


# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 26 MAY 2021

## WEATHER

 **Max:** 39.6°C  
**Min:** 27.2°C  
**RH:** 22%  
**Rain:** Nil

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

## ASTROGUIDE

**Plava:** Uttarayana  
**Tithi:** Vaishakha Shuddha Purnima till 4.44 pm  
**Star:** Anuradha till 1.15 am (Thursday)  
**Variyam:** 11.47 am to 12.39 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 11.47 am to 12.39 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 12 noon to 1.30 pm  
**HJRI CALENDAR**  
**Shawwal** 13,1442 AH  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 4.34 am  
**Zohar:** 12.23 pm  
**Asar:** 4.46 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.50 pm  
**Isha:** 8.05 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY** 6.44 PM  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW** 5.41 AM  
**MOONRISE TODAY** 6.47 PM  
**MOONSET TOMORROW** 5.20 AM

## COUNTER POINT



**Covid vaccines and medicines? You are late... the mafia has taken them all!**

## SHORT TAKES

### CISF'S SUBODH KUMAR IS NEW CBI DIRECTOR

**New Delhi:** Senior IPS officer Subodh Kumar Jaiswal was on Tuesday appointed as the new CBI chief for two years, according to a personnel ministry order.

A 1985-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Maharashtra cadre, Jaiswal is currently the director general of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

A Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led three-member selection committee had on Monday short-listed his name for the post. Jaiswal has been appointed as the director, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a period of two years, the ministry order said. He has served as Maharashtra's DGP.

— PTI

■ Another report on Pg 8

### Daily Covid nos dip to below 2L

**New Delhi:** The daily fresh Covid-19 cases, for the first time in 40 days, fell below two lakhs on Tuesday, with the Union health ministry terming this as an "encouraging sign" as new cases were 1.96 lakh along with 3,511 deaths. The active caseload too has fallen to 25.86 lakhs and the daily positivity rate has come down to 9.54 per cent. In the last 24 hours, close to 3.27 lakh recoveries were registered.

### No bail for fear of death, says SC

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed directions issued by the Allahabad High Court, which had granted anticipatory bail to an accused in a cheating case observing that apprehension of death due to Covid infection can be a valid ground for granting the relief. It said that courts shall not consider the directions issued by the High Court on May 10 for grant of anticipatory bail to accused in other cases.



## WORLD | 9

### Iran bars Rouhani allies from Prez poll

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

## Fugitive Mehul Choksi goes missing in Antigua

**DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs**  
NEW DELHI, MAY 25

Fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi, who was wanted in a ₹13,500 crore loan fraud in Punjab National Bank, has reportedly gone missing in Antigua where he has been staying since January 2018.

According to reports, Choksi, who had taken citizenship of the Caribbean island nation of Antigua and Barbuda, was seen driving in the southern area of the island on Sunday. Later, his vehicle was found but there was no trace of him.

A local news agency in Barbuda quoted commissioner of police Atlee Rodney as saying that the police are "following up on the whereabouts of Indian businessman Mehul Choksi", who is "rumoured" to be missing.



● According to reports, Mehul Choksi, who had taken citizenship of the Caribbean island nation of Antigua and Barbuda, was last seen driving in the southern area of the island on Sunday. Later, his vehicle was found but there was no trace of him.

which is probing the PNB scam, on Tuesday contacted the Antigua embassy in India following reports alleging that Mr Choksi was missing.

While Nirav Modi is in a London prison and is contesting extradition to India, Mr Choksi took the citizenship of Antigua in 2017 using the Citizenship by Investment programme, before fleeing India in January 2018.

Antigua Prime Minister Gaston Browne has said he has "no reliable information till date" that Choksi has fled the country and it was very likely that he was still in Antigua and Barbuda.

In a statement to the Parliament of Antigua and Barbuda, Browne said authorities were "collaborating" with the Indian government, neighbouring countries and international police organisation to try and locate Choksi.

Choksi and his nephew Nirav Modi are wanted for allegedly siphoning off ₹13,500 crore of public money from the state-run Punjab National Bank (PNB), using letters of undertaking. The CBI,



Strong waves lash the beach, ahead of the landfall of Cyclone Yaas in Puri, on Tuesday.

— PTI

## 13L people evacuated in WB, Odisha before Yaas

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI AND AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC**  
KOLKATA/BALASORE, MAY 25

A day before the "very severe" Cyclone "Yaas" makes its landfall and strikes mainly two states in eastern India, a tornado hit two districts of West Bengal on Tuesday, leaving two persons dead due to electrocution and injured several others, while damaging several houses. Eleven lakh people were evacuated to safer places in West Bengal, while in Odisha at least two lakh people were evacuated.

It was also found Cyclone Yaas had slightly changed its course; and

will now have its landfall at Dhamra, in Odisha's Bhadrak district, at 5.30 am on Wednesday, instead of Balasore. Heavy downpours and squally winds lashed the coastal districts both states. In the midst of a raging pandemic, those who are Covid-positive are being placed in separate cyclone shelters.

In Kolkata, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee has stationed herself at the control room at Nabanna, the state secretariat, for the next two days to lead her government's relief and rescue operations. The Indian Army has deployed 17 relief columns of soldiers in 10 districts of the state.

The tornado struck two districts — Hooghly and

North 24 Parganas —located on both sides of the Hooghly river on Tuesday afternoon. The two victims — Swapna Das Baul (40) and Kamal Majhi (21) — are from Pandua in Hooghly districts. They were out of their homes then.

The director-general of the India Meteorological Department, Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, said Tuesday evening: "The storm will further intensify in the next 12 hours and turn into a very severe cyclonic storm. It will have its landfall near Dhamra in Odisha's Bhadrak district. The windspeed at the time of landfall will most likely be 155-165 kmph, gusting up to 185 kmph."

## 8 drown as 2 boats overturn in Sileru

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 25

Tragedy struck the agency tracts when eight persons, including children and women, all guest workers from Odisha, drowned after two country boats capsized in Sileru reservoir along the AP-Odisha Border on Monday.

The incident took place when 35 members of migrant families were trying to sneak into the Odisha border at night, fearing lockdown clampdown. Ten persons managed to swim ashore, while eight others

drowned in the river. The police said 35 members of guest workers from Guntawada and Kondu-guda villages under Malkangiri district in Odisha reached Sileru from Hyderabad as they lost their livelihoods due to the Covid curfew.

After crossing the Sileru reservoir in a vehicle, they reached Jonnalam-amidi on foot and decided to take a boat ride to reach their hometowns as they feared they may be stopped at the border by Odisha officials.

■ Full report on Page 5

## BIG | RELIEF

## Some miss deadline for second dose; some UPHCs remain shut

**SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

The Telangana state government resumed the second dose of vaccination against Covid-19 on Tuesday following instructions from Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, much to the relief of over three lakh people who are eligible to receive the shot. Urban primary health centres (UPHCs) witnessed huge crowds, as people thronged in large numbers to avail the jab.

The vaccination drive was stopped by the state

government on May 16 as there was no adequate supply of vaccines. Since then, people who are due to get the second shot were running around for vaccine, afraid that the scheduled time gap between doses may lapse.

Those who completed four weeks after taking the first dose of Covaxin and those who completed 12 weeks after taking the Covishield are eligible to take the second shot.

Health officers said no

● Those who completed four weeks after taking the first dose of Covaxin and those who completed 12 weeks after taking the Covishield are eligible to take the second shot.

● These persons have to produce the proof of the first shot or the vaccination certificate to get the second dose.

one had completed 12 weeks after taking the Covishield first dose as of now; those who were due for Covaxin had been receiving the vaccination.

This drive is for those who are above 45 years of age.

The UPHC at Musheerabad had around 50 people taking Covaxin shots. The centre has received 100 doses of vaccine.

King Koti District Hospital had a very few people eligible, whereas Fever Hospital at Nallakunta did not open for the vaccination at all, forcing many senior citizens to return disappointed. The UPHC at Tilaknagar had the sufficient doses for all those who came for the jab.

There was a minor tussle at Government Hospital at Vanasthalipuram as peo-

ple standing in the queue alleged that the medical staff was administering vaccines to those they knew.

P. Bhargava, deputy manager at SBI, said, "I took the second dose of Covaxin, exactly after completion of four weeks. I was worried when they stopped the vaccinations in the state. Now I'm relieved."

Another beneficiary, Satyanand said, "Our time gap of taking the Covaxin second dose lapsed because of the unavailability of vaccine. Today is the 59th day since we were administered the first shot."

## After BJP opens its door, Etala hits out hard at CM

### 3-member BJP team in talks with former health minister

**SRIRAM KARRI | DC**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

After several days of dejected parlances across the political board, an oeilade and several hints from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) gave former minister Etala Rajendar a shot in the arm, and an ounce of heady confidence, reflecting at his presser on Tuesday in which he volleyed an array of sharp repartees at Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) chief and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

A senior BJP leader, speaking from Delhi, explained, "Ever since the time Rajendar was dropped from the TRS Cabinet and investigations into land grabbing were launched, there was a divide in the party on whether to take him in or ignore him. Finally, the party has decided that it would be open to taking him, as he will likely prove to be an asset."

But leaders across the state BJP played coy, profusely denying any big change in its divided stance over sending overtures to the strong



Mudiraj leader.

"Some idle TV channels without any news began spreading some political palaver, which got further amplified on social media," at least three senior BJP state leaders said. But none of them refuted the news of several meetings taking place between party leaders and the entrenched Kamalapuram strongman.

"In my meetings with Rajendar, I advised him to continue his fight against the injustice being meted to his people but desist from resigning from his MLA post. The TRS would want to push for a bye-election, which could be suicidal for him. Otherwise, we will continue to give him friendly advice and moral sup-

port," said former MP and senior BJP leader A.P. Jithender Reddy.

Another BJP leader, who also met Rajendar twice in the last few days, and who, according to BJP Delhi sources, is part of a three-member team to guide and induct Rajendar, said, "There has been absolutely no discussion at the party's national level over Rajendar. I met him to generally discuss politics and understand his thinking about the future."

Even as a posse of BJP leaders denied interest in the former TRS minister and Huzurabad MLA, Rajendar himself presented a buoyed self while addressing the media and resorting to distinctly more scathing remarks

since the start of the ordeal. "You may resort to unethical politics in Karimnagar but people will reject it. Have you forgotten what happened in Dubbak? You are trying to lure people in my constituency and district but it won't yield results," he said.

Without naming his former boss, Rajendar said, "Are you suffering from vainglorious thoughts that you will remain in power forever? What you are doing to me today will happen to you tomorrow. You will be reduced to nothing."

The previous galimatias replaced with strong rhetoric, Rajendar also brought the previously avoided mention of a byelection. "You think you can repeat a Nagarjunasagar here in Huzurabad. Big mistake. Karimnagar people place self-respect over money."

He, however, remembering the BJP advice, added, "Of course, there will be no bypoll. But if or when there is one, you will witness an anger that is now spread across the state."

■ Page 2: Etala wants to be focus of anti-TRS forces

### FLAG TWEETS OF MANTRIS, CONG. TELLS TWITTER

**DC CORRESPONDENTS**  
NEW DELHI, MAY 25

The Delhi Police on Tuesday served notices on two Congress leaders in connection with the probe into a complaint about the alleged "Congress toolkit" matter even as the Congress once again wrote to Twitter asking them to flag tweets by 11 Union ministers referring to the alleged "Congress toolkit" as "manipulated media".

The letter, written to Jim Baker, Twitter's deputy general counsel and vice-president (legal), and Vijaya Gadde, lead for legal, policy and trust and safety, by Congress' communications chief and general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala says, "The subject matter of the forged Toolkit document was created by certain BJP leaders to gain undue and wrongful political advantage by spreading potentially dangerous, false and fabricated material through their Twitter handles against the Indian National Congress and its leaders". The letter carried the URLs of the specific tweets which the Congress demanded to be marked.

## TS ropes in pvt hosps to vaccinate over 18-yr-olds

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Taking a cue from the Centre's move to start vaccination of those above 18 years in private hospitals and vaccination centres, the Telangana government has also decided to engage private medical facilities in inoculating those in the age group. It has issued an order on Tuesday to this effect, asking private hospitals to prepare plans for vaccinating people above 18 years.

There are also orders given to private hospitals to facilitate vaccination of people at their workplaces. The workplace vaccination centre will require availability of doctors, nurses and also an emergency ambulance to deal with adverse effects.

Accordingly, private hospitals in the state said that they were ready to vaccinate people above 18 years of age once the government supplied sufficient vaccines. The vaccine supply must be continuous and there must not be any gaps to allow them to run the programme seamlessly.

Dr K. Hari Prasad, president, Apollo Group Hospitals, said, "Apollo Hospitals will start vacci-

### PRIVATE PUSH

● The state government on Tuesday issued an order asking private hospitals to prepare plans for vaccinating people above 18 years.

● It has also asked private hospitals to facilitate vaccination of people at their workplaces.

● Apollo Hospitals and Continental Hospitals will begin the vaccination. Other hospitals want to wait and watch for now.



● The workplace vaccination centre will require availability of doctors, nurses and also an emergency ambulance to deal with adverse effects.

nation from tomorrow as per the guidelines of the government of Telangana. We will now start with Covaxin and Covishield as per government regulations. We will start Sputnik V once it is available in early June."

At Continental Hospitals, 600 doses per day are available, stated chief executive officer Dr Riyaz Khan. "For the age group of 18 to 44 years, we are expecting more registrations and will plan accordingly. Continental Hospitals is also signing up with corporate offices and we are already in conversation with them as we plan

to vaccinate 75,000 people in the next three months," Dr Khan said.

Other hospitals in the city want to wait and decide as per the allotment. A senior manager at a multi-specialty hospital said, "Offices have approached us but we first want to check how many doses the government will provide. There is a master plan ready for execution but it will be done effectively only when there is clarity from the government on the availability of vaccines for the private sector."

■ Page 2: Hospitals place order for vaccines



## Inter P1 admissions go to on till July 5

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

First phase admissions for the 2021-22 academic year of the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) began on Tuesday and will go on till July 5. Online classes will begin on June 1.

In view of the introduction of the grading system in SSC, admissions will be made based on GPA (Grade Point Average) and subject-wise grade points (GP).

The BIE said that no test for admission should be conducted and stringent action will

be taken against the junior colleges making admissions on any other basis.

Colleges can make provisional admissions on the basis of Internet marks memos, and will be confirmed after the production of original SSC pass certificate and transfer certificate.

Candidates seeking admission on condonation of gap period have to obtain a certificate of local candidate or residential certificate for the period from the tahsildar.

It further said that the schedule for the second phase of admissions will be communicated in due course.

## HOSPITALS PLACE ORDER FOR VACCINES

From Page 1

Hospitals have started placing their demand to the government for vaccines.

Dr D.V.S. Soma Raju, executive director at SLG Hospitals, said, "We are expecting doses from June 15 and we have created a separate area for vaccination. There are not only corporates but also different communities who have approached the hospital for the vaccination. We are

looking at offices, industrial units, community centres and have a well-equipped dedicated team of experts to carry it out. We are geared up for largescale vaccination."

Hospitals are having a team of managers who are approaching their regular patients and their families.

This is being done to give them confidence and also deal with any misconception, misnomers and clear doubts about the Covid vaccines.

## Most corporators keep off roads in 2nd wave

They even ignored Mayor's plea to take part in relief works

MADHY DEEKSHITH | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Corporators of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) are not to be seen during the second wave of Coronavirus pandemic.

Last year, the 150 corporators — 99 from the TRS, 44 MIM, four BJP, two Congress and the lone TD corporator — hit the city roads and participated in multiple programmes in order to impress their respective party high commands to secure a ticket in the GHMC polls.

This year, the TRS has 56 corporators, BJP 47, MIM 44 and Congress three. But few are seen participating in any relief programmes.

Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav, addressing

● **MINISTER TALASANI** Srinivas Yadav, addressing a press conference last week, said it is up to the respective corporators to participate in relief measures in their respective wards. The party would not insist on them to step out because of the pandemic. This could have encouraged the corporators in keeping themselves away.

● **INCIDENTALLY, NONE** of the corporators have been paid any salary since February last by the cash-strapped Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation.

a press conference last week, said it is up to the respective corporators to participate in relief measures in their respective wards. The party would not insist on them to step out because of the pandemic. This could have encouraged the corporators in keeping themselves away and safe.

Incidentally, the corporators ignored city mayor Gadwal R. Vijaylakshmi's

request that they take part in intensive sanitation drives and other Coronavirus relief measures in their respective wards, cutting across party lines.

When *Deccan Chronicle* spoke to multiple corporators from various parties, they maintained that none of their party high commands were any more bothered post the GHMC polls. However, no one

wanted to come on record fearing ire of their respective parties. "Honestly, we do not depend on our salaries. We have our own businesses for living, which have been badly hit due to Covid-19. If we step out for providing relief, we will have to spend at least ₹20,000 to ₹50,000 per day. We have thus come to a conclusion to stay home and stay safe", said a corporator, requesting anonymity.

Incidentally, none of the corporators have been paid any salary since February last by the cash-strapped Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. Officials said the issue has been taken to the notice of state government and a decision would be taken soon.

## GOVERNOR LAUDS SUPPORT BY INDIAN DIASPORA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan appreciated the role of the Indian diaspora in extending relief material to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Respecting their roots and with great love for the motherland, many organisations and individuals supporting Indians all over the world are extending great help to the needy back home," she said.

The Governor was handing over 300 oxygen concentrators, donated by the IT Serve Alliance, Dallas, Texas, the USA, to their representatives in Hyderabad at Raj Bhavan, here.

The oxygen concentrators will be distributed to the needy staff and their family members working in the city.

## Narasimha Jayanti



A devotee seeks blessings from a person dressed as lion and posing as the Lord Narasimha Swamy avatar on Narasimha Jayanti at the Koti temple in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

## Covid death rate high in state

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

While the number of new Covid-19 cases has stayed below 4,000, the state is experiencing a high rate of death due to the disease which shows that patients in a critical condition are not recovering. A mean average of 20 deaths per day shows that 140 patients have died in a week.

On Tuesday, the government Covid-19 bulletin said there were 3,821 new cases and 23 deaths. The recovery rate was put at 92.52 per cent. Those who have not recovered continue to be in intensive care units and their recovery and post-Covid 19 progress remains a challenge.

Senior health officials said those on ventilator support for more than 14 days are not showing the rate of improvement required. The overall case-load in the state is 5,60,141, and the toll is 3,169.

The number of patients in home and institutional isolation has seen a sharp drop from 45,000 in the May 16-22 week to 38,706 on Tuesday. This is being taken as an indication of reduction in mild cases.



Para-medical staff register names of persons who want to undergo swab tests for Covid-19 at an urban primary health centre in Hyderabad.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

The government is ramping up testing and sources said the target is one lakh a day. It stood at 81,203 tests on Tuesday.

Among the districts, the rising number of cases in Khammam and Suryapet is causing concern. It went up in Khammam district from 123 cases on May 23 to which rose to 198 on May 24 and zoomed to 245 on May 25. The rise in the cases in the district is attributed to political activity. There are no micro containment zones set up in the district.

Suryapet saw a sharp rise in cases to 214, from 130 cases on May 24 and 63 on May 23. 73 on May 22 and 51 on May 21.

Other districts have a large number of cases, with a slight variation in the daily numbers. The districts which have been constantly recording more than 100 new cases per day are Nalgonda with 187, Karimnagar 172, Peddapalli 147, Warangal Urban 146, Nagarkurnool 132, Mahabubnagar 128, Bhadrachalam 116 each, Jagtial 111, Sangareddy

and Vikarabad 103 each. Wanaparthy 105 and Siddipet 104.

This drastic rise in the districts is being attributed to the movement of people for economic activity. The highest micro containment zones are in Warangal rural at 19 and Siddipet at 10.

Health officials said that they are concentrating on districts which are constantly having high numbers but those showing sudden spurts will require strict monitoring.

The GHMC area comprising the city is seeing a very slow decline in the cases on a weekly basis. Against 594 cases on May 19, the city recorded 534 on May 21, 343 on May 23, 424 on May 24 which jumped to 537 on May 25. In the first week of the month, the city recording 700-plus cases.

On the city outskirts, Ranga Reddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri districts continue to register 200-plus cases every day. There are 226 cases new cases in Ranga Reddy district and 215 in Medchal-Malkajgiri on Tuesday.

It remains to be seen how the 20-hour daily lockdown will impact new cases.

## Etala wants to be the focus of anti-TRS forces

From Page 1

Political scuttlebutt has it that while Rajendar is enthused by the signal of hope coming from a party with a government at the Centre, which could give him some immunity against severe legal action initiated by an estranged TRS government, he is not too keen to join the BJP, at least not as yet.

