THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI WEDNESDAY 12 MAY 2021

NATION | 4

Tripura govt forms panel to probe attack on former chief minister Manik Sarkar



Dhawan & Pandya in race for leading India on Lanka tour **DELHI AGE** 11

Proud how Indians have united in a crisis, we shall

■ Minister admits shortfall in oxygen supply, seeks HC probe



www.asianage.com

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Queen Elizabeth II sits on the the Sovereign's Throne in the House of Lords chamber during the State Opening of Parliament at the Houses of Parliament in London on

3 Lashkar militants gunned down in **Anantnag gunbattle**

Srinagar: Three Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) militants were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Vailoo village of J&K's southern Anantnag district early Tuesday. The police said that all the slain were local Kashmiris. A statement issued by it here said that fighting broke out at around 4 am after a joint team of J&K police's counter-insurgency Special Operations Group, the Army's 19th Rashtriya Rifles and the CRPF on receiving information about the presence of militants in the village laid siege to it.

Pappu Yadav held for Covid violation

Full report on Page 4

Patna: Former Madhepura MP Pappu Yadav was arrested in Patna on Tuesday for violating Covid-19 protocols during the lockdown. His arrest comes days after he raised the issue of 30 unused ambulances parked in BJP MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy's village. Full report on Page 3

Cloudburst in Tehri dist, no casualties

New Tehri, Uttarakhand: A

cloudburst hit Devprayag in Tehri district of Uttarakhand on Tuesday, razing two municipal buildings to the ground and damaging several shops. However, there was no loss of life as people were alert and had moved to safe locations. — PTI

COUNTERPOINT



People have learned to live with Corona... now. they need to learn to live without oxygen!





Max: 36°C Min: 24°C **RH:** 41% **Rain:** 40%

Forecast: Scattered rains

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana Tithi: Vaishakha Shuddha Padyami till 3.05 am Star: Krittika till 2.39 am Varjyam: 1.05 pm to 2.53 pm Durmuhurtam: 11.47 am to 12.38 pm Rahukalam: Noon to 1.30 pm **SUNSET TODAY 7.02 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.32 AM**

MOONRISE TOMORROW 5.50 AM

MOONSET TODAY 7.37 PM



SPORT 8

sive about the cause.

Goa chief minister Pramod Sawant, who vis-

ited GMCH, said the gap

between the "availability

of medical oxygen and its

supply to Covid-19 wards in the GMCH might have

caused some issues for the patients" even as he

stressed that there is no

scarcity of oxygen supply

in the state.

Speaking to reporters,

WHO cautions

Ivermectin drug

New Delhi, May 11:

World Health Organi-

sation's chief scientist

Soumya Swaminathan on Tuesday warned against the use of

Ivermectin drug to com-

bat Combat-19, except

Monday announced that

Ivermectin — an orally-administered drug used

to treat parasitic infections — will be given to all adults in the state

irrespective of their

coronavirus status as a

preventive treatment.

within clinical trials. Goa health minister Vishwajit Rane on

against use of

overcome, says Bhumi

Vol. 28 No. 85 | 16 pages | ₹5.00

After 2 mnts,

cases of Covid

down by 30K

'Rural areas reporting

significant rise in cases'

Some respite seems to be

in sight from the daily

sharp rise in Covid-19

Tuesday recorded near-ly 3.30 lakh fresh cases –

a decline of about 30,000

after nearly two months

of tormenting spike. Though 3,876 fatalities

According to Union health ministry, Mahar-

ashtra, Uttar Pradesh,

Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand, Bihar and

Gujarat are showing a

decline in daily new cases while in Uttara-khand, Rajasthan and Haryana the wave app-

ears to have plateaued.

Delhi health minister

Satender Jain said that

the Covid-19 peak in the

city is sliding as the pos-itivity rate in the city

dropped from 19 to 17.7

added that there is still

37.15 lakh.

as India on

in 24 hours

VINEETA PANDEY

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

ED registers PMLA case against ex-Maha minister

NCP, Cong allege Deshmukh case is politically motivated

AGE CORRESPONDENTS MUMBAI/NEW DELHI,

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a money laundering case against Anil Deshmukh, the former home minister of Maharashtra, and others on the basis of the FIR registered by the CBI. The CBI has booked Mr Deshmukh for allegedly asking police officers to collect Rs 100 crore by extorting hotel and bar owners in Mumbai every month.

In the first week of April, the Bombay high court had directed the CBI to conduct a preliminary inquiry into the corruption allegations against Mr Deshmukh levelled by former Mumbai Commissioner Param Bir Singh. Based on the conclusion of the preliminary inquiry, the CBI on April 24 registered an FIR against Mr Deshmukh and others. The CBI said that Mr Deshmukh had used his official position to obtain undue advantage and had

also influenced transfers

and postings in Mumbai Police, as alleged by Mr

to hear Centre's

plea on Friday

PARMOD KUMAR

NEW DEI HI, MAY 11

The Supreme Court on

Tuesday agreed to hear

on May 14 the Centre's

plea for widening the

highway in Uttarakhand

linking the Char Dhams

--the Hindu pilgrimage

sites. The Centre has

approached the court

seeking its permission

for widening of the 900-km Char Dham high-

way, not just for facili-

tating the travel of devo-

tees going on pilgrimage

but for defence require-

ments, to enable the movement of troops and

military equipment up

to the India-China bor-

Agreeing to take up the

Centre's plea for an

urgent hearing, a bench

of Justices Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari

said that the matter was of national importance

and had to be examined

The court rejected a plea by an NGO, Citizens for Green Doon, which is

opposing the widening of the highway on envi-

ronmental grounds, for a three-week adjourn-

ment, saying it will decide the matter after

Attorney-general K.K.

Turn to Page 4

plea bid to stall

project: Centre

New Delhi, May 11: The

Centre has told the Delhi

high court that the PIL

seeking stay on the con-struction of Central

Vista amid the raging

pandemic was just ano-

ther attempt to stall the

project which has been

facing such attempts

from the beginning on

one pretext or another.

The "intentions and motive" behind filing of

the plea are evident from

the fact that the instant

project has been singled

out by the petitioners

despite several other

agencies carrying out

construction activities across Delhi, the Centre

More on Page 2

has alleged.

hearing all the sides

Central Vista

at the earliest.

Anil Deshmukh Param Bir Singh. On the basis of this FIR, the Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) has been regis-

> ducted by the agency. The agency, however, has not specified the quantum of illegal gratification in its ECIR.

tered in Mumbai and soon

searches could be con-

As per the normal course of procedure, summons could be issued to the ex-Maharashtra home minister and others in the coming days and ED officials will record their statements.

'The ED will soon conduct searches as part of its investigation into the case. Summons will also be issued to the former home minister and others in the coming days and <a>Turn to Page 4

Explosives case: Waze sacked by Mumbai police

Mumbai, May 11: Suspended assistant police in spector Sachin Waze, arrested by the NIA in the

case of an explosives-laden SUV found near Mukesh Ambani's house and the murder of busi-Mansukh nessman Hiran, was on Tuesday dismissed from police service, an official said. The order terminating Waze's service was issued by Mumbai police com-missioner Hemant Nagr-

ale, said an official. A 1990-batch officer of the Maharashtra cadre, Waze, also known as an "encounter cop", was ear-lier suspended after his arrest by the NIA in the SUV-cum-murder case on March 13.

Waze was reinstated in the Mumbai police in June 2020 after being suspended for 16 years in a case related to alleged custodial death of a bomb blast accused.



Delhi police ASI Rakesh Kumar assists in performing the last rites of people at the Lodhi Crematorium in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Mr Rane admitted the shortfall in the supply of medical oxygen at the GMCH as of Monday.

investigate the reasons behind these deaths. The

on oxygen supply to the GMCH, which would help to set the things right," the health minister said The high court should after the CM's visit to the Mr Rane said the med-HC should also intervene and prepare a white paper ical oxygen requirement **Turn to Page 4**

were recorded, the recoveries on Tuesday were higher than the new cases. The national positivity rate at present is 21 per cent and the active caseload has come down to

71 bodies fished out of Ganga in Bihar so far

All floated downstream from UP: Minister Patna, May 11: The Bihar stream from neighbour-

government on Tuesday said altogether 71 bodies have been fished out from the river Ganga in Buxar district, where these were found floating in the river, triggering suspi-cion that the abandoned corpses could be those of Covid-19 patients.

State water resources minister Sanjay Kumar, a key aide of chief minister Nitish Kumar, came out with a series of tweets, asserting that the bodies had flown down-

ing Uttar Pradesh.
"The Bihar government is seized of the matter of unfortunate case of floating mortal remains in river Ganga... The bodies have floated into Bihar from UP," said Mr Jha, adding, doctors have con-

firmed upon post-mortem that the deaths had taken place "four-five days" ago. ned at both the tragedy as well as the "harm" to the river Ganga.

He said the CM was pai-More on Page 3

health

per cent in the last 24 hours and cases came down to 12,481 from 28,000 a few weeks back. The minister, however,

> However, Karnataka, Kerala. Tamil Nadu West Bengal, Odisha, Punjab, Assam, Jammu-Kashmir, Goa, Himachal and some other north eastern states are showing an increase in daily cases. Union health ministry officials added that there is an increase in the number of districts showing a decline in fresh cases of Covid, even as there are allegations of reduced testing of Covid suspects.

Given the shortage of **Turn to Page 4**

2 Bengal BJP MLAs to **Widening highway** to Char Dham: SC quit to retain LS seats

BJP's Assembly strength will fall to 75

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, MAY 11

Two first-time BJP MPs Nishith Pramanik and Jagannath Sarkar, who won in the West Bengal elections but didn't take the oath last week, will resign from the Assembly to retain their Lok Sabha seats. This will bring down the BJP's strength in the Assembly from 77 to 75. The BJP central leader-

ship, sources said, accepted the two MPs' request to retain their Cooch Behar and Ranaghat parliamentary seats and not enter the Assembly.

Their absence at the May 7 swearing-in of new MLAs led to speculation On Tuesday, Mr Pramanik said: "The party fielded me in the Assembly polls, which I won. Since two posts cannot be held simultaneously, I have been asked by

about their intentions.

our party central leadership to resign from my Assembly seat. I accepted their decision and will abide by them. Mr Sarkar said: "I will

follow our party's decision. An MP cannot become an MLA." A BJP insider said

the party gave more importance to the MP posts due to the huge in seven votebank Assembly segments of each parliamentary seat it won in 2019.

■ Share vaccine formula, scale up production: Kejri to PM Desperate state govts to float global tenders

AGE CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, MAY 11

With state governments running out of both varieties of vaccines and having to either shut down vaccination centres or ration them, several states and Union Territories, including Maharas-htra, Delhi, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh. Telangana and Odisha, are planning to float global tenders to procure vaccines and ramp up the inoculation drive. Many

them blamed the Centre for the shortage and said that its new policy is forcing states to compete with each to procure vaccines rather than help each other.

The Maharashtra government indicated on Tuesday that it would buy vaccines from the global market to cater to its needs. Delhi's deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia too said the AAP government will float a global tender for procuring coronavirus vaccines.

minister announced that the state will give priority to those in the 45-plus age category and needing a second dose. Addressing a press conference, he alleged that the BJP-ruled Centre is "forcing" state governments to invite global tenders for vaccine procurement.

Maharashtra

"The Central govern-ment wants the states to compete and fight with each other in the internamarket ■ Turn to Page 4

very high demand for hospital beds in Delhi.

Smoke rises after the Israeli forces strike in Gaza City on Tuesday.

"Hamas will receive blows now that it didn't expect"

2 Israelis killed by rockets, 26 die in Gaza as Israel hits Hamas

Gaza City, May 11: A confrontation between Israel and Hamas sparked by weeks of tensions in contested Jerusalem escalat-Tuesday. Israel unleashed new airstrikes on Gaza, killing a number of militants and civilians, while militants barraged southern Israel with hun-

dreds of rockets, killing

Since sundown Monday,

two Israelis.

Palestinians were killed in Gaza, most by airstrikes, health officials there said. The Israeli military said at least 16 of the dead were militants. Two women were killed

by rockets fired from Gaza that hit their homes in the southern city of Ashkelon — the first Israeli deaths in the current violence. At least 10 other Israelis have been wounded since Monday. those deaths, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said officials decided to "increase both strength and rate of the strikes" against militant groups Hamas Islamic Jihad in the Gaza

Strip. "Hamas will receive blows now that it didn't expect," he said. -AP

9 killed in Russia school shooting; suspect held

Moscow, May 11: A gunman attacked a school Tuesday morning in the Russian city of Kazan, sending students running out of the building as smoke poured from its windows. At least nine people were killed seven eighth-grade students, a teacher and another school worker and 21 others were hospitalised, officials said.

Footage released by Russian media outlets showed students dressed in black and white running out of the building. Russian media said while some students were able to escape, others were trapped inside during the ordeal. All students were eventual ly evacuated to nearby day care centers and col lected by their families.

Officials said the attacker has been arrested and the police has opened a criminal investigation into the shooting. Authorities immediately put additional security measures into place in all schools in Kazan. -AP

■ More on Page 6

Nadda slams Sonia attacks on govt for mishandling Covid

Accuses Rahul, others of 'duplicity & pettiness'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 11

A day after the Congress Working Committee blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government for mishandling the Covid-19 crisis, BJP president J.P. Nadda, in a letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday, said he was "saddened but not surprised by the conduct of the Congress during these challenging times as it "did not do the right thing, instead only did wrong politics" over the global pandemic.

In a four-page letter, Mr Nadda said under Mr Modi, "India's fight against Covid is driven by unwavering belief in the principles of science, support to innovation, trust in our Covid warriors and cooperative federalism", while pointing out that the conduct of top Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi. "will be remembered for

Modi not to attend G-7 meet in person New Delhi: Prime

Minister Narendra Modi will not travel to the UK to attend a summit of the G-7 grouping in person in view of the prevailing Covid situation, the ministry of external affairs said on Tuesday. The G-7 summit is scheduled to take place in Cornwall in the UK next month. PAGE 3

duplicity and pettiness". He also added, though, that there are "certainly a few members of your (Congress) party who (like several other selfless citizens) are doing commendable work in helping people, (but) their hard work gets eclipsed by the consistent negativity spread by the more senior members of the party

Mr Nadda also accused ■ Turn to Page 4

No camp at IGI as Covid vaccines not available

New Delhi: The proposed Covid-19 vaccination camp which was scheduled to be held at GSD Complex, Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi on Tuesday and Thursday, has been cancelled as government authorities have expressed inability to hold these camps due to non-availability of vaccines. An official letter issued by Air India stated: "The proposed Covid vaccination Camp at GSD Complex, IGIA (Delhi) on May 11 and 13 stands canceled because government authorities have expressed inability to hold these camps due to non-availability of vaccines." However, the fresh dates will be notified once Air India get re-confirmation from government authorities, "Fresh dates will be notified once we get reconfirmation from government authorities," it stated. Meanwhile, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that over 18 crore vaccine doses provided to States/UTs free of cost by the Government of India, so far. "More than 90 lakh doses still available with States/UTs to be administered. Over 7 Lakh doses, in addition, will be received by States/UTs in the next 3

rape by Delhi man Latur, Maharashtra: A 23the accused forced the victim for allegedly blackmailing the videos. The complainant Pune where she is pursuing a and also working as a fashion designer. All the four accused are residents of Delhi. As pei the FIR, the accused sent her objectionable photos and videos to the victim's family members and friends when she warned them of filing a police complaint. Police Inspector Sunil Thopte told the FIR to senior officers and

Kejriwal bats for vaccine formula sharing

Entire country can be provided 'safety cover' if more companies manufacture Covid vaccines, says Delhi CM in letter to PM

New Delhi, May 11: With several states grappling with a shortage of Covid-19 vaccines, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, saying the Centre should share the vaccine formula of the two manufacturers with other capable pharmaceutical companies to scale up production in the country.

