# THE ASIAN AGE

**NEW DELHI SATURDAY 22 MAY 2021** 

### NATION 3

Renowned environmentalist & Chipko movement pioneer Sunderlal Bahuguna, 94, dies



### NATION 4

Scindia rattles BJP. calls Rajiv 'builder of modern

### **DELHI AGE** 10

Neena's autobiography Sach Kahun Toh to hit



www.asianage.com

RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi pays tribute to his father and former PM Rajiv Gandhi on his 30th death anniversary at his memorial Veer Bhumi in New Delhi on Friday.

#### **RBI** will transfer **₹99,122 crores as** dividend to govt

Mumbai: The RBI approved paying a higher-thanexpected ₹99,122 crore to the government as a dividend, providing cushion to the state at a time when a crippling second wave of the novel coronavirus may strain public finances. In a statement, the RBI said its central board has approved transferring `99,122 crore surplus (commonly called dividend payment) out of the excess it generates from market operations, investments and printing of currency, for the accounting period of nine months ended March 31, 2021. — *PTI* Full report on Page 7

#### IAF pilot killed in

MiG-21 Bison crash

Moga, Punjab: An IAF MiG-21 Bison aircraft crashed during heavy rain in a field in Moga district, killing its pilot Squadron Leader Abhinav Choudhary. The aircraft was on a training sortie from Suratgarh in Rajasthan when it crashed on Thursday night. — PTI Full report on Page 4

### 13 Maoists shot dead

in Maha encounter

Mumbai: Around 13 Maoists were killed in a police encounter in a forest between Paydi-Kotmi in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district on Friday. A cache of arms and ammunition as well as some electronic items were found from the encounter site Full report on Page 4

#### COUNTERPOINT



Not islands, they are heaps of dead bodies!





Max: 34°C Min: 25°C **RH:** 52% **Rain: 20%** 

Forecast: Mostly sunny

### ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana Tithi: Vaishakha Shudda Dasami till 9.12 am Star: Uttaraphalguni till 2 pm **Varjyam:** 9.45 pm to 11.13 pm Durmuhurtam: 5.46 am to 7.29 am

Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am **SUNSET TODAY 7.09 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.26 AM** MOONRISE TOMORROW 2.39 PM

**MOONSET TODAY 2.32 AM** 



India', deletes tweet later

the stands on June 14

Vol. 28 No. 95 | 16 pages | ₹5.00

### ■ 2.6L new cases, 4,209 deaths ■ 2 Covishield doses 85-90% effective: UK study

### PM's new 'doorstep' strategy: 'Jahan bimar, wahan upchar'

with agency inputs

Underlining that the bat-tle against Covid-19 it is going to be a long one, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday pitched for "doorstep treatment" of patients and said efforts should be made to take medical services closer to Covid patients instead of them having to travel to places for treatment.

"Jahan bimar, wahan upchar," the PM remarked, saying this will reduce the burden on the health care system.

Mr Modi was interacting with doctors and officials of his constituency Varanasi on Covid management. The PM choked with emotion as he talked about the loss of lives during the second wave of the pandemic.

'This pandemic is so big that despite all the efforts we have not been able to save the lives of our family members. This virus has snatched so many of our near ones," Mr Modi said, choking with emotion. He took a pause to regain composure and states to effectively use said: "I pay my respects to telemedicine and mobile

AGE CORRESPONDENT

External affairs minister

S. Jaishankar will be vis-

iting the United States on

a five-day official visit

starting Monday and is

expected to focus on the

important aspect of direct

procurement of vaccines

and raw materials from

the US for their manufac-

ture in India. He will also

hold discussions with US

secretary of state Antony

Blinken and also meet the

UN Secretary-General in

New York. India is now a

close strategic partner of

NEW DELHI, MAY 21



Doctors treat a patient infected with black fungus at NSCB Medical College and Hospital in Jabalpur on Friday.

Jaishankar for Mission Vaccine in US

EAM's 5-day visit starts Monday ■ To meet Blinken in DC; UN chief in NY

PM MODI, while interacting with docs & officials of his constituency Varanasi on Covid management, choked with emotion as he talked about the loss of lives during the second wave

all these people and offer condolences to their near and dear ones." He lauded the efforts of doctors, nurses, technicians, ward boys and ambulance dri-

The Centre has asked

has already rus-

Covid-related

the past few weeks.

said:

huge

relief material to India in

In a statement on Friday,

"External

the external affairs min-

affairs minister will be

visiting the United States

from 24-28 May 2021. In

New York, he is expected

to meet UN Secretary-

General Antonio Guterres. In Washington

DC, external affairs minis-

ter will hold discussions

with his counterpart, sec-

a

amount

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dispensaries for diagnostics and treatment in rural, tribal and peri urban areas since the Covid virus has started spreading outside urban areas and entering rural households.

Mr Modi warned against the "new challenge of Black Fungus" saying the country must be prepared to fight the rare and potentially fatal condition. He added that vaccination should be a mass movement in the long battle against the "unseen shifting enemy' Covid-19.

retary of state Antony

Blinken. He will also be

meeting Cabinet members

and senior officials of the

dealing with the bilateral

relationship. The minister

will have two interactions

with business forums on

economic & Covid-related

India and the US." The

minister, in the course of

these meetings may also

hold discussions with top

executives of vaccine

manufacturing companies

Thursday evening said in

MEA had on

cooperation

administration

between

■ Turn to Page 4

### **Positivity rate 4.76% in Delhi**; 252 die, 3,009 cases in 24 hrs

AGE CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, MAY 21** 

Delhi reported 3,009 fresh Covid-19 cases on Friday, and 252 fatalities, while the positivity rate dipped to 4.76 per cent, the health department said. Friday's positivity rate fell to below 5 per cent, from 36 per cent seen on April 22, signifying a marked improvement in the situation.

Medical experts said the

lockdown was the main factor behind the dip in daily cases count amid

the second wave.
Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said many inoculation centres for the 18-44 age group were being shut in Delhi from Friday as the city had run out of vaccines for this age group.

He added there were 197 cases of black fungus in hospitals across the city.

More on Page 2

response to media queries

that India would procure

vaccines from the US as per Indian regulatory

guidelines, adding that even the US will only

export vaccines that met

product quality standards.

on Thursday: "Where the

Quad arrangement that

also involves the US is

concerned, its agenda

today covers vaccine col-

laboration, critical and emerging technologies,

semi-conductors, supply

chains, critical materials

and of course connectivi-

ty, amongst others.'

Mr Jaishankar also said

### 2 Bengal mantris, 2 others placed under house arrest

Two judges differ over bail, larger bench to be set up

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI** 

Four heavyweight Narada sting bribery accused, who spent four nights in judicial custody since their arrests by the CBI on May 17, were put under "house arrest" at their residences by the Calcutta high court on Friday after a difference of opinion on their bail plea between two judges of a division bench pushed the highprofile case to a "larger" bench of five judges for a hearing next week.

Two among the four accused — Firhad Hakim and Subrata Mukherjee — were allowed by the division bench of acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and Justice Arijit Banerjee, following their lawyers' plea, to perform their duties as Cabinet ministers in the Mamata Banerjee government only by meetings through video conferencing while under house arrest.

Mr Hakim is the state transport minister and

### Mamata to fight poll from Bhowanipore

MLA vacates seat to let CM enter House

RAJIB CHOWDHURI **KOLKATA, MAY 21** 

Mamata Banerjee, who became West Bengal's chief minister for third consecutive time despite her defeat by protege-turned-adversary Suvendu Adhikari of the BJP in of the BJP in Nandigram amid her party's clean sweep in the Assembly election, will contest from her home turf Bhowanipore in South Kolkata to

Trinamul Congress boss

his home turf, making it a prestige fight. Mr Chatterjee defeated Turn to Page 4 video conferences also

enter the Assembly and

continue as CM.
Though Ms Banerjee

won the seat in 2011 and

2016, she fielded her

party MLA from Rashbehari and Cabinet

Bhowanipore this time

and accepted Mr Adhikari's challenge to

contest against him in

Sovandeb

colleague Chatterjee

outgoing Kolkata mayor, while Mr Mukherjee is state panchayat minister. A logbook of recording their departmental meet-ings and the duration of

has to be maintained, apart from CCTV vigil at their homes, the division bench ordered, adding

Turn to Page 4

### Goa court acquits journalist Tarun Tejpal of rape charges

Govt will move HC against Tejpal's acquittal, says Goa CM (sexual

Panaii. May 21: A sessions court in Goa on Friday acquitted journalist Tarun Tejpal of sexually assaulting a former female col-league inside the elevator of a hotel in Goa in 2013.

Additional sessions judge Kshama Joshi acquitted Mr Tejpal, who was present in the court along with his family members when the judg-ment was pronounced around 10.45 am.

Mr Tejpal, who faced trial under IPC Sections 341 (wrongful restraint), 342 (wrongful confinement), 354 (assault or criminal force with intent to outrage modesty), 354-

or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe), 376(2)(f) (person in a position of authority over women,

committing rape) and 376(2)k) (rape by a person in a position of control) has been acquitted of all the charges. The order was not available at the time of going to print. Goa CM Pramod Sawant

on Friday said the state government will challenge Mr Tejpal's acquittal in the high court, adding that there was enough

proof against the accused. Soon after the 2013 incidents, Mr Tejpal had written to his junior colleague who accused him of sexually assaulting her: "It wrenches me beyond describing, therefore, to accept that I have violated that long-standing relationship of trust and respect between us and I apologise unconditionally for the shameful lapse of judgement that led me to attempt a sexual liaison with you on two occasions on 7 November and 8 November 2013, despite your clear reluctance that you did not want such

### Nepal's Opp. stakes claim to govt under Deuba's leadership

PM Oli refuses to face new floor test

SHIRISH B. PRADHAN

Nepal's Opposition par-ties on Friday decided to stake a claim for the formation of a new government under former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's leadership, in a fresh twist to the protracted political crisis bedeviling

Himalayan nation. The Opposition's decision came after embattled Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli reportedly expressed unwillingness to undergo another floor test to prove his government's majority in the House

Representatives. Leaders of the Opposition alliance have reached the official residence of President Bidya Devi Bhandari to stake a claim to form the next govern-

The alliance, including the Nepali Congress (NC), CPN (Maoist Center), the Upendra Yaday-faction of Janata Samajbadi Party and the ruling CPN-UML's Madhav Nepal faction, has claimed to have the support of 149 law-makers of the House of

Representatives,



Man Singh. The num-S.B. Deuba ber includes 61 MPs

of Nepali Congress, 48 of Maoist Center, 13 of JSP and 27 of UML, My Republica website report-

The leaders from the Opposition alliance left for the President's official residence, Shital Niwas, to submit the signatures of 149 lawmakers recommending Sher Bahadur Deuba's appointment as the Prime Minister.

Mr Deuba, 74, is the president of the Nepali Congress and served as the PM of Nepal on four different occasions; first from 1995 to 1997, then from 2001 to 2002, again from 2004 to 2005, and from 2017 to 2018.

The veteran politician currently serves as the Leader of the Opposition since the 2017 general elections. He is also the current president of the Nepali Congress, having been

elected to the position in

### Israel & Hamas agree to truce, end 11-day Gaza war, both claim victory

Jerusalem, May 21: Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire on Thursday, halting a bruising 11-day war that caused widespread destruction in the Gaza Strip, brought life in much of Israel to a stand-still and left more than 200 people dead.

At 2 am local time, just the ceasefire took effect, life returned to the streets of Gaza. People went out of their homes, some shouting "Allahu Akbar" or whistling from balconies. Many fired in the air, celebrating the

Like the three previous wars between the bitter



Palestinians dance as they wave Hamas and their national flags while celebrating the ceasefire pact in Gaza City early on Friday.

of fighting ended incon-clusively. Israel claimed

enemies, the latest round to inflict heavy damage on Hamas but once again was unable to halt the

Islamic militant group's nonstop rocket barrages. immediately, Almost Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu Benjamin faced angry accusations from his hardline, rightwing base that he stopped the operation too soon.

Hamas, the Islamic militant group sworn to Israel's destruction, also claimed victory.

But it now faces the daunting challenge of rebuilding in a territory already suffering from unemployment and a raging coronavirus outbreak.

■ More on Page 6

### ■ Princes William & Harry hit out, see direct link to their mother's death

### BBC under fire for 'deceit' in Di interview

**London, May 21:** British broadcaster BBC, seen as a respected source of news and information around the world, is facing questions at home about its integrity following a scathing report on its explosive 1995 interview with Princess Diana.

Britain's justice secretary said Friday that the government would review the rules governing oversight of the BBC after an investigation found that one of its journalists used

secure the interview and the corporation obscured this misconduct for 25 years.

Princes William and Harry, Diana's sons, late Thursday excoriated the BBC, saying there was a direct link between the interview and their mother's death in a traffic accident two years later as she and a companion were

being pursued by paparazzi.
The interview on the

Panorama program came under renewed scrutiny after Diana's brother, Charles Spencer, complained that journalist Martin Bashir used false documents and other dishonest tactics to persuade Diana to grant the interview. As a result, the BBC commissioned an investigation by retired Judge John Dyson, who released a 126-page report on his findings Thursday. "It wasn't just the deci-

sion of a reporter or a pro-

duction team, there were decisions made much further up the chain about the conduct of these individuals that have now proved, according to Lord Dyson, to be unfounded and wrong," justice secretary Robert Buckland told the BBC. "And therefore, government does have a responsibility to look very carefully to see whether the governance of the BBC does need reform in the light of ■ Turn to Page 4

### **Ulfa releases ONGC** worker from its camp in Myanmar

attention from me." — PTI

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, MAY 21

Keeping his commitment to Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, the outlawed Ulfa chief Paresh Baruah is reported to have released and despatched the abducted ONGC employee Ritul Saikia with a small group of Ulfa-I cadres from the camp in Myanmar.

Disclosing that the

employee is expected to enter India sometime on Saturday, security sources told this newspaper that Mr Saikia is yet to be handed over by Ulfa-I to Indian authorities. Pointing out that Mr Saikia would be handed over to some "nominated" people in Mon district of Nagaland, sources claimed that Ulfa-I cadres have started from their remote camps in Myanmar with Mr Saikia towards the international border where he is expected to be released. Refusing to divulge to whom the employee would be handed, sources said that they have already reached Nagaland.

■ More on Page 4

### **Transport expert Dinesh Mohan**

dies of Covid-19 AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 21

A 75-year-old honorary professor of Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi and a renowned road safety and injury prevention expert Dinesh Mohan succumbed to Covid-19 on Friday, in Delhi. According to the institute director V. Ramgopal Rao, Mohan was under treatment at St Stephen's Hospital after he tested positive for Covid-19. "He passed away this morning due to a cardiac arrest. He was a stalwart in areas of road safety and transportation, and made immense contributions to research in the area," said Rao. "Deeply shocked to learn about the passing of a giant of injury prevention. Dinesh Mohan was an innovative, driven and fun leader in the field. Co-founder of the series of World Conferences and visionary road safety champion. He leaves a huge legacy. Rest in peace my friend," Etienne Krug, Director Social Determinants of Health at WHO, said in a tweet. Noted historian Irfan Habib took to Twitter to express his condo-lences. "Extremely sad to know that Professor Dinesh Mohan, dear friend and former IIT Delhi faculty succumbed to Covid," he said.

### Man crushes wife's head with mattock, held on the spot

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 21

A 42-year-old woman was killed after her husband hit her head with a mattock on Friday morning in northeast Delhi's Sonia Vihar area, police said. According to police, there was some marital dispute going on between the couple. The accused attacked his wife's head with a mattock. On Friday around 9 am, a PCR call was received at Sonia Vihar police station that a man had killed a woman with mattock. Police rushed to the spot and found a woman lying in pool of blood at her residence. She was later identified as Anita Sharma, a senior police officer said. The accused, a labourer, has been arrested and investigation is under-

SUPRIYA SINGH

NEW DELHI, MAY 21

Moved by the shortage of

oxygen in the national

capital, nine-year-old cli-

mate activist Licypriya

Kangujam has offered to

help Delhi with oxygen

concentrators. Kangujam

is a climate activist who hails from a little village

in Manipur. She has spo-

ken at the United Nations

Climate Conference (COP25) in 2019 and travelled around the world at

climate and international

Wednesday tweeted tagging Delhi chief minister

Arvind Kejriwal expressing her wish to donate

oxygen concentrators. The

girl also mentioned that

she has been raising funds

for the last three weeks to

help people who are in

Immediately after seeing

her tweet, the OSD (officer

on special duty) to Delhi

health minister Satyendra

Jain responded by thanking her. Later, when this reporter contacted him, he

said that they are in touch with the activist. Several

other people have also responded to her seeking

Similarly, former Indian

Sehwag has also come for-

ward and offered free oxy-

gen services. "No one

should lose their life due

to lack of oxygen. Privileged to share that

you can avail free services

from our oxygen concentrator bank in Delhi," Sehwag tweeted. He has

helpline number (90-24-

333-222) for people who are

also mentioned

in need of oxygen.