"Rajendar somehow wishes to emerge as a rallying focal point of anti-TRS forces in the state. His wish would be to become a consensus candidate of the entire Opposition, which when split, as witnessed during the MLC graduate and Naga Raju's assembly bypoll, was no match for the mighty juggernaut of the ruling pink party," said a political observer.

The BJP is in no mood for it. If Rajendar won't join the saffron party, which would give its cadre some morale boost and give it an opportunity to re-create the narrative it set for Dubbaka and the GHMC that it is the only alternative to the TRS in Telangana, it has no need for him.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Vivek Venkataswamy, more forthcoming than most other leaders, said, "We offered Etala Rajendar a welcome to join the BJP in the fight against Chief Minister K. Chandrababai Naidu's corruption and dynasty rule. We told him we could also fight the Huzurabad bypoll if it happened, but Etala requested that we instead support him by not having our party candidate if he fights as an Independent."

However, the former health minister's efforts to meet the two most plenipotent leaders in the state BJP, minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy and party state president Bandi Sanjay, have not fructified. Clearly, both of them would want to meet him after he agrees to join the BJP. Kishan Reddy dismissed the entire news as "mere speculation". "I have not met Etala Rajendar. Rajendar called me and expressed a desire

● **THE FORMER** health minister's efforts to meet the two most plenipotent leaders in the state BJP — G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay — have not fructified.

to meet me personally recently," Kishan Reddy said, adding "If Rajendar wants to join the BJP and wishes to discuss the modalities, we can consider."

Top Congress leaders, some of whom the former minister had earlier met, said they "understood" his "compulsions" of having to finally opt for the BJP over their party, despite being still stronger in rural Telangana, for "political-legal protection".

"We cannot offer what the BJP can give him, which is a kind of legal immunity," they said.

While most BJP leaders felt it would be parlous for Rajendar to resign as an MLA and push for a hard-scrabble bypoll at this point of time, arguing that if "TRS makes it a prestige fight and puts all its resources, it would be nearly suicidal, a lone dissenting voice said, "There is a strong anti-KCR wave in Telangana, which has gotten further accentuated by the mishandling of the Covid crisis and underreporting of cases and deaths. The BJP can get back into the driver's seat by not only forcing this byelection but also looking at a few other MLAs who can be offered enough incentive to resign and have a slew of polls, either together or in quick succession."

The contrarian thinking BJP leader added, "One discussion in our party is that Etala is willing to resign as an MLA and join the party if he is promised a Rajya Sabha seat." None from the Etala Rajendar camp, including Rajendar himself, could be contacted to respond to queries of *Deccan Chronicle* on the issue.

In any case, like the Dreyfus Affair, the la Rajendar affair is becoming centre-stage to state politics, and in its resolution lies a pointer to what 2023 holds.

## Drugs sold at high price, 6 arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

The South Zone Task Force and the Malkajgiri Special Operations police nabbed six persons in separate instances, four of them for selling in the black market remdesivir injections used against Covid-19 and two others for selling amphotericin-B which curing black fungus.

In the first instance, the Task Force with the Bahadurpura police apprehended Salman Raj and Aravind and seized 18 remdesivir injections from their possession.

South Zone Task Force inspector S. Raghavendra said he had purchased each injection for about ₹4,000 and were selling it

for between ₹15,000 and ₹20,000. They had procured it from one Shiva Shankar, who is absconding.

The Malkajgiri SOT nabbed two persons, Thokala Avinash and Alwala Venkatesh, who were illegally selling amphotericin-B at Uppal crossroads. Their supplier is absconding.

The accused who were selling Amphotericin B Liposome nabbed at Uppal crossroads under Uppal police station limits.

The supplier is still absconding. In the Malkajgiri police limits, the SOT arrested P. Sankeerth and P. Nemali Kumar, who were fleeing patients for remdesivir injections.

### STORY OF HOPE

## Ailment doesn't deter her from serving needy

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Touching are some stories of compassion. Even more poignant are some others. There are several healthy,

rich, mighty and even poor turning to be saviours of the needy, but here is a story of a person who herself is suffering from a neurologic disability but going around to help patients who need help.

Despite being a Multiple Sclerosis Patient (MSP), Dimple Kaur has taken it upon herself to help fellow humans in this pandemic time. In the last one month that she has been active,

over 80 people have been benefitted by her kind actions. They have received oxygen concentrators, cylinders and more during their battle against Covid-19.

Despite being afflicted by an auto-immune disorder, the urge to assist fellow humans in this crisis situation is helping her go strong.

It all started when another fellow Multiple Sclerosis Patient required oxygen for her husband.

"Over a month ago, an MSP called me saying that there was a requirement of oxygen, which I procured and provided. As days went

by, the number of such calls only increased. This time, it was not just from the city but the expanse of the country. So, when I saw the urgency for people to procure oxygen and other paraphernalia, I took it upon myself to help those in need," she said. To expand her services even further, she approached the local gurudwara for assistance.

"Through the gurudwara, we have support coming in. To raise money for the concentrators and other equipment, we have been getting monetary assistance in the form of donations," she added.



Over 80 people have been benefitted by Dimple Kaur's actions. They have received oxygen concentrators, cylinders and more during their battle against Covid-19.

### CLASSIFIEDS

#### FOR SALE PROPERTY

#### INDEPENDENT HOUSE

#### THREE & MORE

**PREMIUM VILLAS** in Gated community for Sale at Mokila @ 1.80 crs (Special Offer available). For further details, Contact 7353585358 (HYMM/2122/C01255)

**SERILINGAMPALLY, DOYENS** Township, Opp: Alind Factory 400 sqyds, North Face, G+2 Corner House for Sale, Gated Community. No Brokers. Ph:9703335717. (HYCL/2122/C00403)

#### LAND

**4 ACRES** Thota (34km from Shamshabad Airport) with White Sandile, Seethafal, Redsandile, Malabar well developed Farm, 1 bore+ 3 Rooms, very near to RRR. Per acre 1crore 20 Lakhs @Keshamset (Vil&Mdl), Rangreddy (Dist), Ph:9949424759, 9969749355. (HYCL/2122/C00416)

#### RENTALS

#### FLAT/IND/COMM

#### THREE & MORE

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## SHORT TAKES

## PRIESTS SEEK EXEMPTION FROM LOCKDOWN

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Chilkur Balaji temple chief priest C.S. Rangarajan has urged authorities to allow priests to move freely during lockdown period, considering them as part of essential services.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, he pointed out that priests do poojas to deities in temples as well as at private places, apart from performing last rites of dead and taking care of rituals post death at homes of the deceased.

Rangarajan said lockdown relaxation is from 6 am to 10 am during which priests can perform the morning poojas without any hindrances. However, they need to light lamps and carry out evening poojas too at temples, which is not possible due to the lockdown. Priests who need to perform last rites of dead are also finding it difficult to commute, as police have imposed stringent rules.

Under the circumstances, archakas should be exempted from lockdown rules, Rangarajan observed. He said many priests have requested him to take up the issue with the authorities.

The Chilkur chief priest explained: "In Hinduism, a death does not end with just burring of the dead body. We believe it is only a transformation of life. A lot of rituals are performed before the cremation and after it, for which presence of a priest is must."

"I request police department to issue passes to Archakas, so that they can perform their holy duties," he stated.

## MBT: GUIDELINES IGNORED AT COP'S SON'S MARRIAGE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

A senior IPS officer and former home secretary allegedly violated the lockdown norms and conducted his son's marriage under Kamathipura police station limits of Hyderabad Commissionerate.

Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT) spokesman Amjed Ullah Khan first raised the issues on social media and tagged the Telangana Director General of police and Hyderabad City police commissioner.

Speaking to this newspaper, Khan said, "The marriage was performed in a perfume maker's house at Kamathipura. The wedding ceremony which started around 8 pm went on to 5 am flouting the lockdown norms."

"Very surprising was that many VIPs including senior IPS officers attended the wedding and enjoyed orchestra, fire crackers and band and many attendees were found without masks. It is evident that more than the permitted number of guests (40) attended the wedding," alleged Amjed Ullah Khan.

He added, "On one hand, the police are beating up food delivery persons for violating norms. On the other, senior police officials are themselves violating the norms. Law is equal to everyone and every person who attended the marriage violating the Covid norms should be booked by the police."

When contacted, Kamathipura inspector G. Rambabu said, "We are conducting an enquiry and after thorough investigation, action will be taken according to the law." He added that so far they had found that the wedding took place according to norms with limited strength. Asked whether they had prior information regarding the wedding, the inspector said, "It is not mandatory to inform police if they conduct the marriage according to the norms."

## Demand for Covid-19 beds continues to rise

## Oxygen, ICU beds vacant for only couple of hours

KANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Lockdown has been in place for a fortnight now and the government has been claiming that Coronavirus cases are declining. But in stark contrast, demand for beds in multi-specialty hospitals remains high and cries for more beds resonate the Covid centres by each passing day.

In an alarming development, oxygen and intensive care beds are vacant only for a couple of hours before other patients occupy them — be it at Asian Institute of Gastroenterology Hospital, Apollo Hospitals, KIMS Hospital, Care Hospital or Continental Hospital. Moreover, these hospitals are receiving 10-20 calls for beds every day, so as to shift severe and serious cases from different districts.

● **DOCTORS SAY** the time taken for recovery of patients under intensive care is ranging from 14 days to 40 days. Often, these patients are recovering and on discharge, dying at their homes within a week.

● **EXPERTS SAY** that decline in cases will be slow even though lockdown has been imposed.

Dr Kodeti Rakesh, consultant pulmonologist at Star Hospitals, says, "Out-patient departments of big hospitals are seeing a decline in mild cases. But severe and serious cases requiring emergency attention continue to be high."

A senior manager of a private hospital recounted,

"There was a call about a severe case from Rangareddy district involving a 74-year-old who required an oxygen bed, as his O2 level was 88. But on arrival, his prognosis showed that he needed intensive care, as his other vitals had been compromised. They waited for two hours in the hospital lobby for an ICU bed. But while waiting, the patient died."

Doctors say the time taken for recovery of patients under intensive care is ranging from 14 days to 40 days. Often, these patients are recovering and on discharge, dying at their homes within a week.

A senior doctor of a multi-specialty hospital, on condition of anonymity, confessed, "Our follow-up with relatives presents a grim picture of patients surviving post recovery. Many patients

are recovering in hospitals but succumbing at home. Hence, it is very difficult to say how severe and serious patients will fare during the next month. We are expecting many patients from districts, as there are many distress calls from Khammam, Siddipet, Warangal, Karimnagar and Mahabubnagar, where caseloads continue to be high."

Experts say that decline in cases will be slow even though lockdown has been imposed. No sharp drop is expected in mild cases during the last week of May, with the disease manifesting only in the second week of June.

All top doctors are clear on one aspect. The only way to safety from Covid-19 virus is vaccination. Maximum people must be vaccinated as early as possible for the safety of all.

## Vaccine confusion



People wait for second dose of Covid vaccination but return home without getting their shot due to lack of information at health centre in Secunderabad on Tuesday. — S. SURENDER REDDY



Elderly people wait from early morning to take vaccine at Fever Hospital as they were denied shots last week due to shortage. — DC

## 40 admitted with black fungus at ENT hospital

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Forty patients with black fungus were admitted at the Government ENT Hospital and five discharged after surgical intervention and treatment on Tuesday. The hospital is increasing the bed strength by 50, given the heavy rush for treatment.

The hospital will now have 280 beds. The ENT Hospital has the capacity to increase bed strength in its different surgical wards as there are only

● **THE HOSPITAL** will now have 280 beds. The ENT Hospital has the capacity to increase bed strength in its different surgical wards as there are only

patients of black fungus presently in the hospital.

Dr Ramesh Reddy, Director of Health and Medical Education, along with senior health officials visited the hospital on Tuesday to discuss increasing the number of beds, availability of medi-

cines and integration of Ayurveda and allopathy treatment. Doctors said that they are carrying out a maximum of 15 surgeries every day.

A team of ENT, eyes, kidney and cardiology specialists is monitor the patients most of whom have fungal invasion in eyes and require a good number of amphotericin-B injections.

Oral antifungal medicines post-discharge are also available and they are being given to the discharged patients for complete recovery.



Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar inspects a checkpoint near Ramanthapur as police personnel check vehicles on Tuesday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

## DGP, 3 police chiefs hit the road to monitor lockdown

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

State police chief M. Mahendar Reddy visited several places in the Hyderabad, Cyberabad commissionerates and Sangareddy district to take stock of the lockdown situation on Tuesday.

Director General of Police (DGP) Mahendar Reddy visited JNTU checkpoint in KPHB PS limits along with V.C. Sajjanar, police commissioner, Cyberabad, and Patancheru along with Sangareddy SP Chandrashekhara.

In the evening the DGP and Anjani Kumar, commissioner of police, Hyderabad, inspected the checkpoint in the Old City and went around Shahalibanda and Santoshnagar.

Speaking to the media later, Reddy said that the

lockdown was being implemented very strictly. Stating that lockdown was the only viable solution to control the spread of the Coronavirus, Reddy asked people not to step out of their homes without any valid reason or necessity.

Commenting on the e-pass issue, he said, "No ambulances will be stopped at the borders of the state. People with valid e-passes will only be allowed". He also warned people not to apply for the pass without any valid reason.

In the morning, Anjani Kumar inspected the police checkpoint in Amberpet. Speaking on the occasion, he said, "Public are diligently following lockdown norms. However, during the relaxation time many are venturing out

for no reason."

He added that at several government hospitals in Hyderabad commissionerate limits like Gandhi Hospital, Osmania General Hospital, Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences have installed a help desk, which is coordinating well with the public and passing information regarding the health status of their kin or friend undergoing treatment.

Meanwhile, Sajjanar toured Allwyn crossroads, BHEL, Ramachandrapuram, and other places. Raghakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat made a surprise visit to the Tukuguda checkpoint and briefed police personnel on division of goods vehicles, intercity buses via ORR and dealing with violators of lockdown norms.

## COOK TESTS +VE FOR COVID-19, ENDS HIS LIFE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

A 30-year old cook, who had tested positive for Covid-19, allegedly died by suicide at his residence under Narsingi police station limits of the Cyberabad commissionerate.

The deceased, R. Ravi, a native of Jhansi, was living in Kokapet village. According to police, he used to live in a relative's house before shifting to another house a few days ago after a relative contracted Covid-19.

Meanwhile, he also tested positive. "On Tuesday evening his aunt Gayatri came to the house to hand over milk packets. When she knocked on the door Ravi didn't respond. After several attempts, she went to the window and found Ravi's body. She immediately alerted the villagers," said police.

She later lodged a complaint with Narsingi police. She said that Ravi had informed his parents that he had tested positive and asked them to send money for treatment, added police.

Narsingi police booked a case of suspicious death and further investigation is underway.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA Irrigation & CAD Department Office of the Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle, Gadwal			
S.No.	Tender Number and Date	Name of the Work	Value of work in lakhs
1	SUNUS/2021-2022 Date: 24.05.2021	J.N.S-Operation & Maintenance of the Pumps at Stage-I & Stage-II Pumping Stations under Jawahar Neltampadu Lift Irrigation Scheme at Diwar Mandal, Joggulamba Gadwal District for the period one year (2021-2022)	272.00
Tender Documents are available Date: 24-05-2021, from 11.00AM to 15-06-2021 upto 3.00PM			
Date of tender filing : 24-05-2021, from 11.00AM to 15-06-2021 upto 3.00PM			
Date of Opening of Technical bid : 16-06-2021 11.00 AM			
Date of Opening of Price bid : 19-06-2021 11.00 AM			
Contact address: Office of the Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle, Gadwal, Joggulamba Gadwal, DIST. Further details can be seen at 'e-procurement market place @ https://tender.telangana.gov.in			
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle, Gadwal-509125			
R.O. No. : 173-DPIC-AGENCY/ADV/11/2021-22 Date: 25-05-2021			

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Ref.No. TF/HRD/Cant/Prov/829/2016-20	Date: 25.05.2021.
TENDER NOTIFICATION	
Telangana Foods invites tender for Supply of: Provisions to the Canteen in the premises of Telangana Foods for 6 months. BIDS SUBMISSION CLOSING DATE & TIME: 10.06.2021 at 3.00PM	
Note: Full Tender Notification & Tender Schedule with Terms & Conditions, Specifications, etc. can be downloaded from the website: <a href="http://tender.eprocurement.gov.in">http://tender.eprocurement.gov.in</a> on 25.05.2021 at 11.00 A.M onwards.	
R.O. No. : 1818-PP/CIL-AGENCY/ADV/11/2021-22	Date: 25-05-2021 Sd/- Manager - PPM

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Ln.No: PDS/PT/2633BR/F2020-21	Dated: 25.05.2021
SHORT TENDER NOTICE	
EMPANELMENT OF SUPPLIERS THROUGH AP e-Procurement e-Reverse AUCTION PLATFORM FOR SUPPLY OF 1500 MTs OF FORTIFIED RICE KERNELS (FRKs) WITH THREE (3) MICRO NUTRIENTS (IRON, FOLIC ACID AND VITAMIN B12) IN 20KG BAG TO APSCSL FOR FORTIFICATION OF BOILED RICE TO BE DELIVERED TO FCI.	
Andhra Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd., invites tenders for appointment of Manufacturers/Suppliers for supply of 1500 MTs of Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK) for boiled rice. For registration, interested Manufacturers/Suppliers of FRKs from all over India may visit <a href="http://tender.eprocurement.gov.in">http://tender.eprocurement.gov.in</a> or <a href="http://www.apscsl.in">www.apscsl.in</a> to view and download tender documents at free of cost.	
The details and procedure for obtaining Digital Signature Certificates are mentioned in website <a href="https://tender.eprocurement.gov.in">https://tender.eprocurement.gov.in</a> or contact the help desk of procurement portal, Phone numbers: 08645-246370/71/72/73/74.	
Last date for online registration and completion of Formalities for the e-Reverse auction shall be up to 5.00 pm of 01.06.2021 and the tentative date of online e-auction through e-procurement auction platform would be on 03.06.2021.	
Sd/- VC & MANAGING DIRECTOR	

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA  
Revenue (LA) Department

FORM - C  
NOTIFICATION

(Under Section-11 of the Act where 10 A Exemption is given)  
(See rule 6(12))

Gazette No. GHMC-91  
No.C/71/2021

Dated: 10-05-2021  
Date: 10-05-2021

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/ Special Collector (LA) & Commissioner, GHMC, that a total of **240.66 Sq. Yards** land is required in the Uppal (V) & (M), Medchal-Malkajgiri District for public purpose, namely proposed under road widening from Uppal X road to Nalla Cheruvu, Uppal for the proposed 150'-0" feet wide road.

Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the Uppal (V) & (M), Medchal-Malkajgiri District land measuring more or less **240.66 Sq. Yds** of Standard measurement, whose detail description is as following, is proposed for acquisition:

Sl. No	Pre mis No.	Typ e of Tril e	Typ e of Lan d	Ext en in Sq. Yds	Name & Address of person interested	Boundaries				Trees		Structures	
						North	South	East	West	Variety	No.	Type	Plinth area in Sq. Yds
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	-	-	-	93	Tej Pratap Singh	As per Sketch	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	62	C.Venkat Reddy		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	31	Rahmath Bee		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	37.69	Badri Narayana, B.Padma Rao Krishna, Pandu & Jagannath (Common Passage)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	16.97	Bikkumalla Bikkashapathy & Bikkumalla Ramesh		-	-	-	-	-	-	-

This Notification is made under the provisions of Section-11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act No. 30/2013), as amended by the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act No. 21 of 2017) to all whom it may concern.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the Office of the Special Collector, and Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana / Special Collector-cum-Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize Officer, i.e., Spl. Dy. Collector, Land Acquisition, GHMC, Hyderabad and his staff to enter upon and survey land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in Section-12 of the said Act.

Under Section 11(4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e. sale / purchase, etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Special Collector.

Objections to the acquisition if any, and claims from all the persons interested / affected for settlement by negotiation of the compensation, may be filed by the person interested in the land within 60 (sixty) days from the date of publication of this notification as provided under Section 15 of the Act before Special Collector / Authorized Officer.

Sd/-  
Special Deputy Collector (LA)  
GHMC, Hyderabad.

Sd/-  
Special Collector (LA) & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad

R.O.No. 150/LA-PP/Adv/Pub/2021-22

## INCOGNITO | COP

## Video of late-night run goes viral; officer gives staff clean chit after one-hour ride

## In civil dress, ACP checks out how cops behave

DURGA PRASAD  
SUNKU | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

While allegations of police behaving rudely with the public are on the rise in the process of implementing the lockdown, Rameshwar, Siddipet assistant commissioner of police (ACP), decided to check the charges, and experienced first-hand what was going on.

