

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | WEDNESDAY | 2 JUNE 2021

WEATHER

 **Max:** 37.4°C
Min: 25.6°C
RH: 38%
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Rain likely. Max/Min
temp. 39/26°C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Vaishakha Bahula Asthami
till 1.15 am (Thursday)
Star: Satabhisham till 5.30 pm
Varjyam: 11.52 pm to
1.35 am (Thursday)
Durmuhurtam: 11.48 am to
12.39 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Shawwal 20, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.32 am
Zohar: 12.24 pm
Asar: 4.49 pm
Maghrib: 6.53 pm
Isha: 8.09 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.47 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.41 AM
MOONRISE --
MOONSET TODAY 11.23 AM

COUNTER POINT



He recovered from Covid, but got a heart attack after seeing the hospital bill!

SHORT TAKES

PRASAD, EX-CS OF UNITED AP, PASSES AWAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

S.V. Prasad, former chief secretary to erstwhile combined Andhra Pradesh, died of Covid at a private hospital here on Tuesday. He was 70.

Prasad's wife Lakshmi and his two sons, Vardhan and Sailesh, were also admitted to the hospital after they were tested positive. While the family recovered from the virus and was initially in home isolation, they developed post-Covid symptoms and were hospitalised.

According to close relatives, doctors performed a brain surgery on the ex-official and his wife a few days ago to remove clots. While Prasad breathed his last in the morning, doctors said his wife was in a critical condition. Both sons are stable.

■ More on Page 2

Human case of bird flu in China

Beijing: China has reported the first case of human infection with the H10N3 strain of bird flu from the country's eastern Jiangsu province, China's National Health Commission said on Tuesday. The patient, a 41-year-old man from Zhenjiang city, is currently in a stable condition and meets discharge standards, the state-run CGTN TV reported. Officials said the risk of causing a pandemic was extremely low.

■ Full report on page 5

Brics resolves against terrorism

New Delhi: Five-nation grouping Brics on Tuesday resolved to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the cross-border movement of terrorists, and vowed to step up joint efforts in building support for an India-backed global framework to deal with the menace. At an India-hosted virtual meeting, the foreign ministers of Brics countries vowed to finalise a "result-oriented action plan" by the bloc's counter-terrorism working group in 2021.

WORLD | 5

New Vatican law criminalises abuse

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Hyderabad gets back to normalcy



Roads were chock-o-block at Mozamjahi Market in Hyderabad on the second day of an extended relaxation in lockdown on Tuesday. More number of people have come out and resume their works because of relaxation of lockdown norms. — P. SURENDRA

HC to state: Take steps to refund excess hosp. fees

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

The Telangana High Court directed the state government to immediately initiate steps to refund the excess amount collected by private hospitals from Covid-19 patients.

The division bench comprising Chief Justice Hima Kohli and Justice B. Vijayesen-Reddy asked Advocate-General B.S. Prasad, to convey the government about the court's concern and ensure that it would be implemented.

The A-G submitted that he would convey the message and come up with the response of the government on Wednesday.

The bench was dealing with the batch of PILs on Covid-19. During the adjudication, several counsels

We are aware of the situations where the relatives of Covid patients are mortgaging gold, and approaching money lenders to pay hospital bills to save their kins' life."

— CJ HIMA KOHLI

raised concerns that the government has not so far issued new GOs on fixing a cap on prices for the treatment of Covid-19, and for tests like CT scan.

The bench specifically directed the government in May, to issue fresh GOs fixing the maximum prices to all the medical services, tests and medical equipment. Despite the court orders, the government has not issued a single GO in this regard.

When this was ques-

tioned by the bench, the Advocate-General replied that showcase notices were issued to the private hospitals on the 115 complaints received against fleeing of money.

He also submitted that licences to treat Covid -19 to a few private hospitals had been cancelled, after the enquiry reports mentioned that excess amounts were charged by them.

Reacting to it, Justice Kohli questioned, "How will these steps help the victims, who already have been fleeced? Of course, issuing of show cause notices, and cancellation of licences are parts of work. But, what is the position of the patients who paid money to save their lives?"

■ Page 2: Cancelling licence won't help fleeced patients

Bengal's ex-CS gets notice for violation of disaster Act

DC CORRESPONDENTS
KOLKATA/NEW DELHI, JUNE 1

In a move that may further escalate tensions between the Centre and the Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal government, the Union home ministry late on Monday evening slapped a showcase notice on 1987-batch IAS officer Alapan Bandyopadhyay hours before he retired as the state's chief secretary after rejecting a three-month extension.

The notice, under Section 51 of the Disaster Management Act 2005, which is punishable by a prison term of up to two years or a fine, or both, was served to the state's former top bureaucrat as he skipped a review meeting chaired by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi on May 28 on the devastation by Cyclone Yaas in the state.

Mr Bandyopadhyay, who has been appointed by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as her chief adviser for three years after he retired from service, was directed to "explain in writing" to the ministry within three days on "why action should not be taken against him" under Section 51 of the DM Act. This particular section relates to "punishment for obstruction" for refusal to comply with a direction given by the Central government.

The notice states: "The officer, by abstaining himself from the review meeting taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

at cyclone-affected Kalai-kunda in West Bengal on May 28, has acted in a manner tantamount to refusing to comply with the lawful directions of the Central government and is thus violative of Section 51(b) of the Disaster Management Act 2005."

"After the Prime Minister arrived at Kalai-kunda for a scheduled review meeting with the chief minister and chief secretary of West Bengal, the Prime Minister and other members of his entourage waited for nearly 15 minutes for the officers of the state to arrive."

Sources at Nabanna, the state secretariat, claimed on Tuesday evening that Mr Bandyopadhyay would reply to the MHA's notice, citing proper grounds.

SPORTS | 8

Osaka pulls out of French Open

TABLOID

An ode to nature



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Telangana put growth on fast track in 7 years

Despite minor hiccups, state performed well on most metrics

L. VENKAT RAM
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

Telangana state has completed seven years of its formation and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, seven years in power on Wednesday.

Though the state under the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) government made rapid strides in agriculture, irrigation, power, industries sectors, welfare schemes etc in the past seven years, the government is facing a challenge of keeping state finances in order due to the Covid-induced financial crisis in its seventh year.

On the political front, the TRS and Chandrashekar Rao emerged stronger by sweeping Graduate MLC polls, Warangal, Khammam corporation polls and Nagarjunasagar bypoll recently, though they faced minor setbacks in GHMC polls and Dubbak bypoll in 2020-end.

The government is now struggling to fund its welfare schemes and development programmes forcing

SEVEN YEARS ON, TELUGU STATES WAIT FOR BIFURCATION PROMISES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

Seven years after Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated on June 2, 2014, both Telangana and the residuary state of Andhra Pradesh continue to suffer bifurcation blues as most of the promises made by the Centre to both the states in the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, remaining unfulfilled.

Distribution of assets and liabilities of common institutions listed under Schedule 9 and 10 of the Act, mostly located in Hyderabad are still pending with both states fight-

ing cases in courts.

There are 107 institutions listed under Schedule 10, of which 97 are located in TS, mostly in Hyderabad, it being the capital of undivided Andhra Pradesh for nearly six decades. There are another 89 institutions listed under Schedule 9 of AP Reorganisation Act.

All these institutions together have assets worth thousands of crores of rupees in the form of assets and bank deposits, on which both the governments are staking claim.

■ Page 2: Water disputes affect AP-TS ties

the state Cabinet to take a decision on May 30 to sell off government lands and housing board houses and flats to raise at least ₹30,000 crore this year.

Telangana state came into existence on June 2, 2014 as a 'revenue-surplus

state' giving ample scope for the Chief Minister to spend over ₹50,000 crore on welfare schemes per year and launch a slew of development projects by spending lakhs of crores of rupees.