Virender

conferences.

The little

need of oxygen.

assistance.

cricketer

way, police added.

9-yr-old girl offers to help Delhi with

O2 concentrators

Licypriya Kangujam

students from

FORMER INDIAN crick-

eter Virender Sehwag has

offered free oxygen servic-

es. He has also mentioned

333-222) for people who

are in need of oxygen.

Also,

his helpline number (90-24-

Delhi University's Shri

tion with the organisation Doctors for You, have

planned to set up an oxy-

gen plant. The oxygen

plant, which can produce

150 litres of oxygen per minute, will be set up at the Commonwealth

Games Centre which has been converted into a

free-of-cost Covid care facility. Help is pouring in from

all over the world to the

country in these tough

times. A group of Indians

in Singapore has raised

funds from various means,

including selling Kimchi,

to buy 15 oxygen concen-

The pandemic has crip-

pled the healthcare system of the country. With the

third wave now expected,

hospitals and people are

bracing up to face the com-

ing wave in a much pre-

different

trators

pared way.

groups in India.

College Commerce, in collabora-

also come forward and

Delhi records 3,009 Covid cases, 252 deaths; positivity dips to below 5%

## 200 black fungus cases in Delhi hospitals, says Jain

NEW DELHI, MAY 21

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on Friday said there were 197 cases of black fungus or mucormycosis in hospitals across the city, till Wednesday night, including non-residents who have come to the city for treatment. The minister also said many inoculation centres for the 18-44 age group are being shut in Delhi from Friday as the city has run out of vaccine for this category.

Amid rising cases of black fungus, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday had said that dedicated centres were to be set up for the treat-ment of black fungus cases at three city government-run hospitals. On May 15, Kejriwal had said, "The virus is reducing in Delhi slowly and steadily, and I hope it diminishes completely and does not rise again. However, we are not going to become negligent in anyway", while sounding a tone of cau-

Mucormycosis or black fungus is more common

### **No vaccination for 18-44 yrs** in Delhi from Monday: Govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 21

The Delhi government will have to temporarily stop the inoculation drive for the 18-44 age group from Monday, as it has almost run out of vaccines for this age group, AAP MLA Atishi said on Friday. She said that in the last one week, Delhi has already shut 235 of the 368 inoculation centres for this category due to a shortage of vaccines.

among people whose immunity has got lowered due to Covid-19, dia betes, kidney disease, liver or cardiac disor-ders, age-related issues, or those on medication for auto-immune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis. Delhi has been reeling under a brutal second wave of the pandemic that is sweeping the country, claiming a massive number of lives daily, with the recent oxygen supply shortage issue at

"The remaining 133 sites will (also) be shut on Saturday, which means the inoculation drive for this age group will have to be stopped temporarily from Monday, she added. Vaccination drive is not carried out in Delhi on

Sundays.

Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia also tweeted: "It is unfortunate that we have to close our centres, for 18+ age group, because of non-availability of vaccine." various hospitals, adding

to the woes. A total of 63,190 tests, including 45,685 RT-PCR tests and 17,505 rapid antigen tests, were conducted a day ago, accord-

ing to the latest health

bulletin. The number of cumulative cases on Friday stood at 14,12,959. Over 13.5 lakh patients have recovered from the virus. The number of active cases decreased to 35,683 on Friday from 40,214 a day The number of people under home isolation dipped to 20,673 from 23,851 on Thursday while the number of containment zones dropped to 50,074 from 56,833 a day before, it said

Delhi recorded 3,009 fresh Covid-19 cases on Friday, and 252 fatalities from the coronavirus infection, while the positivity rate dipped to 4.76 per cent, according to data shared by the health department here.

According to the latest health bulletin, these new fatalities pushed the death toll from Covid-19 here to 22,831. The posi-tivity rate on Friday declined to below 5 per cent from 36 per cent reg istered on April 22, signifying a marked improvement in the situation of the pandemic.

This is the lowest daily cases count since April 1 when 2,790 cases and nine deaths were recorded. Medical experts have attributed the lockdown as the main factor behind the dip in the daily cases count amid second wave of the pan-

### 3 arrested in **Delhi for cow slaughtering**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 21

Three men were arrested on the charge of catslaughtering in Ranhola area of west Delhi, police said on Friday. The accused have been identified as Shanu (23), a native of Sambhal district in Uttar Pradesh, Tanjeem (23) and Mohseen (30), both hailing from Shamli district in UP.

A case was registered at Ranhola police station. Police succeeded in identifying and arresting three accused, he said. One car used in the commission of crime, and knives used for slaughtering anifrom them, police said.



A vaccination centre wears a deserted look due to shortage of vaccines in New

### India didn't support our action in Gaza publicly: Israel envoy

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, MAY 21

Hours after an Egyptianbrokered ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas came into effect after a high-voltage military campaign by the west Asian nation, Israeli deputy ambassador in India Rony Yedidia Clein on Friday said that there had not been public support from the Indian government for the Israeli actions in Gaza compared to some other nations but added that there was an "understanding" of the Israeli actions by Indian government officials as well as a "great amount of support" from the Indian

Evading a direct question on whether Israel was dis-

cial position regarding the recent developments in Gaza, Ms. Clein welcomed the condemnation by India at the UN of the rocket-firings from Gaza by Hamas, adding that ties with India were "getting stronger". She also said that the kin of the 31-year-old Indian woman Soumya Santosh, killed in Israel recently by a Hamas-fired rocket, would be eligible to receive compensation insurance benefits, adding that Israelis considered Ms. Santosh as one of them.

"We had an understanding from the Indian Government on Israeli actions although there was no public support like other nations. ... The United States gave full-hearted support (and) countries in

Europe ... . They know our actions are just," Ms. Clein told reporters during an online briefing in the Capital. Asked about reports of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu not including India in a list of countries Israel had thanked for their support, she said that Israel had thanked nations that had publicly supported its

actions in Gaza. It may be recalled that at the UN recently, India had supported the "just supported the "just Palestininian cause" and two-state formula (Israel and Palestine) while condemning the rocket firing from Gaza by militant group Hamas. Israel is one of the biggest suppliers of defence platforms, equipment and weaponry to India.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that the Railways have decided to cancel the following Special Trains due to low occupancy and other operational reasons as per the following details:-

CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS					
Train No. & Name	Date(s) of Cancellation (from originating station)				
02595 Gorakhpur - Anand Vihar (T) Special Express	24.05.2021 to till further advice				
02596 Anand Vihar (T) - Gorakhpur Special Express	25.05.2021 to till further advice				
05161 Muzaffarpur JnManduadih Special Express	24.05.2021 to till further advice				
05162 Manduadih - Muzaffarpur Jn. Special Express	24.05.2021 to till further advice				

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

For any kind information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or





**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE** 

# ₹1cr for family of Covid warrior schoolteacher

Govt job for wife of late primary schoolteacher: Kejriwal AGE CORRESPONDENT

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday provided financial assistance of ₹1 crore to the family of corona warrior Late Nitin Tanwar.

He said that late Tanwar was a primary schoolteacher and was posted at MC Primary School, Naraina, and he continued to serve people during the corona crisis. Mr Kejriwal said that while nothing can fill the loss of Nitin, the financial assistance of ₹1 crore on behalf of the Delhi government will provide some ease to the family of the corona warrior. The government will also provide a job to Nitin's wife in a Delhi government school and will stand beside his family for any help they might need in the future. Kejriwal said: " Tanwar Ji

was a very hardworking



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal with family members of teacher Nitin Tanwar in New Delhi on Friday.

and dedicated teacher in our Delhi government school. He was posted at various duties during the corona crisis, he was initially posted at the ration distribution centre, and later on many such duties." Late Tanwar got affected by Covid while on his duty on 12th December 2020 and

was admitted to the RML Hospital, where he died on 14th December 2020. He was a resident of Delhi. Nitin Tanwar is survived by father Satya Pal Singh, mother Sarla Devi, wife Sarvista Tanwar, daughter Pakhi Tanwar, brother Manish Tanwar and sister-in-law Nitu.

# ED raids premises of Kalra, others in O2 hoarding case

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 21

Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at the premises linked to businessman Navneet Kalra and his associates in connection with a money-laundering probe linked to a the recent case of alleged hoarding and black-marketing of oxygen concentrators.

Sources said searches were conducted at 10 places in the national capital region under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The ED had recently booked Kalra and others under the anti-money laundering law,

taking cognisance of a Delhi Police FIR filed on May 5 after policemen raided some restaurants and premises owned and linked to Kalra.

The Delhi police had recovered more than 524 of these life-saving machines from these premises and it was alleged that they were being hoarded and sold in the black market. He was sent to 14 days judicial custody by a local court here on Thursday. Kalra had denied wrongdoing and claimed that the consignment was kept for regular sale. The concentrators are in short supply as they are being anxiously scoured by those gasping for breath

Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

The ED will probe if the

oxygen concentrators were illegally hoarded and sold to the family members or caregivers of coronavirus-infected patients at exorbitant prices, thereby leading to generation of "proceeds of crime" as defined under the PMLA, sources said.

The ED is empowered to question and record the statements of the accused and it can even attach their properties during the course of investigation, following which it files a charge sheet before a special PMLA court seeking their prosecution under the anti-money laun-

### F Kind Attention Rail Passengers T IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the timings of the following Special Trains will be revised due to speed enhancement/operational requirements as under:-

amid the second wave of the

TRAIN NO. 02425			TRAIN NO. 02426					
Existing Timings		Revised Timings		STATIONS	Existing Timings		Revised Timings	
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.		ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
	21:10		20:40	New Delhi	05:00		05:55	
01:16	01:26	00:28	00:38	Ludhiana	00:05	00:15	01:40	01:50
03:40	03:42	03:10	03:15	Pathankot Cantt	21:32	21:34	23:05	23:10
		03:44	03:46	Kathua			22:25	22:27
05:45	57750	05:10		Jammu Tawi		20:10		21:25

Days of Run: 02425 from New Delhi on 28.05.2021 and 02426 from Jammu Tawi on 29.05.2021

TRAIN NO. 02422			2	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 02421			
Existing Timings		Revised Timings			Existing Timings		Revised Timings	
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.		ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
	18:10		18:15	Jammu Tawi	08:15	-	07:35	-
19:20	19:22	19:15	19:17	Kathua	06:40	06:42	05:31	05:33
20:00	20:05	19:55	20:00	Pathankot Cantt	06:05	06:10	04:57	05:02
21:55	22:00	21:50	21:55	Jalandhar Cantt	04:15	04:20	03:15	03:20
22:55	23:05	22:50	23:00	Ludhiana Jn	03:15	03:25	02:20	02:28
00:55	01:00	00:41	00:51	Ambala Cantt Jn.	01:25	01:39	00:57	01:02
01:53	01:55	01:39	01:41	Karnal	23:59	00:01	23:28	23:30
03:55	04:25	03:50	04:15	Delhi Jn.	22:00	22:30	21:45	22:10
04:55	04:57	04:43	04:45	Delhi Cantt	21:12	21:14	20:57	20:59
05:11	05:13	05:01	05:03	Gurgaon	20:53	20:55	20:40	20:42
05:22	05:24	05:12	05:14	Garhi Harsaru Jn.				
06:13	06:15	06:04	06:06	Rewari	20:15	20:17	19:57	19:59
06:50	06:51	06:40	06:42	Khairthal	18:56	18:57	18:49	18:51
07:13	07:16	07:04	07:07	Alwar Jn.	18:35	18:38	18:28	18:31
07:42	07:44	07:33	07:35	Rajgarh	17:58	18:00	17:56	17:58
08:11	08:13	08:00	08:02	Bandikui Jn.	17:33	17:35	17:35	17:37
08:32	08:34	08:22	08:24	Dausa	17:07	17:09	17:09	17:11
09:28	09:30	09:17	09:20	Gandhi Nagar Jaipur	16:28	16:30	16:28	16:31
09:50	10:00	09:50	10:00	Jaipur	16:10	16:20	16:10	16:20
10:41	10:43	10:41	10:43	Phulera Jn.	15:14	15:16	15:15	15:17
11:23	11:25	11:23	11:25	Kishangarh	14:33	14:35	14:31	14:33
12:20		12:10		Ajmer Jn.	12.5	14:05	223	14:05

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and stations en route etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

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"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

SC grants bail to rebel YSRC MP

### SHORT TAKES

### **Odisha: Black fungus**

a notifiable disease

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha government has declared Black Fungus (Mucormycosis) a Notifiable Disease (ND) under Epidemic Act. A notice has been issued by the state health and family welfare department in this connection. "After careful consideration, the Odisha government includes mucormycosis (black fungus) as a notifiable disease under Section-2 of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897," a notification issue late on Thursday evening said. On Thursday, the Union health ministry had appealed to all states and Union Territories (UTs) to declare mucormycosis or black fungus as a notifiable disease. The ministry has also advised that all govern-ment and private health facilities as well as medical colleges should follow guidelines issued by it and the ICMR on screening, diagnosis and management of mucormycosis.

#### **5 Himachal cops** died of Covid-19

Shimla: Five Himachal Pradesh police personnel have died after contracting Covid so far, state director general of police (DGP) Sanjay Kundu said on Friday. Four of them succumbed to the virus during the first wave, while one police personnel died during the ongoing second wave, he said. The DGP told the media that 2,874 police personnel in the state have so far tested positive for the virus. Of them, 2,378 people have recovered while the remaining 496 are still under active cases category. Two police personnel are being treated at hospitals. The DGP further stated that 90 per cent of police personnel in the state were administered both doses of vaccines. As many as 15,339

#### Four dead in MP from Black fungus

doses, he added. — PTI

of the total 17,415 HP police

personnel have got both the

Damoh/ Balaghat: Four people from Damoh and Balaghat districts in Madhya Pradesh have died of Mucormycosis, a dangerous fungal infection seen in some Covid patients and those who had recovered, even as the state grapples with a shortage of injections for its treatment, officials said on Friday. Deepak Soni (39) and Nitin Jain (30), both from Damoh, died of the infection. also called black fungus, on Thursday, after recovering from COVID-19, while Sheshram Kuchalahi (38) and Chinu Lalwani (42), the other two deceased, hail from Balaghat, officials said, "Soni died in a hospital in Nagpur, Jain died in Damoh. Four other patients of Mucormycosis have been sent to Bhopal for treatment," Damoh ENT specialist

### **ODISHA: DONGARIA KONDHS AGREE FOR COVID TESTS**

Vishal Shukla said. — PTI

Rayagada: The Dongoria Bondh tribals living in Niyamgiri hills in Odisha's Rayagada district have finally agreed to undergo Covid test. Initially, members of this tribal group who normally live on the hilltops of Niyamgiri stretching nearly 60 km, and come down the hills on a very few occasions to buy their essentials; were reluctant for swab tests due to their unique lifestyle in the lap of nature and inadequate exposure to modern medicines and healthcare systems. The development came following persistent efforts of five days by the Rayagada district administration to spread awareness about the Covid-19 pandemic among the Dongarias The Dongaria Kondhs belong to the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). "After persistent persuasion by the Rayagada district administration, the two testing camps were organised today in two panchayats of

Kalyansinghpur block and swab samples were collected from the tribal people. We were able to convince the Dongria Kondhs by engaging them in discussion with the support of local community leaders," said Rayagada subcollector Pratap Chandra Pradhan. The sub-collector informed that Anganwadi workers would do regular thermal screening of the people suffering from cough, cold and fever in the area.