Rameshwar went incognito during the lockdown hours to see for himself how the police on the ground were behaving with the people. A video where he was

being checked by the police personnel, apparently unaware of his identity, is being circulated widely on social media.

Rameshwar travelled through 12 check-posts on a motorcycle in civil dress with a towel covering his face, from about 10.30 pm on Monday night during the curfew. He introduced himself as someone out to get medicines as he was feeling sick.

As a precaution he kept his identity and vehicle documents during the ride, which lasted about an hour. Asked about his adven-



Siddipet ACP Rameshwar speaks to cop on duty during lockdown with a towel around his face.

ture, Rameshwar, who joined the police force in

1991 as a sub-inspector, told this newspaper: "I suspected that the police personnel behaved differently in the presence of senior officials. I wanted to check how they were behaving at other times. I went late at night because usually the patience of police personnel on duty may be weak."

His experiment bore fruit. In one of the videos, a constable is heard speaking rudely with him. Rameshwar pretended to talk to the personal secretary of a minister. In return, the police seized his bike.

Rameshwar appreciated

the police for not paying heed to those trying to use political influence to bypass rules. However, when he revealed his identity, the police were shocked and returned his bike.

Sharing his experience, Rameshwar said, "At one check-post, there were around six police personnel and a woman constable among them. She came forward to stop me and enquired why I was out during the curfew. I told her I was suffering from fever and had come out to buy some tablets. She stepped back and let me go."



## SHORT TAKES

PVT HOSP LOOTING  
COVID PATIENTS IN  
KARIMNAGARDC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, MAY 25

Though people with Coronavirus are facing a lot of hardships, many private hospitals in Karimnagar district are taking advantage of the situation by charging astronomical prices for every service they are providing.

Patients are getting admitted to private hospitals due to non-availability of beds or lack of facilities and hygiene in government hospitals. Having got admitted to private hospitals, many patients and their families are forced to sell their valuables and even properties or take loans from private money lenders at high rates of interest.

Even before admitting patients, many hospitals are demanding a deposit of ₹1-2 lakh. In addition, they are even charging ₹50,000 a day for bed with oxygen. Despite charging such enormous amounts, they are charging additional fee promising a balanced and nutritious diet for speedy recovery.

Private hospitals are collecting ₹1,000 per day for supplying nutritious food. But what they are doing is ordering food from local hotels that cost ₹100 for full vegetarian meals for and ₹150 for non-vegetarian.

These hospitals are not even giving bills for treatment and medicines, except to those who want to claim from their insurance.

UNIONS CALL FOR  
'BLACK DAY'  
PROTEST TODAYDC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, MAY 25

National council member of All India Kisan Sangh (AIKS), Ponaganti Kedari, on Tuesday appealed to various working unions to observe May 26 as 'Black Day' against the BJP-led Union Government and to demand suspension of all its laws that were detrimental to the interests of farmers and working class.

Even though farmers are on protest for the past six months against the new agriculture bills, the Centre has remained silent, he alleged.

If on the one hand it is neglecting the welfare of farmers, it is, on the other hand, going out of the way in its patronisation of corporate companies, which also stand to gain immensely from the new laws, he said.

Meanwhile, members of Hind Mazdoor Sangh (HMS) have exhorted all working unions to make a success of the May 26 'Black Day' protest.

After releasing a poster in Godavari, state president of HMS, Riyaz Ahmed and district president Thota Venu alleged that from the time it came to power on May 26, 2014, the Narendra Modi government has been adopting anti-worker policies and trying to suppress the working class. The Centre is denying people, farmers and workers of their fundamental right, they said.

TEEN'S MURDER  
LEADS TO POLITICAL  
BLAME-GAMEDC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, MAY 25

The murder of a 17-year-old in Hasakothur village of Kammarpally mandal acquired political colour as TRS party and BJP leaders blamed each other for the death.

Malavath Siddarth was beaten to death on May 20 following a love affair. Hasakothur village TRS president Kanaka Rajesh and four others were arrested for alleged involvement by Kammarpally police.

Meanwhile, opposition leaders alleged that minister VPrashanth Reddy was trying to protect the main accused, Kanaka Rajesh, who was trying to project it as Covid death. They also found fault with the accused who allegedly shared his photos from jail on social media groups. TRS leaders refuted the allegations and said that opposition leaders were intentionally defaming the minister.

Meanwhile, Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind, BJP district president B.Laxminarsaiah, Palle Ganga Reddy visited the victim's family on Tuesday. They demand a full-fledged inquiry into the murder and stringent punishment for the guilty. Arvind gave ₹one lakh to the bereaved family.

BSP state leader Muthyala Sunil Reddy also demanded inquiry into the murder.

## No fear of Corona



Customers throng to buy breakfast at a roadside tiffin center without following social distancing in Secunderabad on Tuesday.

—S. SURENDER REDDY

Speed up LI  
schemes: KCR

He orders to call tenders for projects by June 15

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao on Tuesday directed officials to speed up work on all lift irrigation schemes proposed on foreshores of Nagarjunasagar reservoir as well as in undivided Nalgonda district from Devarakonda to Kodad.

The CM further ordered that officials call tenders for construction of these projects by June 15. Minister Jagadish Reddy has been asked to coordinate with irrigation department for speeding up of the foreshore schemes.

Addressing a high-level meeting on irrigation sector at Pragathi Bhavan with ministers and senior officials, Chandrasekhara Rao pointed out that Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project has become a boon for Telangana state, as it alone irrigated 35

● **THE CM** further ordered that officials call tenders for construction of these projects by June 15. Minister Jagadish Reddy has been asked to coordinate with irrigation department for speeding up of the foreshore schemes.

lakh acres of farmlands and enabled farmers to raise two crops a year. He asked officials to fill all major and minor tanks, reservoirs and check dams in the state with Kaleshwaram water in the upcoming rainy season.

The Chief Minister pointed out that 90 per cent of tanks under Kaleshwaram remained brimming with water even during summer. This resulted in significant improvement in levels of ground water across the state. In this context, he said 50 per cent of total tanks should always be full with Kaleshwaram water irre-

spective of rainfall. Rao said, "New irrigation facilities created by Telangana government have led to unprecedented increase in agriculture production. Crops are being sown in more than one crore acres. Even during the difficult Corona time last year, agriculture sector contributed 17 per cent to GDP and remained as a backbone of state's economy."

Stating that water will be available from Yellampalli to Dummugudem till October-end due to Kaleshwaram, he directed officials to fill all tanks and keep water ready for farmers to raise a second crop during the Rabi season.

At the same time, the CM said, officials should ensure that there is no drinking water shortage in any part of the state. Minimum water levels must be ensured in all the reservoirs by coordinating with Mission Bhagiratha officials, he added.

BJP DEMANDS  
ARREST OF  
UPPAL MLADC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Former MLA and senior BJP leader NVSS Prabhakar on Tuesday charged that the police had deliberately not registered any land-grabbing case against Uppal MLA Bheti Subhash Reddy.

Speaking to the media, he said that Reddy was going about his land-grabbing spree because he enjoyed the backing of ruling party big guns.

He alleged that police were extending undue favours to the legislator. Prabhakar demanded the immediate arrest of Reddy and MRO Gautam Kumar in the Kapra land scam. He said that as he enjoyed support from CMO, none dared to register a case against Reddy, despite a court order.

● **SPEAKING TO** the media, he said that Reddy was going about his land-grabbing spree because he enjoyed the backing of ruling party big guns.

Make pvt hosp  
for Covid: CongDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Congress MP Komatreddy Venkat Reddy on Tuesday filed a petition urging the Telangana High Court to direct the state government to take over all the private hospitals to provide medical care to Covid patients, as there was no vacancy of beds in government hospitals.

The MP said in the petition that there were misleading and faulty statements being made by the authorities with regard to availability of beds in government hospitals. He said he had been receiving several complaints from the relatives of Covid-19 patients about government hospitals turning them away. "Only around

6,900 beds were available in government hospitals, whereas several poor patients in a critical condition are rushing to the government hospitals for treatment. They do not get beds," the MP said in the petition.

"Please direct the government to take over the private hospitals to provide treatment to poor patients or adapt the procedure followed by Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and others which are providing free treatment to Covid-19 patients," the petition said.

The High Court refused to take it up as an urgent house motion petition and said that it could come up for regular hearing when the court starts after the summer vacation from June 1.

Fee error fixed, 30 SSC  
students to get resultsDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Over 30 SSC students of St. Adam's School in Musheerabad are likely to get their result in two-three days, Hyderabad deputy director of education Samuel Raj told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Their results were withheld ostensibly due to non-payment of exam fee to the SSC Board by the school authorities, despite collecting the same from the students.

Samuel Raj confirmed that the school had provided receipts and photostat copies of the payment. "We

● **THEIR RESULTS** were withheld ostensibly due to non-payment of exam fee to the SSC Board by the school authorities, despite collecting the same from the students.

mitted the fees via mail addressed to the Director of Education in March. "We have the proof, which we submitted to the Deputy DEO on Monday. We do not intend on creating any problems for students," the official said.

Samuel Raj confirmed that the school had provided receipts and photostat copies of the payment. "We

met the school authorities who have provided the documents for verification along with ₹1,000 challan per student due to late receipt. The documents will be sent to the SSC Board and results will be released within a few days, he said.

The Telangana government had earlier cancelled the SSC exams due to Covid-19 spread in the state and across the country. All SSC students were declared pass on the basis of year-long internal assessment. The SSC results were announced last week where most students secured a 10 CGPA.

## CHEKURI KASIAH SUCCUMBS TO CANCER

**Khammam, May 25:** Chekuri Kasiah, twice elected MLA in the seventies and chairman of Gurudakshina Foundation, passed away on Tuesday while undergoing

treatment for cancer. He was 86. He is survived by two sons. Kasiah was elected MLA from Kothagudem on a Congress ticket and then in 1978 from the Janata Party.

## OBITUARY



**Smt. Padma Gaglani**

Passed away on 25th May 2021

न जायते श्रितये वा कदाचि-शायं कृत्वा भविता न भूयः ।  
अजो मित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

The soul is not born, nor does it die; nor having been, ceases at anytime to be; unborn, unchanging, ever-abiding, primalval, it is not destroyed, when the body ceases to exist

**Pradeep Gaglani (Husband)**  
**Jayesh & Pranita Gaglani (Son & Daughter-in-law)**  
**Aditya & Megha Gaglani (Son & Daughter-in-law)**  
**Bhakti & Niraj Adajla (Daughter & Son-in-law)**  
**Pooja & Hemang Seth (Daughter & Son-in-law)**  
**Akash, Arya, Aarav, Ayaan, Sayesha, Sanya, Samara (Grand Children)**



"Your legacy of love will live on forever."

## OBITUARY

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints." Psalm 116:15



**DR. MESA ROBINS THEODORE**

DoB: 25-02-1950 DoD: 25-05-2021  
Funeral today, May 26, at 8 am at St. John's Cemetery, behind Parade Grounds, Secunderabad.  
Deeply mourned by: Mary Radha (wife), Sharon Varsha (daughter), Rajesh (son-in-law), Aariana (granddaughter), Ph: 9852263172, 7702771683.

## OBITUARY

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints." Psalm 116:15



**DR. MESA ROBINS THEODORE**

DoB: 25-02-1950 DoD: 25-05-2021  
Deeply mourned by: Lily Wilson (sister), Mesa James Samuel (brother), Angelina Clement (sis-in-law), Vijji Kishore (sis-in-law), David Suraj (brother-in-law) and all family members. Ph: 9396200057, 9985547344.

## 13th DEATH ANNIVERSARY



**S. DALIPSINGH JI WASU**

"Life is not worth living without you"

Inserted by :-  
**Mr&Mrs. GURDEEP SINGH WASU MADHUSALA**

## 16th DEATH ANNIVERSARY



**G. BALAKISHTHIAH**

(Retd. Engineer)  
Madannapet, Hyderabad  
Inserted by: **Sons, Daughters, Daughters-in-law, Brothers-in-law, Grand Sons & Grand Daughters**

## 1 Year Death Anniversary



**G. M UMAPATHI**

Sr. Dy. General Manager (Retrd), ECIL  
DOB: 06/04/1955 • DOB: 26/05/2020

We miss you a lot and you will always remain a treasure in our hearts.

Fondly remembered by :-  
**G U Santosh Kumar (Son)**  
**G. Umadevi (Wife)**

## 11th DAY CEREMONY



**Sri KOTAMARTHI SATYA BHAGAVAN**

D.O.B: 29-05-1938 D.O.D: 16-05-2021  
S/o Kotamarthi Venkanna Kakirada, A.P.

Cocoon & Palmyra Fiber Exporter  
**11th Day Ceremony on 26-05-2021**  
"You will live in our hearts forever"

We miss you. Love you.  
Inserted by: **Wife, Grand Children, Sister, Nieces & Nephews.**

(S/2122/D00240)

## SHRADHANJALI



**Y. SHIVA RAO**

OFFICER: C-MAP, Moulaali  
DOD :25-5-2021

Our Friend, Guide,  
Mentor

*You will be in our  
Hearts & Prayers  
We miss you and  
Remember you  
Fondly in every  
moment of our life*

**Prakash Ragi**  
**Ashith Ragi & Family**  
Phone: 98490-00510



**MUTHINENI BHARATHI DEVI**

W/o Late Sri M. Sambasiva Rao

Left for Heavenly  
Abode on 20.05.2021

*She Lives On  
In the Lives She Touched  
In all our Memories  
She Lives On....*

**Daughters: Sons-in-Law:**  
Ramadev - T Mallikarjuna Rao  
Vijayalakshmi - G Chandrasekhara Rao  
Sucharith - I Shiva Prasad  
And all her loving Grandchildren

H.No. 10-B, JEERA,  
RP Road Secunderabad  
**Contact: 98669 93186**

## IN LOVING MEMORY OF



**SMT. ANNAMMA ABRAHAM**

**1st Death Anniversary**

The Memory of the Just is blessed. Proverbs 10:7

Those we love don't go away,  
they walk beside us every day,  
unseen unheard but always near  
still loved still missed and very dear.

FONDLY REMEMBERED BY

N. ABRAHAM,  
SUNNY B ANIL, SUSAN B ROY, SAM B BRIDGETA,  
RHEA, ASHISH, SHREYA, LUKE B SHREEM,  
9849030225, 7893877961

## BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

"Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!"  
2 Cor 9:15



**DOLORES MARY VINAYAGAR (STUDDEN)**

W/o B. M. John Vinayagar  
D.O.B: 26-05-1953 D.O.D: 30-05-2019

We appreciate all the moments that we had together, and today being your birthday, we want you to know that every little moment spent with you were the happiest in our lives.

Inserted by: **Bommarthi John Vinayagar, Sharon Sunayna & Seelena Samantha**

(S/2122/D00244)

## I will say to YEHOUAH, you are my

refuge and my stronghold, my God in whom I trust. Psalm 91:2

## IN LOVING MEMORY OF



**BANTU ESTHER RANI JAIRAJ**

DoB: 24-12-1941 DoD: 26-05-2020

"Thank you Mom for all that you have done for us. You are always there in our hearts."

Inserted by: **Son, daughters-in-law, daughter and grandchildren.**

## 1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY



**MALGANI SWAYAM PRABHA MANI**

W/o Late M. Sree Ramulu Goud  
Malgani Family  
Relatives & Friends

Your memories will cherish in our hearts, may your soul rest in peace

(S/2122/D00235)

## IN MEMORY OF MY PARENTS



**Pastor P. PRASAD RAO & Evangelist KAMALAMMA**

D.O.D: 26-05-1998 D.O.D: 12-12-1997

Founders of Little Flock Ministries  
Elders: Pastor P. Samuel Kumar  
Daughter-in-law: B. Bharathi

Grand Daughter:  
P. Tabitha Roseline - Michael Parnandi

Grand Sons: P. Joel Samuel - Anuradha  
P. Joshua Samuel - Rathna

Great Grand Kids: Pearl - Samuel Jonathan,  
Jeremiah Samuel

Ph: 9391015893, 9949500724  
(B/2122/D00033)

## 2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY



**Smt. PULAKANTI SHAKUNTALA**

Expired On : 26th May, 2019

Your memories will remain in our hearts forever.

Inserted by: **Pulakanti Sai Kumar (son)**  
**Pulakanti Uma Devi (daughter-in-law)**  
Grand Children and Great Grand Children.

## MRS. RANI XAVIER



**MRS. RANI XAVIER**

19/04/1963 - 24/05/2021

Correspondent of St Marys High School, Poodur

Join us for prayer service on 26-05-2021 evening at our residence

Inserted by daughters, son-in-laws and grand children

## DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT



**GAFOOR UNNISA BEGUM**

Expired on 24-05-2021

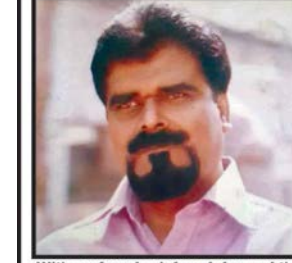
D/o. Late. Mir Roshan Ali  
W/o. Syed Baderuddin

"Your memories will remain in our hearts forever"

Inserted by: **Syed Mohammed Ali and Brothers**

**7842217509, 9848221900**

## OBITUARY



**With profound grief we inform of the sad demise of KHALED BIN ABDULLAH senior leader MIM (A.C GUARD), who passed away on the 12th of may 2021**

In grief: family & friends

Contact: 7330935653

## OBITUARY

With profound grief, we would like to inform you **Smt. Saroj Laxmi** (67 years) passed away on 24th May 2021



**SMT. SAROJ LAXMI**

May your soul rest in peace, you would be dearly missed

From Near and Dear ones

## BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE



**Smt. CASULA SHANTHI**

Retd. Superintendent P.A.O.  
W/o Casula Raghunatha Rao

D.O.B: 26-05-1944 D.O.D: 11-05-2019

Happy Birthday dear Sister. Losing you was the saddest moment ever. We deeply miss you.

Fondly Remembered by:  
**Smt. Y. Surya Kumar (Youngest Sister)**  
Ph: 9849456720 / 040 27800023



## SHORT TAKES

RESTORE FORT  
AT KONDAPALLI:  
AP LOKAYUKTADC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

Expressing concern over the dilapidated condition of historical monument Kondapalli Fort in Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh Lokayukta Justice P. Lakshman Reddy has directed the Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh archeology and museums department to immediately issue a final notification declaring 100 metre periphery of the fort as a prohibited area and 200 metre area thereafter as a regulated area.

The judge also directed the Commissioner to furnish a report on restoration and renovation works on the fort and the structures located within its precincts. He also sought details of efforts made to strengthen the walls. He also called for information on the development of the link road from the national highway to the fort.

Justice Lakshman Reddy also directed the official to explain the steps taken to restore Jaikhan building, Koneru pond and museum in the fort.

MOIN MANZIL NOT  
FOR SALE, SAYS  
WAKF BOARDDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

The Wakf Board written to the registration department, requesting it to keep the Moin Manzil property under 'auto lock' and prevent registration of any transaction on it as it is a notified Wakf property.

It was stated that the registration department had received a letter last month in the name of CEO, Wakf Board, requesting it to delete the property 'Moin Manzil' admeasuring 1,987 square yards, situated at Church Road, Gunfoundry.

The joint sub-registrar I, registration department, doubting the genuineness of the letter, had sought clarification from the Wakf Board over the no-objection certificate (NoC) that the department had received pertaining to the property.

The Deputy CEO, Wakf Board, informed the department that Moin Manzil was a notified Wakf property and requested the department not to entertain any transaction in this regard.

CROP INSURANCE  
WORTH ₹1.8K CR  
FOR AP FARMERSDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 25

As many as 15.15 lakh farmers got ₹1,829.23 crore as crop insurance in the state. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy noted that the government has taken the responsibility of supporting the farmers at all hard times and thus brought in the free crop insurance scheme, without levying the burden of premium on them.

The Chief Minister said that a total of ₹3,788.25 crore was spent on the crop insurance scheme in the last 23 months, including the pending dues of ₹715.84 crore left by the previous government. Besides these, the State government had spent ₹63,000 crore towards farmer welfare in the last 23 months. For Rythu Bharosa alone, an amount of ₹17,029 crore was spent.

## High alert for Yaas in AP

Measures being taken to ensure constant supply of power, O2

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MAY 25

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday directed District Collectors and other officials to be on high alert and follow the updates of meteorological department and act accordingly in the Yaas cyclonic conditions.