In the process, Chandra-

shekar Rao created a record of making Telangana the only state to provide tap water to every household through Mission Bhagiratha, 24x7 free power supply to farmers, 10,000 per acre per year to 60 lakh farmers totalling to over ₹14,000 crore per year towards Rythu Bandhu, ₹5 lakh free insurance for farmers under Rythu Bima, ₹2,000 crore per year for Aasara pensions, ₹1 per kg rice, ₹1 lakh financial assistance to perform marriage of daughters under Kalyana Laxmi and Shaadi Mubarak with an outlay of ₹2,750 crore, distribution of sheep and the list goes on.

The government could spend nearly ₹1 lakh crore for Kaleshwaram, the world's largest lift project in just two years.

In the agriculture sector, Telangana witnessed phenomenal food grains production of over 1 crore metric tonnes and stands second only to Punjab in the country.

■ Page 2: Covid pushed state into fiscal crisis

COVID 2ND WAVE IS NOW ABATING, SAYS CENTRE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

The Central government on Tuesday said that the "ferocious" second wave is abating as more than half of the country's total districts have less than five per cent positivity at present.

According to data on Covid cases collated by Covid19india.org, the country has recorded 1,32,439 cases on Tuesday, which is a tad higher than the Monday figure.

However, 86,033 cases or 64 per cent of the total cases on Tuesday were reported from five states — Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh — that have more than 10,000 cases each.

SC brings back IGST on imported oxygen gadgets

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 1

The levy of 12 per cent Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on oxygen concentrators imported or gifted for personal use is back.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed an order of the Delhi High Court that had held that May 1, 2021, finance ministry notification imposing 12 per cent IGST was unconstitutional.

The top court bench comprising Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Justice M.R. Shah stayed the HC order which held that, during the Covid pandemic, the oxygen concentrators constitute a life-saving device and, therefore, should be treated on par

The HC order was stayed by the apex court after A-G said the GST Council will discuss this issue on June 8

with life-saving drugs.

"We are staying the operation of the High Court order till further orders," the court said in its order.

The HC order was stayed by the Supreme Court after Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal told the court that the GST Council is meeting on June 8 to deliberate on granting an exemption to essential commodities related to Covid-19, including oxygen concentrators.

The Attorney-General also informed the court that the IGST exemption to state and its agencies

for import of O2 concentrators was given as these were to be given free to poor and needy.

The High Court order holding the finance ministry notification as unconstitutional had come on a petition filed by a senior citizen Gurcharan Singh who had challenged the vices of the notification invoking Article 21C guaranteeing the right to life that also includes the right to health.

By May 1, 2021, notification, the GST on oxygen concentrators was reduced from earlier 28 per cent to 12 per cent. The petitioner had knocked on the doors of the Delhi High Court after he was asked to pay IGST on the oxygen concentrators sent to him as a gift by his nephew.

CBSE, ISC Class 12 exams cancelled

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, JUNE 1

Putting an end to the suspense on holding of the CBSE Class 12 exams, the Centre on Tuesday announced its cancellation, in both online and offline modes. The CBSE will now compile Class 12 results as per a "well defined objective criteria" in a "time-bound manner", the gov-

ernment said after a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Those students who still want to take the exams for evaluation will have that option when the Covid-19 situation improves. The Prime Minister said the decision on the CBSE Class 12 was taken in the interest of the students as the pandemic had affected the academic calendar and

the board exams issue was causing immense anxiety among students, their parents and teachers, "which must be put to an end".

Soon after the Centre announced this decision, the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) said its Indian School Certificate (ISC) Class 12 board examination would also be cancelled in view of the Covid-

19 situation. "The exams have been cancelled. The alternative assessment criteria will be announced soon," CISCE secretary Gerry Arathoon said.

"Health and safety of our students is of utmost importance. In today's time, such exams cannot be the reason to put our youth at risk... All stakeholders need to show sensitivity for students," the PM said.

AMATEUR | TRIP

Prashant says Pak officials suspected him to be spy; he learnt Urdu in prison during 4-yr stay

City techie who strayed into Pak on love trail returns

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

A Hyderabad-based software engineer who had crossed over into Pakistan on his way to meet his lover in Switzerland, and was arrested by the police in Bhawalpur, Pakistan, was repatriated through the Wagah border on Monday.

Waindam Prashant, a resident of Madhapur and a native of Vizag, was brought back to Hyderabad on Tuesday evening, said Cyberabad police commis-

sioner V.C. Sajjanar.

On April 29, 2017, a missing case was lodged at the Madhapur police station by Prashant's family. They said he had gone missing on April 11.

Later, a video purportedly posted by him saying that he was in a Pakistani prison while trying to go to Switzerland to meet his girlfriend, was found in social media sites.

After the video went viral, his father Babu Rao approached the Cyberabad police and the state and Central governments for

Prashant, 32, had allegedly planned to impress the girl he was in love with by walking till Switzerland and showing up at her doorstep.

help. "After continuous follow up by the Telangana state government with the minister of external affairs and the ministry of home affairs, Prashant was released and handed over to Indian authorities on May 31, who in turn handed over him to Madhapur

inspector P. Ravindra Prasad, in Attari, Punjab," said Sajjanar.

Prashant, 32, had allegedly planned to impress the girl he was in love with by walking till Switzerland and showing up at her doorstep. The amateurish planned adventure cost him four years of his life, he told the Madhapur inspector on his way back to the city.

Prashant could not speak Hindi before his 'escapade', but came back fluent in the local Urdu dialect and conversed easi-

ly with the authorities at the border, said Prasad, adding that the techie said he was overjoyed to speak in Telugu, his mother tongue, after four years.

The IT professional, who was around 28 when he jumped the fence and entered Pakistan, was found by the local authorities without a wallet or a mobile phone. "They were very sure that I was a spy connected to RAW," he said.

■ Page 2: Hyd techie regrets his escapade



Prashant (centre) embraces an unidentified person as Cyberabad police commissioner V.C. Sajjanar looks on at the latter's office in Hyderabad on Tuesday. — DC

SHORT TAKES

COURT DISMISSES
REVANTH'S PLEA
ON CASH-FOR-VOTE

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court dismissed a petition filed by TPCC working president A. Revanth Reddy, who had said that the cash-for-vote case would not come under the purview of the ACB. He had contended only the Election Commission can look it.

The High Court rejected the contentions of Revanth Reddy and made it clear that the ACB has jurisdiction to probe the bribery cases in which politicians are involved. Earlier, the ACB court had dismissed a similar petition filed by Revanth Reddy, and he had approached the High Court.

KISHAN RELEASES
AYUSH-64 MEDS
FOR COVID-19

Hyderabad: Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy released the Ayush-64 medicine developed under the aegis of the Union Ayush ministry for Covid-19 patients. The drug was formerly used for malaria, and has been tested upon Covid-19 patients. The National Research Institute of Unani will conduct clinical trials on people between the ages of 18 and 60.

Authorities are selecting asymptomatic patients and those with mild symptoms to test the medicine.

WATER DISPUTES
AFFECT AP-TS
RELATIONS

From Page 1

About ₹1,51,349 crore under capital heads, ₹28,099 crore under loans and advances, ₹4,474 crore under deposits and advances, ₹238 crore under suspense and miscellaneous, and ₹310 crore under remittances are yet to be apportioned even after seven years of bifurcation.

While the 'political rivalry' between Chief Ministers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, K. Chandrashekar Rao and, at that time, N. Chandrababu Naidu, respectively was attributed to delay in resolution of bifurcation issues between 2014 and 2019, the situation did not improve much even after the change of guard in AP after the YSRC government headed by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy stormed to power in 2019.

Jagan Mohan Reddy extended a 'friendly hand' to Chandrashekar Rao within days of becoming the Chief Minister by handing over all government buildings in Hyderabad including Secretariat and Legislative Assembly buildings to the Telangana state government which Naidu had refused to do till 2019 even after shifting the AP administration to Amaravati in 2016.

