

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | 4 MAY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 36.7°C
Min: 25.6°C
RH: 85%
Rain: 4.4 mm

Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Rain likely in evening.
Max/Min temp. 37/26°C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Chaitra Bahula Ashtami till 1.14 pm
Star: Sravanam till 8.27 am

Varijama: 12.35 pm to 2.14 pm
Durmuhuram: 8.24 am to 9.15 am; 11.04 pm to 11.49 pm

Rahuakalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Ramzan 21,1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.44 am

Zohar: 12.23 pm

Asar: 4.40 pm

Maghrib: 6.43 pm

Isha: 7.55 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.37 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.48 AM

MOONRISE TOMORROW 1.06 AM

MOONSET TODAY 12.35 PM

RAMZAN TIMINGS

IFTAR: 6.43 PM (TODAY)

SEHRI: 4.22 AM (TOMORROW)

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CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE PROPERTY

FLATS

DOUBLE BEDROOM

PADMARAO NAGAR, 2 BHK 1036 Sft Flat 3rd Floor with Car Parking, 60 Lakhs. Chilka Colony, New 2 BHK 1012 Sft Flat 5th Floor 45 Lakhs. Contact: 9848448400 (S/2122/C00229)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

THREE & MORE

PREMIUM VILLAS in Gated community for Sale at Moksha @ 1.80 crs (Special Offer available). For further details, Contact: 7353585358 (HYMM/2122/C01052)

RENTALS

COMMERCIAL

✓1235SFT FULLY furnished commercial space for Rent with central AC staff 20 seaters MD room reception immediate occupancy contact: 9849165045 (HYMM/2122/C01046)

IMMACULATE 2500 Sft Commercial Space for rent Semi furnished commercial space available for rent. This space can be used for polyclinic, warehouse or any business setup. Add: Opposite Durre Shehar Hospital, Puran Haveli, Hyderabad, Telangana. Contact hours: 11am-5pm. Ph: 8326171097 8247803006. (HYCL/2122/C00298)

GODOWN FOR Lease at Bowenpally, 3800 Sft, East facing, suitable for Food, Electronic, multi purpose and Shed for Lease at Jeedimetla 3600 Sft with 49hp Power. Ph: 91779424290, 9098848598. (S/2122/C00228)

LEASE

WAREHOUSE SPACE available at Medchal & Kakalak main road 25,000 to 2,00,000sft. Ph: 9393834321 (HYMM/2122/C00988)

SITUATION VACANT

ADVT. SALES & MKTG.

✓SALES/ Executives for Construction Business, Engineers for firms. Experienced and Freshers with good selling skills and knowledge of English, Hindi and Telugu. Salary and Incentives. Basic Computer knowledge. contact: 8247409292, email: info@sanaii.com (HYMM/2122/C01054)

CALL CENTRE

URGENT REQUIREMENT for 2 No's Digital Marketing Executive (SEO Analyst), Web Designer, Marketing Executive & 50 No's Female/ Male Telecallers (Good Salary-Incentives) for Healthcare Company @ Bowenpally. Contact us: 9030016222/ 955000445. Walk-in or Send resume to: resumester2013@gmail.com (HYCL/2122/C00315)

LECTURERS

WANTED LECTURERS to teach in Commerce, Computer Science, Statistics, Electronics, Chemistry, English and MBA Eligibility Min. 55% Marks in PG and 60% for MBA. Walkin with Biodata and Testimonials on 03rd & 04th May between 2.00 to 4.30pm, at Sasi-Sudhir Degree & PG College, B-8/2, ECIL X' Roads, Hyd. 9966407111. sasidhircircle@gmail.com. (HYCL/2122/C01005)

MEDICAL

WANTED HOSPITAL Supervisor with Computer Knowledge (Male/ Female) and Female Cook in House. Urgent. Contact: 040-24549575, 9000575576. (HYCL/2122/C00316)

WALK-IN INTERVIEW for Fresher/ Experienced GNMM, B.Sc Nurses, Pharmacist (Male), Receptionist (Male) willing to do night shift also ABS Hospital, Opp. Pillar No. 151, Attapur, Hyderabad. Call: 9347407776. (HYCL/2122/C00317)

WANTED RMO for immediate recruitment Durgabai Deshmukh Hospital & Research, Vidyanganar, Hyderabad. contact: 9848052011 (HYMM/2122/C01051)

MULTIPLE VACANCIES

IMMEDIATELY APPOINTMENT Civilians, Gunman, Ex-Servicemen Guards Residing @ Secunderabad. Experienced in HR/Admin Operation, Manager All Statutory, E-Procurement (Online/Offline) age: 25-45 Government, Marketing/ Business Manager(BDM), Drivers, Digital Marketing Executives, Stenographer, Computer Operator (Speed 50) Telecallers, Office-Boy (Vehicle), Field Officers, Work in Security Agency. Email: sec2011@gmail.com Ph: 040-27813011, 040-40058907 9866259371, 7569783139. (HYCL/2122/C00318)

TEACHERS

WANTED TEACHERS for Classes I to X all Subjects E/M. Send your application to geetanjali97@gmail.com. Geetanjali Vidyalaya, Saraspurthi, Saidapet, Ph: 040-24070997. (HYCL/2122/C00314)

REQUIRED TEACHERS

with B.Ed for Social Studies, English, Hindi, Computer, Dance & Coordinators for Primary & HS. Interested candidates appear for interview on 10.05.2021 from 8.30am at St. Mark's Boys Town HS, Jahamuna, Hyderabad. Ph: 9346472172. (B/2122/C00113)

MATRIMONIAL

MARRIAGE BUREAU

TRUSTED MATRIMONY FIND Perfect Partner, Reliable, Responsible, Good Service. All Castes Brides, Grooms. 100% Marriage with Expert Guidance. WhatsApp: 6304286162. (HYMM/2122/C01049)

FINANCE

LOANS: 10LS TO 500Cr against Property, Project, Business Cheques. Take over done. Easy Process & Repayment. Good Commission for Agents. 9092692403. (CHJM/2122/C00001)

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF Name I. Pratap Challaugula would like to change my daughter's name Challaugula Aditi as Challaugula Sri Aditi. Address Hno: 4-7/9/26/1 street no.5, Indira Nagar, Nacharam, Uppal, K.V.Rangareddy, Telangana. (HYCL/2122/C01055)

EDUCATIONAL

DISTANCE EDUCATION

DIRECT FINAL/ Regular Degree and PG courses Engineering, ST Marys, ECIL, ECIL/ Ph: 9394354167. www.svesinstitutes.com (S/2122/C00103)

CONTACT FOR NCTE

Recognised: B.Ed./M.Ed. No Advance Fee. Only For Educational Consultants. Students Please Note: Call/ Consult regarding Educational Problem/ Guidance. Shiksha Bharti, Varanasi. Email: shikshabharti88@yahoo.com. Mob: 9519759663, 9915103781. (HYMM/2122/C01050)

MOSQUITO NET

MOSQUITO MESH: Glass Fiber, Aluminium meshes with different systems. Detachable Velcro, openable with Aluminium powder coated frames for windows, Doors, Roll-on, U-PVC Sliding systems. For Estimation, Installation, Call: Satya Creations. Ph: 8326847852. 9849057513. w w w . s a t y a c r e a t i o n s . i n (HYCL/2122/C00293)

POULTRY

VENCOBB CHICKEN rich in protein, great in taste eat & enjoy. Vencobb's Broiler Hyderabad Zone price per kg. Rs.25/- Gate Pass, Replete Live Bird Rs.82/- Dressed with Skin. Rs.19. Skinner. Rs.135. Ph: 27992239. (HOPE) (S/2122/C00110)

PEST CONTROL

REDDORKIINS PEST HICARE: Efficient & Non-toxic Treatments: Cockroaches, Termites, Woodborers, Bedbugs, Ants, Rodentrants, Honeybees, Lizards, Mosquitos, Centipedes, Spiders, Insects, Sanitization. Ph: 9989956152/ (HYMM/2122/C00973)

SPECIALIST PEST Control Cockroach Treatment & Termites, New Construction Treatment, 10 years Guarantee and Sanitizer Spray. Ph: 9989808181, 9989369849. (HYMM/2122/C01048)

PACKERS & MOVERS

SURYA PACKERS & Movers Professional in Packing & Moving of Household Goods, Cars for Local & Countrywide. Ph: 9849478333, 040-27244111, www.suryapackersmovers.com, E-mail: suryapackers6@gmail.com (HYMM/2122/C001056)

SUMMER CAMP

ONLY SUMMER Camp from May 5th to June 5th. 6yrs to 15yrs Yoga, Dance, Art and Craft, Chess, Flameless cooking and English language skills. All the above @ 2999 only. E-Certification. 8919987838 www.tueh.in (HYMM/2122/C01055)

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T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, MAY 3

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DC IMPACT

King Koti staff get drinking water, docs to stick to job

Authorities swing into action following report in these columns



King Koti hosp. staff supplied with crates of bottled water.

Doctors working at the Government District Hospital at King Koti have been told to stay put at their posts during their shifts. The Medical Superintendent of the hospital, on Monday, issued a circular to this effect.

The notice to doctors on government payroll working at the King Koti hospital, a Covid-19 only facility, came in the wake of a report in these columns on Monday, "King Koti Hospital might turn into another death hole", that highlighted bad infrastructure, repeated disappearance of permanent doctors, and issues relating to bad infrastructure in the hospital

wards. In this regard, all the doctors are instructed to stay at the designated places of the posting in their stipulated timings.

This is for strict implementation." Copies of the circular were also marked to all the doctors, the Special Chief Secretary (Health),

and the Resident Medical Officer, among others.

The report published in these columns also could facilitate, for the first time in about a year, clean drinking water being provided to the hospital staff with the hospital being supplied with crates of bottled water. It was a group of Senior Resident Doctors, who were fed up with the conditions at the hospital, which in turn were affecting their ability to take care of patients, and was also putting their health in jeopardy, wrote a letter on Sunday to the Director of Medical Education, highlighting the conditions at the hospital. At least 40 doctors and staff at the hospital have already been affected by various diseases.

GHMC sets up control room for Covid-19 assistance

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

Health S.A.M Rizvi says, "To contain the spread of the virus, the State government is taking up several war-footing initiatives. The Covid control room besides roping in doctors to assist and guide callers. The control room provides information on issues related to Covid-19 and also on measures being taken to contain the pandemic. Citizens can get assistance and Covid-19 kits."

Lokesh Kumar and other officials were present in the programme.

"To contain the spread of the virus, the State government is taking up several war-footing initiatives. The Covid control room is a part of this exercise," said Rizvi.

He said citizens residing in GHMC limits can call on the number for any healthcare assistance and Covid-19 kits.

STORIES OF HOPE

A helping hand from Sadhu Vaswani Mission during Covid

Matrimonial sites turn easy pickings for fraudsters

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

City cybercrime sleuths have warned those who are looking for matrimonial alliances on myriad websites. With the pandemic forcing people to keep a tight rein on their lifestyles, aspiring brides are increasingly falling prey to cyber fraudsters.

There have been several cases of late, where women are cheated by cyber conmen who lure them promising to marry and later cheating them of huge amounts of money. The cybercrooks' modus operandi is to take vulnerable women into confidence by posting advertisements on matrimonial sites. After promising to marry them, the fraudsters extract money in the name of customs clearance for their gifts at airports. Once they manage to get money, they delete the profiles from the sites and vanish into thin air.

According to cybercrime officials, the women targeted are in their late 20's, middle-aged or divorcees.

"My family and I were searching for grooms online for me when we came across a profile where a man claimed that he was 30-year-old hailing from Lucknow and residing in Delhi. Believing him, we approached him with the proposal. We exchanged phone numbers and started making calls. Over a period of time, we became close and involved in late night calls and texts. He said as he had recently quit his job and was in need of cash and convinced me to send him lump sum amounts over a few months," recalls a 26-year-old victim from Kukatpally.

Single mothers and single women in their middle-age are the most vulnerable. "Most victims are divorcees, widows or unmarried women in their 30s and 40s. The scammers pretend to be younger than the victims and claim to be MNC employees or NRIs. They provide emotional support and send gifts to impress them and gain trust. Single women, who do not have elders to verify or check the background of prospective grooms they meet online, might get persuaded," said an investigator of matrimo-



Do's

- Check with the police if the person has a criminal background
- It is a must to visit the person at his or her home in the company of his/her parents/ relatives not once but at least a number of times
- Invite the person over to your family home as well
- Conduct thorough background checks
- Verify educational certificates

Don'ts

- Do not be in a hurry to get married to someone you meet online. It is very important to go slow.
- Do not get involved in a courtship which involves 'sexting' (sending sexual messages) or webcam chatting with the online match
- Do not transfer money in any circumstance before finding out if the person is genuine

ny fraud cases.

Men too have faced such incidents wherein women masqueraded as damsel in distress to dupe them. In February, 2021, K. Swathi alias Archana alias Indira Priyadarshini, an MBA graduate and the wife of a lecturer in Nellore, was arrested by the Rachakonda Cybercrime Police on charges of duping NRI men seeking suitable alliances on matrimonial sites. The police seized ₹5.1 lakh, four mobile phones and other material from her.

As the 'terms and conditions' posted by the websites state that it is the user's responsibility, the police say it is not possible to take action against websites. Cybercrime Police say none of the matrimonial websites has methods to verify the authenticity of an account-holder.

Woman falls prey, cheated of ₹10 L

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

A software engineer was allegedly cheated to the tune of ₹10.50 lakh by a cyber fraudster through a matrimony website.

According to the police, the victim, a resident of Begumpet, posted her profile on a matrimonial website a few months ago, following which one person claiming to work in the United States contacted her.

"After chatting with her for a few weeks, the conman evinced interest in marrying

her and on the pretext of arranging a visa for her, asked her to deposit ₹50,000 in an account. When she deposited ₹50,000, he told her he had purchased a property in Gujarat worth a few crores of rupees. He asked her to send across ₹10 lakh for registration of the property. Believing him, she transferred the money, after which he avoided her calls," the Hyderabad cybercrime police said. Realising that she was duped, the victim approached the cybercrime police who registered a case. Investigation is on.

POLICE BUST HUMAN TRAFFICKING RACKET, ONE ARRESTED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

The Rachakonda and Medipally police said on Monday that they detained and charged a man with human trafficking offence under Preventive Detention Act.

Police claimed, "In an effort to root out organised human trafficking network and prostitution and to create a sense of safety and security among the family system, Commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat invoked the Preventive Detention Act against the ring's organiser Domati Prasad."

On a tip off, police had raided a house at Akshaya Nagar Colony in Boduppal on March 4 and arrested Prasad.

Cops rescued a girl from there and sent her to a rescue home.

The arrested was remanded to judicial custody, police said.

COPS ARREST MAN FOR SELLING FAKE RED LABEL TEA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

A man was arrested by the Mangalhat police in a raid at a warehouse here on Sunday night. The cops seized duplicates of Red Label tea and some other products.

According to the police, Narendra Chowdhary was arrested following a complaint from G. Vijay Kumar, a representative of Hindustan Unilever Ltd. "Police raided a house at Sitarambagh, where Chowdhary was packing a local brand of tea powder in the branded Red Label tea packets. He was supplying this in the market."

They seized other items including boxes of Vicks Vapourub from the place," officials shared, adding that a case under Section 63 of the Copyright Act and Section 420 of the IPC was booked and further investigation was on.

HC puts state on notice over KBR Park

Petitioners say Union govt notification to facilitate SRDP works is 'illegal'

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

The Telangana High Court on Monday issued notices to the state government, asking it to respond within four weeks about the future of Kasu Brahmananda Reddy (KBR) Park, following the recent notification of the Union government, which recommended amendments to the earlier

Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ) norms.

The Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Hima Kohli was dealing with a PIL challenging the notification issued by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on 27 October 2020, announcing the KBR park and its surrounding area as ESZ. The petitioners said that the notification was illegal and did not



File picture of KBR National Park.

serve the purpose of a logically sensitive zone like Buffer Zone, around an eco-

that the areas inside the zone were protected and no construction activity took place around the zone.