Addressing a review meeting with the District Collectors of S r i k a k u l a m, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam on the measures to be taken in the wake of Cyclone Yaas, he directed them to monitor the situation closely and help the needy without fail.

Chief Secretary Adityanath Das attended the review meeting from Srikakulam through video conference and explained the situation in the three districts. He said there was no major impact at present in Srikakulam district except little rain and added that all the higher officials were stationed in Srikakulam. He said all measures were taken ensuring no Covid patient was present in



A fisherman struggles to get his boat ashore as cyclone Yaas caused huge tides at Pedajalaripeta seashore in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. — K. MURALIKRISHNA

temporary buildings. Also, to ensure no shortage of oxygen, they arranged generators and diesel readily in case of interruption in power supply.

Srikakulam District Collector E. Nivas said they were coordinating with Odisha officials and special teams were placed in Ichapuram so that if any problem arose in transportation of Oxygen

tankers, it can be immediately addressed.

Vizianagaram District Collector Jawahar said no impact of the cyclone was seen in the district so far and they are well-prepared to deal with any event. He said all generators were arranged at 28 Covid hospitals in the district and added that enough diesel was available for four days. He said they even arranged gas

cylinders in Covid care centers to ensure no shortage to food. Poles and transformers were also readily kept in case of any problem in power supply and added IMD alerts are being shared with mandal-level officers.

Visakhapatnam Collector Vinay Chand said the situation was normal in the district and they were fully prepared

● **SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT** Collector E. Nivas said they were coordinating with Odisha officials and special teams were placed in Ichapuram so that if any problem arose in transportation of Oxygen tankers, it can be immediately addressed.

to deal with the cyclone. He said measures were being taken to ensure uninterrupted power supply to oxygen plants and cylinder filling plants. All precautionary measures were taken at 80 hospitals where Covid patients were being treated. Alternative preparations were also in place if power was disrupted, he added.

M u n i c i p a l Administration and Urban Development Minister Botsa S a t y a n a r a y a n a, Agriculture Minister Kurasala Kannababu, Agriculture Mission Vice Chairman M.V.S. Nagi Reddy, Agriculture Special Chief Secretary Poonam Malakondaiah, Agriculture Commissioner H. Aruna Kumar and other officials were present.

## Fire at HPCL refinery in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 25

A major fire broke out at one of the crude processing distillation units – CD3 – at Visakh Refinery of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), at Malkapuram here on Tuesday afternoon. The incident took place about 3 pm and the in-house fire fighting system brought the fire under control within an hour. No loss of life or injuries were reported.

GVMC regional fire officer Niranjan Reddy, who rushed there along



Thick smoke oozes out of a crude processing unit at HPCL's Visakh Refinery following a fire mishap at Malkapuram in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. — P. NARASIMHA MURTHY

with a team, said that soon after the fire start-

ed, the technical staff cut off the supply line and

allowed the leftover crude to burn. The cooling process was immediately initiated, he said. District Fire Officer Ram Prakash said the fire mishap was due to a mechanical failure that took place at a height of 30 meters on a pipeline.

"Preliminary reports said the pipeline was worn out which led to leak and subsequently caught fire as the crude oil was heated at 120 degree Celsius. However, a full technical report on the incident would be available after two weeks."

RAILWAYS  
CANCEL TRAINS  
AHEAD OF  
CYCLONE YAASDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

The railways said on Tuesday that it had cancelled one set of trains due to Cyclone Yaas, which will make landfall on Wednesday on the Odisha-Bengal border, and two others due to poor patronage.

No. 08189 from Tatanagar to Ernakulam was cancelled on May 27 due to the cyclone, and No. 08190 on May 30 in the reverse direction. Due to poor patronage, the railways has cancelled Trains 07415/6 between Tirupati and Chatrapati Sahu Maharaj Terminus and Trains 07247/8 between Narsapur and Dharmavaram till the end of the month.

● **NO. 08189** from Tatanagar to Ernakulam was cancelled on May 27 due to the cyclone, and No. 08190 on May 30 in the reverse direction.

Hyd start-up says  
launched first  
ion-based air maskDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 25

A Hyderabad-based Taradiddle Digital LLP launched what it said was the first-of-its-kind Wolf air mask, which it claimed is an innovative ion-based technology that neutralises all viruses and bacteria, including the Corona-virus.

The mask is a portable device which can be installed at commercial and residential spaces, it said.

Jagadeesh Bakthavachalam from Taradiddle Digital LLP, speaking during the launch, said, "With the current surge in Covid-19 cases, the Wolf air mask is being used extensively nationwide to suppress the spread and ensure a healthy work environment by numerous government bodies like medical colleges and corporations."

According to a press release, he said that



The Wolf air mask being launched in the city. — DC

● **THE MASK** is a portable device which can be installed at commercial and residential spaces.

this device has an efficacy rate of 99.9 per cent after numerous tests conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research's laboratory and research center under the Centre.

## TSCOGF CONCERNED OVER PALM COSTS

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, MAY 25

Cooperative Oilseeds Growers Federation (TSCOGF), which operates two palm oil factories.

The price difference of oil palm fresh fruit bunch in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana has turned problematic for Telangana State

The modal (most common) retail prices of edible oil have increased by 50 per cent in the past one year.



**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR COLLEGE OF NURSING**  
**LAJPAT NAGAR IV, NEAR MOOLCHAND METRO**  
**STATION, NEW DELHI-110024.**

Tel. Nos. 011-2643 6788, 2643 5270.  
E-Mail-PRINCIPAL@RAKCON.COM

**ADMISSION NOTICE**  
**M.Sc. NURSING (Session 2021-2022)**  
**Affiliated to University of Delhi.**

Applications are invited for admission to M.Sc. Nursing (2 years), session 2021-2022. Prescribed application forms with prospectus can be downloaded from college website [www.rakcon.com](http://www.rakcon.com) and should be submitted (by hand or by post) in the college till 14/06/2021 by 5.00 p.m. on payment of Rs. 550/- by Demand Draft in favour of **Principal, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur College of Nursing** payable at New Delhi. The timings for submission of forms will be from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on all working days i.e. Monday to Friday except gazetted holidays.

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The Candidate must have passed the B.Sc. (Hons.) Nursing Examination (12+4) years of the University of Delhi or a Degree recognized as equivalent thereto with at least 55% marks in the aggregate and completed one year experience in Nursing in a Hospital/Specialty Institute/Educational Institution or Public Health/Agency. The experience will be calculated up to 17th May, 2021. The selection test will be held on **27th June, 2021 (Sunday) at 10.00 a.m.**

Davp 17149/11/0001/2122

NORTHERN RAILWAY				
Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system				
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-				
S.No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	07211333	HAND BRAKE COLUMN	500 NOS	18-06-21
02	12211386A	FRLT CONTON INSULATION TAPE FOR ELECTRICAL	739980 MTR	21-06-21
03	20203856	GLASS FIBER BAG FITTER FOR ALCO LOCOMOTIVES	609 NOS	21-06-21
04	19210887	NI-CD BATTERY SET FOR ELECTIC LOCOMTIVE	33 SET	22-06-21
05	07211152	HEAD STOCK COMPLETE	271 NOS	28-06-21
06	07211077	REAR COVER FOR AXLE BOX	18149 NOS	28-06-21
07	07211067	AXLE BOX HOUSING	2578 NOS	28-06-21
08	07201074	GANGWAY BRIDGE	712 NOS	28-06-21
09	09213284	FABRICATED SIDE STANCHION,	1691 NOS	28-06-21
10	07211454	SCREW COUPLING ASSEMBLY	1459 NOS	28-06-21
11	09213050	GENTIAN BLUE ENAMEL PAINT	262260 LTR	28-06-21
12	09212504	CONSTANT CONTACT POLYURETHANE SIDE BEARER PAD ASSEMBLY	1277 NOS	30-06-21
13	09212136	COUPLER BODY WITH SHANK WEAR PLATE	115 NOS	30-06-21
14	08201507	LOW MAINTENANCE LEAD ACID SECONDARY CELL 2V/300AH	2503 NOS	30-06-21

NOTE :- 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained. Tender Notice No. 13/2021-22 Dated : 25.05.2021 1122/2021



सत्यमेव जयते

**Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**  
**Government of India**

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Section 22 of the PC-PNDT Act, 1994 prohibits any advertisement in any form, **including internet** relating to preconception and prenatal determination of sex or sex selection.

**Any contravention is punishable with imprisonment up to 3 years and with fine up to 10,000/-**

Anyone (any person) who comes across anything that has the nature of an advertisement related to preconception and prenatal determination of sex or sex selection in any method, manner or mode by any E-commerce Websites (e g. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com), [www.alibaba.com](http://www.alibaba.com), flipkart etc.) may bring it to the notice of the Nodal Agency through e-mail or phone.

E-mail : [pcpndtcomplaints@nihfw.org](mailto:pcpndtcomplaints@nihfw.org)

Telephone Nos. : 011-26165959/26107773  
26166441/26185696, Ext-125

Davp 17102/11/0001/2122

## TRAGIC | NEWS Victims part of 35-member group returning home

## 8 dead after boats capsize

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 25

Tragedy struck the agency tracts when eight persons, including children and women, all guest workers from Odisha, drowned after two country boats capsized in Sileru Reservoir along the Andhra-Odisha Border (AOB) on Monday night.

The incident took place when 35 members of migrant families were trying to sneak into the Odisha border at night, fearing lockdown clampdown. Ten persons managed to swim ashore, while eight others drowned in the river.

The police said that the 35 members of guest workers from Guntawada and

● **THE POLICE** said that seven among the eight victims were children and women. The bodies were shifted to a local hospital in Odisha for post mortem. A 13-month-old baby also died in the incident.

Konduguda villages under Malkangiri district in Odisha reached Sileru from Hyderabad as they lost their livelihoods due to the Covid-19 curfew. After crossing the Sileru check post in a vehicle, they reached Jonnalamamidi village on foot and decided to take a boat ride to reach their hometowns as they feared they may be stopped

at the border by Odisha officials.

In the first trip, 17 people set off in two country boats and crossed over to Odisha. In the second trip, 18 persons set sail in the same country boats. When the first country boat capsized allegedly due to the overload or the boat hitting a pole underneath the water, the panic-stricken occupants jumped into the other boat to save their lives. But it too gave in and sank in the river.

Chintapalle ASP Vidya Sagar Naidu said that a team of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force with the support of AP police and other departments launched a search and res-

cue operation to trace the missing eight persons. They recovered six bodies so far from the river and the search is on to trace the remaining two bodies.

The police said that seven among the eight victims were children and women. The bodies were shifted to a local hospital in Odisha for post mortem. A 13-month-old baby also died in the incident.

Meanwhile, AP minister for health Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas asked the Visakhapatnam district authorities to take up rescue operations. He also asked them to ensure proper treatment to the people who managed to swim ashore.



# DECCAN Chronicle

26 MAY 2021

## Vaccines: Fix schedule, focus on procurement

Several state chief ministers are now a frustrated lot, what with their unsuccessful attempts to procure Covid-19 vaccines from the global market. Some of them have demanded that the Union government procure and distribute the doses to them. This is a demand the Centre must consider a top priority as the information from the field on vaccination is thoroughly disappointing.

It's a fact that India launched the world's largest vaccination programme in January but its pace has been on a downward slide as it has progressed. As of now, India has been able to fully vaccinate only around five crore people while it has administered at least a single dose to 19 crore people. Latest reports say that the average number of weekly administration of doses has fallen below one crore, almost a third of the figures one month ago when the drive was at its peak. Of this, almost half is being done by the state governments with the vaccines they procured from the market. However, several states, including Maharashtra and Delhi, have closed down their vaccination camps opened for

**The stand of the foreign manufacturers exposes the specious argument advanced by the apparatchiks of the ruling dispensation that the government was following the demand raised by the states for decentralisation of vaccination**

people aged between 18 and 44 years; several others have complained that the Centre's supply of vaccine for those aged 45 and above is dwindling and the entire vaccination programme is now on a crawl. The story, in short, is that the programme is gasping for breath at a time it has to pace at full throttle. This is an unfortunate mess the government has created, and the government alone can clean it up.

The first step towards this end is for the government to take charge of vaccine procurement instead of making the state governments scour the international market with their limited experience and resources. That is made necessary for another reason, too: several prominent vaccine manufacturers have made it clear to them that they have no plans to do business with state governments or private companies and will deal directly with national governments. This stand of the foreign manufacturers also exposes the specious argument advanced by the apparatchiks of the ruling dispensation that the government was following the demand raised by the states for decentralisation of vaccination. It cannot be that the Union government is completely unaware of such setbacks. One fails to understand why the Centre makes state governments waste precious time competing unsuccessfully with one another at a juncture when they must be engaged in fighting the virus on the ground.

The government must not only take over the procurement process but also announce a proper schedule with definite milestones in the number of vaccinations to be administered before the third wave hits the nation. The schedule must be convincing in that it must specify how and when the government plans to procure the vaccine, whether from within the country or abroad and how it plans to reach the last man.

It will be too risky for this nation to think that it can ward off a third wave of the pandemic with an ostrich-like attitude. It must act, instead.

## Freedom of speech in peril

The ruling party BJP and the Union government seem bent upon escalating the "Toolkit" issue through its proxy, the Delhi Police, with its big-footed and ham-handed ways of investigation. But this is only a small part of a larger pattern of official India operations to regulate digital content and which aim at not only muzzling criticism but to erase it altogether from popular social media platforms.

An even bigger issue lies ahead as major social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are yet to comply with a May 25 deadline when government's new IT rules heralding a new digital ethics code, a three-tier supervisory system and a grievance redressal mechanism were to kick in. The very foundations of freedom of speech and expression are in peril as India tries to turn social media intermediaries, which post the contribution of individuals, into legally liable entities as "publishers" of content.

The police raids on Twitter offices in and around the capital New Delhi on Monday were clear attempts at intimidation and come in the wake of a clumsy attempt at counter propaganda by a prominent national spokesperson of the BJP, who had been adjudged to have manipulated media in making allegations against a person with avowed links to a major Opposition party.

Twitter may only have been responding to complaints from the Congress about certain tweets ascribed to persons with links to the party. Twitter has the technical capabilities to judge whether there was media manipulation in those tweets but the Delhi police put out a pedantic defence of its action on the grounds that the matter is under investigation and hence Twitter should not have been pro-active in judging the posts by BJP representatives.

As the BJP indulges in a blame game in these distracting sideshows while attempting image management, the country is being deprived of consolidated efforts against the second wave of the coronavirus. The perception is the battle against the pandemic is being progressively lost as evidenced in the shortage of medical oxygen, hospital beds and critical drugs even as mortality rates have risen though positivity rates are dipping.

### DECCAN CHRONICLE

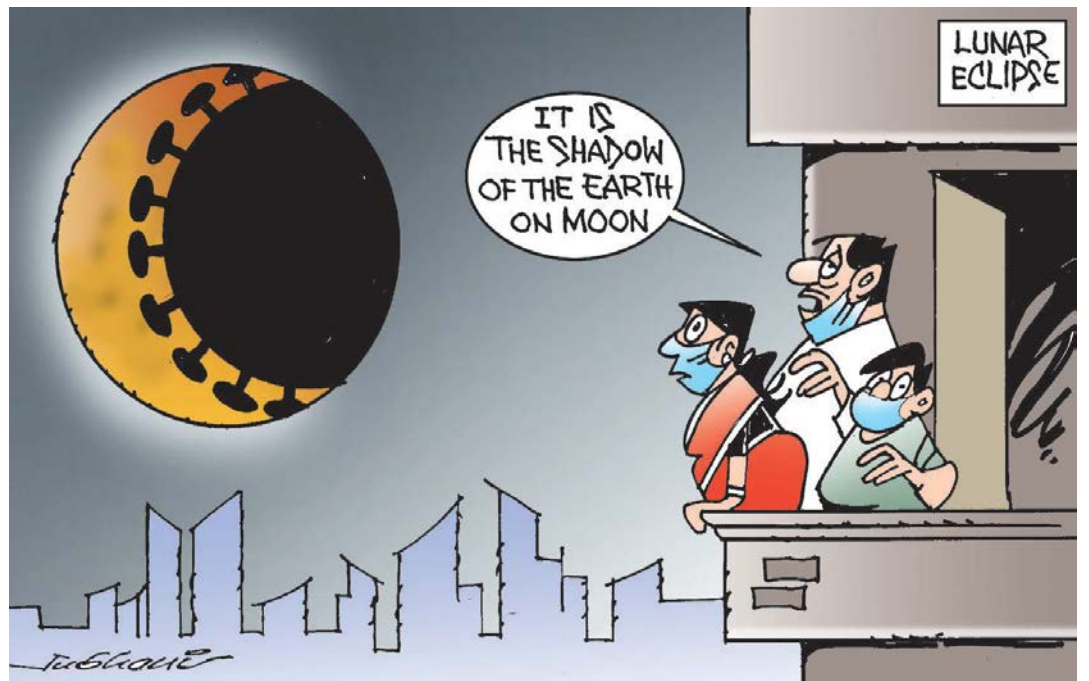
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Subhani



## Hubris, narcissism and moment of 'hamartia'



Mohan Guruswamy

The Greeks had words for every personality frailty. In the present case three of these words are of relevance to us: (1) Hubris; (2) Hamartia; and (3) Narcissism. Hubris is described in the dictionary to simply mean "excessive pride or self-confidence; arrogance". Hamartia is usually an artifact in Greek drama that initiates a "movement of spirit" within the protagonist to commit actions which drive the plot towards its tragic end. Narcissism is the pursuit of gratification from vanity or egotistic admiration of one's idealised self-image and attributes. The term originated from Greek mythology, where a young man named Narcissus fell in love with his own image reflected in a pool of water. In the drama of Narendra Modi today, we see quite a bit of the hubris and overweening narcissism, both fatal flaws. The question before us now is whether this is the moment of hamartia which will drive the plot to its tragic end?

The sin of hubris has been a continuing theme that has captured the imagination of historians, philosophers and theologians alike. The Biblical saying "pride cometh before the fall" applies equally well to Ravan, the great king of the Rakshasas whose long years of penance secured him the favour of Brahma, who rendered him invulnerable to the gods and demons alike. We know what happened to him. We, the lesser Hindus, also know that it's not necessary to be a tyrant in order to attract the malefic attentions of the gods. Bali, the celebrated *daiitya*, rose to such an eminence that

Indra and the other gods had to seek the intervention of Vishnu, who once again obliged the devas by consigning Bali to *patala*, or the nether-world.

On April 19, 1959, Cuba's Fidel Castro paid his first post-revolution visit to Washington and met then vice-president Richard M. Nixon for three and a half hours. Following this meeting Nixon appraised him thus: "The one fact we can be sure of is that he has those indefinable qualities that make him a leader of men. Whatever we may think of him, he is going to be a great factor in the development of Cuba and possibly in Latin American affairs generally." In October that year, President Dwight D. Eisenhower authorised a plan to overthrow Castro.

The plan called for the landing in Cuba of a force of Cuban émigré fighters armed and trained by the CIA. This force was then meant to storm its way inland, releasing in its wake a popular upsurge that would topple Castro, just like he did the dictator Fulgencio Batista. Fortunately for Castro, Bay of Pigs, the place chosen for the landing, suffered from two crucial disadvantages. The beach was close to Castro's favorite holiday home and hence had a Cuban military unit garrisoned on it. The shallow waters of the bay also concealed shoals that required the landing force to wade ashore from a great distance, making them sitting ducks. That is precisely what happened. As US warships watched helplessly, President John F. Kennedy realised that he was led up the path and the CIA's urgent pleas for US air strikes would strip whatever was left of the fig leaf of innocence donned by the

**The PM then went on to push his luck a bit further by claiming that India, as the world's largest vaccine producer, would assume the charge of saving the world! He even announced that this was a turning point in India's economic history...**

United States. He abandoned the landing force to its fate. The few who survived ended up in Cuban jails. When asked what went wrong, JFK's national security adviser McGeorge Bundy replied: "Hubris!"

In February 1961, Robert McNamara, a brilliant Harvard MBA and a former head of Ford Motor Company, took over as the US defence secretary. He took with him an equally brilliant team of systems analysts who were to transform the way the US fought its wars in the future.

The systems analysts quantified everything. Every weapons system ordered was subject to a cost-benefit analysis. Even military results were quantified in terms of "area pacified" and "body count".

When Clark Clifford, who took over from McNamara as defence secretary, topped up all the "body count" figures of the war, he found it had exceeded all intelligence estimates of enemy combatants by over half! When he asked: "Why are we then still fighting?", President Lyndon Johnson knew that he too was led up the path. Some years ago I met Robert McNamara at a seminar on the Cuban missile crisis organised by Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. I asked him how he had got it so wrong. He replied with one word: "Hubris".

