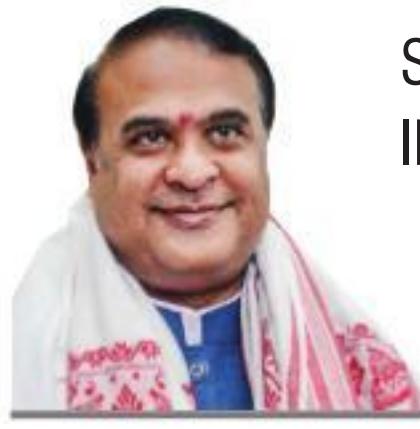




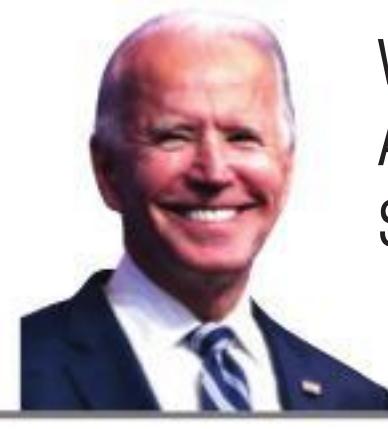
PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



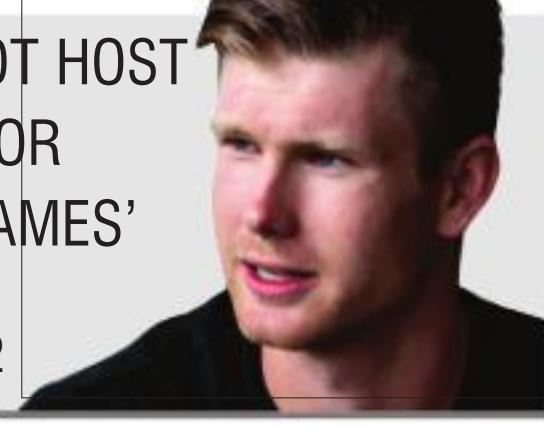
SARMA SWORN  
IN AS ASSAM CM



SCOTLAND'S FUTURE



WHITE HOUSE PANEL  
AIMS TO SEPARATE  
SCIENCE, POLITICS



'INDIA CANNOT HOST  
WORLD CUP OR  
DEFERRED GAMES'

P5

P6

P10

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 38 and 24 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: 0.2MM

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 62% Min: 28%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 39.4°C (+1) Min: 23.2°C (-2)

SUN RISES

05:33 hrs

MOON RISES

05:51 hrs

SUN SETS

19:03 hrs

MOON SETS

18:43 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Naval vessel INS Trikand carrying a shipment of Liquid Medical Oxygen cryogenic containers from Qatar, arrives at Mumbai on Monday. IANS

**Lookout notice against wrestler Sushil Kumar:** The Delhi Police has issued a lookout notice against two-time Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar in connection with the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl that led to the death of a wrestler here, officials said on Monday. The notice was issued late Sunday evening. Police have already recorded the statements of the victims of the brawl. The clash took place over vacating a flat in the Model Town area.

P5

**PIL for early hearing against Central Vista:** A request was made to the Delhi High Court on Monday to give an early hearing to a PIL seeking a stay on the construction of the Central Vista in New Delhi amidst the raging Covid pandemic. The request was mentioned before a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jasmeet Singh and the court said an early hearing application be filed first. The application for early hearing is likely to be heard by the high court on Tuesday. The plea before the high court has contended that the project has the potential to be a super spreader.

The Central government submitted that the vaccination policy conforms to the mandate of Article 14 and Article 21 of the Constitution and was made after several rounds of consultations and discussions with experts.

State governments and vaccine manufacturers require no interference by the top court as dealing with a pandemic of this magnitude, the Executive does have room for free play in the joints, in the larger public interest, it said.

"Any overzealous, though well-meaning judicial intervention may lead to unforeseen and unintended consequences in absence of any expert advice or administrative experience, leaving doctors, scientists, experts and executives very little room to find innovative solutions on the go," the Centre told the apex court in its 200-page affidavit.

It submitted that in the times of such grave and unprecedented crisis which the nation is fighting the disaster of an unprecedented magnitude, the executive functioning of the government needs the discretion to formulate policy in the larger interest.

"It is submitted that in view of the unprecedented and peculiar circumstances under which vaccination drive is devised as an executive policy, the wisdom of the executive

should be trusted," it said.

The government told the apex court that the price factor of vaccines will not have any impact on the ultimate beneficiary namely, the eligible person getting the vaccine since all state governments have already declared their policy decision that each State will be administering the vaccine to its residents, free of cost.

"Thus, while it is ensured that the two vaccine manufacturers are not unduly enriched from out of public money, the citizens are not supposed to make any payment for getting both doses of the vaccine," the Centre said.

The Centre said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials, the mere addition of more production capacity may not lead to the desired outcomes," it said.

The Centre also said that the apex court has laid down the parameters for judicial review of executive policies, which can only be struck down or interfered with on the grounds of manifest arbitrariness, allowing sufficient play in the joints to the executive, to function in accordance with its Constitutional

mandate. On the issue of invoking compulsory licensing of provisions under the Patents Act to ensure availability of vaccines and drugs, the government said that the main constraint is in availability of raw materials and essential inputs and therefore, any additional permissions and licenses may not result in increased production immediately.

The affidavit stated that the Ministry of Health is making all efforts to enhance the availability of antiviral drug Remdesivir through ramping up of production and imports.

"In view of current constraints on availability of raw materials,



*The BJP had been unnecessarily trying to malign my image and career*

ON THE INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED BY CBI INTO THE NARADA STING OPERATION

# Delhi left with 1-day Covaxin, 4-day Covishield stocks: Jain

Modi govt was 'selling' 6.5 cr Covid shots abroad when people were dying in country: Sisodia

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

**R**eeling under a devastating coronavirus wave made deadlier by the scarcity of oxygen, hospital beds and essential medicines, the national capital is now grappling with an acute Covid vaccine shortage.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain today said that the city has only 1 day's Covaxin stock left and its Covishield doses will last for just 3-4 days.

His statement came a day after chief minister Arvind Kejriwal urged the Centre to direct vaccine manufacturers to increase their supplies to Delhi between May and July.

"Covaxin doses can last up to one day only, while Covishield doses can last up to three to four days," Jain told reporters after reviewing preparations at Guru Teg Bahadur Covid Care Centre at Gurudwara Rakab Ganj Sahib in central Delhi.

Delhi has so far received



5.5 lakh doses of coronavirus vaccines for the 18-44 age group, and over 43 lakh doses for 45-plus and healthcare and frontline workers, according to government data released on Sunday. About 39 lakh vaccine doses have been administered in the national capital so far.

Till Sunday evening, Delhi had 4.65 lakh doses of coronavirus vaccines available for those above 45 and healthcare and frontline workers,

while 2.74 lakh doses were available for the 18-44 age category.

Jain said the 400-bed Guru Teg Bahadur Covid Care Centre has been attached with the Delhi government-run Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital. The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) has provided the infrastructure for the facility and the Delhi government has given medical support in April.

The BJPs was practising the "politics of lies and propa-

ganda" and "falsely accusing" the AAP government of ordering 5.5 lakh vaccine doses only, Sisodia charged.

He said that after the Centre decided in April that states can directly place orders with vaccine manufacturers, the Kejriwal government ordered 1.34 crore doses for the people of Delhi. "Later, the central government in a letter told us that we can have only around 3.5 lakh doses in May," he claimed.

Sisodia slammed the Narendra Modi government, charging that it was "selling" 6.5 crore Covid vaccines abroad when people were dying in the country. The entire country is in crisis and is in need of Covid vaccines," he added.

Meanwhile, blasting the BJP over Delhi's Covid vaccine crisis, deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia today said that the BJP-led central government has allowed only 3.5 lakh doses of coronavirus vaccine for the national capital in May even though the Kejriwal-led Delhi government had placed orders for 1.34 crore doses with vaccine manufacturers in April.

The BJPs was practising the

"politics of lies and propa-

## BJP hits out at Kejriwal govt over Covid crisis

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

The BJP on Monday slammed Delhi's Arvind Kejriwal government over the COVID-19 crisis, claiming the chief minister has been spending crores on publicity and "misleading" people while washing his hands of responsibility and leaving everything to the Centre.

Addressing a virtual press conference, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra cited a RTI reply to say that the Kejriwal government has spent around Rs 805 crore on advertisements since 2015 but not opened a single new hospital in the city.

He has been making daily appearances on the TV, "misleading" people and "lying", Patra said, attacking the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader.

"You keep advertising claiming there will not be any lockdown, no shortage of oxygen and that people will be delivered oxygen at home. When you saw that you cannot control the situation, then you pointed fingers at the Centre and washed your hands of your responsibility," he said.

Patra noted that Kejriwal had claimed on April 26 that his government will order 1.34 crore vaccine doses, which is worth nearly Rs 1,400 crore.

"Today, he's saying he has nothing. Only 8.93 percent people over 45 years have got their second dose in Delhi. Only 48.03 percent people over 60 years have received their first dose. Only 17 percent people over 60 years have received second dose," he said.

Instead of pushing the vaccination programme in time, the Delhi government was busy advertising and is now doing politics over the availability of oxygen, Patra alleged.

Citing an interview of Brhammambai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal in which he rejected suggestions that the Centre is to blame for oxygen crisis and said states are primarily responsible for making arrangement for the life-saving gas, the BJP spokesperson said Kejriwal made little efforts to augment its availability in the national capital.

Despite funding from the PM Cares Fund for setting up oxygen plants, the Delhi government failed to start any because it could not provide any site, he alleged.

Patra also hit out at the AAP over an alleged rape at Tikri border, where farmers' protest has been continuing, alleging that the name of one of its workers has cropped up, and he has been missing.

Capital adds 319 Corona fatalities, 12,651 cases; positivity rate 19.1%

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

Delhi today reported 319 fresh Covid deaths and 12,651 infections, the lowest in four weeks, with the positivity rate dipping to 19.10 percent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The dip in new coronavirus cases, the lowest since 12 April, could be due to a relatively lesser number of tests, 66,234.

At 19.10 percent, the city's positivity rate is the lowest since 16 April, when it had stood at 19.7 percent, according to government figures.

The positivity rate has remained above the 20 percent mark since 17 April. It was 21.67 percent yesterday, 23.34 percent on Saturday, 24.92 percent on Friday, 24.29 percent on Thursday, and 26.37 percent on Wednesday.

On 22 April, the national capital had recorded a positivity rate of 36.2 percent, the highest so far. Delhi had reported 13,336 Covid cases yesterday, 17,364 on Saturday, 19,832 on Friday, 19,133 on Thursday, and 20,960 on Wednesday, according to official data.

The city had logged 273 deaths yesterday, 332 on Saturday, 341 on Friday, 335 on Thursday, and 311 on Wednesday.

According to today's health bulletin, over 13,300 patients recovered from the infection in Delhi during the last 24 hours.

There were 85,258 active cases of which 52,451 patients were under home isolation, the bulletin stated. The number of Delhi's cumulative cases rose to 1,36,218 while its Covid toll tally mounted to 19,663, the bulletin said. Over 12.31 lakh Covid-affected people have recovered in the city so far. Of the 22,667 hospital beds meant for coronavirus patients in the national capital, 3,229 were vacant, the bulletin claimed.

Meanwhile, Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said the dip in the positivity rate and the new infections over the last fortnight is a "glimmer of hope".

## Classified

### PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to inform you that Mr. Chander Shekhar alias Deepak who used to work with Lipomic Healthcare Pvt. Ltd. and involved in other illegal activities including false RTPCR test reports, black-marketing Remdesivir & other lifesaving medicines. He and other people who are not related to us are misusing our brand Lipomic Healthcare Pvt. Ltd. while doing such activities which general public should be aware of. Lipomic Healthcare Pvt. Ltd. is not responsible for any such illegal act. We have taken all necessary legal action against such illegal activities however it is informed that Lipomic Healthcare Pvt. Ltd. is only a Laboratory that conducts Tests including COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, 19 detection and is not involved dealing with any drugs or oxygen etc.

Lipomic Healthcare Pvt. Ltd.  
Reg. Off.: 389/2, Shreyas Society, Shankar Road, Gultekdi, Pune-411004  
Branch Off.: B-57, 1st Floor, Narans Ind. Area, Phase-2, New Delhi-110028

NOTICE hereby given that one original sale deed registered before District Sub Registry-III, Alipore, recorded in its Book No. I, Volume No. 28, Pages from 158 to 180, Deed No. 1120 for the Year 1997 in respect of Residential Flat measuring carpet area more or less 525 (five hundred twenty-five) sqft. on the Second Floor, East side facing at Premises No. 88, Selimipur Road, Police Station: Kasba now Garfa, Kolkata-700033 under K.M.C. Ward No. 92, District: South 24 Parganas; has been lost from the cus-

tody of Alek Mukherjee & Ors.; any person who has any claim on the said deed or flat can contact with Mr. Soumik Biswas, Advocate, having office at 40/2, Selimpur Lane, Kolkata-700031, Mob.: 9830607670 / 9804507670 within 7 days.

### LEGAL NOTICES

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT**  
(Order 5 Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Ms. Pooja Talwar Additional District Judge-01 South District Saket Court, New Delhi. CS No. 35/18

ICICI Bank Versus

Abhishek Singh

Sh. Abhishek Singh, s/o Mahesh Kumar (Borrower) r/o 422/1, Gali No. 1, Om Nagar, Near Police Station, Gurgaon-122001.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 20th day of May, 2021, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this 01st day of March, 2021.

Additional District Judge-01

Saket Court, New Delhi.