Though Chandrashekar Rao and Jagan Mohan Reddy initially displayed bonhomie by meeting over half a dozen times to resolve bifurcation issues, the situation is back to square one after the AP CM launched Rayalaseema lift irrigation scheme in May 2019 to divert Srisailem water, which fuelled 'water disputes' between both the states again after which both the Chief Ministers never met.

Even the Chief Secretary-level talks between the states to resolve bifurcation issues came to a halt in January 2019. The Centre, which is supposed to hold regular meetings with Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state governments to resolve bifurcation issues, did not conduct a meeting for nearly two years after August 2019 and recently held a meeting in April which ended abruptly with no consensus reached on any issue.

Stage set for digital
survey of lands in TS

KCR likely to hold a meet with the firms soon

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

The state government has initiated the process to undertake digital survey of lands in Telangana. The government had allocated Rs 400 crore in the recent 2021-22 budget for undertaking digital survey to safeguard every acre of land and determine the ownership of lands accurately with an aim to make Telangana a 'land dispute-free state'.

As a follow-up to this, chief secretary Somesh Kumar on Tuesday held a preliminary meeting with various survey agencies. As many as 17 firms participated in the meeting and discussed the modalities

METHODOLOGY, TECHNOLOGY to be adopted, time and cost factor, availability of survey equipment and technical persons, requirement of software, hardware and internet bandwidth were some of the issues which figured in the discussion.

while taking up similar surveys in other states. The methodology, technology to be adopted, time and cost factor, availability of survey equipment and technical persons, requirement of software, hardware and internet bandwidth were some of the issues which figured in the discussion.

Principal secretary industries Jayesh Rangan, commissioner of stamps and registration Seshadri, TSMS MD Venkateswar Rao, commissioner of settlements Sashidhar and other officials were present.

In the recent budget session of the Assembly, the Chief Minister said, "Once the survey is completed, there would

be complete clarity on all issues. Boundary disputes between farmers on agricultural land, dispute over government and forest lands and between forest lands and private lands will be resolved. There will be a solution to Podu lands too, and all such issues will be resolved in the next three or four months."

With the provision of land coordinates, he said, there would not be any scope for boundary disputes in the future. "In countries where land records are maintained properly, they have achieved 3 to 4 per cent GDP growth. The government is ready to have such a revolutionary change here," the Chief Minister said.

ARUNA BLASTS
TRS CADRE FOR
REMARKS
AGAINST ETALA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

BJP vice president D.K. Aruna on Monday objected to the comments of TRS leaders that former health minister Etala Rajendar had mortgaged his self-esteem to the BJP. She said that, rather, TRS leaders were currying favour with the CM to amass wealth.

Addressing the media online, she said the TRS leaders had no self-esteem, no soul and were stooping low to appease the CM to serve their own individual ends.

"Those who abused KCR during the Telangana movement are now enjoying their minister posts. Palla Rajeswar Reddy has contested the MLC polls by spending crores. Even then, he did not secure 30 per cent of the votes. He has no right to criticise the BJP," she said.

On agriculture issues, she asked: "Does the government not know the quantity of the grain that would arrive at the procurement centers? Have they started procurement this year? Do they not know the issues that would come up during the procurement?" She thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar for selecting five districts which were part of the old Mahabubnagar district for the crop cluster development programme.

The government has been successful in reviving and revitalising agricultural operations by constructing irrigation projects and stabilising the farm sector. The government was also successful in strengthening the rural economy. The CM said the people had contributed to the success and thanked them for the same.

Though a great economic loss had been caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, with the people's support the state is marching forward, he said. The faith and confidence reposed in him by the people, the CM said, is rock solid support. He said he would not rest till with the people's support he makes it Bangaru Telangana, a golden state.



Charminar is fully illuminated on the eve of Telangana Formation Day celebration in Hyderabad on Tuesday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

KCR: Will not rest until
'Bangaru' TS is achieved

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao said that he will not rest till his dream of "Bangaru Telangana" is achieved. In a press release issued by the Chief Minister's Office on Tuesday, the CM greeted the people of the state on the eve of the seventh Telangana State Formation Day on Wednesday.

"With many battles, sacrifices, martyrdom, we have achieved Telangana state in a parliamentary democratic way," the CM said. The state has excelled in all sectors within a short span of seven years, the state laid strong foundations and offered stability, he said.

"The Telangana state is fulfilling the de-

mands of the statehood movement one by one. Water for the irrigation and drinking, power, medical and health, roads and all other infrastructure facilities are being provided, reaching short-term and long-term aims," the CM said.

The CM said he is felt proud to announce that the 29th state had made rapid strides in the development and welfare sectors and became role model for the other states and the country as well.

Rao said that every sector that was neglected in undivided AP now being corrected. As Telangana society has constituted 90 per cent of people from the SC, ST, BC and minorities communities, the government has been working for their wel-

Bandi asks CM about jobs for youths

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD JUNE 1

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay said on Tuesday that though seven years have passed after the formation of Telangana, the youth in the state are suffering due to lack of jobs and employment.

"There was a Telangana movement for Neelulu, Nidulu, and Niyamakalu. But water went to the chief minister's farm house, funds went to his benamis

and employment was given to his family members. This is what happened since 2014," Sanjay said.

Addressing the media in Delhi, Bandi expressed concern that millions of youths in the state have no job for years and many educated are crossing their age limit for government jobs.

Some 25 lakh people have registered with the TSPSC for jobs in the state as was stated by former chairman of

TSPSC Ghanta Chakrapani. Sanjay also recalled that the Biswal Committee had announced that there existed some 2.90 lakh job vacancies in the state but unfortunately, the state government has not issued a Group 1 notification to fill these posts. Teacher posts were not filled after the formation of Telangana, he said, and added that the TRS government cheated the voters by saying they

would be given unemployment benefits before the Graduate MLC elections.

The BJP state president said the Chief Minister had promised that he will notify 50,000 jobs after the completion of the graduate quota MLC elections. "Till today, there is no such action."

He also said 12,000 education volunteers are starving due to the Corona spread. Nearly 20,000 contract employees were laid off.

main accused -- Kailash Gupta, Nitin Gupta, Nikhil Gupta and their firms, their chartered accountants, the gold bullion dealers and the major contributors of the black money involved in the fraud.

A total of 41 entities/individuals have been charged with the offence of money laundering. "They knowingly layered the amount into the bank accounts of Musaddilal Group to claim the same as untainted money, then converted the same into gold bullion which was further sold for profit," as per the case.

Vehicle check



Police Commissioner V.B. Kamalasan Reddy and other officials checking the identity of bikers who came out during the lockdown at Kamanchowrasta in Karimnagar on Tuesday. —DC

City techie regrets
his love escapade

From Page 1

"Prashant had met the girl for whom he crossed the border when he was working in Bengaluru. She was his colleague and was a native of north India who shifted to Switzerland. Hoping that he would win her heart by walking to Switzerland, he took off from home. He was staying with his brother Srikanth in Kukatpally before he left the state," said the Madhapur police inspector.

Prashant said there was a land route to Switzerland via Pakistan which takes about 60 days. Replying to a query in Punjab on Tuesday morning, he claimed he was beaten up by the Pakistani police, but did not want to fault them. He said he was treated well in the Lahore prison.

"On Tuesday afternoon, as we were heading back to the city, he asked me in Hindi if

we could eat something as he had not eaten anything since morning. After I replied in Telugu that we will stop for lunch, he had this glow in his eyes and was expressing how happy he is to speak in his mother tongue after four years.

He shared how he regrets the decisions and how he wasted four years of his prime youth behind a quest of a one-sided love," added the official.