In 1987, Indian troops went into Sri Lanka at the invitation of the two warring parties to impose an agreement midwifed by

then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. When the LTTE reneged on it, the then Indian Army Chief, Gen. Krishnaswamy Sundarji, assured the government that he would be able to eliminate or disarm the LTTE in just a few weeks. We know what happened. It continues to be sad chapter in the Indian Army's history. It even cost Rajiv Gandhi his life. The question that baffles is how is it that the Indian Army ended up fighting a group that was fostered and supported by the Indian government? And what made the Indian Army think that it would be able to wipe out its onetime protégé in just weeks, if not days? Hubris?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on January 28 this year, virtually addressing the World Economic Forum's Davos Dialogue, had declared India as one of the countries that had successfully controlled the coronavirus. He said: "India took a proactive public participation approach and developed a Covid-specific health infrastructure and trained its resources to fight Covid." He went on to declare "mission accomplished", very much like President George W. Bush had declared atop an aircraft-carrier off the coast of Iraq. He then went on the push his luck a bit further by claiming that India, as the world's largest vaccine producer, would now assume the charge of saving the world! He even announced that this was a turning point in India's economic history and that India was once again poised for greatness.

Was this his moment of "hamartia"? Will this take us to the denouement or the final part of a play, film or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are resolved and the theatre ends?

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

### LETTERS

#### HELP THE POOR

The Telangana state government should seriously think about the helpless poor who find it difficult to make ends meet (*Lockdown to get extended, DC, May 25*). These are the people who survive on day-to-day earnings. Supply of food by NGOs will not be sufficient to all. Let the government at least supply them with medicines and essentials on a regular basis so that they do not feel the pangs even if the lockdown is extended for a week.

**Fatima Zafar**  
Secunderabad

#### EXTEND LOCKDOWN

The TS government's probable plan to extend the lockdown up to June 7 is most welcome (*Lockdown likely to get extended, DC, May 25*). The only way to contain the spread of the virus is strict implementation of the lockdown. Hope people of the state cooperate.

**C.K. Vinaya Chandra**  
Hyderabad

#### IMA'S DUAL POLICY

Countless corruption cases in many hospitals involving medical services and doctors were reported during the Covid-19 pandemic. But, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has not taken any hard-core action against its own institutions. However, when yoga guru Baba Ramdev made comments on Allopathy, the IMA erupted strongly.

**Prasanna Venkatapur**  
Hyderabad

### 50 YEARS AGO IN

## DECCAN Chronicle

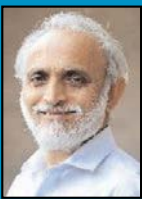
### 69 die in pre-dawn tragedy

HYDERABAD, May 25.

Death came in the most cruel way to 69 persons 34 of them children of Palem village, near Kothakota, 10 miles from Wanaparthy; in the early hours today.

Palem is 135 kms from Hyderabad. A truck, No. APQ 4045, driven by Silarmiah, and bound for Kurnool from Hyderabad, ploughed into an audience which was witnessing a Bhagavatham, at around 3 am today. Fifty-four persons were injured — ten of them seriously. The injured were rushed to Wanaparthy hospital and Mahboobnagar.

Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr



## As the Covid-19 pandemic rises, it's crucial to get 'numbers' right

Looking at the Covid-19 infection numbers which rose steadily from 33,610 in April 2020 to 1,82,143 in May, 5,66,840 in June (these were also the months of a total national lockdown) to 16,38,870 in July, 36,21,245 in August and peaked at 62,25,763 in September, it is evident the increase was at an alarming rate. In the same period, deaths due to Covid-19 rose from 1,075 to 97,497. While the total infections figure remained high, there was a monthly decline in new infections afterwards. For example, total infections in September were 26,04,518, in October 19,11,356, in November 12,94,572, in December 8,34,983. The lowest monthly rise was in January 2021, compared to December 2020: 4,79,509. It declined further to 3,50,548 from February-end to March-end this year.

There was a spurt in the numbers between the end of March and the end of April: 66,13,641. It seems the gap between the first and second waves was too short. There was no room for declaring the Covid-19 ended either at the end of January or end of February as there was just a decline in numbers but the monthly figures remained sub-

stantial. They show Covid-19 was still raging. Again, the decrease in infections can't be attributed to the phased vaccination programme rolled out on January 16. The infection was moving along a trajectory of its own and the vaccination on its own. Somewhere the two trajectories should reach a point in future, either at the end of this year or sometime in 2022, or even later, when the infections must touch zero and the vaccinations should be at a permanent peak.

When the first wave receded in January-February this year, and the second wave surge became evident in April, the interpreters of Covid-19 numbers made the error of believing things were getting better. It's not just the issue of learning from the pattern seen in other countries that there was an imminent second wave. The first wave numbers didn't flatten enough for even a robust optimist to turn one's back on the pandemic. It's unnecessary to attack Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his team for getting the Covid numbers for January/February wrong. The false glimmer of hope created by the receding first wave was a natural

one. Caution would have dictated that the fall in number of infections, however encouraging, wasn't good enough to believe that the trouble had ended.

For long we have believed numbers are sure indicators, that they don't deceive. Most of the time and in most contexts the belief in numbers is justified. But this turns out to be a simplistic assumption when we are dealing with biological phenomenon. It's indeed a matter of debate whether viruses are biological creatures. Though population genetics brings mathematics and biology quite close, we have seen that mathematical models for the coronavirus, especially Covid-19, has been a non-starter.

The infection rates and the fatality rates can serve in inferring some kind of mathematical modelling, but it's unlikely to help in predicting the patterns of the spread of infection or the rate of fatality in a definitive sense. This poses problems for epidemiologists and for governments to manage an epidemic. So, the Covid-19 infection rates in India and in the world which the different dashboards are displaying are signs of how things happened

but the numbers on these dashboards can't be used to predict the future behaviour of Covid-19. The fluctuating graph doesn't point to either the end of the pandemic or its unrelenting course. The infection and fatality figures might just stop blipping on these dashboards. But this cannot be taken to mean that it's all over, or if it comes back against it will be easy to predict its patterns.

The weapons at our disposal to deal with a pandemic like Covid-19 are the vaccines and therapeutic drugs, which need to be modified constantly as mutations emerge in the virus. It's a constant battle, and of course it's not all chaos. There's a certain stability which allows doctors and researchers to work with vaccines and drugs. Even if you succeed in containing Covid-19 and some other similar coronaviruses, the dangers of other pandemics are not ruled out. And with every new menace, you must fight with whatever we have on hand, including drugs that worked earlier and may not work now, and vaccines which were successful may not do the job this time around.

This uncertainty is bad news for

political leaders as they are quite keen on defeating opponents and they love to celebrate victories. The Covid-19 pandemic is proving to be a party-pooper for them. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath are all hell-bent on defeating Covid-19, but their naivety in the matter is not amusing. The medical emergency gives them plenty of opportunity to prove their leadership skills like issuing orders, the one thing leaders enjoy the most. But dealing with a pandemic is a long-drawn affair. It's not just about issuing orders. All that one can succeed is either to contain and minimise its impact, and deal with reconstruction work to undo the destruction it has caused. There is no room for loud and vulgar war cries of victory. Meanwhile, the numbers will need to be tracked as meticulously as possible because they can help in a limited way to deal with the pandemic. But there will be no magical patterns and solutions in the numbers.

*The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst*



## SHORT TAKES

## SCBA WANTS MORE VACATION BENCHES

PARMOD KUMAR | DC  
NEW DELHI, MAY 25

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president Vikas Singh on Tuesday wrote to Chief Justice N.V. Ramana, requesting that the number of vacation benches and the category of matters they can hear be increased and the system of oral mentioning be restored.

“Today’s cause list also surprisingly states that no oral mentioning will be allowed whereas this has never been a practice of this court to forbid mentioning before vacation benches,” Singh wrote.

The SCBA is a body of the lawyers practising in the top court.

Noting that he has been practising in the Supreme Court for more than 30 years, Singh wrote that the practice being followed for hearing matters during the break has always been that a vacation judge/bench exercised powers in respect of all special benches as well as hearing a particular matter if a case for urgency was made out and some urgent orders were required to be passed.

Singh also mentioned that only two courts are functioning during the present vacation despite the fact that there has been a huge rise in pending cases due to the pandemic and a large number of matters are awaiting hearing.

Oral mentioning is a convention by which lawyers short-circuit the long-winded filing procedures and make a direct appeal to the CJI, who is the court’s administrative head and master of roster, for early hearing.

## ENSURE SAFETY OF COVID-ORPHANED KIDS: DELHI GOVT

**New Delhi, May 25:** The Delhi government’s Social Welfare Department has written to all district magistrates and child care institutions in the city to ensure immediate action for rehabilitation of children orphaned due to Covid-19 in accordance with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act.

The directives come after the Union ministry of women and child development wrote to all states and Union territories, asking them to take immediate measures for such children.

The ministry had asked states to direct district magistrates to ensure that “immediate action is taken for rehabilitation of Covid-orphaned children in accordance with the provisions of the Act, and rules thereunder, while leveraging the facilities funded under the scheme for Child Protection Services”.

The district administration can take all necessary measures to restore normalcy in the life of such children on immediate basis and they will be assisted by all stakeholder agencies, including those working for protection of children i.e. local police, district child protection unit, child welfare committees etc, it had said.

## MAHA TO FOCUS ON CONTRACT TRACING

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, MAY 25

With Covid cases in the state on the decline, the Maharashtra government has decided to focus on contact tracing and testing instead of general testing of people. Those who are in contact with Covid patients will only be tested across the state.

“We have to avoid random testing of people and testing has to be done in focused manner. Once a person tests positive for Coronavirus, all high and low risks persons, who may have come in contact with the patient, should be tested. The district collectors have been instructed to carry out focused testing rather than the random testing in large numbers,” said state health minister Rajesh Tope.

There has been a drop in Covid patients in Maharashtra in recent days with Tuesday recording 24,136 new cases, while 36,176 patients recovered. More than 52 lakh patients have been discharged after full recovery so far. Tuesday also recorded 601 Covid-19 deaths, taking the total number of deaths in the state to 90,349.

● **THERE HAS** been a drop in Covid patients in Maharashtra in recent days with Tuesday recording 24,136 new cases, while 36,176 patients recovered.



Army personnel distribute relief material among transgenders at a park in Srinagar on Tuesday. Jammu and Kashmir recorded 2,964 fresh cases of Covid-19, raising its tally to 2,75,822, while 53 more deaths pushed the fatality count to 3,662.

— PTI

## Maha ends home isolation for patients in 18 districts

Babus told to set up Covid care centres, admit all symptomatic patients

## Cases continue to drop; Assam extends curfew

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 25

**Mumbai, May 25:** The Maharashtra government has decided to stop home quarantining of Covid-19 patients in 18 districts where the positivity rate is high and all active patients in these areas would be admitted to Covid Care Centers, health minister Rajesh Tope said here on Tuesday.

Of 36 districts in the state, Satara, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri, Osmanabad, Beed, Raigad, Pune, Hingoli, Akola, Amravati, Kolhapur, Thane, Sangli, Gadchiroli, Wardha, Nashik, Ahmednagar and Latur have above-average positivity rates, as per the health department data.

Ordinarily, asymptomatic patients or those who have mild symptoms of Coronavirus infection are advised home isolation.

The state has 3,27,000 active Covid-19 cases and the recovery rate has improved to 93 per cent. The case positivity rate — proportion of positive cases in tested samples — is around 12 per cent while the case fatality rate is 1.5 per cent, Tope told reporters.

But the positivity rate in 18 districts is higher than the state average, he said.

“The state government has decided to stop home isolation completely in these 18 districts. The district collectors have been asked to set up more Covid Care Centers (CCCs) and admit all active patients there,” he said. The collectors have also been asked to utilise the funds from the premium collected on the auction of minor minerals for setting up CCCs in villages, he added.

## AHEAD OF YAAS, ODISHA SETS UP COVID CENTRES

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANEWAR, MAY 25

The Odisha government which is gearing up to tackle cyclone Yaas has set up treatment centres for Covid-19 positive persons to ensure that people do not get infected with the virus.

The treatment centres have been set up at safe distances from the cyclone shelters.

Over 800 flood and cyclone shelters in the coastal pockets of Odisha have accommodated people from sea-side villages while nearly 100 treatment centres have been built to take care of Covid-19 patients.

Schools, colleges and government office buildings, which are lying vacant, have also been used as cyclone and treatment shelters.

In May 2020, 80 separate shelters were turned into Covid-19.

**New Delhi, May 25:** Amid rising mucormycosis cases among Covid patients and those who have recovered from it, epidemiologists on Tuesday advised people to not get panicked by the colour of the fungus causing it, and underlined the importance of analysing the kind of infection, its causes and associated risk-factors.

Health minister Harsh Vardhan had said on Monday that 18 states have reported 5,424 cases of mucormycosis, a life-threatening infection, prevalent among Covid-19 patients and those who recovered from the viral disease. Beside Black Fungus cases, White and Yellow fungus infections too were reported from different parts of the country recently, which scientists say are also mucormycosis.

Dr Samiran Panda, the Head of Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases at the Indian Council of

rate to 89.26 per cent. Delhi, the nation’s capital, that has borne the second wave’s brutal brunt between April and May, is now witnessing huge relief as the detection of new cases fell to 1,568 on Tuesday and the positivity rate declined to 2.14 per cent. However, 156 deaths still remain an area of concern though hospitals are now seeing less serious patients, and of the 25,035 beds, only 7,872 are occupied.

However, patients in ICUs and on ventilators or on oxygen support are still high. Despite a slide in cases, the states continue to show caution. Assam on Tuesday extended curfew in urban areas till June 5. As per new orders, all shops, commercial establishments and offices — both government and private — will shut down by 1 pm on all days.

All district collectors have also been directed to complete fire safety audits of hospitals in their areas, he informed.

Asha (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers will be trained to Conduct Rapid Antigen Tests and use self-testing kits, Tope said, adding they will be asked to encourage villagers to undergo testing and also to spread awareness about

The second wave has also left the fate of CBSE students in suspense. Union education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal “Nishank” had asked state education ministers to give suggestions on the holding of CBSE Class 12 exams. Delhi’s deputy CM and education minister Manish Sisodia has urged the Centre to vaccinate students before the exams. “If we cannot vaccinate school students, we advise that board exams be cancelled this year. The result can be declared based on their performance in the last two years. A “Plan B” can be prepared for students disagreeing with it,” Sisodia said at the meeting.

Punjab education minister Vijay Inder Singla too rooted for vaccination of students before the exams and said exams in only selected subjects should be held.

the importance of vaccination.

On the global tender issued by the state for coronavirus vaccines, the minister said, there has been no response from any vaccine producer. We have sent emails for Sputnik-V vaccine (to the Russian manufacturing firm) but are yet to hear from them. The Centre should float a tender on behalf of the states.”

— PTI

## ‘RUSSIAN VACCINES ARE RELIABLE LIKE KALASHNIKOV’S’

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC  
NEW DELHI, MAY 25

Russian vaccines are reliable like Kalashnikov rifles since they are based on technology used for decades, Russian Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Roman Babushkin said on Tuesday, telling reporters that supplies of the Russian Sputnik V vaccine to India are going on as per contractual obligations and that Russia is studying very carefully new requests for the vaccines from various Indian state governments and Indian companies.

The Russian DCM was speaking to news agencies after an aircraft landed from Russia with vials of anti-viral drug remdesivir along with other medicines used in the fight against Covid.

While India has already approved use of the Sputnik V double-dose vaccine, the Russian DCM also said that the third phase clinical trials are on for the Sputnik Lite single-dose vaccine, adding that its potential use in India also would help vaccinate a large number of people in a short period of time.

The Sputnik V double dose vaccine is already a shot in the arm for India which is looking to vaccinate its 1.3 billion population as quickly as possible.

## Covid medicines, vaccines being smuggled to Nepal

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 25

The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), the border guarding force for the Indo-Nepal border, has further intensified patrolling along the entire border following reports that critical medicines, vaccines, oxygen concentrators and other medical equipment were being smuggled from India to Nepal to be sold at a whopping profit there in wake of the Corona pandemic.

There were Intelligence reports suggesting that some organised criminal gangs operating along the Bihar and Uttar Pradesh borders of Nepal were taking advantage of the pandemic there and were involved in smuggling of crucial medicines and other medical equipment from India.

Following this additional troops were deployed in the border areas and SSB was now very closely monitoring the situation there.

Even the local police of border districts of Bihar and UP were assisting central forces in this increased vigilance. Home ministry has

issued strict instructions to all law enforcement agencies to take stern action to check black marketing or smuggling of essential medicine and medical equipment both within the country or to neighbouring countries also.

Intelligence reports had also cautioned the ministry that some Chinese made medical equipment, particularly oxygen concentrators, were being smuggled into India through the Nepal route and were being sold at exorbitant prices in the country.

“Cases have come to light from different states that Chinese-made oxygen concentrators have been smuggled into India using the Nepal route and then sold at a huge profit. This came to light during the Khan Market case also. So we can say that smuggling of essential medicine and medical equipment is happening both ways along the Nepal border. Deployment has been increased along the vulnerable points and patrolling has been further intensified to stop this trend,” a senior SSB official remarked.

## Shivraj govt goes for global tenders

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, MAY 25

In a U-turn, the state government on Tuesday decided to go for global tender to procure anti-Covid-19 vaccines for inoculation of 18-plus age group in Madhya Pradesh.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan who had last week spurned the idea of taking recourse to the global tender route to procure vaccines for adults in MP, has now reversed his decision considering the ‘demand-supply gap’ of the vaccines.

He had indicated his reluctance to go for global tender to purchase vaccines at the meeting of industrialists here on May 19, saying that he was not sure of the effectiveness of the route to deliver.

The state cabinet which met here gave its nod to float global tender to procure Covishield and Covaxin vaccines. Infact, the matter did not figure in the original agenda of Tuesday’s cabinet meeting.

The cabinet agenda was revised to include it at Chouhan’s instruction, sources in the Chief Minister’s office disclosed to this newspaper.

“It has been decided in the cabinet meeting to float a global tender to procure Covishield and Covaxin vaccines considering the current situa-

● **THE CHIEF** Minister who had last week spurned the idea of taking recourse to the global tender route, has now reversed his decision considering the ‘demand-supply gap’ of vaccines.

tion of demand-supply gap of the vaccines”, state home minister Narottam Mishra told reporters here in his post-cabinet meeting briefing. The state government has also dropped the idea to procure Pfizer and Moderna mRNA-1273 vaccines since the manufacturers of the vaccine candidates have made it clear that they would deal with the Government of India only and not any states.

Madhya Pradesh, like other states, is facing a challenge to procure vaccines for inoculation of the 18 plus age group in the state due to short supply of the vaccines.

The state government had in the first week of May placed orders for procurement of 4.76 crore doses of Covishield and 52.25 lakh doses of Covaxin.

The state expects to get only five lakh doses of vaccines by the end of May.

Madhya Pradesh deferred the vaccination drive for the 18 plus age group, scheduled to be launched on May 1, by five days following delay in supply of vaccines by the Centre.

## FUNGUS | FEAR In Ghaziabad, a person was detected with black, white, yellow fungus variants

## Don’t panic due to colour of fungus, say experts



A doctor attends to a patient suspected to have been infected with mucormycosis at a hospital in Navi Mumbai on Tuesday.

— PTI

Medical Research (ICMR), said the use of “terms like black, green or yellow fungus” is making people scared and apprehensive. Also, black fungus getting synonymous with existing mucormycosis is complicating things, he said.

“For common people,” he said, “I will say not to be

driven by panic by colour — black, yellow, white. Let us find what kind of fungal infection is the person infected with as most fungal infections that cause fatal or severe disease are invasive fungal infection so that can occur when there is reduction or compromise in immunity. So

basic underlying phenomenon is immunity or the ability to fight the fungal infection,” he said.

In Ghaziabad, a person was detected with three variants of the fungus — Black, White and Yellow — on May 24, claimed a doctor of a private hospital who is treating the 59-year-

old patient in the NCR city in Uttar Pradesh.

Yellow Fungus has been observed in reptiles, such as lizards, but not in human beings, claimed Dr B.P. Tyagi, an ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat) specialist at Harsh Hospital in city’s Raj Nagar area.

“The patient had come to me with conditions of extreme weakness, giddiness, fever and nasal discharge. The Yellow Fungus was detected during the endoscopy,” the doctor said. “This is the first case of a person having three variants of the fungus — Black, White and Yellow,” he claimed. He said the patient, a lawyer by profession, had Covid-19 but was in home isolation and approached the hospital after enduring these problems for eight to 10 days.