In his letter to PM Modi, Mr Kejriwal said the entire country can be provided a "safety cover" by allowing more companies to manufacture the vaccines on a war footing ahead of the third wave of the pandemic. He said the Centre can also terminate the monopthrough the patent law.

There are two vaccine makers in the country currently, Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India, which are manufacturing Covaxin and Covishield respectively.

The two vaccine manufacturers can be given royalty from the profit of other companies for the use of their original formulas, Mr Kejriwal said.

Delhi will float global tender for Covid vaccines: Sisodia

New Delhi, May 11: The Delhi government will float a global tender for procuring coronavirus vaccines, deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia announced on Tuesday, while accusing the BJPruled Centre of "forcing" state governments to compete among themselves in the international market for anti-Covid shots.

Addressing an online briefing, Sisodia alleged that the BJP-ruled Centre was forcing the states to compete and fight in the international market for

"Presently, only two com-

in

India.

panies are manufacturing

Providing vaccines to the

whole country through two

companies only is not pos-

sible. It requires ramping

up vaccine manufacturing

at war footing. I request

you to grant permission for

mass production of the

vaccines." he wrote in his

vaccines. "We will also do it. We have talked to some states. The Delhi government will do it, some other states are preparing for it," Sisodia said about global tender for procuring Covid-19 vaccines

to 13,48,699, while the death toll due to the viral 20,010 with 347 more peoauthorities Tuesday.

press briefing that the Centre has the power to do so at such difficult times.

With a single-day rise of 12,481 cases, Delhi's Covid-19 tally has climbed disease has shot up to ple succumbing to it, said on

letter to PM Modi. Earlier in the day, Mr Kejriwal told an online

There is an urgent need to ramp up the manufacturing of vaccines on a war footing while developing a national policy to inoculate everyone in the next few



Delhi is facing a shortage of vaccines. Some states have not even started inoculation. The vaccine shortage has become a big challenge for the country.

Arvind Kejriwal Delhi CM



months, he said. "Delhi is facing a shortage of vaccines. Some states have not even started inoculation because they do not have the required number of doses. The vaccine shortage has become a big challenge for the country," the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo said.

91 Covid cheats held, 370 FIRs filed, 20 bank accounts frozen

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, MAY 11

The Delhi Police has so far registered over 370 FIRs against Covid cheats, arrested 91 persons, seized 95 devices and frozen more than 200 bank accounts, officials said on Tuesday.

According to police, they have registered 372 cases and frozen 214 bank accounts within cheated amount of ₹53.60 lakh.

Police said they have two-pronged strategy. In the first one, the citizens are being facilitated for easy lodging of complaints at helpline and portal and the second is proactively instantly started taking actions to dismantle the ecosystem of Covid frauds.

There was a sudden and substantial change in the nature of distress calls being received. Covid cheat becoming most important amongst all others within a day or two. Delhi police overnight augmented the capacities of its Covid helpline 011-23469900 for reporting Covid cheat cases, they said. Simultaneously, aware-

ness campaign requesting citizens to lodge cyber fraud instances www.cybercrime.gov.in and use the Delhi special pilot cyber financial fraud helpline 155260 and www.acpcybercell1.delhipolice.gov.in was initiated, police said.

All the district cyber cells and cybercrime unit of Crime Branch joined hands with CyPAD and a system of generation of 12 hourly situation reports on complaints and FIR was established, the offi-

Continuous analysis of

plaints indicated that while a majority of suspect SIM cards were subscribed and sourced from one state, the SIM cards were being used in another state, they said. Moreover, the benefici-

ary accounts where these SIM users were receiving cheated moneys were scattered all over the country – states like West Bengal Bihar, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka appeared as being highly affected by the presence of this cybercriminal network, police said.

The director generals of police of concerned states were contacted by Commissioner for coordinated effort to wipe out Covid cheats and strong from CyPAD and districts were sent to locate and dismantle the infrastructure of

'Fashion designer' woman alleges

days," the ministry said

to be a fashion designer based in Pune, has lodged a complaint of rape against a 28-year-old man from Delhi, an official said on Tuesday. The alleged incident had occurred on February 26 night at a hotel in Pune after to eat sweets laced with drugs, the official said quoting the FIR. Pune Police has also booked three more persons, including two women, victim and circulating her objectionable photos and

alleged the accused extorted gold jewellery from her, police said. As per the FIR, the woman, who hails from Latur, is currently staying in computer software course

PTI over the phone from Pune that they will forward investigate accordingly. He said police are yet to arrest anybody named in the FIR given the Covid-19 situation in Delhi. An FIR has been

registered at Chandan Nagar police station in Pune under various sections of the Indian Penal Code for rape and under the Information Technology Act, 2000. – PTI

New delhi, May 11: The Centre has told the Delhi High Court that the PIL

seeking stay on the con-struction of Central Vista

here amid the raging Covid

pandemic was just another attempt to stall the project

which has been facing such attempts from the begin-

ning on one pretext or

another.

The "intentions and cling of the

motive" behind filing of the

plea are evident from the

fact that the instant project

has been singled out by the

petitioners despite several

other agencies, including Delhi Metro, carrying out

across the national capital,

all these construction activ-

ities going on simultaneously for different projects

by different agencies, the

petitioner has chosen to be

a public spirited citizen

only with regard to one

project only speaks volumes

about his intentions and

motive behind filing the

petition,'

"The very fact that out of

the Centre has alleged.

activities

construction

tended



Delhi Police provide free refilling of oxygen cylinders to needy family members of Covid-19 patients at Greater Kailash police station in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Patients mourn orthopaedic surgeon's death due to Covid

"Dear Dr Shekhar Agarwal, without you around, things have not been so lovful and won derful. You make a difference like no one else," reads one of the testimonials on Sant Parmanand Hospital's

website about its executive director and vice Dr Agarwal, a renowned orthopaedic surgeon, succumbed to

coronavirus on May 10. He was associated with the hospital ever since its inception in 1997. Another testimonial for Dr Agarwal stated

that he gave a "personal

Centre to HC: PIL against Central Vista

Rahul asks PM Modi to

New Delhi, May 11: Attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the

Covid situation in the coun-

try, Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi on Tuesday said he

should remove his rose-tint-

ed glasses through which

he can see nothing but the

The Congress has been

demanding that the project,

including a new Parliament

building and a new resi-

dence for the prime minis-

ter, be dropped and the

money be used on improv-

Since the affidavit was not

yet on record, a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and

Justice Jasmeet Singh list-

ed the matter for hearing on

The court also allowed the

early hearing application

Central Vista project.

construction another attempt to stall project

remove his 'tinted glasses'

touch" to his work. One of his patients has called him the "gold standard" in his field.



been used Shekhar Agarwal by Agarwal his patients. 'He was a

very pleasant person, an excellent doctor, a renowned orthopaedic, and a workaholic. He just had about every quality any head should have. He was loved by his staff and patients. I have known him for more than 20 years. We were colleagues and friends. It feels like a personal loss," said Dr Sagar Rajagopal, executive director of the hos-

pital in Civil Lines.

"Dr Agarwal had prob-

contracted the

medical

facilities and

infrastructure

in the country.

dead bodies

tals. Robbed

flowing in the Rahul rivers. Miles of

Gandhi lines in hospi-

people of their right to life.

PM, take off those rose-tint-

ed glasses through which

nothing is seen except the

Central Vista," Gandhi said

in a tweet in Hindi.

'Countless

Kind," "cooperative," and "incredible" medical facility in the medical facilit developed other compli cations and could not make it. He did not have any major comorbidity," said his colleague.

Agarwal's wife was also infected and was admitted to the hospital but was recently discharged. "We will miss him

immensely and he will always be remembered very fondly. It is very painful and tragic. We are trying to get over it. It will take a lot of time. A lot of doctors and nurses have been infected by the virus at our hospital but this is the first major tragedy," Dr Rajagopal added. — *PTI*

'India heading towards serious livelihood crisis' New Delhi, May 11: India Indian economy, the eminent economist said the situation today is not very different from what it was

might be heading towards a 'serious livelihood crisis' as the situation seems to be worse this time for the working class amid the Covid crisis and local restrictions by states already add up to something close to a nationwide lockdown, according to noted economist Jean Dreze.

In an interview , he also said the government's target to make India a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25 was never a "feasible target" and was just to pander to the "super-power ambitions" of the Indian elite. About the impact of the

around this time last year as far as working people are concerned.

"The economic consequences of local lockdowns may not be as destructive as those of a national lockdown. But in some respects, things are worse this time for the working class," he opined

Further, the eminent economist said the fear of infection is more widespread and that will make it hard to revive economic activity. "Despite mass vaccination, there is a serious possibility that intermittent crises will continue for a long time, perhaps years. "Compared with last year,

many people have depleted savings and larger debts. Those who borrowed their way through last year's crisis may not be able to do it again this time," observed.

Dreze also pointed out that last year there was a relief package and today relief measures are not even being discussed.

'On top of all this, local lockdowns may give way to a national lockdown relatively soon. In fact, they already add up to something

"In short, we are heading towards a serious livelihood crisis," he said.

On how the government could have missed seeing the second Covid-19 wave coming, Dreze said the Indian government has been in denial all along.

"Remember, the government refused to admit about any 'community transmission' of Covid for a long time, even as recorded cases were counted in millions. When an early analysis of official data exposed the collapse of health services, the government retracted the data," he said.

Chhota Rajan returns to Tihar after recovering from Covid

New Delhi, May 11: Gangster Chhota Rajan, who was admitted at AIIMS here for treatment after he had tested positive for Covid-19, was taken back to Tihar jail on Tuesday following his recovery from illness, offi-

ciais said. He was found Covid-19 positive in the Tihar Jail on April 22 and was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on April

According to a senior police officer, Rajan was brought back to Tihar on Tuesday as he had recov-



ered. On Friday, the jail administration had dismissed reports claiming tha Rajan had died.

"News Rajan death of Tihar inmate Rajendra Šadashiv Nikalje Chhota Rajan s/o

Sadashiv wrong," director general (prisons) Sandeep Goel had said. Rajan, 61, is lodged at the

high-security prison since his arrest after deportation from Bali Indonesia in 2015.

General public is hereby informed that one person Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 40 Yrs., Height: 5'6", Sex: Male, Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Muscular, Wearing: Green and White T-Shirt, Blue Shorts and Bare footed, Place of Recovery: Found in unconscious condition on 21.04.2021 in the area of P.S. Hauz Khas, New Delhi and

where doctor declared brought him dead. In this regard DD No. 34-A, Dated 21.04.2021 has been lodged at Police Station, Hauz Khas, New Delhi. Any clue come to

Appeal for Identification

notice please inform undersign. Phone: 011-23014046 (Direct), 011-23015229 & 23015218 ext. 210.

Web-site: http://cbi.nic.in E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in Fax: 011-23011334 DP/522/SD/2021

P.S. Hauz Khas, New Delhi Ph.: 011-26867878, 26510077

On-duty ASI assaulted, 2 brothers held

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 11

brothers arrested for allegedly manhandling an on-duty assistant sub-inspector of Delhi Police in east Delhi's Kalyanpuri area, officials said on Tuesday.

(DDMA) has permitted con-Central were engaged well before the imposition of curfew on

continue the aforesaid "The facility provides for strict implementation of Covid protocol strictly and also adherence to Covid appropriate behaviour, such as sanitization, thermal screening, physical/social the government has said in its affidavit.

It has also said that the contractor has provided health insurance to all the concerned workers against Covid-19 and a separate facility for conducting the RT-PCR test, isolation and medical aid has also been

According to police, assistant sub-inspector Devender and constable Manoj were on patrolling duty in Kalyanpuri Central Market on Sunday. Around 4 pm, they saw a bike and stopped the vehicle for checking. The rider could not show the documents and started arguing with police. Later, Manoj went deposit the motorcycle, a senior police officer said.

to the police station to Meanwhile, the rider of the bike called his accomand started assaulting Devender who was present in the market. Some of them threw stones on the ASI and he sustained injury on his right hand, the officer said. He pulled out his service revolver to save himself from assailants. There was no misuse service revolver and it was taken out for self defence, police claimed. One of the assailants, identified as Mosin (24), a resident of Gazipur Dairy Farm, was riding the motorcy-

cle. Another was his

brother Mehboob (32).

It is notified for the information of all concerned that Railways have decided to the change the traction points of the following Rajdhani Express Special trains to New Coochbehar instead of New Jalpaiguri, consequently the timings of these trains will be revised as per following detail:-

02505 Dibrugarh - New Delhi Rajdhani Spl.		1888 - 1784 MARCHAN (SA)	02506 New Delhi - Dibrugarh Rajdhani Spl	
Existing Timings	New Timings	STATIONS	Existing Timings	New Timings
22:00 (D)	22:00 (D)	Dibrugarh	03:45 (A)	03:45 (A)
10:00/10:05	10:00/10:25	New Coochbehar	14:20/14:25	14:00/14:25
11:40 (Pass)	11:55 (Pass)	Raninagar Jalpaiguri	13:00 (Pass)	12:35 (Pass)
12:05/12:30	12:20/12:30	New Jalpaiguri	11:55/12:20	11:55/12:05
13:38 (A)	13:38 (A)	New Delhi	11:25 (D)	11:25 (D)

Days of Run: 02	505 from Dibrugart	on 17.05.2021 and 025	06 from New Delhi	on 16.05.2021		
Train No. 02503/02504 Dibrugarh - New Delhi - Dibrugarh Rajdhani Special Train						
02503 Dibrugarh - New Delhi Rajdhani Spl.		(2)	02504 New Delhi - Dibrugarh Rajdhani Sp			
Existing Timings	New Timings	STATIONS	Existing Timings	New Timings		
19:55 (D)	19:55 (D)	Dibrugarh	05:30 (A)	05:30 (A)		
10:00/10:05	10:00/10:25	New Coochbehar	14:20/14:22	14:00/14:25		
11:40 (Pass)	11:55 (Pass)	Raninagar Jalpaiguri	13:00 (Pass)	12:35 (Pass)		
12:05/12:30	12:20/12:30	New Jalpaiguri	11:55/12:20	11:55/12:05		
13:38 (A)	13:38 (A)	New Delhi	11:25 (D)	11:25 (D)		

Days of Run: 02503 from Dibrugarh on 15.05.2021 and 02504 from New Delhi on 14.05.2021

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

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

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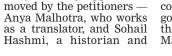
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May 12.





documentary film maker who have contended that the project was not an essential activity and therefore, it can be put on hold for now during the pandem-

In the affidavit filed in the court on May 10, the central government has said that Delhi Disaster Management Authority

struction activities, during the prevailing curfew, where the labourers are residing on-site. It has said the workers

April 19. "It is submitted that in the meantime, a Covid compliant facility was installed at the worksite itself, to accommodate the 250 work-

ers who had expressed their

willingness to stay put and

distancing and masking.

set up at the site.