Seal of the Court

### SALES BY AUCTION

WEB AUCTION SALE - No. 1 / WEB / AUC / 2021-22

Under Instruction From CESC LTD, Kolkata

CESC Ltd. is organizing Sale of Various Electrical & Non Ferrous Scrap like Old CFS mechanisms, 7 panel Siemens make 33 kV AIS Board, Copper Scrap, Voltage Transformer, Copper Cables, Battery Bank, Rejected Aluminium, eWaste, ACSR Conductors etc. "As is Where is Condition" thru e-Auction on 21.05.2021 (Friday). Inspection Date: 12-05-21 to 19-05-21. For further details, contact: MatexNet Pvt. Ltd. (e Auctioneer), Ph.: 7305081262 / 9331677046, visit: www.matexnet.com e-mail: kolkatanators@matexnet.com

## HC gives bail to Natasha Narwal for performing father's last rites

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

The Delhi High Court Monday granted bail to JNU student Natasha Narwal, arrested last year in May in connection with the communal riots in north-east Delhi to perform the last rites of her father who succumbed to COVID-19.

A bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and A J Bhamhani granted interim bail to Narwal, a Pinjra

Tod activist, for three weeks subject to her furnishing of a personal bond of Rs 50,000.

The court granted the relief as her brother is also infected with COVID-19 and the state did not oppose the plea moved by her through advocate Adit S

Puri (Advocate).

## HC asks AAP govt if MLA Imran Hussain got O2 from refillers in Delhi

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

The Delhi High Court Monday asked the Delhi government whether AAP MLA Imran Hussain was supplied any oxygen through refillers in the national capital who were given the gas for individuals in home care, hospitals and ambulances.

A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli also asked the MLA to show documents that he procured the oxygen from Faridabad, Haryana, as claimed by him and not from the gas allocated for Delhi.

The directions came after Hussain, represented by senior advocate Vikas Pahwa, told the court that he procured the gas from outside Delhi, while the cylinders were rented from the national capital and he has the receipts to prove it. However, as the receipts were not on record, the court asked the MLA to show the documents in support of his claims and listed the matter for hearing on May 13.

## Nursing assistants among 3 held for black marketing Remdesivir injections

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

Three people including nursing assistants of two hospitals, have been arrested for allegedly indulging in black marketing of Remdesivir injections, used to treat COVID-19 patients, police said on Monday.

Anshul Aggarwal (22), a resident of Shadnagar, was nabbed on May 8 while he was trying to sell the injection to a decoy customer sent by the police, officials said. Aggarwal used to help his father at his garment shop. His associates had tasked him to speak to customers over phone and get the deals fixed, police said, adding that he used to get Rs 2,000 per deal.

Police said the decoy customer spoke to Aggarwal and fixed the deal at Rs 32,000 per injection on May 8. Aggarwal was nabbed when he came to deliver the injections, police said.

The police also arrested two of his associates -- Sunil Kumar and Rahul Paul -- both residents of Nehru Nagar.

While Kumar was working as a nursing assistant at a hospital in Delhi's Gulabi Bagh area, Rahul was a nursing assistant at a hospital in Ghaziabad, police said.

The duo managed to get these injections from hospitals where the patient had either succumbed to COVID or did not care to report their theft, police officials said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Parvinder Singh said a team was constituted and a decoy customer was deployed to finalise the deal.

"The accused confirmed the availability of injection at Rs 32,000 per piece. Aggarwal was apprehended when he came to deliver the order. Based on his disclosure, Sunil and Rahul were also arrested later," he said.

## Stay denied on coercive action against Kalra

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

Special Judge Sumit Dass has directed the Investigating Officer (IO) to file the reply to the application by tomorrow. No stay on Delhi Police's coercive action, the court said. The judge will take up the matter at noon tomorrow.

During the course of proceedings, Public Prosecutor Atul Srivastava opposed the pre-arrest bail application. The Public Prosecutor also asked the court, if it is a case of the Crime Branch, is this a suitable court for it? The accused's

counsel Advocate Vineet Malhotra told the court that his client is being hounded and sought pre-arrest bail. On Thursday, 419 oxygen concentrators were recovered from another restaurant owned by Kalra and a farmhouse in south Delhi. Four men were arrested during the raids. The oxygen concentrators had been imported from China by a private company. Kalra has been absconding since the raids and his mobile phone has been switched off, according to police.

Kalra, against whom the Delhi Police's Crime Branch has launched a manhunt, moved the Saket Court seeking anticipatory bail in the case.

## Unauthorized Adoption of a Child is Crime

Follow legal process to adopt a child

- COVID pandemic has made many children orphans. Some frauds are trying to use this for trafficking purposes.
- If a child loses both the parents to COVID, do not give away the child to any random person or shelter.
- If you come across any illegal or fraudulent offering for child adoption on social media, whatsapp or facebook etc. immediately inform Delhi Police.
- Remember, it is MANDATORY to follow Central Adoption Resource Agency (CARA) guidelines and Child Welfare Committee (CWC) orders for child adoption.

For guidance and information, call:

Child Helpline

1098

Delhi Police

112 1291 011-23469900

Register online for child adoption @ cara.nic.in

Help Us Prevent Child Trafficking

SPECIAL POLICE UNIT FOR WOMEN & CHILDREN  
HELP US SERVE YOU BETTER

Email to CP, Delhi at: cp.snsrivastava@delhipolice.gov.in | Write to: CP, Delhi at: P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL 112

# DELHI FIGHTS CORONA

## DEDICATED COVID-19 HELPLINE: 1031 SERVICES FOR ALL DELHI RESIDENTS

### FOR BED AVAILABILITY STATUS -

Download the delhi corona app from google or apple store. You can also check the updated status on [www.delhifightscorona.in](http://www.delhifightscorona.in). The status is updated every two hours. For real-time status update, you can call up the hospital. Contact details of hospitals are available on both the app and the website. You can also call **1031** for finding out the bed availability status.

### NEED FREE TELECONSULTATION WITH A DOCTOR?

Call **1031**. You will be put in touch with a doctor from a team of doctors put together by the Delhi Govt. This facility is available free of cost on 24\*7 round-the-clock basis.

### FOR COVID POSITIVE PATIENTS ON HOME ISOLATION -

Our teams contact you on your registered mobile number beginning day zero of your positive report till the 10th day. A kit including medicines, oximeter and thermometer is delivered to your place free of cost. For any query / guidance, or if you don't receive the kits, please contact on the district control room numbers given at the bottom

### MEDICINES & DRUGS ARE AVAILABLE IN ADEQUATE SUPPLY -

All commonly prescribed drugs for Covid management are available at the local chemists and pharmacies. Remdesivir injections are supplied to Covid hospitals only as per their projected demand. Tocilizumab injections are also allotted to Covid hospitals based on stocks received from Govt. of India. Hospitals shouldn't ask patients to arrange these medicines.

### FOR LAST RITES OF A COVID PATIENT WHO DIES AT HOME -

Please contact your District Control Room at the numbers indicated below district-wise. You can also call **1031** if you don't know the district you are located in. The District Magistrate's office will make all arrangements, ensuring Covid-appropriate protocols.

### FOR OXYGEN CYLINDER ON THE PRESCRIPTION OF A DOCTOR-

Please go to any of the depots/ dealers mentioned in the list available on <http://oxygen.jantasamvad.org/> with your identity proof, patient's identity proof and doctor's prescription. You may also call **1031** to find out the re-fillers or dealers available around your location.

### NEED AN AMBULANCE?

Call **102** or **1099** for round-the-clock free ambulance service of the Delhi Government.

### OTHER DELHI 24X7 HELPLINE NUMBERS FOR COVID-19:

- 011-22307145, 011-22300012, 011-22300036, 011-22391014, 011-22302441
- 011-22304568 (For pregnant and lactating women suffering from Covid-19)

### DISTRICT CONTROL ROOM NUMBERS:

S.No.	Control Room /Helpline	Contact Number
1.	State Helpline for COVID-19	1031
2.	District- Central	011-23270151
3.	District- East	011-22029103
4.	District-North East	011-22120014, 011-22120015, 011-22120016, 011-22120017, 011-22115287, 011-22115289
5.	District-North	011-27201325, 011-27201327
6.	District- North West	011-25951182
7.	District-South	011-29533217, 011-29533229, 011-29533249, 011-29533260, 011-29533262
8.	District- South East	011-26476410, 011-26476411
9.	District- South West	011-25073502, 01125073505, 011-25073507, 011-25073508
10.	District-West	011-25195529, 011-25170142
11.	District-New Delhi	011-23385743
12.	District-Shahdara	011-22120019, 011-22120021, 011-22111077

DIP/Shabdarth/D/0014/21-22





There are heart-rending reports about the spread of coronavirus in Uttar Pradesh villages after panchayat polls. There is fear among people

BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY SUPREMO MAYAWATI

DEMANDING THE GOVERNMENT TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID ON A WAR FOOTING

## THUMBNAILS



A technician maintains the oxygen for Covid patients at a temporary wellness centre, at the Haj House in Srinagar, Monday. ■ AGENCY

**PDP leader released from detention:** On Monday a former minister and PDP leader Naeem Akhtar was released from detention by the J&K government. He was detained when the Article 370 was abrogated by Modi government. He was released last year and again put under detention five months ago. ■ SNS

**J&K LG's official Twitter account suspended:** The official Twitter account of J&K Lieutenant-Governor (@OfficeOfLGJandK) was on Monday suspended by the micro-blogging platform. A senior officer said the suspension might have been due to some glitch. The LG has been communicating with masses through his official Twitter account and responding to the problems pertaining to spike in Covid-19 cases. Later in the evening, Twitter restored the account. ■ SNS

**Shifting oxygen use hits laser units:** The use of entire oxygen towards medical use has hit the production of laser cutting industries in Aurangabad, leading to job loss, according to unit owners. "The situation is crucial, just wait and watch is what we can do now," an official said. ■ PTI

**Fake call centre busted:** Police have busted a fake call centre being operated from Ahmedabad and targeting US citizens on the pretext of providing them quick loans, and arrested three persons in this connection, officials said. ■ PTI

# 'Mercilessly clamp down on black market of drugs'

Centre asks states to ensure special teams send clear message that trading in human miseries shall not be tolerated



A health worker collects swab samples for Covid tests, at ISBT Kashmiri Gate in New Delhi on Monday. ■ AGENCY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

All states must ensure special teams at different levels to mercilessly clamp down on hoarding and black marketing of drugs during the Covid-19 pandemic and send a clear message that trading in human miseries shall not be tolerated, the Centre has told the Supreme Court.

In an affidavit filed in the apex court, the Centre has said that sale and distribution of drugs are regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the Drugs Rules, 1945 by the state licensing authorities (SLAs) appointed by the state governments.

DCGI has taken a number of measures to check any hoarding and black marketing of drugs. DCGI had instructed all state drugs controllers (SDCs) on 10 April, 2021 to conduct special investigation drive to prevent hoarding/black marketing on Remdesivir in the country and action taken is being followed up by the CDSO (Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation) regularly, it said.

The question of black-marketing is essentially dealt with sternly by use of police administration and local state administration. Law and order being a state subject all state governments must ensure special teams at state, district and taluka levels to mercilessly clamp down on any illegal hoarding or black marketing and send a clear message that trading in human miseries shall not be tolerated under any circumstances the Centre has said in its affidavit.

It said that enforcement actions have been taken in 157 cases in various places across the

cases across the country, which include lodging of FIRs and arresting those involved in such activities.

A bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud, which is hearing a suo motu case for ensuring distribution of essential supplies and services during the pandemic, had on 30 April flagged the issue of black marketing of drugs.

In its affidavit filed in the top court, the Centre has said that sale and distribution of drugs are regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the Drugs Rules, 1945 by the state licensing authorities (SLAs) appointed by the state governments.

DCGI has taken a number of measures to check any hoarding and black marketing of drugs. DCGI had instructed all state drugs controllers (SDCs) on 10 April, 2021 to conduct special investigation drive to prevent hoarding/black marketing on Remdesivir in the country and action taken is being followed up by the CDSO (Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation) regularly, it said.

The question of black-marketing is essentially dealt with sternly by use of police administration and local state administration. Law and order being a state subject all state governments must ensure special teams at state, district and taluka levels to mercilessly clamp down on any illegal hoarding or black marketing and send a clear message that trading in human miseries shall not be tolerated under any circumstances the Centre has said in its affidavit.

It said that enforcement actions have been taken in 157 cases in various places across the

Budget heading for vaccination expenditure does not inhibit Centre from using funds: Min

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

The finance ministry on Monday said provisioning Rs 35,000 crore expenditure for vaccines in the Union Budget for FY22 under the title 'Transfers to States' does in no way inhibit the central government from using the funds to buy Covid-19 shots.

The amount of Rs 35,000 crore provided in the Union Budget for fiscal year starting 1 April, 2021 under the Demand for Grants No. 40, titled 'Transfers to States' has been done for several administrative advantages, including expenditure under such head being exempted from the quarterly control restrictions.

Currently, Covid-19 vaccines are being provided free of cost by the Centre to those who are 45 years of age and above and to all frontline workers. The Centre has so far provided more than 17.56 crore vaccine doses to states/ UTs free of cost.

The Centre has placed total orders of 26.60 crore doses for Rs 3,639.67 crore with the Serum Institute of India which is manufacturing Covishield vaccine while an order for 8 crore doses involving an amount of Rs 1,104.78 crore has been placed with Bharat Biotech for Covaxin.

Since expenditure on vaccine is one-off expenditure outside the normal Centrally-Sponsored Schemes of the health ministry, separate funding ensures easy monitoring and management of these funds, the ministry noted.

The amount provided under this head for vaccinations is operated by the ministry of health. Vaccines are passed on to the states as grants in kind and the actual administration of vac-

country, which include actions like filing cases/lodging FIRs, arresting people involved in such activities, etc, the affidavit said. The apex court, in its 30



People above 18 years of age wait to receive vaccine in Prayagraj. ■ AGENCY

cines is being done by states, it said. Further, there is enough administrative flexibility to change the nature of the scheme between grants in kind and other forms of grants, it said in a statement.

Refuting reports that no provision for expenditure on Covid-19 vaccination has been done by the central government, the finance ministry said, "vaccines have actually been, and are being, procured by and paid for by the Centre through this head of account (Demand for Grants No. 40 Transfers to States)".