“He is under treatment now. There is nothing to worry and the fungus would be removed. Had he come to me after one or two days’ only, his problem would have been resolved

by now” Tyagi said.

He said fungi attack people with compromised immunity and in this particular case, his patient is a diabetic.

Asked about the Yellow Fungus case, ICMR’s Dr Panda said the specimen has to be studied to ensure it indeed was yellow fungus which is seen in reptiles. Professor Dr Giridhara R. Babu, the head of Life-course Epidemiology, Indian Institute of Public Health, said it is important to identify the cause and risk-factors associated with fungal infections.

“When a disease such as mucormycosis exists in a community, what kind of investigations are we doing? As an epidemiologist, I am interested in identifying the particular cause of it, then what is the set of causes that will result in a condition like this, the reason it was not seen in the first wave and it has been seen in the second wave only,” he said.

— PTI



SHORT TAKES

TN TEACHER HELD FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Chennai, May 25:** A teacher of a well-known CBSE school here was arrested on Tuesday following a complaint, after allegations of sexual harassment of girl students surfaced against him in the social media, police said.

After the allegations became public, police officers of the crime against women and children wing conducted enquiries and a complaint was received against the 59-year old teacher, city police said.

Investigation revealed that the commerce-accountancy teacher had sexually harassed girls by sending lewd messages, a police release said.

Also, a girl student of the same school was sexually harassed a few years ago by the same teacher and the parents had already complained to school authorities against the teacher for sending obscene messages and videos to students through WhatsApp, the release added.

“The teacher was taken into custody for questioning and he was arrested. He was produced before a magistrate on Tuesday and remanded to judicial custody. He is lodged in Puzhal Central Prison. A case has been registered against him under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and also the Information Technology Act,” a police officer said. School authorities have also been questioned in the matter, he added.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights said it has taken a serious view of the matter and asked the state police to take strict action against the teacher.

MALAYALAM ACTOR HELD FOR WIFE'S SUICIDE

**Thiruvananthapuram, May 25:** Actor Unni Dev, son of popular Malayalam actor and late Rajan P. Dev, was arrested on Tuesday over the death of his wife Priyanka, police said here.

A physical education teacher in a local school, Priyanka was found hanging in the bedroom of her home at Vembayam near here on May 12, a day after she filed a police complaint of domestic violence against her actor-husband.

The *Aadu* actor was taken into custody from his home in Ernakulam district on Tuesday morning after ensuring that he has turned Covid negative.

A team of police personnel under Nedumangadu DYSP later brought Dev here as the case was registered in the capital district. “As he was Covid positive, we were waiting for him to recover from the disease. We went to his home and took him in an ambulance to the hospital concerned and ensured that he turned negative for the virus infection. A medical certificate was also collected in this regard,” a senior police officer said.

Besides the deceased, the 26-year-old woman's family also lodged a complaint against Dev for alleged domestic violence and harassing her physically and mentally demanding more dowry.

JAISHANKAR SET TO MEET BLINKEN

**New York, May 25:** External affairs minister S. Jaishankar has expressed confidence that India will continue to shape the big debates of our times as he interacted with Permanent Representative Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti and other officials and diplomats from India to the United Nations.

Jaishankar arrived in New York on Sunday evening on his first visit to the US after India entered the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member in January this year and will meet UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

A productive strategy session with @ambtstirumurti and our UN team in New York @IndiaUNNewYork. Confident that India will continue to shape the big debates of our times, Jaishankar tweeted on Monday after his meeting with Tirumurti, Deputy Permanent Representative Ambassador K Nagaraj Naidu and diplomats from the Permanent Mission of India to the UN.

Grateful to EAM @DrSJaisankar for guidance in focussing our efforts in @UN and in Security Council for 2021-22, Tirumurti tweeted.

From New York, Jaishankar will travel to Washington where he is expected to meet US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.



Rough sea in the Bay of Bengal ahead of cyclone Yaas landfall at Digha in East Midnapore district on Tuesday. The Indian Army has deployed 17 integrated relief columns, comprising specialised personnel with necessary equipment and inflatable boats, in West Bengal as cyclone approaches the country's eastern coast.

— PTI

JHARKHAND ALSO SOUNDS ‘YAAS’ ALERT

**Bhubaneswar Ranchi, May 25:** West Bengal and Odisha have evacuated lakhs of people from vulnerable areas to safety as severe cyclonic storm ‘Yaas’ is nearing the coast and is expected to make landfall on Wednesday morning.

Neighbouring Jharkhand has also sounded an alert and is preparing for the cyclone's impact.

The Odisha government said it has moved over 2 lakh people from vulnerable areas in coastal districts to safety.

Special Relief Commissioner of Odisha, P.K. Jena, said that over 2.10 lakh people residing in kutchha houses in low-lying areas have been moved to cyclone shelters. The highest number of evacuees are from Balasore district (74,132), followed by Bhadrak (73,103).

Evacuation of people is also underway in Cuttack, Kendrapara, Keonjhar, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Ganjam, Mayurbhanj, Nayagarh, Puri and Angul districts, he said.

Around 5,000 pregnant women expecting delivery by June 1 have been admitted to hospitals, a health official said.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has rushed Odisha's Minister of State for Home, D.S. Mishra to Balasore to monitor the situation in the northern parts of the state. Jena said large-scale destruction is anticipated in the coastal region. — PTI

Tornado hits Bengal ahead of cyclone, leaves 2 dead

11 lakh people evacuated; Mamata says high tide remains a concern

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MAY 25**

A day before very severe cyclone Yaas makes its landfall and strikes mainly two states in eastern parts of the country, a ‘tornado’ hit two districts of West Bengal leaving two persons dead due to electrocution and injured others while damaging several houses.

Meanwhile, chief minister Mamata Banerjee stationed herself at the state secretariat for two days to lead her government's relief and rescue operations for the natural disaster with the Indian Army deploying 17 relief columns of soldiers in 10 districts. The tornado struck two districts Hooghly and North 24 Parganas, located on both sides of Hooghly, on Tuesday afternoon.

The two victims Swapan Das Baul (40) and Kamal Majhi (21) are from Pandua in Hooghly.

In the evening briefing the Chief Minister said, “A tornado is happening in some pockets as a prelude to the cyclone. It lasted for around a minute but damaged 40 houses partly in Halishahar and Bijpur. Four-five persons suffered minor injuries. The tornado hit Chinsurah in Hooghly also. The two persons who lost their lives at Pandua were electrocuted. Around 11 lakh people have been evacuated so far

● **THE TORNADO** struck two districts Hooghly and North 24 Parganas, located on both sides of Hooghly, on Tuesday afternoon.

to our relief centres of around 4,000 units at the block, panchayat and state level.”

Earlier the Trinamul Congress supremo, who spent whole day and night at Nabanna during Cyclone Amphan's strike on the state on May 20 last year, said, “All of us will stay at the state secretariat at tonight and tomorrow to monitor the landfall which is likely to happen by 12 pm on Wednesday and act accordingly. Do not worry. We are guarding you.”

On her government's measures, Ms Banerjee elaborated, “The rise in water level due to high tide is however our main concern because it may cause floods.” She informed that a workforce of nearly three lakh personnel drawing from all the state and central government agencies has been pressed into service.

“It includes around two lakh police and emergency services personnel like disaster management and 74,000 officers and staff. Cyclone Amphan taught us a big lesson from which we learnt a lot to make these decisions.”

Eastern Command

spokesperson Wing Commander Mandeep Huda said, “The Indian Army is spearheading the Army Relief Effort in West Bengal for preparations for Yaas, which is scheduled to make landfall in the general area bordering West Bengal on May 26, on requisition and in close coordination with the state government of West Bengal.”

“A total of 17 Cyclone Relief Columns, comprising specialised army personnel with associated equipment and inflatable boats, have been deployed to the state. Columns have been positioned in Purulia, Jhargram, Birbhum, Burdwan, West Midnapur, Howrah, Hooghly, Nadia, North and South 24 Parganas. Nine Cyclone Relief columns have been kept standby at Kolkata, for redeployment as necessary in West Bengal, at short notice.

These teams are equipped to undertake casualty evacuation of stranded/ marooned civilians, road clearing/ tree cutting operations, and distribution of relief material, as would be required by the local district administration,” he added.

Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar visited the state secretariat in a first ever move and met the Chief Minister before monitoring the government's preparedness alongwith her from a ‘war-room.’

Rlys moves 680 tonnes of oxygen from Odisha, WB

**New Delhi, May 25:** Indian Railways moved 680 tonnes of oxygen from Odisha, West Bengal, and Jharkhand in the last 12 hours in anticipation of cyclone Yaas which is likely to hit the region soon, the national transporter said on Tuesday.

Severe cyclonic storm Yaas is likely to make landfall near Dhamra Port in Odisha's Bhadrak district early Wednesday morning, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Oxygen Expresses moved 680 tonnes of oxygen relief from Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand in the last 12 hours before the cyclone gets stronger. Eight Oxygen Expresses have moved from the region, a statement from the Railways said.

The country's major liquid medical oxygen (LMO) generation plants are based in this region and are now proving to be the source of the life-saving gas for other states for supply to hospitals during

the Covid-19 pandemic.

So far, the Railways has delivered more than 17,239 tonnes of LMO in more than 1,042 tankers to 14 states since it started operations last month.

Providing relief to oxygen starved states, so far, 263 Oxygen Express trains have completed their journey while two more loaded trains with more than 134 tonnes of LMO in eight tankers are currently on the run.

Amongst the southern states, delivery of LMO to Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Telangana crossed 1,000 tonnes each via the Oxygen Express trains.

Oxygen relief by Oxygen Express trains reached out to 14 states - Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Telangana, Punjab, Kerala, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Assam. Till the time of this release, 614 tonnes of oxygen has been offloaded in Maharashtra. — PTI

VILLAGERS IN ODISHA BANK ON FEATURE PHONES

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, MAY 25**

As the Very Severe Cyclonic Storm ‘Yaas’ on Tuesday advanced towards the Odisha coast, the power distribution companies in coastal Odisha districts on Tuesday stopped supply in sensitive areas fearing collapse of electrical structures that may cause loss of human and animal lives. The snapping of the power came as a major concern for the people living in the coastal villages as many of them found their smart-phone batteries nearly exhausted.

What worried them most is that not many of them got any immediate alternative to charge their drained batteries.

“After a few hours, the cyclone will make landfall. However, the power utilities have disconnected supplies as a precautionary measure. Our smart-phones have nearly run of batteries. Now, we are completely dependent on our feature phones as batteries of these devices last long - at least for 3-4 days,” said Sudam Patra, a journalist based in Balasore.

During cyclone Amphan on May 20, 2020, Sudam and his journalist friends reported every angle of the event to their respective offices through the feature phones.

Kalyani Barik, a health worker, and her friends bought feature phones a couple of days ago so as to ensure that they remain accessible to people in distress during the cyclone and the aftermath to provide them seamless healthcare services.

While diesel power generators have been banned for use by private houses as they would cause back current flow during restoration of electric lines post the cyclone, such machines were installed at cyclone shelters and important government and private establishments for emergency use.

The state government has provided satellite phones to senior officers, relief and rescue teams for uninterrupted communication with district headquarters and the state administration in Bhubaneswar.

Tower lights and searchlights have also been given to National Disaster Response Force, Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force and other teams to carry out their activities.

● **THE STATE** government has provided satellite phones to senior officers, relief and rescue teams for uninterrupted communication with district headquarters and the state administration.

SC told S-G to either withdraw the plea or it would pass order

Narada case: CBI withdraws plea in SC

**PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, MAY 25**

After assailing the conduct of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banarjee for staging dharna outside the CBI office located at Nizam Palace in Kolkata and the presence of state law minister Moloy Ghatak in the special CBI court where four TMC leaders arrested in Narada sting tape case were produced, the investigating agency on Tuesday withdrew its petition that it had filed in the top court after Calcutta High Court had placed the arrested leaders under house arrest.

Allowing the request of the CBI to withdraw the petition, a vacation bench comprising Justice Vineet Saran and Justice B.R.Gavai gave the investigating agency and all other parties to raise all issues before the five-judge bench hearing the

plea for the grant of interim bail to four TMC leaders. The court in its order said that it has not expressed any view on the merit of the case and said that it was open to all the parties including CBI to raise their the contentions before the five-judge constitution bench of Calcutta High Court hearing the matter.

The CBI had on May 17 arrested two West Bengal Ministers Subrata Mukherjee and Firhad Hakim, Trinamul Congress MLA Madan Mitra and former Kolkata mayor Sovan Chatterje in connection with the Narada case.

The CBI withdrew the petition after the court told the Solicitor General to either withdraw it or they will pass an order on merit. All through the hearing that lasted nearly one hour, the court repeatedly asked as to what the investigating agency

● **THE COURT** in its order said that it has not expressed any view on the merit of the case and said that it was open to all the parties including CBI to raise their the contentions before the five-judge constitution bench of Calcutta High Court hearing the matter.

wanted from the court. “We want to know, what you want from us”, Justice Saran asked Solicitor General in a poser as to what was the prayer of the CBI before the top court.

Sensing the mood of the court, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta urged the court to adjourn that matter and take it up on Friday (May 28).

After giving an opportunity to Solicitor General to consult his team, the court in the resumed hearing after dealing with the pass-over matter gave two options to him – either to

withdraw or court will pass order after considering the matter on merit.

The court said that after the matter is considered by a five-judge bench, they will have the benefit of the views of five learned judges of Calcutta High Court.

As the Solicitor General focused on dharna by Mamata Banerjee outside the CBI office and the presence of Law Minister at the Special CBI court during the course of his arguments spread over 45 minutes, Justice Saran told him that you have two set of people – one who are accused and the other who are not – and you can't interfere with the liberty of accused people merely on the acts of others.

Telling the Solicitor General that CBI was a powerful entity and can proceed against the people by whose acts it is aggrieved.

“You can take action

against those who you feel subverted the law”, the court told Solicitor General further pointing out “We don't want to mix the liberty of a citizen (arrested TMC leaders) with the acts of other persons (Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Law Minister).”

As the Solicitor General wanted the case to be transferred outside West Bengal, the court said that it did not want to demoralize the High court which is seized of the matter.

At the outset of the hearing senior counsel Vikas Singh appearing for West Bengal government raised a preliminary objection to the CBI's plea against an interlocutory order of the High court. He said that the guidelines for the admission of matters during vacations clearly exclude any petition against interim orders of the High court.

CISF’s Jaiswal is new CBI chief

**New Delhi, May 25:** CISF chief Subodh Kumar Jaiswal was on Tuesday appointed as the new CBI director for two years, according to a Personnel Ministry order. Jaiswal is a 1985-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Maharashtra cadre. He has also served as Maharashtra's director general of police in the past.

The Central Bureau of Investigation was working without a regular chief for over three months after Rishi Kumar Shukla completed his two-year tenure on February 3.

CBI Additional Director Praveen Sinha, a 1988-batch IPS officer of Gujarat cadre, was appointed the acting chief of the agency after Shukla completed his tenure.

Jaiswal has been



Subodh Kumar Jaiswal

appointed as the director of CBI for a period of two years, the ministry order said.

A three-member selection committee led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on Monday shortlisted Jaiswal's name. Chief Justice of India N. V. Ramana and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury are the two members of the panel.

— PTI



## SHORT TAKES

## BAD DREAM STOPS GUIDE FROM CLIMBING EVEREST

**Kathmandu, May 25:** A record-holding Sherpa climber halted his attempt to scale Mount Everest for a 26th time because of a bad dream but plans to try again next year.

Kami Rita already reached the summit of the world's highest mountain for a record 25th time earlier this month but stopped his most recent climb more than halfway to the top. He was making (the 26th) attempt and had reached up to Camp Three "but the weather turned bad and I had a really bad dream," Rita said on return to Kathmandu on a helicopter from the mountain on Tuesday. "The gods were telling me not to go and because I really believe in God, I decided to return," he said but would not elaborate on the dream. Sherpas believe Everest to be a goddess and have a religious ceremony before stepping on the mountain to make their climbs.

## TWO CHILDREN AMONG 18 KILLED IN PERU

**Lima, May 25:** Two children and 16 adults were shot dead in a remote coca-growing area of Peru, the armed forces said Monday, blaming the attack on members of the Shining Path guerrilla group.

The killings late Sunday risk inflaming tensions amid a polarized campaign for the presidency between leftist Pedro Castillo and his rival from the right, Keiko Fujimori.

The villagers were mowed down at San Miguel del Ene in a coca-growing valley where members of the Maoist Shining Path group operate, according to the joint command of the armed forces. The head of the police counter-terrorism unit, General Oscar Arriola, said the dead included 10 men, six women and two children.

The armed forces command blamed the attack on fighters led by guerrilla leader Victor Quispe Palomino, or Comrade Jose. A specialised terrorism unit has been tasked with investigating the killings.

## GUAM CAN PURSUE \$160M DUMP CLEANUP LAWSUIT

**Washington, May 25:** The Supreme Court says the US territory of Guam can pursue a \$160 million lawsuit against the federal government over the cost of cleaning up a landfill on the island.

The justices on Monday unanimously overturned a lower court decision that had said Guam had waited too long to pursue the claim. The case before the justices involves a long-running dispute over the Ordot Dump on Guam. The lawsuit says the Navy built the dump during the 1940s and then deposited toxic military waste there before turning over control to Guam in 1950.

Guam operated the dump for decades. The US has said Guam "vastly expanded" it and "failed to provide even rudimentary environmental safeguards." In 2002, the government sued Guam over pollution from the dump. Guam ultimately agreed in 2004 to close the dump and take steps to stop pollution from the dump, among other things. In 2017, Guam sued the United States, arguing that it's responsible for some of the costs of the cleanup.

## POPE PRAYS FOR ITALY CABLE CAR MISHAP SURVIVOR

**Rome, May 25:** Pope Francis offered prayers Tuesday for "little Eitan", the lone survivor of the cable car disaster in northern Italy that left 14 people dead when the cabin plunged to the ground after the lead cable snapped and the emergency brake failed to engage.

Francis sent a telegram to the local bishop offering his condolences to the families of the dead who, he said were "tragically lost while immersed in the marvels of creation".

Prosecutors have said they are investigating why the lead cable of the Stresa funicular snapped Sunday while it was bringing sightseers up to the Mortarone peak overlooking Lake Maggiore in Italy's Piedmont region. They have said the emergency brake on the supporting cable didn't engage, events that sent the cabin reeling back down the line until it pulled off, crashed to the ground and rolled over down the mountainside until it came to rest against some trees.

Five-year-old Eitan Biran, an Israeli citizen living in Italy, was the lone survivor and was hospitalized in Turin with several broken bones. Pope Francis offered particular thoughts for Eitan.

## Mali's ex-coup leader dismisses Prez, PM

## EU leaders condemn kidnapping of civilian leadership

**Bamako, May 25:** Mali's former coup leader Assimi Goita fired the president and prime minister of the transitional government Tuesday but promises to still hold new elections next year.

The move came a day after the two leaders were arrested by the military following their announcement of a cabinet reshuffle. Goita said the president and prime minister had acted without consulting him.

President Bah Ndw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane lead an interim government that was installed under the threat of regional sanctions following a putsch in August, and the detentions on Monday raised fears of a second coup.

Two senior officials, who declined to be named, said that soldiers had taken Ndw and Ouane to the Kati military camp on the outskirts of the capital Bamako. Their detentions followed a sensitive government reshuffle earlier on Monday that was designed to respond to growing criticism of the interim government.

The military kept the strategic portfolios it controlled during the previous administration in the reshuffle. But two coup leaders — ex-defence minister Sadio Camara and ex-



In this file photo taken on September 22, 2020, Colonel Assimi Goita (C), President of CNSP (National Committee for the Salvation of People) addresses the press during the ceremony of the 60th anniversary of Mali's independence in Bamako, one day after announcing that the transitional presidency would be assigned to a retired colonel, Bah Ndw, 70 years, ephemeral Minister of Defence in 2014.

security minister Colonel Modibo Kone — were replaced. Coup leaders and army officers have wielded significant influence over the government, casting doubts on a pledge to hold elections by early next year.

The reshuffle came at a time of growing political challenges in the capital Bamako and pressure to stick to the deadline for promised reforms.

Speculation of a coup swirled around Bamako late on Monday, but the city remained relatively calm. Briefly reached by phone before the line cut, Prime Minister Ouane said that soldiers "came to get him". EU leaders condemned what they called the "kidnapping" of Mali's civilian leadership, said council president Charles Michel. "What happened was grave and serious and

we are ready to consider necessary measures," he told reporters after a summit of the bloc's 27 leaders, describing events as "the kidnapping of the president and the prime minister". Earlier, a joint statement by the United Nations, African Union, Economic Community of West African States, the European Union and the United States condemned the arrests.