■ Bahuguna was undergoing treatment for Covid at AIIMS-Rishikesh since May 8

# Chipko stir icon Bahuguna dies

ist Sunderlal Bahuguna, who pioneered the Chipko movement, died of Covid-19 at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Rishikesh on Friday. He

He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.

Bahugubna was cremated with full state honours at the Poornanand Ghat on the banks of the Ganga in Rishikesh.

Known for his pioneering role in the Chipko movement, during which activists hugged trees to save them from being felled, Bahuguna had been undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at AIIMS-Rishikesh since May 8.

Admitted to the hospital after testing positive for the infection, Bahuguna's condition had turned critical last night with his oxygen level dropping

He was on CPAP therapy in the ICU of the premier hospital and breathed his last at 12.05 pm, AIIMS director Ravikant said.

Narendra Modi condoled Bahuguna's death.

"Passing away of Shri Sunderlal Bahuguna Ji is a monumental loss for our nation. He manifested our centuries-old ethos of living in harmony with nature. His simplicity and spirit of compassion will never be forgotten. My thoughts are with his family and many admirers. Om Shanti," the prime

minister tweeted.
Chief minister Tirath Singh Rawat described it as a big loss not just for Uttarakhand and India but for the entire world. "It was he who made the

Chipko movement a movement of the masses," Mr Rawat said. The funeral pyre was lit The void created by his by his son Rajiv Nayan

SUNDERLAL BAHUGUNA 1927-2021

KNOWN FOR his pio-

neering role in the Chipko

movement, during which

activists hugged trees to

save them from being

felled, Bahuguna had

AIIMS-Rishikesh since

daughter.

May 8. He is survived by

his wife, two sons and a



death in the field of environment can never be filled, the chief minister said. He prayed for peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family to bear the loss.

Bahuguna's body was brought to the ghat wrapped in the national flag and was given a guard honour the Uttarakhand police.

Bahuguna in the presence of his wife Vimla, daughter Madhu and other rela-

tives.
Uttarakhand Assembly Speaker Prem Chand Aggrawal and Rishikesh Mayor Anita Mamgai were also present.

Born on January 9, 1927 in Tehri district, Bahuguna is considered the pioneer of the Chipko movement of the 1970s which he had launched ronment conservationists like Gaura Devi to save forests.

Started by Bahuguna at the foothills of the Himalayas in 1973 in Uttarakhand, then a part of Uttar Pradesh, the Chipko movement was a forest conservation movement in India. It later became a rallying point for many environmental movements all over the world.

Conferred with the Padma Vibhushan and many other honours for his pioneering work in the field of environment protection, Bahuguna also led protests against the construction of the Tehri

He had observed an 84day fast and got his head tonsured in protest against the project which displaced a huge population rendering them

Curiously, chief minis-

Chouhan has maintained

silence on the issue. Nearly 4,000 sleazy videos and audios, sex

chats, and photographs

showing some high pro-file people including

babus and politicians in

compromising positions were recovered from lap-

tops, pen drives, and

other electronic gadgets

seized from the accused

involved in the honey

trapping and blackmail-

Shivraj Singh

### the trial court, a bench com-prising Justice Vineet Saran and Justice B.R. Gavai saddled Raju with a number of conditions including that he will not speak to both print and visual media on the issues that form the part of the

case against him.

Noting that there was nothing in the case that required Raju's custodial interrogation as the crime investigation department of the state police has proceeded against him and filed an FIR after an inquiry and everything said by him (Raju) is a matter of record, the court directed him to cooperate with the investigation and be present before the investigating officer as

PARMOD KUMAR

ed while in police custody.

instead of sending him to

and when required.
"We are of the opinion that charges (against Raju) are not such that custodial interrogation is required,' said Justice Saran while pronouncing the granting bail to Raju. the order

The court directed him to furnish a bail bond of ₹1 lakh and two sureties of like amount. At the outset of the hearing, the court read from

Approx cost of the works

Address of the office

Earnest Money

Opening of tender

Website & notice board

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03 (Three) Months

Electrical Branch, Divisional Railway Manager's office, Northern Railway, Moradabad

The tenderer has to submit Bid Security Declaration

certification mandatorily in place of Earnest money

Name of work and its location | 30-Elect-38-T-2020-21-E3



Secunderabad Army hospital which listed a number of ailments that Raju suffered, including fracture in the toe of his left leg and swelling.

Grabbing the opportunity, senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi told the court that the report by the Army hos-pital vindicated their assertion that Raju was tortured while in the police custody during interrogation and the fracture was a consequence to third degree methods used against him.

Describing the alleged torture of Raju in police custody as a "state sponsored terrorism," Mr Rohatgi, appearing for Raju, said that he (Raju) has been charged under Section 124A of the IPC so that he does not get bail. Meanwhile, senior counsel Dushyant Dave, appearing for Andhra Pradesh, took the court through the speeches of Raju in an attempt to demonstrate that he was creating disaffection and trying to incite people based on caste and religious

Provision of portable DG set for emergency

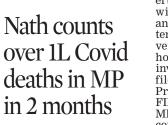
power supply over Delhi division.(Covid coaches

1093/2021

Sr. Divil Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

### ■ Kamal Nath threatens to make public honeytrap videos FIR on Cong MLA kicks off storm

CHOUDHURY



Kamal Nath

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, MAY 21

Senior Congress leader and former chief minister Kamal Nath has come out with a stun-ning 'disclosure' that coronavirus has claimed lives of a little over one lakh people in Madhya Pradesh in March and April this year.

His claim comes hours after chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced to provide financial assistance of ₹1 lakh each to the next kin of those who died of Covid-19 during the second wave of the pandemic that hit the state in March this year.

Mr Nath's claim was however strongly contested by state home minister Narottam Mishra who called it a 'canard' being spread by him to create a fear psychosis among people and tar-nish the image of Madhya Pradesh and India outside the country.

"I dare him to produce evidence to substantiate his claim on Covid deaths. He should resign from his post (as Congress Legislature Party leader) if he fails to back up his claim with evidence. I will step down if Mr Nath produces evidence to prove his claim", Mr Mishra told reporters here on Friday.

The minister said he would move governor of Pradesh Madhya Anandben Patel to book Mr Nath for sedition for trying to taint image of the state and the country by giving misleading information on Covid deaths in MP.

'Mr Nath is deliberately spreading falsehoods on Covid deaths with ulterior motive", Mr Mishra alleged.

Earlier on Thursday evening, Mr Nath while addressing Congress MLAs online claimed that total 1,02,002 people died of coronavirus in the state in March and April this year.

Beijing, May 21: China on

Friday said that any suc-

cessor to the present Dalai

Lama should be approved

by it, ruling out recogni-

tion to any heir nominat-

ed by him or by his follow-

The reincarnation of

the Dalai Lama and other

grand Living Buddhas

has been subjected to

approval by the central

government since the

Qing Dynasty (1644-1911),

claimed an official white

paper issued by the

Chinese government here.

The document has also

A huge political row

erupted here, on Friday, with Congress veteran and former chief minister Kamal Nath issuing a veiled threat to make the honey trap videos, involving some high profile people of Madhya Pradesh, public if the FIR filed against party MLA Umang Singhar in connection with the suicide of his girlfriend was not withdrawn.

Ruling BJP here took strong exception to Mr

Nath's statement describing it an attempt to blackment to "submit to his dictates." The party also dared him to expose the honey trap videos that "are in his possession."

"Mr Nath's statement suggests that he was running his 15-month-old government that fell in March, 2020, by resorting to blackmailing tactics since he has claimed that the honey trap videos are in his possession," state higher education minister Vishwas Sarang said. BJP leader Pankaj Chaturvedi said Mr Nath

Kamal Nath's statement describing it an attempt to blackmail the state government to 'submit to his dictates.' The party also dared him to expose the honey trap videos that 'are in his posses-

▶ RULING BJP here took

strong exception to

needed to clear the doubts as to if the original honey trap videos were submitted to the court by his government then since he has now claimed to have in his possession the original



The money has been

The event coincided death anniversary of former Prime Minister later

the state in four installspokesman

Chhattisgarh government said.

The chief minister also

"The input subsidy given to the farmers will help in significant improvement of agriculture and farming in the state", Mr Baghel said.

Congress supremo Sonia Gandhi commended the scheme, saying, "Rajiv Gandhi Kissan Nyay Yojana is an appreciable steps towards welfare of farmers in the state". In a message sent on the occasion, she said. "Late Rajiv Gandhi had always envisioned the empowerment of farm-

### **Baghel provides** incentive to farmers under welfare scheme

AGE CORRESPONDENT RAIPUR, MAY 21

Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel on Friday transferred ₹1500 crores directly to the bank accounts of 22 farmers in the state as input subsidy for the upcoming kharif season.

released to the farmers as first installment of Raily Gandhi Kissan Nyay Yojana, 2021.

Rajiv Gandhi. Under the scheme, a total of ₹5597 crore will be given to the farmers of

ments as input subsidy, a

transferred ₹7.17 crore to 72,000 villagers, cattle rearers of the state as payment for the cow dung procured from them between March 15 and May 15 under the 'Godhan Nyay Yojana' scheme.

ers, labourers, poor and backward people".

#### Date & Time for submission of Tender will be received upto 15:00 hrs ender & opening of tender and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 15:06,2021 Website particulars Website www.ireps.gov.in Divisional Railway & Address of office Manager's office, Northern Railway, Moradabad Tender Notice No.: 05/2021 Dated : 21.05.2021 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LTD.

05/SrDEE/G/MB/2021:

Address of the office from where

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Completion period of the work

Earnest Money to be

leposited(In ₹)

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Corporate Office: Jhalwan, Joginder Nagar, Distt. Mandi CIN No: U40101HP2003SGC025877, GSTIN: 02AABCH4161P1ZL Company Secretary: Mob No. 94596-84691 E-mail: cshpsebl@gmail.cc
O/o MD, BVPCL, Jhalwan, Distt. Mandi, Joginder Nagar-175015
fel Number: 01908-224412 & 224516 , Email Id: mdbvpcl\_jnr@yahoo.com
NOTICE INVITING BIDS (e-Tendering Mode only)

Online (through) rate bids (Two- part bid system) are invited by the undersigned for and on behalf of Managing Director, Beas Valley Power Corporation Ltd. (BVPCL) for the below described work on the prescribed forms from the reputed companies having a sufficient experience and expertise to execute such works in the past. The tender documents shall be available on e-Tendering website https://www.hptenders.gov.in by 21 May, 2021.

Tender No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Bid Money including GST		
BVPVL/MD/Uhl Stage- III/Penstock/2021-01	Dismantling of existing Surface Penstock fabricated from SAILMA550 HI Steel, Complete	55.5	Rs. 70.00 Lakh	Rs. 20,000.00		
	Detailed Design & Fabrication Drawings for its replacement, Supply of steel plates, Storage, Fabrication, Testing, Painting, Transportation to Project site, Erection and commissioning of Surface, Steel In-Liners, Cladding work of Penstock and its specials, complete in all respect including execution of allied civil works (Design/Construction Drawings) for Uhl- Stage-III-(100MW) HEP, Joginder Nagar, Distr-Mandi, Himachal Pradesh".					

The bid document shall be available online and is to be submitted on the website https// www.hptenders.gov.in .The bidders would be required to register in the website, which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidders are required to have digital signature certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized certifying authority (CA). Aspiring bidders, who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPSEBL, may obtain the same from the website https://www.hptenders.gov.in. DSC is mandatory to participate in e-tendering. Bidders already have valid DSC issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tendering process as per

Time for Completion= 23 Months

following key dates:-. Date of Online publication Date of downloading of NIT 21.05.2021 Last date & time for submission 21.06.2021 up to 14:00 hours of online NIT Date of opening of Techno-Commercial Bid 28.06.2021 Any further clarification, corrigendum, amendment, extension or

keep themselves updated. Managing Director, BVPCL, Uhl Stage-III, (100 MW), 

addendum shall be notified on the above website only; no press notice for

the same shall be issued. Bidders should regularly visit the website to



### AP to send ayurvedic 'Covid-19 drug' to ICMR to test efficacy

**Amaravati, May 21:** The Andhra Pradesh government on Friday decided to send the ayurvedic medicine, being touted as a miracle cure for Covid and distributed in SPS Nellore district, to the ICMR for a detailed study of its efficacy.

The government also decided to send a team of experts to Nellore for an on-the-spot study of the formulation, popularly 'Krishnapatnam medicine'. Vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu, who hails from SPS Nellore district, also asked Union minister for Ayush Kiren Rijiju and Indian council medical research director Balram

Bhargava to conduct a study on the medicine. He asked them to come out with a report as early as possible, a release here

asserted that Tibet was an

inseparable part of China

"In 1793, after dispelling

government

 $\operatorname{Approved}$ 

low the

Gurkha invaders, the

restored order in Tibet

and promulgated the

Ordinance for Better Governance of Tibet,

improving systems by

which the central govern-

ment-administered

Tibet," the white paper titled 'Tibet Since 1951:

Liberation, Development

and Prosperity" said.

since ancient times.

Imperially

At a high-level review meeting on Covid here, **THE GOVERNMENT** also decided to send a team of experts to Nellore for an on-thespot study of the formulation, popularly known as the 'Krishnapatnam medicine'.

chief minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy enquired about the Ayurvedic medicine, which has now become popular as the 'Krishnapatnam medicine, that is being promoted by his party district president and MLA K. Govardhan Reddy.

it studied by the ICMR and other experts to determine its efficacy," deputy chief minister (Health) A.K.K. Srinivas said after the review meeting.

Doctor-turned-bureau-

Those preparing and promoting Krishnapatnam concoction are punishable under the Pharmacy Act, 1948, and Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, 1954," Ramesh, who actively oversaw the AP govern-

'We have decided to get Anandaiah, who once

ed that the

reincarna-

tion of the

Dalai Lama

ments Covid management last year, said. From tens to hundreds and now thousands, people are flocking to Krishnapatnam village, even violating Covid-19 protocols, to take the medicine being offered by an ayurvedic practitioner B

crat P.V. Ramesh, who preworked as the village viously worked as princisarpanch and later a member of the mandal pal secretary (Health) and also Special chief secre-

Dalai's successor must be approved by us: China govt an uprising by the local population in Tibet. India granted him political asylum and the Tibetan gov-

tary to chief minister Y.S.

Jagan Mohan Reddy,

Krishnapatnam medicine

'yet another recipe for

stop such epidemics of

"Governments

disaster"

superstition.

and other ernment-in-exile has been grand Living based in Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh since Dalai Lama Buddhas then. The Dalai Lama is 85 had to folyears old now and the procedure of issue of his successor has "drawing lots from the gained prominence in the golden urn" and that the last couple of years due to selected candidate would his advanced age.

The Dalai Lama's succession issue was in the limelight, especially in the last few years after the US has stepped up campaign that the right relat

ing to the reincarnation of Dalai Lama's successor should be within the exclusive authority of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people. The Tibetan Policy and

Support Act of 2020 (TPSA) passed by the US Congress makes it official United States policy that decisions regarding the reincarnation of Dalai Lama are exclusively within the authority of the current Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhist leaders

and the Tibetan people.