Prashant, while thanking the Telangana government and external affairs ministry for their efforts to bring him back, said he did not expect that he would come back to India so soon.

"I owe a lot to the Telangana government and the Centre," he said. The family members of Prashant profusely thanked the Telangana government, the Centre and officials for getting Prashant released safely.

CANCELLING LICENCE WON'T HELP PATIENTS

From Page 1

"We are aware of the situations where the relatives of Covid patients are mortgaging gold, and approaching money lenders to pay hospital bills to save their kins' life."

"We are well aware that the hospitals are not discharging the patients or handing over the dead bodies unless the bill amount is paid fully.

The government should control it. Cancelling of licences cannot give any relief to the aggrieved patients.

At least, the amount, collected excessively, should be returned," the court said. The court also directed the Advocate General to submit the government's stand on not issuing new GOs fixing the price cap for Covid-19 treatment.

TS GOVT FAILED TO
CURB COVID-19,
SAYS CONGRESS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

Congress leaders said the state government had failed to curb the Covid-19 spread. Leaders including state party chief Uttam Kumar Reddy and CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka participated in a meeting via social media app on Tuesday as part of a "campaign to vaccinate everyone" as per the call given by AICC.

Reddy urged the government to include journalists in the list of frontline warriors and inform the public about remdesivir injection availability. The vaccination drive should be carried out without any halt, he proposed. He said the TRS government was failing to fulfill the promises it made to the people even after seven years in power. The central and state governments took the pandemic issue lightly after the first lockdown, he alleged.

He asked that when neighbouring states were offering Covid-19 treatment free, why was the TRS government not doing so? He demanded that the RT-PCR testing should be done free at all mandal centers. Bhatti said the government does not care about the problem of unemployment and does not care about giving unemployment benefits to youths.

He said Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had deceived the people. He said that AICC president Sonia Gandhi gave Telugus the separate state of Telangana but the aim for which it was created, namely to give employment to youths, had not been fulfilled.

The CLP leader said if the black fungus situation worsened in the state, a fear is that there will not be sufficient stock of medicines.

Explain plan to
tackle the third
wave: HC to TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday asked the state government to inform it about the plan of action formulated to counter a likely third wave of the coronavirus spread during which children are feared to be the worst-affected.

Chief Justice Hima Kohli said the court was surprised that the status report filed by the director of public health has reserved only one facility, the Niloufer Hospital, for treating such children. The court noted that the hospital has just a few beds.

Advocate L. Ravichander told the court about the bed availability in Niloufer Hospital, which he said was the only government hospital in Telangana State specializing in treatment for children. "Only eight ICU beds and 12 oxygen beds are available in the hospital to treat children in a critical condition," he said.

In response, Chief Justice Kohli said, "some 8,000 children hailing from one district in Maharashtra have been affected by Covid-19 during this wave. Going by this kind of (insufficient) preparedness, the health of our future generation is at stake."

The court noted that the counter filed by the public health director had given no details of the infrastructure, medical equipment and technical manpower to handle these machines, or of the requi-

site drugs for treating children in anticipation of the third wave.

"Several members of the advocate community have lost their lives due to the pandemic," Ravichander told the court.

He explained how a young advocate at age 35 lost his life, and complained that there was a serious shortfall of the medicines in the state. He said the state government continued to act contrary to court orders in relation to RTPCR tests and the tests for the old and the disabled.

Counsel Chikudu Prabhaker pointed out how the promised rations are not being supplied in the state and how the distressed poor are committing suicide.

Noting that several directions issued by the court in the past had not been complied with, the high court asked the public health director to appear before it on Wednesday, June 2, on virtual mode, and explain matters.

The court also directed the additional solicitor general representing the central government to inform it as to the quantities of the life-saving drugs that are supplied to the Telangana State for treating patients suffering from black fungus disease.

Since May 26, the central government has not supplied even the allocated vials, it heard.

The court sought to know the reason for this lag and directed the ASG to come up with all details by Wednesday.

Prosecution complaint filed on Musaddilal

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) on Tuesday filed a prosecution complaint in the infamous demonetisation scam in which cash of approximately ₹111 crore was deposited immediately after announcement of the high-denomination currency note ban by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 8, 2016.

This deposit was made by the firms of Kailash Gupta, Nitin Gupta and Nikhil Gupta. ED later initiated the money laundering investigation against

Musaddilal Gems and Jewels, the Vaishnavi Bullion, the Musaddilal Jewellers and others, on the basis of an FIR registered by the Telangana state police here.

The ED investigations revealed that the accused used the demonetization scheme to bleach its unaccounted black money into white and also to earn a windfall gain. "They blatantly created around 5,911 fictitious sale invoices, attributing fake sales during the short space given between 8 pm and 12 midnight to use the banned currency notes," the charge-sheet said.

As per the case, the accused men deposited ₹111 crore in their bank accounts. A major part of the deposited black money belonged to the main accused and his family members and remaining was solicited from others on a commission basis. They used a part of the amount to repay their loans, pay due taxes and kept apart the remaining amount to buy gold (bullion). This gold, investigators said, was further sold at a very high rate to earn even more profits. ED has done an extensive fund trail by way of the investigation and found that the

total proceeds of crime generated in this scam was of ₹139 crore.

A provisional order was issued on February 2 this year, attaching both movable and immovable properties of the accused, worth ₹130.57 crore, which included jewellery worth Rs86 crore, which had been seized during the searches conducted by the ED.

Two prosecution complaints were filed by the department against 13 individuals/entities. On May 31, ED filed this final prosecution complaint after extensive investigation and has charged the

main accused -- Kailash Gupta, Nitin Gupta, Nikhil Gupta and their firms, their chartered accountants, the gold bullion dealers and the major contributors of the black money involved in the fraud.

A total of 41 entities/individuals have been charged with the offence of money laundering. "They knowingly layered the amount into the bank accounts of Musaddilal Group to claim the same as untainted money, then converted the same into gold bullion which was further sold for profit," as per the case.

SHORT TAKES

CONG. DISTRIBUTES EVERYDAY NEEDS TO ADIVASIS

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, JUNE 1

The Adilabad Congress party in-charge DCC president Sajid Khan and his team have distributed essential commodities to the Adivasi families of KB colony of Malebhorigam in Adilabad Rural mandal on Tuesday.

Congress leader Sajid Khan, on behalf of ASK Foundation, distributed essential commodities and fruits to the villagers.

Sajid Khan said on learning that villagers are facing hardships with no work following the lockdown, they have taken the initiative to distribute the essential commodities.

Village head Thulasiram Patel and Congress leaders Nagesh and M.A Shakeel and Thoufiq and others were present.

LAND ACQUISITION IN PANDEMIC IS UNJUST: CPM

Khammam: CPM district secretary, Nunna Nageswara Rao demanded the state government to take back the land acquisition notifications for Warangal to Khammam and Khammam to Vijayawada national highways on May 26.

He said that hundreds of people are being killed by the Covid-19 and lakhs are joining in hospitals. He said that there is no place in hospitals for the patients on one side and platforms are not available in cemeteries to perform last rites to the deceased.

He said that CPM will demonstrate protests on the issue in all mandal headquarters on June 3 to protest against the stand of the state and central governments.

PLEA IN HC TO MAKE GOVT BUY JOWAR AT MSP

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, JUNE 1

The Rythu Swarajya Vedika has filed a PIL in the High Court of Telangana requesting the state government to procure jowar from the farmers in the Adilabad district on Tuesday.

The PIL is filed by the Rythu Swarajya Vedika state committee member and convenor of the Adilabad district, Sangepu Boranna and Human Rights Advocate Vasudha Nagaraj.

The Rythu Swarajya Vedika members said Jowar was sown in the 34,161 acres and a record harvest of 4.6 lakh quintal of jowar crop is expected in the Adilabad district alone this year.