The state government, in 2018, had decided to revise the ESZ of KBR Park to between 3 metres and 29.8 metres of its surrounding to facilitate the Strategic Road Development Plan (SRDP) works.

According to its decision, the Telangana state government forwarded a draft file

to the Union Environment Ministry for issuing a notification inviting objections and suggestions from the citizens.

But the activists approached the NGT, challenging the draft notification.

However, in 2020, the Union government issued a notification recommending amendments to the norms for Eco Sensitive Zones and its surroundings.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Walk-in-interview for

engagement of CMPs for COVID Isolation ward of

Northern Railway Central Hospital, New Delhi on contract basis

No. 752E/Contract/COVID/NRCH/2021
Sub : Walk-in-interview for engagement of Contract Medical Practitioners (CMPs) for COVID Isolation Ward in Northern Railway Central Hospital, New Delhi on contract basis as below:-

ITEM NO.	CATEGORY	SPECIALTY	NO. OF POSTS	PLACE OF POSTING
01.	CMP	(Specialists Medicine/Anesthesia/Pediatrics/Critical Care/ENT) (Specialist) Microbiologist	Ten (10)	NRCH, New Delhi
02.	CMP	(General Duty Medical Officer)	Three (03)	NRCH, New Delhi
03.	CMP		one (01)	NRCH, New Delhi

Note: - 1. Duration of engagement will be up to 27.10.2021 or earlier with a notice period of 15 days.

Note: - 2. Depending on administrative exigencies, Railway Administrations have reserved the right to modify number of vacancies and place of posting. In case, sufficient Specialists are not available, posts will be filled by GDMOs.

Note: - 3. Term/period of the contract is further extendable as per requirement for each category of CMPs if such directions are received from Railway Board.

Reservation will be as under:

ITEM NO.	CATEGORY	SC	ST	OBC	EWS	UR	TOTAL
01	CMP Specialist	01	Nil	02	01	06	10
02	CMP(GDMO)	01	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	01
03	CMP Specialist(Microbiologist)	-	-	-	-	03	03

Note :- In case reserved candidates are not available, reserved posts will be filled by UR candidates because the appointment is to be done in Emergency for COVID-19 pandemic.

The reservation will apply as per rules in vogue. The actual reservation of vacancies would depend upon the prevailing sanctioned strength at the time of engagement. In case, required number of reserved slots are not filled in, it will be open to fill the seats with unreserved candidate in terms of Rly Bd's directives issued vide No. 77 E (SCT) 15/18 date 22.7.1977 in view of emergency.

Date, Time & Venue of Document Verification, Walk-in Interview & Medical Examination:-

The interested candidates can appear in Walk-in-interview at the following venue:-

Date	Time	Categories	Venue
Every Thursday starting from 06.05.2021	10:00 Hrs. to 14:00.	CMPs	Auditorium, Northern Railway Central Hospital, Basant Lane, New Delhi

The candidates should bring with them, RT-PCR report conducted within 48 hours, a candidate without RT-PCR report shall not be interviewed/entertained.

Medical Examination of ONLY selected candidates will be held.

Note:- Candidates should submit their application in duplicate on prescribed proforma enclosed herewith latest by 09:00 AM on the date of interview at AUDITORIUM for Documents Verification and walk-in-interview.

In case, it is not possible to interview all candidates on nominated day, they will be interviewed on next working day/days. Thus, the candidates should make their own arrangement for lodging/boarding and should come prepared accordingly.

Remuneration:-

S. NO.	CATEGORY	SALARY PER MONTH
1	CMP(Specialists)	Rs. 1,40,000/-
2	CMP Specialist(Microbiology)	Rs. 1,40,000/-
3	CMP(GDMOs)	Rs. 1,25,000/-

Consolidated remuneration at the rate of Rs.1,25,000/- for General Duty Doctor and Rs.1,40,000/- for Specialist Doctors per month will be admissible, if Govt. accommodation is not provided. If Govt. accommodation is provided, an amount equivalent to House Rent Allowance payable to a fresh entrant to Group 'A' Jr. Scale and License fee of Railway accommodation so provided, shall be deducted from the monthly remuneration payable to the CMP.

This may also be noted that above remuneration shall be paid to CMPs deployed in Covid Wards and flu clinics. CMPs deployed in General wards shall be entitled for remunerations @ Rs. 75000/- PM for GDMOs and 95000/- PM for Specialists.

Age Limit:-

Candidate should not have completed more than 53 years of age for Item No. 1, 2, 3 as on 04.05.2021 (Date of Advertisement). However, age relaxation of 05 years for SC/ST and 03 years for OBC candidates is admissible.

Terms and Conditions:-

Engagement of Doctors would be on contract basis initially for a period up to 27.10.2021, further extendable as per administrative requirement & on the basis of assessment of performance of CMPs as well as the situation of COVID-19 Pandemic if such instructions are received from Railway Board. However, services of these doctors can be terminated even before 30.06.2021 giving 15 days notice on either side. Railway Administration reserves the right to terminate the contract at any time during the contract by giving 15 days notice or payment of 15 days remuneration without assigning any reason whatsoever. The services rendered as contractual staff is a stop gap arrangement and will not confer upon them any right for regularization or permanent absorption in the Railway. The engagement shall be purely on contract basis for a period of six months of earlier with a notice period of 15 days.

Essential Educational Qualification

(i) For General Duty Doctors: MBBS degree (with completion of internship) from any University/Institution recognized by Indian medical Council.

(ii) For Specialist Doctors: MBBS degree and Post Graduate Medical Degree/Diploma in subject concerned from any University/Institution recognized by Indian medical Council. (Specialist - Pulmonary Medicine, General Medicine, Anesthesia, Critical Care Medicine)

(iii) For CMP Specialist (Microbiologist) Educational Qualification:-

(a) MBBS degree and Post graduate Medical degree from recognized institute i.e Doctor of Medicine (Microbiology) or Diplomat National Board (Microbiology) or MSC (Medical Microbiology) with doctor of Philosophy (Medical microbiology/Virology).

(b) Experience

Preferably with minimum 6 months' experience of working in molecular virology/molecular methods/molecular lab.

Experience

(c) For specialist Medical Practitioners, three-year experience is essential. For General Duty Doctors, the candidate with experience will be given preference

Contract is liable to be terminated, if the Contract Medical Practitioner is found to be mentally or physically incapacitated.

Note:-

(i) Candidate should bring their Application form along with original and attested copies of all certificates & mark-sheets. No TA/DA is admissible.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Signature of the Candidate

Note: This application can be given at the time of walk-in-interview. It will thereafter be initiated by the officers taking interview and kept in record for subsequent proceeding.

961/2021

Long wait for seniors



Senior citizens waited from 8 am till afternoon but were not able to get vaccinated due to insufficient stock at Fever Hospital, Hyderabad on Monday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Cong.: Declare health emergency in state

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

AICC spokesperson Dr Sravan Dasoju on Monday urged Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao to declare a health emergency in Telangana as the second wave of Covid19 is "killing large numbers of people due to lack of sufficient hospital beds, oxygen and scarcity of life saving drugs in the state."

In an open letter to the chief minister, the Congress leader called for necessary steps to revamp the health care system to make Telangana a role model. "This can effectively check the spread of the Covid-19 as also similar situations in future."

He criticised KCR for keeping the health ministry with him now and making it "inaccessible to the common man."

The Congress leader

ACCORDING TO him, the CM has paid attention only to "lopsided fantasies" and was pursuing avoidable obsessions like building ultra-modern Secretariat buildings by use of thousands of crores. The CM focused on winning elections rather than anticipating the need for ramping up health infra

health minister, doctors, industrialists, officials, NGOs and resident welfare associations (RWA) to provide guidance and direction.

According to him, CM has paid attention only to "lopsided fantasies" and was pursuing avoidable obsessions like building ultra-modern Secretariat buildings by use of thousands of crores. The CM focused on winning elections rather than anticipating the need for ramping up the health infrastructure and protecting the people, he alleged.

Hailing the contributions of Dr Kakarla Subbar Rao who transformed NIMS Hospital into a world-class super specialty hospital, Dr Sravan urged the CM to appoint a doctor or a health care professional as the new health minister of Telangana to lead this department at this crucial juncture.

said the people are unable to get Remdesivir injections unless the 'de facto' CM intervened and helped the needy through Twitter. "Instead, buy life-saving drugs by investing ₹100 crore and distribute them through army camps to avoid any black marketing," he said.

Sravan urged the CM to set up a 24/7 Covid-19 war room at state as also in districts and constitute a special task force headed by the CM,

MANY GRABBED LAND, ALLEGES REVANTH REDDY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

Congress working president A. Revanth Reddy on Monday unleashed fresh charges against labour minister Ch. Mallareddy and other leaders and demanded to sack them from the Cabinet for encroaching temple lands similar to Etala Rajendar.

Revanth Reddy, alleged that lands registered in the name of the TRS leader fell under the endowments department and belonged to Sitarama Swamy temple at Devaryamal village in Shamirpet mandal of Medchal-Malkajgiri district in survey number 437 was registered in the name TRS leaders.

The section was sealed on November 8, 2017, on the instructions of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao when the officials failed to provide details of Wakf lands under various institutions during a review meeting. Later, the government had constituted a committee for enumeration/inventory, scanning and digitisation and documentation of records of the Wakf Board. A police picket had been set up for security of records. A Deputy Tahsildar level officer was posted as custodian of the section.

Unfortunately, the work of enumeration and documentation records could not be completed even after a lapse of three-and-a-half years. Sunitha was transferred on promotion on February 3 this year and no other officer was deputed in her place. CEO of Wakf Board Shahnaaz Qasim addressed a letter to the Collector and District Magistrate of Hyderabad on February 23 requesting to depute a suitable substitute in place of her for smooth functioning of the above work.

Officials of the board complained that they were facing many difficulties due to the closure of the Record Section as important files are kept in it. "We are even not able to prepare affidavits and counter-affidavits in the court for want of records and documents," said an official.

Wakf record unit shut for 3 months

ATHER MOIN I DC
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

The Record Section of the Telangana Wakf Board has remained shut for the last three months as the Hyderabad District Collector failed to depute a custodian after the repatriation of services of G. Sunitha, Deputy Tahsildar, in February following her promotion by the Revenue Department. Consequently, the board officials are unable to access the files and records kept in the record section as it has been sealed.

The section was sealed on November 8, 2017, on the instructions of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao when the officials failed to provide details of Wakf lands under various institutions during a review meeting. Later, the government had constituted a committee for enumeration/inventory, scanning and digitisation and documentation of records of the Wakf Board. A police picket had been set up for security of records. A Deputy Tahsildar level officer was posted as custodian of the section.

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MARTYRDOM | ANNIVERSARY No procession taken

Shia rally is low-key

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

The Shia sect of Muslims observed the martyrdom anniversary of Hzt. Ali ibne Abi Talib, the first Shia Imam and the fourth Islamic Caliph, on Monday, following the Covid safety protocols. A symbolic procession was taken out from Charminar with limited participation of 25 mourners.

Hzt. Ali was assassinated by Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam al-Murabi. Glowing tributes were paid to Hzt. Ali on his martyrdom anniversary. Religious scholars addressed the faithful online, underlining the teachings of Hzt. Ali and Panje Shah where participation will however be restricted.

General secretary of Shia Companions Syed Ali Jeffery thanked the Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi.

KANCHI SEER RELEASES BOOK ON LORD RAMA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MAY 3

Kanchi Kama Koti Peethadhipathi Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi emphasised on the need to propagate Telugu Bhakti literature all over the world for the benefit of younger generations.

He pointed out that many youngsters have benefitted after Tamil Bhakti literature had been similarly spread across the globe. Releasing "Andhra Valmiki Ramayana Rasa Ramya Gathalu" written by TS Chief Minister's Chief Public Relations Officer Vanam Jwala Narasimha Rao on Sunday through a Zoom meeting, the Kanchi Peethadhipathi appreciated that the book is being released when a temple for Sri Rama is coming up at the Lord's birthplace in Ayodhya.

The Kanchi Seer congratulated Narasimha Rao for compiling Andhra Valmiki Vasudasa Mandara in the form of a story with critical analysis. Similarly, Telugu culture, religious practices and Bhakti literature too must be propagated for generations to come, the Peethadhipathi underlined.

HE POINTED out that many youngsters have benefitted after Tamil Bhakti literature had been similarly spread across the globe.

According to him, CM has paid attention only to "lopsided fantasies" and was pursuing avoidable obsessions like building ultra-modern Secretariat buildings by use of thousands of crores. The CM focused on winning elections rather than anticipating the need for ramping up the health infrastructure and protecting the people, he alleged.

Hailing the contributions of Dr Kakarla Subbar Rao who transformed NIMS Hospital into a world-class super specialty hospital, Dr Sravan urged the CM to appoint a doctor or a health care professional as the new health minister of Telangana to lead this department at this crucial juncture.

He criticised KCR for keeping the health ministry with him now and making it "inaccessible to the common man."

The Congress leader

Rains destroy paddy in state

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, MAY 3

Untimely rains during the past two days have damaged paddy in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts.

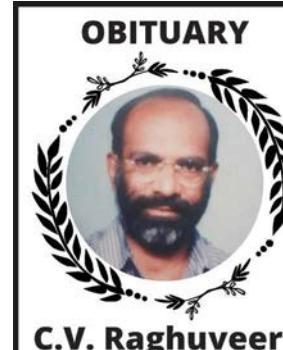
In Nizamabad district alone, paddy has been cultivated over 4 lakh acres, with farmers hoping to get a yield of

around 12 lakh metric tonnes. But untimely rains have badly damaged paddy. However, some of the farmers had managed to sell their product to private traders prior to the rains.

Due to the damage caused, farmers are worried over the minimum support price they would get for discoloured

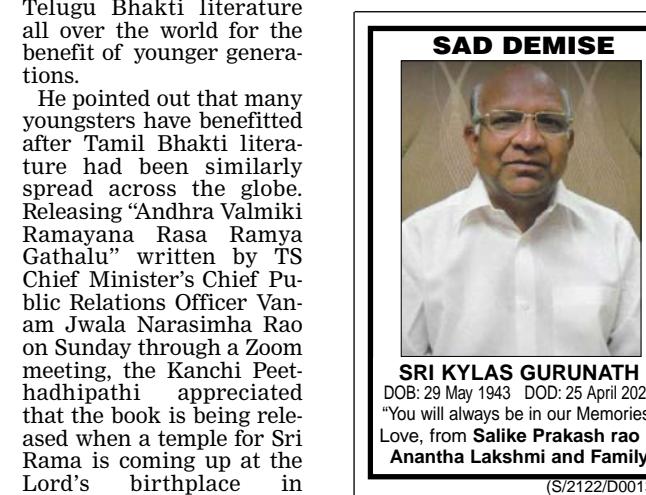
paddy with higher moisture content.

Revenue and agriculture officials have visited agriculture fields to assess damaged paddy. Farmers have urged these officials to procure paddy at the earliest, so that they can protect themselves from suffering huge financial losses.



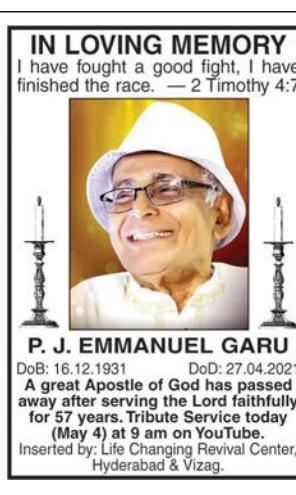
It's with deep sorrow that we inform the demise of my Husband on 2 May 2021. A Leader, Banker An Activist, A Social Worker, A Mentor and above all A Good Human Being. We all will miss him.