The ordinance stipulat-

be subject to approval by

the central government of

China, the document said.

to India in 1959 following

a Chinese crackdown on

The 14th Dalai Lama fled

### PREP UP HEALTH **CENTRES TO DEAL WITH YAAS: GOVT**

New Delhi: The Centre has asked Andhra Pradesh. Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andaman and Nicobar Islands to ensure that health facilities are stocked with essential medicines and supplies to meet any exigencies in the wake of Cyclone Yaas which is expected to make a landfall later this month. According to the India Meteorological Department, a low pressure area is likely to form over north Andaman Sea and is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm by May 24, and expected to move northwestwards and reach near Odisha and West Bengal coasts around May 26. Apart from the impact of cyclone in Odisha and West Bengal, there may be wide-

spread rains in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and districts of the east coast that may cause inland flooding, it has said. Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan wrote to the chief secretaries of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, saying public health challenge already posed by the coronavirus pandemic, may be compounded due to direct impact of Covid and public health risks posed by water, vector and airborne diseases that may arise in the community or in displaced

### **ARMY CHIEF REVIEWS BORDER ALONG ARUNACHAL**

population living in camps

or temporary shelter

New Delhi: Army Chief Gen. M.M. Naravane reviewed India's operational readiness along the border with China in the Arunachal Pradesh sector during a two-day visit to the Northeastern region that began on Thursday. His visit to the region came amid the Indian Army's continued standoff with the Chinese military in some of the friction points in eastern Ladakh. Officials said Gen. Naravane arrived at Dimapur in Nagaland on Thursday to review the operational readiness along the Northern borders of Arunachal Pradesh

Northeastern region. "On arrival at the Corps headquarters in Dimapur, the Army Chief was briefed by Lt. Gen. Johnson Mathew, General Officer Commanding of Spear Corps and the division commanders on the prevailing situation and operational preparedness along the Northern borders." the Army said. It said the Chief of Army Staff complimented

and the security situation in

the hinterland in the

all ranks for maintaining excellent vigil and exhorted them to stay alert and keep watch on activities along the Line of Actual Control. On Friday, Gen Naravane

reviewed the security situation in the hinterland of the Northeast and along the India-Myanmar borders and exhorted all the personnel to keep working with the same zeal and enthusiasm. - PTI

### TEMPLE FOR 'CORONA DEVI' **COMES UP IN TN**

Coimbatore: As the severe second wave of Covid-19 sweeps across the country, not sparing this district too, a Coronadevi temple has come up on the outskirts of the city, thanks to a mutt. seeking divine intervention to put an end to the raging pandemic. This is in line with a "Plague Mariamman Temple", dedicated by the faithful to the deity Amman seeking her protection earlier when plague wreaked havoc about 150 years ago. The Kamatchipuri Adheenam has built a temple near

Irugur on the outskirts and consecrated an idol, naming it as Goddess Corona Devi. The 1.5 foot tall black stone idol of was consecrated at the temple in the Mutt premises recently and daily prayers will be held seeking

divine intervention to save the people from the deadly disease, for 48 days, sources in the Adheenam said. It was not for the first time such a temple has come up, as when plague spread across the dis-

trict taking a heavy toll more than a century ago, an idol of Mariamman was installed and people started offering

prayers. The place turned into a temple and came to be known as "Plague Mariamman Temple". — PTI

### Uddhav takes dig at PM's aerial survey of Gujarat

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA** 

Taking a dig at Prime Narendra Modi's aerial survey of cyclone-hit areas of Gujarat, Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday said that he is inspecting cyclone affected areas on the ground. He also said that his visit was not merely for a photo opportunity. Hitting back at Mr Thackeray, the BJP said that the Maharashtra CM doesn't usually venture out of his home no matter how big a crisis is. Therefore, he needs to be congratulated for finally coming out of his home, state BJP president state BJP president Chandrakant Patil said.

Mr Thackeray was on a one day tour of Konkan region to take stock of the damages in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts, with five talukas in the former district - particularly Rajapur and Ratnagiri talukas — having borne the brunt of the natural calamity that was

intensely severe. According to his itinerary, which is given by Chief Minister Office (CMO), he landed at Ratnagiri airport at 8.35 am. Later he travelled by

a helicopter to Chipi Airport in Sindhudurg. During his visit, Mr Thackeray promised a 360 degree SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis actual devastation caused by Cyclone Tauktae in the Konkan region of Maharashtra while assuring immedi-

#### **Capt. of barge faces** homicide charges

Mumbai: A day after the Mumbai police announced that it would carry out a probe into the deaths of personnel onboard barge P305 off Mumbai coast, the Yellow Gate police station on Friday regis-tered an FIR for culpable homicide not amounting to murder against the captain of the ill fated barge. So far 51 dead bodies have been recovered and 24 people are still missing due to Cyclone Tauktae. Even as the FIR was registered against him. Captain Balwinder Singh is amongst the missing persons.

pense, for each person impacted adversely. "Let the 'punchanama' be comfirst," hackeray said.

The CM also directed officials to submit a proposal of compensation for the cyclone affected areas after a thorough and professional assessment of damage was conducted to reveal specific figures and data in the wake of huge losses suffered in the two districts.

In his four-hour visit, he "The Prime Minister has been apprised about the huge loss caused by the cyclone. We have sought Central assistance. The Prime Minister is sensitive. We hope that like Gujarat, the central government will also help

### Scindia hails Rajiv as builder of modern India, deletes post later

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, MAY 21

Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scinida on Friday created a flutter when he said former Prime Minister late Rajiv Gandhi was maker of modern India while paying tribute to him on his death anniversary.

"Former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi is OI modern India. I pay my rich tribute to him on his death anniversary," he tweet-

He however deleted the tweet later and replaced it with a fresh post that said 'I pay rich tribute to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi on his death anniversary'.



Jyotiraditya Scinida

The first twitter post of Mr Scindia who joined BJP from Congress in March 2020, leading to the fall of 15-month-old Kamai Nath govern has however ment, taken BJP people here by surprise.

However, Mr Scindia's followers here described it a 'faux pass' committed 'unwittingly'.

"One should not read between the lines into it", a close aide of Mr Scindia said.

## Cops gun down 13 Naxals in Maha

C-60 commando force carry out operation after intel input; seize arms, electronic items

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA** 

Around 13 Maoists were killed in a police encounter in a forest between Paydi-Kotmi in Gadchiroli district on Friday. The C-60 commandos had cracked down a Maoists camp near a village. A cache of arms and ammunition as well as electronic items were recovered from the encounter site. Maharashtra government congratulated Gadchiroli police for this operation.

According

### Gadchiroli district super-**Bengal BJP MP** gets summons in a graft case

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, MAY 21

Within days of four Trinamul Congress leaders' arrest by the CBI in the Narada bribery case, Barrackpore BJP MP Arjun Singh got summons from the criminal investigation depart-ment of the West Bengal police in connection with a case of corruption.

In the notice served to Mr Singh on Thursday evening, the detective agency directed him to appear physically at the economic offence wing of its Bhawani Bhavan

headquarters on May 25. Preliminary investiga-tion revealed that a person close to the BJP MP got a contract through government tender to build a drain at a cost of ₹4 crores. Though the money was spent, the drain was not allegedly built. Mr Singh, however, cried of political vendetta against him by the Mamata Banerjee

intendent of police's office, those killed include six men and seven women

Maharashtra home minister Dilip Walse-Patil has congratulated the Gadchiroli police on their act of bravery and grit. He also said that he would discuss the issue of increas-Naxalism on the Chhattisgarh border near Gadchiroli with the chief minister of Maharashtra.

cadres.

The C-60 commando force has carried out the operation based on a specific intelligence input.

In a series of tweets, the official twitter handle of

#### of #Police and #Naxalites broke out at Paydi-Kotmi forest in Etapalli, where the Naxalites had gathered for a meeting. C-60 squad were successfully able to gun down 13

operation (sic)."

### Kasansur dalam ter office said, "Early this morning an encounter between C-60 commandos

Mr Walse-Patil said that Maharashtra home minis-

received

Naxalites during this

▶ THOSE KILLED include six men and seven women Naxal cadres

**ALL DECEASED** Naxals were identified and mostly belonged to the

during this season, the collection of Tendu leaves is typically carried out in Gadchiroli area. The Naxalites collect large sums of ransom from this

"The C-60 squad had information about the meeting of the Naxalites in the forest, and accordingly the team launched a planned search operation (sic)," the home minister said.

C-60 team, which has been headed by the super-intendent of police Ankit Goyal, carried out this operation. During the operation, AK-47s, SLRs, carbines,

rifles, and explosives were confiscated.

The Gadchiroli police said that the operation continued between 6 am to 7.30 am. All deceased Naxals were identified and mostly belonged to the Kasansur dalam. The security forces are conducting a search operation as more Naxals could be

hiding in the area. Additional director-general of police (special operations) Sanjay Saxena, deputy inspector-general of Naxal range Sandip Patil and Gadchiroli superintendent of police Ankit Goyal oversaw the opera-

### 'Would rather die': Fr. Stan refuses to go

to JJ hospital MUMBAI, MAY 21

Father Stan Swamy, the 84-year-old tribal rights activist on Friday interacted personally with the judges of the Bombay high court via video conferencing and refused to get admitted to state-run J.J. Hospital. He requested the court to consider his interim bail application, as he hometown Ranchi.

The court adjourned the hearing on his bail plea till June 7, after his lawyer sought time to explain to Swamy that he could be admitted to a private hospital pending his bail application.
As per court's direc-

tion he was produced before the court from Taloja jail in Navi Mumbai.

During his interaction with the vacation bench of Justices S.J. Kathawalla and S.P. Tavade, Father Swamy

a prison hospital. When

### IAF pilot killed as MiG-21 Bison crashes in Punjab

Jet was on training sortie from Rajasthan's Suratgarh

Moga, May 21: An IAF MiG-21 Bison aircraft crashed during heavy rain in a field in Punjab's Moga district, killing its pilot Squadron Leader Abhinav Choudhary, officials said. The aircraft was on a training sortie from Suratgarh in Rajasthan when it crashed in Langeana vil-lage on Thursday night, Suratgarh said Moga superintendent

of police Gurdeep Singh. The Indian Air Force has ordered a Court of Inquiry to ascertain the cause of the accident and said it condoles the tragic loss of its officer. "The aircraft crashed in a field and caught fire. It was raining heavily at the time," Singh said, adding that there was no other loss of life or damage to property
The pilot's body was

found about two kilometres from the crash site, barely 200 metres from a had taken off from Mudki road.



which crashed late on Thursday night, killing the pilot, in Moga district on Friday.

couple of big 'havelis'. Had the aircraft crashed over these houses, it could have caused heavy casualties, Singh said. He said the pilot appeared to have deployed a parachute in a bid to land safely. It seems he broke his neck upon impact on the ground, he

According to the infor-

Suratgarh in Rajasthan Jagraon Ludhiana and was on the way back after a training sortie when it crashed, Singh said. He added that IAF offi-

cials from Halwara and Bathinda with medical teams and ambulances had reached the crash site, about 12 km from Baghapurana town on the

#### ■ Ulfa chief frees abducted employee from Myanmar camp ONGC staffer may reach India today Myanmar with Mr Saikia as an Assamese not as THE ULFA-I chief's

MANOJ ANAND **GUWAHATI, MAY 21** 

Keeping his commitment to Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the outlawed Ulfa chief Paresh Baruah is reported to have despatched the abducted ONGC employee Ritul Saikia with a small group of Ulfa-I cadres camp in the Myanmar to release him in India.

Disclosing that ONGC employee Saikia is expected to enter India sometime on Saturday, authoritative security sources told this newspaper that there have been speculation about his release but the abducted

announcement to release the abducted ONGC employee came soon after chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's appeal on Thursday and welcome to Ulfa-I's ceasefire because of the pandemic

ONGC employee is yet to be handed over by Ulfa-I to authorities in India.

Pointing out that Mr Saikia would be released or handed over to some 'nominated" people in Mon district of Nagaland, security sources however claimed that Ulfa-I cadres have already started from their remote camps in

towards the international border where he is expected to be released. Refusing to divulge to whom ONGC employee would be handed over by

Nagaiand. The announcement to release abducted ONGC employee came soon after Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's appeal on Thursday and

the pandemic. Referring that he was

employee and parents are suffering immensely and are in distress situation, Assam chief minister also Ulfa-I cadres, security sources said that they have already reached welcomed the unilateral ceasefire. He on Thursday said, "We have seen a statement irom declaring unilateral ceasefire in view of the pandemic and as goodwill for the new government. We welcome any positive step, but a ceasefire will need welcome to Ulfa-I's unilatground rules for impleeral ceasefire because of mentation (and) we look forward to a more solid indication from the outappealing to Ulfa-I chief

chief minister because the wife of abducted ONGC Paresh Baruah

#### said that his health has progressively deteriorated in the eight months he has spent at Taloja prison. He also alleged that being in Taloja has brought him to a situation where he can neither eat, write, bathe or go for a walk by himself. Currently Swamy is in

judges asked him about shifting him to JJ Hospital, he said he didn't want to get admitted at this hospital. He said he has been there thrice and he knew the set-up there. He said he would 'rather suffer, possibly die very shortly if this were to go on." "I would prefer this, than be admitted at the JJ Hospital. It is a very difficult moment for me,'

### **BBC** under fire

■ Continued from Page 1 these devastating findings.

The BBC, founded in 1922, is Britain's publicly-funded but editorially independent national broadcaster. The rules governing its operations are set out in a royal charter that requires the corporation to be impartial, act in the public interest and be open, transparent and accountable. A mid-term review of the BBC's governance is scheduled to begin next year.

Even before the Dyson report, the BBC was under pressure from some members of Prime Minister Johnson's Boris Conservative Party, who complain that the broadcast-

er has a liberal bias. Mr Johnson said he was concerned about the findings and hoped that the broadcaster would make sure "nothing like this ever happens again'

At the heart of the scandal were documents made to look like bank statements, falsely suggesting that members of Diana's inner circle were being paid to spy on her. Spencer alleged Bashir used the documents to gain his trust so he would introduce the journalist to Diana. He also alleged that Bashir

made up stories about the

royal family to strengthen

Diana's belief there was a conspiracy against her. When graphic designer Matt Wiessler, who had been commissioned by Bashir to create mocked-up documents, saw the program, he immediately made the connection. He brought his concerns to BBC management but he has long contended they made him a scapegoat.

He said that there is a culture within the BBC that "the little people" don't need to be addressed. His business faltered after the BBC blacklisted him from assignments "Only under duress do we

get some sort of apology and

some sort of acknowledgement," he told the BBC. Former Panorama producer Mark Killick, who was told to leave the program within 24 hours after he raised concerns, criticised the BBC for its inadequate

response to both whistleblowers and Diana's sons. "Many people, both on the Princess Diana side of the line and in the BBC, had their reputations destroyed by a smear campaign authorised by BBC senior management, and many of them lost their jobs," he said. "I'm not quite sure that a generic apology in the form of a press statement by the BBC

is anything like adequate."
The BBC did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

police force, which in March ruled out a criminal investigation into allegations about the BBC interview, said Friday it would review the Dyson report "to ensure there is no significant new evidence".

In the interview, a major scoop for Bashir, Diana famously said that "there were three of us in this marriage" — referring to Prince Charles' relationship with Camilla Parker-Bowles. — AP

### Mamata to fight poll... be ensured she returns

■ Continued from Page 1 agriculture minister.

On Friday afternoon he submitted his resignation as the TMC MLA Bhowanipore to Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee and vacated the seat for the bypoll where his party chief will be the candidate. Mr Chatterjee has, however, not resigned as a Cabinet minister. "I was elected from Ms Baneriee's Assembly constituency in such a situation where she needs to be elected within six months. It has to smoothly as a winning candidate. Baneriee's stay in nower

is our supreme leader," Mr Chatterjee said. He added: "In that context, I was approached from some quarters. After this, I decided to quit voluntarily as an  $\overline{\text{MLA}}$ Banerjee contests again and wins. She will decide

as a minister, I will check the rules. as CM is everything for us and our party as she

in North 24 Parganas where TMC candidate Kajal Sinha died of so that Ms my future later. I am an obedient soldier of the party. I never protested

Speculation was rife earlier that the TMC supremo could either become a member of the Legislative Council or may stand from Khardah

Covid-19 before his name was announced as the winner TMC sources indicat-

ed that Mr Chatterjee, who has a clean image, may be fielded as a party candidate in the Rajya Sabha polls later.

### 2 mantris under house arrest

after the hearing began

whenever and wherever

I was fielded by my party.

■ Continued from Page 1 that they cannot step out of their residences nor can any government official meet them phys-

These set of rules will also be applicable to the two other accused --Madan Mitra, TMC MLA of Kamarhati, and former Kolkata mayor Sovan Chatterjee. While Mr Hakim returned home from Presidency Central Jail in the evening, the three others remain admitted to Woodburn Block of SSKM Hospital due to

their ill-health.

The difference of opin-

ion between the two

judges of the division

bench came to light

at the high court earlier in the day. While Justice Banerjee appeared to be in favour of interim bail for the arrested quartet on their plea to vacate the division bench's overnight stay on the special CBI court's bail for the accused, acting CJ Bindal did not agree with him while holding that the four must be kept under house

arrest. Later, a larger bench of five judges was constituted by the high court for hearing the case on May 24. It includes Justices Harish Tandon, Indra Prasanna Mukerji Soumen besides the acting CJ

and Justice Banerjee. During the day, Mr Hakim's family had filed a caveat in the Supreme Court in the case so that the CBI can't have any legal advantage if it moves for a hearing against him.