T'gana announces 10-day lockdown

Hyderabad: The Telangana Cabinet on Tuesday decided to impose a 10-day lockdown beginning May 12 from 10 AM to prevent further spread of Covid, with four hours relax-

ation in the morning. The chief minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao-led cabinet meeting, which was held at Pragathi Bhavan has decided to give a relaxation period from 6 am to 10 am for the people for their general activities and needs, an official release said. Works related to agriculture produce, allied sectors, works undertaken with the agriculture machines, running of rice mills, transport

of the paddy and rice, supplying paddy to FCI, fertiliser and seeds shops and manufacturing companies and other agri-based sectors are exempted from the lockdown, it said. "The State Cabinet will meet again on May 20, would review the situation on the continuing of the lockdown

Committee to study Maratha quota order

and take a decision accord-

ingly," the release said. -PTI

Mumbai: A committee headed by former chief justice of the Allahabad High Court Dilip Bhosale will study the Supreme Court's order striking down quota for the Maratha community in Maharashtra, state minister Ashok Chavan said here on Tuesday. The eight-member panel led by Justice Bhosale, a former Bombay HC judge, will guide the state government on the future course of action, Chavan added. Other members of the panel include former state advocate general

Darius Khambata, senior advocate Rafique Dada and a few serving and former government officials, the minister informed. The committee will submit its report on or before

May 31. The apex court on May 5 struck down a Maharashtra law granting quota to Marathas in admissions and government jobs, terming the statute as uncon-

Punjab: AAP leader killed in road mishap

Fatehgarh Sahib: A 30year-old AAP leader and his two friends were killed when their car collided with a truck in this district of Punjab, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place on Monday night near Maheshpura village of Khamanon sub division. The deceased were identified as Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader from Sangrur's Dhuri Sandeep Singla, and his friends Mandeep Singh Dhindsa (26) and Vijay Goldy (45), police said. Singla and Dhindsa died on the spot while Goldy succumbed to injuries in a hospital. The police has registered a case against the truck driver, said Khamanon

Station House Officer

■ MEA: PM Modi may participate in the summit virtually

PM will not attend G-7 meet in person due to Covid situation

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not attend the forthcoming G7 summit in person at Cornwall in Britain due to the Covid situation in India, the MEA said on Tuesday. However, there is a possibility that PM Modi may participate in the virtual format.

Meanwhile, PM Modi spoke to his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering on Tuesday, with the two leaders noting that the "present crisis situation has served to further highlight the special friendship between India and Bhutan.'

Speculation is rife that despite the raging Covid crisis in the country, India will find a way for Bhutan to gain access to vaccines in view of the special bilateral ties. In "response to media

queries on the upcoming the Prime Minister to attend the G7 summit at Cornwall in UK," the MEA spokesperson said, "While appreci-



A woman takes a selfie as a medical worker inoculates her with a Covid vaccine dose at Moti Lal Nehru Medical college in Prayagraj on Tuesday.

Minister by Prime UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson to attend the G7 summit as a special invitee, given the prevailing Covid situation, it has been decided that the Prime Minister will not attend the G7 summit in person.

On the conversation with the Bhutanese PM, the MEA said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation on Tuesday with the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Lyonchhen Dr

The Lotay Tshering. Bhutanese Minister expressed soli-darity with the government and the people of India in their efforts against the recent wave of Covid-19." The MEA added, "The leaders noted that the present crisis situation has served to further highlight the special friendship between India and Bhutan, anchored in mutual understanding and respect, shared cul tural heritage, and strong

PM hails scientists. innovators for fight against coronavirus

New Delhi, May 11: On the National Technology Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that in any challenging situation, the country's scientists and innovators have always risen to the occasion and over the last year have worked industriously to fight Covid. The National Technology Day (NTD) marks the anniversary of the underground nuclear tests conducted in Rajasthan's Pokhran in 1998. The day celebrates the achievements and contributions of Indians to science and technology.

Technology Day, we salute the hard work and tenacity of our scientists and those passionate about technology," PM tweeted.

remember with pride the 1998 Pokhran Tests, which demonstrated India's scientific and technological prowess,"

Covid-19 claims lives of 10 Naxals, triggers desertion

CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, MAY 11

Outlawed CPI (Maoist) is currently witnessing desertion of its cadres and leaders in insur-gency-hit Bastar in Chhattisgarh in the wake of the sudden surge in coronavirus cases in the region, documents seized in a Naxal camp by security forces have revealed.

Meanwhile, intelligence inputs have suggested that at least ten Maoist cadres in south Bastar districts of Sukma and Bijapur died of Covid-19 in recent times

A two-page letter written in Gondi was among the Naxal materials seized during a raid by security forces in the Naxal camp established in Palnar jungle under Gangaloor police limit in Bijapur district on Tuesday.

The letter, copy of which is in possession of this newspaper, has indicated mass desertion of cadres and leaders from their respective units of CPI (Maoist) after several cadres and leaders fell sick due to an 'unknown disease that has taken an epidemic form' in the

A TWO-PAGE letter written in Gondi was among the Naxal materials seized during a raid by security forces in the Naxal camp established in Palnar jungle under Gangaloor police limit in Bijapur district

"All the members of the Gangaloor area committee have fallen ill prompting Rajesh 'dada' and Joga to flee", the letter, purportedly written by a junior Maoist leader to his senior woman leader,

The letter informed that three senior cadres of Darbha division Nagesh, Sumitra and Anita quit the organisation and fled to their villages.

A Maoist militiaman of the Konta platoon Rupesh fled his unit for fear of contracting the disease.

Similarly section commanders of a battalion of People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) Budharam and Bimla fled their unit.

The letter has also reported that some senior Maoist leaders have fallen sick due to the disease which has been spreading its tentacles to villages in

Hunga, commander of Chetana Natya Mandal (CNM), the campaign wing of Maoists, of Darbha division has fallen sick from the unknown disease, while divisional commanders Rajesh, Suresh and Manoj were

critically ill.

Five PLGA militiamen Debe, Ganga, Sundru, Munni and Reena have fallen sick.

"Our medical supply network has been disrupted due to frequent raids by Alternative supply network needs to be explored and activated to reach medicines to the sick cadres urgently", the let-

ter said. have received inputs Many Naxal cadres and leaders have developed symptoms like Covid-19. At least 10-15 Maoists died of suspected Covid-19 in southern Sukma and Bijapur districts in recent time.

We have offered to arrange medical treatment for them if they surrender before police" Bastar range inspector general of police Sunderraj P told this

'Prioritise vaccinating' those due for 2nd dose'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 11

The Centre, on Tuesday, asked the states and Union Territories (UTs) to ensure that all beneficiaries, who have taken the first dose, be prioritised for the second doses during the vaccination drives. The decision comes as a huge crowd was reported at several places after the government opened vaccination for the 18 plus population. Amid this, those needing the sec-ond dose of vaccines were not getting slots to complete their vaccination process.

During a meeting on the vaccination programme chaired by Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan and Dr R.S. Sharma, a member of the National Expert Group on Vaccine

Administration Covid-19, it was decided that states can reserve at least 70 per cent of the vaccines supplied to them from the government of India channel (free of cost) for the second dose vaccination while the remaining 30 per cent can be used for the first dose.

"This, however, is indicative. The states



Frontline workers, perform Suryanamaskar after applying cow dung on their body during cow dung therapy believing it will boost immunity to fight against the coronavirus disease at SGVP in Ahmedabad.

as 100 per cent," a statement from the health ministry said.

"The states have been informed in a transparent manner in advance about the Covid vaccines being provided to them from the govt of India channel. The visibility for the forthcoming fortnight is conveved to them in advance to enable better and more effective planning by

"The next allocation for the period between May 15 and 31 will be conveyed to them on May 14. It was pointed

have the liberty to out that the states can enhance this to as much utilise the information regarding dose allocation for the next 15 days to plan their vaccination sessions," the statement added.

In a communication through their health secretaries, the states were urged to minimise vac cine wastage. While the overall levels have considerably reduced, the Union health secretary pointed out that there were many states that still needed to substantially reduce the wastage by retraining vaccinators to ensure judicious usage of the

71 bodies fished out from the Ganga in Bihar so far Ballia/Ghazipur (UP), A LARGE number of were seen floating in

May 11: Bodies were seen floating in the Ganga in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia and Ghazipur districts, according to local resi-dents and the authorities

Meanwhile, at least 71 bodies were fished out from the Ganga in Bihar's Buxar, which is downstream the two UP districts, triggering suspicion that these could be of Covid patients.

According to Ballia residents, at least 45 bodies were seen floating at the Ujiyar, Kulhadia and Bharauli ghats in the Narahi area.

However, the district authorities did not tell the exact number of bodies found there.

Ballia district magistrate Aditi Singh in a statement said some bodies in bad condition were

bloated corpses were seen floating in the river bed in Chausa block of Buxar district on Monday, triggering shock waves

Buxar bridge. She said

Subdivisional Magistrate (Sadar) and the circle officer are probing the matter and the last rites of the dead were performed with due respect. Superintendent police Vipin Tada said he

did not know how many bodies were found. The hodies were old In Bihar, there is a tradition of disposing of dead

bodies in the river," he said, adding that seeing the wind direction, it seems the bodies came from Bihar.

Ghazipur's Gahmar and Bara villages, according to residents there. Ghazipur district mag-

istrate Mangala Prasad Singh told PTI that they informed on Monday that bodies were seen floating in the river, following which probe teams were constituted.

"On Monday evening, we spotted a body in Bara village and it was cremated with full respect, he said, adding that their teams are patrolling the villages and urging people to inform the district administration if they are facing any problem in getting the last rites of relatives their formed.

Mr Singh said officials from the Bihar's Buxar had come here and the district administration has launched a probe

6 'black fungus' cases in MP, 1 patient loses sight

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, MAY 11

Madhya Pradesh has reported six black fungus infection cases, a post-Covid-19 development in some patients, in the last 24 hours.

While four people suffering from black fungus infection have been admitted to state government-run Hamidia hospital. Mucormycosis in medical terms, one each contracting the infection has been admitted to AIIMS, Bhopal and a

private hospital here in the last 24 hours. Doctors in the Hamidia hospital removed an eye of an elderly woman who has recovered from Covid-19 a couple of weeks ago follow-

ing the fungal infection. patient suffered swelling in one of her eyes following the infection and the infected eye was removed in a surgery, head of the department of ENT of Hamidia hospital, Dr Smriti

Pappu Yadav held for violating Covid rules

NAYEAR AZAD PATNA, MAY 11

Former MP from Madhepura and JAP chief Pappu Yadav was arrested in Patna on Tuesday for violating Covid protocols. He was picked up from his residence and was taken to Gandhi Maidan police station. According to the police, "he was arrested for roaming around without any valid permit during the

95-yr-old Odia wins **battle against Covid**

AKSHAY KUMAR SAHOO

KEONJHAR, MAY 11 A 95-vear-old woman in Odisha's Keonjhar district has successfully won the battle against Covid-19 after a fight of 15 days. Sushila Bala Pahi, the first woman Zilla Parishad vice-chairperson of the district from 1997 to is a resident of Thakurpatna village. After she suffered from fever, her swab sample was collected on April 25 for Covid test and the report came out pos-

She was being treated by a team of doctors under the supervision of CDMO Ashok Das. After undergoing treatment for 15 days, the nonagenarian recovered from the deadly disease setting an inspiration for many others.

Responding to the police action Pappu Yadav in a tweet said that, "I was picked up and taken to Gandhi Maidan police station".

His arrest comes days after he raised the issue of 30 unused ambulances parked in BJP MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy's village Amnour in the Saran district of Bihar. The ambulances had his name and were reportedly purchased with MPLAD

CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Digitally signed online open E-Tenders are invited by SrDEE/TRD /Nagpur, from established Contractors for execution of the following work on Nagpur Division of Central Railway. E-Tender Notice No: NGP/Elect/TRD/2021-22/02, dated 11-05-2021 Name of work: dated 11-05-2021 Name of work: Electrification, modification, design, supply, erection, testing & commissioning of 25 KV, AC, 50 Hz, single phase OHE in connection with "Replacement of leaning and critical implantation OHE masts for improving safety and reliability" in Nagpur division of Central Railway. Nagpur division of Central Railway. Estimated Cost of work: Rs. 8,91,33,650.00/- (Rs. Eight Crores, Ninety One Lakhs, Thirty Three Thousand, Six Hundred Fifty Only) Earnest Money Deposit: Nil -Submission 'Bid Security Declaration' is mandatory Last date & Time for submission of tender: 03-06-2021 at 15.00 Hours Web site address: The relevant details about address: The relevant details about this E-Tender & for online participation in E-tendering are available on Railway website www.ireps.gov.in.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Preeti D/o Ashok R/o Plot No. 44 Khasra No. 52/12 Near Ambedkar Park, Prahaladpur Banger, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped from the area of PS: Shahabad Dairy, Delhi since 16.04.2021. In this regard, a case FIR No. 0168 Dated 17.04.2021 has been registered at P.S. Shahabad Dairy, Delhi. The description of the missing girl as under.



Age: 13 Years, Complexion: Blonde, Height: 4' 3", Face: Round, Built:

Medium, Wearing: Orange colour suit, red colour pajami and sleepers in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnapped girl then please inform P.S. Shahabad Dairy, Delhi at following Tel No./e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbi.nic.in

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- S.H.O. PS: Shahabad Dairy, Delhi DP/1005/ON/2021 PH: 011-27821047, 27822206, 27822207

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED General Public is hereby informed that



one girl Namely: Gulfasa, D/o: Ahmad Hasan, R/o: h.No. 3/188, Trilokpuri, Delhi has been missing/ kidnapped since 23.04.2021 from the area of P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 181/2021 U/s 363 IPC dated 30.04.2021 has been registered at P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi. The description of the missing girl are as

under: Age: 16 years, Height: 4' 8", Eyes: Black, Face: Long, Hair: Long & black, Built: Thin, Complexion: Fair. Wearing: Black & white colour top, white colour pant and sandal in her feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl kindly inform to the following.

Website: http//cbi.nic.in E-mail Id - clc@cbi.gov.in Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax No. 011-24368639

P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi Tel.No. 011-22772251, 8750871830

During Home Quarantine & Also Use Masks at Home Wash Hands Frequently With

Don't Panic, Combat Corona

with Appropriate Behaviour

Suggestions to Follow



Contact Doctor Immediately if You Have Difficulty in Breathing, High Grade Fever or Severe Cough
For More Than Five Days

Helpline For Assistance Regarding Covid-19 8558893911 (for Entire State) 1075

(Except Gurugram & Faridabad)





Soap & Water or Use Sanitizer

Regularly Monitor Your Body



Keep in Touch With Your Doctor & **Take Medicines on Time**



Follow Respiratory Etiquettes



Dispose off Tissue Paper etc. **Properly After Use**



Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana

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TMC leader shot

at in Hooghly dist Chinsurah, West Bengal: A TMC leader was shot at by indentified miscreants in West Bengal's Hooghly district on Tuesday when he was buying vegetables at a local market, a police officer said. Aditya Niyogi, former vice chairman of Bansberia Municipalty, was taken to a nearby hospital in a critical condition, but the doctors there referred him to a clinical establishment in Kolkata, he said. BJP sources claimed

the incident was a fallout of factional feud within the ruling party. Denying the charge, TMC MLA and former minister Tapan Dasgupta said, "Saffron party workers carried out the attack, aided by a group of traitors within the

Trinamul who have been exposed after the just-concluded assembly elections.' Several TMC activists hit the streets in Bansberia during the day in protest against the incident. — *PTI*

5-member group to **study Cong poll rout**

New Delhi: The Congress set up a five-member group headed by former Maharas-

htra chief minister Ashok Chavan to evaluate the party's performance in the just-concluded Assembly polls. It comes a day after party chief Sonia Gandhi proposed at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) the formation of a group to assess the party's losses in Kerala, Assam, West Bengal and Puducherry. "The Congress president has constituted a group to evaluate the results of the recently concluded Assembly elections, with immediate effect. Ashok Chavan will be the chairman

Manish Tewari, Vincent H Pala and Jothi Mani," an official statement said. The group will submit its report within two weeks, the communication further said. — PTI Nadda slams

Sonia Gandhi

Congress leaders, including a

chief minister, of trying to

actively create vaccine hesi-

tancy during the "once-in-a-century" pandemic. Mr Nadda

accused the Congress of "mis-

leading people, creating false

panic and even contradicting

their stands just based on political considerations".