The Vedika said, however, the farmers of the Adilabad have been in for a rude shock as the government made no move to procure the jowar cultivated during the Rabi season by the farmers.

COLLECTOR: SPEED UP PROCUREMENT OF FOODGRAINS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 1

As the rainy season is about to approach within a few days, Rajanna Sircilla district collector, D. Krishna Bhaskar told the officials to take immediate steps for speeding up the process of purchasing of food grains in the district.

The collector inspected the purchasing centres at Moodapally and Narsingapur village of Chandurthi mandal here in Rajanna Sircilla district on Tuesday.

He inquired the officials about the details of food grains purchased and still to be purchased.

Bhaskar ordered the officials to speed up the process of purchasing and to take steps for transporting the purchased food grains to the rice mills immediately along with keeping tarpaulins ready in view of the approaching rainy season.

By making arrangements of required gunny bags and vehicles transport the purchased food grains without any delay. If needed, take the help of other departments and hire private vehicles in transporting the purchased food grains to rice mills, he ordered.

Tahsildar Nareish and deputy tahsildars Praveen and Vahiuddin were among those who were present along with others.

Govt sanctions long-awaited med college for Karimnagar

Parties, people's organisation have been demanding med college since two decades

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 1

Establishment of a government medical college along with an affiliated nursing college in Mallial mandal of Jagtial district is fulfilment of a long-pending demand of people in the region.

Political parties and people's organisation had been demanding a medical college in Karimnagar district since two decades. After becoming Chief Minister, TRS chief K. Chandrashekhar Rao, during his visit to Karimnagar in August 2014, too promised sanction of a medical college with all facilities in Karimnagar district headquarters, akin to NIMS in Hyderabad.

District administration had also allocated 42 acres of land in the premises of University PG College on outskirts of Karimnagar city for the purpose. However, the government medical college has

CONG. LEADER URGES GOVT TO SET UP MEDICAL COLLEGE IN KHAMMAM DIST

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, JUNE 1

The Congress leaders of Madhira requested the government to set up a medical college hospital in Khammam.

Madhira mandal Congress president, Suramsetti Kishore submitted a memorandum to the medical and health department principal secretary SM Rizvi and director G Srinivasa Rao. He said that the government sanctioned medical college hospitals to many districts and ignored Khammam district where

now been sanctioned in Mallial of Jagtial district, 65 km away from Karimnagar.

Welfare minister Koppula Eshwar thanked Rao for sanctioning the government medical col-

medical facilities are very poor.

"The people are going to Hyderabad for various surgeries and expert opinions, it is a financial burden to the people. The government should consider the issue on a war-footing basis", he said, adding that more and more dengue cases were reported in the district earlier and Covid-19 in the present.

Kishore said that the the government hospital in Madhira is not in good shape and need to be upgraded and fill the vacancies in the hospital.

lege and affiliated nursing college to Jagtial district. He said this would fulfil the emergency medical needs of people in the area with availability of specialist doctors, professors and junior doctors.

Choppadandi MLA Sunke Ravi Shankar, along with TRS leaders, bathed the CM's flexi in milk for sanctioning the medical college to Jagtial district.

There has, however, been also criticism with regard to location of the college. Representatives of Telugu Nadu Students' Union (TNSU) have pointed out that there are already two private medical colleges - Chalmada Anand Rao Medical College and Prathima Medical College in Karimnagar district, owned by managements belonging to the community of KCR.

The union alleges fearing that these colleges will face losses, location of the government medical college has been shifted from Karimnagar to Jagtial district. This is betrayal of people belonging to Karimnagar district, TNSU sought to point out.

Ambati Johi Reddy, Karimnagar parliamen-

tary segment TD president, said that people of the district eagerly waited for the announcement of a government medical college as they were promised by the CM seven years back. The TRS leaders must be ashamed of not allotting a medical college to Karimnagar.

It is most unfortunate for the students as they did not have any government medical, engineering and agriculture college in the district. On a number of occasions, the TRS announced that Karimnagar is the second major city in the state but is neglecting it in terms of all round development, he alleged.

The ministers, MLAs and public representatives of the district must exert pressure on the state government for the establishment of medical, engineering and agriculture colleges keeping in view the future of the upcoming generations, he demanded.

₹3.8 cr allocated for NH works: Sanjay

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 1

BJP state president and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Tuesday announced that centre has approved allocation of ₹3,883 crore for construction of major roads and national highways in Karimnagar parliamentary segment during 2021-22.

In a statement released here, he pointed out that the central government has allocated ₹650 crore for 67.6 kilometres of Siddipet-Elkaturti road via Husnabad. It has also allocated in 2021-22 annual plan ₹3,233.23 crore for National Highway 563 (NH 563). As part of it, Jagtial-Karimnagar highway covering a distance of 59.35 kilometres will be completed at a cost of ₹1,582.36 crore while ₹1,650 crore will be spent on Karimnagar-Warangal highway covering 67.6 kilometres.

The Karimnagar MP said for construction of

these road projects, he had met union transport minister Nitin Gadkari on several occasions and the minister had responded positively by allocating the funds. Sanjay asked the state government to complete detailed project reports of these roads as soon as possible, so that works could be taken up at the earliest.

Meanwhile, BJP leaders gathered at the Tower Circle in Karimnagar on Tuesday and gave a milk bath to flexis of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, union transport minister Nitin Gadkari and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar following allocation of huge funds for constructing national highways in the Karimnagar parliamentary segment.

They included Tanuku Sai, Krishna, Mohan, Chandra shekar, Mohammad Jamaal, Prasanna Kumar, Laddu, Shashi, Naveen, Sri Ramulu, Kranthi, Mahipal Reddy and Ramu.

TRS transforming state into Bangaru Telangana: Kavitha

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 1

MLC K. Kavitha asserted that TRS government has not only formed new districts but is also striving hard for their all-round development as part of creating a "Bangaru Telangana".

Kavitha, accompanied by Karimnagar collector G. Ravi, MLAs Dr Sanjay Kumar and Sunke Ravi Shankar, apart from municipal chairperson Bhoga Shrivani,

inspected construction of double-bedroom houses at Nukapally Urban Housing Colony in Mallial mandal during her visit to Jagtial district on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLC said double-bedroom houses are comparable to those in Hyderabad with wonderful facilities for comfortably sheltering poor families. She said as planned by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao, construction of around 4,520 double-bedroom dwellings involving an expenditure of Rs. 212



MLC K.Kavitha inspects the construction works of 2BHK houses at Nukapally village in Mallial mandal in Jagtial district on Tuesday. —BY ARRANGEMENT

crore is going on at a brisk pace under supervision of local MLA Dr. Sanjay Kumar.

Kavitha said an action plan has been prepared for completing the 2 BHK houses and distributing them to the beneficiaries as early as possible. She maintained that during the seven years of TRS government, many developmental activities have been taken up, including in irrigation and drinking water sectors. In the latest case, a new medical

college has also been sanctioned to Jagtial district, the MLC pointed out.

MLA Dr Sanjay Kumar said ₹7 crore have been sanctioned for providing drinking water facilities in double-bedroom houses. Other works include laying pipelines, constructing overhead water storage reservoir, forming drainage canals, laying CC roads and installing electricity poles for supplying electricity.

Seeds, fertiliser traders under police scanner

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, JUNE 1.

To prevent the sale of spurious seeds in the ensuing Vanakalam (kharif) season, the officials kept vigil on sales of seeds in composite Nizamabad district. For the first time, the official set up district and Assembly constituency level task force constituted to prevent the irregularities in sale of seeds. Police officials also warned errant traders to invoke PD Act against them, if found selling of spurious seeds.

In view of the beginning of Vanakalam season, the farming community is in hurry to procure seeds and fertilizers.