## Biden, Putin to meet June 16

**Washington, May 25:** President Joe Biden will hold a summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin next month in Geneva, a face-to-face meeting between the two leaders that comes amid escalating tensions between the US and Russia in the first months of the Biden administration.

The White House confirmed details of the summit on Tuesday. The two leaders' meeting, set for June 16, is being tacked on to the end of Biden's first international trip as president next month when he visits Britain for a meeting of Group of Seven leaders and Brussels for the Nato summit.

"The leaders will discuss the full range of pressing issues, as we seek to restore predictability and stability to the US-Russia relationship," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said in a statement announcing the summit.

Biden first proposed a summit in a call with

Putin in April as his administration prepared to levy sanctions against Russian officials for the second time during the first three months of his presidency. White House officials said earlier this week that they were ironing out details for the summit. National security adviser Jake Sullivan discussed details of the meeting when he met with his Russian counterpart, Nikolay Patrushev.

The Kremlin, in its own statement announcing the meeting, said that the presidents will discuss "the current state and prospects of the Russian-US relations, strategic stability issues and the acute problems on the international agenda, including interaction in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic and settlement of regional conflicts." The White House has repeatedly said it is seeking a "stable and predictable" relationship with the Russians.

## HUMAN ERROR LED TO MALAYSIA TRAIN CRASH

**Kuala Lumpur, May 25:** A collision between two light rail trains in Kuala Lumpur that injured more than 200 people was caused by a train driver's negligence, according to a preliminary investigation, Malaysia's transport minister said Tuesday.

A fully automated metro train carrying 213 passengers collided Monday night with a vacant train that was being driven manually in a tunnel near the Petronas Towers, the world's tallest twin towers. It was the first major crash for the 23-year-old metro system. Pictures on social media after the collision showed bloodied passengers, some lying on the floors of carriages strewn with shattered glass.

"Preliminary investigations found that the accident was caused by the negligence and carelessness of the train driver ... who was driving in the wrong direction," said Transport Minister Wee Ka Siong.

## Lanka cargo fire: India sends help

**Colombo, May 25:** India has dispatched two Coast Guard vessels and an aircraft to help the Sri Lankan Navy douse the flames on a container ship that caught fire off the coast of Colombo last week, amid intensified efforts by the coastal command to extinguish the fiery wreckage.

The 25 crew members — of Philippine, Chinese, Indian and Russian nationality — on the ship have been rescued. Official sources said at least five Indians were among the crew rescued. The cargo vessel, 'X-PRESS PEARL', was

carrying a consignment of chemicals and raw materials for cosmetics from Hazira in Gujarat to Colombo Port. It caught fire 9.5 nautical miles from the coast here where it was anchored outside the port of Colombo on May 20.

The Indian High Commission in a tweet on Tuesday said, "Help on way! Responding promptly as ever to the request by Sri Lanka. India dispatches ICG Vaibhav, ICG Dornier and Tug Water Lilly for fighting the fire". A major operation was launched to

extinguish the flames of the ship.

A special team of the Sri Lankan Navy, Sri Lanka Ports Authority and Marine Environment Protection Authority reached the fire-hit container ship on May 21.

Officials said a loud explosion was heard on Tuesday morning, possibly the fire remains in the sub sections of the vessel where a load of nitric acid is stored.

The Navy, in a statement released on Tuesday, confirmed the forthcoming Indian assistance. The fire

## Iran Prez vote okays 7 but bars Rouhani allies

**Dubai, May 25:** Iran named the hard-line cleric running its judiciary and six others Tuesday as approved candidates in its June 18 presidential election, barring prominent candidates allied to its current president amid tensions with the West over its tattered nuclear deal.

The announcement carried by state television puts judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi, who is linked to mass executions in 1988, in the dominant position for the upcoming vote. He's the most-known candidate of the seven hopefuls, with opinion polling previously showing his anti-corruption campaign drew Iranian support.

He's also believed to be a favorite of Iran's 82-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. But perhaps most notable was who Iran's Guardian Cou-

ncil barred from running. Chief among them was former parliament speaker Ali Larijani, a conservative who allied with Rouhani in recent year. Larijani had been positioning himself as a pragmatic candidate who would back Rouhani's signature 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. That accord is now in tatters as diplomats in Vienna try to negotiate a return of both Iran and the US to the agreement. Larijani seemingly signalled he wouldn't fight the decision.

"I have done my duty before God and the dear nation, and I am satisfied," Larijani wrote on Twitter. "Thank you to all those who expressed their gratitude and I hope you will participate in the elections for the promotion of an Islamic Iran."

Also barred was former

hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Rouhani's senior Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri, a reformist. Ahmadinejad ignored a warning from Khamenei in 2017 and registered, only to be rejected then as well by the Guardian Council, a 12-member panel under Khamenei. During an earlier session of parliament Tuesday, lawmaker Ahmad Alireza-beigi described Ahmadinejad's home as being "under siege" by security forces since the day before.

He also warned that the decision would suppress turnout. Iran's theocracy since its 1979 Islamic Revolution has based its legitimacy in part on turnout in elections. State TV quoted Abbas Ali Kadkhodaei, the spokesman of the Guardian Council, as saying "only seven" had been approved.

## FLIGHTS AVOID BELARUS AIRSPACE, EU MULLS CURBS

**Moscow, May 25:** Belarus' isolation deepened Tuesday as commercial planes avoided its airspace, the European Union worked up new sanctions, and a senior UN official said he was concerned for the welfare of an opposition journalist arrested in Minsk after his plane was diverted there, apparently on the orders of the country's longtime strongman.

After his detention, Raman Pratasevich was seen in a brief video clip shown on Belarusian state television late Monday, speaking rapidly to say that he was confessing to some of the charges authorities have levelled against him. The spokesperson for the UN's human rights office, Rupert Colville, said Pratasevich's appearance was likely not voluntary and that he seemed to have bruising to his face, though it was difficult to tell from the footage. The 26-year-old journalist and activist was arrested Sunday after Belarusian flight controllers told the crew of a Ryanair jetliner he was aboard that there was a bomb threat against the flight and ordered it to land. A Belarusian MiG-29 fighter jet was scrambled to escort the plane in a brazen move by President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled the country with an iron fist for over a quarter-century. The diversion and arrest elicited widespread shock and fury, and EU leaders took unusual swift action in response at a summit Monday.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (C) talks with Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi, upon arrival at Tel Aviv Ben Gurion Airport, on Tuesday.

## Blinken: US will aid Gaza without helping Hamas

**Jerusalem, May 25:** US Secretary of State Antony Blinken vowed Tuesday to rally international support to aid Gaza following a devastating war there while keeping any assistance out of the hands of its militant Hamas rulers, as he began a regional tour to shore up last week's cease-fire.

The 11-day war between Israel and Hamas killed more than 250 people, mostly Palestinians, and caused widespread destruction in the impoverished coastal territory. The truce that came into effect Friday has so far held, but it did not address any of the underlying issues in the conflict, something Blinken acknowledged after meeting Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu.

"We know that to prevent a return to violence, we have to use the space created to address a larger set of underlying issues and challenges. And that begins with tackling the grave humanitarian situation in Gaza and starting to rebuild," he said. "The US will work to rally international support

## US TO UPGRADE RELATIONS WITH PALESTINE

**Jerusalem, May 25:** Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced Tuesday that the US would reopen its Consulate General in Jerusalem — a move that restores ties with Palestinians that had been downgraded by the Trump administration. The consulate long served as an autonomous office in charge of diplomatic relations with the Palestinians. But former US President Donald Trump downgraded its operations and placed them under the authority of his ambassador to Israel when he moved the embassy to Jerusalem.

around that effort while also making our own significant contributions. He added that the US would work with its partners to ensure that Hamas does not benefit from the reconstruction aid."

## US security aid to Pak still suspended

**Washington/Islamabad, May 25:** US President Joe Biden has continued his predecessor Donald Trump's policy on suspending security assistance to Pakistan and there is no clarity if the administration will change its stance in the future, the Pentagon has said.

Former US president Trump suspended all security assistance to Pakistan in January 2018, arguing that he was not satisfied with Islamabad's cooperation and role in the fight against terrorism.

"At this time, the US security assistance to Pakistan is still suspended. I will not get into speculating one way or another about if or whether that will change going forward," Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby said at a news conference on Monday. He was responding to a question on if the new Biden administration has reviewed the policy of the previous Trump administration and if there are any changes in it or if this issue was on the table during talks with the Pakistani leadership.

Earlier in the day, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke with Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa to discuss shared regional interests and objectives, Kirby said. "During the call, the secretary reiterated his appreciation for Pakistan's support to the Afghanistan peace negotiations and expressed his desire to continue to build on the United States-Pakistan bilateral relationship," he said.

"I reiterated my appreciation for the US-Pakistan relationship and my desire to continue to work together to further regional security and stability," Austin said in a tweet. A day earlier, US National Security Advisor Jek Sullivan met his Pakistani counterpart Moed Yusef in Geneva. "Both sides discussed a range of bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest, and ways to advance practical cooperation. They agreed to continue with the conversation," spokesperson of the National Security Council Emily Horne said.

## LIMITED | SUCCESS

## Debate causes sharp divisions in a New Hampshire town

## Push to review 2020 US ballots spreads

**Atlanta, May 25:** Six months after Donald Trump's loss, conspiracy theorists and Trump backers are continuing their push for repeated examinations of ballots and finding limited successes. A Georgia judge last week awarded a group the chance to review mail ballots in a large Georgia county that includes Atlanta.

Officials in a rural Michigan county have expressed interest in a review of their voting machines. A similar debate has caused

sharp divisions in a New Hampshire town. In some cases, the efforts have been inspired by an audit of the votes in Arizona's Maricopa County, an elaborate exercise engineered by the GOP-led state Senate. The efforts are unlikely to yield any new revelations about President Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 election. The votes have been counted — and often recounted — and certified by local officials.

Still, the lingering debate and legal wrangling

have propelled suspicions and advanced debunked theories. And their sometimes misleading conclusions have been amplified by Trump, whose false allegations of election fraud sparked the push.

The profusion of audits alarms election experts, who note that the Arizona audit has set a troubling new precedent of third-party, partisan review of the ballots, long after elections are over.

"This is bad enough to see it happen once," said

Eddie Perez, an expert on voting systems at the OSET Institute, said of Arizona, but seeing it elsewhere in the country is "dangerous for democracy." The audits are serving a clear political purpose in firing up the Republican Party's base. At a rally outside Phoenix last week featuring GOP Reps. Matt Gaetz and Marjorie Taylor Greene, references to the Arizona audit drew much more enthusiastic applause than even immigration, normally the top hot-but-

ton issue on the right in the border state.

In a statement Monday night, Trump criticised Republican Party leaders for not doing more about "what went on" in November. He cited the ballot reviews underway and promised "more to follow". The Arizona audit has been cited as a template for the others, although each is distinct. In Arizona, the Republican-controlled state Senate subpoenaed more than 2 million ballots.





## SHORT TAKES

## SEVEN BELARUS ACTIVISTS GET JAIL TERMS

Minsk, May 25: Belarus on Tuesday sentenced seven activists, including senior opposition figure Pavel Severinets, to jail terms of four to seven years, a journalist reported from court. In a trial held behind closed doors in a court in the eastern Mogilev region, the activists were found guilty of taking part in "mass unrest", referring to the historic protests that erupted after a disputed presidential election last August.

The demonstrations gripped the country for months after Alexander Lukashenko, 66, claimed a landslide sixth presidential term in the vote the opposition and European leaders said was rigged. Severinets, who co-chairs the unregistered Belarusian Christian Democracy party, was arrested in June last year after a picket in support of opposition candidates. The court found him guilty of "organising mass unrest" even though he has been in detention for the past 11 months.

## ANTI-TERROR CASE: B'DESH PREACHER HELD

Dhaka, May 25: Bangladesh police have arrested one of the country's most popular Islamist preachers, whose rallies draw tens of thousands of people, on charges of inciting militants, a senior officer said Tuesday.

Amir Hamza is the latest high-profile Islamist to be held since March, when a visit by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi sparked protests in which at least 13 people died.

Hamza was detained in a raid at his home in the western city of Kushtia and then transferred to Dhaka, police said.

A court remanded Hamza for 10 days for questioning, Mohammad Asaduzzaman, head of Dhaka police's counter-terrorism unit, told AFP.

"He is an accused in an anti-terrorism case," Asaduzzaman said, adding that investigators had found videos of Hamza's speeches in the mobile phone of a suspect detained this month over an alleged plot to attack Bangladesh's parliament.

## GOV APPOINTS 1ST POC WOMAN TO MISSOURI SC

Jefferson City (US), May 25: Republican Gov. Mike Parson on Monday appointed Missouri Eastern District Appeals Court Judge Robin Ransom to be the first PoC woman to serve on the state Supreme Court.

Ransom will replace Judge Laura Denvir Stith, who was the second woman appointed to the high court. Stith retired in March. Ransom marks a new first for the court as Missouri's only Black female Supreme Court judge. She's the third PoC judge, and she'll join Chief Justice George Draper as the second PoC judge currently serving on the high court.

Her appointment is especially poignant in a state known internationally for the 2014 fatal shooting of unarmed, Black 18-year-old Michael Brown by a white Ferguson police officer.

Brown's death sparked months of sometimes violent protests, and PoC communities continue to call for fair treatment by police and in the courts. Ransom told reporters gathered at the Capitol that she grew up in North St. Louis, a primarily PoC area near Ferguson.

## U.S. STUDENT WINS \$65K LITERARY PRIZE

Chestertown (US), May 25: A student from Delaware has won the nation's largest undergraduate literary prize.

Washington College announced Friday that Justin Nash, 22, of Smyrna won the Sophie Kerr Prize, which is worth \$65,580 this year. The prize named for an Eastern Shore writer is awarded each year to the graduating senior demonstrating the best potential for future achievement in a literary endeavour, school officials said. Nash was one of six finalists this year.

The English major with three minors has served as editor-in-chief of campus literary magazines and journals. He was the vice president of the campus Writers' Union and has interned in publishing. He hopes to become an editor with a nonprofit publishing press one day.

The *Wilmington News Journal* reports that Nash, who grew up on a farm in Smyrna, focuses on subjects like rural life, death and desire.

"I do owe that to how I was raised and where I was raised," Nash said.

## Unused vax will be dumped, warns HK

A task force member says expiry date approaching, not enough people have signed up for the jabs

Hong Kong, May 25: Hong Kong warned Tuesday it may soon have to throw away Coronavirus vaccine doses because they are approaching their expiry date and not enough people have signed up for the jabs.

Hong Kong is one of the few places in the world fortunate enough to have secured more than enough doses to inoculate its entire population of 7.5 million people.

But swirling distrust of the government as it stamps out dissent — combined with online misinformation and a lack of urgency in the comparatively virus-free city — has led to entrenched vaccine hesitancy and a dismal inoculation drive.

On Tuesday a member of the government's vaccine task force warned that Hong Kongers "only have a three-month window" before the city's first batch of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines go out of date.

"The vaccines all have expiry dates," Thomas Tsang, a former controller of the Centre for Health Protection, told *RTHK* radio. "They cannot be used after the expiry date and the community vaccination centres for BioNTech will, according to present plans, cease operating after September." Tsang said it was "just not right" that Hong Kong was sitting on an unused pile of doses while the rest of the world "is scrambling for vaccines".

And he warned new doses were unlikely to be delivered. "What we have is probably all we have for the rest of the year," he said.

Hong Kong bought 7.5 million doses each of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and China's Sinovac.

The latter has yet to be approved by the World Health Organisation but was fast-tracked for use by city health regulators.

It also pre-ordered 7.5 million doses of AstraZeneca jabs but scrapped that deal earlier in the year, with authorities saying they planned to use the money for second-generation vaccines next year.

So far just 19 percent of the population has received one dose while 14 percent has got two doses.

Hesitancy is common even among the city's medical workers. Earlier this month, the city's Hospital Authority revealed only a third of its staff had taken the opportunity to be vaccinated. — AFP



Alexei Navalny

## NAVALNY: FACING 3 NEW CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Moscow, May 25: Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny said Tuesday that he had been told by investigators that three new criminal probes have been launched against him.

"My influential criminal syndicate is growing," President Vladimir Putin's top domestic opponent quipped in a new post on Instagram.

"I am a genius and puppet master of the criminal underworld," said the 44-year-old, adding that more than 20 investigators were involved in the new probes.

Citing a senior representative of Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, Navalny said he was accused of "stealing" donations to his Anti-Corruption Foundation and insulting a judge.

He is also accused of creating a non-commercial organisation and encouraging Russians not to perform "their civic duties" by publishing an investigation into Putin's alleged wealth, Navalny said.

Navalny in January released a probe into a Black Sea palace Russian tycoons allegedly built for Putin. — AFP



An electronic notice board advises local people to isolate and get tested if they have Coronavirus symptoms, in the town centre of Bolton, England, on Tuesday. — AP

## UK's localised directions to tackle B.1.617.2 variant

London, May 25: The UK government on Tuesday faced accusations of "confusion and uncertainty" after it introduced additional guidance to curtail non-essential travel in and out of so-called hotspots of the B.1.617.2 variant of concern (VOC), first identified in India, as part of measures to control the spread of the virus.

Local authorities in the affected areas said they were not consulted or informed as the government's coronavirus restrictions website changed its guidance over the last few days for people living in eight areas of Bedford council.

Blackburn with Darwen council, Bolton Metropolitan council, Burnley council, Kirklees council, Leicester council, Hounslow council and North Tyneside council.

The guidance also calls upon residents of these regions of England to avoid indoor gatherings, which is now currently permitted in most other parts of the country as part of the lockdown lifting roadmap.

"In the areas listed... wherever possible, you

## Two black fungus infections in B'desh

Dhaka, May 25: Bangladesh on Tuesday confirmed first two cases of black fungus in a hospital here, amid a surge in the number of Covid-19 infections and deaths in the country.

Birdem General Hospital in Dhaka confirmed that two of their Covid-19 patients were found infected with black fungus and one of them has died.

Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said 40 people died in the past one day, highest in the past two weeks, taking the total number of fatalities to 12,441. The number of deaths on May 9 was 56.

At least 1,675 new infections were recorded during the period, taking the total number of people infected with the disease to 7,92,196. — PTI

However, a row has broken out after the new guidance appeared to have been issued without a widespread announcement. "This is a major change to policy that will have a huge impact on people's lives. Simply updating the government website without an official announcement is a recipe for confusion and uncertainty," said Liberal Democrat MP Layla Moran. — PTI

## Shots near Floyd square on death anniv

Minneapolis, May 25: The Minneapolis intersection where George Floyd died was disrupted by gunfire Tuesday, just hours before it was to be the site of a family-friendly street festival marking the anniversary of his death at the hands of police. *Associated Press* video from the scene showed people running and seeking cover as shots rang out.

A police spokesman didn't immediately respond to a message seeking comment. Journalist Philip Crowther, who was shooting live video from 38th and Chicago, reported hearing as many as 30 gunshots about a block east of the intersection.

Crowther said a storefront window appeared to have been broken by a gunshot. "Very quickly things got back to normal," Crowther said.

"People here who spend a significant amount of time, the organisers, were running around asking, Does anyone need a medic? It seems like there are no injuries." Police said they responded to a reports of gunfire at about 10:10 a.m. at the 3800 block of Elliot Ave. South. Callers told police that a vehicle was seen speeding away from the area. Soon after, someone went to Abbott Northwestern Hospital with a gunshot wound. The victim was taken to Hennepin County Medical Center and it's believed the injury is not life-threatening.

It wasn't immediately clear if that person was injured in the shooting near George Floyd Square. The intersection has been barricaded since soon after George Floyd's death. — AP

## CELESTIAL | SHOW

## In many cultures, eclipses are seen as harbingers of doom

Sydney, May 25: Stargazers across the Pacific Rim can cast their eyes skyward on Wednesday night and behold a "Super Blood Moon", as the heavens align to bring a rare celestial twin treat.

The first total lunar eclipse in two years is happening at the same time as the moon is closest to Earth, in what astronomers say will be a once-in-a-decade show. If the skies are clear, anyone living between Australia and the central United States will be able to see an enormous, bright,

orange-red moon. The main event will be between 1111-1125 GMT — late evening in Sydney and pre-dawn in Los Angeles — when the moon will be entirely in the Earth's shadow.

The moon will darken and turn red — a result of sunlight refracting off the Earth's rim onto the lunar surface — basking our satellite in a sunrise- or sunset-tinged glow.

