-based spokesman

declined to comment.

UBS is upping the stakes, offering one-time

bonuses that are double

the amount that Credit

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

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

Bloomberg













SHORT TAKES

Pakistan sweep

Zimbabwe series

Harare: Pakistan quickly took the one wicket it needed Monday for another innings victory over struggling Zimbabwe in the second Test and a 2-0 series sweep. It took only five overs on Day 4 for Shaheen Shah Afridi to end it by having Luke Jongwe caught behind by wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan for 37. Pakistan won by an innings and

147 runs at Harare Sports Club to go with the innings and 116-run win in the first test at the same venue. Pakistan also claimed a slice of history with Afridi's 5-52 making him the third Pakistan bowler in the Test to take a five-wicket haul. He and Nauman Ali took five each in the second innings after Hasan Ali's five in the first. It's the first time Pakistan has had three bowlers with five

wickets in a match, and the first time it has happened in tests since 1993. — PTI **Chawla's father**

dies of Covid-19

Mumbai: Experienced India legspinner Piyush Chawla's father Pramod Kumar Chawla on Monday died after battling COVID-19. He was around 60 vears old. "With deepest grief, we announce that my beloved father, Mr Pramod Kumar

Chawla, left for the heavenly abode on 10th May 2021. He was suffering from covid and post covid complications,' Chawla wrote on his Instagram account. "We invite your kind thoughts and prayers in this difficult times. May his noble soul rest in

peace." Chawla's latest IPL team Mumbai Indians too offered their condolences

Zverev clinches 2nd Madrid title

Madrid: Alexander Zverev continued his impressive form going into the French Open by winning his second Madrid

Open title. After beating top-seeded Rafael Nadal in the quarterfinals and fourth-ranked Dominic Thiem in the semifinals, Zverev rallied to defeat Matteo Berrettini 6-7 (8), 6-4, 6-3 for his second title this season. The sixth-ranked German also won the Mexican Open in Acapulco in March. Zverev won his first Madrid title in 2018 in a final against Thiem. The win on Sunday gave him his fourth Masters 1000 title. and first in three years. Zverev

his fourth-round exit last year at the French Open. "To do well at the French Open you need to be playing well during the clay court season,' Zverev said. — PTI

be trying to improve from

Former footballer

Franco no more

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

Shafali set to play for Birmingham

New Delhi: India's teen batting sensation Shafali Verma is set to play for Birmingham Phoenix in the inaugural edition of The Hundred and might also turn up for a Sydney franchise in the Women's Big bash League later in the year. The 17-year-old, who is the world number one in ICC women's T20I rankings, thus will join her skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, vive captain Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues and Deepti Sharma

in the 100-ball tournament involving eight men's and women's teams. "Shafali was approached by Birmingham franchise and the deal is about to be closed. She will be replacing New Zealand's Sophie Devine in the team," a BCCI source said. "She is also in talks with the Sydney franchise to play in the women's Big Bash," the source added. While The Hundred, which was postponed last year, is scheduled to start on July 21 with the women's match between the Oval **Invincibles and Manchester**

Originals in London. — PTI

PINNED TO MAT

WFI says murder case against Sushil tarnished wrestling's image

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

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

Wrestling

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

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

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

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

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

REBEL JUVENTUS

Rome, May 10: Juventus

will be kicked out of Serie

A if it doesn't withdraw

from the European Super

League, Italian soccer fed-

Gabriele Gravina said

Monday. While AC Milan and Inter Milan backed

out of the ill-fated bid to

form a breakaway compe-

tition, Juventus remains

"The rules are clear. If

Juventus is still part of

the Super League when it

enters next season, it

can't participate in Serie

radio station Kiss Kiss.

Gravina told Naples

"I would be sorry for the

Madrid

fans but rules are rules

and they apply to every-

Barcelona are also still

grasping onto the project,

despite the risk of being

hope this holdout ends

The Super League proj

ect imploded three weeks

ago after the six English

clubs involved, Arsenal,

Manchester City and Tottenham, backed out

inside 48 hours of the pro-

ject's announcement.

Liverpool,

United

Champions League.

soon," Gravina added.

from

Real

banned

Chelsea,

Manchester

the lone holdout in Italy.

president

RISK REMOVAL

FROM SERIE A

lamented



The Delhi Police has issued a lookout notice against two-time Olympic medallist

Sushil Kumar in connection with the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl The incident has come at a time when Indian wrestling is celebrating its highest number of quotas — eight — for the Olympics. The anticipation of a best ever per-

formance at the Tokyo Games is hard to miss. The police is ascertaining the role of Sushil in a May 4 brawl that led to the death of 23-year-old Sagar outside Rana

Chhatrasal stadium.

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

The WFI official was coach

Christchurch, May 10:

vew Zeaiand ali-rounde

Jimmy Neesham doesn't

think that there is any

chance of the remaining

31 matches of Indian

Premier League happen-

ing in India this year,

after the tournament got

postponed due to COVID-

19 cases inside the bio-

He also has serious

doubts whether India

would be able to host the

16-team T20 World Cup

India is in the midst of

its worst ever health cri-

sis in last 70 years with

the country recording

400,000 cases on a daily

hasis with at least 4000

Both IPL and T20 World

Cup are set to be re-sched-

uled to the United Arab

Emirates.
"If it did start up again,

I doubt the IPL would be

in India again," said Neesham told Newshub.