Since expenditure on vaccine is one-off expenditure outside the normal Centrally-Sponsored Schemes of the health ministry, separate funding ensures easy monitoring and management of these funds, the ministry noted.

The amount provided under this head for vaccinations is operated by the ministry of health. Vaccines are passed on to the states as grants in kind and the actual administration of vac-

April order, had said that black marketing of critical Covid-19 drugs and oxygen was a condemnable attempt to exploit peoples' misery.

Fake Remdesivir: Cops arrest pvt hospital owner

Bhopal, 10 May

The police in Jabalpur have booked the owner of the private 'City Hospital', Sarabjeet Singh Mokha, and two others for allegedly buying and supplying fake Remdesivir injections to patients in the said hospital and also outside.

Police said the case has been registered in connection with the fake Remdesivir scam unearthed by the Gujarat police from the Morvi, Surat and Ahmedabad towns in Gujarat some days ago, in which it was alleged that more than one lakh fake Remdesivir injections were produced using salt and glucose.

Jabalpur SP Siddharth Bahuguna said the three accused who have been booked are Sarabjeet Singh Mokha, Devendra Chaurasia and Swapna Jain. Devendra works as Mokha's manager while Swapna handles dealships of pharma companies. The Gujarat police had arrested Swapna a couple of days ago. The SP said that the three accused have been booked under Sections 274, 275, 308 and 420 of the Indian Penal Code along with relevant sections of the Disaster Management Act and the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

"We have arrested Devendra Chaurasia but Sarabjeet Mokha is still absconding," the SP said. "We have solid information and evidence that fake remdesivir injections were supplied at the City Hospital," the SP stated.

Some sections of the media also reported that Mokha is the Jabalpur District president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The SP could not confirm that.

The Congress has demanded a CBI probe into the scam.

Congress Rajya Sabha member from MP, Vivek Tankha said through a tweet that the 'multi-state fake Remdesivir scam's investigation must be handed over to the CBI.' Tankha alleged that about 3500 fake injections came to Jabalpur and 3000 to Indore.

## CORONA NEWS



Metro trains parked at a Timarpur depot during the lockdown at Timarpur, in New Delhi. ■ IANS

**Kerala HC slams private hospitals over collecting exorbitant charges:** The Kerala High Court has come out against private hospitals in the state for collecting exorbitant charges for providing treatment for Covid-19 patients. While considering a plea against the private hospitals over charging a high rate for Covid treatment, a Division Bench comprising gave strong warning to private hospitals for overcharging on Covid patients and asked the hospitals to abide by the rates notified by the government. ■ SNS

**Army's Northern Command gears up in J&K, Ladakh to fight Covid:** With the spike in Covid-19 in the union territories of J&K and Ladakh, the Northern Command of the Army has joined hands with the civil administration in building the capacities as a pre-emptive effort anticipating that severity of spread of Covid might go up in the next one month or so. A defence spokesman said that starting from ramping up its organic assets in terms of holding capacity of Covid patients, oxygen availability, number of ICU beds, vaccination of serving and retired personnel and Veer Naris and establishment of four Covid Care Centres with almost 490 bed capacity for the civilians. ■ SNS

**Bodies of suspected Covid victims found floating in Ganges in Bihar:** Several bodies, decomposed, bloated and suspected to be of people who succumbed to Covid, were on Monday found floating in the river Ganga in a Bihar district. Officials in Chausa block of Buxar, which borders Uttar Pradesh, rushed to the spot of the unseemly sight upon hearing the news. "We were alerted by the local chowkidar that many bodies have been spotted floating from upstream. We have so far recovered 15 of these. None of the deceased happens to be a resident of the district," Chausa BDO Ashok Kumar said. ■ PTI



Ambulances lined up at Guru Tegh Bahadur Covid Care Centre at the Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib will start operating from Monday, in New Delhi. ■ AGENCY

**Malicious Covid vaccine SMS compromises Android phones spreading:** A fake Covid vaccine registration SMS that "maliciously" gains entry into a user's Android phone leading to compromise of individual contact list is in circulation, the federal cyber security agency has alerted. The harmful SMS has been identified by at least five variants. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team or CERT-In in a public advisory issued on Saturday said that the only "official" online link to register for coronavirus vaccination in the country is the portal - <http://cowin.gov.in>. It asked users to be alert against all attempts of phishing through fake domains, emails and text messages that promise registration for a jab against the pandemic. ■ PTI

**INS Kolkata arrives with medical supplies from Qatar and Kuwait:** In support of the fight against Covid-19 and as part of the Indian Navy's ongoing operation 'Samudra Setu II', INS Kolkata arrived at New Mangalore Port on Monday carrying critical medical supplies including liquid medical oxygen from Qatar and Kuwait, a defence official said. "The ship brought in 400 bottles of Oxygen and two containers of 30 MT Liquid Medical Oxygen that were embarked at Qatar and Kuwait, a defence official said. "The ship left Port Shuaikh, Kuwait on 5 May," the official said. ■ PTI

## PM must atone for his mistakes: CWC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

The Congress Working Committee on Monday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his handling of the coronavirus crisis, saying he must "atone for his mistakes" and serve the people instead of carrying on with his "personal agenda" oblivious to the sufferings all around.

The CWC, the Congress' highest decision-making body, in a resolution also questioned the government data on coronavirus cases and fatalities, and alleged non-reporting of deaths.

**The solution lies in facing challenge, not in concealing the truth, it said. The CWC also expressed deep concern over the government's coronavirus vaccination strategy, alleging the supply was grossly insufficient and the pricing policy opaque and discriminatory**

da, oblivious to the suffering all around," the CWC resolution said.

The two leaders said the CWC noted with concern that the government data on Covid-19 deaths is "horribly wrong and afflicted by a massive non-reporting of deaths".

The CWC said the second Covid-19 wave is nothing short of a grave calamity and is a direct consequence of the Modi government's "indifference, insensitivity and incompetence".

"In order that it may become a reality, the Prime Minister must atone for his mistakes and commit to serving the people instead of carrying on with personal agenda."

Congress leaders KC Venugopal and Randeep Surjewala said the CWC is of the firm belief that this is a time for showing an unwavering sense of national unity, purpose and resolve.

"He said that the nagar nigam is shortly raising a tin covering over the boundary wall of parking space of Suraj Kund so that the ash doesn't reach the nearby households. He however appealed people to cooperate with them at such a critical time of pandemic

## Covid: Cong puts off party president poll

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

The Congress Working Committee unanimously decided on Monday to defer the crucial election to the post of party president until the Covid situation in the country improves, sources said.

After a section of leaders had last year pressed for an organisational overhaul, the Congress had decided to hold elections for the new party president by June-end and its central election authority chaired by Madhusudan Mistry proposed June 23 for the exercise.

The CWC, the apex decision-making body of the Congress which met in the backdrop of the recent drubbing in four Assembly polls, considered the schedule for electing the AICC president prepared by the party's election authority.

"We have to take note of our serious setbacks. To say that

## Need to draw lessons from serious setbacks in polls, put house in order: Sonia Gandhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Monday said the party has to take note of its serious setbacks in assembly polls, and face the reality to draw the right lessons and put its house in order.

Addressing a meeting of the Congress Working Committee, Gandhi said she intends to set up a small group to look at every aspect that caused such reverses and report back very quickly," she told the meeting in her inaugural address.

Gandhi said the party needs to candidly understand "why in Kerala and Assam we failed to dislodge the incumbent governments, and why in West Bengal we drew a complete blank". The Congress fared poorly, drawing a blank in West Bengal and failing to win back power in Kerala and Assam, besides losing Puducherry. The party only came to power with the help of its ally DMK in Tamil Nadu.

Gandhi also said that the schedule to elect the new Congress president would

also be discussed at the meeting. She also hit out at the Modi government over the handling of the pandemic situation. During the meeting, chief ministers of Congress-ruled states of Rajasthan, Punjab and Chhattisgarh gave an account of the Covid situation in their states and steps being taken to contain the virus.

Noting that the Covid situation has become even more catastrophic in the past four weeks, she said, "Governance failures have become even more stark. Scientific advice has been willfully ignored and the country is paying a horrendous price for the Modi government's neglect of the pandemic, indeed its willful patronage of super-spreader events that were allowed for partisan gains." Gandhi noted that a far deadlier second wave has now overwhelmed us and some scientists have now cautioned about a third wave overtaking us soon.

## Residents raise objection over cremation of bodies in parking lot

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MEERUT, 10 MAY

Residents living close to Suraj Kund cremation ground here have raised objection over the cremation of bodies in its parking lot followed by a sharp rise in the number of deaths due to pandemic.

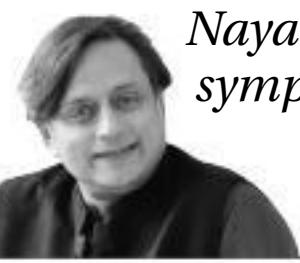
Brijpal Singh Assistant Municipal Commissioner of Meerut has appealed the residents to cooperate at this critical time and have promised to erect a tin covering at the parking lot.

A woman who is living close to Suraj Kund Cremation ground posted a video on social media in which she was showing burning pyres in the parking lot of the cremation ground. These pyres were of people who died of Covid. In her video the woman said that the burning of dead bod-

ies in the parking lot which is close to her house is not only affecting her family but also others living in the vicinity. She said that the smoke and ash coming from the pyre is everywhere in their houses even in their food. This is also affecting their children who are scared to see such a mass cremation.

The woman said that all these years they never complained and had no issues with cremation at Suraj Kund but now they are facing problems because of mass cremation at the parking lot.

They had also approached a local counsellor and raised the issue before him requesting to stop cremation in open parking lot, but nothing was done. Hence appealing for help this video has been shot and uploaded on social media, she added.



*Naya Bharat is one where we make virtue out of sympathy earned by failures*

SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER SHASHI THAROOR  
TAKING A DIG AT GOVT OVER FOREIGN AID IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19 SECOND WAVE

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 11 MAY 2021

05

## THUMBNAILS



Odisha govt to float global tender for vaccine procurement

BHUBANESWAR, 10 MAY

Odisha government has decided to issue a global tender for procurement of Covid vaccine from major companies.

The state Cabinet chaired by chief minister Naveen Patnaik today decided to float a global tender enabling the participation of vaccine manufacturers.

The two vaccine producers - India Serum Institute and Bharat Biotech - are unable to meet the demand and one of the options is to purchase Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson etc from other countries. Delhi government has taken a similar step.

But there is a big "if" to it, said sources while pointing out that imported vaccines need to be cleared or approved by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI). The other issue will be with regards to pricing as the state should be in a position to afford the costs, he added. The Russian vaccine Sputnik has been approved for emergency use and is priced high as of now, he said. The state Cabinet iterated its demand for GST waiver. It has voiced a demand for sharing of funds mopped by the Centre by way of cess and surcharge, including the heavy levy of such taxes on petrol and diesel. During Covid times, the Centre should share huge amount that it collects by way of cess and surcharge with the states and lessen the burden on states.

SNS

PTI

Cyber frauds: HP police on Monday warned the people to not fall prey to cyber thugs who are cheating people in the name of providing help in getting beds in hospitals or oxygen and Remdesivir.

IANS

Religious hymns: In the holy month of Ramadan, on the eve of Shab-e-Qadr, the Mirwaiz Foundation released *Seena ba Seena* - a collection of religious hymns - recited by Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq.

PTI

Cyber frauds: HP police on Monday warned the people to not fall prey to cyber thugs who are cheating people in the name of providing help in getting beds in hospitals or oxygen and Remdesivir.

SNS

## Don't want ISF as ally in future: Adhir

KOLKATA, 10 MAY

Following a debacle in the West Bengal assembly election, state Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has said he does not want to contest any future election in an alliance which has the Indian Secular Front (ISF) as a partner. The Congress leader said he has asked the Left Front not to ally with the ISF as he had reservations. The Samyukta Morcha of the Congress, Left and the party.

PTI

ISF failed to make an impact on the electorate. The alliance won just one seat and that went to the party floated by an Islamic cleric in January. "I will never want the ISF to be part of an alliance where we are also present," Chowdhury, also the leader of the Congress party in the Lok Sabha, said over the phone. He asserted his party never wanted to form an alliance with the ISF and it was the Left, which chose to tie up with the party.

In a solemn function,

Modi, Shah, Rajnath congratulate Sarma

Earlier, Governor Jagdish Mukhi administered the oath of office to Sarma as the new CM along with 13 legislators as ministers. Party legislators, including state BJP president Ranjit Kumar Dass, senior saffron leaders Chandra Mohan Patowary, Parimal Suklabaidya, Ranuj Pegu, Sanjay Kishan, Jogen Mohan, Ajanta Neog, Ashok Singhal, Pijush Hazarika and Bimal Bora were also sworn in as ministers.

Other BJP leaders joined Modi in congratulating Sarma and his ministerial colleagues with home minister Amit Shah saying under the Prime Minister's guidance and Sarma's leadership, Assam will set a new benchmark of peace,

"The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our Cabinet meeting

tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures," Sarma said.

Asked about the contentious National Register of Citizens, the CM said his government wants reverification of 20 per cent names in the border districts of Assam, and 10 per cent in other areas.

"If any negligible error is found, then we can proceed with the existing NRC. But, if there are huge anomalies, I hope the court will take note and do the needful with a new perspective," he said.

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP government in Assam will be to control the pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc.

