





## OTHER STORIES

## 93 CR FISHLINGS, TO BE RELEASED INTO RESERVOIRS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

About 93 crore fishlings and 10 crore prawns seedlings would be released into 28,000 reservoirs and irrigation tanks this year to benefit the fishermen community.

Animal husbandry minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav on Thursday reviewed the implementation of the scheme and told mediapersons that the government will spend ₹89 crore on fishlings and ₹25 crore prawns.

The minister directed officials to call for tenders soon to procure required fishlings and prawns seedlings.

He said that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao was encouraging traditional occupations to strengthen the rural economy and provide a source of livelihood to those dependent on these occupations.

He said that 34,024 tanks had been identified for fish and prawn farming of which 28,704 were geo-tagged and the rest were in the process of being geo-tagged. "This will enable the government to effectively monitor the fish and prawn farming," he said.

## DLSA EXTENDS ASSISTANCE TO COVID PATIENTS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, MAY 27

The District Legal Services Authority, Khammam too swung into action in extending assistance to the Covid-19 patients during the pandemic situation. Every helping hand can play its role in these conditions.

The Authority Judge Mohammad Abdul Javed Pasha visited Devakripa old-age centre in Kothagudem in Khammam urban mandal and distributed fruits and biscuits to the old age persons. Later, he interacted with the organizers.

The Judge was explained about the availability of food supplies and the health of the elders in the centre during covid-19 times. He also asked for the vaccination of the inmates. The organizers told him about not giving old-age pensions to some of the inmates. He asked them to register their names online and submit the details to him.

## KAVITHA TELLS UN FOOD BODY OF TS GOVT WORK

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Kalvakuntla Kavitha, MLC and Telangana Jagruthi president, interacted with Bishow Parajuli, UN World Food Programme (WFP) representative and country director, India, on a virtual call on Thursday.

Parajuli stressed on the need to bring the government, the private sector and NGOs such as Telangana Jagruthi together to fulfil the vision of a hunger- and malnutrition-free India. He congratulated Kavitha and requested her to convey his appreciation to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on their effort to end hunger and malnutrition in the state.

In particular, the WFP representative commended the state government on the Arogya Lakshmi initiative. The provision of mid-day meals at government hospitals for not just the mother and child but also attendants was a measure that was particularly appreciated by Parajuli.

Parajuli and the World Food Programme team also appreciated the efforts of Kavitha in her constituency to promote initiatives and build awareness to eradicate malnutrition among adolescent girls.

Kavitha spoke about the good work that the state government had done under the leadership of Chandrashekar Rao in terms of increasing access to food and eradicating hunger, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. She also discussed the initiatives to fortify rice and other crops to combat malnutrition.

● **IN PARTICULAR**, the WFP representative commended the state government on the Arogya Lakshmi initiative. The provision of mid-day meals at government hospitals for not just the mother and child but also attendants was a measure that was particularly appreciated by Parajuli.

## Jolt to Jamuna Hatcheries

## High Court dismisses petition by Etala's wife on land survey

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD MAY 27

In a jolt to former minister Etala Rajendar's family in the land row at Achampet village, the Telangana High Court on Thursday dismissed an interim application filed by E. Jamuna, one of the directors of Jamuna Hatcheries and wife of Rajendar. The plea was to restrain the revenue and survey authorities from conducting a survey of the lands and prevent any further action on the survey notices issued by the deputy inspector of survey in Toopran division of Medak district.

Considering the lockdown constraints and the pandemic situation, the court directed the local tahsildar to fix another date for the survey in the second or third week of June.

The court of Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy was dealing with the petition. Earlier, the petitioner and other partners in Jamuna Hatcheries had approached the High Court complaining that the revenue authorities had conducted the survey without following the procedure and rushed into their lands to threaten them in an unlawful manner.

At that time, the court directed the revenue authorities to follow the procedure and rules of revenue acts while entering into the lands of the petitioners for the survey.

## Seven godowns built in name of Rajendar's wife

FROM PAGE 1

It was found that seven godowns in survey no 735 were constructed in the name of Rajendar's wife Jamuna.

This apart, godowns over an extent of 1.25 lakh sq.ft spread over 12 acres in survey no 57 were constructed allegedly by his benamis.

The CM had ordered the first probe against Rajendar on April 30 after some farmers from Medak district complained that the former minister had grabbed their assigned

lands for Jamuna Hatcheries owned by Rajendar's close relatives. The Medak collector's report submitted to the government stated that Rajendar's family had possessed 66 acres illegally. The former minister's kin challenged this in the High Court, which however dismissed the report and directed the government not to initiate any action against Rajendar till further orders.

On May 2, the CM ordered another probe by a committee comprising four IAS

Advocate General B.S. Prasad. He submitted that the intention of the petitioner was to delay the process of survey and inquiry into the illegal occupation of the said lands.

Counsel for the petitioner defended the case by citing technical points that a survey of the land can be conducted only when the occupants of the said survey number have made an application for a survey to fix the boundaries. In this

case, no one made such an application and hence the procedure is a violation of the rules of the Survey and Boundaries Act 1923, he submitted.

Reacting to this, Justice Vijaysen Reddy asked petitioner Jamuna as to what prejudice would be caused to her if the survey is conducted in the subjected lands – which, according to the government, are assigned lands under illegal encroachment and occupation of private per-

● **JUSTICE REDDY** also said that the petitioner can approach the court if the resumption orders was passed against their land or if any adverse order was issued.

Justice Reddy also said that the petitioner can approach the court if the resumption orders was passed against their land or if any adverse order was issued.

He reminded the petitioner about the earlier court order, which directed the authorities to follow the procedure while doing the survey. How can the court stop the survey when due procedure followed, he asked.

Another petition filed P Krishna Reddy, agriculturist hailing from Devarayam village in Shamirpet mandal, sought a court order to the endowments and revenue officials not to dispossess the petitioner from his land admeasuring seven acres and three guntas in the village in Medchal Malkajgiri district.

Justice Vijaysen Reddy asked the commissioner of the endowments department and the district collector of Medchal not to demolish sheds existing on the land and not evict the tenants from this land.

## Rajendar receives Konda support

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Former MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy and Telangana Jana Samiti (TJS) president Prof. Kodandaram met former minister Etala Rajendar at his residence in Shamirpet on Thursday. The two leaders checked with the former minister about rumours he might join the BJP and discussed the political situation.

Both leaders expressed their moral support to Rajendar who was recently removed from the state Cabinet by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao. The leaders suggested to Rajendar to avoid taking future decisions in a hurry.

The former MP told Rajendar that if he resigned from the Assembly, it will send wrong signals to political circles. He must rather wait for the present inquiry over his land grab allegations to complete.

Sources said that the both leaders suggested to Rajendar to remain neutral for now so that he would be in a better position to expose the corruption of the present government before the public. They extended their support to him in the present scenario where the Chief Minister is seen to be targeting him.

After meeting Rajendar, both the leaders

● **SOURCES SAID** that the both leaders suggested to Rajendar to remain neutral for now so that he would be in a better position to expose the corruption of the present government before the public. They extended their support to him in the present scenario where the Chief Minister is seen to be targeting him.

● **AFTER MEETING** Rajendar, both the leaders addressed the media. Prof. Kodandaram said the attack on Rajendar involved issues of self-respect and his party will also fight with the former minister if he continued to remain an independent. He said the CM treats other leaders in the party as his slaves. "KCR is not in a mood to save democracy. Let us fight against his anti-democratic tendencies collectively," Prof. Kodandaram said.

addressed the media. Prof. Kodandaram said the attack on Rajendar involved issues of self-respect and his party will also fight with the former minister if he continued to remain an independent. He said the CM treats other leaders in the party as his slaves. "KCR is not in a mood to save democracy. Let us fight against his anti-democratic tendencies collectively," Prof. Kodandaram said.

Vishweshwar Reddy alleged that Chandrashekar Rao attacked the Rajendar family in a rude manner. He asked the CM why he did not dare suspend Rajendar from the party. The former MP said Chandrashekar Rao does not have the guts to do so.

Vishweshwar Reddy urged Rajendar to join hands with him and fight against Chandrashekar Rao's "dictatorial style". Reddy, Venkata Veeraiah and

others had conspired to bribe Stephenson for securing his vote for Narendar Reddy, the TD candidate in the Legislative Council election that was slated for June 1, 2015.

In pursuance of their conspiracy, the accused had contacted Stephenson and promised him a bribe of ₹ 5 crore. Stephenson made a complaint to the ACB police and a 'trap' was laid. His meeting with the accused was secretly audio-video recorded.

A phone conversation between Stephenson and Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu was also verified by forensic experts and the voice was found to be that of Naidu. As per the case, the accused persons met the complainant at his house on May 30, 2015, and made the bribe offer.

The next day, Revanth Reddy, Harry Sebastian and Rudra Uday Simha

came to the house of Malcolm Taylor, a friend of Stephenson, to hand over the advance bribe amount of ₹50 lakh in cash. This was when they were trapped by the ACB and taken into custody along with the seized cash, officials said.

"The cash had been handed over to the accused by Krishna Keerthan, son of Narendar Reddy, to help his father win the election," officials said.

ED's investigation has established that the accused persons committed the scheduled offence as well as the offence of money laundering by dealing with the bribe money. ED thereon filed a prosecution complaint against the accused persons, with a prayer to hold trial against them for committing the off

"The cash had been handed over to the accused by Krishna Keerthan, son of Narendar Reddy, to help his father win the election," officials said.

ED's investigation has established that the accused persons committed the scheduled offence as well as the offence of money laundering by dealing with the bribe money.

ED thereon filed a prosecution complaint against the accused persons, with a prayer to hold trial against them for committing the

## State logs 3,614 new Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The fall in the number of Covid-19 cases might be seen as an encouraging sign but public health specialists opine that the missing numbers mean more than what meets the eye.

In the daily official medical bulletin on Thursday, 3,614 new cases and 18 deaths were recorded. These numbers do not reflect real-time data at the ground level, specialists said. Districts are having many more missed and lost cases and their tabulation is not properly being carried out.

Public health specialist Dr Santosh Kraleti said: "Auxiliary nurse midwives (ANM) are the ground level workers and they will give a different picture of the number of cases of fever in the rural heartland. There are 26,000 ANM workers and they should have been engaged to get the right kind of information."

Right now they are a part of the fever survey but many households in rural areas still dismiss the Covid-19 infection as normal fever, he said.

The health bulletin on Thursday cited 229 Covid cases in Nalgonda, 228 in Khammam, 196 in Karimnagar and 142 in Bhadradi Kothagudem while Mahbubnagar had

## ED probe establishes conspiracy, files prosecution plaint

From page 1

Officials said the ED investigations have established that Revanth Reddy, Venkata Veeraiah and others had conspired to bribe Stephenson for securing his vote for Narendar Reddy, the TD candidate in the Legislative Council election that was slated for June 1, 2015.

In pursuance of their conspiracy, the accused had contacted Stephenson and promised him a bribe of ₹ 5 crore. Stephenson made a complaint to the ACB police and a 'trap' was laid.

His meeting with the accused was secretly audio-video recorded.

A phone conversation between Stephenson and Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu was also verified by forensic experts and the voice was found to be that of Naidu. As per the case, the accused persons met the complainant at his house on May 30, 2015, and made the bribe offer. The next day, Revanth Reddy, Harry Sebastian and Rudra Uday Simha came to the house of Malcolm Taylor, a friend of Stephenson, to hand over the advance bribe amount of ₹50 lakh in

cash. This was when they were trapped by the ACB and taken into custody along with the seized cash, officials said.

"The cash had been handed over to the accused by Krishna Keerthan, son of Narendar Reddy, to help his father win the election," officials said. ED's investigation has established that the accused persons committed the scheduled offence as well as the offence of money laundering by dealing with the bribe money. ED thereon filed a prosecution complaint against the accused persons, with a prayer to hold trial against them for committing the off

"The cash had been handed over to the accused by Krishna Keerthan, son of Narendar Reddy, to help his father win the election," officials said. ED's investigation has established that the accused persons committed the scheduled offence as well as the offence of money laundering by dealing with the bribe money.

ED thereon filed a prosecution complaint against the accused persons, with a prayer to hold trial against them for committing the offence of money laundering.

## POLICE HELP TO QUENCH THE THIRST OF ADIVASIS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, MAY. 26

The Kerameri police dug up borewell under 'Police Mee Kosam' at Chalbadi village in Kerameri mandal of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district, to quench the thirst of the devotees who come to the village to offer prayers to Nagoba deity.

The police successfully dug up a borewell in the village with the help of Divya Sri Foundation on Wednesday.

The villagers of Chalbadi have been facing drinking water problem for a long time and there was no pipeline connection to the village since it was located on the hillock.

Wankidi CI D. Sudhakar and Kerameri SI Elpula Ramesh those who took the initiative to dig up the borewell in the Chalbadi and Foundation chairman Praveen Naik and Chalbadi village elder Korenga Govind Rao, Babhejhari Sarpanch Manik Rao and Kerameri Sarpanch Uttam Naik were present.



Former MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy inaugurates the 10-bed Covid-19 care centre at the youth club run by the Justice Konda Madhava Reddy Foundation in Chevela.

— DC

## KONDA REDDY TURNS CLUB INTO COVID-19 CARE CENTRE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

Amid the Covid-19 second wave, former MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy has converted the Youth Club (Pragathi Bhavan) into a Covid care centre in Chevela.