Hitting back over the criti-

cism of his party for holding

huge poll rallies in April even

as Covid-19 cases surged

across the nation and also over

the construction of the Central Vista project, Mr

Nadda said the Congress lead-

ers too held massive election

rallies in Kerala, causing a

spike in the Covid cases and were now "grandstanding" about poll rallies elsewhere.

Responding to the CWC's

charge of the Modi government abdicating its responsi-

bilities on vaccinations, Mr Nadda alleged there seemed to

be a "communication gap

between the Congress Party

as in April, the Congress top

brass were seeking decentralisation of vaccinations.

"Even when the second wave

was on the rise, your party's

leaders were happier being

seen at super-spreader politi-cal events in North India

where there was no regard for

masks or social distancing

This is not the era when such

information can be erased

from public memory," wrote

Mr Nadda. The BJP leader said the

Centre had so far distributed

16 crore vaccines to the states

and 50 per cent of them were

being provided even now free

of cost, and asked Mrs Gandhi

if the states where her party

was in power would also give free jabs to people as those ruled by the BJP and its allies

have done. He also said the

poor had been provided with food and DBT (direct benefit

Mr Nadda said the Modi gov

ernment had engaged with all

stakeholders, including CMs,

in fighting the pandemic, and former Prime Minister H.D.

Deve Gowda had also acknowl-

On the Congress' allegation

about the BJP government

transfer) distribution.

edged that.

and the states it shared power

■ Continued from Page 1

and other members of the

group are Salman Khurshid,

3 militants of LeT dead in Anantnag encounter

AGE CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, MAY 11

Tayyaba (LeT) militants were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Vailoo village of Jammu and Kashmir's southern Anantnag district early

The police said that all the slain were local Kashmiris and identi-fied them as Ilyas Ahmad Dar alias Sameer, Ubaid Shafi alias Abdullah and Aqib Ahmad Lone alias Sahil.

A statement issued by it here said that fighting broke out at around 4 am after a joint team of J&K police's counterinsurgency special operations group (SOG), the Army's 19th Rashtriya Rifles and the CRPF on receiving information about the presence of militants in the village laid

siege to it. It said that when the presence of militants in a private house was established, they were given an opportunity to surrender. "However, surrender. "However, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated, leading to an

encounter," it added. The statement said that the forces rescued all the civilians trapped in the area during gunfire and halted the operation for the time "to ensure safe-ty and safe evacuation of people from the area of gunfight". "Later the operation was resumed and all the terrorists were killed in the ensuing encounter," the police said.

It added that one AK-47 rifle, two pistols and "incriminating materials" were recovered from the encounter site.

AGE CORRESPONDENT

A day after Union home ministry decided to pro-

vide X-category security

over to all 77 BJP MLAs in

West Bengal, the Central

intelligence agencies, sources said, will also

closely monitor threat per-

ception to other senior

party functionaries and

submit regular updates on

the same to the ministry

for an "appropriate follow-

able tension between the

Centre, governor and

newly-elected Mamata

West Bengal ever since

NEW DELHI, MAY 11



A biker wades through a waterlogged street after a heavy rain in Kolkata on

Tripura govt forms panel to probe attack on Sarkar

Agartala, May 11: A day after Leader of the Opposition in Tripura and former Tripura chief minister Manik Sarkar and some CPI(Marxist) leaders were allegedly attacked, the BJP-led government on Tuesday constituted an inquiry committee to probe the incident and submit its report within 48 hours.

"Chief minister Biplab Kumar Deb has taken step regarding what happened with Opposition leader Manik Sarkar in South district. He has ordered to form an inquiry committee led by south district superintendent of police and submit the report within 48 hours," said statement by the chief minister's office.

Mr Sarkar and other leaders were attacked Monday, allegedly by ruling party cadres, during their visit to CPM activists who were attacked a day ago at Shantirbazar in

AGE CORRESPONDENT

A day after blaming the

Mamata Banerjee govern-

ment of not arranging his

visits to the post-poll vio-

lence-hit areas, governor

Tuesday informed that he

would fly in a Border Security Force (BSF) heli-

with a thumping majority

Fearing possible violent

copter, starting

Dhankhar

with

KOLKATA, MAY 11

Jagdeep

up action".
There has been consider- she came back to power

Banerjee government in retaliation from Trinamul



Manik Sarkar

The police, however, claimed that unidentified youths had thrown stones but none was injured.

Mr Sarkar, also CPI-M politburo member, said the delegates had gone to the houses of party supporters who were allegedly attacked by BJP goons on Wednesday when they were celebrating the birth anniversary of social thinker Karl Marx before a CPI-M party office.

The delegates were led by Mr Sarkar and the others were the deputy leader of the Opposition, Badal Chowdhury, and others.

The BJP hoodlums showed them black flags and chanted slogans "Go

Coochbehar from May 13.

Jagdeep Dhankhar will be

leaving Kolkata by BSF

Helicopter on May 13 to

visit post poll unprecedented violence affected

#Sitalkuchi and other

places in Coochbehar to

connect with sufferers.

he tweeted in the evening.

cies will keep a close

watch on the possibility of

of attack or violence not

just against senior func-

tionaries of the state BJP but also middle-level lead-

@MamataOfficial

'Governor West Bengal

■ Agencies to keep close watch on BJP netas, their security

Centre to keep close eye on Bengal

Gov to visit clash-hit areas in BSF copter

areas

The police allegedly asked the delegates to return in view of the situ-When the delegates were

returning to the main

roads , the attackers brickbatted them, he said. Nirupam Datta, the subdivisional police officer of Shantirbazar said none was injured in the incident and the police had to resort to lathicharge to disperse the attackers and provide protection to the PI-M delegates.

Mr Sarkar alleged that the state director-general of police was informed of the CPI-M leaders' visit in advance but still they were attacked.

"It was a pre-planned attack, which could not have been possible without the indulgence from the state leadership. The law and order had collapsed in the state and attacks on CPI-M party workers are increasing day by day, he

Narendra Modi had a tele-phonic conversation with

. West Bengal governor

Jagdeep Dhankar a few

days ago following post-

poll violence that killed

both BJP and Trinamul.

more than 12 workers of

The nome ministry had

also sent a four-member

team to West Bengal to

review the law and order

concluded that the securi-

ty situation in the state

was "grim" while not rul-

ing out further violence

between cadres of differ-

ent political parties.

The Central team had

Minister

and blocks.

Prime

situation.

■ New Assam govt reviews Covid situation

Sarma sets up panel for jobs to 1L youths

The first Cabinet meeting of newly appointed Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma here on Tuesday while clearing the detailed Covid action plan, formed a high-power committee headed by finance minis-ter Ajanta Neog to prepare the roadmap for implementation of giving appointment to one lakh unemployed youth of Assam. This was a poll promise of the BJP.

Informing that the Cabinet discussed the Covid situation at length, Industry and transport minister Chandra Mohan Patowary told reporters that the chief minister has also formed another high-power committee headed by minister Ashok Singhal to prepare the plan for waving the loan taken by women from microfinance companies.

Pointing out that the Cabinet has also resolved to ensure strict enforcement of restrictions to bring down the positivity rate, newly appointed health minister Keshab Mahanta ruled out the ongoing rumour of complete lockdown. "Assam chief secretary and director-general of Police will be announcing the Covid Action Plan that the Cabinet has approved, in a



Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma holds first Cabinet meeting in Guwahati on Tuesday after forming the new government in the state.

conference Wednesday. We are going to enforce the restrictions to contain the Covid situa-tion from Thursday," said Mr Mahanta after the first Cabinet meeting. He said that the govern-

ment was also planning to announce an economic package that could be announced in case further strict steps would be required to take to contain the spread of Covid. Earlier during the day the chief minister held a meeting with ministers and senior officers to assess the Covid situation in Assam and stressed the need to intensify containment measures. In the wake of escalating numbers, he also directed officers to ensure strict enforcement of restrictions to bring down the positivity rate.

Boy, 12, killed in grenade blast Tinsukia, Assam: A 12-

year-old boy was on Tuesday killed in a grenade blast in Tinsukia district of Assam, a senior police officer said. The victim. Sujoy Hajong, was riding a bicycle when he found a grenade lying on the road at Hajong village in Jagun police station area of the district, he said. "As he tried picking up the grenade, it went off and critically injured the boy," the officer said. Hajong was immediately rushed to Margherita civil hospital where doctors declared him brought dead. "We do not know yet how the grenade landed there," he said.

Maha govt halts Covid-19 doses to 18-44 age group

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, MAY 11

Facing acute scarcity of Covid vaccines, the Maharashtra government has decided to suspend the vaccination drive for the 18-44 age group temporarily. The vaccines procured for this age group will now be used for giving second dose to 45 plus beneficiaries.

"There is a dearth of vaccines due to which we are considering holding off the vaccination drive temporarily for the 18-44 age group. So we will be giving vaccines right now to 45-plus people. Administering the second dose is a priority now,' said State Health Minister

Rajesh Tope on Tuesday. The decision has been taken in the wake of the inadequate supply of vac-cines for 45-plus beneficiaries by the Union Government. Efficacy of the vaccine is largely

11 patients die in AP hospital due to problem in O2 supply Tirupati, May 11: At least now normal. Because of

11 Covid-19 patients died due to a problem in oxygen supply inside the ICU in Andhra Pradesh government-run Ruia Hospital Monday Chittoor district collector

M. Hari Narayanan said. There was a five-minute lag in reloading the oxygen cylinder that caused the pressure to drop, resulting in the deaths, he said. "The oxygen supply was restored within five minutes and everything is mai wards.

is not administered within the stipulated time

period, he added. nearly five lakh 45-plus people in Maharashtra are awaiting the second this, we could prevent more casualties," Hari Narayanan added. About 30 doctors were immediately rushed into the ICU to attend to the patients.

The collector said there was no scarcity of oxygen in the hospital and adequate supply was in place. In all, about 700 Covid-19 patients were undergoing treatment in the ICU and oxygen beds in Ruia while another 300 were in nor-

affected if the second dose

According to Mr Tope, dose of Covaxin vaccine. However, presently there

are only 35,000 doses of Covaxin available in the state. Besides, the State Government had procured 2.75 lakh Covaxin doses for the 18-44 age group. All these doses will now be used only for giving second dose to 45-plus

26 Covid patients die in Goa

cadre, the Central agen-

■ Continued from Page 1 of the facility as of Monday was 1,200 jumbo cylinders of which only 400 were supplied.

"If there's a shortfall in the supply of medical oxygen, the discussion should be held about how to bridge that gap," he said. Mr Rane said a three-member team of nodal

officers set up by the state government to oversee Covid-19 treatment at GMCH should give its inputs about the issues to the CM. Earlier in the day, the CM donning a PPE kit vis-

ited Covid-19 wards in the GMCH where he met patients and their relatives. "There are issues over the availability of their destinations on time.

oxygen in these wards which need to be sorted out," the CM said.

He announced the setting up of a ward-wise mechanism to ensure a smooth supply of medical oxygen. Doctors, who are busy

treating patients, cannot spend their time in arranging logistics like oxygen. I will hold a meeting immediately to set up ward-wise mechanisms to ensure that oxygen is supplied to patients in time,"

Mr Sawant told reporters.
The CM said there was no dearth of medical oxygen and cylinders in the state but the problem arises sometimes as these cylinders do not reach

Mr Sawant said the state government is making efforts on all fronts to tackle the pandemic.

"We have abundant supplies of (medical) oxygen. There is no scarcity in the state," he said. Goa's Covid-19 tally

stood at 1,21,650 as of May 10, while 50 deaths had taken the toll to 1,729, an official had said. Meanwhile, Mr Sawant warned of action against

private hospitals that refuse the coverage of Deen Dayal Swastha Seva Yojana (DDSSY) to Covid-19 patients. He said the pending financial dues on part of private hospitals under this scheme will be cleared in the next 15

ED registers PMLA case

■ Continued from Page 1 their statements will be recorded by the ED offi-

cials," sources said. The NCP and the Congress alleged that the ED's case against Mr Deshmukh is politically motivated.

"Right from Singh's allegations to the filing of the case by the ED, it is all politically motivated and aimed at defaming him (Deshmukh) by misusing power. It is clear that the BJP is playing politics using the CBI, ED and other Central agencies," NCP spokesman Nawab Malik said.

The Congress dubbed the ED's move as an attempt to cover up the Modi government's "failure" to manage the pandemic by diverting the public attention. "Why had the ED come into picture when there was no money transaction? Actions of Central agencies have become a joke, Congress spokesman Sachin Sawant said.

On March 20, Mr Param Bir Singh on March 20 had written a letter to chief minister Uddhav Thackeray alleging that Mr Deshmukh had asked accused assistant inspector Sachin Waze and ACP Sanjay Patil to collect ₹100 crore for him every month. Of this ₹100 crore, ₹40-45 crore were to be extorted allegedly from hotels,

Covid cases down by 30K ■ Continued from Page 1 asymptomatic individuals undertaking essential travel must follow Covid undertaking minister

testing kits, the Union issued 'revised testing strategy' under which RT-PCR tests will be rationalised. The new policy says RT-PCR testing must not be repeated in any individual who has tested positive once either by RAT or RT-PCR and no testing is required for recovered patients in accordance with the discharge policy. The ministry also said the requirement of RT-PCR testing for healthy indiundertaking inter-state travel may be removed. This comes after almost all states have started insisting for an RT-PCR negative report from incoming travellers. However, the government made it clear that all

appropriate behaviour.

The ministry further said that all symptomatic Rapid Antigen Test negative individuals should be retested with RT-PCR.

"The new policy is focused on improving access and availability of testing. RAT will be allowed at all government and private facilities and there should be 24x7 RAT booths at multiple locations such as healthcare facilities, RWA centres, schools, colleges and other available vacant spaces. Drive-through RAT testing facilities may be created at locations,' convenient convenient locations," said ICMR chief Dr Balram Bhargava. He added that RT-PCR and RAT kits should be now

diverted to rural areas that are reporting significant Covid cases.

"Rationalise RT-PCR tests, increase RAT testing for early detection, isolation and home care,' Dr Bhargava said.

India at present has the RT-PCR testing capacity of 16 lakh tests per day while RAT capacity is 17 lakhs/day.

Meanwhile, Telangana has decided to impose a strict 10-day lockdown to contain the spread of the virus. Union health ministry said though strict lockdown measures help in containing the spread of Covid, it cited the example of Pune where night curfew with no restriction on gatherings showed less impact in controlling the growth trajectory of daily new cases

Hindu pilgrim sites in

Uttarakhand, but NGOs, including Citizens for Green Doon, are up in

arms over the possible

landslides and floods as

cutting the mountains for

Widening highway to Char Dham

Nariman had allowed the

width of 5.5 meters. The A-G told the court the

ministry has since amend-

ed its 2018 circular, noting

that the roads are to be

used for different purpos-

■ Continued from Page 1 Venugopal, appearing for the Centre, pleaded that the road width has to be seven meters to enable the easy movement of heavy military vehicles. He was pleading against the Supreme Court order in September last year to limit the road width of the entire Char Dham route to not more than 5.5 meters as was earlier proposed by

the ministry of road transport and highways

Justice Rohinton Fali

bench headed by

in its circular in 2018.

er orders, by Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning at the latest. The matter relates to the Char Dham project to

improve access to four

the highway may cause devastation and heavy es, going right up to the India-China border. Posting the matter for loss of lives. hearing on Friday, the The Centre earlier asked court sought all docuthe Supreme Court to go ments, including its earli-

by the majority view of the high-powered committee that favoured a 10-meter wide road for the Char Dham project, which was rejected by the bench headed by Justice Nariman.

thought. For instance, the data from February and March would reveal which states had failed to track the rising cases. Why are mortality rates in states such as Punjab so high? These are questions you must ask your own chief minis-

mishandling the crisis, Mr Nadda wrote: "There are other aspects that also need greater

■ Continued from Page 1 vaccines," Mr Sisodai alleged. World Health

Organisation, India and South Africa have have all called for patents to be temporarily suspended, especially by the US.