The Covid

## Scotland's future

Well might Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, celebrate the electoral victory of the Scottish National Party (SNP) as "historic and extraordinary". Not the least because it is the party's fourth consecutive triumph, one that is bound to give impetus to efforts to break Scotland from the United Kingdom. Though quite obviously the government's priority is the pandemic, it is profoundly significant that Ms Sturgeon intends to hold an independence referendum once the crisis is over. "The task of building a better Scotland for everyone who lives here will be my priority every single day," Ms Sturgeon has said in her first address to the people. While the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has invited the "devolved nations" to a Covid recovery summit, differences have surfaced already between Ms Sturgeon and the resident of 10 Downing Street who had spearheaded the break from the European Union. Ms Sturgeon was emphatic on the point that there was no democratic justification for the Prime Minister, or anyone else, to attempt to block the "divorce", so to speak, from EU. Equally stout in his opposition was Mr Johnson who said talk of "ripping our country apart" would be "irresponsible and reckless". Ergo, the presumptuous separation of Scotland shall remain a contentious issue for some time yet. The Prime Minister congratulated Ms Sturgeon and the Welsh First Minister, Mark Drakeford, on their re-election and invited them to a meeting "to discuss our shared challenges and how we can work together in the coming months and years to overcome them". Ms Sturgeon said her party had won the maximum number of constituency seats and secured the highest share of the constituency vote in the history of devolution. "And, yes, when the crisis has passed, it is to give people in Scotland the right to choose their future. All of that is what I promised and all of that is what I intend to deliver." In terms of devolution, therefore, she has made her position clear, whatever the qualms of Mr Johnson. In the moment of victory, she has insisted that holding a referendum was now "the will of the country".

The SNP has pledged to push forward legislation for a second Scottish independence referendum and has said it could go to court if the UK government attempts to block it. Ms Sturgeon has said she will not hold an illegal "wildcat vote" on the issue of referendum, arguing that it would not actually lead to Scotland becoming independent because the result would not be recognised by the UK government or the international community. She has repeatedly stressed that she would only want a referendum to be held once the pandemic is over. Opinion polls suggest that voters are split 50-50 on the question of whether Scotland should be an independent country. It is a profoundly intricate issue for a country that had not backed Britain's referendum in June 2016.

## Compliments from...

Unusual developments are happening within the traditionally tangled skein of diplomacy. It is almost unprecedented for a foreign Head of State to send congratulatory messages in the aftermath of State assembly elections. And yet so it has been in the equation between Bengal and Bangladesh. Very critically and despite the hiccups over Teesta since 2011, Mamata Banerjee has been warmly complimented by the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Begum Hasina, and the country's foreign minister, AK Abdul Momen. "The huge victory of Trinamool Congress in the Assembly election of 2021 is a reflection of deep-rooted trust of West Bengal in you," was at the core of Hasina's message. Profoundly significant was her stress on what she called a "joint battle" against coronavirus by the people on either side of the border. Both Bengal and Bangladesh have been acutely affected by the resurgence of Covid. Miss Banerjee has already responded to the letters from Hasina and Abdul Momen. The exchange of complimentary messages, post a State election, has been deemed as "quite unusual" by the diplomatic class in either country. The polls were closely monitored by the media across the border. Amit Shah's reference to infiltrators as "termites" was deeply resented in Bangladesh. In course of the campaign he had said that "not even a pigeon" would be allowed to fly into this side if the BJP came to power. The saffronite leaders have ruffled the feathers of the Awami League, the BNP and hoi-polloi in Bangladesh. Feathers were also ruffled with the BJP stalwart's pledge to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act, if the party was voted to power, as also deport illegal infiltrators. The Chief Minister's assurance that "everyone is a citizen of India" and that she will oppose the Citizenship Act till her "last breath" was sufficiently robust to impress the people of Bangladesh. At another remove, Bangladeshis have welcomed Mamata for upholding secular values and principles. Her standing across the border is considerable, though Teesta signifies a dichotomy in the equation, one that has been overshadowed by the post-election euphoria.

Foreign minister Momen's compliments delved on history. "We are grateful to you as you spiritedly upheld the values of Bengal, the spirit of religious harmony and brotherhood that Mujibur Rahman spearheaded". His message was couched with an allusion to Teesta water-sharing as well. "Bilateral relations," he said, "would be strengthened further and help resolve the outstanding issues". Implicit was a message to India and the ministry of external affairs. Teesta is scarcely a state issue; it involves the Centre no less acutely. Was this the reason why Hasina had to send another message after Momen's letter, presumably to mollify sentiments at Nabanna? The foreign minister did not express a personal view. Hasina has been more diplomatic than Momen.

# The Bench's remarks

All constitutional institutions are amenable to the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court in its writ jurisdiction unless expressly barred or restricted by the Constitution itself. A Constitutional Writ Court has both jurisdiction and power to pass any judicial order against or in respect of any constitutional institution and particularly so in a public interest litigation



**W**hile hearing a special leave petition filed by the Election Commission of India against an order of refusal by the Madras High Court to accede to the plea of the Commission that the media confine their reports to observations recorded in orders or judgements and refrain from reporting oral statements made during court proceeding, the Supreme Court told the Commission that it would neither gag the media nor undermine the courts subordinate to it. The context and occasion for expressing such a balanced view by the Apex Court was that the chief Justice of Madras High Court, Justice Sanjib Banerjee sitting with Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy made certain remarks on inept handling of election campaigns of political parties in spite of repeated orders of the court that Covid protocol ought to be maintained during such campaigns as "survival and protection" was the first priority and everything else came next.

The Court observed that rallies were held without distancing norms being maintained and in wanton disregard of the requirements of the protocol. The court expressed its utter anxiety and equal displeasure by adding that the Commission should be put up on murder charge probably. As soon as those remarks were made by the Court, the media publicised those remarks which reasonably gave rise to an apparent legal debate as to whether the Court could make such remarks against another constitutional institution in a democratic republic when the said institution's authority and powers have been delineated in the Constitution providing in an exclusive Part as many as six Articles(Articles 324 to 329) making the Commission sole authority in charge of superintendence, direction and control of election. The Commission felt that it did not deserve such disparaging remarks from the constitutional court.

All constitutional institutions are amenable to the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court in its writ jurisdiction unless expressly barred or restricted by the Constitution itself. A Constitutional Writ Court has both jurisdiction and power to pass any judicial order against or in respect of any constitutional institution and particularly so in a public interest

litigation. From the tenor of the report, it was apparent that the Madras High Court was sitting as a Writ Court taking up public interest litigation. The seeming debate is however not on the authority of the writ court to pass a legal order but as to whether it is equally competent and free to make observations and remarks on the efficiency or otherwise of another constitutional institution. If the constitutional Writ Court has the authority to pass a legal order on the deeds or misdeeds of another constitutional institution, there appears to be no reason why the same court would be barred from making any observation as appropriate on such constitutional institution.

It is more than justified to make it clear that an observation (or remarks) made either off the cuff or otherwise by the court during the hearing of a matter is of no consequence unless the observation is reduced in writing to make it a part of an order or judgement. An observation or remark however pungent if not made a part of an order of the court is of no legal

value or consequence. During hearing a court may and does often make such observations or remarks which may or may not get reduced in writing to make it a part of an order.

It needs to be reminded that courts function through their authorised agents i.e. the judges who are human beings like any other and are susceptible to human frailties. Depending upon factual situations, the judges as courts' agents more often than not express observations and those observations also more often than not do not find place in orders or judgements. Reactions also vary from judge to judge, case to case and also from time to time. There are judges who refrain from making any observation and pass only orders and deliver judgements. There are also judges who make observations incessantly. And there are judges who fall in between.

It is also true that there are plenty of instances when observations or remarks or even threats of contempt proceedings do help to make constitutional bodies act and/or rectify its mis-

deeds in accordance with law. The Commission after the observation made by Madras High Court swung into action by issuing new directions with regards to political campaigns and rallies just on the following day. The issue which may call for an answer is to what extent a court should (and not can) have his discretion in making observations and remarks and how and when such discretion is to be exercised. Discretion is also expected to be exercised judiciously and judicially and not arbitrarily or whimsically. Judicial restraint is always considered to be a virtue which is not that rarely found. There are and will be judicial officers in the system who are found to be not that restrained.

It does appear from the facts of the situation that there were good reasons for the Madras High Court to exhibit its extreme displeasure in the backdrop of its repeated orders which could not make the Commission proactive enough about the extraordinary situation created by the Covid 19 pandemic. The Commission did not appear to have risen to the occasion as was expected by the court. The Supreme Court appears to have acted as an apex body in the hierarchy when it said that it could not do or say anything which was likely to undermine any court subordinate to it. To undermine a subordinate court would have undermined the apex

body itself and also the judicial system. It may not be inappropriate to mention that it is the Supreme Court which decides who can be made Judges of High Courts. An apex body is meant to correct the wrong, if any, committed by the subordinate court but while doing so should never undermine it.

It is a matter of regret to say that there was a period in the Indian judiciary and that too in the apex court where the apex body often undermined the subordinate courts by expressing disparaging remarks in an attempt to correct them. A shift in attitude of the Supreme Court towards its subordinate courts is therefore more than welcome. The Madras High Court however could have

been a little more restrained while choosing its words in making observations in the case at hand.

In a democracy there cannot exist either in theory or in practice absolute freedom in any sphere of life and from that angle media also is no exception. Real freedom is to be enjoyed along with all its attendant legitimate restrictions. As executive, legislature and judiciary enjoy their respective freedom with their attendant restrictions, so also the media as the so called fourth pillar of democracy must also enjoy its freedom accordingly. Media's primary job happens to be the dissipation of news, and nothing but true news. Fake news or yellow journalism are to be strictly avoided by the media to enjoy its respect as the fourth pillar of democracy. Degeneration and questionable credibility of the media is rather regrettably of recent origin. There happens to be a generation fond of unfair competition in the field of media with a craze for who will be first in publishing news irrespective of its quality and need for publication.

In such unhealthy competition, the first victim is the truth and then the consumer of news in society.

Dissipation of incorrect news, coloured news and news unhealthy for society have been gaining ground for a number of reasons including absence of appropriate training of journalists and growth in demands of modern media. Reporting on the law needs not only a fair amount of knowledge of law but also reasonable knowledge in the practice of law in courts and tribunals. The reporters must be able to make a distinction between reportable and unreportable matters and be able to exercise their discretion in making a choice to report or not to report. Responsible exercise of such discretion is bound to enhance the quality of reportable news.

In the case at hand, there was nothing untrue or fake that was reported and the media cannot be faulted. The media reported exactly what had been said by the Madras High Court in its anguish. The hearing in the said Court was also not held in "camera". The proceeding was in open court and observations or remarks were made in the hearing of all present in court. There was also no inept reporting.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

**ASIAN VOICES**  
**Vietnam affirms commitments**

**M**inister of Foreign Affairs Bùi Thanh Son has affirmed Vietnam's strong commitments to multilateralism, international solidarity and joint efforts for peace and development in the world. Addressing a ministerial-level online open discussion of the UN Security Council (UNSC), Son said that multilateral cooperation played a key role amid the current global challenges, including arms races, terrorism, trans-national crime, climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic. He recalled the UNSC's commitments in promoting multilateralism, abiding by the UN Charter and building international order based on international law as stated in the UNSC President's Statement in January 2020 when Vietnam held the rotating Presidency. Son called on the international community to promote the culture of complying with the UN Charter and international law. He underlined the need to continue strengthening collaboration between the UN and regional organisations, while highlighting the central role and efforts of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in dealing with regional and international issues.

The minister also encouraged multilateral institutions, including the UNSC, to work harder in reform towards increasing transparency, democracy, efficiency and the representation of member countries. On the occasion, he recalled that Vietnam's Dien Biên Phu Victory on May 7, 1954 played an important role in promoting the movement of struggling for peace, independence, national liberation and anti-imperialism, helping to facilitate democratisation in the international system with the UN being the centre and Viet Nam being a member. At the session, President of the UN General Assembly Volkan Bozkır stressed the crucial role of multilateralism in the settlement of peace and security issues.

**Việt Nam News**  
THE NATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY

uses in the world. He showed deep concern about the situation in hotspots such as Myanmar and Syria, while calling for the enhancement of international cooperation in coping with global challenges such as conflicts, hunger and poverty, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Participants reaffirmed their support for multilateralism and the UN-centred international system, calling all parties to uphold the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law. They also highlighted their commitments to promoting multilateral cooperation in the settlement of common matters. The same day, Ambassador Đặng Dinh Quý, Permanent Representative of Vietnam to the United Nations, also took part in the UN Security Council (UNSC)'s Arria-formula meeting on the impact of Covid-19 on violations against children in situations of armed conflict.

The meeting, jointly held by UNSC members - Estonia, Norway, France, Tunisia, Ireland, the UK, the US, Kenya, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Vietnam - along with Belgium, Sweden, Germany and Canada, drew representatives from 32 countries, a number of UN agencies and non-governmental organisations. According to Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused the delay of activities supporting children in armed conflicts, while posing adverse impacts on the UN's capacity in supervising and verifying serious violations against children and preventing the UN's efforts at national level in contacting parties involving.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Between the cup and the lip

SIR, On 27 April, I had written in the pages of this newspaper ("Beware of the Ides of May") pleading with all political parties that they jointly declare a moratorium on election victory celebrations. I expressed concern about the possibility of a new surge of the coronavirus infections if these victory rallies were held. Already we were reeling under the aftermath of the election rallies. Coincidentally, on the same day the Election Commission issued a notification banning victory processions "in view of the surge in Covid-19 cases throughout the country." I read the notification and felt happy. A question arose in my mind. Who is going to implement the strictures issued? Fortunately, political parties exercised restraint. But they were hardly able to exercise complete control of their jubilant supporters.

Celebrations with large numbers of party supporters were organised in all the States in which elections took place. Google is replete with photos of these celebrations. The EC order was violated with impunity.

West Bengal witnessed another set of events, following the polls. In addition to victory celebrations, there was "post-poll violence." This has resulted in congregations. Initially, the sizes

were small, but had grown larger and larger. On May 7, Nandigram witnessed two huge processions, one group protesting against post-poll violence and another claiming to be marching for peace. These processions are surely enabling the coronavirus to march into homes that it had not been able to gain an entry earlier. The EC order possibly does not apply anymore. And anyway these processions were not

to celebrate election victory.