According to the agriculture department, in the last Vanakalam season, crops were cultivated in 4.92 lakh acres in Nizamabad district. Presently, 5.07 lakh acres are estimated for cultivation. Based on this, the officials make arrangements of seeds and fertilizers by government agencies and private traders.

Few traders sell the spurious seeds to the farmers on the pretext of quality seeds. The trend has been continued for decades in undivided Nizamabad district. The farmers had incurred heavy loss due to the spurious seeds so far. In this context, the state government directed district

● **ACCORDING TO** the agriculture department, in the last Vanakalam season, crops were cultivated in 4.92 lakh acres in Nizamabad district. Presently, 5.07 lakh acres are estimated for cultivation. Based on this, the officials make arrangements of seeds and fertilizers by government agencies and private traders.

officials to keep vigil on sale of seeds and prevent the spurious seeds.

Agriculture department officials set up task forces to monitor the sale of seeds and prevent spurious seeds. Interestingly, agriculture officials deputed in other than their working places to prevent the sale of spurious seeds. It is also directed to seed and fertilizer shop owners to display the price lists.

District agriculture officer M.Govind suggested farmers to get original receipts for purchasing of seeds and fertilizers.

"If any farmer incur loss due to spurious seeds, the receipt is the main source to initiate action against errant traders", he said and also suggested farmers not to sow the seeds at earliest. After verifying the moisture content in soils, farmers should go for sowing of seeds, he said.

Top med, health babus visit TS borders, assess Covid situation

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, JUNE 1

Top officials of the medical and health department including principal secretary S M Rizvi and director G Srinivasa Rao visited Madhira and Sattupalli and reviewed the Covid-19 conditions in the district.

They found that the Covid-19 is continuing to spread on the Andhra Pradesh border especially in Assembly segments of Sattupalli, Madhira, Khammam and Nagarjunasagar due to the interstate transport of people.

Rizvi said the Covid-19 positive rate was reduced after execution of lockdown and it should be curtailed to below five percent by June 9. "For that, we have to concentrate more on border mandals. Field workers should find the reasons for increasing cases and identify asymptomatic persons in their houses itself," he said, adding that coordination between the departments was must to achieve the target.

"The virus is still prevalent in villages and all departments should work to curtail the cases there. It is a fact that thousands of people are coming from Andhra Pradesh for various purposes and cases should be reduced keeping all factors in view. The role of the staff working in primary health centres

CORONAVIRUS POSITIVITY RATE 'UNDER CONTROL' IN NIZAMABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, JUNE 1.

Covid positivity rate is 'under control' in Nizamabad district on Tuesday. Of 1097 Covid tests conducted only 51 persons were tested positive resulting 4.64 percent positivity rate. Medical experts believe that below 5 percent positivity rate is considered as under control position in particular areas. Following the collective efforts of officials and cooperation from people yielded 4.64 percent posi-

tivity in the district. Door-to-door fever survey gave good results, as the Covid-19 mild and moderate patients identified medicine kits were handed over at patients' at doorsteps and majority of the victims had successfully completed treatment in home isolation.

Strict lockdown restrictions also prevent the spread of the coronavirus in the district. As a result, beds occupancy in government and private hospitals reduced below 50 percent.

is very important in fulfilling the task and a house-to-house fever survey should be conducted strictly," he said.

"Knock the doors of asymptomatic persons immediately after getting information and give them medicine kits first and conduct antigen tests later. If the patients do not have facility for home isolation, they should be shifted to the government isolation centres. In case the patient is not shifted, the other members of the family may contract the virus," he said.

The principal secretary asked the officials to keep an eye on paddy lifting centres, farms and other workplaces.

With no schools, hostels rice, dal, for Adivasis rot

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, JUNE 1

A large quantity of rice and dal stored in godowns for supply to tribal hostels in undivided Adilabad district has got spoiled due to closure of schools and hostels for many months during the Covid period. The rotten foodstuff now cannot be supplied to tribal hostels for fear of food poisoning, it is understood.

The officials concerned failed to foresee that the rice, dal and other food materials would be damaged after storing them for longer periods at once place in a room or godown.

It is said that the ITDA officials should have used the rice for distribution among the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGS) much before they got damaged or else diverted to the public distribution system through ration shops. The ITDA officials reportedly made a futile attempt to distribute the free rice to the 1,000 families of Kolam Adivasis a few days ago as the officials wanted to use the rice stocks in tribal welfare hostel, but found the rice non consumable, to their utter shock.

The officials dropped the idea of distributing the rice to the Adivasis due to the fear that the rice may cause food poisoning if consumed

by them. With the extension of lockdown for 10 more days, the Kolams, Naikpods, Thoti, Mannewar, Andh and some Gond Adivasis are reeling under pathetic conditions with no work in the old Adilabad district.

Kolams are the most vulnerable group which depends on minor forest produce and makes a living by selling baskets and mats made of bamboo collected from the forests. But, now the Kolams are not being allowed into the forest and trenches are dug up to prevent them from going inside the forests.

These Adivasis are unable to sell bamboo products even if they manage to make some baskets and mats since there are no weekly markets due to the lockdown. It is found that Kolams are badly in need of essential commodities like edible oil, mirchi, vegetables, onions, sugar, tea and other commodities to save themselves from starvation.

However, Kolam families are collecting monthly rice from the nearest ration shops and that is their only means of survival. Dr Appala Chakradhari, a paediatrician of Nirmal who recently visited Kolam hamlets, said already pregnant women, new-borns and lactating women have been suffering from anaemia and their health would deteriorate further if they did not get nutritional food in this stage.

ADILABAD MLA TERMS BJP RULE A FAILURE

Adilabad: Adilabad MLA, Jogu Ramanna on Tuesday heavily came down on the central government led by the BJP for its failure on various fronts and infusing confidence among the various sections of the society in the last seven years of its rule.

Speaking to media persons, Jogu Ramanna said the BJP government has pushed the country into crisis and alleged that has failed to rise up the expectations of the people of the country.

He said the 'Make in India' slogan has just remained as a publicity stunt and failed to create employment for the educated youth, instead the Central government has taken steps such as disinvestment from the PSU and encouraged the privatization during its seven years rule. Jogu Ramanna reminded that lakh of people died of covid due to insufficient Oxygen facilities, Covid vaccine and short-sighted policy to deal with the Covid pandemic.

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SHORT TAKES

ODISHA: CYBER THIEVES SWINDLE 1.49 CRORE

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 1

Incidents of cyber theft increased during the lockdown period in Odisha in the last one month.

According to a statement issued by the police on Tuesday, the looters took advantage of the pandemic restrictions which prompted people to prefer online transactions for shopping and other financial activities.

The police said that fraudsters duped unsuspecting people to the tune of ₹1.49 crore during the lockdown out of which ₹70,78,714 was duped in the state capital Bhubaneswar alone during the period.

According to the data shared by the police, the Cyber help desk had received 529 calls regarding cyber frauds out of which the cyber cell in Bhubaneswar had received a maximum 256 calls.

As many as 160 calls were related to UPI fraud while 100 other calls related to frauds regarding credit and debit cards.

Based on the data of Bhubaneswar cyber cell, 17 cases had been registered at different police stations.

Similarly, 56 dubious mobile numbers have been blocked by the police during the period.

Police have refunded/blocked ₹12,05,306 during the month of May, the statement added.

UNPARALLELED HANDLING OF COVID IN UP: BJP

Lucknow, June 1: BJP vice president Radha Mohan Singh on Tuesday dismissed speculation over any change of leadership in Uttar Pradesh and called the state government's handling of the Covid pandemic "unparalleled".

Singh and BJP's national general secretary (organisation) B.L. Santhosh are on a three-day visit here, meeting party leaders on "preparations to fight Covid" and what participants called "organisational" issues.