Assembly Biman Banerjee said: "I am very unhappy about the way the four were arrested because I was very much in office at that time. No one informed me of anything before arrests. I was intimated about it later as per leg islative rules. I do not know what unknown reasons prompted the CBI to go to the governor for permission.

### New 'doorstep' strategy

■ Continued from Page 1 The Centre said it is making efforts to ramp up

supply and availability of Amphotericin-B antifungal drug for the treatment of Black Fungus disease. Five additional manufacturers have been licensed to manufacture the drug within the country while production by existing five manufacturers is also being substan-

tially ramped up. The PM also hailed the initiative of micro containment zones and appreciated the home delivery of medicines. He requested health workers to make this campaign as comprehensive as possible in rural areas. He said bringing doctors, labs and e-marketing companies together to provide a telemedicine facility named "Kashi Kavach" is also a very innovative initiative. 'We have to fight a long battle," he added.

The overall fresh Covid-19 cases remained under 3 lakh for the fifth consecutive day as about 2.60 lakh new cases were detected in the last 24 hours. However, the death toll shot up to 4,209 after a brief decline. In Delhi, the cases came down to 3,009 for the first time since early April and positivity rate fell to 4.76 per cent. It was expected that Delhi may ease up the lockdown a bit after the positivity rate falls below 5 per cent but the city still has a high number of deaths – 252 on Friday.

Some states like Kerala Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have decided to extend the lockdown.

Meanwhile, the first real-world data from Public Health England (PHE) has found that Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine Covishield is 85-90 per cent effective after two doses. The method used for the "Covid-19 Surveillance Vaccine Report" by PHE for analysing the approxi-mate number of deaths and hospitalisations prevented by the vaccine prointo account the impact of both first and second doses for the first time due to more data now being available on that in the country. Previously, the real-world method only used the impact of the first dose of vaccination on hospitalisations and deaths. New analysis for the first time estimates that two doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine provide around 85 to 90 per cent protection against symptomatic

disease, PHE said. The UK government hailed the incredible impact the vaccination programme was having, as PHE estimates reveal that 13,000 deaths have now been prevented in people aged 60 years or older in England and 11,100 deaths in individuals aged 80 years and older, 1,600 in individuals aged 70 to 79 and 300 in individuals aged 60 to 69 years.



### THE ASIAN AGE

22 MAY 2021

### Israel's Gaza war ends, but will peace endure?

ceasefire has brought to a halt the 11-day Gaza war. Only time will tell if this is a true harbinger of peace between Israel and the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank. The fear is this will be as short-lived as several peace initiatives brokered in the past proved. The ceasefire, pursued vigorously by Egypt on top of US President Joe Biden's increasingly stern advice to Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu, is the best thing to happen as it puts an immediate stop to the toll of lives. As many as 230 Palestinians, including 65 children and 35 women and 12 Israelis, including two children, have perished after lives of millions were torn asunder when thousands of rockets and GPS-guided missiles and bombs were raining on the region.

The question is, when will the next escalation come as victory is already being declared by the Hamas militants over a more powerful Jewish state even as Palestinians and Israelis cautiously welcome the cessation of hostilities? A cycle of violence followed by temporary truce has been the historical pattern and it will change only if Mr Biden becomes even less supportive of Israel, which is largely

What happens from here would be subject to how much the US is prepared to back any plan in which the state of Israel, whose right to existence is not in question anymore, may have to compromise in recognising a Palestinian homeland

dependent on US funding and protection, besides an endless supply of precision-guided weapons. The US has said it will route humanitarian aid to rebuild Gaza only through the recognised Palestinian Authority, headed by Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank and not the shadowy Hamas commanders.

Not too much credence can be given to the Palestinian militants' claim that Mr Netanyahu has promised to halt further action at the Al Aqsa Mosque as well as planned evictions from Sheikh Jarrah in east Jerusalem. The two flashpoints marked the run up to the most recent war though its direct cause may have been the invasive action of the firing of 4,000-plus rockets into Israel from Gaza. Whatever be the historical

background to intractable confrontations, the fact remains that Hamas was the aggressor in raining fire though Israel reacted excessively in bombing Gaza in its hunt for militant targets, especially the network of tunnels, nicknamed "The

The ultimate solution lies in the two-State principle granting recognition to a homeland for the Palestinian people, millions of whom were displaced during the creation of Israel in 1948 and after the 1967 war. The timing may seem awkward right now when war wounds are still being tended but international diplomacy would have to get cracking for any progress to be made in initiating talks on the right of the Palestinians to a homeland in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It stands to reason that the economic blockade of Gaza must end in any fair solution and the return of the displaced to Jerusalem and other Palestinian territories must be considered though it is hugely complicated.

There is no pretending that the Hamas, voted to power in Gaza in 2006 over the

moderate Fatah, are not an impediment to peace in their fanatical belief in "intifada". What happens from here would, however, be subject to how much the US is prepared to back any plan in which the state of Israel, whose right to existence is not in question anymore, may have to compromise in recognising a Palestinian homeland and if it seeks to live in peace.

### Live-in ties: Courts confused?

The contradictory positions taken by the Punjab and Haryana High Court on live-in relationships could send confusing signals to the people who see constitutional courts as their last refuge in their pursuit of justice. A week ago, two benches of the High Court rejected the pleas of couples who approached it seeking protection from their relatives who do not approve of their relationships. The judges were of the opinion that such relationships are "morally and socially unacceptable" and that they could "disturb society's moral fabric". A week later, a third bench has now extended state protection to a couple holding that an individual has the right to formalise the relationship with the partner through marriage or to adopt the non-formal approach of a live-in relationship. The right to life and liberty the Constitution guarantees includes the right of an individual to full development of one's potential in accordance with one's choice, and for such purpose, one is entitled to choose a partner of choice, the court held.

The Preamble of our Constitution upholds the idea of liberty, which forms the bedrock of a democracy, and it is the job of the state to frustrate attempts of all forces that seek to undermine that eternal value. The executive branch of the government, which is a product of contemporary politics, could fail to uphold it but the judiciary, which is led by the Constitution and constitutional morality, canno afford to do so. In fact when the court failed the first two applicants, it failed the Constitution, too. This is unacceptable.

The Supreme Court recently came out with detailed guidelines for all courts that try sexual assault cases, asking for extreme sensitivity on the part of the judges. It is time the apex court considered coming out with another set of guidelines for considering cases such as live-in relationships. Subjective interpretation of constitutional principles and citizen rights reflects weakness of the judiciary; the earlier it corrects itself, the better.

#### THE ASIAN AGE

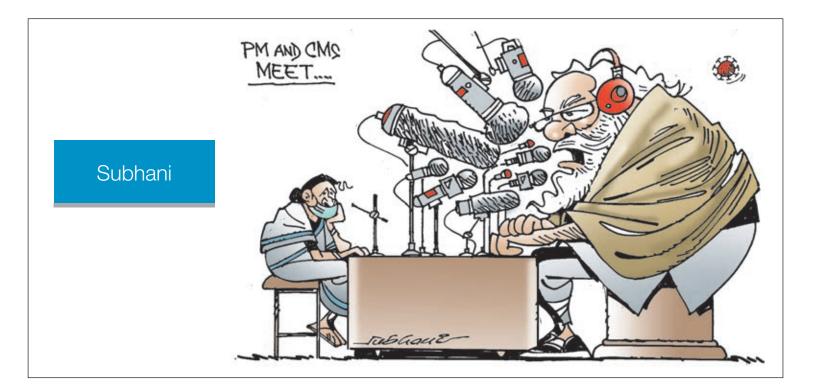
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# The rise of anti-science as Covid-19 cases exploding



Patralekha Chatteriee

**Dev 360** 

has familiar face. Cach one of us knows someone who has died of Covid-19 and someone whose life has been gutted. There is fear. There is uncertainty as we grapple with a ferocious second wave. India's coronavirus tally has crossed 25 million. More than 2,87,122 are

But this has not led to a push for pro-science politics that prioritises evidence-based medicine in these troubled times. Quite the opposite, in fact.

In Meerut, a politician from the ruling BJP has been walking down the streets, blowing a conch shell, and performing a "havan" which he claims will stop the spread of the virus. Behind him, there are people and a bicycle cart with a heap of combustible material, and billowing clouds of smoke. Gopal Das Sharma, the politician, is not one who Between blowing conch shells and rallying the faithful, he found time to tell one news channel: "We have mixed 'havan' material with cow dung cakes and ghee of desi cow, stems of the mango tree, camphor, etc. to stop the spread of the corona, purification of the environment, increase the oxygen level in the atmosphere and kill the dangerous virus from the

atmosphere. Pragya Singh Thakur, another BJP politician who represents Bhopal in Parliament, has been telling people to consume gau mutra (cow urine) of a desi (Indian) cow to fight lung infections, and plant trees like peepal and tulsi to prevent oxygen shortage.

These are only two of the most recent illustrations of anti-science. Who can forget the Coronil fiasco?

Many of us are tempted to view all this as fodder for mirth and merriment in these bleak times. But

at large is the reopening of the insides

of pubs. Two weeks or so ago, you

could, with social distancing, sit in the

gardens of pubs or at tables on the pave-

ments outside them, but from last week

As the first wave of the plague reced-

ed, chancellor of the exchequer Rishi

Sunak announced a scheme to induce

people to eat out at restaurants by

(hurrah!) you can drink at the bar.

it's no longer that funny. Kishorechandra Wangkhem, a journalist from Imphal, Manipur, was recently booked under the stringent National Security Act for a comment on the social media. Wangchem, media reports said, wrote "cow dung and cow urine did not work" in

cumbed to Covid-19. India's scientific community has been worried about anti-science politics for some time now, but it's also important to recognise that statements which strike many of us as ludicrous and outright dangerous in the time of a pandemic resonate among a ages it? sizeable section of the

Indian public. These sentiments and views are not totally novel. What is new is their growing social acceptability. That is, in part, linked to the kind of politics on the rise across the country. Earlier, what was not in muhlic can be said now, with scant consequences.

the wake of the death of a

local BJP leader who suc-

What is happening in India is part of a global trend. Experts have noted that the rise of populism and the emergence of antiscience politics are occurring simultaneously in many places, raising questions about their possible connection. Many analysts see this as

a natural fallout of the populists' dislike for science because science is meant be evidence-based, objective and demands proof of statements, and it clashes with populist politics which relies greatly on emotion and fears that resonate with a lot of people.

"Anti-science emerged as a dominant and highly lethal force, and one that threatens global security, as much as do terrorism and nuclear proliferation," wrote Peter Hotez, in a recent Scientific American article. Hotez, a vaccine scien-

These sentiments and views are not totally novel. What is new is their growing social acceptability.

tist at the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, is the author of Preventing the Next Pandemic: Vaccine Diplomacy in a Time of Anti-Science. "We must mount a counteroffensive and build new infrastructure to combat anti-science, just as we have for these other more widely recognised and established threats," he said.

How exactly does one do that? Do scientists need to ask themselves if they can do a better job of communicating the need for rational thought in places where large numbers of people do not have a scientific temper nor a political leadership which encour-

Dr Soumyadeep Bhaumik, a medical doctor affiliated to George Institute for Global Health, India, who focuses on research evidence for informing policy, practice and public debate, stresses the need for redefining science communication.

all scient that scientists should engage in science communication, make time and effort to do so... They (scientists) need to promote rationalism and engage with their local communities. Globally, a big problem in science is obscure metrics which have no meaning, are easy-to-game and are used to evaluate scientists - number of research papers, number of citations, number of patents, etc. This needs to change. The current principal scientific adviser has started talking about science communication but hardcore investments are required.

A pandemic is a new, unfamiliar phenomenon for most people. "This means that people are scared automatically. A lot of people are ready to try new things and believe new things, which they probably ordinarily won't. A lot of opportunistic people use this -- to earn

mediocre science as solutions. The government needs a very active communication plan which works to fight misinformation. The majority in India is still not on the Internet... and for the Gov-ernment of India, posting things on the social media is not enough ... One needs

greater relevance. Which brings one back to the question — what does one do if the political lead-ership itself chooses to overlook public state-ments which are blatantly anti-science? And how does one advocate for rational thought in a soci-ety where faith holds the

to engage with communi-

ties." says Dr Bhaumik.

Science communication, he says, should be done in

regional languages for

trump card? There is no short and easy answer. But one must continue to call out pseudo-science, and one must do that in a language and idiom that is accessible to people in this country.

Perhaps India's successful fight against polio offers a lesson. It was not just the vaccine that did it. was consistent communication with communities and engagement with a wide array of influ-encers. This included religious leaders.

During the battle against polio, vaccine resistance had varied from the overt to the covert in several districts. I remember several conversations with polio vaccine-refusers. Many were from marginalised communities who had never really had access to other basic services, such as clean water. They were wary of the vaccine and were easily manipulated into believing absurd con-

spiracy theories.

However, eventually, even the vaccine refusers became acceptors. The came through sustained efforts which mostly focused on communities. We need to remember that.

> The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee @gmail.com.

#### **LETTERS**

#### **HEROIC SITTING**

A bench of Justices S.J. Kathawalla and S.P. Tavade of the Bombay high court have reportedly sat for over 12 hours from 10.45 am to 11.15 pm on Wednesday to hear cases many of which demanded urgent attention. Unbelievable indeed. Their endurance for sitting over 12 hours is admirable. Eighty matters are said to have been heard. It goes to the credit of Justice Kathawalla that in May 2018, just a day before vacation, he had sat till 3.30 am after the working hours. Agreeably and admittedly, this cannot be possible for anyone to do daily. If all the judges sit for eight hours per day to hear the cases, the pendency of cases will vanish to a substantial extent.

#### K.V. Seetharamaiah Hassan, Karnataka

### **ADIEU, BAHUGUNA**

THE PASSING AWAY of Sundarlal Bahuguna, India's noted environmentalist who ushered in the famous Chipko Movement, on Friday due to lovid-19 is shocking sciousness of the people and the gov-ernment about the dire consequences of deforestation and how harmonic living can ensure a healthier tomorrow, he began foot marches along the hilly regions, stretching over thousands of kilometres. RIP.

Sankar Paul Chakdaha, West Bengal

#### **SECOND SHOT**

INDIAN EVES ARE all set to script history when they take on the Australian women's team in their maiden day-night Test from September 30 to October 3 at Perth. which hasn't hosted a pink ball Test yet. India last played a Test "Down Under" in 2006. The pink-ball Test between the two countries will be only the second such match to be held in the history of women's cricket. The only day/night women's game played between Australia and England in Sydney in November 2017 failed to produce a result.

N.J. Ravi Chander

Bengaluru

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Farrukh Dhondy Cabbages &

In BoJo's UK, it's

okay to hug now.

But if cases spurt,

fresh ban looms...



"If the last shall be the first What happens to in-betweens? This is the sort of question I asked When I was in my teens, But now that I'm a man And put away childish thoughts And spend my time in wondering What happens if crosses are noughts?"

— From Kaaley Koo Aagey Dhuklo by Bachchoo

ne world awaits, with bated breath, the results of the triumph of sense and science over nature. The PM of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, one BoJo, says he is "following the science" and attempting to restore the country in measured steps to something like normality. All manner of measures and the suspension of suspensions have been announced — six people from two different households can now meet indoors; barber shops or hairdressing saloons can reopen; so can

promising to pay half the bill or something. People did go to restaurants as a result and the hospitality industry got a boost — but so did the Covid plague. Triumph of ingenuity to the defeat of foresight. Take a bow Rishi, or maybe even take the knee, as proportionately more black people died as a result of the second wave. But the UK government remained keen on currying favour, so to speak. They have now allowed the opening of restaurants and at last I can go to the Star of India or the Taj Mahal and

— er, maybe not! And in the move towards being the cuddly, loveable government, BoJo has announced the crowning measure Perhaps most popular with the public of opening up Britain. Yes folks, from

enjoy a Bangladeshi version of Dhan

the middle of last week people are allowed to hug each other! Gentle reader, this is not another instance of my warped humour — it's

absolutely true. This great democracy has taken to legislating for when its citizens can hug each other. It's not compulsory. One doesn't have to hug every person one passes in

the street, but it now permits grandparents to embrace their grandchil-

My impression is that different cultures have distinct attitudes towards hugging. I've always thought that Russians and Indian politicians who regard themselves as equals went in for a brotherly hug. As soon as BoJo announced this advance in British freedoms, some commentators in the press protested that they were averse to hugging anyone as it was not acceptable in British culture. One writer even went on to say that where she came from in the north of England, if a gentleman unwittingly hugged her mother in greeting, her father would have assaulted the miscreant and perhaps killed him. A bit severe and perhaps not quite the truth — but then we columnists have our peyt ki puja to

All through the pandemic year, I have thought that the typical Indian greetings and ways of showing love or respect were the safest. So instead of knocking elbows I have resorted to a simple namaste with folded hands. I don't at my age do it myself, but I find the practice of touching an elder's feet and drawing energy from their aura or magnetic field or whatever, would stop you kissing them on both cheeks and inviting a leap of viral infection.