For the Covid-19 patients from among the poor who are facing difficulty in getting admitted to private hospitals for treatment, the former MP has set up 10 beds with oxygen concentrators at the youth

club which is run under the aegis of the Justice Konda Madhava Reddy Foundation.

Vishweshwar Reddy stated that people who were Covid-19 positive and having mild symptoms could get admission for treatment. He asked mandal-level leaders irrespective of their political affiliations to inform the people of the availability of the youth club that offers treatment for Covid-19 patients with mild symptoms.



An oxygen mask used by the patients at King Koti hospital turns out to be more effective and saves 50 per cent of oxygen.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

SPO2 levels at less than 80 per cent, making them reach 95 per cent much faster than by using an NRBM," she told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Dr Veronica said she developed the first 'prototype' with the help of a plumber and it worked well. "The design itself was

based on the one developed by Dr Sanjeeth Peter, a cardiologist from Hyderabad who works in Gujarat. "We are alumni from the Christian Medical College, Vellore. When I heard about his invention, I contacted him and he shared a video with details of how to go about making one."

A change made to ensure that a patient gets the fully intended amount of oxygen, say 15 litres a minute – something that is not possible with an NRBM as some of the gas escapes from it – was to replace the NRBM with a non-invasive CPAP mask that fits the snug on the face and with no holes.

Instead of the normal plastic sack in which oxygen first goes into before entering the mask, a urosac bag that is much sturdier and can hold more oxygen under pressure has been used.

Another modification was a T-joint with a filter to the pipe through which the expelled air leaves, with the filter holding back any virus particles from escaping into the air.

"We found that the oxygen used for a patient has gone down by 50 per cent by using the modified mask," Dr Veronica said, adding that the goal was to make the most out of the oxygen supplies and not let any part of it go waste.

"The first model was used

on a patient for 48 hours and with good results. We made three more, which looked a little more elegant than the prototype. We never thought we will use the three immediately but had to put them to work the same day," she said.

The biggest advantage with the modified masks, Dr Veronica said, was not just the reduced wastage of oxygen, but the relief the patients experiences. They realise that even when their oxygen saturation falls, they do not have to be put on invasive ventilation.

"The patients we have tried the masks on so far are very happy. We have also used one of the masks for weaning a patient off the invasive ventilation and this is working really well," she said.

"All that is needed, she said, is to keep an eye on the patient using these newly designed masks to ensure they do not go thirsty. It is helping them enormously on the psychological front that they are not being ventilated," she said.



## OTHER STORIES

## KIDS ORPHANED AS PARENTS SUCCUMB TO CORONAVIRUS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MAY 27

One of the priests at the Medaram Sannakkha Saralamma Shrine in Tadvai of Mulugu district Siddaboina Samma Rao (28) succumbed to the coronavirus on Thursday. He was infected with the virus one month back.

Despite recovering from it, his health deteriorated and he was admitted to a hospital in Hanamkonda where he breathed his last. His wife Srujana succumbed to the Coronavirus earlier this month.

The couple leaves behind their two children, orphaned.

Minister for Tribal Welfare Satyavathi Rathod express shock over the death of the priest and his wife in less than a month. She extended condolences to the family and said the state government would take responsibility for their children henceforth.

The government would stand by the family in all means, she stated.

## SRISAILAM HYDEL POWER PLANT TO BE FULLY OPERATIONAL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MAY 27

The work on restoration of Srisaillam hydel power plant's left bank hydro election station is nearing completion. Five of the six units damaged in the fire in August last have been restored. The six units together produce 900mw, these having a capacity of 150mw each. The remaining unit is expected to become operational in a month's time.

A major fire broke out in the plant on August 20, damaging all the six units. Seven power department employees two persons from a private battery company died in the mishap.

A short circuit was said to be the reason but the state government had ordered a departmental inquiry as well as a CID probe. There is no clarity on the outcome of these inquiries. Officials refused to answer a question whether the probe reports were submitted to the government.

Of the damaged six units, the first and second units were restored within two months, in October. These plants resumed power generation of 300MW.

In December, a unit was restored and in January another unit. Last week, officials restored the third unit. The trial run was successfully conducted under the supervision of Srisaillam power plant chief engineer M. Prabhakar Rao. Around ₹10 crore was spent for restoration of this unit.

Officials are making arrangements to officially launch power generation in this unit soon to restore 750 MW production out of total 900 MW capacity. The remaining fourth unit, which was badly damaged in the mishap, is currently in the process of restoration. Officials aim to restore this unit by June-end.

## Priority to superspreaders in vax drive widely hailed

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, MAY 27

The decision of giving priority in vaccination to super-spreaders is being well-received by the denizens here.

The 'super-spreaders' include gas delivery boys, vendors of vegetables, meat, fish and fruits, cab and auto drivers, those working in petrol pumps, workers in farm markets and staff at wine shops, food and provision delivery boys, ration shop dealers and their assistants and media personnel.

The concerned officials were asked to prepare a list by collecting their identity cards and Aadhar cards.

Gopu Narasimha Rao, correspondent of Khammam Study Circle said, "These categories deal with 10 to 200 people a day. At least 100 persons would approach a vegetable vendor. Giving vaccines to such persons is a matter of first priority."

The people of the above categories will be vaccinated on May 28 and 29 at the Khammam Nayabazar School. There will be 70,000 persons in these categories in Khammam. There are 35,000 auto drivers and allied workers, 10,000 taxi drivers, 1,300 ration shop dealers and assistants, 10,000 vendors of all goods, 5,000 boys working at gas and petrol pumps, 5,000 workers and

2,000 scribes in the district. An auto driver used to transport at least 100 to 150 people a day to various destinations.

There is every chance of Covid-19 patients travelling in autos even before they completed the 14 days gestation period. If the auto driver had immunity and was asymptomatic, the virus can spread to the others travelling by the auto.

Dr M.F. Gopinath said, "The second wave virus is spreading fast through aerosols. Places where more than ten persons assembled are a ground for the virus to spread. The vaccination to these categories is somewhat better in checking the virus.



The police officials of Ramagundam police commissionerate send the youth who ventured out without any reason to the isolation centre here in Godavarikhani of Peddapalli district on Thursday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

## Police warn to send lockdown violators to isolation centres

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, MAY 27

DCP Ravinder on Thursday detained several youths roaming around the city in violation of Covid and lockdown rules. They were sent to an isolation centre by way of punishment.

The DCP accompanied by ACPs Umender and Nikhith Pant, circle inspectors Ramesh Babu and Raj Kumar, along with sub-inspectors conducted patrolling on bikes in Godavarikhani One Town police station limits and rounded up miscreants. They were sent to the isolation centre at Sultanabad in a van.

DCP Ravinder said that the drive against law violators will continue under the leadership of Ramagundam police commissioner V. Satyanarayana. "Some youth are coming out on their bikes unnecessarily and are violating the rules," he said.

As warnings did not help, the Ramagundam police introduced a new punishment mode by sending the law violators to isolation centres. A special drive will be conducted every day for enforcing lockdown rules, he said.

## POLICE DRONES TO KEEP AN EYE OVER VIOLATORS IN MAHBUBABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MAY 27

Lockdown violators who are unnecessarily roaming on the roads hiding from the police patrol will now be detected by drone cameras in the Mahbubabad district. Superintendent of Police N Koti Reddy warned the public to this effect.

He conducted a drone patrol over Thorur on Thursday to detect people violating the lockdown norms.

He also walked the LYR Garden Road and inspected the clothing stores, grocery stores, highways and pedestrians on the junction and also raise awareness among the public and traders.

Speaking on the occasion, the SP said that the police are patrolling every alleys in their respective limits and vehicles coming on the roads unnecessarily will be seized.

He said the drone cameras are also being used to detect the movements of motorists as well as people on the main intersections within the police station as well as on the roads connecting the main road to enforce the lockdown more strictly.

Thorur DSP Venkataramana, CI, Karunakar and SI, Nagesh were present among others.

● **MINISTER SATYA-VATHI** Rathod extended her condolences to the family and said the state government would take responsibility for their children. The government would stand by the family in all means, she stated.

● **DCP RAVINDER** said that the drive against law violators will continue under the leadership of Ramagundam police commissioner V. Satyanarayana. "Some youth are coming out on their bikes unnecessarily and are violating the rules," he said. The special drive will be conducted every day for enforcing lockdown rules, he said.



Dhanpal Suryanarayana Gupta and his family members distributed essential commodities to temple priests in Nizamabad on Thursday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

## ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES SUPPLIED TO PRIESTS

**Nizamabad:** BJP state executive committee member, philanthropist Dhanpal Suryanarayana Gupta and his family members distributed essential commodities to temple priests in

Nizamabad on Thursday as they had lost livelihood during the Covid-19 pandemic. Suryanarayana Gupta and family members handed over kits to more than 100 priests.

## Rice millers looting paddy farmers in Karimnagar dist

## Officials are reducing weight by 2 kg in the name of wastage

PULI SHARAT KUMAR | DC  
KARIMNAGAR, MAY 27

Even after several appeals from the farming community, leaders of Opposition parties and peoples' organisations for purchase of paddy from the farmers unconditionally, rice millers and procurement centres continue to fleece farmers in Karimnagar district.

To procure around 4.34 lakh metric tonnes of food grains, 351 centres have been set up across the district. Farmers have been asked to bring in their produce based on the tokens allotted to them after appropriately drying the harvest and ensuring that the moisture content was less than 17 per cent.

The state government fixed a minimum support price of ₹1,888 for A-grade variety and ₹1,868 for B-grade variety. With an increase in production during this Rabi season, huge quantities are brought to the respective procurement centres.

With inadequate labour force, shortage of paddy



Kisan Morcha district president Annadi Raji Reddy, along with other BJP leaders, inspects the procurement process of paddy at Thimmapur village in Karimnagar district.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

cleaners, gunny bags, tarpaulin covers and tents for protection from heavy sunlight and poor drinking water facilities, farmers are facing a lot of problems at procurement centres. To add to the problem, officials are reducing weight of the produce by two kgs while rice millers are deducting around two to four kgs in the name of wastage for every 40 kgs bag of food grains.

K. Anjaiah, a farmer from Thimmapur village, pointed out that they faced

hardship during paddy cultivation so that they could get good returns, but officials at procurement centres and rice millers were dashing their hopes in the name of wastage. Nor did they arrange any facilities at procurement centres, he said. Moreover, they are delaying the purchasing process and also in depositing the amount into their accounts, Anjaiah said.

Meanwhile, vexed with the apathy, some farmers

staged dharna at various procurement centres across the district demanding the government to procure paddy without any restrictions and without deducting weight.

District president of Kisan Morcha, Annadi Raji Reddy, along with other BJP leaders visited the Thimmapur procurement centre and observed the process of procurement.

One farmer, Lakshma Reddy, informed them that he had brought 538 bags but around 34 of them were deducted by officials towards 'wastage'.

Raji Reddy said that some farmers were cleaning their produce by hiring big fans to prevent wastage and deduction. But officials and rice millers had colluded, leaving the farmers helpless, he said. He wondered how rice millers could deduct when the produce was weighed and sent to them from procurement centres.

He demanded a helpline number at every purchasing centre for lodging complaints.

## SURRENDER FOR COVID-19 CURE, COPS TELL REDS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KOTHAGUDEM, MAY 27

Bhadradri-Kothagudem district superintendent of police Sunil Dutt said that many Maoist leaders and commanders are battling for life with Covid-19. He said that key CPI-Maoist leaders like Soubrai, Rajesh, Nandu, Sagar and many others are infected with the virus. The health of some of them is serious and doctors pertaining to the battalion are unable to give good treatment due to lack of knowledge. "The police will extend treatment to these Maoist leaders if they surrender. Covid-19 is spreading to the adivasis due to the movement of these leaders in their habitations", he said.

He said that they caught three persons on Thursday at Hanuman temple in Manuguru while travelling in a car. They were on their way to supply explosives to Maoists. The arrested include Sapalam Pojja, Maoist supply team member, Sodi Sitaiah, party courier and Kunja Jogaiah, militia member. About ten gelatin sticks, three detonators, four nippo batteries, one cardex wire bundle and 20 meter electric wire were seized from their possession.

The leaders informed that Kurasam Gangaiah aka Ithu aka Ramaiah, who was guerrilla commander of South Bastar technical team, died while undergoing treatment for Covid-19 in a private hospital in Bastar.



Junior doctors protest outside the MGM hospital in Warangal on Thursday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

## Junior doctors now threaten to skip even emergency duties

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MAY 27

Moral support is all we ask from the state government as we risk our lives for the treatment of covid-19 patients, said junior doctors protesting for the second consecutive day at the MGM hospital here on Thursday.

The doctors threatened to boycott even the emergency services as the state government has refused to address their issues.

"Don't we have the basic right to live? Is it too much to be worried about our families in case we die in the line of duty?" asked Dr Swaroop, vice president of Telangana Junior doctors association.

"We are happy to serve the people during this catastrophic time but we need to ensure we do not leave behind our

● **DR BHARATH** Kumar said even though the state has already assured of an ex-gratia no GO to this effect has been released. The GO regarding the 10% hike in incentives has not been released.

families in a helpless state. Unless the government announces ex-gratia to our families after us, we will not be able to confidently render our services," he added.