Inserted by
C.V. Vyjayanthi - Wife,
Sons, Daughters-in-law,
Grandchildren

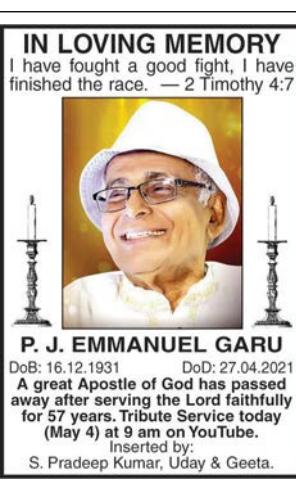


SAD DEMISE

SRI KYLAS GURUNATH
DOB: 29 May 1943 DOD: 25 April 2021
"You will always be in our Memories"
Love, from Salleke Prakash rao & Anantha Lakshmi and Family
(S/2122/D00137)



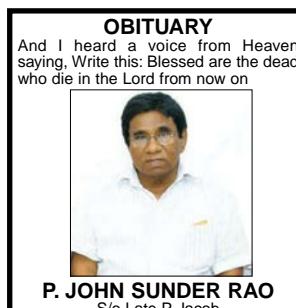
P. J. EMMANUEL GARU
DOB: 16.12.1931 DOD: 27.04.2021
A great Apostle of God has passed away after serving the Lord faithfully for 57 years. "You will always be in our Memories"
Today (May 4) at 9 am on YouTube.
Inserted by Life Changing Revival Center, Hyderabad & Vizag.



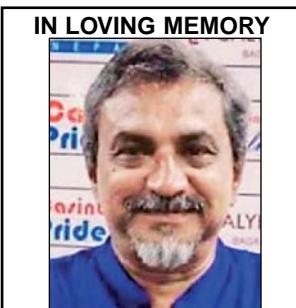
P. J. EMMANUEL GARU
DOB: 16.12.1931 DOD: 27.04.2021
A great Apostle of God has passed away after serving the Lord faithfully for 57 years. "You will always be in our Memories"
Today (May 4) at 9 am on YouTube.
Inserted by S. Pradeep Kumar, Uday & Geeta.



Sri. S. KRISHNA KUMAR
IPS Retd.
DOB: 18-05-1923 DOD: 04-05-2007
We miss you every moment of our life
Vinod - Malini, Ravi Kumar - Sandhya, Shashi Kumar - Rajini, Dr. Das & SREE BHASYAM FAMILIES



P. JOHN SUNDER RAO
S/o Late P Jacob
Retd SBH Manager
D.O.B: 01/02/1945
Slept in the Lord: 03.05.2021
Funeral will be held on 04/05/2021 at CSI Cemetery No 12 Trimulgherry, Opp. R.T.O Secunderabad at 11:00 AM.
Inserted by: FAMILY MEMBERS
Ph: 7660012318



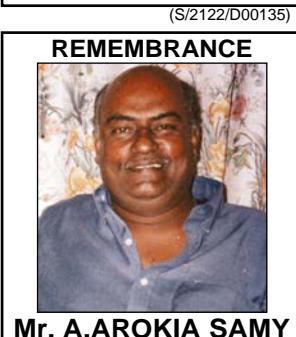
JAGDISH MOTILAL JOSHI
With profound grief we wish to inform about sad demise of our Beloved Shri Jagdish Motilal Joshi On April 30, 2021 at Ahmedabad.
In Grief: Devendra B. Joshi +91 9885266227
(S/2122/D00135)



HARISH MADHAVLAL JOSHI
DOB: 12-6-1937 DOD: 25-5-2021
With profound grief and deep sorrow we regret to Inform that
Harish Madhavlal Joshi Passed away on 25-5-2021.
Inserted by: Kokila Joshi (Wife)
Nitin & Jigna Joshi (Son & Daughter-in-law)
Sonal & Tushar Purohit (Daughter & Son-in-law)
And Joshi Parvaan Ph: 9347548009, 990863188



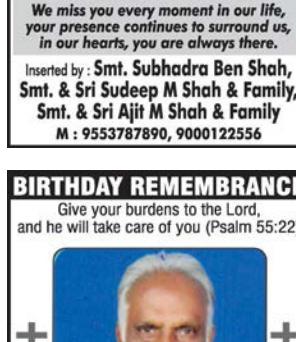
SRI MUKUND DAS SHAH
DOB: 08-08-1938 | DOD: 04-05-2020
We miss you every moment in our life, your presence continues to surround us, In our hearts, you are always there.
Inserted by: Smt. Subhadra Ben Shah, Smt. & Sri Sudeep Ben Shah, Smt. & Sri Ajith M Shah & Family M : 955378690, 9000122556



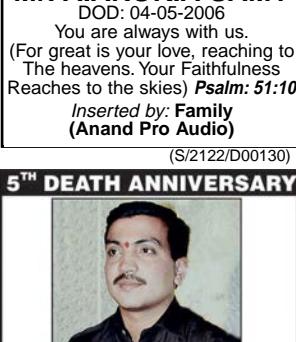
MR. AROKIA SAMY
DOB: 04-05-2006
You are always with us. (For great is your love, reaching to The heavens. Your Faithfulness Reaches to the skies) Psalm: 51:10
Inserted by: Family (Anand Pro Photo) (S/2122/D00130)



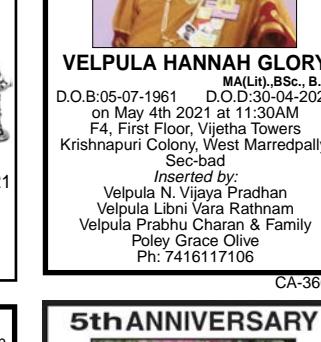
VELPULA HANNAH GLORY
MA(Lit),B.Sc., B.ED
DOB: 05-07-1961 D.O.D.30-04-2021
on May 4th 2021 at 11:30AM
F4, First Floor, Vijetha Towers
Krishnapur Colony, Marredpally,
Sec-Bld
Inserted by:
Velpula N. Vijaya Pradhan
Velpula Libni Vara Rathnam
Velpula Prabhu Charan & Family
Poley Grace Olive Ph: 7416117106



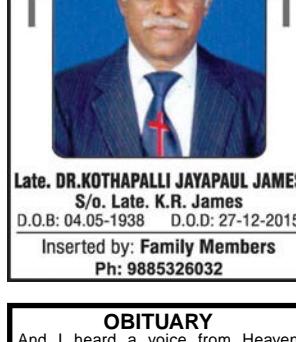
LATE DR. KOTHAPALLI JAYAPAL JAMES
S/o. Late. K.R. James
DOB: 04-05-1938 D.O.D: 27-12-2015
Inserted by: Family Members Ph: 9885326032



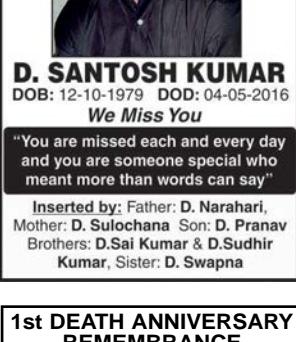
D. SANTOSH KUMAR
DOB: 12-10-1979 DOD: 04-05-2016
"We Miss You"
"You are missed each and every day and you are someone special who meant more than words can say."
Inserted by: Father: D. Narahari, Mother: D. Sulochana Son: D. Pranav Brothers: D.Sai Kumar & D.Sudhir Kumar, Sister: D. Swapna



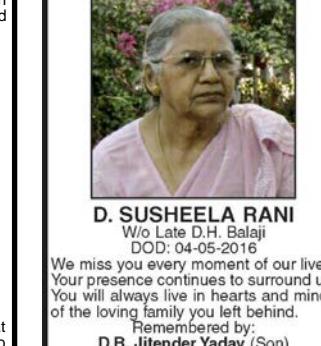
D. SUSHEELA RANI
W/o Late D.H. Balaji
DOB: 01/02/1945
Slept in the Lord: 03.05.2021
Funeral will be held on 04/05/2021 at CSI Cemetery No 12 Trimulgherry, Opp. R.T.O Secunderabad at 11:00 AM.
Inserted by: Smt. Nitima Yadav (Daughter-in-law) Harshi Yadav (Grand Son)



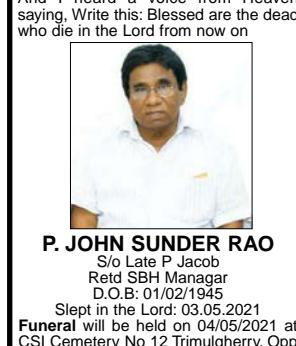
P. JOHN SUNDER RAO
S/o Late P Jacob
Retd SBH Manager
D.O.B: 01/02/1945
Slept in the Lord: 03.05.2021
Funeral will be held on 04/05/2021 at CSI Cemetery No 12 Trimulgherry, Opp. R.T.O Secunderabad at 11:00 AM.
Inserted by: FAMILY MEMBERS Ph: 7660012318



DAVID M DAVY
(Retd. ICIRISAT)
DOB: 04 Nov 1950 DOD: 04 May 2020
H.No: 131/C, Old Santos Nagar Colony, Hyderabad
Your memory remain deep in our hearts forever.
Inserted by: Wife, Daughters, Son-in-law And Grand Children's Ph: 814344396, 8121823533



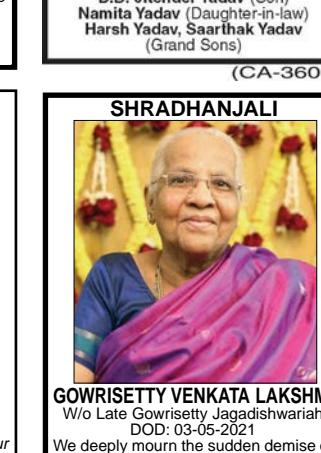
SMT. NEELAM PARIKH
W/o Hasmukh Parikh
DOB: 18.09.1936 DOD: 02.05.2021
"Your sweet memories will remain in our hearts forever & ever"
In Grief: Kishore - Urviita
Jayant - Bhavika
Smita - Tushar & Parvati Family
GIRIRAJ TRADERS - 9848324041



GANTA SUVARNA JYOTHI
Retd. Asst. Dir - Export Promotion Dept.
Commissioner of Industries
W/o Stewart McLoughlin (Mckly)
DOB: 23-08-1950 DOD: 02-05-2021
Memorial service will be held via zoom on Sat, 08-05-2021 at 7pm
For link, please WhatsApp 9000983860 / 9885466378



MR. KODUMAL ASOOUDANI
(1937 - 01/05/2021)
"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"
Prayer meeting and Padi will be held at 4:30 to 5pm at our Residence through ZOOM, Please pray for his peaceful journey By Family Members



SHRADHANJALI
W/o Late P. Jacob
Retd SBH Manager
DOB: 01/02/1

DECCAN Chronicle

4 MAY 2021

Heed SC's directions on Covid course correction

The series of directions on facilitating the treatment of Covid-19 patients, issued by a special bench of the Supreme Court in an April 30 order that was released late on Sunday, points to a visible lack of understanding on the part of the government in tackling the pandemic and requires it to launch an immediate process of course correction. The most important of the directions is to revisit the vaccine policy, which this newspaper has been demanding ever since the government placed it in the public domain. While reiterating that the court "does not attempt to delve into the role of the executive in designing policy choices" and "it is ultimately up to the executive to frame and implement policies that it deems appropriate, with the topmost regard to public interest", the court has reminded the government that such a policy must be consistent with the right to life, which includes the right to health, guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Invoking Article 14, the court said such a policy should not discriminate between two classes of people who have been circumstanced similarly, disapproving of the policy which excludes people aged between 18 and 44 from the free vaccination programme. The court told the government that there would be people who are unable to pay for the vaccines, which leaves them at the mercy of the state government who may or may not pay for their jabs. This will create a disparity, the court has noted. It has also sought to know whether there are options available for people who do not have access to digital resources to get vaccinated as registration on the CoWin portal has been made mandatory. The court has said that it would not be logical to impose the obligation to source vaccinations for the 18-44 age group on the state governments, as it will leave them to negotiate with the manufacturers which will produce chaos and uncertainty.

After listing the potential for discrimination within the policy, the court has also advanced a rational method for the Union government with respect to vaccines: to negotiate the price with manufacturers, procure all doses and allocate it to the states. The court has also directed the government to form a uniform policy for admission of Covid-19 patients in hospitals, explore the possibilities available under the Patents Act 1970 and the Disaster Management Act 2005 and the institution of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority to ensure an adequate supply of oxygen and life-saving drugs such as Remdesivir and Tocilizumab.

Vaccination is one of the best and most reliable tools to combat the Covid-19 pandemic and anyone who does not have access to it is a potential victim, unable to enjoy the right to life which the Constitution guarantees. Proper treatment also falls under this category. There is only so much that a court can advise a popular government on policy and its execution, but it has left strong enough clues that a policy which is inconsistent with the constitutional provisions will be subjected to judicial review. The court's intervention has given the government an opportunity to cover lost ground in the fight against the pandemic and take solid steps to prevent any further loss of lives and to reduce the trouble that citizens face in these harrowing times.

Well-run race helped DMK

The DMK's electoral triumph was very much on the expected lines so no one was surprised that M.K. Stalin, the party's president and son of its late patriarch M. Karunanidhi, is getting ready to take over as Tamil Nadu's next chief minister. But the results did throw up a few surprises, such as the way Seeman's Naam Tamizhar Katchi surged in popularity with over six per cent votes and the BJP clinching four of the 20 seats it had contested.

In the electoral sweepstakes, the dice was loaded in favour of the DMK once the BJP tied up with the AIADMK. There is still the perception that the AIADMK may have done better, if not romped home, if it shrugged off the albatross around its neck. In a supreme irony, a coalition that pulled down the leader, stripping it of several seats, helped the ally make electoral gains.

It's a different matter that the DMK took pole position way back in 2019. The Lok Sabha elections, where the state bucked the national trend, had set the mode for these Assembly elections. The DMK was seen as the lone formidable force that could stop the Hindutva juggernaut running roughshod over Tamil Nadu's socio-cultural landscape. However, there were hiccups in cementing the old alliance of 2019, with the AIADMK endearing itself to people by effectively managing the first wave of Covid-19. But the DMK overcame the setbacks, and eventually prevailed.

Whether it was the planning or the formulation of strategy (Prashant Kishor and his I-PAC were firmly behind it) or the campaign itself, the DMK started much before the Election Commission blew the poll bugle. Above all, the DMK, by falling back on its traditional ideology, emerged as a worthy combatant to forces inimical to local aspirations and played its part effectively, the BJP and NTK pulling off feats out of sync with the popular mood notwithstanding.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

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A "preamble" is a short preparatory statement and an introduction to a Constitution. The preamble tells us what the purpose of the constitution is and what the laws are meant to achieve. India's Constitution says the people of India (not the government) have resolved to make India a democracy, which will ensure for all its citizens social justice, economic justice and political justice. We will ensure we have freedom of thought, religion, and expression. We will have equality of status and opportunity. We have ignored all these, of course, and never in our history have we enjoyed fully any of these freedoms. But it is the last line of the preamble that we should look at today. It says that the people of India will give themselves fraternity.

What is "fraternity"? The word means "bandhuta" in Hindi. It is feeling empathy for someone who is not like you. We do not require the government to feel empathy for our own. Indians are especially community minded. We marry among our own, we are comfortable among our own and for the most part we vote

for our own community. Fraternity is to reach out and touch and feel for someone who is not like you. Whether the person is from a different community or different economic background. Are we living up to this word in our preamble? The answer is no. We are not promoting fraternity of any sort.

Our recent history tells us that not only do we not promote fraternity, we promote its opposite. When, before the lockdown, and before the guidelines were in place, when daily new cases of Covid-19 were only 100 around the country and one community organises a religious gathering, they are called Covid terrorists. When another community organises the largest gathering in human history while cases are over one lakh per day, this doesn't just not only not attract criticism, but the event is happening at the invitation of the Prime Minister. We are not promoting social fraternity.

Our country has hundreds of deaths annually from a system called manual scavenging where workers, who are mostly dalit women, have to clean toilets by

their hand. The government has banned this practice, but it still continues. Septic tanks and drains are cleaned manually mostly by dalit men, many of whom die of the poison these spaces contain. This is also not supposed to happen, but because most of the rest of us don't care, it continues despite innumerable court orders. We are simply not promoting caste fraternity.