According to the Centre's Liberalised Centre's Pricing and Accelerated Covid-19 National Vaccination Strategy, Covid-19 vaccination is free at government vaccination centres that receive doses from the Centre for eligible population groups comprising healthcare workers, frontline workers and people above the 45 years of age.

However, states and private hospitals have to procure vaccines to immunise persons in the age group of 18 to 44 years.

Since the third phase of vaccination began amidst a ferocious second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, India has been facing acute shortage of vaccines. The Odisha government,

meanwhile, has formed

committees for the supervision of the proposed global e-tendering process to procure Covid-19 vac-The Karnataka government too decided to procure two crore vaccine

doses through global ten-

der to meet the increased

State govts to float global tenders demand and to facilitate vaccination of the age group of 18-44 years, deputy chief minister and state Covid task force head C.N. Ashwath head C.N. Ashwath Narayan said on Tuesday. The Telangana Cabinet

> Officials Andhra Pradesh government will float a global tender in a day or two for the procurement of Covid-19 vaccines from foreign manufacturers to comthe vaccination process as quickly as pos-

Tuesday decided to invite global tenders for the procurement of vaccines to inoculate the state's entire population. said the

bars and restaurants.



THE ASIAN AGE

12 MAY 2021

Get moving on vaccines as Indian lives do matter

he Union government's contention before the Supreme Court that its vaccine policy was made after several rounds of consultation and discussion with experts, state governments and vaccine manufacturers and hence calls for no judicial "interference" flies in the face of facts that are in the public domain. And the suggestion that the court was making "overzealous, though well-meaning" intervention reflects the government's attempt to play the victim card.

The court is grappling with a question as to why the Union government and the state governments get the vaccines at differential prices with the states paying almost double what the Union government does when the ultimate beneficiaries are the citizens of India. In layman's words, what makes the Centre force the state government to cough up more money to the vaccine manufacturers to inoculate the most productive segment of the population, that is those aged between 18 and 45 years, is the question on hand. That the Centre placed large purchase orders as the reason for cheaper price is hardly convincing as the states, put together, will have to make a

India claims to host the similar-sized order. manufacturing unit but

The principal scientific advisor to the governworld's largest vaccine ment has already warned of a third wave of the anufacturing unit but pandemic, and experts are saying in unison the government lost that vaccination is the most effective tool to precious time in stop it from wreaking havoc. The US governhelping it augment its production facilities to meet the home requirements

stop it from wreaking navoc. The US government is planning to lift public health restrictions on July 4 by which date its plans to administer at least one dose to at least 70 per cent of the population. In India, launching the world's largest vaccination programme, the government simed of inequalities the fearbling. government aimed at inoculating the frontline

health workers in the first phase as it is a safeguard against the threat they face at their workplace. A couple of months later, the Election Commission of India ensured that all those officials who were part of the election process in four states and one Union territory were administered two doses of the vaccine. It is more than evident that being vaccinated is a precondition in these times of a devastating pandemic for the people to stay alive and go about earning their daily bread. It is a right available to every person, guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution. The court's efforts must be seen as an attempt to hold the government accountable to the Constitution, which is its mandate, and not as

The government's plea that the current need for vaccination was both "emergent and urgent" does not appear to reflect the whole truth. India claims to host the world's largest vaccine manufacturing unit but the government lost precious time in helping it augment its production facilities to meet the home requirements. While the US government worked closely with manufacturers there and gave them funds in advance, the Serum Institute of India, which manufactures AstraZenaca's Covid-19 vaccine, was waiting for a similar help this

A free universal vaccination programme is one of the best tools to remove the threat to life, and hence is a right of every citizen. The government should, instead of questioning the motive of those who question its non-action, get into the action mode. Indian lives matter.

Uncertainty looms in Nepal

The defeat of Nepal Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli in a confidence vote last Monday is reflective of the tenuous political situation in the Himalayan state that can be exploited by China, which has been actively meddling in Nepal's affairs since the last general election in 2017 which brought Mr Oli to power in a power-sharing deal with Pushp Kumar Dahal Prachanda of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist. While Mr Oli has lost the confidence of the House, his Communist Party of

Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) remains the largest single political formation in the House. It is not considered unlikely that he would seek to manoeuvre various parties in the Pratinidhi Sabha (Lower House) to join him in a coalition under his leadership, although Nepali Congress, the main Opposition

party, has rebuffed an approach.

Mr Oli first built up his nationalist credentials by mounting a cartographic coup against India by incorporating changes in the India-Nepal boundary (Kalapani area) through a constitutional amendment that was passed unanimously since no party wished to run the risk of being seen as less than nationalist. This would have pleased Beijing, the other power in contention in Nepal's affairs.

ening his position on the man issue Mr Oli's nower-hunger l him to renege on internal arrangements made with Mr Prachanda to rotate the Prime Minister's post with the CPN (Maoist) leadership. Faced with the prospect of loss of support in the House, he dissolved Parliament with the connivance of President Bidya Kumari Bhandari and called for fresh elections. This unpopular move was thwarted by the Supreme Court. The PM was thus faced with a no-confidence motion.

The fragile internal political situation in land-locked Nepal can render it helpless in dealing with the Covid pandemic, and drive it into the arms of Beijing. New Delhi needs to keep a careful watch on the unstable state of affairs. Negative developments in Nepal have a bearing on India's security.



T. VENKATRAM REDDY

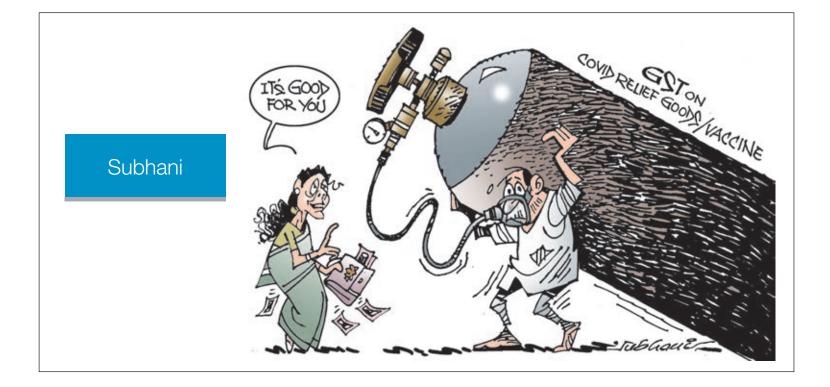
THE ASIAN AGE office is located at:

New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone

Published and Printed on behalf of and for

Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.

London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ. RNI Registration number: 57290/94



Amid pandemic, Britain, EU eye India trade deals



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray

Reflections

n the face of the time hardly seems propitious for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reach out to his foreign His ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has suffered electoral setbacks in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh and been reprimanded by the courts. People blame his government for the mix of complacency and inef-ficiency that aggravated the fearsome second wave of Covid-19. But stricken India desperately needs the emergency medical aid that is pouring in from several richer countries.

Britain is one of them. Prime Minister Boris Johnson needs a treaty with India, especially after Brexit, and also to highlight the failure of his predecessor, Theresa May, to secure one. Undaunted by a series of setbacks, he bubbles that Partnership" and the "memorandum of understanding on India-UK Migration and Mobility Partnership" that he and Prime Minister Modi had endorsed on May 4

"mark the beginning of a

new era in the UK-India

relationship" Britain sees India as an Indo-Pacific partner in the great game of countering China. Britain is also the country with which India interacts most intimately at many levels. As Mr Johnson put it without inquiring too closely into the downside, "a living bridge" unites the two countries. Given that demographic link, British public opinion reacts swiftly and spontaneously to domestic Indian developments like the 1984 Sikh carnage, the Gujarat communal killings in 2002, constitutional changes in the former Jammu and Kashmir state, and the Citizenship Amendment

Act.
That is only natural.

Britain's 2011 census recorded Indian-origin persons, accounting for 2.3 per cent of the population. Migration has long been a contentious issue, and British-Indians are particularly curious about the new deal's provision for employment for 3,000 young Indian professionals annually, in return for New Delhi taking back Indian illegals in Britain.

Identifying and repatriating these illegals is bound to cause friction. If the "noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England!", to quote Samuel Johnson, the flight to Heathrow airport is beaten in attractiveness only by the flight to New York for many aspiring Indians. Very few Indians who go nowadays to a Western country to study ever return to the motherland, with employment

opportunities.
The phenomenon isn't exclusively Indian. A special British scheme to facilitate the import of chefs from Bangladesh for so-called "Indian" restaurants at once attracted floods of Bangladeshis whose only aim was to migrate to the West. The scheme

was quickly abandoned. When migration was discussed during Theresa May's 2016 visit to India, London claimed that as many as 100,000 Indians lived illegally in Britain. New Delhi disputed this figure, throwing in the counter-argument that tens of thousands of young Indians who go to Britain to study are denied job opportunities there. Another charge was that Britain is about the only country in the world that counts post-graduate Indian students staying on for a year or two's practical training as

migrants. Indians felt especially

aggrieved when visa rules for Chinese students were greatly liberalised. One obvious explanation lies in the old saying: "Money talks!" With £8.63 billion in Chinese investment in in Chinese investment in the UK (with some of them being in public undertakings) utility and around 800 Chinese companies employing 71,000 people in the UK, Beijing could demand concessions. Moreover, Beijing's rigid controls guaranteed that all its students and trainees would sooner or later be recalled. Britain was not afraid of becoming a vast Chinatown.

The repatriation of Indian "illegals" is supposed to facilitate the legal movement of students and professionals and enhance cooperation in addressing illegal migration. But the late and much maligned right-wing British politi-cian, Enoch Powell, was not alone in warning that "rivers of blood" would flow unless nonwhite immigration was checked. London is so acutely conscious of sensitivity about Commonwealth citizens from Asia and Africa that even Clement Attlee's government Labour back in the 1940s quietly set up a committee to examine how the British Nationality Act of 1948, which granted colonials the right to enter, live and work in Britain, could be revised without creating a huge uproar.

Apart from a series of agreements on climate change, technology and pharmaceuticals, the . Narendra Modi-Boris Johnson negotiations had finalised Indian investment worth £1 billion to create over 6.500 jobs in Britain. The other significant outcome was a commitment by both sides to begin trade talks this year to 'negotiate a comprehen-Free Agreement", remove

> **Mr Johnson** probably hopes that Britain will upstage the **European Union** and sign an FTA with India first

trade barriers, and double bilateral trade by 2030.

The partnership deal will lift all export barriers on goods ranging from British apples to medical devices and open up India's legal services to British firms. In return, Britain agreed to improve access to its fisheries and nursing sectors

Mr Johnson probably hopes that Britain will upstage the European Union and sign an FTA with India first. Negotiations with the EU, which started in 2007, have been stalled since 2013 but were resumed on May 8 when the 16th India-EU virtual summit was held at Porto, Portugal. India was represented by Mr Modi and the EU by Charles Michel, European Council president, and Ursula von der Leyen, president the European Commission, besides all the 27 member countries. The unsurprising news was that they decided to restart talks on trade, investment protection and geograph-

ical indications. The major sticking points in the India-EU negotiations — tariffs on automobiles, wines and ctions the spirits, rest on free movement of professionals, data security status for the IT sector. market access and waiver of patent rights on Covid-related innovations - are important but are not explosive like migration. Ironically, Saturday's summit host. Portugal's Prime Minister Antonio Costa, is an Overseas Citizen of India."

Many assume that the presence of three ethnic Indians (Rishi Sunak, Priti Patel and Alok Sharma) in important positions in Mr Johnson's Cabinet will make it easier for other immigrants. But it's a worldwide trend for those who have boarded the gravy train diligently to ward off any newcomers. As home secretary, Priti Patel has already acquired a formidable anti-immigrant reputation.

> The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

LETTERS

The first revenue minister of Kerala and one of the first leaders of the Communist movement in the state, K.R. Gouri Amma, is no more. Gouri Amma passed away at the age of 102. She was heading the Janathipathiya Samrakshana Samithy party. With her candidature to Kerala Assembly elections in 2011, then 92-year-old Gouri Amma had made history. She was the only candidate to contest all the Assembly elections since the state first went to polls in 1957. Because of her courage and positive attitude. she was loved by all.

K.A. Solaman Alappuzha

NO MORE EXCESSES

BENGALURU DIRECTOR general of police Praveen Sood's clarification that there is no bar on the use of vehicles to buy essentials between 6 am and 10 am must cheer citizens, more so the elderly, the sick and the infirmed. The strict lockdown barring people, except those employed in essential services, from plying their vehicles had come under fire rious auart Opposition Congress and JD(S). Reports of police excesses — caning and meting out harsh punishment have also come in from several parts of the State. Stung by criticism, city police commissioner Kamal Pant ordered the police personnel not to use lathis but to start legal action. N.J. Ravi Chander

GAME-CHANGER

AS PER RESEARCHERS in Cambridge University, the bamboo can become a viable alternative to the willow in the manufacturing of the cricket bat. Replacing the scarce willow with bamboo will no doubt be cost-effective and environmentfriendly. We should ardently welcome this game-changing innovation after getting the players acclimitised. Bamboo was also shown to have a similar "damping ratio" to willow, meaning that a similar amount of force was transferred to a player's hands when they hit the ball, so players would feel no more vibration.

Chanchal Nandy Durgapur

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

Dilip Cherian



As deaths rise, Covid deals a body blow to the steel frame

s India's fabled "steel frame" only creaking or is it screaming? The coronavirus pandemic surge has devastated big cities including the capital and brought the healthcare system to its knees. India has now been recording the highest number of new coronavirus cases in the world and the death toll is

The second wave of the pandemic has spared no one, not even the elite administrative services that are charged with oiling the wheels that run the nation. According to sources, more than 100 senior officers, including IAS, IPS, IRS and others, have lost their lives to Covid. The news of the deaths of senior babus including Bihar chief secretary Arun Kumar Singh and three of his 1985 batchmates - former CBI director Ranjit Sinha, former secretary, department of land resources, R. Buhril and serving director of the panchayati raj department in Bihar and many oth-

ers — has got the babus rattled. Further, the president of the UP IAS Association Deepak Trivedi and additional secretary of health in Bihar R.S. Chowdhury too died, both within a week. In recent weeks, nearly two dozen top babus across central government ministries and departments, including the health ministry, have tested positive for the coronavirus.

The severity of the epidemic has hit home. When even the powerful in the land are not safe and anxious about their health and that of their families, they are pushing the panic button. The "System", normally a bulwark against the vicissitudes of fate that often visit upon the citizenry, has collapsed this time. It must be a novel experience for the nation's elite administrators. Clearly, the old trusted "networks" and reliable connections have failed.

Naturally, none of them can say this openly but India's once-fabled "steel frame" has bent and buckled

in the face of the pandemic headwinds. The creaking is audible, even if it actually feels like screaming.

MAMATA BRINGS BACK COPS TRANSFERRED BY EC

After her hard-fought victory in the recently concluded state Assembly elections, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee is busy setting her house in order. This has primarily meant that she is bringing back a large number of senior IPS officers who had been transferred by the Election Commission during the campaigning. Sources say that within hours of taking oath for the third consecutive time, Didi brought back senior IPS officer Virendra as director general of police. Virendra will be retiring this month. Similarly, Vivek Sahay has been reinstated as director of security.

Sources say that the state government has decided to clean up the mess in police administration and issued transfer orders to a large number of IPS officers whose role during the election period has been seen as not only doubtful but in violation of norms.

However, the return to "normalcy" may take longer. After reports about the violence that erupted in certain parts of West Bengal after the elections, the ministry of home affairs has deputed a team of top home ministry officials led by an additional secretary-level officer to undertake a fact-finding exercise in the state to assess the "ground situation". This again is likely to set off a fresh round of friction between Didi and the Centre.