The party vice president met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and deputy chief ministers Dinesh Sharma and Keshav Maurya on Monday. On Tuesday, the two deputy chief ministers met Santhosh. When asked about speculation over "leadership change" in the state, Singh dismissed it as a figment of someone's imagination.

"Generally, the BJP review meetings take place twice a month, but this time there was a gap due to Covid-19. At the meeting, the 'sewa' (service) done by us was reviewed. Apart from this, the party's preparations for a possible third wave of Covid were also discussed," he said.

DELHI ALLOWS HOME DELIVERY OF LIQUOR ONLINE

New Delhi, June 1: Delhiites may soon order liquor through a mobile app or website for home delivery, with the Delhi government amending the excise rules through a notification that also allows take-away of draught beer in bottles or growlers from micro-breweries.

An official said that the amended rules were implemented with the issuance of notification, but the new facilities will take some time as the government will have to decide dates for implementing different provisions by notifying the new excise policy or separate term and conditions.

The Delhi Excise (Amendment) Rules, 2021, published in a gazette notification on Monday, permit the holders of the necessary licences to serve liquor in open spaces such as terraces, the courtyards of clubs, bars attached to hotels and independent restaurants where customers will also have choice of getting alcohol in bottles. However, it will be the sole responsibility of such establishments to ensure that no customer takes the served bottles out of the licensed premises.

The move will boost the government's revenue at a time when Delhi's economy is struggling due to ongoing lockdown that was implemented on April 19.

According to the notification, the licensee will make delivery of liquor at the residences only if order is received through an app or a web portal. Such deliveries will not be allowed at offices, institutions and hostels.

Only people can break the chain of virus to end lockdown: Stalin

Says unless the state recovers from Covid, govt's plans for other dept's cannot be looked into

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JUNE 1

Entrusting the responsibility of putting a full stop to the spread of Coronavirus with the people, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said only they could break the chain of the infection that spread from individual to individual as the lockdown could not be imposed always.

Urging the people to adhere to the restrictions and the norms imposed by the government, Stalin, in a video message to the public on Tuesday, said since Coronavirus spreads from person to person, everyone should play safe and also ensure that they did not spread it to others.

He pointed to the drastic reduction in the number of infections after a total lockdown was imposed on May 24 and said that though the government extended the lockdown by another week and the numbers came down further, it cannot be extended forever.

There was an urgent need to come out of the present day tragedies and step into a bright future with renewed hopes, he said, adding that the failure to put a full stop to the pandemic in its first wave had led to the second surge, which was throwing up a challenge to medical infrastructure and the state's finances.

Referring to his visit to the Covid ward at the ESI

Hospital in Coimbatore to extend moral support to the patients, the families and the frontline workers of the medical community, he said there were several people who had affectionately warned him not to repeat such an act.

The same alarm raised by the well-wishers should be a common caution guiding the general behaviour of the people since a violation of the precautions even by one person can jeopardise the collective efforts to put an end to the spread of virus.

Unless the state recovered from the present ravages of the pandemic, the government's plans for the other departments cannot be looked into and executed, he said.

As of now, the three-week-old government had developed adequate infrastructure to face the threat of Coronavirus, leading to a situation in which there was no shortage of beds or oxygen, Stalin said.

In fact, beds were empty in hospitals, he said. Besides, three lakh persons were being vaccinated every day and 1.70 lakh RT-PCR tests were being taken daily — both the figures are the highest among all states in the country — he said.

He also elaborated on the relief provided by the government to bring succour to the affected persons mentioning the payment of ₹2,000 to each of the families, a move that had won accolades from Nobel

laureate Abhijit Banerjee.

Other special measures taken by the government to offset the ill-effects of the lockdown include the arranging for supply of groceries and vegetables at the doorsteps and opening ration shops and also issues a list of 13 provisions to cardholders, he said.

Meanwhile, examinations for the State Board Plus Two examinations may also be cancelled in the wake of the Centre doing away with the final examinations for CBSE students, citing the safety of students in the context of the Covid-19 crisis.

State school education minister Anbil Mahesh Poyamozhi said that he would discuss the matter

with the Chief Minister and officials of the education department on Wednesday before arriving at a decision.

On Tuesday Poyamozhi had a rethink on his earlier decision to hold the examinations for the State Board students in the schools and said he was waiting for the CBSE's decision. The Minister had a review meeting with the Chief Minister at the Secretariat earlier in the day.

Now that the Centre has made it clear that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not in favour of holding the examinations for the CBSE board, the state government might also take a similar line and cancel the examinations.



Adar Poonawalla

HC DIRECTS MAHA TO ENSURE POONAWALLA'S SECURITY

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, JUNE 1

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday said that the Maharashtra government must assure Adar Poonawalla, the CEO of Serum Institute of India, of adequate security in the wake of alleged threats to him over the supply of the 'Covishield' vaccine manufactured by his company.

A vacation bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and Abhay Ahuja was hearing a petition filed by city based lawyer Datta Mane seeking Z+ security for Poonawalla, claiming that the news reports showed that he left the country due to fear.

Even though the Union government has already granted 'Y' category security to the Pune-based industrialist, the petitioner through his lawyer Pradip Havnur, told the court that as per news reports, Poonawalla had been living in fear due to constant pressure from politicians and some others demanding that he provide more supply of the Covishield vaccine to their states.

Mane in his petition further said that Poonawalla had left for London due to such threats.

Notably, the SII CEO in an interview had revealed that he has been receiving threats and pressure from 'powerful people' seeking vaccine doses on priority.

The bench said the state must not consider the petition as an adversarial litigation and the state's top officials must personally speak to Poonawalla and assure him of his safety upon his return to India.

The bench directed state's counsel Deepak Thakare to speak to the government officials and convey the court's concerns. "Please speak to the highest state functionaries, maybe the state home minister, and assurance must be given to him (Poonawalla) from the top. They should talk to him personally" the HC said.

'Unlock' in full swing



Rag-pickers collect recyclable plastic from the Dhaka waste dumping site after ease in lockdown restrictions in Kolkata on Tuesday. — PTI



Shopkeepers open their shops at a market after the unlock process of lockdown began in Bhopal on Tuesday. — PTI



Vehicles ply on a road during relaxation hours in the ongoing lockdown in Guwahati on Tuesday. — PTI

Maha: 3 new cases found in Dharavi

Mumbai, June 1: The slum-dominated Dharavi area of Mumbai reported only three new Coronavirus infections on Tuesday, the civic body said.

The congested area with a population of over six lakh thus reported a single-digit rise in cases on the eighth day in a row, the civic body said.

Dharavi had witnessed an alarming rise in cases in the beginning of April 2021.

It had reported 99 cases — the highest daily spike so far — on April 8, 2021. On May 23, the area

recorded 16 Covid-19 cases, after which the cases dipped to single digit.

The caseload in the area on Tuesday stood at 6,825, said an official of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

There are 17 active Covid-19 cases in Dharavi while 6,449 patients have recovered, he said. The BMC does not publish death figures from Dharavi. The day before the area had reported only two Covid-19 cases, the lowest spike in several months. — PTI

MP begins 'unlock', relaxes norms

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JUNE 1

Madhya Pradesh was on Tuesday unlocked partially to start economic and business activities in the state.

The state government has, however, extended the 'corona curfew' in Madhya Pradesh till June 15. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan also announced relaxation in curbs.

The lockdown was imposed on April 24 in the state to contain the Coronavirus pandemic, in the wake of 47 out of total 52 districts reporting a positivity rate below five

per cent. In a series of tweets, the Chief Minister's office has issued detailed guidelines regarding the relaxations that will be provided during the period of 'corona curfew' in the state.

According to the guidelines, the 'corona curfew' will remain in force from 10 pm every Saturday to 6 am on Monday. There will be night curfew in the state from 10 pm to 6 am.