Another doctor Bharath Kumar said even though the state has already assured of an ex-gratia no GO to this effect has been released. The GO regarding the 10% hike in incentives has not been released. "Instead of restricting itself to announcements, assurances and promises, it is high time the state acted," he said.

## WOMAN DIES BY SUICIDE IN HYD

**Hyderabad:** A 22-year-old woman died by suicide her home in Shamirpet on Thursday. Police said the action followed the cancellation of her marriage with a man from MC Pally. The victim, Anusha, was reportedly upset with the decision.

CHANGE OF NAME and Date of Birth
SHASIKANT S/o ANANTH, Date of Birth 24/09/1995 and KENDRE SHASHIKANTH S/o KENDRE ANANTH Date of Birth 24/08/1995 one and same. H. No. 6-1, Village : Mannur, Mandal: Gudihathnoor, Dist: Adilabad, Telangana Hence treated as KENDRE SHASHIKANTH S/o KENDRE ANANTH Date of Birth 24/08/1995.

## CLASSIFIEDS

<b>RENTALS</b>
<b>FLATS</b>
<b>THREE &amp; MORE</b>
MADINAGUDA, PUR Colony, Nityasai Apartment 3 Bedroom flat, 1650 sqft with car parking for rent @ 18000/- PM Contact: 9440212116 (R/2122/C00004)
<b>MATRIMONIAL</b>
<b>GROOM WANTED</b>
<b>CHRISTIAN</b>
<b>FAIR SLIM</b> good looking, B.Tech, MBA, 5.3, 26, working ADP seeks Protestant Bornaganu believer, PG, good job. Whatsapp photo, biodata. Ph:9490166468. (A/2122/C00113)

## NOTICE

Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries while responding to advertisements in these columns. Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. does not vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers. The Printer, Publisher, Editor and Owner of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. shall not be held responsible / liable for any consequences, in case such claims are found to be false.

**Deccan Chronicle**  
BOOK YOUR CLASSIFIED / DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS at  
EDITION CENTRE :  
**KARIMNAGAR**  
H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabhukur Road, Mugdampur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186  
**9000650508**  
e-mail: krmdvt@deccanmail.com  
**9121183123**

## BLACK FUNGUS WARD AT GGH, INDUR SOON

**Nizamabad:** A special ward will be set up for Black fungus patients at Government General Hospital in Nizamabad soon. The hospital authorities are making arrangements in this regard. In view of increase in black fungus cases in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts, a-50 beds ward will be set up for black fungus treatment. A team of doctors is constituted to treat the black fungus patients.

## Outcry as minor working at TRS man's house becomes pregnant

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, MAY 27

A 14-year-old girl working in the house of a public representative from TRS becoming pregnant has created a stir in Raikal mandal of Jagtial district.

The incident came to light after the report went viral on various social media platforms. When officials of district child welfare and child protection departments visited the house of the girl they did not find anyone in their house.

Having learnt that the girl's parents had gone to a private hospital to abort the pregnancy, the officials rushed to the hospital and rescued her.

Her house is situated beside the TRS leader's house, where the girl's sister used to work. After her sister's marriage, the tennager, studying in ninth standard, was sent to work at the leader's house. Locals suspect the involvement of the leader and his driver.

● **THE MINOR** girl's house is situated beside the TRS leader's house, where the girl's sister used to work. After her sister's marriage, the tennager, studying in ninth standard, was sent to work at the leader's house. Locals suspect the involvement of the leader and his driver.

● **During a police** investigation, the girl's parents informed that the 25-year-old driver at the leader's house molested their daughter in the name of love. Her health was bad for the past few days. When she was taken to the hospital, doctors said that she was pregnant, they said.

to work at the leader's house. Locals suspect the involvement of the leader and his driver.

Presently, officials of the child protection department have admitted the girl to a government hospital.

During a police investigation, the girl's parents informed that the 25-year-old driver at the leader's house molested their daughter in the name of love.

Her health was bad for the past few days. When

she was taken to the hospital, doctors said that she was pregnant, they said.

Police registered the case under Pocso Act and started further investigation.

On learning about the incident, MLC K. Kavitha and Jagtial MLA A. Sanjay Kumar expressed shock and directed the concerned officials to take immediate action against the person who was responsible.

**PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**  
Regd. Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001  
Corporate Identification No. U40109PB2010SGC033813 | website: www.pspcl.in (Contact 9646118773)  
**Tender Enquiry No.: Q-3999/21-22/PO-T/CE-MM**  
Chief Purchase Officer/MM, Central Purchase Organization, PSPCL, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Multi Storey Building, The Mall, PSPCL invites E-tender of 9,500 Nos. EEL-3 (Re-designated as EEL-2), ISI Marked, Three Phase, 63 KVA, oil immersed, CRGO/Amorphous core, Aluminium wound, distribution transformers complete with fittings as per PSPCL specifications & conforming to IS 1180 Part-1 (2014) & IS 2026 (with latest amendments). For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 28.05.2021 onwards.  
**Note:** Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
C-204/21 RO No PR-Adv. No :- 76155/12/276/2021/14873



## SHORT TAKES

## ODISHA: 816 INMATES TEST POSITIVE IN MAY

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, MAY 27

As the second wave of Covid-19 infections sweeps Odisha, as many as 816 prisoners have tested positive for disease in the state in May, a statement released by the state prison headquarters revealed on Thursday.

As per the release, at least 420 prisoners have recovered from the virus while others are under treatment as per the protocols of the Odisha health and family welfare department.

Till May 26, 658 prisoners were shifted from over-crowded jails with permission of trying courts to Covid care centres, said the prisons department statement. 54 out of 87 jails in the state have not been touched by the Covid pandemic which is a major relief for the government.

As a precautionary measure, the government has released an amount of ₹15,000 to each sub-jails and ₹25,000 to each district and special jails towards procurement of Covid kits, preventive medicines.

According to the data furnished by the prisons headquarters, the prisoner population in the state had surged to 20,150 in comparison to the scheduled capacity of 19,824 as of May 1, 2021. Citing serious concerns on the overcrowding of jails amid the second wave of the pandemic, a High Power Committee had suggested several measures for decongestion of jails.

## RAJNATH LAUNCHES ONLINE OPD PORTAL

**New Delhi, May 27:** Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday formally launched an online medical consultation platform to facilitate hassle-free health services for armed forces' personnel, veterans and their families.

Singh said the online outpatient platform will ensure widespread access to quality health services in remote areas besides reducing the load on the hospitals. "This is a very important step taken at a very critical time for the health of service personnel," the defence minister said launching the service at a virtual event. The defence ministry said the services can be availed by registering on the website <https://ehatopd.in/>.

The trial version of the platform was made functional in August last year and over 6,500 medical consultations have been already carried out through it. The defence minister said the 'SeHAT OPD' portal reflected the government's commitment to 'Digital India' and 'e-governance'.

"It has always been our endeavour to provide better, faster and transparent facilities to our countrymen," he said describing the launch of the portal as a great example of innovation, especially at a time when the nation is fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

## HC ASKS MAHA TO PROBE HOW CELEBS GOT VIRUS DRUGS

**Mumbai, May 27:** The Bombay High Court on Thursday directed the Maharashtra government to investigate how celebrities and politicians procured anti-Covid-19 drugs and injections to help those in need when the same were available only in scarce quantities across the country.

A vacation bench of Justices Amjad Sayyad and G.S. Kulkarni said such celebrities might have had the noble intention of helping others, but only the Union government was authorised to allocate those drugs.

These people (celebrities) might not realise that they are acting in defiance of the legal set up, it noted.

Therefore, an inquiry must be conducted to rule out issues such as illegal procurement, hoarding, black-marketing and providing spurious drugs. The court's order came after Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni, who appeared for the Maharashtra government, submitted that the state had issued show cause notices to Mumbai Congress MLA Zeeshan Siddique, actor Sonu Sood's charity foundation, and some others over the matter.

Kumbhakoni said Siddique and Sood had sent their replies saying they neither purchased nor stocked the medicines and injections.



A municipality worker sanitises the area before a special Covid-19 vaccination drive for boatmen at the banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar on Thursday. — PTI

## Controlling Covid-19 is my only focus, says BSY

**Bengaluru, May 27:** With speculations rife that some attempts were on within the ruling BJP to replace him, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Thursday said controlling the Covid-19 pandemic and protecting the interests of the people were his only priorities now. In a veiled attack on those trying to exert pressure for unseating him, he said those who had gone to Delhi have been sent back with answers as he asserted that addressing the Covid situation should be the priority of all ministers and legislators.

"The only thing before me is Covid, controlling it and protecting the interest of the people is my priority. If some have gone somewhere (referring to some legislators going to Delhi to meet high command), they have been given the right answers (by the high command) and sent back,"

● **IN A veiled attack on those trying to exert pressure for unseating him, he said those who had gone to Delhi have been sent back with answers as he asserted that addressing the Covid situation should be the priority of all ministers and legislators.**

Yediyurappa said. Speaking to reporters here, he said when people are in distress and deaths are increasing due to Covid, controlling it together should be the priority of legislators, ministers and everyone. "We should focus towards it (controlling Covid), there is no other matter in front of me, facing Covid is my first priority," he added.

Asked whether he will call a legislature party meeting, the Chief Minister merely said, "there is no need to discuss it, with you (media)." Even as the state is bat-

tling the second wave of Covid-19, speculations were rife on Wednesday that some efforts were on within the ruling BJP for replacing Yediyurappa. Some ministers and MLAs, for the first time, have openly admitted to such moves to exert pressure to unseat the Karnataka BJP strongman.

Several legislators considered close to the Chief Minister have rallied around him, questioning the need for such a change and asserted that the 78-year-old veteran will complete the term and will even lead the party during the next Assembly polls two years away.

Citing certain decisions taken by the government, its handling of the Covid crisis, alleged instances of corruption, a few legislators are said to be pushing for convening a legislature party meeting after June 7, the last day of the lockdown. — PTI

## STALIN WRITES TO MODI ON VAX COMPLEX

T. SUDHEESH | DC CHENNAI, MAY 27

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding that the Centre hand over the now-defunct multi-crore Integrated Vaccine Complex (IVC) at Thirukazhukundram in Chengalpattu district on lease. The state government will make the facility, with an annual production capacity of 585 million doses, operational to produce Covid vaccine, he said in the letter.

The development comes close on the heels of Stalin's visit to the IVC on Tuesday.

*Deccan Chronicle* had published a series of reports on the necessity of reviving the IVC ever since the pandemic outbreak reported in the state in March last year.

"The state is ready to take over the facilities on lease without bearing past liabilities," Stalin wrote to Modi.

## States continue to extend curbs

WB extends lockdown, TN may follow suit

DC CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, MAY 27

Even as the nationwide trend of decline in fresh cases continues, several states are not ready to take any chance and have decided to continue with restrictions albeit with some relaxations.

The Mamata Banerjee government on Thursday extended the restrictions due to the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic in West Bengal for another two weeks from May 31 till June 15. It also declared the fresh schedule of the higher secondary and secondary examinations, which were recently postponed, in July and August respectively.

Announcing another round of extension of the curbs, the chief minister said, "We are not calling it lockdown. Punjab has been requesting us to increase the ceiling in the jute industries due to a demand. So the workforce attendance for daily production in the jute industries will be allowed from 30% to 40% in a shift. The construction workers can also start their job if they are vaccinated even in private. We are now focussing on superspreaders like hawkers, rickshaw-pullers, fish-sellers at markets in a model."

Similarly, certain minor relaxations to the total lockdown that is now in force could be expected from next week in Chennai and other districts that have shown a decline in the number of daily infections when the government formally makes the announcement on Friday or Saturday.

At a meeting of high level officials and Ministers at the Secretariat, presided over by Chief Minister M K Stalin, on Thursday, to take stock of the Covid-19 situation and chalk out plans to contain the spread of the virus, there was a suggestion for the relaxations, sources said.

However, with the numbers shooting through the roof in many parts of the state, particularly

## Covid containment norms unchanged

VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, MAY 27

With Covid-19 cases still significantly high and the virus now spreading into rural areas, the Centre on Thursday directed states and Union Territories to continue the ongoing Covid-19 guidelines till June 30 and go for 'intensive and local containment measures' in districts reporting high cases. In the last 24 hours 2.11 lakh fresh cases of Covid-19 and 3, 847 fatalities from the deadly virus were recorded.

In a fresh order, Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla said strict implementation of containment and other measures has led to a decline in new and active cases in majority of states and UTs barring some areas in South

Coimbatore, there is no possibility of lifting the lockdown all over; the sources said, adding that even the relaxations would be to just allow groceries, vegetable and meat shops to open for a few hours daily and nothing more than that.

Delhi that has been under strict lockdown since April 17 is now witnessing a significant decline in fresh infections and on Thursday the new cases came down to 1,072 and the positivity rate dipped to 1.53% while deaths in the city were 117.

It is expected that Delhi Chief Minister Mr Arvind Kejriwal may announce graded opening up of lockdown from June 1.

Maharashtra, which has witnessed the worst of the pandemic, has decided not to lift all Covid-19 restrictions as 21 districts in the state still have more than 10% positivity rate. "Relaxations could be given in the districts

● **THE NUMBER of active cases presently is still very high which is why containment measures need to be implemented.**

and North East India. He, however, said that in spite of the declining trend, the number of active cases presently is still very high which is why containment measures need to be implemented strictly.