EC SPLIT DOWN THE MIDDLE The Election Commission (EC) is split down the middle over its response to the censure by the Madras high court on its role in conducting elections during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. The EC has approached the Supreme Court against the censure, but its petition was swiftly rejected. One of the panel's counsel has resigned stating that his "values are not in consonance with the

After Sunil Arora's retirement as Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on April 12, the three-member Commission has Sushil Chandra as CEC and Rajiv Kumar as Election Commissioner. The position of the third EC is vacant.

Many remember what happened the last time when there was a schism within the Election Commission. In the 2019 general elections, the then Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa had opposed the clean chit given to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former BJP president Amit Shah on charges of violating the election model code of conduct. We all know how that went.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.













UZBEKISTAN JAILS ANTI-CORRUPTION BLOGGER

Tashkent: A court in Uzbekistan has sentenced a blogger known for speaking out on corruption to 6.5 years in jail on extortion and libel charges, his lawyer said on Tuesday.

The case of Otabek Sattoriy, a popular video blogger from the southern town of Termez in the Central Asian country, was widely viewed as a test for authorities who according to rights groups have been clamping down on free speech ahead of a leadership election in October.

A court in the southern Surkhondaryo region sentenced Sattoriy to six years and six months in jail on Monday, lawyer Umidbek Davlatov said, calling the verdict "completely unfair" and pledging to appeal.
"We don't know for the

moment on what precise basis the court ruled to send him to jail," Davlatov said by tele-

THAILAND SEEKS HUMANITARIAN FIX FOR JAILED SCRIBES

Bangkok: Thailand said on Tuesday it was seeking a "humanitarian" solution for three Myanmar journalists arrested after fleeing across the border to escape a junta

The trio's employer — the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) — and the Thai foreign correspondents' club urged the authorities not to deport them, warning their lives could be in danger if they returned to the

coup-hit country.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1, triggering a mass uprising as large swathes of the population take to the streets to demand democracy.

The junta has responded with shooting protesters, arresting suspected dissidents in night raids, and targeting journalists and news outlets by shutting them down.

Thai authorities on Tuesday confirmed the arrests, while foreign ministry spokesman Tanee Sangrat said they were seeking a way out of the case.

TEXAS COPS SHOOT MAN FOR FIRING

Lancaster (US): Officers in a Dallas suburb fatally shot a man firing a gun in a home on Monday, hours after he was released from a hospital where he had a mental health evalua-

Officers were dispatched to a home in Lancaster on Sunday night after receiving a report of a man refusing to let a woman leave. They found Kalon J. Horton, 29, who appeared to be intoxicated and in an altered mental state. He was taken to a hospital for evaluation and was later released, according to a

police statement. On Monday, police in the city about 16 miles (26 kilometers) south of downtown Dallas received a shooting report and arrived to find Horton firing a gun in a different home occupied by two children, police stated.

Police Chief Urbanski said officers confronted and shot Horton, who was later pronounced dead at a hospital. He said the others in the home were not injured. remained under investigation.

OZ PLANS BIG DEFENCE, SECURITY INVESTMENTS

Canberra: The Australian government released a big-spend ing economic plan for the next fiscal year on Tuesday that includes hefty investments in defence and national security as relations with China wors-

The government plans to spend 270 billion Australian dollars (USD 212 billion) over the next decade on upgrading defence capabilities to "promote an open and peaceful Treasury Indo-Pacific,' Department documents say.

This includes AU\$ 747 million (USD 585 million) to upgrade four military training areas in the Northern Territory where U.S. Marines have a temporary base. The government announced in March that it would begin building its own guided missiles in close collab-

oration with the United States. The AU\$1 billion (USD 784 million) project would produce the first Australian-manufactured missiles since the 1960s

The government also plans to spend AU\$1.3 billion (USD 1.02 billion) over a decade to enhance the ability of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation.

US accepts Pfizer shot for 12-15 year olds

It is a way to protect adolescents before they go back to school; vaccination to begin on Thursday

Washington, May 11: US regulators on Monday expanded the use of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine to children as young as 12, offering a way to protect the nation's adolescents before they head back to school in the fall and paving the way for them to return to more normal activities. Shots could begin as soon as Thursday, after a federal vaccine advisory committee issues recommendations using the two-dose vaccine in 12- to 15-year-olds. An announcement is expected Wednesday. Most Covid-19 vaccines

worldwide have been authorised for adults. Pfizer's vaccine is being used in multiple countries for teens as young as 16, and Canada recently became the first to expand use to 12 and up. Parents, school administrators and public health officials elsewhere have eagerly awaited approval for the shot to be made available to more kids. "This is a watershed moment in our ability to fight back the Covid-19 pandemic," Dr Bill Gruber, a Pfizer senior vice president who is also a pediatrician, said.

The Food and Drug Administration declared that the Pfizer vaccine is safe and offers strong protection for younger teens based on testing of more than 2,000 US volunteers ages 12 to 15. The agency noted there were no cases of Covid-19 among fully vaccinated adolescents compared with 16 among kids given dummy shots. More intriguing, researchers found the kids developed higher levels of virus-fighting antibodies than earlier studies measured in young adults. The younger teens received the same vaccine dosage as adults and had the same side effects, mostly sore arms and flu-like fever, chills or aches that signal a revved-up immune system, especially after the second dose.

Pfizer's testing in adolescents "met our rigorous standards," FDA vaccine chief Dr Peter Marks said. other countries to follow.



Queen Elizabeth II reads the Queen's Speech from the sovereign's throne, as Prince Charles, Prince of Wales (right), listens in the House of Lords chamber during the State Opening of Parliament at Westminster in London on

England, N. Ireland, Scotland record zero Covid-19 deaths

United Kingdom, May 11: England has recorded zero daily Covid deaths for the first time since July, in a situation welcomed by experts who said it reflected the impact of lock-downs and vaccination against the disease.

Monday marked the first time since 30 July last year that no deaths within 28 days of positive Covid test were reported in England, following Monday 3 May's

"Having a vaccine authorised for a younger popula-tion is a critical step in continuing to lessen the immense public health burden caused by the Covid-19 pandemic." Pfizer and its German partner Bio-NTech recently requested similar authorisation in the European Union, with report of a single death by the same metric. No deaths were recorded in Scotland or Northern Ireland on Monday. However, four Covid-related deaths were recorded in Wales.

While experts cautioned that the figures were only one measure of Covidrelated deaths, and were often affected by time lags in reporting, they said the declining death toll was promising.

The latest news is welcome for US families struggling to decide what activities are safe to resume when the youngest family members remain unvaccinated. "I can't feel totally comfortable because my boys aren't vaccinated," said Carrie Vittitoe, a substitute teacher and freelance writer in Louisville,

Kentucky, who is fully vaccinated, as are her husband and 17-year-old daughter. The FDA decision means her 13-year-old son soon could be eligible, leaving only her 11-yearold son unvaccinated. The family has not yet resumed going to church, and summer vacation will be a road trip. -AP

Rowland Kao - a profes-

sor of epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh

who contributes to the

Spi-M modelling subgroup

of Sage, the Scientific Advisory Group for Emer-

gencies — said the fall in deaths reflected the imp-

act of vaccination. "There

ing of deaths in the second

half of the week ... but

overall it is good news," he

— Agencies

W.H.O. DENIES **'LYING' TO ITALY OVER UN REPORT**

Rome, May 11: A top World Health Organisation offi-cial has strongly denied making false statements to Italian prosecutors about a spiked UN report into Italy's Covid response, doubling down on his assertions in court documents.

Dr Ranieri Guerra, a WHO special adviser, outlined his position in a 40page response, with a 495page annex, to prosecutors who placed him under investigation last month for having allegedly made false statements to them when he was questioned November 5.

The prosecutors' claims create a picture that is quite different from the reality of the facts and above all, are imprecise and don't adhere to the reconstruction of events that Dr Guerra provided, said the response signed by his Rome-based attorney. -AP

S'pore cannot shut borders: Parliament

Singapore, May 11: Singapore is on a "knife's edge" with Covid-19 cases 11: ressed. Singapore has dethat could go either way over the next few weeks, but the country cannot completely shutdown its borders as it is not self-suffi-cient and need to maintain supply lines and global connections to survive, two senior minister told lawmakers on Tuesday.

Singapore is now reopening its borders gradually to allow safe travel in limited cessary safeguards in place to ensure public health considerations are addtected 10 different variants among local and imported coronavirus cases till date, Health Minister Gan Kim Yong told Parliament. The emergence of new Covid-19 variants have challenged existing knowledge on the virulence and trans-

missibility of Covid, he said. Education minister Lawrence Wong, who is also the co-chair of the multi-ministry task force dealing with Covid, said the country is now on a "knife's edge" with community case numbers that could go

HONG KONG NOT TO **MANDATE VAX FOR DOMESTIC STAFF**

Hong Kong, May 11: Hong Kong officials dropped a plan to mandate foreign domestic workers be vacciagainst Coronavirus, after hearing international criticism the move would be dis-

criminatory.

Most of Hong Kong's approximately 370,000 domestic workers come from Indonesia Philippines, both severely impacted by the pandemic. Hong Kong officials initially proposed the mandate after a foreign domestic worker tested positive for a Coronavirus variant in April, with an unknown infection. Another worker arriving from the Philippines had also tested positive for a variant.

Those findings prompted the city to order domestic workers to be tested for the virus at the end of April. The plan for mandatory vaccinations was dropped after officials assessed public health needs and the potential legal issues, Ho-

MAN CHARGED **FOR MISUSING COVID LOANS**

Irvine (US), May 11: A Southern California man has pleaded not guilty to charges he obtained USD 5 Coronavirus-relief loans for phony businesses and then used the money for lavish vacations and to buy a Ferrari, Bentley and Lamborghini, prosecutors

said on Monday. Mustafa Qadiri, 38, was arrested last week on suspicion of scheming to defraud the Paycheck Protection Program, which was implemented last year to help small businesses struggling during the Covid-19 pan-

Qadiri, of Irvine, pleaded not guilty on Friday to multiple charges includ-ing bank fraud, wire fraud, aggravated identity theft, and money laundering, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Prosecutors said Qadiri submitted fraudulent PPP loan applications to three banks on behalf of four companies that didn't

China: 2 plead guilty in web control case

Beijing, May 11: Two amateur computer coders guilty Tuesday to "stirring up trouble and picking quarrels" in a case that highlighted a growing Chinese government crack-

down on online activity. Chen Mei, 28, and Cai Wei. 27. created an online archive that stored articles that had been censored from the Chinese internet, and an accompanying forum that allowed people to discuss them anonymously.

In court, prosecutors zeroed in on 2049bbs, the forum accompanying the archive. They said Cai was responsible for building a website that had insulted the government, and Chen had paid for it, Chen's mother, Wei Xiuwen, told reporters outside the court Family and friends believe what

Berlin, May 11: A German

regulator on Tuesday slapped a three-month ban

on Facebook collecting

user data from WhatsApp

accounts and referred the

case to an EU watchdog,

citing concerns about elec-

The Hamburg Commis-

sioner for Data Protection

and Freedom of Infor-

mation, which has juris-

diction because Faceb-

ook's German branch is

based in the city, sent the

order to the social network

which owns the popular

The tech giant informed

WhatsApp users earlier

this year that they must

consent to a new data use

policy to continue using

The German authority

said in an emergency deci-

sion that the terms of that

agreement were now null

and void in Europe's top

messaging service.

the service.

tion integrity.

Germany bans data

sharing by Facebook

got them in trouble was archiving articles showing an alternative to China's official narrative about its Covid response just as the country started facing questions over its handling of the initial outbreak.

The case was tried at Wenyuhe People's Court in the northeastern outskirts of Beijing. The court said that sentencing would come at a later date. The charge "stirring up trouble and picking quarrels" is a catch-all charge often used for politically sensitive cases. Chen's mother, who travelled from northwestern Shaanxi province to attend the hearing, said that her son wore a full-body medical protective suit and had his hands cuffed and feet shackled.

economy for three months.

to the European Data

Protection Board, an inde-

pendent EU body that

enforces rules throughout

regulator, Johannes Casp-

ar, said past Facebook data

protection breaches as

well as Germany's general

election in September showed the "dangers" of

"mass building of user

profiles" that could be exploited. "This ruling is inte-

nded to protect the rights

and freedoms of the many

millions of user across Ge-

rmany who give their per-

mission to the new use and

the private sphere but also the possibility of using

profiles to influence voter

choices and manipulate

democratic decisions.

"That includes not only

privacy policy," he said.

The head of the German

the 27-nation bloc.

It will hand the case over

CHINA WARNS BANGLA OVER JOINING U.S.-LED QUAD ALLIANCE

Dhaka, May 11: China has warned Bangladesh against joining the USled Quad alliance, saving that Dhaka's participation in the anti-Beijing "club" would result in "substantial damage" to bilateral relations.

The unusual warning from Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming came weeks after visiting Chinese Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe emphasised to Bangladesh President Hamid that and Dhaka should make joint efforts against powers from outside the region establishing a "military alliance" in South Asia and practising "hegemonism".

"Obviously it will not be a good idea for Bangladesh to participate in this small club of four (Quad) because it will substantially damage our bilateral relationship, Ambassador Li said at a virtual meeting organised by the Diple omatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh on Monday.

Moscow, May least nine people including eight pupils were killed on Tuesday after two unidentified attackers opened fire at a high school in the central Russian city of Kazan, news agencies reported.

"Eight school children and a teacher were killed,' a source told the Interfax news agency. Ten more people were injured. Spokespersons for police

had vear-old. been

Images broadcast on nearby streets.

detained.

source told *Interfax news agency* that a second shooter had barred himself in on the floor of the

Nine killed, 10 injured in high school shooting in Russia

and the emergencies ministry refused to comment. News agencies reported that two unidentified people had carried out the shooting and one, a 17-

state television from the scene showed dozens of people outside the school building with fire services and police vehicles lining

building.
The TASS state news

agency, citing sources in children were evacuated the emergency services, from the school and that



Ambulances seen at the scene of a shooting at School No. 175 in Kazan, the capital of Russia's republic of Tatarstan, on Tuesday.

said that 10 people had been injured and were rushed to hospital. "I was in class, I first

heard an explosion, then gunshots," TASS quoted a teacher as saying. The city administration

was cited as saying that

stered at other educational facilities in the city.

Another source cited by the RIA Novosti agency said they had heard an explosion and could see smoke rising from the building.

President Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov had

to surpass China as the

security had been bol- arrived at the scene of the shooting, news agencies

Russia has relatively few school shootings due to normally tight security in education facilities and the difficulty of buying firearms legally, although it is possible to register hunting rifles.

CHANGING | CURVE

As per 7th census, nation recorded increase of 5.38% from 2010

Chinese population rises at slow pace

Beijing, May 11: China's autonomous regions, and population grew at its slowest pace to reach 1.41178 billion, keeping its status as the world's most populous country amid official projections that the numbers may decline from next year, leading to labour shortages and a fall in consumption levels, impacting the country's future economic outlook. According to the seventh national population cen-

sus released by the

Chinese government on

Tuesday, China's popula-

tion in all the 31 provinces,

municipalities reached 1.41178 billion up by 5.38 per cent or 72.06 million from 2010. The figures do not include Hong Kong and Macao. "Data shows that China's population maintained has growth in the past decade," Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics, (NBS) told the media here while releasing the census results.