The Government of India has, as of the day that I am writing this piece, opened up vaccinations to those who can afford it in private hospitals. They charge over ₹1,200 for one shot of Covaxin. You need another shot after six weeks, so that is ₹2,400 per individual. How many families of five in India can afford to pay ₹12,000 for vaccines which will last one year? The poor have been left to their own devices. The Centre has told the states to vaccinate them but has given the states neither money nor vaccines. Those who observed the proceedings at the Supreme Court on Friday were struck by how the court pointed out something that the government has not explained: why are different Indians

paying different prices to protect themselves from Covid-19? Shouldn't it be the responsibility of the Centre to do this? It is, but it does not believe in economic fraternity. If you have money in India, you can be vaccinated, and this difference will just have to be accepted. We are not promoting economic fraternity.

Since 2014, more than 28,000 "dollar millionaires" (meaning those who have more than ₹7.5 crore) have left India to become citizens of other nations. This should not surprise us. We have gone down a path which has left optimism. We are today demanding votes on laws which exclude and target people on the basis of their religion. We are today celebrating the destruction of monuments and the building of temples on them. We are today at this moment carrying out the reconstruction of New Delhi which will cost us ₹20,000 crore and give the Prime Minister a new house, while crores of people have no means and no money to buy vaccines for their children. We are going through a national crisis of unprecedented

proportions. We have not been affected in Independent India on this scale over a virus that has picked on all of us equally but has killed fewer of those who have had access to a bed, ventilator and oxygen. In Bengaluru, I have a colleague who lost his job and had to pay ₹22,000 a day with his wife and child also infected. But he was one of the lucky ones. For most Indians, this is not possible. They will die in their homes, as the difference in the official Covid-19 deaths versus the numbers reported by the press and the number of funeral pyres show. They will die without treatment and no possibility of treatment.

Not only is this not fraternity, it's contempt of the word "fraternity". We have lost our empathy for those who are unlike us and we do not even recognise that we have lost it. Our Constitution told us that we have to try and understand and support those who are unlike us. The fact is that we do not even know that we are supposed to do that.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

Subhani



Bengal's thinking is clear: Will rest of India follow?

Mohan Guruswamy

The second wave of Covid-19 began on February 10 when India reported 11,000 new cases. In the next 50 days, the daily average was 22,000 cases. In the following 10 days the daily average touched 89,800. We are now adding over 400,000 a day. India has never been engulfed by a crisis of this order. We are woefully short of hospital beds, oxygen, Remdesivir and Tocilizumab, vaccines, ambulances and sadly even space in our crematoria. The growth and spread are expected to scale to almost a million a day. In two months, India has become the world's basket case. Yet, on January 28 this year, speaking to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Prime Minister Narendra Modi showed a blissful and disturbing ignorance of the perfect storm looming. The committee of scientists monitoring the virus warned the PMO of the gathering storm. He was not interested. He was crowing about his perceived "achievement" of beating back the much-mutated "Chinese virus". He was so wrong, and the country is paying a huge price. There is no Modi image of competence left.

The elections to the four states and Puducherry, which he was so focused on, have been his undoing. He began campaigning on February 5 and 7 in Assam and West Bengal. After that he addressed 20 more rallies in West Bengal and six more in Assam. He also addressed 10 rallies in Tamil Nadu, three in Kerala and one in Puducherry, in all around 40 giant rallies criss-crossing across in IAF Boeings. I wouldn't even hazard the true cost to the exchequer, but I have heard it said the PM himself is liable to a charge of ₹6 per air km. Other costs

numbers might work for him, as he needs just a dozen MLAs to cross over and give Assam a new government. Mr Sarma was a Congress satrap till Rahul Gandhi insulted him by playing with his dog rather than listening to him. Rahul will be all ears now.

Mamata Banerjee's stunning victory puts her squarely on the centre stage of Opposition politics. Joining her there will be Lalu Prasad Yadav, released on bail by the Supreme Court despite the government's strenuous objections. Tejashwi Yadav has shown he's capable of leading a party when the RJD came so close to upstaging the BJP-JDU alliance in Bihar. Rajasthan's Ashok Gehlot and Punjab's Amarinder Singh have emerged as fairly independent Congress satraps. Uddhav Thackeray has shrugged off the Shiv Sena's pariah status by providing Maharashtra with good leadership and a penchant for making politics the art of the possible. In Telangana, KCR has put the BJP in its place by a resounding win in Nagarjunasagar after its surprise showing in the Dubbaka and GHMC polls. YSRC scored a resounding win in Tirupati with the BJP candidate, a retired chief secretary, losing her deposit. The anti-BJP lineup now has seven chief ministers, excluding Naveen Patnaik. Seven CMs will mean the election and propaganda machines can be kept well-greased and the powder kegs dry and replenished. Prime Minister Modi's inability to defend India against the second Covid-19 wave, and his inability to cajole the Chinese from withdrawing from areas they occupied in Ladakh now make him an easy target.

So where does our politics go from here? One clear conclusion is that both the BJP and Congress were dealt severe blows. It's interesting the BJP's campaigns were entirely shouldered by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. None of the other top BJP leaders even bothered to show up anywhere. What shouldn't be missed is that the Raksha Mantri, a former BJP president, was the first from the party to congratulate Mamata Banerjee. In Assam, Mr Sarma's supporters have gone public crediting the victory to their leader. Mr Sarma has already fired a shot across Sarbananda Sonowal's bow, saying he was no longer interested in being just a minister in someone's Cabinet. The

Prime Minister Modi's inability to defend India against the second Covid-19 wave, and his inability to cajole the Chinese from withdrawing from areas they occupied in Ladakh now make him an easy target.

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

LETTERS

MAMATA AS PM

I remember a few decades ago when Jyothi Basu got elected as West Bengal Chief Minister for the third time, he was offered the PM's post which he refused. Later, Narendra Modi became the CM of Gujarat for three times and went on to become the PM. Now, Mamata Banerjee got elected thrice. Will she become the next Prime Minister?

T. Kallash Ditya
Hyderabad

The City of Joy has found a new "mother". Didi's elevation to mother is the result of the relentless cat-calling and degradation of Bengali women by the Modi-Shah team. The "Durgas" of Bengal have thrashed "demons" in such a way that they will long be remembered as nari-shakti. All the money, muscle and institutional power could not help the "invaders" from breaching the fort of Mamata's Bengal. She stands even taller.

Varghese George
Hyderabad

COWIN FAILED
My wife had her first dose of Covishield on March 17. She is now unable to get her second dose. On COVISHIELD portal, 200 free slots for May 3 were shown in Picket HC. She booked a slot. On reaching the venue at 10 am, she was told that there was no vaccine available. If there is no stock, how was appointment given? The staff are either selling the vaccines to private hospitals or giving the vaccination to those who are paying for them. I request the authorities to look into this and come up with a solution.

Sunil Srivastava
Secunderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Censor Board against cabarets in films

MADRAS, MAY 3
The Central Board of Film Censors has observed that film producers have a tendency to present cabarets not relevant to the story and that in some cases the movements were "quite vulgar as to highlight the human form in the most bawdy sexy and lascivious manner."

In a communication to the South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce, the Chairman of the Censor Board has asked the chamber to tell the producers to take "great care" in presenting cabaret dances.

Aakar Patel

Constitution is just forgotten: No 'fraternity' exists in India!

for our own community. Fraternity is to reach out and feel for someone who is not like you. Whether the person is from a different community or different economic background. Are we living up to this word in our preamble? The answer is no. We are not promoting fraternity of any sort.

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Our country has hundreds of deaths annually from a system called manual scavenging where workers, who are mostly dalit women, have to clean toilets by

SHORT TAKES
ODISHA MINISTER DRIVES PATIENT TO HOSPITAL

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, MAY 3

Odisha rural development and labour minister Susanta Singh drove an ambulance to carry a Covid-19 patient to hospital in Sohela area of Bargh district, reports said on Monday.

Singh, on being informed that a youth of Tabada village in his Sohela Assembly constituency was suffering from Covid-19, on Saturday reached the locality by driving the ambulance himself.

He then took the patient to Sohela Hospital in the vehicle and facilitated the admission process. He also directed the doctors to ensure proper treatment of the youth.

The minister has donated a new ambulance for Covid-19 management in the area.

"My district Bargh has reported several cases of Covid-19 cases. As many of them need institutional healthcare, we are taking all possible steps to help them reach hospitals in time. Without waiting for the driver who was away at his home on Saturday morning, I drove the patient to hospital in the ambulance so as to ensure that he reached hospital without any waste of time. It gives a good feeling when you contribute in your own way to someone who is in distress," said the minister.

MP OFFICIAL KICKS COVID NORM VIOLATOR

Indore, May 3: A video of a tehsildar kicking a man for not performing a punishment task given to him for Covid-19 norm violation in Indore in Madhya Pradesh went viral on social media, prompting the MP Human Rights Commission to ask authorities to submit a report on the incident.

In a video of the incident, said to have taken place on Sunday in Depalpur town here, the official is seen kicking the man on the back when he fails to leap like a frog in sync with drum beats, the punishment handed down to the latter for violating corona curfew.

Taking cognisance of a complaint in this connection, MP Human Rights Commission chairperson Narendra Kumar Jain directed the Indore divisional commissioner and the Depalpur tehsildar to submit a report within a week, an official said. Speaking about the incident, Indore district collector Manish Singh on Monday said the action of the official was "totally wrong", adding that "I have scolded him".

However, Singh said citizens who neglect norms in place under the Epidemic Diseases Act due to the prevailing pandemic are liable to be punished. Janata curfew, which allows only essential services and emergency travel, is in place in Indore, Madhya Pradesh's worst Coronavirus hit district.

TRIPURA: NIGHT CURFEW EXTENDED TO MORE AREAS

Agartala, May 3: With the surge in Coronavirus cases in Tripura, the state government on Monday decided to extend night curfew to all local and urban bodies and nagar panchayat areas as well as the number of hours under it, officials said.

Tripura chief secretary, Manoj Kumar on Monday passed the order which said that the night curfew will be in force indefinitely from Tuesday.

The government on Monday decided to clamp the night curfew in all civic body areas of the state from 6 pm to 5 am the next day. Earlier night curfew was clamped in Agartala Municipal Corporation areas from 10 pm to 5 am. Emergency services like medical services and the media have been exempted from the purview of the night curfew, the order said.

Law Minister Ratan Lal Nath, who is also the cabinet spokesperson said though the Coronavirus situation in Tripura was better than any other states in the country, the number of virus infected patients was increasing day by day.

"We have observed that the cases are mostly found in the municipal council, nagar panchayats and in Agartala Municipal Corporation areas. It prompted us to extend the time of night curfew in all urban bodies, Nath told reporters.

He said government offices will function from 10 am till 4 am with 50 per cent attendance of employees but all gazetted officers will have to be present in the offices.

PM makes key decisions on medicos

NEET-PG postponed to make a large number of qualified doctors available for pandemic duty



A health worker adjusts oxygen mask of Covid-19 positive patient as she receives primary treatment inside an autorickshaw at Government Covid-19 hospital in Ahmedabad on Monday.

— PTI

engaged in Covid related work will be suitably vaccinated, it said.

All such professionals who sign up for minimum 100 days of duty and complete it successfully will also be given the Prime Minister's Distinguished Covid National Service Samman from the government of India.

Those providing services in Covid management will be given priority in forthcoming regular government recruitments after they complete a minimum of 100 days of duty, the PMO said.

The medical students and professionals to be

will be postponed for at least four months, and the exam will not be held before August 31.

Some states showing very early signs of 'plateauing' in new cases: Govt

As the second wave of Coronavirus continues to engulf several parts of the country, the Centre on Monday said some states are showing very early signs of plateauing in daily new cases, while some remain a cause of concern.

Addressing a news briefing, joint secretary in the

health ministry Lav Agarwal said 13 states, including Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Punjab, are showing early signs of plateauing, while states like Bihar, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and West Bengal are showing an increasing trend in daily cases.

Amid a shortage of medical oxygen in the country, he said the government is exploring the feasibility of converting existing nitrogen plants to produce oxygen.

"There are some early signs of plateauing or decrease in new cases in some states," he said. — PTI

Modi to talk to UK, EU heads virtually

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 3

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold Summits this week in virtual format with Britain on Tuesday and the European Union (EU) on Saturday amid huge Covid assistance extended by both. Britain had earlier quit the EU.

PM Modi also spoke on Monday to the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in which they discussed the prevailing Covid situation in India including India's ongoing efforts to contain the second wave of the pandemic that is battering the country.

PM Modi "expressed his appreciation of the EU and its Member States for mobilising quick support for India's fight against the second wave" of Covid, the MEA said.

On Tuesday, PM Modi will hold a Virtual Summit with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson during which a "comprehensive Roadmap 2030 will be launched which will

pave the way for further expanding and deepening India-UK cooperation over the next decade across five key areas, namely people-to-people relationship, trade and prosperity, defence and security, climate action and healthcare". Cooperation in battling the pandemic will also be discussed.

External affairs minister S. Jaishankar is already in London from May 3-6 to participate in the G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting, at which India has been invited as a guest country. He will thereafter begin a bilateral visit to the UK.

Ahead of the Summit-level meeting with the EU later this week on Saturday, PM Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Monday agreed that for the forthcoming India-EU Leaders' Meeting on May 8 in virtual format was an "important opportunity to provide renewed momentum to the already multifaceted India-EU relationship".

IMA-BIHAR ASKS GOVT TO IMPOSE FULL LOCKDOWN

NAYYAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, MAY 3

Amid the surge in Covid-19 cases, the Bihar chapter of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has urged the government to impose a lockdown for 15 days in the state.

Along with the IMA, heads of four government hospitals in Patna All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (IGIMS), Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH) Nalanda Medical College and Hospital (NMCH) have also urged the government to consider imposing a lockdown in the state to stop the surge in cases.

Talking to this newspaper, IMA state secretary Dr. Sunil Kumar said that, "imposing a complete lockdown for at least three weeks would break the chain of Coronavirus in the state. We have also discussed the issue with heads of government hospitals. We believe that lockdown would bring the situation under control".

Bihar has witnessed a steep rise in cases. According to reports, there are about 1,09,945 active cases and 2,739 people have died due to the deadly virus so far.

Delhi govt seeks Army's assistance

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 3

Delhi High Court seeking for handing over of management of oxygen supplies, including logistical aspect, in and around Delhi to Armed Forces for ensuring uninterrupted supply to hospitals and Covid facility.

Delhi HC is already hearing a matter regarding the supply of oxygen in Delhi hospitals and other related issues.

The public interest litigation was mentioned before the division bench for urgent listing today by Senior Advocates Abhinav Vasisth, Sacchin Puri, and Jagdeep Singh Bakshi.

The petition titled as Manish Gupta Vs. GNCTD and Ors. has been filed by advocates Praveen K. Sharma, Dhananjay Grover and Kamil Khan.

The petition has sought for handing over the management of oxygen supplies to the Armed Forces.

The petition has sought direction from the respondent to enhance the oxygen allocation of Delhi from 590MT to 1000 MT.

Battle continues



(Top) Beneficiaries above 18 years of age wait to receive the first shot of Covid-19 vaccine in Varanasi on Monday.



(Left) People buy vegetables at a crowded wholesale market during lockdown, amid surge in Coronavirus cases across the country, in Jalandhar on Monday.

— PTI

SC asks Centre to revisit vax policy

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, MAY 3

Questioning the rationale behind the different vaccine prices and asking the Centre to consider revisiting its vaccine procurement and pricing policy, the Supreme Court has favoured a uniform price structure for the Covid vaccine, centralised procurement and decentralised distribution.

The court said that the current vaccine pricing and procurement policy will prima facie be detrimental to the right to life.

"Leaving state governments to negotiate directly with manufacturers will result in chaos and uncertainty. Procurement should be centralised and distribution of vaccines across the country can be decentralised", said a bench comprising Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Justice L. Nageswara Rao and Justice S. Ravindra Bhat in their order passed on April 30.

The court in its order, running into 64 pages, said that once the vaccination programme has been opened up for persons other than the 45 plus age group, "it would not be logical to impose the obligation to source vaccinations for the 18-44 age group on the state governments."

"Prima facie, the rational method of proceeding in a manner consistent with the right to life (which includes the right to health) under Article 21 would be for the Union government to procure all vaccines and to negotiate the price with the manu-

facturers", the court observed.

Once the Centre allocates a quantity of vaccine to each state, "the latter will lift them and take up their distribution."