Hugging has, through history, been symbolic of sealing a deal. Traditional enemies come to an agreement and seal it with a hug. I can't be sure, but I think years ago I saw, on film, Richard Nixon hugging Deng Xiaoping — or perhaps it was Khrushchev and Nehru or someone.

Myself? I have always been wary of sealing a deal with an erstwhile enemy with a hug because very early in life the history books told me the story of the Maratha hero Shivaji hugging his enemy, the unwary Afzal Khan, and digging a metal waag nukh into his lung and ripping him apart.

And some part of me has, I must admit, been more inclined to kissi than to koti, but depending on the halitosis and the bulk and body odour of the opposite number, I am partial to an indulgence in both. One waits for the British government to lift the ban on

But enough confession. Every day BoJo's office issues warnings that the relaxation of restrictions and lockdown caveats will be constantly reviewed. There is more than a hint in these communiques that, depending on the statistics of deaths and the spread of fresh infections, this may even result in a reversal of liberties. The "Indian variant" of Covid-19, as it's now universally known, has reportedly spread through 80 British "councils" (municipalities) and "the science" is still trying to determine whether the vaccines we have can stop it generating a third wave. This science tells us that it is more virulent and spreads faster than its uncles, the original, South African or Kent "variant"

The nation watches this space in trepidation. Will the pubs shut again? Will hugging be banned?













### **TAIWAN 'GROSSLY INTERFERED' IN OUR AFFAIRS: HK**

Hong Kong: Hong Kong's government on Friday said it has pulled all of its staff out of Taiwan and accused the island's government of having "grossly interfered" in the semi-autonomous Chinese semi-autonomous city's internal affairs.

It said the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office will remain closed while it closely monitors developments and considers the way forward "in a holistic man-ner." Relations between the sides have deteriorated in recent years as Beijing tightens its control over Hong Kong and ratchets up diplomatic, military and economic pressure on Taiwan, a self-govern-ing democracy China claims as its own territory, to be brought under its control by

The future of Taiwan's de facto consulate in Hong Kong, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, also appears bleak, with Hong Kong refusing to issue visas to several of its officials, reportedly because they refused to sign declarations endorsing Beijing's contention that Taiwan belongs to China.

#### **BOMB TARGETING ISLAMIST LEADER KILLS 6 IN PAK**

**Quetta:** Six people were killed and several others were wounded on Friday when a powerful roadside exploded near a vehicle carrying a local leader of an Islamist political party in Pakistan, police and a government spokesman said.

It was unclear who was behind the attack in Chaman, a town in the southwestern

Baluchistan province. Local police chief Abdul Bashir said the attack took place when Abdul Qadir, a local leader of a faction of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party, was on his way to attend a rally in support of the Palestinian people.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack and police said they were still investigating. Liaquat Shahwani, a spokesman for the provincial government in Baluchistan, tweeted a condemnation of the blast. It came as Pakistanis across the country were gathering for anti-Israel rallies.

#### **PAK BUYS DILIP, RAJ ANCESTRAL HOMES FOR RS 2.30 CR**

Peshawar: Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial gov ernment has handed over ₹2.30 crore to Peshawar's Deputy Commissioner for purchasing the ancestral houses of legendary Bollywood actors Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor located in the heart of this city to convert them into museums.

The amount was released to the Deputy Commissioner by the Archaeology Department as final notices were issued to the owners of both the historic buildings for their procure

The DC Peshawar is in close contacts with the owners to find out an amicable settlement hampering the process of taking over custody of the buildings by the government authorities. Director Archaeology KPK Abdus Samad said the government would take custody of both the houses shortly and would start work to restore the structures in its original shape.

### Japanese Freed FROM MYANMAR: **INMATES ABUSED**

Tokyo: A Japanese journalist who was freed from a Myanmar prison said on Friday that military and police interrogators repeatedly asked him about his friends, clients and made-up allegations.

Yuki Kitazumi, a freelance journalist and a former reporter for Japan's Nikkei business news, also said other inmates told him about abuses they suffered at the hands of authorities, including repeated beatings during nonstop,

dayslong interrogations. Kitazumi was detained at Yangon's notorious Insein prison for a month before his release and return to Japan last week. He was arrested by authorities while in the country covering the aftermath of the February's military coup and accused of offenses including violating the terms

of his visa. The ruling military junta said he was released as a gesture of friendship toward

# Israel, Hamas opt for truce after 11 days

Toll crosses 240 in deadly escalation before global pressure to end violence in volatile region

Jerusalem, May 21: Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas have agreed to a ceasefire. bringing to an end 11 days of bombardment, the heaviest flare-up since the 2014 Gaza War, that has left over 240 people dead and threatened to destabilise the volatile region.

The ceasefire, which followed mounting pressure from the US, Egypt and other international brokers to halt the violence, came into effect on Friday.

The Israeli Security Cabinet voted to accept the ceasefire late Thursday as the Israeli south and Gaza remain

The Security Cabinet unanimously agreed to a unanimously agreed to a
"mutual and unconditional" cessation of hostilities, according to a statement from Prime
Minister Benjamin
Netanyahu's Office.
"The political leadership emphasised that reality on the ground is what
will determine if the cam-

will determine if the campaign continues or not, the statement said.

Netanyahu did however inform the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) to prepare for a scenario in which Hamas did not respond to Egypt's ceasefire offer.

Celebratory demonstra-tions took place in the Gaza Strip and West Bank as well, following the ceasefire.

Fireworks, singing, and parades down the streets could be seen in uploaded videos on social media. Both Israel and Hamas

have claimed victory in the conflict that has left over 240 people, including an Indian caregiver in Israel, dead.

Soumya Santosh, 30, was killed in a rocket attack by Palestinian mil-

itants from Gaza. Santosh, who hailed from Kerala's Idukki district, worked as a caregiver attending to an old woman at a house in the southern Israeli coastal city of Ashkelon.

President Egyptian Abdel Fattah al-Sisi thanked US President Joe Biden for his role in the success of the Egyptian brokered ceasefire Israel and between

He added that both see the urgency in managing the conflict between the parties through diplomacy. Biden hailed the ceasesayıng Palestinians and Israelis deserve to live safely.

the "I believe the Palestinians and Israelis equally deserve to live safely and securely and to enjoy equal measures of freedom, prosperity, and democracy. My administration will continue our quiet, relentless diploma- Israel," he said.



Israeli security forces and Palestinian Muslim worshippers clash in Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound, the third holiest site of Islam, on Friday. Fresh clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police broke out at Jerusalem's Al-Agsa mosque compound today, in the latest unrest at the sensitive religious site police said.

CELEBRATORY **DEMONSTRATIONS** took place in the Gaza Strip and West Bank as well, following the ceasefire. Fireworks, singing, and parades down the streets could be seen in uploaded videos on social media.

cy toward that end. I believe we have a genuine opportunity to make progress and I'm committed to working for it,'

Biden said on Thursday. He said the US is committed to working with the United Nations to provide rapid humanitarian assistance for the people of Gaza.

"We remain committed to working with the United Nations and other ers to provide rapid humanitarian assistance and to marshal international support for the people of Gaza and the Gazan reconstruction efforts,'

Biden told reporters that he spoke with Egy-ptian President Al-Sisi and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. "In my conversation with Netanyahu, I commended him for the decision to bring the current hostilities to a close in less than 11 days. also emphasised I've said throughout this conflict--the United States fully supports Israel's right to defend itself against indiscriminate Hamas and other Gazabased terrorist groups that have taken the lives of innocent civilians in



Palestinian supporters of the Hamas movement celebrate after a ceasefire brokered by Egypt between Hamas and Israel, in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Stip, on

### UN: Gaza has significant trauma, medical needs

World Health Organisation has tallied "significant trauma needs" in infrastructure was imped-Palestinian areas, where at least 243 people have been killed during 11 days of fighting between Palestinians and Israelis. WHO spokeswoman Margaret Harris said a total of 8,538 people had been injured across Palestinian areas during the violence, and 30 health facilities in Gaza had been damaged — with one clinic fully destroyed and Committee of the Red

another sustaining significant damage.
She said damage to

ing the access of ambu-

The comments to a UN briefing in Geneva came humanitarian workers assessed the fallout from the latest fighting between Hamas militant fighters and Israeli forces. Fabrizio Carboni, regional director for the Near and Middle East at the International

were "several hundred" pieces of unexploded ordnance strewn about in Gaza and said medical supplies were a pressing

Matthias Schmale, Gaza director for UNRWA, the UN aid agency for Palestinian refugees, cited a "window" of several hours on Friday during which aid and supplies could be brought in through the Kerem Shalom crossing point

### Gazans return to assess damage amidst ceasefire

Gaza City, Palestinian Territories, May 2 1 : Thousands of displaced Gazans started going back to their homes to check for damage and

mal life on Friday after a ceasefire appeared to take hold following 11 days of deadly fighting. In Jerusalem, Israeli police cracked down on

Israelis returned to nor-

stone-throwing protesters, an *AFP* journalist and Israeli police said, two weeks after similar events led to the violent escalation between both

Prime Netanyahu Benjamin said Israel's bombing campaign of Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip was an "exceptional success", after the enclave's Islamist rulers Hamas had claimed "vic-

In Gaza, thousands of Palestinians trickled out of the schools were they had taken shelter, a UN official said, while the civil defence said it was working with what little means it had to remove the rubble and rescue any

said the Israeli military destroyed his home in Gaza Čity in an air strike on Monday.

"We don't have another home. I will live in a tent on top of the rubble of my home until it is it re-built," the father of five

Raed al-Dahshan, deputy head of Gaza's civil defence, said authorities were "continuing to look for the missing under the debris".

Palestinians honked their horns and some fired shots in the air minutes after the truce started, while in the occupied West Bank, joyful crowds also took to the streets.

With no alerts sounding in Israel to warn of incoming Hamas rockets, calm reigned across much of the Jewish state with people heading to outdoor cafes in Tel Aviv.

The truce brokered by Egypt, that also included Gaza's second-most pow-Islamic Jihad, was agreed following mounting international pressure to stem the bloodshed. -AFP

### Indonesia irked by Israel strikes

Jakarta, May 21: More than a thousand Muslims rallied outside the U.S. Embassy in Indonesia's capital on Friday to denounce American support for Israel and demand an end to Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip.

The protesters marched from several mosques after Friday prayers to a major street outside the embassy, which was under heavy police guard. They halted traffic along the way as they chanted "Allahu Akbar," or "God is Great," and "Save Palestinians.

Authorities with loudspeakers warned protesters to maintain social distancing during demonstration, organised by the Islamic Student Association and several other groups, to prevent the spread of the Covid. More than 3,000 police,

many wearing hazmat

marched from several mosques after Friday prayers to a major street outside the embassy, which was under heavy police guard.

suits, were deployed to secure the embassy and the nearby presidential palace Nations Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslimmajority nation, does not have formal diplomatic relations with Israel and there is no Israell emb assy in the country. It has long been a strong supporter of the Palesti-nians, and President Joko Widodo has condemned the Israeli airstrikes.

Media reports said similar protests were held Friday in at least 10 provincial capitals and cities across Indonesia. — AP

### Moon to nudge **Biden for North Korea diplomacy**

**Washington,** May 21: has yet to detail what its South Korean President third-way effort to try to Moon Jae-in hopesWhite meeting with President Joe Biden will lead to renewed diplomatic urgency by the US on curbing North Korea's nuclear programme. The White House, how-

ever, is signaling that it is taking a longer view on one of the most difficult foreign policy challenges Biden faces. Ahead of Friday's meet-

ing — just the second inperson foreign leader session for Biden because of the coronavirus pandemic — White House officials said North Korea will be a central focus of talks. Coordination on vaccine distribution, climate change and regional security concerns spurred by China are also high on the

president's list. The White House announced last month that it had completed a review of North Korea policy and that Biden would veer from the strategies of his two most recent predecessors, rejecting both Donald Trump's deeply personal effort to win over North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Barack Obama's more hands-off approach.

But the administration

prod the North to abandon its nuclear program will look like. Moon, who will leave office next May, is eager to resume stalled talks between Washington and Pyongyang and between Seoul Pyongyang. But the Biden administration — which confirmed in March that it had made outreach efforts to the North without suc-- has been less enthusiastic about the idea of direct negotiations

in the near term. Asked at Thursday's White House briefing whether Biden was open to holding direct talks with Kim, as Trump did twice, press secretary Jen Psaki demurred. "I don't expect that to be top on his agenda," she said of Biden. Still, Moon has made clear he plans to nudge Biden to renew diplomatic efforts with the North. "I will not be pressed by time or become impatient during the remainder of my term. However, if there is an opportunity to restart the clock of peace and advance the peace process on the Korean Peninsula, I will do everything I

can," Moon said.

Russia after President Joe Biden opted not to punish the company overseeing a Russia-Germany pipeline project that Washington opposes. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline has been an irri-

tant in relations between the US and Germany for years. Washington, which has battled to block it, argues that the pipeline now 95% complete — threatens European energy security, heightens Russia's influence and

Berlin, May 21: Chancellor Angela Merkel said

Thursday that Germany

will discuss "necessary

common ground" with the

US on relations with



Angela Merkel

poses risks to Ukraine and Poland in bypassing both countries

On Wednesday, the Biden administration imposed sanctions on Russian companies and ships for their work on the pipeline, but Biden angered many

Republican lawmakers by opting not to punish Nord Stream 2 AG, the company overseeing the project. Waiving penalties regarding ally Germany was "in line with our commitment to strengthen our Transatlantic relation-ships as a matter of national security," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a state-

Merkel said on Thursday that "President Biden has now taken a step toward us in connection with the Nord Stream 2 conflict, where we have different views but where we will now talk further about mon ground is in the relationship with Russia.

Speaking at an event organised by German broadcaster WDR in Berlin, she didn't elaborate on that common ground. Asked what Biden will get from Germany or Europe for waiving sanc-Merkel replied: tions, "Look, that's not how it works.

Merkel added that she and Biden will soon see each other at Group of Seven and NATO meetings. She noted that she and Armin Laschet, her party's candidate to succeed her after Germany's Sept. 26 election, advocate

Germany to discuss Russian ties with US Germany's defense spend-"We will have to speak about Russia and Ukraine policy, and of course about China poli-

cy," she said. 'But this isn't measured in millimeters and grams
— partnerships are based on trying to react to the other's thought processes and positions in order to find good compromises.' Nord Stream 2 is owned by Russian state company Gazprom, with investment from several European companies. Domestic critics in Germany including Laschet's main opponent in the elec-

### **NEW | TECH | Sense of touch drastically improves functionality of prosthetics**

### Mind control arm restores touch

**Washington, May 21:** Imagine being able to control a robotic arm from a distance, using only your mind. Now imagine being able to feel when its fingers grasp an object, as though it were your own

US researchers published a study in the jour-nal Science on Thursday about the world's first brain-computer interface that allowed a volunteer with paralysis from the chest down to accomplish this very feat. The team say their work demonstrates that adding a sense of touch drastically improves the functionality of prosthetics for quadriplegics, compared to having them rely on visual cues alone. "I am the first human in the world to have implants in the sensory cortex that they can use to stimulate my brain directly," Nathan

"And then I feel as if a sensation is coming from

Copeland, 34, said.

my actual hand.'

In 2004, Copeland was in a car accident that left him with a serious spinal cord injury and without the use of his hands or his legs. He volunteered to partic-

ipate in scientific research, and six years ago underwent a major operation to have tiny electrodes implanted in his brain. Two sets of 88 electrodes the width of a strand of hair are arranged into "arrays" hair are

that resemble tiny hair-

brushes and penetrate deep into the brain's motor cortex, which directs movement.