"Any relaxation by states and UTs, may be considered at an appropriate time, in a graded manner, after assessing the local situation, requirements and resources," Bhalla said. The order comes at a time when some of the states have started easing up the strict restrictions imposed at the time when cases were very high.

where cases are declining but not in the entire state. The guidelines will be issued in a few days," Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said.

Madhya Pradesh government on Thursday decided to unlock the state partially from June 1.

The decision was taken following recommendation by a ministerial panel constituted by chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to study the current pandemic situation in different districts in the state and suggest if restrictions imposed in the districts could be relaxed from June one.

Meanwhile, the Chhattisgarh government has opened up partially 15 out of 27 districts in the state following dip in positivity rates in these districts. Sources said the state government was seriously contemplating to partially lift restrictions imposed in the rest 12 districts from June one.

## Raj: 'Dead' man returns home after his funeral

**Jaipur, May 27:** A 40-year-old man presumed dead showed up much to the surprise of his family, a week after they had performed a funeral mistakenly identifying a decomposed corpse as his body.

The goof-up took place after the state-run RK Hospital declared the body of a man named Goverdhan Prajapat, who was under treatment at the hospital, as unidentified and later Omkar Lal Gadulia's relatives wrongly took possession of that body at Rajsamand district in Rajasthan.

Gadulia, a liquor addict, had gone to Udaipur without informing his family on May 11. He was admitted to a hospital owing to some liver-related problem. Gadulia's family was living with his brother after the Covid-induced lockdown, police said.

On the same day, Prajapat was taken from Mohi area to the RK Hospital by an ambulance service arranged by some public representatives. He died during treatment, they said. We had got a letter from the hospital authorities that a body was lying unclaimed at the mortuary for three days. We then circulated photographs of the deceased man on various fronts to identify the body, Kankroli police station SHO Yogendra Vyas said.

He said over a dozen people came to the hospital on May 15 to identify the body. Police were informed about it and the family members gave in writing to hand over the body to them without conducting any post-mortem.

The family members wrongly identified the body to be that of Gadulia

● **THE FAMILY members wrongly identified the body to be that of Gadulia going by a similar scar on his right hand and appearance.**

going by a similar scar on his right hand and appearance, and the police handed over the body without conducting any post-mortem and DNA test.

The body was identified by the family members. DNA testing and post-mortem by a medical board is conducted when the body is unidentified following which the body is usually handed over to municipality for cremation, Vyas said.

The body was taken away and the final rites were performed on May 15 itself. However, Gadulia returned home on May 23 and was shocked to learn that he was believed dead. Later, the police launched an investigation and identified the body which Gadulia's family had cremated as that of Goverdhan Prajapat.

Police were nowhere at fault in this case. The body was declared unidentified by the hospital authorities, Vyas said. Meanwhile, the hospital authorities admitted that the whole incident was a goof-up on part of the nursing and mortuary staff. There was a huge patient load. The patient was admitted to the hospital through 108 ambulance service. The incident took place due to lack of coordination between the nursing and mortuary staff. Appropriate action will be taken in the matter, Principal medical officer of RK Hospital Lalit Purohit said. — PTI

## No safety



Beneficiaries do not adhere to social distancing norms as they wait to receive the Covid-19 vaccine dose at Badshah Khan hospital in Faridabad on Thursday. — PTI

## FIGHTING | TERROR

Many policemen, security personnel test positive for virus

## J&amp;K: Covid hampers anti-militancy ops

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, MAY 27

The lingering Coronavirus pandemic has hampered greatly if not halted completely counterinsurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir. Stating this, J&K Director General of Police Dilbag Singh said on Thursday that a large number of policemen and other security forces personnel too have contracted Covid-19, thereby making it difficult for the counter-militancy grid to continue its operations with the pace it would conduct these until recently.

The other reason he said is the huge deployment of uniformed forces on the

roads and other public places to enforce lockdown which entered the 28th day on Thursday.

Singh, while speaking to reporters in southern Kulgam district said, "Covid pandemic has affected anti-militancy operations to some extent. But it is not like we are leaving areas free for terrorists to roam around".

He said "many policemen and security forces personnel have tested positive for the virus. But despite the fact that the J&K police are fighting Covid pandemic and enforcing lockdown through their deployments on roads and streets across the Valley, specific lead based anti-militancy

operations are being conducted in South Kashmir and other parts of Kashmir".

Asked if it was true that the recruitment into militant outfits from among the local youth has plummeted in the recent past, the police chief said, "Unfortunately, the recruitment is still taking place, but the graph is very less compared to previous years. The J&K police have been doing a lot on this front and making concerted efforts to plug it completely. I believe more steps need to be taken to stop it fully."

He, however, also said "we don't want local youth to turn to guns. The police have been working hard to

prevent misguided youth who have joined various terror outfits to return and live peaceful and dignified lives. Here in Kulgam itself a group of youth which was about to join militancy was brought back and each of the boys was united with their family." He added, "Likewise, in other districts too many such youths were stopped from treading on the wrong path."

He claimed that proscribed outfits like Jaish-e-Muhammad, Lashkar-e-Taayyaba and Al-Badr "continue to get oxygen from across the Line of Control and continue to try to lure Kashmiri boys into their fold".

Singh said that the police authorities have in many instances succeeded in persuading militants to lay down their arms and surrender before the security forces even during live encounters. "Young boys do agree to surrender but older ones aren't ready. From our end, efforts are on to reach out to misguided youth to help them come back," he asserted.

Replying to another question, the DGP said that the number of active militants keeps fluctuating and, as of now, intelligence reports suggest there are about 100 of them active in the four districts of south Kashmir—Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama and Anantnag.



SHORT TAKES

ARMENIA: SIX SOLDIERS HELD BY AZERBAIJAN

**Yerevan, May 27:** The Armenian military said Thursday that six of its troops have been taken prisoner by neighbouring Azerbaijan, an incident that further exacerbates tensions between the two ex-Soviet nations in the wake of an outbreak of hostilities over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry claimed that the Armenian soldiers were seized early Thursday when they attempted to cross the border and place mines on supply routes leading to the Azerbaijani positions. The Armenian authorities insisted that its soldiers were captured on Armenia's side of the border while conducting engineering works, and demanded their immediate release. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told a government meeting that the soldiers were planting a minefield with warning signs on Armenian territory near the border.

TALIBAN LEADER KILLED IN BALOCHISTAN

**Karachi, May 27:** A top commander of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, who was believed to be involved in the deadly attack on the Civil Hospital in Quetta in 2016, has been killed, along with three members of the banned militant outfit in Balochistan province, police said on Thursday. Based on a tip-off, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) launched an operation in Agbara area of the restive Balochistan province on Tuesday and killed Riaz Thekedar. "Four of the terrorists were killed in heavy firing, while two of them managed to escape," police said. A large cache of guns, ammunition and weapons was seized from the spot. A CTD spokesman said top Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan leader Thekedar, was killed in the encounter. "Thekadar was involved in several attacks on security forces and the attack on the Civil Hospital in Quetta in 2016," he said.

REVIEW CASE OF FEMALE ACTIVIST, EU ASKS IRAN

**Dubai, May 27:** The European Union on Thursday called on Iran to review a case of a prominent female human rights activist who was sentenced to 30 months in prison and 80 lashes on charges of protesting against the killing of protesters during the country's 2019 unrest. A spokesperson for the bloc urged Iran to look into the case of Narges Mohammadi under "applicable international human rights law and taking into account her deteriorating health condition." Earlier this week, Mohammadi confirmed her sentence in an Instagram post and said she does not "accept any of these sentences." "The recent sentencing of the Iranian human rights defender Mrs Narges Mohammadi to prison term and flogging is a worrying development," the EU said. In the post, Mohammadi said one of the charges against her is having a party and dancing in jail. She was released from jail in October 2020, after serving eight and a half years in prison.

TIGRAY REBELS KILL 22 OFFICIALS IN ETHIOPIA

**Johannesburg, May 27:** Rebels have killed 22 officials of the war-hit Tigray region's interim administration, Ethiopia's government said on Wednesday. An additional 20 interim officials had been "kidnapped" by forces loyal to the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, which ruled the region until it was toppled by an offensive ordered by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in November. A further four have been "wounded and hospitalised", said the statement issued on Twitter. Abiy declared victory four weeks after the offensive began and replaced the TPLF's regional administration with an interim one headed by officials appointed by the federal government based in Addis Ababa. But six months on, fighting continues in Tigray as pro-TPLF fighters wage an insurgent campaign in the region's countryside. The attacks on the officials have been carried out by TPLF fighters who claim to fight for the people of Tigray but have rather been killing members of the administration that are tasked with bringing stability, the statement said.

New taxiway at NY airport



A Southwest aircraft moves along a new taxiway at LaGuardia Airport, in New York, on Thursday, becoming the first aircraft to pass beneath the pedestrian sky bridge that connects gates with the new Terminal B. — AP

Rwanda genocide: Macron stops short of an apology

Says France has to recognise suffering inflicted on Rwandans

**Kigali, May 27:** In a key speech on his visit to Rwanda, French President Emmanuel Macron said he recognises that France bears a heavy responsibility in the 1994 genocide in the central African country. Macron solemnly detailed how France had failed the 800,000 victims of the genocide but he stopped short of an apology. France "was not an accomplice" in the genocide but ended up siding with Rwanda's "genocidal regime" and bore an "overwhelming responsibility" in the slide toward the massacres, the French leader said, speaking Thursday at the genocide memorial in the capital, Kigali. "France has a role, a history and a political responsibility in Rwanda. It has a duty: That of looking history in the face and recognising the suffering that it inflicted on the Rwandan people by favouring silence over the examination of truth for too long," Macron said. When the genocide started, "the international community took close to three months, three interminable months, before reacting and we, all of us, abandoned hundreds of thousands of

victims." France's failures contributed to "27 years of bitter distance" between the two countries, he said. "I have to come to recognise our responsibilities," Macron said. He arrived in Kigali early Thursday and met President Paul Kagame at the presidential residence. — AFP

CHINA TRYING SINO-OZ WRITER OVER ESPIONAGE

**Beijing, May 27:** China on Thursday put a Chinese-Australian writer on trial for alleged espionage and denied the Australian ambassador in Beijing access to the hearing. Yang Hengjun has been held since arriving in China in January 2019 and has had no access to family and only limited contact with his lawyer, the Australian government has said. Ambassador Graham Fletcher walked to the court complex gate in Beijing and returned after he was denied entry, telling journalists it was "regrettable" that diplomats were prevented from observing the trial. His government had been told earlier that a representative would not be allowed to attend the trial because it is a national security case. — AP

EU could hit key Belarus exports

**Lisbon, May 27:** The EU is intent on making Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko pay a high price for the forced landing of a European airliner to arrest regime opponents, the bloc's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said. "The heads of state and government asked us on Monday (at a summit) to propose sectoral economic sanctions, something that we are not used to doing in the EU, and there are some that immediately come to mind," Borrell said in an interview Wednesday in Lisbon on the eve of an informal meeting of foreign ministers. "Belarus is a big exporter of potash: \$2.5 billion. Everything goes through the Baltic countries. It's easy to control it, if you really want to," he said. "One can also imagine that the gas which arrives

UK's 15-YEAR VOTING CAP FOR EXPATS MAY GO

**London, May 27:** Britain's government on Thursday detailed plans to scrap a restriction that deprived expats of their right to vote after 15 years of living abroad, calling it outdated in a globalised world. Long a bane of expatriate Britons, the limit will be replaced with "votes for life" in forthcoming legislation that will also controversially introduce voter identification for the first time in UK elections. "In an increasingly global and connected world, most British citizens living overseas retain deep ties to the United Kingdom," Cabinet Office minister Nicholas True said in a statement. "These measures support our vision for a truly global Britain, opening up our democracy to British citizens living overseas." — AFP

HK Bill amends poll law, reduces direct public vote

**Hong Kong, May 27:** Hong Kong's legislature on Thursday passed a bill amending electoral laws that drastically reduces the public's ability to vote and increases the number of pro-Beijing lawmakers making decisions for the city. The new law empowers the city's national security department to check the backgrounds of potential candidates for public office and a sets up a new committee to ensure candidates are patriotic. The number of seats in Hong Kong's legislature will be expanded to 90, with 40 of them elected by a largely pro-Beijing election committee. The number of legislators elected directly by Hong Kong voters will be cut to 20, from the previous 35. The bill, passed by a 40-2 vote, was met with little opposition, as most of the legislators are largely pro-Beijing. Their pro-democracy colleagues resigned en masse last year in protest over the ousting of four lawmakers deemed to be insufficiently loyal to Beijing. Pro-Beijing lawmakers lauded the bill during the debate on Wednesday and Thursday, saying that reforms would prevent those not loyal to Hong Kong from running for office. Some pointed out that multiple bills that impact people's livelihoods have been passed with more ease this year compared to in 2020, when pro-democracy lawmakers would at times filibuster or behave disruptively during meetings to stall the passage of bills that they disagreed with. The changes to Hong Kong's elections come as Beijing further tightens control over the semi-autonomous city that saw months of anti-govern-

ment protest and political strife in 2019. Authorities have arrested and charged most of the city's outspoken pro-democracy advocates, such as Joshua Wong, who was a student leader of 2014 protests, as well as media tycoon Jimmy Lai, who founded the *Apple Daily* newspaper. China's rubber-stamp parliament in March endorsed changes to the city's electoral system, which then led to Hong Kong's proposals. They are the latest in a string of moves to ensure people elected to office or serving the city are loyal to Beijing. An amendment the legislature approved earlier this month requires the city's over 400 district councilors who mainly deal with municipal matters to take an oath pledging loyalty to Hong Kong and to upholding its mini-constitution. The oath was previously required only of legislators and government officials such as the chief executive. — AP