However, the court said that it is not passing a "conclusive determination" on the constitutionality of the current policy, but "the manner in which the current policy has been framed would prima facie result in a detriment to the right to public health."

The court said "We believe that the Union government should consider revisiting its current vaccine policy to ensure that it withstands the scrutiny of Articles 14 and Article 21 of the Constitution."

The court in a number of posers to the government asked whether the Centre would revisit its policy by procuring 100% of the doses which could then be equitably disbursed to the states.

The court in its order addressed to chief secretaries.

"In such a sad situation of surge in Covid-19 cases in the country there are situations arising where the child has lost both its parents or is found to be abandoned. It may be noted that the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 provides for the procedure to be followed for children who have lost their family support and have become child in need of care and protection," it said.

"The commission has been made aware of instances where it has been seen that many NGOs are advertising about the children who have become orphan after losing both their parents to Covid-19," NCPCR chairperson Priyank

Kanoongo said in the letter addressed to chief secretaries.

"These children who have lost family support due to Covid-19 or have been

abandoned due to the loss of parents to the disease are in need of care and protection as per the JJ Act, 2015, and such children must be produced before the Child Welfare Committee as per section 31 of the Act, the commission said.

"Therefore, it is of utmost importance that these children who have lost their family support must be produced before the child protection authorities of the district, and information about these children must be shared with the authorities," he wrote.

These children who have lost family support due to Covid-19 or have been

requested that if any such information for an abandoned or orphaned child is received by any entity, organisation, NGO then the same can also be informed to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights either through email (cp.npcr@nic.in) or through telephone (011-23478250) for assistance and help to the children. This information can also be shared with the respective state commissions of the said state/UT for the same," the letter read.

— PTI

Covid | Crisis Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 to help kids who have lost family support

NCPCR seeks info on orphaned children

New Delhi, May 3: The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) wrote to states and Union Territories on Monday, urging them to inform child protection authorities about children who have lost both parents due to Covid-19.

"The commission has been made aware of instances where it has been seen that many NGOs are advertising about the children who have become orphan after losing both their parents to Covid-19," NCPCR chairperson Priyank

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Similarly, it is further

SHORT TAKES

AKHIL GOGOI FIRST IN ASSAM TO WIN POLLS FROM JAIL

Sibsagar (Assam), May 3: Jailed anti-CAA activist Akhil Gogoi became the first Assamese to win an election without hitting the campaign trail, as he clinched the Sibsagar constituency, defeating his nearest rival Surabhi Rajkonwari of the BJP by a decisive 11,875 votes.

The founder of the newly floated Rajoij Dal — arrested in December 2019 over sedition charges — bagged 57,219 votes as an independent, garnering support from 46.06 per cent of the electorate.

The Congress, which had initially backed the Rajoij Dal chief, ended up giving ticket to Subhramitra Gogoi, who came third in the contest.

The RTI activist, in an attempt to reach out to the people of the state, wrote several open letters from jail, highlighting problems that need to be addressed.

What might have struck a chord with the electorate was his 85-year-old mother's efforts to campaign for her imprisoned son along the narrow lanes of Sibsagar, despite the frailties of old age. Moved by Priyada Gogoi's determination, renowned social activists Medha Patkar and Sandeep Pandey flew down to the Upper Assam town and joined the octogenarian in her campaigns. Hundreds of youth volunteers and members of the Rajoij Dal also took to door-to-door electioneering to woo voters ahead of the three-phase polls.

MAHA DGP WANTS TO BE EXEMPTED FROM BIR'S PROBE

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, MAY 3

Maharashtra DGP Sanjay Pandey has written a letter to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray expressing his inability to conduct investigation into the alleged nexus of Param Bir Singh with the underworld. Pandey's letter came a few days after Singh alleged that the DGP had offered a settlement and asked him to withdraw his allegations against NCP leader Anil Singh.

Following the allegations by Singh against him, Pandey has asked the case to be reassigned to someone else.

According to the sources, DGP Pandey and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray are going to have a meeting after which a decision will be made in the matter.

On April 29, Singh had approached the Bombay High Court and had claimed that Pandey confided in him that he had himself fought the system his entire life but to no avail. Pandey had then allegedly advised Singh to not fight the system and asked him to take back the case against Deshmukh and in return, inquiries against him ordered by the state government would be closed. Singh has also submitted a transcript of conversation with DGP Pandey in the court.

Singh's allegations against Anil Deshmukh is that the minister asked suspended Mumbai Police officer Sachin Vaze to collect ₹100 crore for him every month.

KERALA CABINET: FATHER-IN-LAW CM, SON-IN-LAW MLA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 3: In a first, a father-in-law and son-in-law duo will make their presence felt together in the Kerala Assembly soon and thus script a new chapter in its decades-long history.

The 77-year-old father-in-law is no one other than Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan while the lucky son-in-law is P.A. Mohammed Riyas, national president of the Democratic Youth Federation. Riyas is the husband of Vijayan's daughter Veena, an IT entrepreneur based in Bengaluru.

While Vijayan won by a whopping margin of over 50,000 votes from his home turf Dharmadam in Kannur district, the 44-year-old Riyas got elected from Beypore, a Left bastion in Kozhikode.

Though the state Assembly had a legacy of accommodating sons and daughters of various politicians in these years, it is for the first time that a father-in-law and son-in-law are together becoming part of the House.

A vibrant youth leader, Riyas had earlier unsuccessfully contested in 2009 Lok Sabha polls from Kozhikode. Veena and Riyas got married at Cliff House, the official residence of the CM, on June 15, 2020.



Senior BJP leader and convener of North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) Himanta Biswa Sarma being greeted by AGP president Atul Bora after BJP's win in the Assam Assembly elections, in Guwahati on Monday. — PTI

BJP Parliamentary board to clear Assam leadership row

Some newly-elected MLAs advocate Himanta Biswa Sarma as new CM

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, MAY 3

Bogged down by the media debate over the leadership issue, the Assam BJP on Monday pushed the ball into the court of the parliamentary board of the party and advised the newly-elected legislators through their leaders to maintain restraint on the issue by avoiding giving comments in the media.

The problem started as some newly-elected legislators started expressing their views openly before some television channels and advocated the name of senior minister Himanta Biswa Sarma as the new chief minister.

However, Assam BJP president Ranjeet Kumar Dass took the lead and

announced: "That decision will be taken by the parliamentary board. The party is sending an observer. He will talk to all stakeholders and a decision will be taken based on his report."

In between, more than a dozen newly-elected legislators were seen visiting Sarma at his official residence in Dispur. However, most of them were tightlipped. Newly-elected legislator Jayanta Malla Baruah told reporters that he came to felicitate Sarma.

"This is not new, I have been a regular visitor to Sarma. As far as leadership issues are concerned, party leaders and the parliamentary board of the party will take a call," said Baruah, a staunch sup-

porter of Sarma since his Congress days.

With the party asking legislators to be restrained, some BJP MLAs said: "Sarma deserves to be the next CM as he has not only performed well as minister but also leading the party to victory in all the entire northeastern states since 2016. He has also proved himself as an efficient crisis manager for the governments and the party as well in the Northeast."

Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Monday invited the newly-elected legislators of the party and alliance partners at his official residence. Though it was not known if all legislators could attend the meeting, party sources

said most legislators who were in Guwahati attended the meeting.

The remarks of the new legislators in the media asking for a change in the leadership in Assam has alerted the central party leaders in New Delhi too.

Having retained power in Assam, the BJP will now need to take a call on whether to keep Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal at the helm or elevate Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam's health and finance minister, who has steadily gained strength within the party since defecting from the Congress in the run-up to the 2016 Lok Sabha elections.

There has been speculation all through the campaign season of Sonowal possibly getting a role in the Union government and Sarma taking his place as CM, particularly since the BJP did not name a CM candidate before the elections.

BJP vice-president and Assam in-charge Jay Panda, who met Sonowal and Sarma separately at their residences on Monday, said: "Any decision that will be taken will be after a call is taken at the parliamentary board."

It is significant that the leader of the United Peoples Party Liberal, Pramod Boro, has already said: "Selecting the chief minister is an internal BJP matter but we as an alliance partner would like to request them to select a dynamic leader to lead the party in Assam."

2020 DELHI RIOTS 'REMINISCENT OF PARTITION DAYS', SAYS COURT

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 3

New Delhi, May 3: A court here has called the 2020 Delhi riots the 'reminiscent of carnage during the days of partition', while rejecting the anticipatory bail petition of a man accused of attacking a boy during the widespread violence, merely because he belonged to a different community.

Fearing arrest, Siraj Ahmad Khan had moved the court to seek anticipatory bail in the matter, claiming that he was being falsely implicated and had nothing to do with the alleged offence.

Dismissing his pre-arrest bail plea, Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav noted that the allegations against him were grave in nature and that his presence was necessary to unearth the conspiracy involved in planning, instigating and fanning the flames of communal conflagration.

Communal violence had broken out in northeast Delhi in February last year after clashes between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

It is common knowledge that the dreary days of February 24/25, 2020 saw parts of North-East Delhi gripped by a communal frenzy, reminiscent of carnage during the days of partition, the judge remarked, in his April 29 order.

"Soon, the riots spread like wildfire across the smoke-grey skyline of Capital, engulfing new areas and snuffing out more and more innocent lives," he added. — PTI

Govt to launch ops against Maoists

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 3

Now that Assembly elections in five states are over, home ministry has decided to deploy most of the one lakh security forces that were deployed for the polls in launching massive operations against Maoists outfits in Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

More than 20 CRPF commandos were killed last month by Maoists in the Bastar region following which a fresh offensive against Maoists was started and is now being intensified.

Home ministry sources said with a long election process now over, the central forces deployed there had become free for being used in anti-Maoist and counter insurgency operations. Though, officials clarified, th-

at there was no shortage of security forces for deployment in Maoists-infested areas, availability of additional or extra forces will be like a shot in the arm to launch specific operations to target top Maoist commanders.

Security forces have already launched massive hunt for a senior Maoist commander Hidma who is said to be the mastermind behind the April 5 Naxal attack in Bastar region of Chhattisgarh in which 23 CRPF and DRG commandos were killed.

Top security sources said at least 20,000 additional troops who are being released from elections duty will now be used in launching a fresh offensive against Maoist groups active in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Blame-game begins in WB BJP unit

SANJAY BASAK | DC
NEW DELHI, MAY 3

As the dust settled, a covert blame game has begun in the West Bengal BJP. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the party's central leadership have emerged as the main target of the West Bengal BJP leaders. Fingers are now being pointed at the Prime Minister's style of campaigning.

Nerves appeared to be frayed over the apparent "marginalisation" of the local leaders by the heavyweights from Delhi and north India. It was also claimed that both the central and local leadership failed to attract the state's intelligentsia and Bengali bhadralok in the urban areas following a "sectarian and low level" style of campaigning.

Speaking to this correspondent from Kolkata, a senior BJP leader felt that the first "strategic error" was the failure to bring

forth an "effective Bengali leadership" in the state. "Identity crisis" hit the BJP hard as the majority of the rallies, which included that of the Prime Minister and home minister Amit Shah were addressed in Hindi. This helped strengthen Banerjee's narrative of the "BJP is an outsider".

The local leaders also questioned the regular visits of the Prime Minister and the camping of the home minister in the state during the elections.

"They behaved like a daily passenger. This gave an impression that if the BJP won, the state government would be run by remote control from Delhi." Some senior state leaders claimed that this particular impression damaged the BJP among the local intelligentsia and that is why Mamata Banerjee swept Kolkata, Howrah and North and South 24 Parganas".

6 BJP cadres killed in post-poll clash

RAJIB CHOWDHURY | DC
KOLKATA, MAY 3

and Kolkata police commissioner Soumen Mitra to Raj Bhavan. He also flagged the issue with the TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee when she met him in the evening.

The Union home ministry has also sought a report from the Mamata Banerjee government with BJP president J.P. Nadda flying to the state on a two-day visit from Tuesday.

The victims are Shova Rani Mondal of Jagaddal in North 24 Parganas, Uttam Ghosh at Ranaghat in Nadia, Abhijit Sarkar at Beliaghata in North Kolkata, Haran Adhikari at Sonarpur South in South 24 Parganas, Manik Moitra at Shitalkuchi in Coochbehar and Gourab Sarkar at Bolpur in Birbhum.

Government actions evoke severe criticism by various political parties in J&K**J&K: Another official sacked in interest of security**

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, MAY 3

Days after dismissing a schoolteacher from services for his being allegedly involved in anti-national activities, Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday fired a senior revenue official on the same charges.

The official sources said J&K's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, has, after considering the facts and circumstances of the case, observed that on the basis of the information available, the activities of revenue official Nazir Ahmad Wani who is currently posted as Naib

(deputy) Tehsildar in southern Pulwama district, warrant his dismissal from service in the 'interest of the security of the state'.

Subsequently, an order issued by the government reads, "Accordingly, the Lieutenant Governor hereby dismisses Nazir Ahmad Wani from service with immediate effect".

It further says, "The Lieutenant Governor is satisfied under sub-clause (c) of the proviso to clause (2) of Article 311 of the Constitution of India that in the interest of the security of the state, it is not expedient to hold an inquiry in the case

of Nazir Ahmad Wani, Naib Tehsildar, Pulwama-II."

Last week, the government had fired a schoolteacher Idrees Jan, who was posted at the Government Middle School in the frontier district of Kupwara invoking the same constitutional provision.

The government actions have evoked severe criticism by various political parties in J&K.

Former chief minister and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Monday said, "In the middle of a pandemic, the Government of India

should focus on saving lives instead of firing government employees on flimsy grounds in Kashmir."

She added, "No wonder the government's misplaced priorities have converted India into shamshans (crematoriums) and kabristans (cemeteries). The living continue to suffer and the dead are deprived of dignity."

Last month, the J&K government constituted a Special Task Force (STF) for identifying and scrutinising its employees involved in any activity detrimental to the security of the country or deemed as anti-national.

Order issued by J&K's General Administration Department (GAD) gave sanction for the constitution of a STF which, it said, would be authorised to identify and scrutinise cases of government employees found involved in such activity and refer these to the government for action against them in terms of provisions of Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution of India.

According to the GAD, the STF "shall speedily scrutinise such cases in a time-bound manner and shall be serviced by the Criminal Investigation Department".

The J&K government has, while pursuing a tough policy against what it sees as their anti-national activities and violation of government servants conduct rules, sacked a large number of its employees over a period of time.

SHORT TAKES

16 SOLDIERS IN NIGER KILLED IN ATTACK, 6 HURT

Niamey (Niger): An ambush on a military patrol near Niger's border with Mali in Tillia in the northern part of Niger's Tahoua region when it was attacked by a band of men riding motorcycles on Saturday evening, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement late Sunday. Six other soldiers were wounded in the ambush.

The patrol was returning from a security mission near the border with Mali in Tillia in the northern part of Niger's Tahoua region when it was attacked by a band of men riding motorcycles on Saturday evening, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement late Sunday. Six other soldiers were wounded in the ambush.

Niger's military also intercepted a group of suspected extremists Friday night, killing at least 24 who were preparing to attack Baibangou, a village about 100 kilometers (62 miles) north of the capital, Niamey, according to a statement from the ministry of defence.

TORNADOES HIT MISSISSIPPI; TUPELO AT RISK

Mississippi: Multiple tornadoes were reported across Mississippi on Sunday, causing some damage but no immediate word of injuries.

A line of severe storms rolled through the state on Sunday afternoon and into the nightime hours. Late Sunday, a "tornado emergency" was declared for Tupelo and surrounding areas. Meteorologists urged residents to take cover.

"Damage has been reported in the City of Tupelo," the mayor's office said in a Facebook post just before 11 pm. "Emergency crews are currently assessing the degree of damage. Please do not get out and drive." Photos retweeted by the National Weather Service in Memphis showed several downed trees and power lines.

Tupelo Middle School sustained some damage, as well as houses and businesses.

ISRAELI SETTLERS ATTACK VILLAGE OF PALESTINIANS

Jerusalem: Israeli settlers attacked a Palestinian village in the occupied West Bank overnight, setting brush fires and hurling stones. Palestinian officials and an Israeli rights group said on Monday.