Scientists have been pulled up for not having alerted the Government about the second surge. This is not completely true. Many scientists had indicated that some newly-arising variants of the coronavirus are possibly spreading more efficiently than the pre-existing ones. To be sure, they also appealed that data on RNA sequences be collected rapidly with an appropriate statistical sampling design. And these data should be imme-

### UNDIMINISHED

SIR, In his letter 'Can't hold a candle to B C Roy and Basu' (May 7), Mr Mihir Kanungo has talked about the leadership qualities of both Dr. Bidhan Roy and Jyoti Basu. But I am sorry to say that in spite of Jyoti Basu's leadership quality and statesmanship, Bengal suffered a serious setback in respect of socio-economic development. Jyoti Basu encashed his charisma for some time, but thereafter, everything fell flat and the people of Bengal were anxious for change. Unlike Basu, Dr. Bidhan Roy had a smooth sail in Bengal and the people loved and respected him for his untiring efforts. Mamata's popularity has not diminished as yet and the people have reposed faith in her leadership. This cannot be ridiculed by any means.

overnment to enable systematic large-scale data collection and analyses to help policy-formulation and implementation. Until these are undertaken seriously, the coronavirus will continue to spread like wildfire. And as it spreads more and replicates more, more variants will arise. Some of these new variants will be super-spreaders and highly virulent.

Yours, etc., Partha P Majumder, National Science Chair, Government of India, Kolkata, 8 May.







*Sugar exports are on a good course this year as traders have contracted over 50 lakh tons of the sweetener so far.*

SUDHANSHU PANDEY

FOOD SECRETARY, GOVT OF INDIA

## THUMBNAILS

**Vehicle registrations fall by 30%**: The total vehicle registrations in India fell by 29.85 per cent to 1,52,71,519 units in financial year 2020-21, the lowest in the last eight years, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said on Monday. Total vehicle registrations were at 2,17,68,502 units in fiscal year 2019-20. All categories of vehicles, except tractors were in red in FY21 with two-wheelers (2W), three-wheelers (3W), commercial vehicles (CV) and passenger vehicles (PV) falling by 31.51 per cent, 64.12 per cent, 49.05 per cent and 13.96 per cent, respectively - the lowest in last eight years and way below the FY13 levels, FADA said in a statement. PTI

**Greenply plant**: Greenply Industries on Monday said it will invest at least Rs 75 crore to set up a plywood and allied products manufacturing unit in Uttar Pradesh. The company's board, at its meeting held on 10 May, approved setting up of a new unit at Sandila Industrial Area in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh, for manufacturing of plywood and its allied products through a wholly-owned subsidiary in India, it said in a regulatory filing. PTI

**Yamaha shut-down**: India Yamaha Motor (IYM) on Monday said it will suspend production from 15-31 May at its two plants in the country amid the second wave of Covid-19 sweeping across the country. After a comprehensive review and in view of the rising Covid-19 cases in the country, the company has decided to suspend manufacturing operations at its plants in Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu) and Surajpur (Uttar Pradesh) from 15-31 May, IYM said in a statement. PTI

**Reliance gas**: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd and its affiliates have picked up more than three-fourths of the new gas volumes from the firm's eastern offshore KG-D6 block which at current government dictated price will cost it less than half of the imported rate, sources said. Reliance and its partner UK's BP Plc last week auctioned 5.5 million standard cubic meters per day of incremental gas from the newer discoveries in the KG-D6 block, benchmarking it to a gas marker. PTI

**HUL ED quits**: FMCG major HUL on Monday said its executive director (Foods and refreshment) Sudhir Sitapati is leaving the organisation and will be replaced by Srinandan Sundaram as part of top-level management changes. "Srinandan Sundaram replaces Sudhir Sitapati, who is leaving the organisation to pursue an external opportunity," HUL said in a statement. Sundaram is currently executive director (customer development) at HUL. The changes in the management committee would be effective from 1 July 2021, it added. PTI

# Shock to economy will be less severe from latest wave: Fitch

Recovery, however, is likely to be delayed as economic activity dropped in April-May period

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

**F**itch Ratings today said the shock to economic activity from the latest wave of Covid-19 pandemic will be less severe than the one in 2020, but recovery is likely to be delayed as economic activity dropped in April-May.

The global rating agency said there are growing indications that the latest wave of Covid-19 infections will add to risks among financial institutions (FIs) and anticipates that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may introduce additional measures to support the financial sector if indications of economic stress mount.

"We expect the shock to economic activity from the latest wave of the pandemic in India to be less severe than in 2020, even though caseloads and fatalities are much higher...

## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

**We expect the shock to economic activity from the latest wave of the pandemic in India to be less severe than in 2020, even though caseloads and fatalities are much higher...**

Nonetheless, indicators show activity dropped in April-May, which is likely to delay the country's recovery, and the number of newly recorded cases remains extremely high.

Fitch Ratings said in a report.

It said currently authorities are implementing lockdowns more narrowly, and companies and individuals have adjusted behaviour in ways that cushion the effects.

"There is a risk that disruption could persist longer and spread further than our baseline case assumes, particularly if lockdowns are introduced in more regions, or nationwide," it added.

India is facing the world's worst outbreak of Covid-19 cases with more than 3 lakh



FITCH RATINGS

new daily Covid-19 cases being reported for two weeks now and the new cases reached more than 4 lakh new daily cases over the weekend.

Over 2.46 lakh people in India have died from the virus infection. Public health system is buckling under the weight of surging infections and deaths with several parts of the country reporting shortage of hospital beds, medical oxygen, medicines and vaccines.

"India's slow pace of vaccination means that the coun-

try could remain vulnerable to further waves of the pandemic even once the current surge subsides. Just 9.4 per cent of the population had received at least one vaccine dose as of 5 May, according to figures from Our World in Data," it added.

Fitch had last month said that the surge in Covid-19 cases could add to headwinds facing India's banks and non-banking financial institutions (NBFI) if it led to a resurgence in asset quality pressures. The latest data suggest that this risk is mounting, the agency said.

"There are growing indications that India's latest wave of Covid-19 infections will add to risks among FIs by sapping near-term momentum from the economic recovery," it said. The measures announced by the RBI on 5 May will provide some relief to financial institutions in the next 12-24 months, but largely at the expense of postponing the recognition and resolution of underlying asset-quality problems.

Among the RBI's measures, the reintroduction of a restructuring scheme for indi-

viduals, small businesses and MSMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) may be significant for financial institutions.

It covers those which have not previously taken up restructuring, but also allows flexibility to extend the period of moratorium and/or the residual tenor by up to two years for previously restructured amounts.

The scheme, available till end-September 2021, may provide borrowers with additional time to resolve repayment stresses and allow financial institutions to spread credit costs over a longer period and the take-up under the last scheme, which ran to March 2021, was modest.

"However, the economy at the time was posting a strong post-lockdown recovery. Since then, we believe risks to small businesses have risen, particularly as many would have balance sheets that have weakened since 2020. Meanwhile, many individuals face medical bills that will add to strains on their income and savings," Fitch added.

# Blackstone buys Embassy Industrial Parks from Warburg

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

Pincus and Embassy Group, in one of India's largest logistics transactions.

Embassy Industrial Parks comprises 10.6 million square feet of modern Grade A logistics and warehousing assets near urban centres.

"Blackstone is among the top 10 business groups in India by the total value of assets and the transaction will help reinforce the firm's leading position in the office, retail, and logistics," the statement said.

Embassy Industrial Parks' warehouses are located across major industrial hubs in India, including Bengaluru, Delhi NCR, Hyderabad, and Pune, and are leased to leading e-commerce and retail players.

Ashesh Mohta, head of Blackstone's real estate India acquisitions, said: "Logistics is one of the firm's highest global conviction themes, anchored by our belief that e-commerce trends will further fuel demand for logistics space especially near city centres."

Logistics is one of Blackstone's core investment themes globally.

# Edible oil prices likely to soften soon: Food secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

The Centre today expressed hope that retail prices of edible oils would soften following the release of imported stock that was stuck at ports due to clearance issues.

According to the government data, retail prices of edible oils have shot up by 55.55 per cent in over a year and are adding to the woes of consumers already reeling under the economic distress induced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Responding to a query on steps taken to contain the rise in edible oil prices, food secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said the government monitors edible oil prices closely.

The secretary said that the industry mentioned recently there was some



holding of some stock at Kandla and Mundra ports because of clearances related to tests done by various agencies as part of the general risk analysis in view of the Covid situation.

"That problem has been addressed along with customs and FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India). With that stock getting released in the market, we hope to see the softening

impact on the oil prices," he told in a virtual Press conference.

The secretary further said that India is dependent on imports to meet the shortages of edible oil. Annually, the country imports edible oils worth Rs 75,000 crore.

According to the government data, retail price of vanaspati has increased by 55.55 per cent to Rs 140 a kg on 8 May this year, from Rs 90 per kg in the year-ago period.

Similarly, retail price of palm oil has risen by 51.54 per cent to Rs 132.6 per kg from Rs 87.5 per kg, soya oil by over 50 per cent to Rs 158 per kg from Rs 105 per kg, while that of mustard oil by 49 per cent to Rs 163.5 per kg from Rs 110 per kg in the said period.

PTI

# Sona Comstar gets Sebi nod for IPO

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

Auto component maker Sona BLW Precision Forgings (Sona Comstar) has received capital markets regulator Sebi's approval to raise Rs 6,000 crore through an initial share sale.

The IPO comprises a fund-raise via fresh issue amounting to Rs 300 crore and an offer for sale aggregating up to Rs 5,700 crore by selling shareholder Singapore VII Topco III Pte Ltd, an affiliate of the Blackstone Group Inc, according to draft red herring prospectus.

Sona Comstar, which filed preliminary IPO papers in February, obtained Sebi's observation on 6 May; an update with the markets regulator showed on Monday. Sebi's observation is necessary for any company to launch public issues like IPO, follow on public offer and rights issue.

PTI

# LIC's holding in listed cos at all-time low

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 10 MAY

in the equity assets held by the state-run company to an all-time high of Rs 7.24 lakh crore in March, which represents 6.30 per cent increase, it said, pointing out that market benchmarks the Sensex and the Nifty rose by 3.70 and 5.10 per cent, respectively, during this period.

Holdings by insurance companies declined to a 5-year low of 4.80 per cent as on 31 March, down from 5 per cent at the end of 31 December 2020. In value terms, it went up by 3.09 per cent from the previous quarter to an all-time high of Rs 9.48 lakh crore as on 31 March 2021.

LIC accounts for over three-fourths of the overall value of the stakes held by insurance companies in equities, it added.

# Sensex jumps 296 pts, rupee rises 16 paise

MUMBAI, 10 MAY

Equity gauges the Sensex and the Nifty rallied for the fourth straight session today on hectic buying in mainly pharma, power and banking shares as investors brushed aside concerns over rising coronavirus cases amid positive global cues. At the closing bell, the 30-share BSE index quoted 295.94 points or 0.60 per cent higher at 49,502.41 points.

Over the last four sessions, the Sensex has gained 1,248.90 points or 2.58 per cent.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty jumped 119.20 points or 0.80 per cent to 14,942.35 points, taking its total gains over the four days to 445.85 points or 3.07 per cent.

Today, L&T was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying over 4 percent, followed by Dr Reddy's, Sun Pharma, NTPC, PowerGrid, IndusInd Bank, ONGC and M&M. On the other hand, UltraTech Cement, Infosys, Reliance Industries, HCL Tech and Axis Bank were five losers among the 30 shares.

Sectorally, BSE metal, capital goods, healthcare, power, utilities and industrials indices rose up to 3.53 per cent, while IT was in the red. Broader mid-cap and small-cap indices rallied up to 0.97 per cent.

"Domestic equities continued to defy concerns of rising Covid-19 cases and extended mobility restrictions by several states by extending gains for the fourth consecutive trading day," said Binod Modi, head-strategy at Reliance Securities.

Favourable global cues, steady March quarter earnings along with favourable commentary, liquidity support announced by the RBI and absence of nationwide lockdown have aided domestic equities to shrug off rising Covid-19 cases in the country, he further noted.

Meanwhile, the Indian rupee ended 16 paise higher at 73.35 against the US dollar today.

# Petrol, diesel prices at record highs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

## FIFTH INCREASE IN A WEEK

► Petrol price was hiked by 26 paise a litre and diesel by 33 paise per litre on Monday. This was the fifth increase in prices since 4 May.

► Following the price rise, Maharashtra joined Rajasthan and Madhya

Pradesh in the league of states where petrol rates breached the Rs 100-a-litre mark.

While petrol prices had crossed the Rs 100-mark in some places in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh a few days back, Maharashtra's Parbhani joined the league on Monday. Petrol in Parbhani was priced at Rs 102.42 a litre in Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan and at Rs 102.12 in Anuppur of Madhya Pradesh.

The fuel is sold at Rs 102.42 a litre in Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan and at Rs 102.12 in Anuppur of Madhya Pradesh.

This is the second time this year that rates in some parts

have crossed the Rs 100-per litre mark. Rates had breached the physiological mark for the first time in mid-February.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added tax (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh.

No sooner had voting ended, oil companies indicated an impending increase in retail prices in view of firming trends in international oil markets.

# CCI clears Ingram's acquisition by Imola

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, 10 MAY

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the proposed acquisition of 100 per cent shareholding of Ingram Micro Inc. by Imola Acquisition Corporation. The proposed acquisition was announced last December for an estimated value of \$7.2 billion.

Oil companies, who have in recent months resorted to unexplained freeze in rate revision, had hit a pause button after cutting prices marginally on 15 April. This coincided with electioneering hitting peak to elect new governments in five states including West Bengal.

Fuel companies, who have in recent months resorted to unexplained freeze in rate revision, had hit a pause button after cutting prices marginally on 15 April. This coincided with electioneering hitting peak to elect new governments in five states including West Bengal.

No sooner had voting ended, oil companies indicated an impending increase in retail prices in view of firming trends in international oil markets.

In a statement this morning, the CCI announced its permitting the acquisition of 100 per cent shareholding and sole control of Ingram Micro Inc., together with its parent companies GCL Investment Management Inc., GCL Investment Holding Inc. and its direct and indirect subsidiaries collectively known as Ingram Micro.

Based in Irvine, California, Ingram Micro is a global distributor of information tech-

nology products and services, specialising in technology distribution and logistics, cloud solutions, and e-commerce supply chain services.

With \$47 billion in sales revenue (in 2019), the American technology services provider has a presence in 60 countries, including an office in Mumbai.