China has conducted a national census every 10 years since the 1990s. The country's population on

 AS CHINA faced population decline, India, whose population was pegged around 1.366 billion in 2019 is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country around 2027.

the mainland has reached 1.41178 billion, up by 5.38 per cent or 72.06 million from 2010, the latest census data shows. As China faced population decline, India, whose population was pegged around 1.366 billion in 2019 is projected

world's most populous country around 2027, according to a UN report released in June, 2019. According to the data released by the NBS, the new census figures reveal

that the demographic crisis China faced was expected to deepen as the population above 60 years grew to 264 million, up by 18.7 per cent last year. "Data shows the aging of the Chinese population has further deepened, and we will continue to face the pressure to achieve

long-term balanced population development," Ning said. China's working-age population, or people aged between 16 and 59, stands at 880 million, Ning said, adding the average age of the Chinese population is 38.8, almost the same as the US' 38, he said.

The growth rate of the population was 0.53 per cent annually on average in the 7th census conducted last year in comparison to 0.57 per cent in the 6th census in 2010 and 1.07 per cent in the fifth census held in 2000.

WEDNESDAY | 12 MAY 2021 | NEW DELHI

INDICATO	RS	%
Sensex	49161.81	-0.69
Nifty 50	14850.80	-0.61
S&P 500*	4,144.59	-1.05
Dollar (₹)	73.34	0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.65	-0.28
Euro (₹)	89.22	-0.003
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,308 ▼ 212	0.44
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	68.32	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.008	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.616	0.014
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

Moody's cuts India growth forecast to 9.3%

Moody's Investors Service slashed India's growth forecast for the current financial year to 9.3 per cent, from the 13.7 per cent projected earlier, on account of the negative impact of the Covid second wave. India is experiencing a severe second wave of coronavirus infections which will slow the near-term economic recovery and could weigh on longerterm growth dynamics, the rating agency said.

Ruchi Soya to acquire biscuits biz from Patanjali



Ruchi Soya Industries announced the acquisition of biscuits business from Patanjali Natural Biscuits Pvt Ltd in a slump sale at ₹60.02 crore. The company, in a regulatory filing, said its board on May 10 approved the signing of a **Business Transfer Agreement in** this regard with the PNBPL pleted in the next two months, it added. The sale consideration is payable in two tranches.

HUL to provide 4,000 oxygen concentrators

Hindustan Unilever Ltd said it will provide 4,000 oxygen concentrators to India to address the acute shortage of medical oxygen. Under its Mission HO2PE, HUL will send 4,000 concentrators to the worst affected cities which includes Delhi, Lucknow, Bengaluru, etc. it said. "Patients can avail of this service by calling the Mission HO2PE helpline number and request for oxygen concentrators," it added.

3 private telcos add new users in February

India's largest telecom operator Reliance Jio widened its mobile subscriber base to 414.9 million in February, with healthy addition of 4.2 million users, as it managed a comfortable lead in the market, according to TRAI data. In fact, all three private operators Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea added subscribers during the month, as per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd. C-9 Sector 3. Noida-201301. Published at 219. N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: T.Venkatram Reddy, RNI Registration number 30074/09, Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or

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The Editor.

■ New dividend rules for top 1,000 firms

Sebi makes policy on dividend a must

New Delhi, May 11: To strengthen corporate government ernance practices and disclosure requirements, Sebi has notified new rules, including that top 1,000 listed firms will have to formulate a dividend distribution policy.
The regulator has also

put in place a framework in relation to applicability, constitution and role of the Risk Management Committee (RMC) and eased norms for re-classification of a promoter as a public shareholder, according to a notification dated May 5.

In addition, the regulator has asked listed firms to make available audio and video recordings of analyst and investor meets on their websites as well as stock exchanges within 24 hours or before the next trading day and also notified rules regarding Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BSSR).

Sebi has amended Listing of Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) rules and the new rules have come into effect

from May 5.
In a notification, Sebi said the requirement for formulation of dividend distribution policy by the existing top 500 listed entities has been extended to the top 1,000 listed entities on the basis of market

capitalisation.

The other listed entities can disclose their dividend distribution policies on a voluntary basis on their websites and provide



a web-link in their annual

reports.
In addition, requirement to constitute the RMC has been extended to the top 1,000 listed entities by market capitalisation from the existing top 500 listed entities.

The RMC needs to have a minimum three members with the majority of them being members of the board of directors, including at least one independent director.

The quorum for a meeting of the RMC needs to be either two members or one third of the members of the committee, whichever is higher, including at least one member of the board of directors in attendance.

The meetings of the RMC shall be conducted in such a manner that on a continuous basis not more than 180 days shall elapse between any two consecutive meetings," as per the notification.

The role of the RMC has been specified which includes formulation of a

detailed risk management policy and monitoring its implementation; periodic review of such policy; review of the appoint-ment, removal and terms of remuneration of the chief risk officer (if any).

Further, the regulator has rationalised the existing framework pertaining to reclassification of promoter/ promoter group

entities. This includes exemption from existing require-ments, in cases of reclassification pursuant to an order of the regulator under any law in line with existing exemption already available in cases of resolution plan approved under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

The exemption has also been provided from the requirement of seeking approval of shareholders in cases where the promoter seeking reclassification holds shareholding of less than one per cent, subject to the promoter not being in control, Sebi

PROMOTERS PLEDGED STAKE DIPS TO 1.64% FROM 2.09%

Mumbai, May 11: Fasterthan-expected recovery from the pandemic induced disruptions and the resultant improvement in balance sheets in the second half of FY21 have helped India Inc promoters to redeem their pledged shares, according to a broker-

age analysis.

The pledged holding of the BSE-500 index shows that the value of pledged promoter holdings as a percentage of promoter holding declined to 1.64 in the March quar-ter from 2.09 in the December 2020 quarter, according to a Kotak Institutional Equities analysis

When looked at from a percentage of the over-all promoter shareholding and the pledged holding, GMR Infrastructure (72.8), Omaxe (63.8) and Sterling & Wilson (53.7) were leading the chart. Companies with the highest promoter pled-ged holdings as of March 2021 include Suzlon Energy (88.5 per cent), Future Consumer (88.4) and Max Financial Services (88.4), GMR Infrastructure and Omaxe (63.8).

Similarly, there was a widespread decline in pledged promoter holdings in almost all the Nifty-50 companies, except for IndusInd Bank where it increased.

However, it has to be kept in mind that pledging of shares does not necessarily imply that a company or a promoter under financial

US duty on jewels to hit jobs in India: Exporters

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 11

The proposed retaliatory import duty of 25 per cent by the US on certain gems and jewellery products imported from India will lead to large scale job losses and shift of business to China and Mexico, pleaded the exporters in a virtual multijurisdictional hearing by the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

The gem and jewellery industry employs over four million people who are from the non-agrarian sector and who are not highly educated but are exceptionally skilled in jewellery making techniques. If businesses become infeasible due to the imposition of this import duty, this will adversely impact jobs and lead to large-scale unemployment," Suvankar Sen of Senco Gold impressed upon the USTR.



The USTR has proposed 25 per cent import duty on certain products, including 17 jewellery items, imported from India in retaliation to the two per cent digital services tax or Google tax levied by the Indian government on non-resident digital companies.

"The perception of injustice would lead to real-life consequences such as loss of jobs and livelihoods and a shift of business to countries such as China and Mexico," said Colin Shah, chairman of Gems and Jewellery Export

"The timing could not have been worse for imposing this tariff on Indian jewellery exporters, who are already reeling under the impact of the pandemic," he added. According to Rajeev Pandya of SEEPZ Gems and Jewelry Manufact

urers Association, the withdrawal of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) led to a decline in India's market share by 28 per cent to 22 per cent in 2013 while China's share increased from 18 per cent to 25 per cent. The new proposed duty will similar consequences, he said.

Recommending a multi-lateral solution, RV Anuradha, Partner, Clarus Law Associates said that pursuing a unilateral action undermines and weakens the Dispute System under WTO.

Markets tumble on inflation fears

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MAY 11

Indian equity market corrected after four sessions of gains in line with global market on expected US inflation spike fear and US Fed's monetary policy tightening sooner than later which led to overnight sell off in the technology sector stocks in the US market.

Nasdaq Composite index was down 1.34 per cent on Tuesday night too at the time of going to press after falling 2.34 per cent on Monday on rising inflation and soaring global commodity prices.

The Sensex closed 340.60 points or 0.69 per cent down at 49,161.81 making a partial recovery from intra-day dip by over 600 points to 48,988.18 and gap down opening at 49,066 on weak global cues. Nifty-50 The

closed at 14,850.75 down by 91.0 points or 0.61 per cent. However, the broader market was quite resilient with BSE Mid-cap index

up 0.60 per cent and BSE Small-cap index up 0.80 per cent. PSU stocks were in big demand as BSE PSU index gained 2.44 per cent BSE CPSE index gained 3.16 per cent. "Rising inflation threatens the longterm revenue outlook of tech stocks. The run-up in commodity prices has stoked fears of the US Federal Reserve tightening its monetary policy much sooner than expected," said Deepak Jasani, head of retail research, HDFC Securities.

MF INVESTORS

TURN CAUTIOUS

IN APRIL, BET ON

HYBRID FUNDS

Amitabh Bachchan can't resist Malkist

May 11: INBISCO India. a subsidiary of global food and beverage giant Mayora, has roped in film industry legend and icon Amitabh Bachchan as its brand ambassador its Hagsnip brand Malkist.

Maikist. Headquartered in Huderahad, INBISCO Hyderabad, India offers unique and differentiated highly brands like KOPIKOcandy made with real coffee extracts, Choki Choki, Go Choco Rollz and Wheelz, in the confectionery category, Malkist, Coffee Joy and AttaBix in the biscuits category, and CHAiKO — a candy made with real tea extracts.

The latest ad campaign showcases Mr Bachchan in a series of TV commercials endorsing the brand's NOTE new positioning 'Malkist Can't Resist'. The campaign also features Anikha Surendran who rightly represents the target audience.

The campaign highlights the uniqueness of the cracker, which is made with delicious 14 crunchy layers and innovative toppings.

On his association with the brand Mr. Bachchan



said, "I found the whole concept of Malkist's crunchy layered crack ers and cheesy cream topping so unique, that I had to taste it! And since then I really **Business** haven't been able to resist it!"

A c h y u t Kasireddy, MD, INBISCO India, commented 'Malkist is a much differentiated cracker with each biscuit made out of 7 layers, which makes it very crunchy... The new TVC highlights Malkist's proposition as crunchy crackers with cool toppings, which even Mr. Amitabh Bachchan can't

FLIPKART TO ADD 5 WAREHOUSES FOR GROCERY BIZ

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 11

In order to strengthen its grocery supply chain infrastructure in the backdrop of lock-downs in several states, Flipkart lans to add over eight lakh square feet of space through five new fulfilment centres over the next three months.

The five new fulfillment centres will come up in Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Coimbatore Hyderabad. This will enable the company to handle over 73,000 grocery orders per day and provide its customers safe and seamless access to order daily essentials through quick and contactless doorstep delivery. Currently, Flipkart serves close to 64,000 orders a

day.
"Our new grocery supply chain infrastructure will help us serve more customers in the country who can order daily essentials seamlessly and avail of contactless delivery. We are also continuously engaging with brand and marketplace partners to ensure stock availability across the country," said Smrithi Ravichandran, vice president, grocery, Flipkart.

HUL's Sudhir to join Godrej as MD New Delhi, May 11: FMCG major Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) on

Tuesday said Sudhir Sitapati will take over as its managing director and CEO in October this year. Sitapati is presently executive director, foods

and refreshments, at Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL). His appointment would be effective from October 18, 2021, following which

Nisaba Godrej, who is currently the chairperson and managing director, will serve as executive chairperson, GCPL said in a regulator filing. "The Board of Directors

at its meeting held today. appointed Sudhir Sitapati as the managing director & CEO of the company for a period of five years with effect from October 18,

New Delhi, May 11: The

has sought additional sup-

port, including an exten-

sion of the emergency

credit line, from the

Reserve Bank of India to

combat the challenges

arising out of the second

Sa-Dhan an association

of the microfinance sec-

industry

microfinance

COVID-19 wave.



2021, subject to the approval of the shareholders in the ensuing Annual General Meeting," it said. informed that Sitapati is stepping down. Srinandan Sundaram was named as his replacement.

his significant experience

Sudhir Sitapati

On Monday, HUL had

According to the Godrej group firm, the appointment of Sitapati, who has spent 22 years at HUL, will enable GCPL to leverage

MFIs send SOS to RBI on Covid

tor, in a letter to the RBI,

asked for the Partial

Credit Guarantee Scheme

3.0, emergency credit line,

special liquidity facility in

addition to the recently

announced support meas-

ures by the central bank.

Just when we were com-

ing out of the effects of

the first wave of the pan-

demic, the second wave

in building sustainable and profitable businesses to guide the growth strategy going forward. Last year in June, Vivek

Gambhir had stepped down as the MD and CEO of GCPL. Nisaba Godrej, who was then executive chairperson, had assumed additional charge as MD Commenting on the dev-

elopment, Nisaba Godrej said, "I am delighted to be welcoming Sudhir to Godrej. His significant experience and passion for building sustainable and profitable brands and businesses aligns very strongly with our purpose at GCPL. Sudhir's value-based leadership also makes him a great fit with the Godrej culture."

has descended on us with

In view of the fresh chal-

lenges brought on by the pandemic, Sa-Dhan execu-

tive director P. Satish said

MFIs may be supported

with an emergency credit

line of up to 25 per cent of

their outstanding with

their lending banks.

a vengeance.

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MAY 11 The second wave of Covid impacted mutual investors' fresh allocations in April in equity mutual funds as inflows fell to ₹3,437.37 crore compared

₹9,115.12 crore in March 2021. Investors preferred investing in hybrid MF schemes with ₹8,641 crore inflows in April, higher than ₹6,210.05 crore in the

previous month.

However, the start to fiscal 2021-22 has been quite positive with mutual fund industry average asset under management at all time high of ₹32.42 lakh crore due to inflows in all MF scheme categories be it debt, equity, hybrid or other schemes and monthly SIP contribution at ₹8,591 crore, April month data released by Association of Mutual

Funds in India showed. quantum redemption was almost the same as last month, the fund mobilised was lower than that in March suggesting some of the investors would have preferred to stay on the sidelines until more clarity emerges around the impact of the second wave of the pandemic on the economy. Additionally, few investors would have also held back their investments in anticipation of market correction given the ongoing concerns," Himanshu Srivastava, associate director (Research), Morningstar India said. "The flows during April 2021 were driven by liquid, overnight and money market schemes on the fixed income side, thematic/sectoral schemes and arbitrage and dynamic asset allocation schemes in the equity and hybrid segment," N S Venkatesh, CEO, AMFI said.

CG POWER OKAYS DEBT SETTLEMENT WITH STANCHART

New Delhi, May 11: CG Power and Industrial Solutions on Tuesday said its board has approved a proposal to allot 1.38 crore shares for ₹101.20 crore to Standard Chartered Bank (Singapore) on a preferential basis for settlement of

liability toward the latter. The board has approved the issuance and allot-ment of 1,38,45,000 shares of the company of face value of ₹2 each on preferential basis at a price of ₹73.10, including premium of ₹71.10 per equity share, aggregating to Rs 1,01,20,69,500 for consideration other than cash, the company said in a filing with the Bombay Stock

BAD | TIMES | Infection among staff halves Apple phone's production in India

Covid hits Foxconn's iPhone output in India

Bengaluru, May 11: Production of the Apple iPhone 12 at a Foxconn factory in India has slumped by more than 50 per cent because workers infected with Covid-19 have had to leave their posts, two sources told

The Foxconn facility in the southern state of Tamil Nadu produces iPhones specifically for India, the world's No.2 smart-phone market.

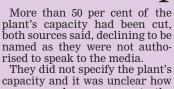
Tamil Nadu is one of the worst hit states in the second coronavirus wave engulfing India. Officials imposed a full lockdown in the state from Monday, closing public transport and shuttering shops, to try slow surging infec-

More than 100 Foxconn employees in the state have tested posi-



ny has enforced a no-entry ban at its factory in the capital of Chennai until late May, one of the sources said.