It appeared to be a revenge attack after three Israelis were wounded in a drive-by shooting at a nearby traffic junction on Sunday. The Israeli human rights group B'Tselem said dozens of settlers attacked the village of Jaloud. It circulated videos showing the fires, with people shouting in the background. Israeli security forces arrested 11 Palestinians and four people were wounded by rubber bullets, B'Tselem said.

Ghassan Daghlas, a Palestinian Authority official who monitors settlement activity in the northern West Bank, provided a similar account, saying the villagers had come out to defend the village after the settlers attacked.

The Israeli military said Israeli civilians and Palestinians hurled rocks at each other outside the village and that a number of locations were ignited.

3 KILLED IN BOAT CAPSIZE OFF SAN DIEGO COAST

San Diego: Three people were killed and more than two dozen others were hospitalised after a wooden boat capsized on Sunday during a possible human smuggling operation just off the San Diego coast, authorities said.

Local lifeguards, the US Coast Guard and other agencies responded around 10:30 am following reports of an overturned vessel near the peninsula of Point Loma, according to the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department. Three people died at the scene and 27 people were transported to hospitals with "varying degrees of injuries," department spokesman Jose Ysea said.

Ysea said when he arrived on scene near the Cabrillo National Monument there was a "large debris field" of broken wood and other items in the choppy waters.

"In that area of Point Loma it's very rocky. It's likely the waves just kept pounding the boat, breaking it apart," Ysea said. He said it was possible, but not confirmed, that the group had been packed in a low-slung panga boat, a type of motorised vessel often made of wood used by smugglers to bring people illegally into the US from Mexico.

— AP

EU to allow vaccinated travellers

Urges 27-member countries to lift restrictions on non-essential travel for people with vax

Brussels, May 3: The European Union's executive on Monday proposed that travellers who are fully vaccinated with EU-approved jabs be able to enter the bloc, a statement said.

The European Commission urged the EU's 27 member countries — which make their own decisions on health matters — to "lift restrictions on non-essential travel for vaccinated persons traveling to the EU".

It also wants to see travellers from countries that have done a good job in keeping Covid-19 at bay to be able to enter, based on how many infections they register per 100,000 people averaged over a two-week period.

The proposal would see that infection threshold raised from the "very severe" bar of 25 cases per 100,000 decided nearly a year ago to 100 cases, an EU official involved with drafting the proposal told journalists on condition of not being identified.

"So we will no longer have the choice among, let's say, 10 to 15 countries around the world, but member states will be able to pick up countries, international countries in a list of up to 100 countries, if the situation continues to develop in a positive way," he said.

Proof that an individual was fully vaccinated — at least two weeks before arriving in the EU, for full immunity to kick in — would not exclude member states also requiring Covid tests either before or after arrival, or quarantine if authorities deemed them warranted, he added.

The proposal also says an "emergency brake" option should be kept in reserve to allow member states to quickly close travel from countries where a "variant of concern or interest is detected".

The EU currently has four vaccines currently authorised by its European Medicines Agency: from BioNTech / Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson.

Others may be added later. The EMA is beginning to look at Russia's Sputnik V vaccine. So far, however, no assessment is being made of China's jabs, which are used in several countries.

The statement said other vaccines may later be added to the list for approved EU travel if they feature on a World Health Organisation emergency use list of jabs.

The EU at the moment



Fans watch Blossom perform at a live music concert hosted by Festival Republic in Sefton Park in Liverpool, north-west England. A crowd of 5,000 people attended the trial gig.

— AFP

Public gather maskless at UK gig trial

Liverpool, May 3: Thou-

UNITED KINGDOM

sands danced without face coverings at a music festival in northern England as the UK government permitted the country's first post-lockdown gig.

A crowd of 5,000 people cheered, danced and sang along to performances from bands including English indie pop act Blossoms at the sold-out event on Sunday at Liverpool's Sefton Park.

The festival was part of a pilot project by the UK gov-

ernment called the Events Research Programme (ERP) to test crowd safety at live events ahead of planned lifting of restrictions on June 21.

Hugging a group of friends outside the concert tent, Matt Berry said they were "getting back to doing normal things that normal people do... finally."

"I think it is good to get it all started again to test if

it can all work for summer, and if it will all go ahead in the summer as well," said another concert-goer, Freya Begley.

The government has previously allowed limited numbers of supporters to attend sports events such as the FA Cup semi-final at Wembley.

Researchers are mon-

itoring how well different approaches to social distancing and ventilation work.

All those attending the

two-day concert had to take lateral flow Covid tests before entering the venue and will also have to take another test afterwards.

They have to give their contact details to the state-funded health service so they can be traced if they test positive.

The bands performed in a tent. At the entrance to the venue, audience members had to show QR codes and Covid test results.

— AFP

France opens high schools, Oktoberfest put on hold

Paris/Berlin, May 3: France's secondary and high schools have reopened and a ban on domestic travel has been lifted as part of the government's plan to gradually reopen the country.

The French are now allowed to go further than the 10-kilometre (six-mile) from home limit that has been applied for four weeks in efforts to slow down the spreading of the virus. A curfew from 7 pm until 6 am is still in place.

Last week, President Emmanuel Macron has presented the key dates of the plan to move out of the country's partial lockdown, as numbers of

infections and hospitalisations have started decreasing.

Restaurants and cafes will be able to serve customers outdoors at tables seating a maximum of six people starting May 19, when the nightly curfew will be pushed back to 9 pm. Non-essential shops also reopen, as well as cultural sites and sport facilities, which will have occupancy limits of 800 people indoors and 1,000 outdoors.

Meanwhile, Bavarian officials on Monday cancelled Oktoberfest festivities for a second year in a row due to concerns over the spread of the Covid, saying that there are too many risks in hosting the celebrations, which traditionally bring in visitors from around the world, during a global pandemic.

Bavarian Governor Markus Soeder said it was with heavy hearts that they decided to call off the festival for which the state is known globally, but that with Coronavirus numbers still stubbornly high and hospitals already struggling, it had to be done.

— Agencies

On June 9, tourists from abroad will be allowed to come to France on the condition they are vaccinated or can show a negative test.

— Agencies

Covax signs deal for 500mn Moderna virus vaccine doses

Geneva, May 3: The Covax global vaccine equity programme said on Monday it has struck a deal to buy 500 million doses of Moderna's Covid-19 jabs.

The doses, to come on stream from October at the earliest, will broaden out the portfolio of vaccines in the Covax scheme, which has so far been heavily reliant on the AstraZeneca vaccine and hit by delays.

The Moderna doses are expected to start supplying Covax in the final quarter of 2021, with 34 million doses available before the end of the year, the Covax scheme's co-leader Gavi announced in a statement.

A further 466 million doses will follow in 2022.

The Covax facility

ensures access to jabs in poor countries, with the cost covered by donors. Wealthier countries can bulk-buy through the scheme.

Covax is co-led by the World Health Organisation, the Gavi vaccine alliance and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations.

The scheme aims to distribute enough doses to vaccinate up to 27 percent of the population in the 92 poorest territories participating in the program by the end of the year.

"We are very pleased to sign this new agreement with Moderna, giving Covax facility participants access to yet another highly efficacious vaccine," said Gavi chief executive Seth Berkley.

— AFP

AUSTRALIA

PM DEFENDS BAN ON RETURNEES FROM INDIA

Melbourne, May 3: Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Monday defended his government's decision to ban and impose a jail term and a penalty for Australians trying to return from India, saying it is in the country's best interests and to prevent a third wave of infections.

Russia has announced three deals totaling 260 million doses with Chinese vaccine companies in recent weeks. It's a decision that could mean quicker access to a shot for citizens from India, the Middle East, and Africa that have ordered Russia's vaccine, as the US and the European Union focus mainly on domestic vaccination needs.

Earlier criticism about Russia's vaccine have been largely quieted by data published in the British medical journal

The Lancet that said large-scale testing showed it to be safe, with an efficacy rate of 91 per cent.

It has been put in place to ensure that we do not get a third wave here in Australia and that our quarantine system can remain strong, he said, adding that it is in the country's best interests.

— PTI

RUSSIA

RUSSIA HITS LAG, SEEKS CHINA AID TO BOOST SPUTNIK

Taipei, May 3: Russia is turning to multiple Chinese firms to manufacture the Sputnik V Coronavirus vaccine in an effort to speed up production as demand soars for its shot.

Russia has announced three deals totaling 260 million doses with Chinese vaccine companies in recent weeks. It's a decision that could mean quicker access to a shot for citizens from India, the Middle East, and Africa that have ordered Russia's vaccine, as the US and the European Union focus mainly on domestic vaccination needs.

The Australian government, for the first time in history, recently imposed a ban on its citizens from returning home, if they have spent time in India up to 14 days before flying back.

The government threatened to prosecute them with a possibility of five years of jail term or a penalty of 66,000 Australian dollars (USD 50,899).

Morrison said this is a temporary arrangement and a very difficult decision.

It has been put in place to ensure that we do not get a third wave here in Australia and that our quarantine system can remain strong, he said, adding that it is in the country's best interests.

— PTI

Biden recalls raid on Osama in 2011

Washington, May 3: The

US will never waver in its commitment to prevent another terror attack on the White House in 2011 to keep the American people safe, President Joe Biden has vowed, as he marked the 10th anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

The al-Qaeda leader who evaded justice for 10 years after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 met his end in a covert raid by US special operations forces on May 1, 2011 in the Pakistani garrison city of Abbottabad.

In a statement on Sunday, Biden, then Vice President, recalled that he joined President Barack Obama and members of

the national security team, crowded into the Situation Room of the White House in 2011 to watch as the US military delivered long-awaited justice to bin Laden.

"It is a moment I will never forget," Biden said, while praising the intelligence professionals who had painstakingly tracked bin Laden down; the clarity and conviction of President Obama in making the call; the courage and skill of the American team on the ground. "It had been almost ten years since our nation was attacked on 9/11 and we went to war in Afghanistan, pursuing al-Qaeda and its leaders.

We followed bin Laden to the gates of hell." — PTI

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We followed bin Laden to the gates of hell." — PTI

SHORT TAKES
SYRIA'S ASSAD TO FACE 2 'RIVALS' IN MAY VOTE

Damascus: A Syrian former minister and a member of the Damascus-tolerated opposition will face Bashar al-Assad in this month's presidential election, the constitutional court said on Monday.

The Assad-appointed body approved only three out of 51 applications to stand in the May 26 ballot, among them the 55-year-old president himself, widely expected to win a fourth mandate.

The court's president said in a press conference broadcast on state TV that Abdallah Salloum Abdallah, a state minister from 2016 to 2020, had been approved to run for president.

The third candidate was named as Mahmoud Marei, a member of the so-called "tolerated opposition" long described by exiled opposition leaders as an extension of the regime.

EU SUMMONS RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR

Brussels: The European Union summoned the Russian ambassador on Monday after Moscow put eight EU nationals, including top Brussels officials, on a blacklist in retaliation for sanctions by the bloc.

Moscow's envoy was to meet senior officials from the European Commission and the EU's diplomatic service later in the afternoon, EU spokesman Peter Stano said.

"These counter sanctions are obviously very politically motivated and lack any legal justification," Stano said.

"We will convey to him strong condemnation and rejection of this decision." On Friday, Russia barred entry to eight officials from the EU -- European Parliament president David Sassoli and commission vice-president Vera Jourová were among them -- in response to sanctions from the bloc over abuses, including the jailing of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

ISRAEL LAUNCHES PROBE INTO DEADLY STAMPEDE

Jerusalem: Israel's state comptroller on Monday announced the launch of an investigation into a stampede that killed 45 pilgrims at a religious festival, saying the crush "could have been prevented".

At least 16 children and teens were among those crushed to death in the early hours of Friday morning, a tragedy described as Israel's worst peacetime disaster.

Tens of thousands had packed a site at Mount Meron in northern Israel for the annual pilgrimage to the tomb of reputed second century rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, coinciding with the Lag BaOmer holiday.

The tragedy "could have been prevented, and we must now determine how", Matanyahu Englman told journalists as he announced a "special audit" into the stampede.

Englman's office, a key government watchdog, had issued reports in 2008 and 2011 warning against the dangers to pilgrims at the Mount Meron site.

IRAN DENIES REPORTS OF U.S. PRISONERS SWAP

Tehran: Iran on Monday denied media reports suggesting a prisoner swap deal had been reached with the United States, in parallel with nuclear talks involving the two archrivals.

"The reports from informed sources are not confirmed, as it was said in the past," foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told a news conference.

But he added that "there are always plans and ideas to be pursued", without elaborating. His comments came after outlets including Iranian state television on Sunday quoted an "informed" source saying that Tehran and Washington would swap prisoners.

"Under pressure from the US Congress and the need for immediate results" in the nuclear file, "the Americans agreed to pay \$7 million and release four Iranians... in exchange for four American spies," the source reportedly said.

A senior White House official had also denied the report on Sunday.

"There is no agreement to release these four Americans," White House chief of staff Ron Klain said on CBS's "Face the Nation".

Ardern toughens stand over China's human rights record

It's getting harder to reconcile differences as China's role grows, says PM



Jacinda Ardern

● **IN HER** speech to the China Business Summit in Auckland on Monday, Ardern said New Zealand has raised grave concerns with China on human rights issues, including the situation of Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region and people who live in Hong Kong.

those systems are becoming harder to reconcile, Ardern told the audience.

Stephen Noakes, the director of the China Studies Centre at the University of Auckland, said he wouldn't have

Australia and Canada has its origins in World War II cooperation.

In her speech to the China Business Summit in Auckland on Monday, Ardern said New Zealand has raised grave concerns with China on human rights issues, including the situation of Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region and people who live in Hong Kong.

And it will not have escaped the attention of anyone here that as China's role in the world grows and changes, the differences between our systems and the interests and values that shape

New Zealand Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta caused a diplomatic stir last month when she discussed her reluctance to expand the role of the Five Eyes to include joint positions on human rights.

The alliance among New Zealand, the US, the UK, and

— AP

Rwanda massacre: French lawyers want case dropped

Paris, May 3 : Paris prosecutors said on Monday that they had asked judges to drop a case accusing senior members of the French armed forces of complicity in a massacre of Tutsis during the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The call to drop the 15-year-old case came after a major report in March into allegations about France's role in the genocide. Survivors of the June 1994 slaughter in the hills of Bisesero in western Rwanda had accused French troops of deliberately abandoning them to Hutu extremists who within days murdered hundreds of people in the area.

The statement said that Paris prosecutors had concluded the investigation "did not make it possible to establish that the French forces could have been guilty of the crimes of complicity in genocide and crimes against humanity." The inquiry did not confirm that there had been any "help or assistance from the French military forces during the carrying out of the atrocities," said chief

Paris prosecutor Remy Heitz.

Nor, he added, did it establish that the French forces "refrained from intervening in the face of genocide or crimes against humanity due to a prior agreement." The criminal investigation into complicity in genocide had been opened by prosecutors in December 2005 after complaints filed by survivors and human rights groups.

The final decision over whether to press ahead with the case rests with the investigating magistrate.

They are now highly likely to drop the case unless any further investigation is ordered, said a source close to the probe, asking not to be named.

The five French military officers targeted by the investigation have never been charged.

Survivors of the massacre alleged that France, which had backed the Hutu government of the day, used the UN-backed Turquoise peacekeeping mission as a front for trying to keep the regime in place, as a buffer against English-speaking Tutsi rebels.

— AFP

Lubbock voters give nod to abortion ban

Lubbock, May 3: Lubbock voters have approved a measure aimed at outlawing abortion in the West Texas city, a move likely to prompt legal action from opponents who call it an unconstitutional ban on the procedure.

Residents voted on Saturday to declare Lubbock a "sanctuary city for the unborn" bypassing the City Council's rejection of the proposal last year over concerns that it would be unenforceable and tie the city up in costly litigation. The proposition was approved with 62% of the vote, according to the unofficial tally from Lubbock County. It's unclear when it would go into effect.

Sarah Wheat, a spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas, said "we are committed to expanding access to abortion and will provide abortion services when possible in Lubbock."

In 2019, the small town of Mineral Wells backed off a similar ban after the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas warned council members it was unconstitutional. In a statement released by Planned Parenthood, the ACLU hinted at possible legal action.