Fewer than 30 people in the world have these kinds of implants, the study's colead author Rob Gaunt, an assistant professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Pittsburgh, said. What's unique about Copeland is an additional set of electrodes that are connected to his somatosensory cortex, which receives and processes sensations.

'When we're grabbing objects, we use this sense of touch very naturally to improve our ability to control," explained Gaunt.

The team developed an interface that is "bi-directional" — meaning not only can it "read" instructions from the brain and send them to the artificial limb, it can also "write" sensations from the device and transmit them back.







# # FINANCIAL

# Chronicle

# quick BITES

INDICATO	RS	%
Sensex	50,540.48	1.97
Nifty 50	15,175.30	1.81
S&P 500*	4,156.10	-0.07
Dollar (₹)	72.83	0.38
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.53	0.28
Euro (₹)	89.06	0.03
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,995▲119	0.24
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	66.47	2.09
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.977	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.635	0.001
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

### **RBI** fixes gold bond issue price at ₹4,842/gram

The issue price for the second tranche of the sovereign gold bond issue has been fixed at Rs 4,842 per gram, the Reserve Bank of India said. The Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2021-22 - Series II or the second tranche will be open for subscription from May 24 to 28. Investors applying online and making payment through digital mode will get a discount of Rs 50 per gram. For them the price will be Rs 4,792 per gram.

### US proposes 15% minimum tax on global corp. profit



The US Treasury Department said it supports a global mini-mum corporate tax rate of at least 15 per cent, below the 21 per cent minimum it has been seeking to impose on the foreign profits of US-based companies. The offer comes as the OECD and the G-20 economies seek an agreement on a minimum corporate tax rate, as countries compete with each other to cut tax rates and lure multinational companies.

### Pawan Goenka, Bijapurkar to join Sun board

appointment of Pawan Goenka, former MD of Mahindra and Mahindra, and management consultant Rama Bijapurkar as additional independent directors with effect from May 21. Goenka retired as the MD and CEO of M&M on April 2. He is currently chairman of the board of governors of IIT Madras and IIT Bombay. Bijapurkar has a management consulting practice and works across sectors.

### MSN Labs to sell posaconazole for black fungus

MSN Laboratories announced the launch of posaconazole in India under the brand name PosaOne as 100 mg delayed release tablets & 300 mg injections, respectively. Posaconazole is a triazole antifungal agent indicated for treating mucormycosis patients. MSN has developed the active pharmaceutical ingredient and the formulation of PosaOne in its in-house R&D and manufactur-

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The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited. ■ Board okays dividend that exceeds Budget estimate

# RBI to bolster govt coffers by ₹99K cr

**FALAKNAAZ SYED** MUMBAI, MAY 21

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday approved paying Rs 99,122 crore as dividend to the central government for the accounting period of nine months ended March 31, 2021. The dividend is likely to alleviate some burden off the government's shoulder at a time when the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has hit government finances. The government is staring at an extra-ordinary fiscal deficit target of 6.8 percent in 2021-22 (April-March), higher than the usual 3.5 percent.

The central bank is mandated by the RBI Act 1934 to transfer surplus funds or balance profits to the government. The RBI earns its profits primarily from the interest it gets from the purchase and sale of government securities, the interest earned from lending to banks and an interest earned on bond holdings earned on open market principles.

The dividend is substantially higher than the budgeted surplus transfer of Rs 53,500 crore by the RBI the nationalised banks for FY22 and Rs 57,130 crore by the RBI for FY21. The central bank recently switched to an April-March fiscal year from July-to-June previously, and the payment this time around is for a nine-month period. Since fiscal accounting is cashbased, the dividend trans-



### Market sees dividend driving stimulus, Sensex gains 975 pts

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MAY 21

after two straight sessions of losses on Friday, gaining close to 2 per cent to register the best weekly gain since February on lower daily Covid cases and the RBI deciding to transfer Rs 99,122 crore surplus as dividend to Government of India, triggering hopes of fresh

The Sensex gained 975 points, or 1.97 per cent to close at 50,540, largely due to heavy gains in banks and financials. The Niftypoints, or 1.81 per cent. The broader market

FY22 for the Centre. "While we await the detailed document to gauge the sources of higher RBI income and thus transfers, it needs to be seen if they used the

underperformed gains of less than one per cent each for BSE Mid-cap (0.82 per cent) and Small-

cap (0.65 per cent) indices.

Banks and financials gained the most during the week with the BSE Bankex gaining 7.34 per cent, followed by BSE Auto (5.15 per cent) compared to gains for the Sensex (3.71 per cent) and the Nifty-50 (3.39 per cent). On Friday SBI's fourth performance announcement investors' sentiments towards bank and financial stocks.

FPIs were net buyers of equities worth Rs 510.16 and domestic institutions, by Rs 649.10 crore.

revaluation reserves in order to pay higher dividend. Nonetheless, this is definitely a relief for the government on revenue front whose finances would soon come under

pressure amid: (1) Fears of delayed execution of ambitious divestment target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore, (2) Higher possible doles payouts than budgeted on food, fertiliser subsidy and NREGA, and (3) Also possible fading of the positive upside surprises of fiscal tax buffers on account of modestly budgeted indirect taxes," said Madhavi Arora, lead economist at Emkay Global. "Given the strengthened

domestic assets and record foreign reserves that RBI holds, we feel that there might be another round of special divi-dend in case of additional requirement in future due to the uncertain environment," said Mohit Nigam, head of portfolio management services at Hem Securities, a domestic stock brokerage house.

The decision to transfer the surplus to the central government was taken at the meeting of the Central Board of Directors of RBI. Board of Directors of RBI.

The meeting was held through video conferencing. The RBI Board, according to the press release, also reviewed the current economic situation clobal and domestic. tion, global and domestic challenges and recent policy measures taken by the Reserve Bank to mitigate the adverse impact of the second wave of COVID-19 on the economy.

During the meeting, the board, headed by governor Shaktikanta Das, also "approved the Annual Report and accounts of the Reserve Bank for the

### Internet **Explorer to** retire in **June 2022**

Washington, May 21: Microsoft has said that it is retiring its long-stand ing browser Internet Explorer on June 15 next year after serving the netizens for over 25

The web browser was released with Windows 95, the tech giant said in a blog Wednesday. post

The Internet Explorer 11 desktop application will be retired and go out of support on June 15, 2022, for certain versions of Windows 10. Sean Lyndersay, a Microsoft Edge programme man ager said while commenting on the decision

"The future of Internet Explorer on Windows 10 is in Microsoft Edge. Not only is Microsoft Edge a faster, more secure and more modern browsing experience Internet Explorer, but it is also able to address a key concern: compatibility for older, legacy web-

sites and applications. "Microsoft Edge has Internet Explorer mode (IE mode) built in, so you can access those legacy Internet Explorer-based websites and applica-tions straight from Microsoft Edge," Lyndersay said. Internet Explorer mode in Microsoft Edge will be supported till at least 2029, the blog post said. On its debut in 1995, Internet Explorer became an instant hit. It killed off Netscape Navigator, and achieved a virtual monopoly in the early 2000s.

### SBI to create ₹10K cr Covid book for healthcare & pharma

FC BANKING BUREAU

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI), is planning to create a Covid-19 loan book of Rs 10,000 crore for the domestic healthcare and pharma sector. The country's leading vaccine makers Bharat Biotech, Biological E have already received creditlines from the lender.

"The Covid book that is expected to be created under the recent guide-lines that have come from the RBI on May 5, we are quite upbeat on this particular sector. We will certainly support this sector. We have some plans and have come out with some schemes which we will be rolling out as of now. As of now we have observed that the pharma sector is of course cash rich...Rs 10,000 crore of Covid portfolio we want to create," said Dinesh Khara, chairman SBI while announcing the bank's Q4 earnings.

Given the widespread resurgence in Covid-19 infections across the country, the RBI this month announced an on-tap liquidity window of Rs 50,000 crore, with a tenor of up to three years, that can be provided by banks for lending support to entities such as hospitals, diagnostics, pharmacies, pharmaceutical companies or importers, medical oxygen manufacturers and suppliers and other operators involved in the crit-



ical healthcare supply chain. This has been done to ease the liquidity position and financial constraints being faced by these emergency healthcare providers, consequent to the significantly higher load on these entities in the recent weeks.

Meanwhile, the lender registered a net profit of Rs 6,451 crore in Q4FY21 as compared to Rs 3,581 crore in Q4FY20, an increase of 80 per cent on lower provisions, stable asset quality and other income. Sequentially the net profit increased by

24.14 per cent.
SBI continued to be resilient by containing asset quality within guidance. Total slippages and restructuring for FY21 was at Rs 46,416 crore, within the guidance of Rs 60,000 crore. The provision buffer stood at Rs 25,376 crore, including Covid related provision of Rs 6,346 crore. Gross NPA saw a decline of 45 basis points QoQ to 4.98 per cent from 5.44 per cent. Net interest income grew by 18.8 per cent YoY and declined 6 per cent QoQ.

### IGST on imported O2 concentrators unconstitutional:HC

New Delhi, May 21: The subject to his depositing Delhi High Court Friday with the court an amount held as"unconstitutional, the imposition of integrated goods and services tax (IGST) by the Centre on import of oxygen concentrators by individuals for personal use.

A bench of Justices Rajiv Shakdher and Talwant Singh quashed the May 1 notification issued by the Ministry of Finance, which says that such oxygen concentrators imported for personal use, irrespective of whether they are a gift or otherwise, will be charged with an IGST of 12 per cent.

The court said the individuals will have to give an undertaking to the authorities that the oxygen concentrator is being imported for personal use and not

commercial use. The HC verdict came on a plea challenging imposition of IGST on the import of oxygen concentrators as gift for personal use.

The court, which had earlier directed that the oxygen concentrator being imported by the 85-year-old petitioner be released by the customs authorities, with the court an amount equivalent to the IGST payable, said the money be released to the man with accrued interest.

It had earlier issued notice and sought response of the Centre on the petition by the senior citizen, who was suffering from Covid-19, He had said his nephew sent an oxygen concentrator for him as a gift from the US to ameliorate his condition.

The petitioner had challenged imposition of IGST on import of oxygen concentrators for personal use, as the essential equipment is already in shortage in the country during the pandemic.

The plea said the May 1 notification was violative of Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution since the same is arbitrary and infringes the right to life of patients reeling under the Covid-19 pandemic.

It said the notification unconstitutionally mandates that the petitioner and other similarly placed Indian citizens to pay IGST on something as crucial as oxygen concentrator.—PTI

## HC stays ONGC tender as GMR seeks gas for its plants

New Delhi, May 21: The Delhi High Court has put on hold state-run ONGC's notice inviting tender (NIT) and the consequent e-auction with regard to sale of natural gas from its block in the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh.

A bench of Chief Justice D. N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh said a prima facie case is made out in favour of the petitionerstwo GMR group companies-and balance of convenience was also in their favour, as finalisation of the bidding would cause

irreparable loss to them. "We, therefore, stay the operation, implementation, execution and finalisation of the NIT dated April 12, 2021 as well as corrigendum to the NIT issued on April 27, 2021 and the consequent e-auction, till the next date of hearing," the bench said in its May 20 order.

With the observation the court listed on June 4 the pleas by GMR Vemagiri Power Generation Ltd and GMR Rajamundhry Energy Ltd challenging the NIT and seeking a stay **GAS OUTPUT RISES 23% AS RIL-BP** FIELDS START PRODUCTION

New Delhi, May 21: India's natural gas production jumped 22.7 per cent in April after Reliance Industries Ltd and its partner BP Plc ramped up output from their eastern offshore KG-D6 block, government data released on Friday showed.

India produced 2.65 billion cubic meters of natural gas in April, up from 2.16 bcm in the same month last year, as per the data released by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. state-owned

ONGC's production was on any new allocation or allotment of gas from the KG-basin of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

(ONGC). Under the April 12 NIT, ONGC had invited bids in respect of 2.0 million metric standard cubic metre per day (mmscmd) of gas

from its KG-basin in

Kakinada.

flat at 1.72 bcm, output from fields operated by the private sector and joint ventures tripled to 710.86 million standard cubic meters. The bulk of this came from 409.12 mmcm output from eastern offshore fields.

The data did not give individual field produc-

Reliance-BP, which in December last year started putting the second wave of gas discoveries in KG-D6 block to production, last month started output from the Satellite Cluster fields.

The companies have sought a stay on any further allocation on the ground that the Centre and ONGC failed to deliver the gas allocation assured to them.

They have also told the court that pursuance to the Centre and ONGC's assurance they have made substantial investments to

The two companies had also contended that there was a stress faced by the power sector and the of the e-auction would be that the natural gas will be supplied to the other sectors at a higher price.

They have also claimed that the auction was in complete variance with the statutory framework for allocation of coal for coal based power projects.

The two companies have also challenged a March 21, 2016 notification of the petroleum ministry that provides for forward auction—gas would be allocated to the highest bidder-and they have contended that this would be discriminatory to them.

The two companies had told the bench that if the auction was not stayed. they will be compelled to bid and participate in the e-auction for procuring allocation of the gas, which was to be allocated to them as per the assurances of the Centre and ONGC and therefore, irreparable loss and injury would be caused to

## PERFORMANCE

### **JSW STEEL PROFIT JUMPS MANIFOLD**

New Delhi, May 21: JSW Steel on Friday posted a manifold jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 4,191 crore for the quarte ended March 31, from Rs 188 crore a year ago, mainly on account of higher income. Its total income in January-March jumped to Rs 27,095 crore from Rs 18,009 crore in the year-ago period. Total expense rose to Rs 20,752 crore against Rs 17,056 crore a vear ago.

The firm said it will spend over Rs 25,000 crore on projects in Odisha, Karnataka and Jammu and Kashmir.

### **HINDALCO Q4 PAT ZOOMS TO ₹1,928 CR**

New Delhi, May 21: Hindalco Industries, the Aditya Birla Group metals flagship company, reported nearly three-fold rise in its consolidated profitafter-tax (PAT) at Rs 1,928 crore for the March 2021 quarter, from Rs 668 crore in the year-ago quarter, mainly on account of higher volumes and lower input costs. Its consolidated revenue from operations increased to Rs 40,507 crore, over Rs 29,318 crore in the year-ago peri-od. Hindalco said it "reported its best quarterly performance with consolidated PAT up 189 per

#### **SOUTH INDIAN BANK POSTS NET PROFIT**

New Delhi, May 21: South

Indian Bank (SIB) on Friday reported a net profit of Rs 6.79 crore in the fourth quarter. The private sector lender had posted a net loss of Rs 143.69 crore in the yearago quarter. The bank had reported a net loss of Rs 91.62 crore in the third quarter. Its total income during January-March 2021 fell 10.4 per cent to Rs 2,098.25 crore as against Rs 2,341.88 crore in the year-ago period.

### UNDER I WATCH Firms now have to be mindful about how space is being used & when it is being used Tech eyes to keep tabs when bankers return to work

**ELIZABETH MARSHALL MAY 21** 

Reservation systems for seats. Algorithms that say whether a location is crowded or not. Cameras to show what's happening in real-time. Trackers that let others know you are

Technology that has swept the world for con-venience, curiosity, and accountability is arriving at workstations of US bank employees, as they prepare to return to offices in coming months because of the pandemic easing, industry sources and outside vendors said.

JPMorgan Chase & Co, Goldman Sachs Group Inc, Citigroup, Deutsche Bank AG and HSBC Holdings PLC plan to have workers commute to buildings in New York and other US cities as soon as this month, after more than a year of largely work-fromhome situations.

But not everyone can return at once: banks will have to extend practices like those used for small teams of traders during the pandemic. Shifting rotations of people will pass through giant buildings on different days. without clustering in the same areas on the same including floors, to avoid spreading



Covid-19. Some of the banks are implementing systems where employees will book "hot seats" on particular days and be monitored while they are sitting at them, sources said.