"Employees are only allowed to leave but not to enter the facility since yesterday," the person said "Only a small part of output is being kept."



many workers were at the facility, which provides dormitory accommodation for employ-

Taipei-based Foxconn, the world's largest contract electronics maker and a major supplier to Apple, said a small number of employees at one of its facilities in India tested positive for Covid-19 and the company was providing them with support, including

"Foxconn places the health and safety of our employees as our highest priority and that is why

medical assistance.

we have been working closely with local government and public health authorities in India to address the challenges that we and all companies are facing in dealing with the Covid-19 crisis," it said in a statement to Reuters.

Foxconn's shares fell as much as 6.2 per cent after the Reuters report. The stock closed down 5.31 per cent, outpacing a 3.8 per cent fall in the broader market on concerns about rising Covid-19 cases in Taiwan.

India has benefited from Apple's move to shift some areas production from China to other markets as it navigates a trade war between Washington and Beijing, with Apple announcing in March it had started the assembly of the iPhone 12 in India.



Anand to feature

in Covid fundraiser

New Delhi: Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand and four other Indian Grandmasters will play simultaneous online exhibition matches against other chess players on Thursday to raise funds for COVID-19 relief work in the country. Any player who has a Chess.com blitz or FIDE standard rating of under 2000 can play with former world champion Anand by donating \$150 and with the other four GMs by paying \$25 as registration amount. Donations will also be accepted during the exhibition matches to be broadcast on Chess.com at 19:30 IST. The website said it will match all donations up to a total of \$10,000. All the proceeds from the simultaneous exhibitions involving Anand, Koneru Humpy, Dronavalli Harika, Nihal Sarin and Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu will go to RedCross India and the Checkmate COVID initiative of the All India Chess Federation (AICF). - PTI

Pacer Bumrah gets vaccinated

Mumbai: India's star pacer Jasprit Bumrah and women's national team opener Smriti Mandhana on Tuesday said they received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Joining the duo was veteran wicketkeeperbatsman Dinesh Karthik. All three cricketers posted pictures of themselves on their respective social media accounts while urging everyone to get inoculated. Several of his teammates, including skipper Virat Kohli, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma, had got their first jab in various vaccination centres across the country. Head coach Ravi Shastri was the first from the Indian cricket team to receive the vaccine. He got his first jab in the first week

Don't break Covid

protocols: Rijiju

New Delhi: Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday cautioned Indian sportspersons against breaking COVID-19 pro-tocols of foreign countries while travelling for training or competition. Rijiju posted the comment while wishing Olympic-bound shooters a successful trip to Croatia, for which they left earlier in the day. "Safe journey! Never break the COVID-19 protocols of other countries. Focus on training, take care and stay safe. Will provide all necessary support to our athletes and the coaches. All the best." Riiiiu tweeted. The remark came in the backdrop of Bengaluru FC's AFC Cup play-off against Eagles FC in Male being postponed after the visiting team had to tender an apology for violating quarantine protocols in the host city. Maldives sports minister Ahmed Mahloof had asked BFC

Fulham relegated from top flight

to leave the country. — PTI

London: Relegation, promotion, and now relegation again. Fulham's rollercoaster ride between the top two divisions of English football has taken the London club back out of the Premier League, their fate sealed by losing to Burnley 2-0 on Monday. Fulham joined Sheffield United and West Bromwich Albion in going down to the Championship, wrapping up the Premier League's relegation battle at the earliest ever stage with three rounds still to go. "I'm bitterly disappointed, I'm hurt, I'm gutted," said Fulham manager Scott Parker, who also presided over the team's relegation two seasons ago when he was in charge on an interim basis. — AP

Westbrook sets record in NBA

Los Angeles: Russell Westbrook wrote his way into NBA history on Monday, bagging the 182nd triple-double of his career to break Oscar Robertson's 47year-old record. Washington Wizards star Westbrook, who had equaled Robertson's record of 181 triples on Saturday, sealed his record-breaking triple with 8min 33sec remaining in Monday's 125-124 defeat to the Atlanta Hawks. — AFP

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhya Marg, New Delhi 110 002. and Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C - 9, Sector - III. Noida - 201301.

Editor - T. Venkatram Reddy, RNI Registration number 57290/94, Price in Nepal - Nep.Rs. 20.00

per copy.

TWO-HORSE RACE

Dhawan, Pandya in contention to lead second-string team

New Delhi, May 11: Veteran opener Shikhar Dhawan and flamboyant allrounder-turned specialist batsman Hardik Pandya will be locked in a two-way fight for India captaincy if Shreyas Iyer doesn't get fit in time for the white-ball tour of Sri Lanka in July. India's limited overs specialists will be playing three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs in the island nation during the second half of July, when big guns like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will be in England for a marquee five-match Test series.

"It is still not clear if Shreyas will recover fully and will be match-fit in time for tour of Sri Lanka. Normally, a surgery of this scale along with rest, extensive rehab and training to get back in shape takes around four months," a senior BCCI source privy to selection matters said on condi-

tions of anonymity.
"In case Shreyas was available, he would have been the automatic choice for captaincy.

It's only logical that the two contenders for captaincy are 35-year-old Dhawan, who has had good "one and half IPLs" in last two seasons and Pandya junior, who is one of the most accomplished match-winners.

"Shikhar has had two very good IPL including this curtailed one and being the senior most among those who are available for selection, he is a very strong contender. Also he has been a solid performer for India for past eight years," an offi-

As far as Hardik is concerned, his reputation as a white-ball match-winner can't be discounted either.

'Hardik hasn't been regularly bowling for MI or India in recent times. However, he is the man with x-factor and among options available. He is miles ahead of his peers in terms of being an impact performer," the official said. — PTI

JUVENTUS ARE

IN DANGER OF

LOSING RONALDO

Rome, May 11: With their

nine-year reign in Serie A ended and club president

Andrea Agnelli roundly

criticised for his role in

the aborted European

Super League, Juventus

now risk missing out on

next season's Champions

Juventus were knocked

out of Italy's top four last weekend following a 3-0

home defeat by AC Milan,

leaving coach Andrea

Pirlo's position increas-

ingly under threat enter-

ing the final three games.

on the Champions League

in 2011 while Cristiano

Ronaldo, the competition's all-time leading

scorer with 134 goals, has

featured in every edition

Failing to qualify would

see Juventus lose out on roughly 80 million euros,

jeopardising their ability

to retain Ronaldo and

afford his reported pre-

tax annual salary of 54

It would likely spell the

end of Ronaldo's Turin

spell, who despite turning

36 in February is the lead-

ing scorer in Serie A this

term with 27 goals. That could though free up

opportunities for others

since 2003.

million euros.

Juventus last missed out

League.

A FEW INDIANS DIDN'T LIKE RESTRICTIONS: PAMMENT **Auckland, May 11:** Mumbai Indians fielding 11: coach James Pamment has claimed that some

senior Indian players did not like being subjected to restrictions inside the currently-suspended IPL's bio-bubble but it felt completely safe till the time cases from participating teams hadn't come to

light. Pamment did not elaborate on his assertion about the Indian players and did not take any

London, May 11: England

have a busy international

onwards and the players

are unlikely to be avail-

able for the remainder of

the suspended IPL if the

rescheduled this year,

says ECB Director of

The IPL was suspended

last week after multiple

COVID-19 cases inside its

bio-bubble. There are two

windows for the T20 event

to be resumed this year -

one is in the second half

of September and before

(October-November) and

the other is after mid-

But England's top play-

ers will be in action at

both times. They have

tours to Bangladesh and

Pakistan in September

and October, while they

will compete with Australia at the Ashes

right after the T20 World

Cup.
"We're planning on

involvement of England players in England matches. We've got a full

FTP schedule. So if those

tours to Pakistan and

Bangladesh are going ahead, I'd expect the play-ers to be there," Giles said

quoted

ESPNcricinfo.

November

T20 World Cup

Cricket Ashley Giles.

tournament

schedule from

suspended on May 4. "Some of the senior

Indian guys don't like being restricted and told what to do," he was quoted as saying by stuff.co.nz.

"But we did feel safe, at no point did we feel the bubble would be compromised ... We felt the travel was always going to be a challenge," he said.

The New Zealander, a former Northern Districts coach, said he and the MI players started to feel shortly apprehensive before the competition and the Aussies, their Mumbai hotel.

was halted.

"It was when cases started to come with the teams. They were a little more fearful, a little more apprehensive," said the 52-year-old, who returned home on Saturday.

"Chennai announced their cases and we'd played Chennai at the weekend, so straight away, the dynamic changed. I certainly noticed from within my group. I'd spend most of my time with the Kiwis mindset had changed. 'We started to get Indian

A file photo of

Hardik Pandya and

Shikhar Dhawan.

guys in our environment whose families were sick. There were bereavements as well and we were tak-ing a bit of a cue from those guys who were saying 'no, we want to carry on' and the messages were coming back that this is a

good distraction."

Pamment said at no stage did he feel his health

RECLAIM LOST

GLORY: CURTLY

Kingston, May 11: Pace

legend Curtly Ambrose believes the current lot of

Caribbean youngsters doesn't really understand

what cricket means to the

West Indies and so the

two-time world champi-

ons will never be able to

relive the glory days

first two World Cup titles

in 1975 and 1979 and it

took 33 years for the team

to claim another ICC title

"Most of the youngsters

we have now probably

don't quite understand what cricket means to

West Indians in the West

because cricket is the

only sport that really unites Caribbean people,"

the players we have now

because we have a couple

quality in them and can

become great. I don't

think we will ever see

those great, exceptional

glory days again." — PTI

ensure that the balance of bat and ball remains intact. "MCC's role as

Guardian of the Laws

includes maintaining the

balance between bat and

ball, and any potential amendments to the Law

would need to carefully

take this into considera-

This is no disrespect to

guys who have some

Ambrose said.

and

in 2012 (T20 World Cup).

West Indies had lifted

Caribbean

again.

was going to be put in jeopardy within the bubble set up by MI at a Mumbai hotel. -PTI

No England stars for IPL phase 2

lation — in the last several weeks. Organizers warned before the relay began that changes and delays were expected in the face of the pandemic. "It is certain there will be no relay on public streets since we are all trying to reduce going out, and how to do the ceremony without the relay on the

The relay began on March 25 in northeastern Japan and is to end on July 23 at the opening ceremony of the Olympics. Tokyo and other areas are under a state of



Indian shooters leave for Croatia

New Delhi, May 11: The Olympic-bound Indian shooting team on Tuesday left for Croatia for a two and a half months training-cum-competition tour, its final tune-up to the

upcoming Tokyo Games. With coaches and support staff in tow, a 13-member Indian shooting team took off for Croatian capital Zagreb, where it will undergo a training camp before leaving for Osijek to take part in the European Championships (May 20 to June 6) followed by the combined ISSF World Cup

'Team India takes off in 20 mins. Bon Voyage, Get the nose to the ground and hard for your inevitable success team, Raninder Singh, president

(June 22 to July 3).

The two Olympics bound skeet shooters Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Mairaj Ahmad Khan will be based in Italy.
The Indians, including

Gurjoat Singh Khangura, took part in the ongoing shotgun World Cup in Lonato, where they could not make the final of the men's skeet event on

The team left in a chartered flight arranged by the NRAI. After the stint in Croatia, the team will directly leave for Tokyo to participate

COVID | SCARE

Doubts raised over Olympics

Tokyo, May 11: Japanese superstar Naomi Osaka has admitted she is "not really sure" the coronavirus-hit Tokyo Olympics should go ahead, as doubts grow about the Games just weeks before the opening

ceremony.
The four-time tennis
Grand Slam winner joined fellow Japanese player Kei Nishikori in raising concerns as Tokyo and other parts of Japan remain under a virus state of emergency.

A top politician also warned that Japan still had to make a "careful decision" about whether to hold the Games, which have scant public support, according to opinion polls.
Scrapping the 2020

Scrapping the 2020 Olympics, postponed last year as the pandemic advanced, is an idea that has never quite gone away, despite repeated assertions from officials that they will proceed.

A survey by a leading Japanese daily released on Monday found 59 percent of respondents want the Olympics cancelled, underlining persistent public concerns over the risk of infections.

Osaka, Japan's biggest sports star and a major gold-medal prospect, said to be honest, I'm not really sure", when asked if the Ölympics should take place as planned. "I'm an athlete, and of

course my immediate thought is that I want to play in the Olympics," the four-time Grand Slam winner told the BBC. "But as a human, I would

say we're in a pandemic, and if people aren't healthy, and if they're not feeling safe, then it's definitely a really big cause for

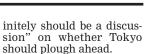
Nishikori said there "def-



Naomi Osaka

I would say we're in a pandemic, and if people aren't healthy, and if they're not feeling safe, then it's definitely a really big cause for con-

— NAOMI OSAKA Japanese tennis star



"I don't know how much they are thinking about how they are gonna make (a) bubble, because this is not like 100 people," he

Nadal 'not sure'

World number three Rafael Nadal admitted he is unsure if he will take part in the Summer Olympics.

In a normal world, the Olympic Games were always my main priority. In the current world, the Olympic Games are still a priority, but things have changed. We have been for almost year-and-a-half under this pandemic and the only thing I can say it is that I take the decision based in a short term,' Nadal said.

Olympic officials insist the Games can still be held safely and have released rulebooks they say will ensure the biggest international event since the pandemic began does not spread the virus.

TORCH RELAY PULLED OFF STREETS IN JAPAN

Tokyo, May 11: The Tokyo Olympic torch relay is being pulled off the streets in Hiroshima prefecture as COVID-19 cases rise in Japan barely 10 weeks before the opening ceremony. Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki said that a ceremony next week without the relay is likely to still take place. This is at least the sixth change to the relay — from rerouting to cancel-

streets is still being discussed with the organizers,



Indian shooters Elavenil Valarivan (left) and Sanjeev

MCC says bamboo bats will be illegal the blade, except in junior needs to tread carefully to

Chennai Super Kings in IPL.

Englishman in various franchises in the sus-

"None of us knows what

a rearranged IPL looks

like at the moment, where

it's going to be or when.

But from when we start

this summer against New

Zealand, our programme

England's Sam Curran (left) and Moeen Ali represent

London, May 11: The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has shot down the idea of bats made from bamboo, saying it would be "illegal" under the current set of rules govern-

ing the game. The guardians of the laws of cricket, however, said they will deliberate on the matter during their laws sub-committee meet-

According to a study by Darshil Shah and Ben Tinkler-Davies from the University of Cambridge, bats made from bamboo

are economically sustainable and are also stronger than the ones made from willow, which is traditionally used.

'Currently, law 5.3.2 states that the blade of the bat must consist solely of wood, so for bamboo (which is a grass) to be considered as a realistic alternative to willow would require a law change," MCC said in a statement on Monday.

"Importantly, the law would need to be altered to allow bamboo specifically, as even if it were to



A study by University of Cambridge suggests bats made from bamboo are economically sustainable.

be recognised as a wood, this would still be illegal under the current law, which bans lamination of

The researchers found the bamboo bat to be

is incredibly busy," Giles

important, high-profile

cricket including the T20

World Cup and the Ashes.

And we're going to have to

look after our players."

"We've got a lot of

"stiffer, harder and stronger than those made of willow, although more brittle" and also supposed to have a larger "sweet spot, closer to the toe of

"The sweet spot on a bamboo bat makes it much easier to hit a four off a Yorker for starters, but it's exciting for all kinds of strokes," Shah had said in the report. MCC, however, said it

tion, particularly the concept of the bat producing greater power.

The apex body said it will discuss the matter as finding alternatives to willow in a relevant issue.

Association of India (NRAI) tweeted just before the team's departure.

Olympics, beginning on

--PTI