CONSTITUTIONAL BENCH TO HEAR NEPAL PLEAS

**Kathmandu, May 27:** Nepal's Supreme Court on Thursday sent all the 19 petitions challenging the dissolution of the House of Representatives by the President to the Constitutional Bench. As many as 30 petitions, including one by the Opposition alliance, have been filed at the Supreme Court, challenging Friday's House dissolution by President Bidya Devi Bhandari and rejection of Opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba's claim by the President for the post of prime minister. After a preliminary hearing on the 19 petitions, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Chandra Shumsher Rana decided to send them all to the Constitutional Bench, the *Kathmandu Post* reported. "A single bench of Chief Justice Rana has decided to send all the petitions related to the House dissolution to the Constitutional Bench," Kishor Poudel, a communication expert at the Supreme Court, told the newspaper. These cases will now be heard along with 11 others, including the one filed by 146 lawmakers demanding appointment of Nepali Congress President Deuba as the prime minister. Eleven petitions were directly registered at the Constitutional Bench. Some of the petitioners had demanded an interim against the dissolution and calling of the House meeting to present the national budget. Rana, however, refused. According to the constitutional provision, the government must present the federal budget at the federal Parliament on Jestha 15, which is May 29 this year. Since there is no Parliament, the government is planning to bring the budget through an ordinance. — PTI

Efforts on to clean up Lankan coast: Officials

Oz kids can't block coal mine expansion

**Colombo, May 27:** Sri Lanka's apex environment body on Thursday said a Singapore-flagged cargo vessel, which caught fire near the Colombo beach last week, is in the process of sinking, and that preparations are underway to tackle the resulting oil spill. Top Marine Environmental Protection Authority (MEPA) official Turney Pradeep Kumara said the government would file for damages to responsible parties for the damages done to the marine ecosystem. "The crew will be questioned and statements will be recorded. There will be legal action through the Attorney General," Kumara said. All 25 crew members of MV 'X-PRESS PEARL' — of Indian, Chinese, Filipino and Russian nationality — were rescued on Tuesday after a 'fire alarm' dispatch was sent. "We have set in motion the process to manage the oil spill when it occurs. Equipment necessary is already in place," Kumara said. The National Aquatic Resource Research and Development Agency (NARA) said chemicals and other materials washed ashore from the ship along the western coast area from Colombo to

**Canberra, May 27:** A group of Australian child environmentalists lost their court bid Thursday to force the federal government to ban a coal mine expansion. The eight children, aged 13 to 17, had argued in the Federal Court that Environment Minister Sussan Ley had a duty of care to protect younger people against climate change. Ley is considering whether to approve the Vickery mine expansion in New South Wales state, and the children sought an injunction preventing the expansion. Justice Mordy Bromberg rejected their application while noting the mine expansion would lead to an additional 33 million metric tons of coal being extracted over 25 years and 100 million metric tons of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere. Ley did owe the children a duty of care under the law of negligence, the judge found, but said he was not satisfied a reasonable understanding had been established that Ley would breach her duty of care to the children. Bromberg found there was a "real" risk that the extension of the mine near the town of Gunnedah would likely cause a "tiny but measurable increase to global average surface temperatures." — AP

Marawila would be collected and analysed. Based on the analysis, the NARA officials would state the degree of damage done to the marine ecosystem.

Apart from the 325 metric tonnes of fuel in its tanks, it was loaded with 1,486 containers carrying about 25 tonnes of hazardous nitric acid. — PTI

CLIMATE | TRENDS

Chances of tropical cyclones in the Atlantic, increased rainfall in high-latitude regions

World may breach 1.5°C warming within 5 years: WMO

**Paris, May 27:** The world may temporarily breach the 1.5-Celsius warming mark within the next five years, according to an updated assessment of global climate trends released Thursday. The World Meteorological Organisation and Britain's Met Office said there was a 40 percent chance of the annual average global temperature surpassing 1.5C above pre-industrial temperatures — the aspirational warming limit of the Paris climate accord. According to the Met Off-

ice's updated global 10-year climate prediction, there is a 90 percent chance of at least one year between 2021-2025 being the hottest on record. The annual average global temperature over the next five years is likely to be at least 1C warmer than pre-industrial levels, within a range of 0.9C-1.8C warmer, it said. "These are more than just statistics," said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas. "Increasing temperatures mean more melting ice,

higher sea levels, more heatwaves and other extreme weather, and greater impacts on food security, health, the environment and sustainable development." The landmark 2015 Paris climate deal saw nations commit to limit global temperature rises to "well below" 2C above pre-industrial levels. The accord strives towards a safer cap of 1.5C, but pledges made by nations under the Paris accord to date leave Earth on the path to warming roughly

twice as much by the end of the century. Experts greeted Thursday's announcement with caution. Joeri Rogelj, director of research at the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London, said a single year above 1.5C would not mean the Paris goals had been breached. "But this is nevertheless very bad news," he said. "It tells us once again that climate action to date is wholly insufficient and emissions need to be reduced urgently to zero to

halt global warming." The Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update, released on Thursday, showed that the chance of breaching 1.5C had roughly doubled compared to a similar assessment made last year. The WMO said this increase was largely down to improved datasets used to predict temperatures, rather than a sudden increase in the rate of warming. It said the new assessment showed an increased likelihood of tropical cyclones in the Atla-

ntic, as well as increased rainfall in high-latitude regions and the Sahel compared with the recent past. Ed Hawkins, climate research scientist at the University of Reading, said Thursday's assessment was "an indication that we are fast approaching the temperature levels that the Paris Agreement aims to avoid". He said that some months in 2016 — the hottest year on record — had already breached the 1.5C warming mark. "As global temperatures

continue to rise, it is inevitable that we will continue to temporarily cross 1.5C before we exceed it for more sustained periods," he said. "To limit global warming to 1.5C — or what the parties to the Paris Agreement thought 1.5C meant when they signed it — we need to hit the brakes on emissions now and stop global warming in the next 30 years or so," said Myles Allen, professor of geosystem science at the University of Oxford. — AFP





# DECCAN Chronicle

28 MAY 2021

## Stop govt repression of Lakshadweep residents

The quiet life of about 70,000 people in Lakshadweep, an archipelago of 36 islands in the Arabian Sea about 300 km off the Kerala coast, has been in turmoil for the last six months, in direct consequence to the efforts of Praful Khoda Patel, a BJP leader from Gujarat, who landed in the Union territory as administrator in December last year. Mr Patel has been working over-time to overturn, both through legal and administrative measures, every system that has been existing there — some for centuries, some recent — creating deep resentment among the people.

The administrator has taken over the powers of the local self-governments with respect to agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, health and education, virtually denuding the elected representatives of whatever little say they have in the administration of their society. The newly introduced Lakshadweep Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Regulation 2021 provides for preventive detention of people whom the administration feels engaged in or preparing for activities which include crimes are normally tried under IPC and Information Technology Act, 2000. That the goonda act, as the new regulation is called, is sought to be imposed in a place which has reported hardly a heinous crime in decades shows the intentions of the administrator in poor light. The Lakshadweep Animal Preservation Regulation 2021 the administrator has introduced seeks to ban cow slaughter and consumption or sale of beef in any form in a place where an estimated 65 per cent of the population consumes meat. The draft Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation 2021 virtually ends the rights of landowners once that land falls under the development plan of the administration.

Apart from the legal route, Mr Patel has launched a series of administrative actions that has left the islanders high and dry. Among them are the demolition of makeshift-yards where the fishermen keep their boats to save them from the marauding cyclones which never fail to touch the island and the introduction of bureaucratic procedures for emergency evacuation of medical cases to Kerala, depriving the people of their assurance of emergency medical help.

Union territories are formed with a view to taking to tiny communities the benefits of the best of Indian democracy; it is undemocratic, unfair and unjust to serve them the worst of it. Every single act of Mr Patel is aimed at unsettling the lives of the people with little regard to their welfare or opinion. It is nothing less than an assault by the mighty Indian State on a hapless people and an attempt to impose its will and lifestyle on a society which is made up of 93 per cent indigenous people who have been classified as Scheduled Tribes.

The Union government must immediately recall Mr Patel and stop the process he initiated in the island at the earliest. The government must instead strengthen its local self-government system to administer the people taking the best of Indian democratic traditions.

Lakshadweep and its people are geo-politically and strategically important to India. Short-sighted, thoughtless and haphazard acts of administrators sent from Delhi should not be allowed to play havoc with it. The Union government must act, and act quickly and undo the damage the administrator has done.

## Minimise curbs on social media

The new IT laws that have kicked in seek to moderate content on social media and most major platforms are planning to fall in line. Accountability in hosting content in media is desirable but the grave danger is the government, in its zeal to thwart what it sees as content aimed at denigrating its leaders, might use the laws to abridge the freedom of expression which has been a great feature of Indian democracy.

The reaction to WhatsApp going to court on the premise that users will lose their privacy protection has been projected as a challenge to India's sovereignty, which it is not. As a platform that essentially enables communications, WhatsApp has apprehensions regarding its end-to-end encryption which ensures confidentiality of messages shared between individuals and groups. There is a need for further engagement on this count as over 500 million users, including many departments of the Government of India, use WhatsApp regularly.

If a law challenged is seen as an affront to official India it only betrays the authoritarian nature of government. What is needed is a more nuanced approach to find a balance between the right to privacy and the need to allow action against malicious content, like those which have harmed Indian society as in rumours spread on internet platforms leading to the exodus of northeastern people, the lynching of "child kidnappers", and denigration of minorities, etc.

As the county with the most recorded objections to social media content, India must realise it needs to liberalise laws on content that are way too draconian, respect the right to privacy in matters that do not transgress the laws of the land and face up to the Internet age freedoms without trampling upon them.

The knotty issue involving those wishing to establish a wholesome degree of control over social media just to aggregate more power and the millions of Indians who use global platforms for their sheer convenience must be resolved by placing the most reasonable restrictions on fundamental rights through fair grievance redressal mechanisms.

### DECCAN CHRONICLE

**KAUSHIK MITTER**  
Editor

**K. SUDHAKAR**  
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

**Hyderabad:** 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256  
**Vijayawada:** No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234  
**Visakhapatnam:** Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285  
**Rajahmundry:** Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208  
**Anantapur:** Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904  
**Karimnagar:** Survey No.1341, Vavilalpally Colony, Jagitiyala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433  
**Nellore:** Survey No.527/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580  
**Chennai:** SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325  
**Coimbatore:** 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255  
Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Subhani



## 7 yrs of PM Modi: Can he lead us out of the abyss?



Karan Thapar

As I See It

As we approach Narendra Modi's seventh anniversary as Prime Minister I think I've realised why so many are disappointed with him. The one quality we looked for when we voted for him in 2014 — and which some believe they had found in the immediate years thereafter — is what is missing today when we most need it. And it's called Leadership.

Let me explain what I mean. I'm not simply referring to assertiveness and conviction. They are necessary but not sufficient. What I have in mind is the capacity to paint a vision for the future, convince the country to ascribe to it and then boldly lead towards its realisation. It might sound fanciful but it's not unlike Moses leading the Israelites through the parted waters of the Red Sea to the promised land he had committed himself to deliver.

Think back to 2014. Perhaps he was misunderstood but Dr Manmohan Singh was widely perceived as a paralysed Prime Minister. Not just silent but also a prisoner of his own coalition and, even, his own party. He was not his own man and, therefore, could not be our leader either. The country saw him as Mrs Sonia Gandhi's "poodle" and he did precious little to change that impression.

Mr Modi, on the other hand, presented himself as the chief minister who had worked miracles in Gujarat. Many accepted that as fact and refused to entertain any doubts because they wanted a saviour. Here was a self-made man who had risen by his own efforts and talent. He didn't carry the burden of family nor the taint of compromise. He also had the gift of oratory and thus knew how to pre-

sented himself. During the 2013-14 campaign he sold himself to us and we readily bought him.

Yet behind this truth lies another and it's possibly more important. Each of us saw in him what we wanted to see even if it wasn't there. The Narendra Modi that we voted for was probably more our creation and less of his own making.

So you could say disappointment and disillusionment were perhaps inevitable. The real Narendra Modi was bound to be different from the image we had created and convinced ourselves we were acquiring. But in the early years so strong was our belief in him that we overlooked — foolishly and myopically — the first signs our faith had been misplaced. We found excuses for his impetuous and thoughtless demonetisation. We accepted his silence when Muslims were baited and lynched or dalits thrashed for being uppity, on the grounds that the Prime Minister can't speak on every occasion. Indeed, most people didn't even pay heed when he mistook mythology for science. Finally, the way the diaspora cheered him and foreign leaders like Barack Obama, Theresa May, the Asean heads of government and Middle Eastern potentates courted him convinced us that this was

**There's no doubt on some things he has made a difference — Swachchh Bharat, Ujjwala Yojana, medical insurance and electricity in villages. We applauded him, forgetting it's what governments are elected to do.**

**Mr Modi defied his own scientists and continued with massive political rallies and shahi snans. He didn't care this could fan the flames. Ultimately, when the pot boiled over, he handed the problem to the state governments.**

quite a man.