"The ACLU has a long history of challenging unconstitutional abortion bans and will continue to fight to protect the fundamental rights of the people of Lubbock," said attorney Drucilla Tigner.

— AP

Republican-controlled cities and states have passed with the hope of leading the US Supreme Court to reconsider its landmark 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*. Abortion services are available in Lubbock at a Planned Parenthood clinic that opened last year.

Sarah Wheat, a spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas, said "we are committed to expanding access to abortion and will provide abortion services when possible in Lubbock."

In 2019, the small town of Mineral Wells backed off a similar ban after the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas warned council members it was unconstitutional. In a statement released by Planned Parenthood, the ACLU hinted at possible legal action.

"The ACLU has a long history of challenging unconstitutional abortion bans and will continue to fight to protect the fundamental rights of the people of Lubbock," said attorney Drucilla Tigner.

— AP

In full bloom



Farmers work in a tulip field in Meerdonk, Belgium on Monday. Most tulips in the region are grown specifically for the bulbs and not the flowers, however the flowers remain in the fields until they fully blossom before being cut down.

SAUDI KING APPOINTS NEW ECONOMY MIN

Riyadh, May 3: Saudi Arabia's King Salman appointed a new economy minister and named his eldest living son as a special adviser in a series of royal decrees issued early on Monday.

The king named al-Ibrahim as the minister of economy and planning, a move that promotes him from his post as deputy minister in which he'd served as since early 2018.

Al-Ibrahim has previously held jobs with Aramco and in the country's Council of Economic Affairs and Development, according to Saudi state media reports.

Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan had been serving as the acting minister of economy since last year.

— AP

Oz reviews Chinese Darwin port lease

Sydney, May 3: Australia on Monday said a Chinese company's controversial 99-year-lease on Darwin Port is under review and could be scrapped, opening a new point of friction in relations between Beijing and Canberra.

Landbridge is owned by Chinese billionaire Ye Cheng. Following the Darwin port deal, Australia introduced legislation giving Canberra a veto over future sensitive deals and launching a review of those already signed.

Darwin is the most important port on Australia's north coast, the closest to Asia and a base for US Marines who rotate in and out of the country.

That review is due to be concluded by the end of the year and had been expected to include Darwin.

But in his comments to the Herald, Dutton stated explicitly for the first time that the Darwin agreement is under review. Any move to scrap the deal is sure to further strain relations between Australia and China which are already in deep crisis.

— AFP

Northern Ireland marks a low-key centenary

London, May 3: Queen Elizabeth II stressed the need for reconciliation, equality and mutual understanding as she sent her warmest best wishes to the people of Northern Ireland on Monday to mark what is widely considered to be its centenary.

Northern Ireland was created on May 3, 1921, when the Government of Ireland Act came into effect and partitioned the island of Ireland into two separate entities. Northern Ireland became part of the UK alongside England, Scotland and Wales.

Much like the day that Northern Ireland was founded 100 years ago, there will be no huge celebrations or grand ceremonies given the sharply differing views on its creation and subsequent history.

Restrictions related to the Coronavirus pandemic have also led to commemorations this year being scaled back.

Since its creation, Northern Ireland society has been split between those who want to remain in the UK and those who wish to see Northern Ireland become part of the Republic of Ireland.

For decades, that fissure fuelled sectarian violence. The so-called Troubles resulted in around 3,500 deaths.

The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 formalised power-sharing arrangements between unionists and nationalists. It's not always been a smooth process politically with the two sides often

unable to reach agreement on how to govern. There have also been sporadic outbreaks of violence.

This anniversary reminds us of our complex history, and provides an opportunity to reflect on our togetherness and our diversity, the queen said in a statement.

It is clear that reconciliation, equality and mutual understanding cannot be taken for granted, and will require sustained fortitude and commitment," she added.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson also marked the date, describing it as a very significant anniversary and stressed the importance of reflecting on the complex history of the past 100 years.

— AP

BOYSTOWN | PLATFORM The darknet site has over 4,00,000 registered members

Germany busts global child porn racket

Berlin, May 3: German prosecutors announced on Monday they have busted one of the world's biggest international darknet platforms for child pornography, used by more than 4,00,000 registered members.

The authorities said the platform was one of the world's biggest child pornography darknet platforms and had been active at least since 2019. Pedophiles used it to exchange and watch pornography of children and toddlers, most of them boys, from all over the world.

Prosecutors wrote that they found images of most severe sexual abuse of toddlers among the photos and video material.

A German police task force investigated the platform, its administrators and users for months in

cooperation with Europol and law enforcement authorities from the Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, the United States and Canada, the statement said.

The three main suspects were a 40-year-old man from Paderborn, a 49-year-old man from Munich and a 58-year-old man from northern Germany who had been living in Paraguay for many years, the prosecutors' statement said. They worked as administrators of the site and gave advice to mem-

bers on how to evade law enforcement when using the platform for illegal child pornography.

A fourth suspect, a 64-year-old man from Hamburg, is accused of being one of the most active users of the platform having allegedly uploaded more than 3,500 posts.

Germany has requested the extradition of the suspect who was arrested in Paraguay. No names were given in line with Germany privacy regulations.

— AP

Oli to seek trust vote on May 10



K.P. Sharma Oli

Kathmandu, May 3: Nepal's embattled Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli will seek a vote of confidence from Parliament on May 10 in his bid to stay in power.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari, on the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli, summoned a Parliament session on May 10 to obtain a vote of confidence in his government, according to an official statement on Sunday.

Oli, 69, requires at least 136 votes in the 275-member House of Representatives, the lower house of Parliament, to win the confidence motion as four members are currently under suspension.

During a Cabinet meeting on Sunday, Oli said that he would try to win the trust of Parliament to stay in power, Nepalese media reported.

Oli's decision comes amid the current chaotic state of political affairs in the country that emerged since the Prime Minister's controversial move to dissolve the House of Representatives in December last year.

The Prime Minister will seek a vote of confidence on May 10, Lila Nath Shrestha, Minister for Law, Justice and Parlia-

mentary Affairs, told the Kathmandu Post. This is just a day-long session.

Shrestha said Oli wants to take a vote of confidence to take the political process which has been stuck now, forward. The government believes it will win the vote of confidence if not, the process will move forward for the formation of a coalition government.

This is also an opportunity for other parties to form the government otherwise the country will move in the direction of the snap poll, he said.

Prime Minister Oli's decision to seek a confidence vote comes at a time when Nepal is grappling with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

— PTI

PHILIPPINES OPPOSES CHINA'S SHIP BLOCKADE

Manila (Philippines), May 3: The Philippine government has protested the Chinese coast guard's harassment of Philippine coast guard ships patrolling a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, the Department of Foreign Affairs said on Monday.

It was the latest of dozens of recent protests by Manila's foreign affairs department, along with increasingly acerbic remarks by the country's top diplomat and defense chief about Chinese actions in the disputed waters.

The high-profile feud has escalated despite President Rodrigo Duterte's friendly stance toward China. Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. used an obscene phrase in a tweet demanding China get out of Philippine-claimed areas.

"What are you doing to our friendship?" Locsin asked. "You're like an ugly oaf forcing your attentions on a handsome guy who wants to be a friend..." Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana rejected

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	48,718.52
Nifty 50	14,634.20
S&P 500*	4,197.28
Dollar (\$)	73.91
Pound Sterling (£)	102.41
Euro (€)	89.10
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,580▲310
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	67.33
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.001
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.608 -0.023

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Godrej Properties posts ₹192-cr loss in Q4, income dips

Godrej Properties reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 191.62 crore for the March quarter on lower income, even as it achieved record sales bookings of Rs 2,632 crore. The realtor had posted a net profit of Rs 102.39 crore in the year-ago period. Total income fell to Rs 576.08 crore in Q4 from Rs 1,288.17 crore in the year-ago quarter. For financial year 2020-21, the firm reported a net loss of Rs 189.43 crore.

M&M advances maintenance shutdown



Mahindra & Mahindra said it has advanced the annual maintenance plant shutdown of its automotive division to this month in the wake of the second wave of the pandemic. The maintenance of four working days was originally scheduled for June 2021, M&M said in a regulatory filing. M&M's automotive division has manufacturing units at Chakan, Nashik, Kandivali, Zaheerabad and Hardiwari.

Motherson takes Bombardier's wiring biz in fold

Auto components major Motherson Sumi Systems Ltd said it has completed the acquisition of Bombardier's electrical wiring interconnection systems (EWIS) business in Huelueto, Mexico. In October last year, the company had announced the acquisition of Bombardier's Mexico-based EWIS business for around \$10 million through its Mexican subsidiary, Motherson Rolling Stocks.

Tata Chemicals Q4 consolidated PAT down 85%

Tata Chemicals reported an 85 per cent decline in consolidated profit after tax (PAT) at Rs 29 crore for the fourth quarter against Rs 198 crore a year ago. Consolidated income from operations rose by 11 per cent to Rs 2,636 crore from Rs 2,378 crore. "During the year, we witnessed a sequential improvement in demand and this quarter saw continuation of the same trend," the company's MD & CEO R. Mukundan said.

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■ Developed countries need to share technology No room for vaccine nationalism, says FM



New Delhi, May 3: Cautioning the global community against vaccine nationalism at this critical hour of the spreading pandemic, India on Monday asked the developed nations to share technology and allow free movement of critical components and raw material needed for production of vaccines.

Speaking at the Asian Development Bank's annual meet, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman also underlined the need for a re-look at the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (Trips) agreement in the context of the pandemic.

"Countries will have to be open about sharing vaccine-based technologies. The Trips agreement will have to be looked at in the context of the pandemic. There cannot be any more vaccine nationalism, countries will have to be flexible about it," she said.

The Trips agreement is a legal pact between all the member nations of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It establishes minimum standards for regulation by national governments of different forms of intellectual property as applied to nationals of other WTO member nations. The agreement has been in force from January 1995.

Participating in a virtual governors' seminar, Sitharaman said there is a need to have a global multilateral approach to deal with the Covid pandemic. One critical point in

POONAWALLA SAYS CAN'T RAMP UP VACCINE PRODUCTION OVERNIGHT

New Delhi, May 3: With states scrambling to secure vaccines, Adar Poonawalla—whose firm is the main supplier of Covid vaccine in India—on Monday said his firm cannot ramp up production overnight as vaccine making is a specialised process.

Serum Institute of India (SII) has orders from the Government of India to supply 11 crore more doses over the next few months on top of 15 crore already supplied, he said in a statement. Another 11 crore doses will be supplied to states and private hospitals in the next few months, he said.

He, however, did not give a timeline for supplying the vaccines. Pune-based SII can pro-

ramp up the production of (vaccine) capacity is access to critical raw materials, she said.

"Although we speak

about global value chain and the need for countries to open up trade and also facilitate free movement of raw materials, critical

components, critical APIs and so on, we find that the movement of critical raw materials for production of vaccines is finding certain hiccups. We would love that to be sorted out at the earliest so that India can produce," she said.

It is important that critical raw materials are available and made to flow freely, she said, adding, two more vaccines, including a nasal spray are in the offing to treat Covid.

Indian vaccine manufacturers, including Serum Institute of India (SII), faced problems in production last month as Europe and the US banned export of critical raw materials.

Tagging the Twitter handle of the President of the United States, SII CEO Adar Poonawalla had tweeted, "Respected @POTUS, if we are to truly unite in beating this virus, on behalf of the vaccine industry outside the US, I humbly request you to lift the embargo of raw material exports out of the US so that vaccine production can ramp up. Your administration has the details."

The ban was lifted after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the US President Joe Biden held discussions on issues related to the Covid crisis in India last week. Modi had also discussed India's initiative at the WTO for a relaxation in the norms of the agreement on Trips to ensure quick and affordable access to vaccines and medicines for developing countries.

The ban was lifted after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the US President Joe Biden held discussions on issues related to the Covid crisis in India last week. Modi had also discussed India's initiative at the WTO for a relaxation in the norms of the agreement on Trips to ensure quick and affordable access to vaccines and medicines for developing countries.

—PTI

—PTI

Earnings downgrade on cards post-second wave

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, MAY 3

An earnings downgrade looms over Indian companies in the first quarter of FY22 given the second Covid-19 wave disrupting economic activity, according to brokerages.

April automobile sales data are already indicating the pandemic impact, analysts said.

The market has largely ignored the short-term negatives of the pandemic but may want to look deeper into the longer term implications of and lessons from the pandemic, "Kotak Institutional Equities (KIE) said in its market strategy report.

The second wave has shown signs of slowing down in the last few days and infection numbers have started falling but it's too early to calculate its impact on the GDP and earnings.

The impact on the economy and earnings will be clearer over the next one-two months depending on the duration and nature of lockdowns. There is little

scope for earnings upgrades barring global commodity sectors and in fact, we could see earnings downgrades," KIE analysts said.

"4QFY21 results have hardly shown any positive surprises and a combination of lower-than-expected economic activity in 1QFY22 and margin pressures across sectors will likely result in earnings downgrades," it said.

So far the market has overlooked the second wave's impact but it was now time to go much deeper, according to analysts. "The market has largely looked through the second wave given a consensus view of the limited economic and earnings impact of this wave. However, we believe the market may want to look deeper into three issues—(1) potential upward pressure on domestic bond yields, (2) India's long-term structural challenges due to under-investment in edu-

cation and healthcare and (3) governments' (central and state) post-pandemic stance on economic and social issues," KIE said.

"April 2021 auto numbers have started showing the impact of lockdowns which has put brakes on the recovery. Two-wheeler sales are higher in this period and hence channels had stocked up. But, lockdowns happened in states which contributed 25-30 per cent of the sales."

"Commercial vehicles were the worst hit, tractor sales have also declined sequentially, indicating the pandemic impact in the hinterlands," said Centrum Research.

"We expect May to be subdued with more states taking lockdowns and as original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) take maintenance shutdowns. "Exports have done well with positive outlook," Centrum analyst said.

Only metal stocks may have brighter outlook given the global demand and rising steel prices, according to KIE.

Commenting on the latest survey, Pollyanna De Lima,

IDBI Bank in black in FY21

New Delhi, May 3: In a remarkable turnaround LIC-controlled IDBI Bank turned profitable in 2020-21 after a five-year gap, posting a net profit of Rs 1,359 crore for the financial year. In 2019-20, the lender had posted a net loss of Rs 12,887 crore.

In the last quarter of 2020-21, the bank reported a nearly four-fold jump in its net profit to Rs 512 crore from Rs 135 crore in the year-ago quarter.

Gross NPA (non-per-

forming asset) ratio improved to 22.37 per cent as on March 31, 2021 as against 27.53 per cent in the year-ago period. Net NPA improved to 1.97 per cent from 4.19 per cent, IDBI Bank said.

The bank said its recovery from technically written-off accounts improved to Rs 6,924.94 crore in the same period of 2019-20. The full year income, however, was down against Rs 24,557 crore in the year-ago period.

Provisions were up at Rs 2,457 crore in Q4. —PTI

Kotak Bank disappoints street, bad loans jump

RAHUL SATIJA &
SUVAZHREE GHOSH
MAY 3

Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd posted a fourth-quarter profit that missed analysts' estimates as it set aside a higher amount of money to boost bad loan buffers.

The private lender's net income was Rs 1,680 crore (\$227 million) in the three months to March compared with Rs 1,270 crore a year ago. That lagged a Rs 1,870-crore estimate by eleven analysts at a Bloomberg survey.

The bank saw bad loans rise last year as the economic fallout of the pandemic eroded borrowers' repayment ability.

Shares of the Mumbai-based lender dropped as much as 3.7 per cent after the earnings were reported, before paring the losses to 1.4 per cent.

Kotak Bank's gross bad-loan ratio was 3.25 per cent at the end of March compared with 2.26 per cent in the previous quarter. Banks had to mark their

delinquent loans after the top court reversed its relaxation that had barred lenders from classifying debt as soured. The bank's

provisions were at Rs 1,180 crore in the March quarter compared with Rs 420 crore in the previous quarter. —Bloomberg

GUIDELINES FOR FOOD PROCESSING PLI SCHEME ISSUED



New Delhi, May 3: The food processing ministry on Monday said it has issued detailed guidelines of the Rs 10,900-crore production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme that has recently been announced for the growth of the sector.