In some buildings, that

could mean cameras that

monitor a room's occupan-

cy level and even sensors that tell building management whether someone is sitting at a desk. That feels a little per-

sonal," one bank employee said about desk sensors. The comment reflects a

sentiment that some banks could face as they bring in tech that monitors employees more closely after an unprecedented period of working from afar: they are okay booking dinner reservations online, sharing locations with friends, live-streaming videos or wearing activity trackers for their own health, but not necessarily okay with having their employers knowing

when they are seated at a Employees will need to

get over these hang-ups because the technology is necessary for safety and saves companies money. industry sources and consultants said.

'We have to be more mindful about how space is being used and when it is being used," said Neil Murray, CEO of corporate solutions at JLL, which offices for JPMorgan, Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs and others.

Staff returning JPMorgan's Manhattan headquarters will soon have a new app that uses

intelligence to book seats. It is part of an "optimum Pinto, JPMorgan's co-president and chief operating officer said recently. That means getting the right people together on the

right days for in-office col-

algorithms and artificial

laboration. HSBC and Deutsche also plan to launch reservation apps and online systems. While all three banks are still working out the details, apps like these can use card-swipes at security turnstiles to identify patterns and suggest when someone should book a desk to meet teammates.

### **Boxing coach**

#### **Bhardwaj no more**

New Delhi: India's first Dronacharya awardee coach in boxing, O. P. Bhardwaj, died on Friday after battling prolonged illness and age-related issues here. He was 82 and had tragically lost his wife Santosh to illhealth about 10 days ago. Bhardwaj was bestowed the highest national honour in coaching jointly with Bhalchandra Bhaskar Bhagwat (wrestling) and O. M. Nambiar (athletics), when it was introduced in 1985. Bhardwaj was India's national boxing coach from 1968 to 1989 and also served as a selector. Under his tutelage, Indian pugilists won medals at the Asian Games, the Commonwealth Games and the South Asian Games. Boxing Federation of India President Ajay Singh condoled his

#### **AFI** medical chief **loses Covid fight**

New Delhi: The Athletics Federation of India's medical commission chairman Arun Kumar Mendiratta, who was set to travel with the Indian contingent for the Tokyo Olympics, died on Friday due to Covid-19 related complications at a hos-

pital here. He was 60. The Athletics Federation of India condoled the death of Mendiratta, who was also part of the Asian Athletics Association for over

25 years. "He led AFI's relentless fight against age-fraud and doping. He was also the architect of our no-needles policy," AFI President Adille J. Sumariwalla Mendiratta was appointed as the chief medical officer by the Indian Olympic Association for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics.

### **Fielding coach**

wants fit players

New Delhi: India's women cricketers are not as athletic and strong as their foreign counterparts when it comes to running around the park and that is something fielding coach Abhay Sharma will work on extensively with them during the upcoming UK tour. Sharma, who has worked a lot with the men's India U-19 team, was with the national women's team for the first time during the home series against South Africa in March. "Overall development is needed as far as fielding is concerned. The game is changing, you have to be more athletic. Technically, work needs to be done. What I observed is that a lot of girls are struggling with their throw ing techniques," Abhay said. The Indian team is scheduled to play a Test, three ODIs and as

#### **Ronaldo to lead Portugal in Euro**

many T20s. — *PTI* 

Lisbon, Portugal: Cristiano Ronaldo will lead a talented Portugal squad that will try to defend its European Championship title. Coach Fernando Santos on Thursday announced his list of 26 players for next month's tournament, when Ronaldo will be supported by the likes of Bruno Fernandes, Bernardo Silva, Diogo Jota and Joao Felix. Also included in the Euro 2020 squad was 22-year-old Sporting Lisbon forward Pedro Goncalves, who has never played for the national team. Goncalves was key this season in helping Sporting win its first Portuguese league title since 2002. Ronaldo will be playing in his fifth straight European Championship. — AP

### **U-17 women's WC**

### in India next year

New Delhi: The U-17 women's World Cup will be held in India from October 11 to 30 next year, FIFA Council said on Thursday. India were earlier scheduled to host the 2020 U-17 World Cup but it was postponed to 2021 before being cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "The Council also approved dates for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2022 (October 11-30, 2022), FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Costa Rica 2022 (August 10-28, 2022), as well as a 14-team play-off for the FIFA Arab Cup 2021 (June 19-25,

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2021)," the governing body said.

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# Make room for IPL

### BCCI wants ECB to advance Tests, open window for rich league

**London, May 21:** The BCCI has requested England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to advance the five Test series by a week from its current August 4 start to give them a better shot at completing the remaining 31 matches of the nowpostponed Indian Premier

While no one from BCCI has officially confirmed the development, former England captain and renowned cricket writer Michael Atherton reported about the development in London's The Times.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India has enquired about the possibility of moving the final Test of the English summer in order to make room to complete the postponed Indian Premier League," the report said.

"Informal discussions have been had between the respective boards as cricket continues to grapple with a schedule ravaged by Covid," it added.

Indian team are looking at a potential gap of six weeks after the comple-tion of World Test Championship final against New which is scheduled from 18-22Southampton and start of the England series.

The five-Test series

starts with first match at Nottingham (August 4-8), followed by Lord's (August 12-16), Leeds (August 25-29), Oval (September 2-6) and Manchester (September 10-14).

However, a potential start in the last week of July, with lesser gaps between the Tests would open the entire month of September in which BCCI can complete the IPL either in ŪK or more likely in the UAE. Atherton further wrote that ECB's own calendar as well as those hosting counties, which have already sold tickets would be in a fix with this request from the

Barcelona, May 21: Two of

Spain's most modest sta-

diums are set to offer

scenes of joy and sorrow

ensure it clinches its first

Spanish league title in

seven years with a win at

Barcelona will visit the

Atletico enters the final

If Diego Simeone's side

fails to win at Valladolid,

Real Madrid can retain its title by beating Villarreal. Real Madrid holds the

with Atletico in case they

In a provincial city 190

kilometres (118 miles)

Valladolid needs a victory

Stadium to have a chance

Elche and Huesca are

fighting

Valladolid to not go down,

with two of the three clubs destined for the

For Valladolid defender

Kiki Olivas, his team's

of avoiding relegation.

its Jose Zorrilla

finish level on points.

advantage

Madrid.

round of the competition with a two-point lead over defending champion Real

already relegated Eibar.

while

Atletico Madrid

on Saturday.

Valladolid.

tiebreaker



New Zealand star pacer Tim Southee in this file photo.

## Southee upbeat for WTC final

Anytime you get to play a Test match for New

Zealand, it's an amazing opportunity and I don't

Southampton, May 21: Senior New Zealand pacer Tim Southee believes that the upcoming two-Test series against England would serve as "great preparation" for his team as it gears up for the mar-World Championship

against India here. New Zealand are playing two Tests against England at the Lord's (Jun 2-6) and Birmingham (Jun 10-14). The WTC final final is scheduled from June 18. Asked if the focus will be on the WTC final, Southee said: "Anytime you get to play a Test

match for New Zealand,

Spanish title down to last game

Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone gestures in this file photo.

Besides

think you treat them as warm-ups. But great to have the two-match series leading to the World Test Championship final. - TIM SOUTHEE New Zealand star pacer it's an amazing opportuni-

treat them as warm-ups. Our focus is first and foremost on the two match series against England.' But the 32-year-old with 302 Test wickets didn't deny that it was indeed a great opportunity to gear up for the big battle

ty and I don't think you

against India. "....but great to have

those matches leading to the final. So for us, it's great preparation for that final but we are looking at two-match series against a quality English side in their conditions," Southee

Southee also didn't feel that three Tests in three weeks will be much of a workload after a welcome

Poland, aiming to win the

first major title in club

history. If it beats the English powerhouse, it

will also qualify for the

Argentina star Lionel

Messi has been given per-mission to skip the team's

final game of the Spanish

league season — at Eibar

on Saturday — so he can

have extra rest ahead of

the Copa America. Messi

didn't train on Friday.

Champions League.

Meanwhile,

"It's exciting to play three Test matches in a short space of time,' Southee said after his first training session at the Ageas Bowl following a three-day hard quaran-"It is something that the

team doesn't get to do that often. We've come off a bit of a break, which has been nice, and (we have) been able to get some conditioning into our bodies...," Southee said.

He believes that they will be ready to cope with the rigours with some quality training sessions in the next two weeks.

**KANE KEEN TO** 

**MOVE OUT OF** 

**TOTTENHAM** 

Harry Kane has hinted at

mounts over his future.

calling the champions'

star midfielder Kevin De

Kane has reportedly told

Spurs he wants to leave at

the end of the season and

the England captain has

been linked with City,

Manchester United and

Kane has now raised the

prospect of a move to Pep

Guardiola's title winners,

naming City's De Bruyne

City are reported to be interested in signing Kane, but Spurs will not

let him go without a fight,

especially as he is under

contract for the next three

years. Kane is determined

to stay in the Premier

League and when asked

United defender Gary

Neville which player

would help him score more goals he said: "De

Bruyne for sure.

former Manchester

as a perfect team-mate.

move to Manchester

iorward

speculation

London,

Bruyne

Chelsea.

l'ottennam

as

# Medics charged in Maradona's death

Buenos Aires, May 21: Seven health professionals who tended to Diego Maradona in the days before his death have been charged with involuntary

Maradona, who led Argentina to victory in the 1986 World Cup, died of a heart attack November 25 at a rented residence outside Buenos Aires following brain surgery two weeks earlier. He was 60.

A medical board's report given to prosecutors this month concluded that Maradona was in agony for more than 12 hours, did not receive adequate treatment and could still be alive if he had been properly hospitalised.

Prosecutors on Wednesday charged neurosurgeon Leopoldo Luque and psychiatrist Agustina Cosachov, the two leaders of Maradona's medical team, and five other health professionals with involuntary manslaughter.

A doctor, a psychologist, two nurses and a nurse coordinator were the oth-

ers. The medical panel's report said the patient's signs of risk of life were adding that showed ignored, unequivocal signs of a prolonged agony period of at

least 12 hours.

The care that Maradona received at the rented house, the report said, did not fulfill the minimum requirements for a patient with his medical history, and that he would have sur-



Diego Maradona

Prosecutors charged neurosurgeon Leopoldo Luque and psychiatrist Agustina Cosachov, the two leaders of **Diego Maradona's** medical team, and five other health professionals with involuntary

vived with adequate hospitalization. Maradona had suffered a series of medical problems, some due to excesses of drugs and alcohol. He was reportedly

manslaughter.

near death in 2000 and 2004. Julio Rivas, a lawyer for Luque, said earlier this month that medical forensics of the report were flawed and biased... with no scientific foundation.

**INJURED HALEP** 

**PULLS OUT OF** 

FRENCH OPEN

21: Third-ranked Simona

Halep withdrew from the

French Open on Friday

Romanian, who won the

title at Roland Garros in

2018, tore a muscle in her

left calf at the Italian Open

and said it needs more

time to neal. The French

"Withdrawing from Grand Slam goes against

all my instincts and aspira-

tions as an athlete, but it is

the right and only decision

Halep is a three-time finalist at the French

Open. She beat Sloane

Stephens in the 2018 final

in Paris for her first major

energy on recovery, stay-

ing positive and getting

back on court as soon as it

Simona Halep is the

is safe to do so," she said.

'The thought of not being in Paris fills me with sadness, but I will focus my

Open begins May 30.

to make," Halep said.

singles title.

29-year-old

because of a calf injury.

### Rookie Cameron packs off Thiem

**Lyon, May 21:** World number four Dominic Thiem suffered a fresh setback in his Roland Garros build-up when he was knocked out of the Lyon ATP event in his opening match on

Thursday.
Top seed Thiem, 27, lost Bucharest (Romania), May to Britain's 49th-ranked Cameron Norrie 6-3, 6-2 in just over an hour.

Thiem, a two-time run-ner-up at Roland Garros, won just one match at the Italian Open last week, arriving in Rome on the back of a semi-final run at Madrid where he belatedly started his clay court sea-

son. Norrie will face either French qualifier Arthur Rinderknech or Italian sixth seed Jannik Sinner for a place in the semifinals.

Greek second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, the champion at the Monte Carlo Masters, eased into the last eight against Tommy Paul of the United States 6-1, 6-4. French number one Gael

Monfils was knocked out by Japan's world number 60 Yoshihito Nishioka, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/2).

Nishioka's reward is a clash with Tsitsipas on

Friday. Elsewhere in Italy, Coco Gauff advanced to the semifinals of the Emilia-

Romagna Open after beating Amanda Anisimova 6-3, 6-3 on Thursday in a match between American teenagers. Gauff, who last week reached the Italian Open

semifinals for her career-

best result on clay, came from 3-0 down in the sec-

ond set. Gauff will next

defending champion at Wimbledon, winning the title in 2019. face Czech player Katerina Siniakova, who beat eighth-seeded Caroline Siniakova,

Garcia 7-5, 6-1.

Former U.S. Open champion Sloane Stephens also reached the semifinals by beating Sara Errani of Italy 6-3, 6-0. — *Agencies* 

# Westbrook's wizardry halts Pacers

cards.

Gimenez, who has been

hit by injuries and a bout

with Covid-19 this season,

will likely take his place.

Valladolid to at least draw

with Atletico, Madrid must beat a Villarreal side that has played well

all season but may be

looking ahead to an even

Villarreal will face Manchester United in the

Europa League final on Wednesday in Gdansk,

more important game.

Jose

needing

**Washington, May 21:** After one loss back when the Washington Wizards were struggling through a Coronavirus-disrupted, injury-depleted defense-optional stretch of the season that put them 15 games below 0.500, Russell Westbrook gathered his teammates to

speak his mind. According to coach Scott Brooks, Westbrook delivered a "very passionate, very direct talk" that essentially amounted to: We will not miss the post-

Might have seemed farfetched at the time. Turns out Westbrook was true to

his word. Westbrook nearly proa triple-double Thursday night, Bradley

NBA playoffs as the Eastern Conference's No. 8 seed by overwhelming the Indiana Pacers 142-115 in the play-in round Thursday night. Washington led by as many as 38 and now faces

desperation could

the upset.

what it needs to pull off

Olivas will be tasked

with helping defend Luis

Suarez, whose late goal

last weekend secured a 2-1

Atletico at the top of the

standings and in control

of its fate. Atletico will

face the finale without its

most-used center back,

Stefan Savic, who will

serve a one-game suspension for accumulation of

comeback win Osasuna that

Joel Embiid and the No. 1 seed Philadelphia 76ers in the first round, marking quite a turnaround for Brooks' crew, which was 17-32 before going on a 17-6 run over the regular season's last six weeks.

A little more than a week after breaking Oscar Robertson's career record for most regular-season triple-doubles, Westbrook finished Thursday with 18 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists, and it was

Beal scored 25 points and Beal — second in the NBA the Wizards reached the in scoring two years in a row — whose 3-pointer opened up a 30-point lead at 98-68 with about four minutes left in the third

Domantas Sabonis had 19 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists before fouling out early in the fourth quarter for the Pacers, whose run of five consecutive playoff appearances ended in coach Nate Bjorkgren's first year in charge.

The Wizards lost the game at the Boston Celtics 118-100 on Tuesday and Westbrook was hardly himself.

He shot 6 for 18. He had only five assists, less than half of his league-leading average of 11.7.



Daniel Gafford (left) of Washington Wizards blocks a shot by Indiana Pacers' Doug McDermott during their NBA game in Washington on Thursday.

### **GRIEF-STRICKEN KABADDI PLAYER GETS ₹2 LAKH AID**

New Delhi, May 21: The Sports Ministry has approved financial assistance of ₹2 lakh for double Asian Games gold-medallist woman kabaddi player V. Tejaswini Bai, who recently battled Covid-19 and lost her husband to the dreaded infection.

The assistance has been sanctioned under the new joint initiative with the Indian Olympic Association to support former athletes and coaches during the pandemic. The financial assistance has been sanctioned from the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National

Welfare Fund for sportspersons. Tejaswini and her husband contracted Covid-19 on May 1. While she is on the path to recovery at home, her husband Naveen succumbed to the deadly virus on

"He was just 30 but he was panicking a lot after the death of his father. It was the fear and stress that took his life," Tejaswini said in a statement issued by the

Sports Authority of India. "I was not expecting this (financial assistance) but the Sports Ministry, SAI and IOA took very prompt action to take this decision of giving us the assistance. This is the first time that we have been given such support," she added. Karnataka's Tejaswini won the Arjuna Award in 2011.