Its 189 logistics centres and service centres worldwide cater to more than 2,000 clients, including Samsung, Lenovo, Acer, Apple, IBM, Cisco, Citrix, HP, Microsoft, Symantec and VMware.

Imola is a newly incorporated entity belonging to Platinum Equity Group. The Beverly Hills (California) based company with \$23 billion of assets specialises in the merger, acquisition and operation of companies across the USA, Europe and Asia.



demic Response, a public-private partnership organised by the US Chamber of Commerce and supported by the Business Roundtable to give corporate organisations a unified platform to assist areas worldwide urgently needing Covid-19 relief.

To meet the increasing need for oxygen therapy, the Tata Memorial Centre is using an Indian-American network of donors and social workers to facilitate supply and distribution of oxygen concentrators. FedEx free cargo flights are part of the effort.

FedEx is also part of the Global Task Force on Pan-





No doubt US has undercounted Covid deaths

DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES ANTHONY FAUCI

AFTER A RECENT STUDY SHOWING US ACTUAL DEATH TOLL MORE THAN OFFICIAL DEATH TOLL

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	30°C	28°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	18°C	12°C CL
LONDON	17°C	9°C H
DUBAI	31°C	27°C S
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C H
NEW YORK	16°C	08°C H
MOSCOW	15°C	05°C H

S=sunny, CL=clear, H=hazy, R=rainy...

## THUMBNAILS



French President Emmanuel Macron, arrives at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France before launching the Conference on the Future of Europe and to mark Europe Day. AP

Vancouver airport shooting: A 28-year-old man was fatally shot Sunday at the Vancouver International Airport in what Canadian authorities said was a gang-related slaying. Police were later fired on while pursuing the suspect. AP

Man stabs 5 at New Zealand supermarket: A man began stabbing people at a New Zealand supermarket on Monday, wounding five people, three of them critically, according to authorities. Police said a suspect had been arrested and taken into custody after the incident at Countdown supermarket in Dunedin. AP

Navalny's missing doctor reappears after three days

MOSCOW, 10 MAY

A Siberian doctor who treated poisoned Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny last year reappeared on Monday after being reported missing while on a hunting trip, Russian news agencies cited the regional government as saying.

A search was launched in the forests of the Omsk region, about 2,200 km (1,370 miles) east of Moscow, after physician Alexander Murakhovsky left a forest hunting base in an all-terrain vehicle on Friday.

Murakhovsky exited the forest himself and made contact with residents of the village of Basly, RIA news agency quoted the Omsk regional government as saying. He was in "normal condition" though was being examined at Bolsheviks District Hospital, RIA cited the authorities as saying.

Murakhovsky was head doctor at the hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk that treated Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critic, after he collapsed on a flight last year.

After tense negotiations with the authorities, Navalny was airlifted to Germany from Omsk for further treatment. Laboratory tests in three European countries, confirmed by the global chemical weapons watchdog, established that Navalny had been poisoned with a Soviet-style Novichok nerve agent.

AGENCIES

# Biden to join eastern European NATO summit, focus on Ukraine

The virtual summit of eastern European NATO states will be held in the Romanian capital Bucharest

## AGENCIES

BUCHAREST (ROMANIA), 10 MAY

US President Joe Biden will join a virtual summit of eastern European NATO states held in the Romanian capital Bucharest on Monday, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis said, with a focus on security in the Black Sea region and Ukraine.

The summit of the Bucharest Nine, a group of European countries on the eastern edge of NATO, will be jointly hosted by Iohannis and Poland's President Andrzej Duda and aims at coordinating the security positions of countries in the region.

"Glad to welcome Joe Biden to the Bucharest9 Summit

which I host in Bucharest today," Iohannis said on his Twitter account.

"Together with President Andrzej Duda we'll also welcome ... Jens Stoltenberg in preparation of NATO Summit, focusing on Transatlantic ties, NATO 2030, defence and deterrence on the eastern flank."

Biden, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and the Presidents of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia will video-conference into the gathering.

"In ... the statement that the nine will publish after the meeting there will be the issue of security in the Black Sea region and the related security issues in Ukraine," the head

of

of Poland's National Security Bureau, Pawel Soloch, told.

Romanian President Klaus Iohannis said that Monday's meeting would include discussions of defence and deterrence on the alliance's Eastern flank.

Bucharest nine are Romania, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the three small Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were all controlled by Moscow during the cold war, with the Baltic states

incorporated into the Soviet Union. Today they are all members of NATO and the European Union.

The meeting of the nine comes ahead of a NATO summit taking place 14 June in Brussels, where the alliance has its headquarters.

At the June summit, Biden and other leaders plan to discuss tense ties with Russia and China, the troop withdrawal from Afghanistan and the future of the 30-nation alliance.

Earlier this month, Washington said it could increase security help for Kyiv after Russia moved troops near its border with Ukraine's eastern Donbass region, where Ukrainian troops are in conflict with Moscow-backed separatists.

## COMMEMORATION



Fireworks explode over the Moscow University during the celebration of the Victory Day in Moscow, Russia marking the 76th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. AP

## Germany OKs J&J, AstraZeneca jabs for all adults

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BERLIN, 10 MAY

given nearly one-third of the population at least one vaccine shot.

## Norway should exclude J&amp;J, AstraZeneca

Norway should exclude the Covid-19 vaccines made by AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson from its inoculation programme due to a risk of rare but harmful side-effects, a government-appointed commission said.

Those who volunteer to take either vaccines should however be allowed to do so, a majority of the commission said, as it emphasised the importance of dispelling any vaccine hesitancy.

Germany has recommended the AstraZeneca shot mainly for over-60s because of a rare type of blood clot seen in an extremely small number of recipients. But amid a push to get as many people inoculated as possible, the government decided to allow doctors' offices to vaccinate any adults with it -- putting aside a priority system under which the oldest and most vulnerable have been vaccinated first.

Health Minister Jens Spahn said authorities decided Monday to take the same approach with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, about which there are similar concerns. He estimated that 5 to 6 million over-60s in Germany still need to be vaccinated and that should be concluded by early June. Spahn said the largest deliveries from Johnson & Johnson, more than 10 million doses, are expected in June or July. Germany has now

In explaining its recommendations, the commission said eight Norwegian cases of severe clotting had been linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine, and four of those recipients had died.

## UK Labour leader reshuffles team after poor local election results

AGENCIES

LONDON, 10 MAY

The leader of Britain's Opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer, has reshuffled his team after disappointing results in local elections that further strengthened Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson's grip on power.

Labour lost control of a number of local authorities and of the parliamentary seat of Hartlepool, a Labour bastion for many decades.

Starmer, elected leader last year, has struggled to bridge divides and unite

Labour around a clear agenda to challenge the governing Conservatives, who are enjoying a boost from a successful Covid-19 vaccination programme and from ploughing money into areas where many voters have felt neglected.

After many voters in the local elections suggested they did not know what Starmer stood for, Shabana Mahmood, appointed Labour's campaign coordinator in the reshuffle, said the party would launch a policy review to settle on a programme.

"There has to be a policy review process which we are now going to embark on together as a movement to try and work out what is the programme that we need to be offering the country," she told BBC radio.

The main changes in the reshuffle included the appointment of Rachel Reeves as head of economic policy, replacing Anneliese Dodds, who became party chair and head of the policy review.

Angela Rayner, who was sacked on Saturday as party chair and campaign coordinator in a move that went down badly in Labour ranks, was appointed policy chief on "the future of work".

## Capitol rioters make questionable claims about police

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
PHOENIX, 10 MAY

Capitol. The most frequent argument is that they can't be guilty of anything, because police stood by and welcomed them inside, even though the mob pushed past police barriers, sprayed chemical irritants and smashed windows as chaos enveloped the government complex.

The January melee to stop

the certification of Joe Biden's victory was instigated by a mob of supporters of then-President Donald Trump who have professed their love of law enforcement and derided the mass police overhauls protests that shook the nation last year following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. But they quickly turned on police in one violent encounter after another.

"We backed you guys in the



summer," one protester screamed at three officers cornered against a door by dozens of men screaming for them to get out of their way. "When the whole country hated you, we had your back!"

The Capitol Police didn't plan for a riot. They were badly outnumbered and it took hours for reinforcements to arrive - a massive failure that

is now under investigation. Throughout the insurrection, police officers were injured, mocked, ridiculed and threatened. One Capitol Police officer, Brian Sicknick, died after the riot.

Officers who spoke to The Associated Press said police had to decide on their own how to fight them off. There was no direction or plan and they

were told not to fire on the crowd, they said. One cop ran from one side of the building to another, fighting hand-to-hand against rioters. Another decided to respond to any calls of officers in distress and spent three hours helping cops who had been immobilized by bear spray or other chemicals. Three officers were able to handcuff one rioter.

But a crowd swarmed the group and took the arrested man away with the handcuffs still on.

Still, some rioters claim police just gave up and told them that the building was now theirs. And a few - including one accused of trying to pull off an officer's gas mask in a bid to expose the officer to bear spray - have claimed to be protecting police.

The dozens of church services celebrating blessings of

Pope Francis, who has championed a more decentralised church structure, has already reminded the German hierarchy that it must remain in communion with Rome during its reform process, known as a "synodal path." In Berlin, the Rev. Jan Korditschke, a Jesuit who works for the diocese preparing adults for baptism and helps out at the St. Canisius congregation, will lead blessings for queer couples at a worship service May 16.

"I am convinced that homosexual orientation is not bad, nor is homosexual love a sin,"

Korditschke told. "I want to celebrate the love of homosexuals with these blessings because the love of homosexuals is something good."

The 44-year-old said it is important that homosexuals can show themselves within the Catholic Church and gain more visibility long-term. He said he was not afraid of possible repercussions by high-ranking church officials or the Vatican.

"I stand behind what I am doing, though it is painful for me that I cannot do it in tune with the church leadership," Korditschke said.

gay unions are the latest escalation in tensions between conservatives and progressives that have already sparked alarm, primarily from the right, that part of the German church might be heading into schism.

Germany is no stranger to

schism: 500 years ago, Martin Luther launched the Reformation here.

## UK names conservationist David Attenborough COP26 People's Advocate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON, 10 MAY

# World

## New White House panel aims to separate science, politics

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 10 MAY

ing politics into issues including the coronavirus, climate change and even whether Hurricane Dorian threatened Alabama in 2019.

Naomi Oreskes, a Harvard University historian who has written about attacks on science in the book *Merchants of Doubt*, said politicisation of science undermines the nation's ability to address serious problems that affect Americans' health, their well-being and the economy.

There's little doubt that the American death toll from Covid-19 was far higher than it needed to be and that the administration's early unwillingness to take the issue seriously to listen to and act on the advice of experts and to communicate clearly contributed substantively to that death toll, Oreskes.

Lubchenco, who led the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the Obama administration, pointed to an incident during the Trump years that became known as Sharpiegate as a clear example of "political interference with scientific information that was potentially extraordinarily dangerous.

During Sharpiegate, the NOAA reprimanded some meteorologists for tweeting that Alabama was not threatened by the hurricane, contradicting President Donald Trump, who said Alabama was in danger. The matter became known as Sharpiegate after someone in the White House used a black Sharpie a favourite pen of Trump's to alter the official National Hurricane Center warning map to indicate Alabama could be in the path of the storm. A 2020 inspector general report found the administration had violated scientific integrity rules.

## Cyberattack on US pipeline is linked to criminal gang

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
NEW YORK, 10 MAY

enforcement and other federal agencies, including the Department of Energy, which is leading the federal government response. The company has not said what was demanded or who made the demand.

However, two people close to the investigation, speaking on condition of anonymity, identified the culprit as DarkSide. It is among ransomware gangs that have "professionally" a criminal industry that has cost Western nations tens of billions of dollars in losses in the past three years.

DarkSide claims that it does not attack hospitals and nursing homes, educational or government targets and that it donates a portion of its take to charity. It has been active since August and, typically of the most potent ransomware gangs, is known to avoid targeting organisations in former Soviet bloc nations.

Colonial did not say whether it had paid or was negotiating a ransom, and DarkSide neither announced the attack on its dark web site nor responded to a reporter's queries. The lack of acknowledgment usually indicates a victim is either negotiating or has paid.

On Sunday, Colonial Pipeline said it is developing a "system restart" plan. It said its main pipeline remains offline but some smaller lines are now operational.

"We are in the process of restoring service to other lateral lines and will bring our full system back online only when we believe it is safe to do so, and in full compliance with the approval of all federal regulations," the company stated.

## German Catholics to bless gay unions despite Vatican ban

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BERLIN, 10 MAY

Germany's powerful Catholic progressives are openly defying a recent Holy See pronouncement that priests cannot bless same-sex unions because God "cannot bless sin."

The document pleased conservatives and disheartened advocates for LGBTQ Catholics around the globe. But the response has been particularly acute in Germany, where the German church has been at the forefront of opening discussion on hot-button issues such as the church's teaching on homosexuality as part of a formal process of debate and reform.

The blessings at open worship services are the latest pushback from German Catholics against a document released in March by the Vatican's orthodoxy office, the Congregation for the Doc-



trine of the Faith, which said Catholic clergy cannot bless same-sex unions because God "cannot bless sin."

The document pleased

conservatives and disheartened advocates for LGBTQ Catholics around the globe. But the response has been particularly acute in Germany, where the German church has been at the forefront of opening discussion on hot-button issues such as the church's teaching on homosexuality as part of a formal process of debate and reform.

The blessings at open worship services are the latest pushback from German Catholics against a document released in March by the Vatican's orthodoxy office, the Congregation for the Doc-

trine of the Faith, which said Catholic clergy cannot bless same-sex unions because God "cannot bless sin."

The document pleased

# Campus & Career

## 'Frugal and affordable innovations will be encouraged'



MADHURIMA SENGUPTA

**A**s the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has left the already-strained healthcare system of India helplessly exposed, institutions are buckling down to revamp the industry. Biomedical engineering is one such sector, which is comparatively new in India but has immense potential in serving the medical needs of the country, if tapped correctly.