The government has approved a new central sector scheme for implementation during FY22 to FY27 with an outlay of Rs 10,900 crore to support creation of global food manufacturing champions and support Indian brands of food products in the international markets.

The ministry is inviting applications for availing of sales-based incentives and grants for undertaking branding and marketing activities abroad under the scheme from three categories of applicants. Under the first category, the applicants are large entities which can apply for incentive based on sales and investment criteria.

Applicants under this category could undertake branding and marketing activities abroad also and apply for grant under the scheme with a common application.

Under the Category-II, SMEs applicants manufacturing innovative/organic products can apply for PLI Incentive based on sales. In the third category, applicants can apply solely for grant for undertaking branding and marketing activities abroad.

The sales based incentive under the scheme would be paid for six years from 2021-22 to 2026-27 on incremental sales. —PTI

About 34% of global fish populations are overexploited Global effort to save ocean fish may pay off

VIRGINIA GEWIN
MAY 3

After 20 years of negotiations, the World Trade Organization is accelerating an effort to end \$22 billion in government subsidies that prop up fishing industries—key driver of plummeting fish stocks all over the world.

Currently, some 34 per cent of global fish populations are overexploited, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. In the least developed countries, fish make up over 25 per cent of protein consumption; in coastal communities, it can be up to 80 per cent.



Yet, the wealthiest countries subsidise industrial fleets that outcompete small-scale fishermen in poorer nations. Unless something is done, environmentalists warn that the pace of overfishing threatens an unprecedented global hunger crisis and ecological disaster.

But bids by several nations for exemptions and loopholes could jeopardise its effectiveness at a critical moment for the planet's oceans. This year, new WTO

director-general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a Nigerian economist who is both the first woman and African to hold the position, made the issue her top priority with a conference set for July that could help seal an international accord.

Isabel Jarrett, manager of the Reducing Harmful Fisheries Subsidies programme at The Pew Charitable Trusts, said of the negotiations: "We are closer than ever before to an agreement."

Nations intent on protecting food access and local economies have been pouring money into fishing for decades, encouraging the continued depletion of resources by enabling struggling fisheries to expand. In the 1970s, only 10 per cent of the world's known fish resources were overfished, a figure that has since more than tripled. Nevertheless, the industry continues to catch the same amount of fish as it did decades ago: The global marine catch has been about 81 million tonnes a year since the 1990s. Much of that is driven by subsidies. Ironically, reducing fish-

ing pressure will allow stocks to rebound, improving global food security—a critical consideration given the global population has climbed by more than 2.4 billion since 1990. If governments ended subsidies, more than 35 million tonnes of fish—or 12.5 per cent of all the fish in the sea—could be restored by 2050, according to researchers.

The top five biggest providers of subsidies are China, the United States, the European Union, Japan and South Korea, which combine to dole out more than 50 per cent of fisheries subsidies. —Bloomberg

—PTI

SHORT TAKES
Cricket Australia to donate \$50K

Melbourne: Cricket Australia on Monday pledged \$50,000 (Australian dollars) to support India's fight against the devastating second wave of the

COVID-19 pandemic and will also raise more funds in partnership with its players' association and UNICEF. India's daily cases have been upwards of 3 lakh on most days for the past couple of weeks and have also breached the 4 lakh mark. The death toll has been rising by over 3,000 everyday, according to official figures. "Australian Cricket has been deeply saddened by the devastation caused by this second coronavirus wave to hit India, a country with which Australians share a strong friendship and connection. CA will also encourage Australians everywhere to give generously at this crucial time."

— PTI

Lanka's Perera calls it a day

Colombo: Former Sri Lanka skipper Thisara Perera announced his retirement from international cricket on Monday, ahead of a white-ball tournament against Bangladesh.

The 32-year-old all-rounder, who captained his country in the limited-over formats, told Sri Lanka Cricket, the governing body of the sport in the country, that he was stepping down to clear the way for youngsters.

The body said in a statement that Perera "feels the time is right for him to step aside and pave the way for younger and more talented players" to take his place.

The announcement came two weeks ahead of Sri Lanka's tour of Bangladesh, where they are due to play three one-day internationals.

— PTI

Ronaldo brace rescues Juventus

Milan: Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice late to rescue a 2-1 win for Juventus at Udinese on Sunday hours after the Turin giants lost their Serie A crown to Inter Milan. Inter broke Juve's nine-year streak of domestic dominance by clinching their 19th 'Scudetto' after nearest rivals Atalanta drew 1-1 at Sassuolo to leave the 'Nerazzurri' 13 points clear with four games remaining. Antonio

Conte's side had needed just one point to take the title regardless of how Atalanta fared after their 2-0 win at Crotone on Saturday, and have denied Juve a 10th consecutive league triumph. Juve's win moves them up to third as they target a Champions League spot, but are equal on 69 points with second-placed Atalanta and AC Milan in fourth. Napoli are two points behind in fifth after a 1-1 draw against Cagliari while Lazio are still in the running, five points off a top-four finish with a game in hand after an exciting 4-3 win over Genoa. "The nine years are over, we will no longer have the Scudetto attached to the shirt, but we will start again with the same desire as before," said Juve coach Andrea Pirlo.

— AFP

Giannis in solid form, Bucks win

Los Angeles: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored a season-high 49 points in his return from an injury as the Milwaukee Bucks overcame Kevin Durant's 42-point performance to beat the Brooklyn Nets 117-114 on Sunday. Two-time reigning NBA

Most Valuable Player Antetokounmpo, who had been dealing with a sprained right ankle, outdueled Durant in the Eastern Conference clash between the two highest-scoring teams in the league.

Antetokounmpo finished just three points short of his career high, which he set two years ago against Philadelphia.

— AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET
IPL: Mumbai Indians vs Sunrisers Hyderabad from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FOOTBALL
Champions League (semifinal, second leg): Manchester City vs PSG from 12.30am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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BUBBLE BREACHED

IPL on tenterhooks as KKR-RCB match postponed after 2 players test positive

New Delhi, May 3: A COVID-19 outbreak left the star-spangled IPL on tenterhooks as Kolkata Knight Riders' Varun Chakravarthy and Sandeep Warrier tested positive for the dreaded virus, forcing postponement of their game against Royal Challengers Bangalore, while cases also came to light in the Chennai Super Kings camp.

The match, which was to be held in Ahmedabad on Monday night, will be rescheduled some time later during the tournament, which will conclude on May 30.

"Varun and Sandeep were found to be positive in the third round of testing in the last four days. All other team members have tested negative for COVID-19," the league, which features the biggest names in international cricket, said in a press release.

CSK BOWLING COACH BALAJI TESTS POSITIVE

Apart from this, Chennai Super Kings CEO Kasi Viswanathan, bowling coach L. Balaji and a bus cleaner with the contingent tested positive on Sunday. A top BCCI official, after declaring all three cases to be "false positives", later clarified that Balaji along with the unnamed cleaner had come out positive even in the repeat test.

"Three members of CSK contingent, CEO Kasi, bowling coach L. Balaji and a bus driver had tested positive in the morning followed by negative Rapid Antigen test report," the source said.

"However second RT-PCR report found Balaji and bus driver positive again. The others in the team especially playing



A file photo of KKR spinner Varun Chakravarthy boarding a charter flight. — KKR

members have tested negative," he added.

CSK, currently based in Delhi, suspended their training for the day and are scheduled to face Rajasthan Royals on May 5.

The match had been hit by COVID cases even in the 2020 edition, which was held in the UAE.

"The BCCI continued to insist that the league will go on but Monday's developments have definitely cast a shadow on how the COVID-19 threat would be managed for an event being staged across six

Mumbai Indians vs Sunrisers Hyderabad on Tuesday, have also tested positive for the virus.

However, Delhi and Districts Cricket Association (DDCA) chief Rohan Jaitley asserted that "none of the groundsmen on duty" are among them.

"The BCCI continued to insist that the league will go on but Monday's developments have definitely cast a shadow on how the COVID-19 threat would be managed for an event being staged across six

venues, two at one time. Spinner Chakravarthy and pacer Warrier, both have been isolated and the rest of the KKR contingent has returned negative reports for now. Of

the two, Warrier has not yet made the playing XI in any of the seven matches KKR have played.

"The Medical Team is in continuous touch with the due and are monitoring their health. Meanwhile, the Kolkata Knight Riders have now moved towards a daily testing routine to identify any other possi-

ble cases and treat them at the earliest," the statement from IPL said.

"The Medical Team is also determining the close and casual contacts of the two positive cases during the 48 hours prior to collection of the sample that returned the positive test results," it added.

KKR last played on April 29 against Delhi Capitals in Ahmedabad and the development is bound to trigger anxiety in the league, which had been going along smoothly so far in a bio-secure bubble in front of empty stands.

"Now, the DC players (currently in Ahmedabad) will also have to be tested and every member of the team contingents that came in contact with Chakravarthy and Warrier will also be contact traced through the app watch that has been given to everyone," a BCCI source said.

According to IPL's Standard Operating Procedure for COVID-19 management, any close contact of an infected person has to isolate for six days and return three negative tests on days 1, 3 and 6.

It is learnt that KKR's pace spearhead Pat Cummins revealed the latest development to all the Australian players in the IPL after Chakravarthy, while undergoing some shoulder scans for a niggle after Thursday's game, tested positive for the virus.

Chakravarthy has appeared in all of KKR's matches so far and been one of their most successful players with seven wickets under his belt.

IPL had dealt with positive cases before the tournament started, including some high-profile names like Axar Patel and Devdutt Padikkal.

— PTI



Chennai Super Kings players Faf du Plessis (left) and Suresh Raina. — CSK

Games in Delhi could be put off

New Delhi, May 3:

Chennai Super Kings bowling coach L. Balaji testing positive for Covid-19 has left the BCCI in a fix about the next few IPL games in Delhi after postponement of Monday's evening match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bangalore in Ahmedabad.

"Balaji's positive report is certainly a cause of concern although the CSK players have tested negative. But normally, a lot of people start showing symptoms from the fifth or sixth day. There are discussions whether it is safe to go ahead with the next two matches in Delhi," a senior BCCI source said.

Since CSK is doing everyday testing with six days of hard quarantine, many believe that the same rule should be applicable for CSK also before they play their next match.

But rescheduling always becomes a nightmare as the Delhi leg ends on May 8 after which the 'Cluster Caravan' is supposed to move to Bengaluru and Kolkata.

last Saturday.

"Balaji was in the dug-out and also before and after the match, he interacted with Mumbai Indians players which is natural. Now you can test everyday but just like KKR's match has been postponed, it's prudent if MI's match against SunRisers Hyderabad on Tuesday and CSK's game against Rajasthan Royals on Wednesday is rescheduled," the influential official said.

Since CSK is doing everyday testing with six days of hard quarantine, many believe that the same rule should be applicable for CSK also before they play their next match.

While DDCA president Rohan Jaitley said that he hasn't been informed about any re-scheduling of the problem is CSK having played Mumbai Indians

TRAVEL BAN FROM INDIA A DISGRACE, SAYS SLATER

New Delhi, May 3: Cricketer-turned-commentator Michael Slater, who is currently doing commentary in the IPL here, has launched a scathing attack on his country's Prime Minister Scott Morrison for not allowing its citizens to return from COVID-19 hit India, calling the travel ban a "disgrace".

The government has made it clear that Australians who are engaged in the IPL will have to make their own arrangements.

"If our Government cared for the safety of Aussies they would allow us to get home. It's a disgrace! Blood on your hands PM. How dare you treat us like this. How about you sort out quarantine system. I had government permission to work on the IPL but I now have government neglect," Slater tweeted.

Threatening a five-year jail term or hefty fine, the Australian government temporarily barred its citizens from entering the country from India.

— PTI

CA chief says no to charter flight

Melbourne, May 3: Cricket Australia currently has no plans to arrange a charter flight to bring its players back home from Covid-19-ravaged India once the IPL gets over, its chief Nick Hockley said on Monday.

Hockley insisted that Australian players are feeling safe and secure in the IPL bio-bubble but his comments came before it emerged that two KKR players have tested positive for the dreaded virus, leading to the postponement of the franchise's

game against RCB on Monday.

Mumbai Indians batsman Chris Lynn had recently requested Cricket Australia to arrange for a charter flight for Australian players after the tournament concludes on May 30.

"There's no suggestion at the moment of any charter flight," Hockley told Melbourne radio station SEN.

"We're working closely and talking closely with the Australian Cricketers' Association, with the

BCCI to make sure everyone's okay and the people have got full information.

"We've been in touch with the players there and they are generally in good spirits. The work the BCCI has done around the

(bio-secure) bubble means they are feeling safe and secure, and those we've talked to are generally planning to complete their playing commitments."

The Cricket Australia boss said they are monitoring the situation and a decision will be made but not immediately.

"The BCCI have come out and said they understand and want to support the players in making sure they get home safely at the end.

"The tournament does

n't finish until the 30th of May, so for the moment it's monitor the situation and as we get closer to the end of the tournament we'll need to see where the situation is at," he said.

The Australian government recently banned its citizens from travelling back from India, which is battling a severe second wave of the pandemic that causing thousands of daily deaths. Australia still have lot of current and former players in the League, performing different roles.

— PTI

Desperate SRH run into Mumbai

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches 17
MI 9 **SRH** 8

FOR THE RECORD

- Jonny Bairstow with 248 runs at an average of 41.33 in seven innings is the highest run-getter for Sunrisers Hyderabad in this edition.
- Jasprit Bumrah will become the sixth player to complete a century of matches for Mumbai Indians. He has played 99 matches since making his debut in 2013.

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

- Mumbai beat Sunrisers by 34 runs at Sharjah.
- Sunrisers beat Mumbai by 10 wickets at Sharjah.

STATS: S. PEREZ QASIER

flamboyant Suryakumar Yadav (173 runs) can be destructive on their day and the trio would be aiming to give the five-time champions another strong platform and also convert their starts into big scores.

Also, it remains to be seen if Mumbai plays Ishan Kishan or Jayant Yadav in place of all-rounder James Neesham, who neither scored big nor was able to pick up wickets. However, the Mumbai bowlers would need to forget the hammering received at the hands of the CSK batsmen and start afresh.

The pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult would pose a big threat.

— PTI

Can City outshine PSG stars?



Players of Paris Saint-Germain are en route to Manchester for their Champions League second leg match against Manchester City.

— PSG

tinient's more established powers such as Real Madrid, Barcelona and Manchester United struggling to compete with City and PSG's ability to spend freely on transfers.

However, the manner in which they have used that wealth has been very different.

The French champions sparked hyper-inflation in the transfer market with the 222 million euro (\$267 million) capture of Neymar from Barcelona and Kylian Mbappe's 180 million euro move from Monaco in 2017.

PSG's run to the final of last year's Champions League for the first time in the club's history and route past Barca and Bayern Munich to reach the last four this season has been built around the

two most expensive players in history.

City, by contrast, have so far resisted the temptation to try and smash transfer records by assembling arguably the deepest squad in Europe.

The signing of Ruben Dias for 62 million in September is a club record, but Kevin De Bruyne, Riyad Mahrez, Joao Pedro, Laporte, Sterling, Rodrigo, Benjamin Mendy, John Stones, Kyle Walker, Bernardo Silva and Nathan Ake are among those also in Guardiola's squad that cost over \$483 million to recruit.

"We are good playing in a certain way, we cannot do it another way," said the Catalan coach on how his side cut off the supply to Neymar and Mbappe in the second-half a week ago. Mbappe alone has scored five goals in PSG's last two away Champions League trips to Guardiola's former clubs Barcelona and Bayern.

But with the French World Cup winner is an injury doubt due to a calf strain.

— AFP

MESSI STRIKES TWICE AS BARCA EDGE VALENCIA

Madrid, May 3: Lionel Messi came through for Barcelona again, keeping the Spanish league's title race wide open.

Messi scored two second-half goals on Sunday — including his 50th from a free kick — as Barcelona came from behind to beat Valencia 3-2 and get within two points of leader Atletico Madrid ahead of their key match at the Camp Nou Stadium next weekend.