"I think we've already

seen plans for the T20

World Cup to move out of

India later in the year and

they're going to be ultra-

cautious about that sort

of thing," said Neesham,

who was playing for

Mumbai Indians in the

Neesham feels the bio-

security lapses could be

due to the fact that the

now suspended league.

deaths on an average.

bubble.

later this year.

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

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

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

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

However, he has not par-

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

Nur Sultan. The image of Chhatrasal stadium, which has given India its finest wrestlers like Sushil, Yogeshwar, Bajrang and now Tokyobound Ravi Dahiya and Deepak Punia, has also

taken a beating.
A source at the stadium said prominent wresters like Yogeshwar and Bajrang left the facility because "they were target-ted by Sushil's camp for not toeing their line.

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

tional director. After that Sushil was

Neesham doubts IPL re-start

New Zealand's Jimmy Neesham represents Mumbai

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

ENGLISH WON'T

RUSH THEIR IPL

London, May 10: Team director Ashley Giles says

England have no plans to

Premier League stars

back for next month's Test series against New Zealand and could intro-

duce new faces to cope

serving quarantine peri-

ods are Jos Buttler, Chris

Woakes and Sam Curran.

all of whom have Test

They could be available

for County Championship

matches starting on May

20 before joining the England "bubble" ahead

of the first Test against

New Zealand at Lord's,

them, with the amount of

cricket they've got com-

ing up. We're not going to

rush or force them back

coach) will them, as will

our medical teams on

what's best for their

progress," Giles said.

into

Silverwood

cricket. Chris

"We need to look after

which begins on June 2.

contracts with England.

with a packed schedule. Among those currently

their Indian

STARS: GILES

KOHLI GETS A JAB



Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli gets vaccinated in New

Recovered KKR duo back home

New Delhi, May 10: the league's suspension. Kolkata Knight Riders' legspinner Varun Sandeep have gone hor Chakravarthy and pacer Sandeep Warrier, who were the first to test positive for Covid-19 in the currently-suspended IPL's biobubble, have returned to their respective home cities after completing 10 days of mandatory isolation. Tamil Nadu's Chakravarthy was officially the first player in this edition of the IPL, who

after going for some medical scans. Subsequently, two of his teammates, Warrier and Prasidh Krishna, were also

contracted the infection

infected by the virus. Chennai-based Warrier;s interaction with Delhi Capitals veteran Amit Mishra led to the veteran being found positive

as well, causing ultimately

'Yes, Chakravarthy and Sandeep have gone home. They have completed 10 days of mandatory isola-

tion. However, KKR as a franchise will keep monitoring their health," a BCCI official said.

CARIBBEANS RETURN

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

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

CHIT TO GUNAWARD

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



Gunawardene

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

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

He was also charged with Article 2.4.5 that relates to, "Failing to disclose to the ACU (without unnecessary delay) full details of any incident, fact, or matter that

comes to the attention of a Participant that may evidence Corrupt Conduct under the Anti-Corruption Code by another Participant."

SURGE IN COVID CASES

IOC chief puts off trip to Japan

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

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

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

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

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

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

against holding the Olympics in the middle of a pandemic. Between 60-80% of Japanese people in polls have said the Olympics should be cancelled or postponed. An online petition calling

The trip was made

impossible because

of a state of emer-

gency in Tokyo and

been extended until

Organisers and the IOC

have repeatedly said the

Olympics will not be can-

celled, and will be "safe

Japan has attributed

11,000 deaths to Covid-19,

better than many countries, but poor for Asia. Variants of the virus are

spreading with reports of

public health systems com-

Japan continues to run

ing under pressure. Public sentiment in

other parts of the

country that has

May 31.

and secure.

for the Games to be canceled gained 300,000 signatures in three days. -AP

Returning Serena could miss Olympics

Indians in IPL.

flving on

breached.

know

teams were travelling

"Even though we were

through customs, hand

your details over to peo-

ple, walk through termi-

nals, so there were always

going to be pinch-points there," he said.

Neesham said that it is

difficult to comprehend

how the bubble was

teams were infiltrated,

but... it's such a difficult

"We obviously don't

yet exactly how

chartered

we have to go

across the country.

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

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

Williams remains uncommitted about

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

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

about because it was supposed to be last year and now it's this year, and then there is



this pandemic and there is so much to think about.
"Then there are the Grand Slams. It's just a lot. So I have really been taking it one day at a time to a fault, and I definitely need to figure out my next Williams says she is "ready" to get started

prospect to keep every-

thing perfect and when

vou've got so many guys

that are close to each

other, there are going to

be social interactions

"Once one team has it,

you start looking back

through your last week at

who you talked to and

who you shook hands

with. It certainly gets

averse to the idea of

going back to India again

and playing the IPL if it

However Neesham isn't

your mind racing.

after games

again in Rome as preparation for the French Open which starts in Paris on May 24.

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

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

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

on 23 major trophies, one behind Australia's Margaret Court, since winning Australian Open while pregnant.
Since then she has given

birth, returned to the tour, and finished runner-up at four major tournaments - after losing just six out of 28 finals before 2017.

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