Even when the scales began to drop — and for some they did fast and furiously — there was a reluctance to accept that the Prime Minister lacked the one quality we so badly wanted: Leadership. His promises of a \$5 trillion economy or doubling farmers' incomes in five years were a beguiling illusion many refused to see through. His boast of standing up to Pakistan and making India feel good again was bombast but we failed to recognise it as hot air. His talk of reform was tantalising — because we knew we needed it badly — but he didn't deliver, yet many kept hoping that he would.

Of course, there's no doubt on some things he has made a difference — Swachchh Bharat, Jan Dhan, Ujjwala Yojana, rural roads and houses, medical insurance and electricity in villages. We applauded him for this, forgetting that it's what governments are elected to do. These aren't extraordinary achievements. They are just the simple expectations of needy people. Perhaps this is why he gets little credit for them today.

It was against this background the Covid-19 pandemic hit us and we suddenly realised that our colossus has feet of clay. He had nothing to say beyond the trite and the foolish. He reduced us to banging dishes and lighting candles, all in the hope this "mahabharat" could be won in 21 days. Even his fabled oratory took flight. In the early months he didn't stop speaking, but what he said was leaden. I suspect he realised this because he soon opted

for silence.

The last year has revealed a Prime Minister who has failed repeatedly and has only himself to blame. He failed to anticipate how many vaccines we need and we are, as a result, woefully short. Yet all he had to do was enhance capacity by supporting our own vaccine manufacturers. It would have been "atma nirbhar", but he didn't do it. After that he defied his own scientists and continued with massive political rallies and *shahi snans*. He didn't care this could fan the flames. Ultimately, when the pot boiled over, he handed the problem to the state governments. He told them to acquire their own vaccines, knowing it would be both expensive and difficult to do, whilst exacerbating the problem by opening up vaccinations for every adult in the country although he knew the jabs did not exist. In one single stroke he made a bad problem considerably worse.

So if I were to say our great leader — the man we thought could be our Moses — has led us into a blind alley, would I be wrong? If I were to say the qualities of strength and decisiveness that we identified in 2014 have turned into obstinacy, defiance and recklessness, would I be wrong? If I were to say the power of speech that mesmerised us when we heard it from Madison Square Garden has become theatrical and, even, exasperating, would I be wrong?

Now the only question is this: Is Mr Modi the Prime Minister to lead us to the other shore? The truth is that we have no other. We have to believe he is. We have three years to find out, but for all our sakes I hope he has it in him. We can't change captains mid-sea, particularly when we don't know if there is another cyclone heading our way. But when we reach dry land, we must ask ourselves two simple questions: Why did we err in our judgment? And can we be certain it won't happen again?

*The writer is a television commentator and anchor*

### LETTERS

#### CRUEL POLICE

Pavement vendors and hawkers lead a hand-to-mouth existence (*Cops rain lathi blows on vendors, rob them, DC, May 27*). Their paltry income is hardly enough to run their family when the lockdown is relaxed. Policemen must have showed compassion on them instead of being so inhumane.

**Farhana Nikhat**  
Hyderabad

#### LOCKDOWN FORMAT

The lockdown format adopted last year allowing sellers of essential goods like vegetable vendors, kirana and supermarkets to be open from 6 am to 6 pm was far more effective in controlling the pandemic as there was no crowding (*Covid-19 surges ahead in Telangana districts, DC, May 27*). The authorities must consider that again.

**Anil R.**  
Secunderabad

#### COVID VACCINE

I appreciated the way Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to review the production of vaccines in November 2020 and our finance minister allocated ₹35,000 crore for the same. But I am really disappointed now with the states being told to arrange vaccination on their own. I urge the Centre to take over procurement of vaccines and use the RBI bonanza of ₹99,122 crore for the medical emergency and vaccinate every Indian free.

**Lal Melwani**  
Hyderabad

## 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

### More powers to States demanded

MADRAS, May 27. The Rajamannar committee on Centre-State relations, appointed by the Tamil Nadu Government has recommended the setting up of a high power commission for re-distribution of powers between the Centre and the States.

The committee has also recommended the transfer of a number of subjects like development of oilfield and mineral resources and lotteries from the Union List to the State List, and the inclusion of corporation tax, customs and export duties and tax on the capital value of assets in the divisible pools to be shared by the centre and the states.

Devi Kar



## Blame schools if India's kids can't show creativity or be innovative

We often hear educators lamenting the lack of creativity and innovativeness in Indians as a whole. Indeed, it is shocking that hardly any inventions have emerged from India in the past 50 years. However, we can't continue to blame our colonial shackles for the lack of creativity in terms of inventions and patents.

It is upsetting to learn from the latest data compiled by WIPO, the Geneva-based World Intellectual Property Organisation, that in 2019, companies like Samsung and Huawei filed more international patent applications *each* than the whole of India. India was responsible for less than one per cent of the total global applications for patents that year. It is also disturbing to know that unlike colleges and universities abroad, our higher educational institutions have no presence at all in this area. It has been inferred that not only do these figures indicate the sad state of innovative initiatives in India, they also confirm the low spending in research and development by our government. It is important to explore the reasons for this sad state of affairs.

There are many deep-rooted reasons

for this intellectual famine that our country has been experiencing. Most people cite rote learning in schools, which steadily destroys imagination and creativity in young minds, as the main culprit. This article will deal with a single major reason — that is the unconscious but constant reinforcement of plagiarism in our entire educational system.

First, the very concept and awareness of plagiarism is woefully absent in our school education. This year, when we announced in school that we would be tackling the issue of plagiarism, one of our senior students spoke up, saying: "No offence meant, but why is it we were not warned about this when we produced cut-and-paste projects and presentations in the lower classes?" She was spot on. Schools always looked out for factually correct and visually attractive presentations rather than original work. Unfortunately, our board examiners too reward students who produced attractive portfolios, the contents of which were gleaned from the Internet. Before the advent of the Information Age, the cut-and-paste jobs were carried out with the help of illustrated books and magazines, scissors

and glue.

Forget about projects and presentations, even answers to questions and essays have been written with the help of readymade notes and guidebooks. Since these fetched enviably high scores, including in the board exams, they were in great demand, making it unnecessary for students to think for themselves and to do their own research or write their own notes. I remember an oft-repeated joke that you could write a good essay on almost any topic if you prepared just a single essay on God. So, if you were asked to write an essay on "a rainy day", you could write about God's natural creations, which included the sky and earth, sun and of course rain, and then move on to a rainy day. Moreover, students have always been encouraged to quote at length, to enhance the richness of an answer or essay. Even in undergraduate class, students quoted writers to support an argument, but seldom presented research-based evidence of his or her own.

In art class children have been made to copy images and patterns. Imaginative composition — if set as an assignment — was usually "corrected"

and modified to conform to the teacher's ideas. Where music is concerned, how many children are encouraged to compose their own tunes? It is a shame that creative writing is not part of the regular school curriculum. In language and grammar classes, a child's originality is killed at the primary level itself. A schoolboy, asked to write a sentence with "mother", had his simple sentence: "My mother has big eyes". But this was crossed out with a thick red marker and changed to: "My mother is a noble lady". The next sentence, "I hate drinking milk", using the word "milk", was rejected in favour of: "Milk is a nutritious drink". The poor boy was being set in a mould created by his unimaginative teacher.

Also, looking upon the prescribed textbook as the students' Bible causes considerable damage to creative minds. If an answer was based on the subject-related textbook, it was marked correct, but if certain "key" phrases and terms were not used but explained in the student's own words, it was more than likely that the student would be heavily penalised. This is what defeats the making of independent minds.

It is extremely urgent today that we

correct all these mistakes and the lacunae of the past and begin by introducing the concepts of plagiarism and intellectual property right from the junior classes. It is true that much of early learning happens by observing and imitating. But children are imaginative too. We teachers must learn to foster this natural gift and be less rigid about the need to conform. As Picasso said: "All children are born artists. The problem is to remain an artist as we grow up."

As children grow older, they could be taught to consciously acknowledge the sources from where they have taken content. This practice, if well inculcated in our young, will go a long way to making them intellectually honest. Apart from developing academic honesty, educators should encourage and celebrate original work. When our children join school in the kindergarten, they are curious, imaginative and creative. It is we adults who cramp their style and freedom by straitjacketing them. The fault that India does not produce inventors lies in ourselves.

*The writer is a veteran school educator based in Kolkata*



quick  
BITES

## INDICATORS

		%
Sensex	51,115.22	0.19
Nifty 50	15,337.90	0.24
S&P 500*	4,206.76	0.26
Dollar (₹)	72.59	0.27
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.49	0.63
Euro (₹)	88.49	0.78
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,223*319	0.66
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	69.16	0.42
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.987	0.25
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.617	0.043

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

US first quarter  
GDP unchanged  
at robust 6.4%

The US economy grew at a robust annual rate of 6.4 per cent in the first three months of this year, unchanged from the government's initial estimate. The recovery from last year's deep recession gained steam at the beginning of this year, helped by vaccines to combat the virus and trillions of dollars in government assistance. The rise in the GDP was the same as the government's first look one month ago.

Sun Pharma Q4  
net zooms over  
2-fold to ₹894 cr

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries reported a more than two-fold jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 894.15 crore for the March quarter, from Rs 399.84 crore a year ago, mainly on a robust performance in the Indian market. Consolidated total revenue from operations stood at Rs 8,522.98 crore against Rs 8,184.94 crore. For the full year 2020-21, Sun posted a net profit of Rs 2,903.82 crore against Rs 3,764.93 crore.

Ikea launches  
shopping app  
in India

Swedish home furnishing retailer Ikea announced the launch of its shopping app in India, in a bid to expand its omni-channel approach in the country. The Ikea app would be available on both iOS and Android platforms and will offer 7,000 home furnishing products, Ikea said in a statement. Customers from cities Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Surat, and Baroda will be able to buy products with the app, Ikea said.

BPCL says no  
plans to sell stake  
in Petronet, IGL

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) said it has no intention to sell a part of its stake in Petronet LNG Ltd and Indraprastha Gas Ltd (IGL) to help its new owner avoid making an open offer for the two gas companies. "We have no intention to pare down our stake in IGL or Petronet. Any paring down will be value destruction," BPCL director (finance) N. Vijayagopal said at an earnings call with investors.

■ Health crisis more pervasive and debilitating than financial crises  
Near-term outlook clouded: RBIFALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, MAY 27

The Covid-19 pandemic has unleashed a once-in-a-lifetime crisis on the world economy and the outlook remains grim. India's near-term outlook is clouded, with an accentuation of downside risks and potential externalities of global spillovers, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its annual report for 2020-21, published on Thursday. Faster vaccination holds the key to an escape from the pandemic, said the RBI.

The central bank warned that compared to "financial crises, a health crisis can be more pervasive, persistent and debilitating in its impact on the real economy. Letting down the guard is perilous; it is best to prepare for future waves."

It also rued the fact that private investment is the missing piece in the story

## FROM THE RBI ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

- ▶ RBI balance sheet size increased by ₹3.72 lakh crore to ₹57.07 lakh crore as on March 31, 2021, up 6.99 % from ₹53.34 L cr on June 30, 2020
- ▶ Covid 2.0 biggest risk to growth forecast
- ▶ For a self-sustaining GDP growth trajectory post-Covid, a durable revival in private consumption and investment demand would be critical as they account for around 85% of GDP
- ▶ Services sector contraction unprecedented in Indian history
- ▶ Inflation remains a key concern, constraining monetary policy from using any available room to support growth

of the Indian economy in 2020-21 and reviving it awaits an environment in which 'animal spirits' are rekindled and entrepreneurial energies are released so that backward and forward linkages and multipliers prepare the ground for a durable investment

driven recovery.

"Embattled by new waves of infections and mutant strains of Covid-19, the slow pace of inoculation in several parts of the world and visceral vaccine protectionism, the global and domestic outlook has once again turned grim and

overcast with extreme uncertainty and downside risks," the RBI said.

The central bank said the impact and the duration of the second wave of the pandemic are the biggest threats to its growth estimates for the country for the ongoing financial year, with consensus gravitating towards its earlier forecast of 10.5 per cent.

The report said the deterioration in major fiscal indicators in 2020-21 may be attributed to the pandemic superimposed on a cyclical slowdown in tax revenues and a counter-pandemic fiscal push through higher government expenditure.

"Going forward, as growth revives and the economy gets back on track, it is important for the government to adhere to a clear exit strategy and build fiscal buffers, which can be tapped into in events of future shocks to

growth," the RBI said.

It also said that it will ensure a comfortable level of liquidity in the system during the current financial year and monetary transmission will continue "unimpeded".

The apex bank asked banks to closely monitor their bad loans and prepare themselves for higher provisioning in the wake of the second wave and the Supreme Court order lifting the ban on classification of non-performing assets. The waiver of compound interest on all loan accounts which opted for moratorium during March-August 2020 may put stress on banks' financial health. The RBI, however, noted that banks are better positioned than before in managing stress in their balance sheets in view of higher capital buffers, improvement in recoveries and a return to profitability.