It is an interdisciplinary subject combining biology and engineering, applying the principles of the latter on health and medicine to produce revolutionary outcomes such as pacemakers, artificial hips, surgical robots, advanced prosthetics, as well as gene therapy, stem cell engineering and 3-D printing of biological organs. It was only last year that the Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering introduced a paper for biomedical engineering.

In a recent initiative, academics from the Indian Institutes of Technology and other bodies like Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences, New Delhi; Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; Consortium of Accredited Healthcare Organisations, Noida; Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana, Bengaluru; Sri Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Kerala; Kalam Institute of Health Technology, Andhra Pradesh; National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers, New Delhi and Siemens Healthcare, Bengaluru, have come up with a whitepaper on biomedical engineering education for the first time in the country.

Titled "Future of biomedical engineering programmes in India" it aims to help improve the quality of the curriculum by identifying and



M Manivannan

addressing many challenges and bringing together all the stakeholders. The new curriculum will allow students to take up specialised courses in neural engineering, tissue engineering and biomaterial engineering among others.

The whitepaper is promising in its holistic approach, with recommendations for every stakeholder from government policymakers, funding agencies and biomedical engineering industry bodies to educational institutes and teachers. Some of them include creation of dedicated institutes that can integrate biomedical engineering, science, and technology, and medicine for local needs.

In parallel with the incorporation of anatomy and physiology in biomedical engineering programmes, medical education could incorporate one or two courses on engineering principles, which can be taught by engineering faculty in medical institutes. Providing incentives and inviting clinicians from medical colleges and industrialists for presenting guest lectures and stressing on prevention rather than cure for disruptive innovation have been suggested. Biomedical engineers, qualified under the newly introduced Gate (BME), must be mandated in hospitals for accreditation. Hospitals can also provide internships to biomedical engineering students.

Others include designing a medical device corridor and incorporating biomedical engineering in the Union ministry of Ayush or Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy.

Lead author and editor of the whitepaper professor M Manivannan, Touch Lab, Biomedical Engineering Group, department of applied mechanics, IIT-Madras and Deepak Joshi, assistant professor, IIT-Delhi,

who also contributed to the whitepaper, gave further insights into the initiative. Excerpts from an interview:

### How is biomedical engineering involved in the fight against Covid-19?

Continuous monitoring of oxygen levels and other vital physiological parameters in Covid-19 patients requires strong biomedical engineering infrastructure, especially in low-resource settings.

The instruments used for diagnosing and treating Covid-19 are designed and developed by biomedical engineers and also, maintained by them. For example, scalable ventilators, rapid diagnostics, personal protective equipment, etc are made by them. Advanced roles include designing and developing robotics-based testing, big data and analytics for rapid cluster identification and alert service for community, and development of computer software such as mobile phone alert service for maintaining social distance.

### Who will be the stakeholders involved in the new curriculum?

The proposed new curriculum will involve diverse stakeholders including hospital associations, biomedical industries, government agencies, university associations, the All India Council for Technical Education, National Medical Commission and biomedical engineering funding agencies.

Besides, start-ups in the sector will be promising stakeholders as well.

### How can biomedical engineering stress on the practice of prevention rather than cure?

Like the tools required for diagnosis and treatment of diseases, pre-

**In this interview, M Manivannan of IIT-Madras and Deepak Joshi of IIT-Delhi speak about a whitepaper that explores the diverse potential of biomedical engineering education in revolutionising the Indian healthcare industry**

vention too needs various apparatuses. The designing and development of devices for prevention falls under the domain of this sector.

Just like modelling and simulation play an important role in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases, these have an equally significant part in prevention. In line with the theories and principles available for cure, new theses for prevention will be stressed upon as a part of the updated curriculum.

### How can the new curriculum contribute towards making healthcare and wellness affordable for a population that still primarily depends on the country's overburdened public healthcare system?

A major percentage of the diseases are preventable if properly monitored. Healthcare can be made affordable merely by eliminating the unnecessary treatment and cure cycle, which can be averted in the first place.

### How can the whitepaper recommendations be implemented in colleges that are located away from major urban centres?

We are about to embrace a fifth-generation mobile network and all colleges and universities are already connected. In association with central bodies such as AICTE, the recommendations can easily be implemented in remote places.

### Which areas are traditionally explored in biomedical engineering and which ones will be added after upgrading the syllabus?

Until now only diagnosis and cure were the focal areas. Prevention will be incorporated as a part of the upgraded syllabus. The importance of artificial intelligence for biomedical engineering will also be delved on.

### Which are the disciplines that constitute this field?

Biomedical engineering could be considered the most interdisciplinary field involving medical science, engineering, technology, psychology and

mathematics.

### What will be the government's contribution in implementing the objectives of the whitepaper?

The government needs to understand that unless biomedical engineering is strengthened, our healthcare system will always have to depend on foreign nations. It needs to increase coordination among institutions such as the Quality Council of India, AICTE, NMC, etc. Also, it can support short term skilling programmes in biomedical engineering to introduce trained manpower to the market quickly. This will help doctors/clinical staff to fight situations like Covid-19.

### How can the new curriculum help in achieving self-reliance for India when it comes to medical assurance?

We believe that the recommendations will encourage frugal innovations that are affordable. With the successful implementation of those, we can emerge as a leading country in the world in terms of affordable wellness technologies.

### How can students of biomedical engineering in India compete with international standards?

Our country will have an edge over international students in terms of their experience in hospitals and familiarity with local needs.

### What are the placement possibilities for graduates in biomedical engineering programmes?

Based on the new curriculum, the graduates will have opportunities to either go for an industry-based career or opt for higher studies. The updated syllabus will have more information about business and laws related to intellectual property rights so that graduates can go for start-ups which will help in development of medical products specific to Indian demographics.

The writer is a staff member, Features, *The Statesman*, Kolkata

## PLUS POINTS

### Educating designers



Indian Institute of Art and Design in support of Fashion Revolution Week conducted a month-long event called "Fashion Revolution Month" recently. The fashion department of the institute organised several online programmes to engage and educate the young designers of our country.

The aim of the event was to propagate practical knowledge about the history of the fashion revolution, its present stance on industry practices and find ways to improve worker conditions, waste management and to build a sustainable consciousness in future designers. The event gave young and aspiring designers an opportunity to showcase design-based solutions for real world challenges faced by the fashion industry and to bring about awareness around humanitarian and ethical issues in fast fashion.

### For all comers



National Institute of Urban Affairs, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology-Roorkee and support from the Union ministry of housing and urban affairs, successfully conducted public consultation meetings for revisions in guidelines and standards areas of universal accessibility in built environment in India. The consultation meetings were in the backdrop of "Building Accessible Safe Inclusive Indian Cities" programme (supported by FCDO, UK government).

The broad objectives of the consultation were to understand the diverse needs of identified groups in different facets of independent life, understand the problems faced by them in everyday life due to inaccessibility of urban infrastructure and services, and gain insights from their experience and take suggestions for improvement in the guidelines.

### Weekend course



XED Institute of Management announced the launch of the Leeds Business Management Programme for experienced professionals in India and West Asia in partnership with the University of Leeds.

It is a comprehensive, six-month, multi-modular course delivered entirely online by academic experts from the Leeds University Business School. Taught across 24 consecutive Saturdays, it provides working professionals with the skills needed to make informed decisions in the world of business. The programme provides the insights needed to make strategic decisions in an uncertain environment. The first cohort of the programme will start on 10 July 2021. For details visit, <https://leeds.bmp.xedinstitute.org>

### Preparing right



EdTech platform ask.CAREERS – a smart institute initiative and a part of the Shahnai Group of Institutions announced the launch of its new application, *ask.Interview Prep Guide* recently. The app has been developed to help new college graduates and freshers, with a focus on providing a detailed guide for answering common interview questions and helping job aspirants develop compelling talk points to make a great first impression. The app is currently available on Android for free, with the iOS version set to be released soon.

The app familiarises learners with 18 common interview questions through four How To modules and also includes a job interview simulator.

## OBVIOUS SHIFT IN FOCUS

**The pandemic has hastened changes in the already-evolving human resources industry**

CHAYAN MUKHOPADHYAY

**T**he last decade has witnessed an avalanche of change in the human resources industry. Increased diversity in the culture of organisations, use of people analytics, increasing significance of employee experience, the rise of artificial intelligence in recruitment processes, and pandemic-induced remote working -- these are the reasons why the HR industry in India needs to reshape. As companies have realised this, a shift can already be seen in the culture of new-age companies, which will further reflect in traditional industries in future.

In the early 2000s, the function of the HR department was to track employee records and check recruitments. But now, the role has transformed to be called HR manager or human capital manager, whose main job is to acquire, retain and most importantly grow and hone talent, and provide great employee experiences. As their role has become strategic, HR personnel are becoming central to the business as companies have realised that they need to win the war for talent and then compete.

HR people are now being called human resources business partners while what was previously chief human resources officers now imply chief people officers. The change in names denotes how the function is changing. The role is evolving to ensure the creation of more connected, engaged, and empowered workplaces. This makes it necessary to understand the current core trends in the HR industry.

**Remote working**  
While the world is engulfed by



the pandemic, every organisation is compelled to let their employees work from home. The flexibility of working hours, saving on transportation and time, and side-hustles, among other things, have made this method favourable for millennials.

### Employee experience

With the advent of increased competition and survival, employee experience has become critical for the success of an organisation. Global talent professionals have realised that employee experience paves the way for a talented and efficient workforce.

According to the majority of talent professionals, HR is at the forefront of fostering great employer-employee relationships. Focusing on employee experience leads to higher retention and productivity of employees. Decent remuneration, flexible working hours, feedback from employees, openness and direct communication are important facets of the employer-employee relationship.

Millennials and the generation after, who account for most of the workforce now, love such aspects because they come with a new mindset of openness, respect for each individual, equality and expect the same from their employers.

**People analytics**  
People analytics is the use of data points by talent managers to make

decisions regarding their workforce. It helps them to measure employee performance, identify skills, and acquire and retain employees. All large companies have started using this tool as it has proved to be extremely beneficial and more accurate than traditional HR techniques.

Mid-sized and smaller companies are also beginning to use them.

### Internal mobility programmes

The pandemic has left many organisations with limited finances that ultimately led to layoffs and salary cuts. Therefore, they are adopting the model of internal mobility. HR managers and leaders are investing in various learning and development programmes for upskilling their existing workforce. Through this, their employees are gaining new experience and opportunities within the organisation. That is leading to new job roles, and ever-evolving dynamic organisation structures.

Although the HR industry is witnessing several radical changes and professionals are adopting the same, many organisations are lagging. They need to be able to use and leverage HR technology like mobile apps and artificial intelligence.

Taking regular feedback from

employees and ensuring action on those is essential. The HR industry needs to focus on the dual goals of employee experiences and HR process automation. AI is making recruitment and retaining employees easier and data driven. In addition, internal mobility, hybrid workforce models and cross-functional work strategies are needs of the hour.

On the applicants' part, they should avoid unnecessary personal details and try to explain how they can be good team players and problem solvers. HR professionals always look for candidates who are ready to evolve with the changing times and have a growth mind-set to evolve with the company.

Applicants should always convey the value they added to their previous employer and provide references which can substantiate their claims. Moreover, applicants should be courteous, punctual, and ask intelligent questions to the HR teams. By doing simple research on the company they are applying to, applicants can get ahead of the curve.

The shift of the industry is obvious. HR teams need to evolve fast and embrace these changes, or risk being left behind. What was working before 2020 is not going to work anymore.

The writer is co-founder and chief executive officer, Qandle, Haryana



EdTech platform ask.CAREERS – a smart institute initiative and a part of the Shahnai Group of Institutions announced the launch of its new application, *ask.Interview Prep Guide* recently. The app has been developed to help new college graduates and freshers, with a focus on providing a detailed guide for answering common interview questions and helping job aspirants develop compelling talk points to make a great first impression. The app is currently available on Android for free, with the iOS version set to be released soon.

The app familiarises learners with 18 common interview questions through four How To modules and also includes a job interview simulator.



## GOING PLACES

Teenage batting sensation Shafali Verma (in photo, left) is set to play for Birmingham Phoenix in the inaugural edition of The Hundred and might also turn up for a Sydney franchise in the Women's Big Bash League later in the year. The 17-year-old is the world No 1 in the women's Twenty20 International rankings.

For more updates [www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

## THUMBNAILS

**Fernandez dead:** Hockey India today mourned the death of former player George Fernandez, who had been battling Covid-19 in Bengaluru. The 67-year-old died yesterday owing to complications related to the disease. "We at Hockey India are deeply saddened to learn about the untimely demise of George Fernandez, who represented our nation at junior levels," HI president Gyanendra Ningombam said.

**Final venue:** UEFA was meeting virtually with the British government on Monday to discuss the logistics of using Wembley for the all-English Champions League final between Manchester City and Chelsea. The travel waivers already granted by the government for the UEFA European Championship would have to be brought forward by two weeks to stage the May 29 final of its biggest club competition in London.

**Uzbekistan to stage AFC matches:** The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on Monday said Uzbekistan will host the remaining centralised matches of the Champions League (East) Group H and I from June 25 to July 11. The AFC announced this in a press release.

**Arindam's mother succumbs to COVID-19:** A bereaved ATK Mohun Bagan goalkeeper Arindam Bhattacharya on Monday said that his mother has died after battling COVID-19 for a fortnight in Kolkata. Arindam took to Twitter to inform about his mother, Antara Bhattacharya's death.

**Juventus risk Serie A removal:** Juventus will be kicked out of Serie A if it doesn't withdraw from the European Super League, Italian soccer federation president Gabriele Gravina said Monday. While AC Milan and Inter Milan backed out of the ill-fated bid to form a breakaway competition, Juventus remains the lone holdout in Italy.

**Gunawardene cleared of match-fixing:** Sri Lanka cricketer Avishka Gunawardene has been cleared of match-fixing by the International Cricket Council (ICC). The left-handed batsman can now resume cricketing activities. "An independent Anti-Corruption Tribunal of has unanimously cleared former Sri Lanka player of two charges against him under the Emirates Cricket Board's Anti-Corruption Code, allowing him to resume participation in cricket with immediate effect," said a statement from the ICC.