Unlike a solar eclipse, the phenomenon will be safely visible to the naked eye. This eclipse will be

## Texas cop's office accused of abuse

Houston, May 25: Three female deputies filed a federal lawsuit Monday accusing a Texas constable of turning the office's undercover operations into a "booze-fuelled playground for sexual exploitation".

The deputies, who either work or worked for the Harris County Precinct 1 Constable's Office in Houston, alleged women were subjected to unwarranted touching and kissing, molestation and sexual ridicule during their work with the office's human trafficking unit.

The lawsuit alleges the office of Constable Alan

Rosen set up undercover sting operations that were supposed to ultimately arrest those behind sex trafficking businesses. But those operations turned more into parties where officers drank heavily and the female deputies were fondled and kissed by their supervisory officer or were told to give lap dances to other male deputies. In another undercover operation, one female deputy was told she needed to be sexually assaulted by a suspect. The deputy did not get any support from the constable's office. — AP

expecting a clear night." The event will also be livestreamed, and 20,000 users have already registered.

For those wanting to see the event in person, Jacobs predicted the best view will be in "Australia, New Zealand, and large parts of the Pacific. New Guinea also gets a good view." "The Americas see it in the early morning, but they don't necessarily see all parts of the eclipse," he said.

"Europe and Africa and the Middle East are missing out completely, on this particular one." According to NASA's Bill Cooke, "folks in Hawaii and the Aleutian Islands will get to see the entirety of this eclipse — it will be quite a show for them." Lunar eclipses have not always been so warmly anticipated throughout history. In many cultures lunar and solar eclipses were seen as harbingers of doom.

The Inca believed a lunar eclipse occurred when a jaguar had eaten the moon. — AFP

## Indonesia arrests 4 for stealing vax

Medan, Indonesia, May 25: Four people have been arrested in Indonesia for allegedly stealing Covid-19 vaccines marked for prisoners and selling them to the public, authorities said Tuesday.

The suspects took more than 1,000 doses made by China's Sinovac from the prisoners' quota, offering them to buyers in the capital Jakarta and in North Sumatra's Medan city for around 250,000 rupiah (\$17) each.

The four arrested included a doctor at a prison in Medan and a local health official, police said.

They could face a life sentence if convicted under Indonesia's anti-corruption law.

"One of the suspects brought the vaccines to Jakarta where we also uncovered some locations providing the service," North Sumatra police spokesman Hadi Wahyudi said.

Indonesia has been hit hard by the Coronavirus pandemic, and it is rolling out a massive vaccination

programme for many of its nearly 270 million people. Citizens get shots at no cost.

But tens of millions are still waiting for their jabs, with limited supplies prioritised for frontline health workers and other high-risk groups — including the inmates at Indonesia's overcrowded prisons.

Rights groups have warned about the risk of Coronavirus outbreaks in jails.

The arrests come after a separate vaccine scandal in North Sumatra this month, when police said they found health workers at Medan's airport were recycling cotton swabs from Covid-19 tests by washing and repackaging them.

The scheme could have affected thousands of passengers tested at the airport, they said.

Indonesia has officially reported more than 1.7 million cases of coronavirus and nearly 50,000 deaths. — AFP

## NZ, Victoria travel bubble suspended

Wellington, May 25: New Zealand suspended quarantine-free travel with Australia's Victoria state over a new Coronavirus cluster Tuesday, the fourth time the trans-Tasman travel bubble has been disrupted since it opened last month.

Officials in Wellington said they were taking a cautious approach after Melbourne recorded nine locally acquired cases in the past two days, believed to be related to a leak from a quarantine hotel.

New Zealand's Covid-19 response minister Chris Hipkins said the suspension would take effect at 8:00pm (0800 GMT) Tuesday and remain in place for at least 72 hours.

"The government understands the disruption this will temporarily cause affected passengers," he said.

"It was a close call but the correct one given the current unknowns." As it stands, the suspension

will be lifted in time for the Otago Highlanders-Melbourne Rebels Super Rugby match in Queenstown, which will be attended by New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and her Australian counterpart Scott Morrison.

Morrison will be in New Zealand for bilateral diplomatic talks.

It is the fourth disruption since the two countries opened their quarantine-free travel bubble on April 18, almost 400 days after both closed their international borders due to the pandemic.

Flights to Western Australia have been suspended twice previously and services to New South Wales were affected earlier this month.

All of the Australian outbreaks were caused by infections connected to hotels used to quarantine international travellers. — AFP

## PIO RETURNS \$1 MN TICKET, WINS HEARTS

New York, May 25: A woman in the US state of Massachusetts threw away her shot at \$1 million, but as luck would it, she got a second chance at the fortune, thanks to an Indian-origin family who returned the ticket to their customer, earning appreciation for their honesty.

"I was in a hurry, on lunch break, and just scratched it real quick, and looked at it, and it didn't look like a winner, so I handed it over to them to throw away," Lea Rose Fiegea said. Abhi Shah, son of the store owners, noticed the unfinished ticket in the trash, the New York Post reported. — PTI

## OZ CLOSES ITS EMBASSY IN AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, May 25: Australia is shutting its embassy in the Afghan capital later this week, citing security concerns ahead of the final withdrawal of US and NATO troops in what US President Joe Biden has called the end of America's forever war. A number of other embassies in the beleaguered Afghan capital have sent home non-essential personnel, warned their nationals against travelling to Afghanistan and urged those already in the country to consider leaving. — AP



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	50,637.53	-0.03
Nifty 50	15,208.50	0.07
S&P 500*	4,195.16	-0.05
Dollar (₹)	72.78	0.26
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.19	-0.04
Euro (₹)	89.19	0.12
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,025	102 0.21
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	68.62	0.23
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.972	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.579	-0.029

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Grain output to rise 2.66% to record 305.43 mt

Foodgrain production is estimated to rise 2.66 per cent to a new record of 305.43 million tonnes in the current crop year 2020-21 (July-June) from 297.5 mt last crop year, on better output of rice, wheat and pulses, the agriculture ministry said in its third advance estimates. Rice production is pegged at a record 121.46 mt against 118.87 mt last year. Wheat production is to increase to a record 108.75 mt from 107.86 million tonnes.

## BB's US partner submits Covaxin Master File to FDA



Ocugen, Bharat Biotech's US partner for Covaxin, has submitted a "Master File" to the US FDA prior to seeking an emergency use authorisation in that country. The company is currently evaluating the clinical and regulatory path for Covaxin in the US, including obtaining Emergency Use Authorization from the US FDA, Ocugen said in a recent regulatory filing. Ocugen has submitted key information and data to date.

## Clarios sells 10% stake in Amara Raja Batteries

Clarios ARBL Holding LP offloaded a 10 per cent stake in Amara Raja Batteries for a little over Rs 1,276.34 crore, through an open market transaction. The shares were sold at an average price of Rs 747.22. Clarios held a 24 percent stake in Amara Raja, as of March 2021. Morgan Stanley Asia, Integrated Core, and Ghisallo Master Fund LP picked up the shares. After the bulk deal, Amara Raja shares plunged 6.43 per cent.

## Triumph drives in Bonneville Bobber at ₹11.75 L

British premium motorcycle brand Triumph Motorcycles has launched the updated version of Bonneville Bobber in India priced at Rs 11.75 lakh (ex-show-room). The 2021 Bonneville Bobber comes with enhanced engine performance, technology and equipment. "The Triumph Bobber has always had a demand among Indian customers and due to this we decided to bring the Bobber back after a gap of one year.

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## RBI may step in as rupee outdoes peers Re makes strong comeback in May

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MAY 25

After tumbling in April, the rupee has rebounded this month to become Asia's top-performing currency on positive global cues and fall in daily Covid cases with several states planning to ease restrictions in June, which would help revive economic activities.

The rupee has climbed 1.5 per cent against the dollar in May to beat all its regional peers as the country's daily infections declined rapidly after touching a record high. However, experts said they expect the central bank to step in to limit the rupee's gains, as a strong rupee hurts exporters at a time when the Covid pandemic has hit the economy hard.

The rupee on Tuesday appreciated 19 paise against the dollar to settle at 72.77, as the appetite for riskier assets improved after US Federal Reserve officials attempted to soothe concern over high inflation. Foreign banks may continue to sell the US dollar on account of foreign fund inflows for MSCI's rebalancing of domestic stocks, which is expected to fetch about \$1.35 billion by the end of this week.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the domestic unit opened at 72.85 against the dollar and registered an intraday high of 72.75. It witnessed a low of 72.87. The



rupee finally closed at 72.77 against the American currency, registering a rise of 19 paise over its previous close. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.23 per cent to 89.632.

Abhishek Goenka, founder and chief executive officer at India Forex Advisors, said, "The rupee is slightly on a stronger note but we don't expect it to appreciate a lot as the central bank and the government will not be very comfortable with a strong rupee that hurts exports."

"The RBI has not been so active on the buy dollar side because there is enough liquidity in the system and it cannot infuse more liquidity in the system to buy dollars. Also, the RBI cannot do a sell-buy swap and push the dollar purchases forward since the forward premiums are already very high at 5.4 per cent," Goenka added: "Time

and again the communication by the US Fed that the inflation will be transitory and reassurance that they will not increase the interest rate soon has also weakened the dollar globally which is also impacting the dollar-rupee. The real effective exchange rate is close to 120 which is normally seen as upper band. On the downside, we don't expect the rupee to go below 72.5 and on the upside we don't expect it to go above 74.5-75 in the next three months.

The rupee also has the benefit of offering Asia's highest carry returns. The rupee had tumbled to the lowest in nine months in April as daily coronavirus infections surged above 3 lakh, triggering the unwinding of up to \$50 billion in carry trades, according to Bloomberg.

However on Tuesday, the daily count of Covid-19 cases in the country fell below the 2-lakh mark after about 40 days, according to the government data.

## E-COM PLAYERS ONCE AGAIN IN HIRING MODE

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 25

With most of the key cities going into lockdown, e-commerce players are once again in a hiring mode.

In the past three months, over March-May 2021, Flipkart has hired 23,000 people across the country in various capacities.

"The growing demand for e-commerce services across the country as people continue to remain indoors to fight the virus has necessitated a ramp-up of our supply chain, creating thousands of employment opportunities. All new hires will be covered with our health-care and wellness initiatives," said Hemant Badri, senior vice-president, supply chain at Flipkart.

Rituparna Chakraborty, co-founder and executive vice president, Teamlease Services, said, "Most of the e-commerce companies, especially e-grocers and those delivering essential products, have been hiring for the past couple of months.

This is the sector which is still fully operational during the lockdown. They do need more people for delivering, packaging and managing warehouses with increased demand. More-over, when existing staff fall ill, they need people to get the job done."

Most of the hiring has been happening for last-mile delivery and warehouses.

## Centre mulls stimulus package to aid growth

SIDDHARTHA SINGH MAY 25

India is preparing a stimulus package for sectors worst affected by a deadly coronavirus wave, aiming to support an economy struggling with a slew of localised lockdowns, people familiar with the matter said.

The finance ministry is working on proposals to bolster the tourism, aviation and hospitality industries, along with small and medium-sized companies, the people said, asking not to be identified as the deliberations are private. The discussions are at an early stage and no timeline for an announcement has been decided, they said. A finance ministry spokesman declined to comment.

The latest wave of Covid-19 infections has made

India the global hotspot for the pandemic and has decimated travel since the second wave picked up in March even though Prime Minister Narendra Modi has refused to implement a strict nationwide lockdown

**The finance ministry is working on proposals to bolster the tourism, aviation and hospitality industries, along with SMEs**

like last year's. With nearly 200,000 cases daily many local governments - including Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, India's most industrialised states - have imposed curbs against the spread of the virus.

That has prompted many economists to cut their forecasts for the financial year that began April 1, as rising unemployment and dwindling savings among consumers dim the chances for double-digit growth.

Flagging growth prospects put the onus on policy makers to support activity, especially once the virus caseload eases. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who said last month she's monitoring the economy in a "very detailed fashion," has held discussions with economists in recent days about a stimulus package, the people said.

In April, the finance ministry eased rules for capital expenditure by government departments to try to boost spending in the economy. — Bloomberg

## BPCL may sell part stake in IGL, Petronet

AMMAR ZAIDI NEW DELHI, MAY 25

Privatisation-bound Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) may sell a part of its stake in Petronet LNG and Indraprastha Gas (IGL) to shed its promoter status to obviate the need for its new owner to make open offers for the two gas companies, sources said.

BPCL holds 12.5 per cent stake in Petronet, India's largest LNG importer, and a 22.5 per cent stake in city gas retailer IGL. It is a promoter of both the listed companies and holds board positions.

As per the legal position evaluated by the Depart-

ment of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam), which is running the process for sale of government's entire 52.98 per cent stake in BPCL, the acquirer of BPCL will have to make an open offer to the minority shareholders of Petronet and IGL for acquiring 26 per cent shares, three sources said.

This is because BPCL is a promoter of the two companies and since there is a change in ownership of the promoter firm, an open offer is triggered under Sebi (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011.

A way out could be for BPCL to sell a part of its

shareholding in the two firms and shed the promoter status, thereby, obviating the need for open offers, sources said.

BPCL, however, is not in favour of selling the stake, as giving up the promoter status and directorships will mean substantial value erosion for the company.

But the thinking in the government is that the open offers for Petronet and IGL may deter bidders who are mostly eyeing BPCL's oil refining assets and 22 per cent share of the fuel marketing business it commands, sources said. BPCL spokesperson refused to comment. — PTI

## Commodity surge threatens earnings

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MAY 25

Rising commodity costs could affect India Inc's earnings profile and put an end to the benign interest rate regime from early next year.

"There will be adverse impact on auto, consumer goods, consumer durables margins. However, higher commodity price could also lead to earnings uptick in the metals, cement, oil & gas sectors. The IT sector would broadly remain insulated from commodity inflation."

"Earnings in the non-

commodity basket may be adversely impacted given the weak demand backdrop to widespread lockdowns," said a report by Motilal Oswal.

The rise in prices comes amid the Covid second wave that restricted economic activity. With uncertainty in the demand environment, it would be challenging for companies to pass on the rising commodity costs.

"In a constrained demand environment, due to broad based lockdowns and macro uncertainty, corporates would be reluctant to pass on the higher

input prices to consumers and would first exercise other P&L levers to manage margins," the report said.

The construction sector is already feeling the pinch. The rise in prices of steel bars along with cement has added fuel to the construction budget crisis. Also the prices for plastics, man-made polymers and resins, used in everything from piping to insulation, have been rising rapidly over the past few months.

"The rise in raw material prices over the past few months is due to a combination of factors, includ-

ing unprecedented demand, multiple acts of force majeure, and the inevitable interruption of supply chains caused by the Covid-19 pandemic," said Jayesh Rathod, ED, The Guardians Real Estate Advisory.

"In the last three months the iron prices have increased by Rs 20,000 per tonne, which is almost a 50 per cent increase in the iron prices. Apart from this, copper and aluminium prices have also increased which has impacted the construction cost," said Ashok Mohanani, president, Naredco Maharashtra.

## Jaypee Associates wants CoC to consider its offer

New Delhi, May 25: Jaiprakash Associates Ltd, the erstwhile promoter of bankrupt-Jaypee Infratech, has said its settlement proposal without any "haircuts" should be considered by the creditors' panel, which is set to take a call on two existing resolution plans for the company this week.

Currently, state-owned NBCC and Suraksha Group are in the race to acquire Jaypee Infratech

Ltd (JIL), which went into insolvency proceedings in August 2017.

In a letter to JIL's interim resolution professional (IRP) Anuj Jain, the chairman of Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) Manoj Gaur has urged him to consider JAL's settlement offer, which was submitted before the Supreme Court in 2019.

Asserting that JIL has more assets than liabilities, Gaur has also claimed

that lenders would not be entitled to exercise their rights on loan guarantors if the realty firm is sold at a "throw away price".

The committee of creditors (CoC) and homebuyers are scheduled to meet this week to discuss whether more time should be given to NBCC and Suraksha to submit their revised and final bids for JIL.

Urging that JAL's offer should be placed before the CoC, Gaur said the settle-

ment of total liability of Rs 9,783 crore to secured financial creditors is proposed to be done by way of upfront payment, land swap and long terms debentures with a total value of about Rs 12,500 crore.

For homebuyers, he said that JAL would deploy funds for home construction to the tune of Rs 1,650 crore, out of which Rs 400 crore would be upfront.

— PTI

### RAISING REVENUE

Tax could cover auto, paper, cement, power & petchem sectors

## Indonesia may tax the rich, top polluters

GRACE SIHOMBING & ARYS ADITYA MAY 25

Indonesia seeks to cast a wider net to tax more high-income individuals and top polluters in a bid to replenish its state coffers.

The finance ministry presented the proposals, which could be part of key reforms this year, to a parliamentary commission this week. The government needs to collect more revenue to sustain spending while keeping its vow to bring budget deficit back within the 3 per cent of GDP legal limit, from 6 per cent last year.

"The goal of this tax

reform is not just revenue collection but the sustainability of the state budget," said finance minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati. "The whole world is also accelerating its revenue collection in the midst of soaring budget deficits and debt ratios. This is a response that must be done with caution."

Here are the tax changes under study:

**Carbon tax:** Taxing carbon emissions will help Indonesia curb greenhouse gases while raising funds for green state investments and social welfare programs, Indrawati said. The government could use existing taxes such as excise,



motor vehicle and fuel taxes to enforce it, or it could create an entirely new levy through a carbon tax.

The tax could apply to emission sources like fossil fuels, motor vehicles and factories, as well as carbon-intensive activities such as those in the pulp and paper, cement, power generation and petrochemical industries.

**Income tax:** Indonesia

could add a new 35 per cent income tax bracket for individuals earning more than 5 billion rupiah (\$349,000) year. Taxpayers are currently grouped into four brackets, with rates ranging from 5-30 per cent. The country is poised to see the world's fastest growth in ultra-high net worth individuals in the next five years.

**Digital tax:** Indonesia is finalising the formula to tax digital companies and impose levies on electronic transactions. The government has issued a law stating that taxes could be imposed on companies with significant economic presence in the country, but it hasn't set out regula-

tions for the tariff or how it would impose and calculate it.

**Tax amnesty:** Indonesia could take another stab at a tax amnesty programme, following a 2016 programme that uncovered 4.813 trillion rupiah (\$336 billion) in undeclared assets. Taxpayers who have undisclosed assets as of the 2019 tax year might be able to settle their past obligations at current income tax rates without any sanctions. However, those who failed to disclose their assets during the first tax amnesty period in 2016 will have to pay income tax above the highest tax amnesty rate.

— Bloomberg



Bob Chapek

Disney introduced Disney+ Hotstar in India last year. That service, which features cricket matches and other local content, now accounts for 30 per cent of Disney+'s total subscriber count of 103.6 million globally. In April, meanwhile, Disney announced plans to close a number of its sports networks in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong.

Chapek said the closures going forward will depend on contracts the company has in individual markets. Consumers are increasingly choosing to watch content online, and Disney wants to stay ahead of the trend, Chapek said.

"We don't want to be on the back end of that wave," he said. "We want to be on the front end of that wave." — Bloomberg

## GOVT URGED TO SELL SUBSIDISED EDIBLE OIL THROUGH PDS

New Delhi, May 25: Trade body SEA has counselled the government to distribute edible oils at subsidised prices through the public distribution system (PDS), in a bid to give relief to the poor from the rising edible oil prices.

The Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA) has also suggested the government to curb speculative trading of oilseeds and edible oils on the commodity bourses and insist on compulsory delivery contracts.

That apart, the Mumbai-based trade body said the Centre should freeze tariffs at lower levels, reduce agri-cess on imports and revisit customs duty reduction measures.

In a letter to food secretary Sudhanshu Pandey, SEA president Atul Chaturvedi said: "Last few months we have witnessed unprecedented price increase not only in edible oils but in practically all commodities across the world. Reasons for the unprecedented increase have been discussed umpteen times."

Chinese buying, stimulus money, la Nina weather problems in palm and soya producing areas, labour problems in Malaysia due to Covid-19, aggressive bio-diesel thrust in Indonesia and renewable fuel from soybean oil in the USA and Brazil, etc, are some of the major reasons, he said.

To tackle the price rise in the short-term, the SEA president said the government should "subsidise" edible oils by Rs 30-40 per kg through PDS. The port-based refineries have adequate spare capacity across the coastline of India for this purpose."

The central government distributes only foodgrains at subsidised rate of Rs 1-3 per kg via PDS to over 80 crore beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act.

The SEA also recommended a freeze of tariff value on edible oils at lower levels. "Our back of envelope calculation says \$200 per tonne reduction in tariff value would give relief of around Rs 5,000 per tonne." — PTI