## Prices of edible oils, pulses to pressure inflation

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, MAY 27

The sharp price rise in edible oils and pulses had led to historically high inflation in March. Pressure from these food items is likely to persist in view of supply-demand imbalances, says the RBI.

Oils and fats went through a sharp price build-up, leading to a historically high inflation of 24.9 per cent in March 2021. Precautionary buying on account of the pandemic and rise in interna-

tional prices of edible oils led to this adverse development. In fact, international food prices firmed up from June 2020, primarily led by palm oil, sunflower oil and soybean oil prices, driven by supply shortfalls as well as depreciation of the US dollar, the RBI said in its annual report.

In order to contain the price escalation, basic customs duty (BCD) on crude palm oil was revised down to 27.5 per cent from 37.5 per cent with effect from November 27, 2020. However, it got revised fur-

ther to 32.5 per cent when the agricultural infrastructure development cess was introduced in the budget. Increasing global prices, increase in export levy on crude palm oil by Indonesia from December 2020 and imposition of 8 per cent export tax on crude palm oil by Malaysia from January 2021 kept prices high.

Similarly, prices of pulses recorded a 45-month high inflation of 22.8 per cent in April 2020 primarily led by tur and urad. Prices witnessed robust

growth during the months of April-May and September-November 2020, reflecting stockpiling by consumers, lockdown and rain related supply disruption and a decline in kharif pulses production, higher exports and lower imports during April-February 2020-21.

The government released 2 lakh tonnes of tur from the buffer stock through open market sales, extended the time limit for import of tur under an import quota of 4 lakh tonnes for 2020-21 as

on December 31, 2020, expedited imports of urad under the already issued import quota of 1.5 lakh tonnes and extended the MoU with Mozambique for import of 2 lakh tonnes of tur for another five years. With pulses production rising by 6 per cent for 2020-21 over 2019-20, tur, gram and masur prices eased during December 2020-February 2021.

However, the RBI expects that pressures from pulses and edible oils might persist in view of supply-demand imbalances.

BEZOS WILL PASS  
BATON TO NEW  
CEO ON JULY 5

Jeff Bezos Andy Jassy

New York, May 27: Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has picked a date to step down as CEO.

Bezos, who grew Amazon from an internet bookstore to an online shopping behemoth, said on Wednesday that Amazon executive Andy Jassy will take over the CEO role on July 5.

"We chose that date because it's sentimental for me," Bezos said during an Amazon shareholder meeting. He explained that it was exactly 27 years ago on that date in 1994 that Amazon was incorporated.

Seattle-based Amazon.com Inc announced that Bezos was stepping down as CEO in February, but didn't provide a specific date. Jassy, his replacement, currently runs the company's cloud-computing business.

— AP

Cadila seeks human trial  
nod for antibody cocktail

May 27: Zydus Cadila has sought regulatory approval for clinical trials of its antibody cocktail to treat mild Covid-19, as the country grapples with a shortage of medicines and vaccines needed to effectively tackle a devastating second wave of the pandemic.

The treatment candidate, ZRC-3308, was earlier shown to reduce lung damage during animal trials, the drugmaker said, adding it was found to be safe and well-tolerated.

The therapy is a cocktail of two monoclonal antibodies, which mimic natural antibodies that the body generates to fight infection.

"At this juncture, there is a critical need to explore safer and more efficacious treatments to combat Covid," Zydus Cadila's managing director, Sharvil Patel, said in a stock exchange filing.

The company is seeking permission to conduct early-to late-stage human clinical trials from the Drugs Controller General of India.

The US FDA has given emergency use authorisations to similar treatments developed by Vir Biotechnology and GlaxoSmith-Kline as well as ones made

Paytm eyes \$3 bn  
IPO, more than  
\$25 bn valuationSARITHA RAI  
MAY 27

Vijay Shekhar Sharma

Paytm, India's leading digital payments provider, is aiming to raise about ₹21,800 crore (\$3 billion) in an initial public offering late this year, according to a person familiar with the deal, in what could be the country's largest debut ever.

The startup, backed by investors including Berkshire Hathaway Inc, SoftBank Group Corp and Ant Group Co, plans to list in India around November and its offering could coincide with the Diwali festival season, said the person, asking not to be named because the details are private.

Paytm, formally called One97 Communications Ltd, is targeting a valuation of around \$25 billion to \$30 billion. The One97 board plans to meet this Friday to formally approve the IPO, said the person. Paytm declined to comment in response to emailed questions.

If successful, Paytm's initial share sale would surpass Coal India Ltd's offering, which raised more than Rs 15,000 crore in 2010 in the country's largest IPO so far. Banks shortlisted to run the Paytm offering include Morgan Stanley, Citigroup Inc and JPMorgan Chase & Co, with Morgan Stanley the leading tender, the person said.

The process is expected to get rolling in late June or early July. The banks did not immediately respond

to requests for comment.

The public market debut will include a mix of new and existing shares to meet regulatory obligations in India. The country's regulations require that 10 per cent of shares are floated within two years and 25 per cent within five years. Paytm, led by founder and chief executive officer Vijay Shekhar Sharma, has been focusing on ramping up revenue and monetising its services over the past year. It's expanded beyond digital payments into banking, credit cards, financial services, wealth management and digital wallets. It also supports India's financial payments backbone, the Unified Payments Interface or UPI.

Paytm has fended off stiff competition from a swathe of global players including Walmart Inc-owned PhonePe, Google Pay, Amazon Pay as well as Facebook Inc-owned WhatsApp Pay. It has the biggest market share of India's merchant payments. Paytm has over 20 million merchant partners and its users make 1.4 billion monthly transactions. — Bloomberg

Multiple events fuelling  
stock market 'bubble'RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, MAY 27

The RBI has warned of a bubble formation in the Indian equity market in the context of a sharp contraction in GDP in 2020-21 and soaring stock prices.

The widening gap between stretched asset prices relative to prospects for recovery in real economic activity, has emerged as a global policy concern, the RBI said in its Economic Review, as the central bank wondered if the bubble in stock markets rational?

"Prices of risky assets surged across the countries due to unparalleled levels of monetary and fiscal stimulus, and the turn in market sentiments following positive news on the development of and access to vaccines and the end of uncertainty surrounding US election results," RBI said.

"India's equity prices also surged to record highs, with the benchmark index (Sensex) crossing 50,000 mark on January 21, 2021 to touch

a peak of 52,154 on February 15, 2021, which represents a 100.7 per cent increase from the slump just before beginning of the nationwide lockdown (i.e., since March 23, 2020) and a 68.0 per cent increase over the year 2020-21. This order of asset price inflation in the context of the estimated 8 per cent contraction in GDP in 2020-21 poses the risk of a bubble," the apex bank noted.

"The stock price index is mainly driven by money supply and FPI investments. Economic prospects also contribute to movement in the stock market, but the impact is relatively less compared to money supply and FPI."

According to the RBI, the present stock market valuation, by comparing the price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio with its historical trend, the trailing P/E ratio of Sensex hovering between 30 to 35 (31.9 on Thursday) was at an all time high since the year 2000. "The deviation of the actual P/E from its long-run trend shows that the ratio is overvalued."

Measures of dividend

yield also signal that markets are getting overpriced, it said. A decomposition of changes in equity prices indicate that the rise in equity prices during 2016 to early 2020 was mainly supported by a decrease in interest rates and equity risk premium, with increase in forward earnings expectations contributing to a lesser extent.

Thereafter, a spike in ERP on Covid-19 concerns initially contributed to equity prices declining sharply to compensate for increased risks. However, equity prices registered an impressive recovery, subsequently, aided by easing of equity risk premium," the RBI said.

"Currently, dividend yields have fallen below their long-term trends. As such, two-way price movements are possible going forward."

The RBI attributed the record stock market rise to multiple events, including liquidity infusion by the central bank, government's ₹1.5 lakh crore PLI schemes for 10 sectors and record high FPI inflows, among others.

## EXTRAORDINARY | YEAR

## Consumer staples, healthcare sectors generated highest listing gains

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, MAY 27

The RBI annual report, released on Thursday throws light on primary equity market dynamics as FY20-21 proved to be a year of decadal high average IPO listing returns at 36 per cent, which according to the RBI, might have been fuelled by oversubscription along with other factors in play, like underpricing of IPO as well as consumer-focused businesses attracting listing premium.

"The exuberance witnessed in the secondary market gripped the pri-

mary market, with the year 2020-21 turning out to be an extraordinary one for initial public offers (IPOs) by Indian companies, as 21 out of 29 IPOs have generated positive returns for investors on listing," the RBI said.

"A sector wise analysis of 201 IPOs over the last 10 years (2011-12 to 2020-21) indicates that IPOs from consumer staples and healthcare sectors generated the highest listing gains in India."

Main board IPO average listing returns in the last 10 years (sector-wise) were—consumer staples (27.5 per cent), healthcare (21.4

per cent), industrials (16.5 per cent), materials (15.4 per cent), information technology (15.2 per cent), consumer discretionary (14.6 per cent), financials (12.7 per cent) and communication services (4.3 per cent).

"The firm specific characteristics are found to be not statistically significant in explaining the price run-ups on the IPO listing day," RBI said and felt oversubscription as a major factor for the listing gains/returns.

"Thus, the decadal high average IPO listing returns of 36 per cent realised during 2020-21



might have been fuelled by an average oversubscription rate of 71.3 times of IPO issue size."

Delving on underpricing of IPOs as one of the reasons for higher listing gains, the RBI said, "Information asymmetry is regarded as the root

cause of underpricing wherein the issuer deliberately under prices its IPO to attract uninformed investors. Other reasons are providing compensation to investors by the issuers for undertaking ex-ante uncertainty risk."

"Intuitively, a higher oversubscription rate is a signal to the investors in the secondary market on the potential increase in share prices and expected returns."

Also, RBI's study of last 10 years IPOs on BSE and NSE suggest's that IPOs issued during the boom period are relatively more underpriced,

The primary segment witnessed increased activity during 2020-21. Resource mobilisation through IPOs, follow-on public offers (FPOs) and rights issues increased by 43.1 per cent to Rs 1.1 lakh crore during 2020-21 from Rs 76,965 crore in the previous year, the RBI said.

Of these, Rs 46,060 crore were mobilised through 57 IPO/FPO issues, out of which 27 issues amounting to Rs 246 crore were listed on the SME platform of BSE and the NSE. Resource mobilisation through rights issues rose to Rs 64,059 crore in 2020-21 from Rs 55,642 crore.

ASCI ASKS  
INFLUENCERS TO  
DISCLOSE PAID  
BRAND PITCHES

Dolly Singh

Mumbai, May 27: Come June 14, 'influencers' with wide following on social media who advertise brands from their accounts will have to disclose paid partnerships, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) said on Thursday.

The self-regulatory body pegged the size of the digital influencers industry at \$150 million, with digital marketing coming a long way over the past few years.

It has been engaged in stakeholder interactions since last year and released a draft of the influencer advertising guidelines in February 2021.

Dhruv Chitgopekar, founding partner of the Collective Artists Network and the chief executive of Bigbang.Social, who was among those consulted, told reporters that influencers started off as "guerillas" on the marketing scene but are now at the forefront.

He exuded confidence that the guidelines will not result in any dip in revenues for such influencers and there will be better transparency.

Dolly Singh, a digital influencer, admitted that she has seen a dip in engagement ever since she started disclosing a paid partnership but urged everyone to be more optimistic.

ASCI secretary-general Manisha Kapoor said the organisation has hired technology firms to trawl content to identify non-disclosure.

Its chairman Subhash Kamath said so far it has seen 95 per cent compliance with its actions after flagging norm violations, and if nothing works, the body can also escalate it to the sectoral regulators. — PTI



## SHORT TAKES

## Nadal, Djokovic &amp; Roger in same half

**Paris:** Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer, the three most successful men in Grand Slam tennis history, were on Thursday all drawn in the same half of the French Open.

Having slipped to number three in the world, it was always likely that Nadal, the 13-time champion, would face top-ranked Djokovic before the final. The two great rivals could now meet in the semi-finals this year.

Djokovic is top seed and could possibly face 2009 winner Federer in the quarterfinals. All three men are chasing history at the French Open which starts on Sunday. Nadal and Federer are locked on 20 Grand Slams each while Djokovic, who has 18, can become the first man in over half a century to win all four majors on more than one occasion. — *AFP*

## Nagal misses French Open cut

**Paris:** India's top player Sumit Nagal could not make a hat-trick of Grand Slam main draw appearances following a straight-set defeat in the second round of the French Open Qualifying event here.

The Haryana youngster crashed out of the Clay Court major with a 3-6, 3-6 loss to Alejandro Tabilo from Chile, last night. In the engrossing contest that lasted one-and-a-half-hours, Nagal could break the serve of his rival, ranked 23 places below him at 146, only twice while he himself dropped his serve five times.

With the defeat of the 23-year-old from Hajar, India's challenge has ended in the Qualifiers.

Ramkumar Ramanathan, Prajnesh Guneshwaran and Ankita Raina have already exited from the tournament. — *PTI*

## Osaka won't talk to media in France

**Paris:** Tennis star Naomi Osaka says she is not going to speak to the media during the upcoming French Open.

The world's highest-earning female athlete wrote in a Twitter post on Wednesday that she hopes the considerable amount that I get fined for this will go towards a mental health charity.