**Olympic preparatory camp:** The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) will conduct a brainstorming session next week to decide the venue for an Olympic preparatory camp since Sports Authority of India (SAI) has closed training centres due to a spike in coronavirus cases in India.

# 'Held-over matches, World Cup can't be played in India'

AGENCIES

CHRISTCHURCH/NEW DELHI/KINGSTON/MALE, 10 MAY

New Zealand all-rounder Jimmy Neesham (*in photo*) does not think that there is any chance of the remaining 31 matches of the Indian Premier League taking place in India this year, after the tournament got postponed owing to Covid-19 infections inside the bio bubble. He also has serious doubts about whether India would be able to host the 16-team Twenty20 World Cup later this year. India is in the midst of its worst-ever health crisis in 70 years with the country recording 400,000 patients on a daily basis with at least 4000 deaths on average.

Both the IPL and the T20 World Cup are set to be shifted to the United Arab Emirates. "If it did start up again, I doubt the IPL would be in India again," Neesham told Newsweek.

"I think we've already seen plans for the T20 World Cup to move out of India later in the year and they're going to be ultra-cautious about that sort of thing," said Neesham, who had been playing for Mumbai Indians. Neesham said bio-security lapses might have resulted from the team's travails across the country.

"Even though we were flying on chartered planes, we had to go through customs, hand over details over to people, walk through terminals, so there were always going to be pinch points there," he said.

Neesham said it was difficult to comprehend how the



bubble had been breached.

"We obviously don't know yet exactly how teams were infiltrated, but... it's such a difficult prospect to keep everything perfect and when you've got so many guys that are close to each other, there are going to be social interactions after games. Once one team has it, you start looking back through your last week at who you talked to and who you shook hands with. It certainly gets your mind racing," Neesham is not averse to the idea of going back to India again and playing in the IPL if it resumed.

"For me, I signed up for the IPL knowing what it might be like. I felt like it was an obligation - I made the commitment to go and never had any thoughts of pulling out individually before the tournament finished," he said, adding: "Guys will have different opinions on

that, but it's my job, I'm a professional and you have plenty of times you tour countries you're not that keen on going to, but it's about getting on the field and getting the job done. I would sign up again, especially once vaccines start rolling out. I don't think anyone really predicted how quickly it would all come crashing down over there and how quickly we would be on the first plane out. To be honest, I wasn't expecting it to get called off. I think when you've got so many teams in different bubbles, the expectation was that there would always be some cases at some point during the tournament. We thought teams might have to lock down and miss a couple of games, like we've seen in other organisations, like the National Basketball Association. The show must go on. The thing that was so shocking was how quickly it came up

in so many different teams at the same time and we didn't really have an option in the end."

Neesham said they were "not out of the woods yet" and might show symptoms in the coming days.

## Back home

Kolkata Knight Riders' leg-spinner Varun Chakravarthy and paceman Sandeep Warrier, the first ones to test positive for Covid-19 in the currently-suspended IPL's bio-bubble, have returned to their own cities after completing 10 days of mandatory isolation.

Tamil Nadu's Chakravarthy was officially the first player in this edition of the IPL to contract the infection after going for some medical scans. Subsequently, two of his teammates, Warrier and Prasidh Krishna, were also infected.

## Yes, it's impossible: Ganguly

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

This year's suspended Indian Premier League cannot be completed in India while it battles a raging coronavirus crisis and could struggle to find a slot elsewhere, Sourav Ganguly has said.

Ganguly, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, said there was no way for the lucrative tournament to resume before India played the final of the World Test Championship against New Zealand in England from 18 June.

"Too early to say how we can find a slot to complete the IPL," Ganguly told a magazine.

"There are lots of organisational hazards like the 14-day quarantine. It can't happen in India. This quarantine is tough to handle," he added.

Virat Kohli's side have a complicated schedule in coming months. India will go to England early in June to prepare for the WTC final. They are then scheduled to visit Sri Lanka in July before returning to England for five Tests in August and September. AGENCIES

All the Caribbean players who participated in the IPL have reached home too.

## Brawl denied

David Warner and Michael Slater have denied reports of their involvement in a drunken bar brawl in Male, where Australian IPL cricketers are waiting to board a flight home in a few days' time.

According to the Daily Telegraph, Warner and Slater got into a late night physical confrontation after a heated argument at the hotel where they were in quarantine.

## SunRisers' donation

The owners of SunRisers Hyderabad, Sun TV, today donated Rs 30 crore for Covid-19 relief undertaken by state and Central governments.

## Bach cancels Japan trip because of virus infections

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOKYO, 10 MAY

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach has cancelled a trip to Japan because of surging infections of Covid-19 in the country, the Tokyo Olympic organising committee said today in a statement.

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

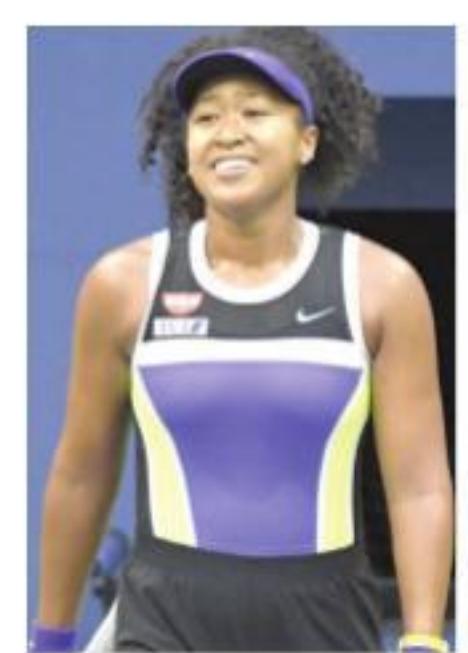
Organising committee president Seiko Hashimoto said last week that the trip would be "tough" for Bach to make, which was interpreted in Japan as meaning it had been cancelled.

The trip was made impossible because of a state of emergency in Tokyo and other parts of the country that had been extended until 31 May. The state of emergency was to have ended tomorrow. The statement said Bach's visit would be made "as soon as possible."

The postponement is an embarrassment to the IOC and local organisers with the Olympics opening in just over 10 weeks. Organisers and the IOC have repeatedly said the Olympics will not be cancelled, and will be "safe and timely."

Japan has attributed 11,000 deaths to Covid-19, better than many countries, but poor for Asia. Variants of the virus are spreading with reports of public health systems coming under pressure.

Public sentiment in Japan continues to run against holding the Olympics in the middle of a pandemic. Between 60 per cent and 80 per cent of Japanese people in polls have said the Olympics should be held.



cancelled or postponed. An online petition calling for the Games to be cancelled gained 300,000 signatures in three days, although a small protest against the Olympics yesterday drew only 100 people.

"Of course I would say I want the Olympics to happen, because I'm an athlete and that's sort of what I've been waiting for my entire life," she said yesterday at the Italian Open.

"But I think that there's so much important stuff going on, and especially the past year," Osaka added.

"I think a lot of unexpected things have happened and if it's putting people at risk, and if it's making people very uncomfortable, then it definitely should be a discussion, which I think it is as of right now."

Other voices are also rising up against the Olympics. Today, the leader of Japan's main Opposition party said it was not possible safely to hold the Games.

## Series sweep adds to Pakistan glory

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HARARE, 10 MAY

Pakistan quickly took the one wicket they needed today for another innings victory over struggling Zimbabwe in the second Test and a 2-0 series sweep.

It took only five overs on Day 4 for Shaheen Shah Afridi to end it by having Luke Jongwe caught behind by wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan for 37. Pakistan won by an innings and 147 runs at Harare Sports Club to go with the innings and 116-run win in the first Test at the same venue. Pakistan also claimed a slice of history with Afridi's 5-52 making him the third Pakistan bowler in the Test to take a five-wicket haul.

He and Nauman Ali (5-86) took five each in the second innings after Hasan Ali's five in the first. It's the first time Pakistan have had three bowlers with five wickets in a match, and the first time it has happened in Tests since 1993. Zimbabwe continued on 220-9 in their second innings, on the brink of defeat and still 158 runs short of making Pakistan bat again. The home team added only 11 more runs to be all out

for 231. Pakistan controlled the match from the start and posted 510-8 declared after batting first, with 215 not out from opener Abid Ali and 126 from Azhar Ali. The bowlers then went to work and were also dominant, with Hasan Ali collecting 5-27 in 13 overs as Pakistan bowled Zimbabwe out for 132 in its first innings and made the home team follow on. Zimbabwe were outclassed and only passed 200 once in their four innings in the series.

Pakistan also won One-Day Internationals and Twenty20 series in South Africa and a T20 series in Zimbabwe on its tour of southern Africa.

Brief scores: Pakistan 510 for 4 dec in 147.1 overs beat Zimbabwe 132 in 60.4 overs & 231 in 68 overs (Regis Chakabwa 80, Brendon Taylor 49, Luke Jongwe 37; Nauman Ali 5-86, Shaheen Afridi 5-52) by 147 runs.

## 'Pakistan need away Test matches'

Former players reckon that neither Pakistan nor Zimbabwe achieved anything from the recent Test series between them and urged the PCB to

schedule matches against stronger teams. Former captain Ramiz Raja termed Pakistan's 2-0 clean sweep against Zimbabwe as a poor advertisement for Test cricket and advised the African nation to just focus on playing white ball cricket. "Such one-sided matches are a joke and it will force fans to watch other sports, instead," Raja said on his YouTube channel. "Some people are of the opinion that when a weak team plays a strong one, you need to focus on what you learn from it rather than the outcome of the match. You learn from the stronger team's process and the way it adapts to the changing situation of a game. But I don't think Zimbabwe learned anything from this series because they were continuously dominated by Pakistan, he similarly another former captain, Rashid Latif also termed the series as a mismatch. "What is the purpose of such a series? It is good that Pakistan has got to play Test matches but in future the PCB must look at scheduling matches against stronger teams. We must not be afraid to match up against them," Latif said.

## Franco dies

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

Fortunato Franco, member of India's Asian Games gold-winning football team in 1962, died today. He was 84. The All-India Football Federation did not specify the cause of his death. Franco is survived by his wife, son and daughter.

One of India's finest midfielders (half-back as per 1960s parlance), Franco was a part of Indian football's golden era between 1960-64. He was a part of the 1960 Rome Olympics squad but didn't get a game. However, he was an integral part of the 1962 Asian gold winning team in Jakarta.

He made 26 appearances for India, including the 1962 Asian Cup, where India finished runners-up, and silver and bronze medal winning sides of 1964 and 1965 Merdeka Cup. But his best performance was in the 1962 Asian Games where Indian football witnessed its finest hour, beating South Korea 2-1 in the final in Jakarta in front of 100,000 people. PTI

## Zverev beats Berrettini to win Madrid Open title

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MADRID, 10 MAY

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

After beating top-seeded Rafael Nadal in the quarter-finals and fourth-ranked Dominic Thiem in the semi-finals, Zverev defeated Matteo Berrettini 6-7 (8), 6-4, 6-3 for his second title this season. The sixth-ranked German won the Mexican Open in Acapulco in March.

Zverev won his first Madrid title in 2018 in a final against Thiem. The win on Sunday gave him his fourth Masters 1000 title, and first in three years. Zverev will be trying to improve from his fourth-round exit last year at the French Open.

"To do well at the French Open, you need to be playing well during the clay court season, the 24-year-old Zverev said. "That is in a way important for me, as well. At the end of the day I won a Masters. There's really very little in terms of bigger than this one right here. I'm happy with this achievement. Obviously, yeah, I look forward to the next few weeks."

didn't play my best tennis." After exchanging a break each in the first set, Berrettini opened the tie-breaker with a 5-0 lead but allowed Zverev to come back. The Italian closed it out on his fourth set point after Zverev also squandered a set point in the back-and-forth tiebreaker. It was the first set dropped by Zverev this week.

Zverev, who finished with seven double-faults, evened the match after breaking Berrettini at 4-4 and serving out to clinch the second set at the Magic Box center court, which had its roof closed due to rain in Madrid.

Zverev, who finished with seven double-faults, evened the match after breaking Berrettini at 4-4 and serving out to clinch the second set at the Magic Box center court, which had its roof closed due to rain in Madrid.

"This was my first (Masters 1000) final. Hopefully it's not going to be my last," Berrettini said.

"But like I said before, I'm really happy on my level. Today unfortunately I think I look forward to what's ahead."

The injury kept Berrettini out until Monte Carlo, where he lost his opening match.

"It was my first (Masters 1000) final. Hopefully it's not going to be my last," Berrettini said.

"But like I said before, I'm really happy on my level. Today unfortunately I think I look forward to what's ahead."

Williams, a four-time champion in Rome, will face either French Open semi-finalist Nadia Podoroska or German qualifier Laura Siegemund in her opening match at the Foro Italico. She's in the same quarter of the draw as Osaka and has a first-round bye.

German qualifier Laura Siegemund in her opening match at the Foro Italico. She's in the same quarter of the draw as Osaka and has a first-round bye.

mation she shares on social media. "I don't do a lot of sport content, so I do feel like people are wondering if I'm playing, and I have to say I always just don't see it," she said. "I don't show what I do. I don't always show my cards."

Williams, a four-time champion in Rome, will face either French Open semi-finalist Nadia Podoroska or

## National shooters lead volunteering efforts to tackle oxygen supply in UP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

Over 100 national shooters volunteers have come forward to augment Rodic Consultants' efforts with an aim to combat oxygen shortage in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Among the renowned shooters who have joined the fight against COVID-19 are Astutosh Dwivedi, (UP), Pardeep Kumar Singh (Haryana), Tabish Ahmed (UP), Rahul Soni (Delhi), Monu Kumar (Delhi), Harpreet Singh (Delhi), Shalender (UP).

The unique platform will regularly monitor and track the real-time location of vehicles so that oxygen reaches hospitals without any delay, especially during emergencies.

"We are contributing by setting up a command centre for oxygen movement across the country like we did successfully along with the UP Gov-