The French Open is scheduled to begin Sunday in Paris. Osaka heads into the clay-court tournament ranked No. 2 in the world. The 23-year-old Osaka has won four Grand Slam titles. That includes last year's U.S. Open and the Australian Open this February.

"I've often felt that people have no regard for athletes mental health and this very true whenever I see a press conference or partake in one," wrote Osaka. — *AP*

## Athletes to be vaccinated for Oly

**New Delhi:** Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Thursday said all the Tokyo Games-bound athletes and officials have got their first Covid-19 vaccine and they will get their second doses before their departure from the country for the multi-sporting spectacle. "The IOA is ... ensuring that all the participants through the IOA for the Tokyo Olympics including athletes, technical officials and delegate members will follow all precautions and will be vaccinated before leaving for Japan," the IOA said.

"... presently each of the above (athletes, technical officials and delegate members) has had the first vaccination and 2nd will happen as per vaccination protocols," IOA President Narinder Batra and Secretary General Rajiv Mehta said. — *PTI*

## 76ers exorcise Wizards 120-95

**Los Angeles:** Ben Simmons silenced the critics with a 22 point, nine rebound, eight assist performance as the Philadelphia 76ers routed the Washington Wizards 120-95 to grab a 2-0 playoff series lead on Wednesday. Joel Embiid also scored 22 points and grabbed seven rebounds while Tobias Harris garnered 19 points. Simmons too scored 12 points in 76ers win. — *AFP*



Villarreal players celebrate winning the Europa League final against Manchester United in Gdansk, Poland, on Wednesday.

— *AP*

## WILL-A-REAL!

## Gutsy Villarreal kill Man U with last kick in sudden death

**Gdansk (Poland), May 27:** Villarreal defeated Manchester United 11-10 on penalties to win their first major trophy after a 1-1 draw in the Europa League final as goalkeeper David de Gea missed the decisive spot-kick in a remarkable shootout.

Gerard Moreno gave Villarreal the lead 29 minutes into the Spanish club's first European final, but Edinson Cavani equalised early in the second half before Unai Emery's team prevailed on spot-kicks, extending United's four-year trophy drought.

Eric Bailly replaced the injured Harry Maguire in central defence, with the United captain surprisingly named among the substitutes despite suffering ankle ligament damage two weeks ago.

De Gea started ahead of Dean Henderson in goal, while Paul Pogba took up a more orthodox midfield role as Fred was only deemed fit enough for a spot on the bench.

An early collision between Juan Foyth and Pogba left the former Tottenham defender bloodied but both sides were slow to click into gear on a damp and chilly night on the Baltic coast.

Carlos Bacca's clever rabona cross created an opportunity for Pau



Villarreal players throw their coach Unai Emery into the air as they celebrate winning the Europa League final match against Manchester United in Gdansk, Poland, on Wednesday.

— *AP*

Torres, the centre-back linked with a summer move to United, while Marcus Rashford tested Geronimo Rulli with a dipping effort from distance.

Jeremy Pino scuffed wide on the counter, but Villarreal were soon ahead.

Dani Parejo swung in a free-kick from the left and Moreno peeled away from Luke Shaw and Victor Lindelof, steering beyond

De Gea as the Swede desperately tugged at his shirt.

Moreno's 82nd goal for Villarreal equalled the club record of former Manchester United forward Giuseppe Rossi.

United continued to dominate possession as Villarreal soaked up the pressure, but the Spaniards remained a threat as Torres curled over at the end of normal time.

Weariness and a raft of substitutions slowed the tempo in the closing stages as the rain intensified with penalties almost inevitable.

The first 21 penalties were successfully converted before De Gea had his attempt palmed away by Rulli as United lost for the sixth time in seven shootouts, handing Emery a record fourth Europa League crown.

— *AFP*

## RASHFORD FACES RACIST ABUSE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**Gdansk (Poland), May 27:** Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford said on Thursday he faced "at least 70 racial slurs" on social media after his team's loss on penalties to Villarreal in the Europa League final.

"At least 70 racial slurs on my social accounts counted so far," Rashford wrote on *Twitter* less than 90 minutes after the game finished.

"For those working to make me feel any worse than I already do, good luck trying," the tweet added.

Rashford added he was outraged that he was sent a mountain of monkey emojis in a message from a person using a profile which identified them as a teacher.

"Yes I'm a black man and I live every day proud that I am, he wrote at the time.

No one, or no one comment, is going to make me feel any different. So sorry if you were looking for a strong reaction, you're just simply not going to get it here," he further added. — *AP*

## Zidane resigns as R. Madrid coach with immediate effect

**Madrid, May 27:** Zinedine Zidane has resigned as Real Madrid manager with immediate effect, the Spanish club said Thursday just days after they were beaten to the La Liga title by Atletico Madrid.

The Frenchman's departure comes at the end of a disappointing campaign for the 13-time European champions, who also lost to Chelsea in the Champions League semi-finals, as they failed to win a trophy for the first time in 11 seasons.

"We must now respect his decision and express our gratitude for his professionalism, dedication and passion over the years and what he means to Real Madrid," a club statement said.

"Zidane is one of Real Madrid's great icons and his legacy extends beyond what he has achieved as a coach and player at our club," it added.



Zinedine Zidane

Only 10 days ago Zidane, who has a contract until 2022, denied press speculation he had already told his players he would be leaving at the end of the season.

"How am I going to tell my players that I am going now? It's a lie," he said after a 1-0 win at Athletic Bilbao.

"I'm focused on this season. There is a game left and we are going to give everything. I only care what happens in this finale," he said.

But, perhaps tellingly, he added: "The rest, we will see at the end of the season." — *AFP*

## INTER MANAGER ANTONIO BIDS GOODBYE TO TEAM

**Milan, May 27:** Antonio Conte parted company with Inter Milan on Wednesday just days after lifting their first Italian league title in 11 years amid clashes with the club's cash-strapped Chinese owners on the way forward.

The ambitious Italian refused Suning's planned cost cutting which would have prevented him building the team he wanted to challenge at home and in Europe. The former Chelsea and Juventus boss took over in May 2019 on a three-year contract worth a reported 12 million euros (\$14 million) annually.

But the 51-year-old leaves the San Siro one year early, Inter confirming "an agreement has been reached with Antonio Conte for the termination of his contract by mutual consent".

"Antonio Conte will forever remain a part of our club's history," the statement added.

Severing Conte's contract has cost the club a reported seven million euros (\$8.5 million), while his final year's salary would have been around 12 million. As part of the deal Conte will not be allowed to coach another Italian league club next season, according to reports. — *AFP*

**New Delhi, May 27:** Denied entry into a restaurant on the basis of his skin colour recently, former Grand Prix driver-turned TV expert Karun Chandhok says more awareness needs to be created against racism through Formula 1 though it has already taken "impressive" steps to address the issue.

Chandhok competed in Formula 1 between 2009-2010. He is now a well-respected commentator and alongside seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton, one of the few non-white faces seen in

the paddock.

After posting about his recent experience at a restaurant during the Monaco GP last week, Chandhok said on social media that he would not dwell on the past but focus on contributing to make the sport more diverse including having more Indians on board. He didn't reveal in which country the incident took place.

"I'm not really interested in talking about the past (about that incident) - the key is to talk about the future. We need to understand and learn why more



Karun Chandhok

people from non-white haven't been able to get involved in the sport and Formula 1 plus Lewis via his Hamilton Commission are doing some very important research to understand that,"

Chandhok said.

"Formula 1 at the moment has really taken up the cause of improving diversity within the sport.

"Historically, this is a sport where over 90 per cent of the people involved have been white and therefore as one of the few people from a minority ethnic background, I'm very encouraged to see that F1 as a sport and the teams as participants are taking steps to change that balance," said Chandhok.

Formula 1 has shown more intent in addressing racism after Hamilton

said the sport was not doing enough for the cause.

He also lamented the lack of support from some of the fellow drivers.

"While drivers are of course the most high profile and someone like Lewis has been very vocal about the topic, the reality is that the drivers are a small number of people when compared to engineers, mechanics, commercial and marketing people, TV pundits and journalists, marshals and officials, etc that make up the sport," he further added.

— *PTI*

## Mark not happy with ECB's take

**London, May 27:** Former opener Mark Butcher feels the ECB should have agreed to the BCCI's request to change the Test series schedule to accommodate the remaining games of IPL as it would have given the England Board the leverage to get top Indian players for its 'Hundred' tournament.

The Indian Board had informally made a request to shift the five-match Test series between India and England, starting August 4, by a week in order to accommodate the remaining 31 IPL games but it has not met with any favourable response from England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

"Well, listen. I take a deep breath here ... as does the nation. I think it's a massive missed opportunity," Butcher said during the latest Wisden Cricket Weekly Podcast.

Butcher said accepting the request would have given ECB the leverage to get top Indian cricketers such as Virat Kohli and M. S. Dhoni for 'The Hundred' tournament, the ECB's flagship project.

"...the ECB is absolutely desperate to make this (Hundred) work. They have to be, they have bet the house on The Hundred, but at every turn, it seems a greater power doesn't want it to happen," said Butcher.

"And so for me, this was the opportunity where you'll say 'Okay, we'll bite the bullet... We would do this for the BCCI on the proviso that we get Kohli, Dhoni, whoever we like, signed up for three years to play in The Hundred, starting 2022'," he added.

The inaugural edition of 'The Hundred', a 100-ball tournament involving eight men's and women's



**I think it's a massive missed opportunity. The ECB is absolutely desperate to make this (Hundred) work. They have to be, they have bet the house on The Hundred, but at every turn, it seems a greater power doesn't want it to happen.**

— **MARK BUTCHER**  
former England player

teams, was scheduled to take place last year but was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"And you have leverage for the first time ever: you have something that they need, that they want. Obviously, the BCCI will lose a lot of money if they don't get the IPL in the window," Butcher said.

"You also have the extraordinary spectacle of the IPL being finished at the behest or because of English cricket. And you use that lever in order to get something you desperately need. So I think there's an opportunity missed," he added.

The IPL was suspended early this month after multiple Covid-19 cases were reported inside its bio-bubble. — *PTI*

## PHYSICIAN WARNS ABOUT VIRUS THREAT IN GAMES

**Tokyo, May 27:** A physician representing a Japanese medical body warned Thursday that holding the postponed Tokyo Olympics in two months could lead to the spread of variants of the Coronavirus.

Dr. Naoto Ueyama, chairman of the Japan Doctors Union, said the International Olympic Committee and the Japanese government had underestimated the risks of bringing 15,000 Olympic and Paralympic athletes into the country, joined by tens of thousands of officials, judges, media and broadcasters from more than 200 countries and territories.

"Since the emergence of Covid-19 there has not been such a dangerous gathering of people coming together in one place from so many different places around the world," Ueyama said, speaking in Tokyo at the Foreign

Correspondents' Club of Japan. "It's very difficult to predict what this could lead to," he added.

Ueyama continually likened the virus to a conventional war situation, and said he was speaking from his own experience as a hospital physician who works just outside Tokyo. He has not been involved in any of the Olympic planning.

"I think the key here is if a new mutant strain of the virus were to arise as a result of this, the Olympics," he added.

The IOC and local organisers said they have been relying on the WHO for public-health guidance. They say the Olympics and Paralympics will be safe and secure, focused on extensive testing, strict protocols, social distancing, and keeping athletes largely isolated in the Olympic Village alongside Tokyo Bay. — *AP*

## Mary stands tall, cruises into final

**Dubai, May 27:** Six-time world champion M. C. Mary Kom (51kg) and Sakshi (54kg) stormed into the Asian Boxing Championship finals after notching up gruelling victories in their last-four stage bouts here on Thursday.

While Mary Kom prevailed 4-1 over Mongolia's Lutsaikhana Altantsetseg, two-time youth world champion Sakshi upstaged top-seeded Kazakh Dina Zholaman 3-2.

However, Monika (48kg) settled for a bronze medal after going down 0-5 to second-seeded Alua Balkibekova of Kazakhstan. The top-seeded Mary Kom dug from her huge reservoir of experience to outwit the sprightly Altantsetseg.

The veteran's right hooks were particularly impressive in a compelling performance. She fought with a perilously low guard despite the aggressive intent shown by her rival and relied on her sharp reflexes to score on counter-attacks. The 33-year-old

will now be gunning for her sixth gold medal at the continental showpiece. She will be up against Kazakhstan's Nazym Kyzaybay.

Sakshi also endured a tough one against Zholaman but came out triumphant, riding on her grit.

Earlier, in an intense contest, Monika just could not keep pace with Balkibekova, who craftily dodged the Indian's attacks and connected some eye-catching combination punches to dominate the proceedings.

On Wednesday night, Ashish Kumar (75kg) lost 2-3 to Asian Games silver medalist Abilkhan Amankul of Kazakhstan in the quarterfinal. Also going down in the quarters was Narender (+91kg). He lost 0-5 to Kazakhstan's Kamshibek Kunkabayev.

On Friday, five Indian men — Amit Panghal (52kg), Varinder Singh (60kg), Shiva Thapa (64kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg) and Sanjeet (91kg) — will fight it out in the semifinals. — *PTI*