Grocery shops and other small business establishments have been allowed to open. But, shopping malls, cinema halls, gym, swimming pools, picnic spots, auditorium and community centres will remain closed during the

curfew. Similarly, religious activities, political and social gatherings will remain prohibited till June 15. Schools, colleges and coaching institutions will also remain closed during the period.

On Monday, Madhya Pradesh reported 1,205 fresh Coronavirus cases taking the tally of cases to 7,80,030. The state has recorded 48 deaths in the last 24 hours taking the death toll to 5,023.

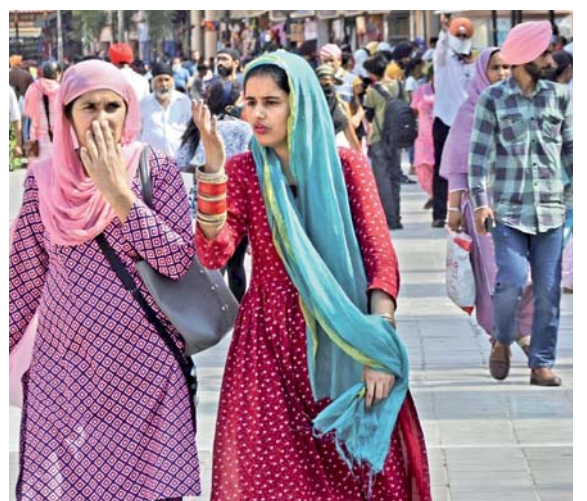
Meanwhile, neighbouring Chhattisgarh government also relaxed some curbs in the state, but decided to extend the lockdown to different periods in different districts considering the gravity of sit-

uation in these areas.

Those districts with a positive rate above five per cent shall continue with restrictions on opening of shops and other commercial establishments, as was instructed in the earlier instructions on May 24, a press release by the Chhattisgarh government said.

Shops and commercial establishments in all other districts reporting less than five per cent positivity rate will be opened.

However, restrictions on opening of cinema halls, swimming pools, water parks and other group gathering places will remain in force in these districts.



People not adhering to Covid-19 norms walk at Heritage Street near Golden Temple in Amritsar on Tuesday. Punjab, which has the highest case fatality rate of 2.4 per cent in the country, registered more than 100 deaths due to Covid-19 every single day in May. — PTI

FRESH POLLS Term of five state Assemblies including Punjab, UP end next year

EC confident of holding polls in 2022

New Delhi, June 1: The Election Commission is confident of holding the five Assembly polls due early next year, including in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, on time as the poll panel has gained a lot of experience from the electoral exercise in Bihar, West Bengal and four other Assemblies amid the Coronavirus pandemic, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra has asserted.

The terms of the legislative Assemblies of Goa, Manipur, Punjab and

Uttarakhand are coming to an end in March 2022, while the term of the Uttar Pradesh legislative Assembly is scheduled to end in May.

"That is the foremost duty of the Election Commission that we should hold the elections and submit the list of the winning candidates (to the Governor) before the term of the Assembly expires," Chandra said.

He was asked whether the poll panel will be able to hold the Assembly polls due in five states on time

due to Covid-19 as recently it has deferred some Lok Sabha and Assembly bypolls due to the second wave of Covid-19.

Some Rajya Sabha bypolls and biennial legislative council elections were also deferred due to the second wave of the pandemic.

"As you are aware that the second wave of Covid-19 is also receding and the numbers (of infections) are quite less. We have done elections in Bihar during the pandemic, we have done elections in four

states and one UT. We have experience... We have learned various experiences on how to hold polls during the pandemic also," he said.

"I am very much sure that with the receding pandemic now, and I wish the pandemic is over soon, we will absolutely be in a position to hold elections next year which are scheduled in five states on time, as per the schedule," Chandra said.

While Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur have BJP-led

governments, Punjab has a Congress government.

Uttar Pradesh, the country's most populous state, has approximately 14.66 crore voters, while Punjab has over 2 crore electors, according to January 1, 2021 data of the Election Commission.

Uttarakhand has 78.15 lakh voters while Manipur has 19.58 lakh and Goa has 11.45 lakh electors.

The five states together have an estimated 17.84 crore voters.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

NEW VATICAN LAW CRIMINALISES ABUSE OF ADULTS

Vatican City: Pope Francis has changed church law to explicitly criminalise the sexual abuse of adults by priests who abuse their authority and to say that laypeople who hold church office can be sanctioned for similar sex crimes.

The new provisions, released Tuesday after 14 years of study, were contained in the revised criminal law section of the Vatican's Code of Canon Law, the in-house legal system that covers the 1.3-billion strong Catholic Church.

The most significant changes are contained in two articles, 1395 and 1398, which aim to address major problems and shortcomings in the church's handling of sexual abuse.

TECH PROBLEM ON IRAN FIGHTER JET KILLS TWO PILOTS

Tehran: An Iranian fighter jet on Tuesday developed a technical problem that killed both of the aircraft's pilots, state TV reported.

The report said the incident happened in the country's southwest, in the city of Dezful, 444 kilometres (270 miles) from the capital, Tehran and near the border with Iraq.

The report said an investigation was underway as to what had caused the malfunction of the Iranian air force's F-5 fighter jet. The TV said it happened before takeoff. It did not elaborate. The report, citing an informed source, identified the pilots as Kianoush Basati and Hossein Nami, without providing their rank. Authorities were investigating, it said.

MYANMAR SCRIBE TO SEEK ASYLUM IN SPAIN

Madrid: Myanmar correspondent Mratt Kyaw Thu will arrive in Madrid on Tuesday to ask for asylum after fleeing the military junta in Yangon, said the Spanish news agency *EFE*, which he worked for.

The 30-year-old correspondent, who will travel to Spain after failing to obtain asylum in Germany, won Kate Webb award in 2017 for his outstanding coverage of the ethnic and religious conflicts in Myanmar.

"Tomorrow he will fly from Frankfurt to Madrid to ask for asylum in Spain," *EFE* southeast Asia director Ramon Abarca said. "He has spent four weeks in a detention centre," he said. A spokesman for Spain's interior ministry said Mratt's arrival had not been officially registered but would be treated according to international law.

2 THAI PROTEST LEADERS GRANTED BAIL

Bangkok: Two prominent Thai pro-democracy protest leaders were granted bail on Tuesday, weeks after contracting Coronavirus in the kingdom's overcrowded prison system. Activist Panupong "Mike" Jadnok and human rights lawyer Anon Numpu are both facing multiple charges under royal defamation laws.

A Thai criminal court on Tuesday granted them bail, Thai Lawyers for Human Rights said.

They had to post a 2,00,000 baht (\$6,500) bail bond each and are banned from leaving Thailand or becoming involved with further activities that defame the monarchy.

Anon has been in custody for more than 100 days and Panupong for 85.

They are expected to be released from Thammasat University Hospital later on Tuesday.

FLOOD RECEDES IN NEW ZEALAND, LEAVING DEBRIS

Wellington: Floodwaters in New Zealand receded on Tuesday, leaving behind a big mess on many farms in the Canterbury region and damage to a major bridge.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told reporters the top priority was getting transport links working again, although it was unclear how long it would take to fix the bridge that connects the town of Ashburton to the main highway south. Crews hoped to have an alternate route to the town ready by the end of the day.

Ardern said farmers had been particularly hard hit with lost feed, broken fences and debris spread across their fields. She said that seeing the damage from the air had shown her the scale of what had happened.

Four Pak soldiers killed in terror attacks

In the exchange of fire, four to five terrorists were killed while around eight ultras were also injured

Ugandan minister injured in assassination bid: Govt

Islamabad, June 1: Terrorists attacked a Pakistani security post and later targeted a military vehicle carrying IED, killing at least four paramilitary soldiers and injuring eight others in the restive southwestern province of Balochistan, the Army said. In the first incident, terrorists targeted Frontier Corps (FC) troops in Quetta and Turbat respectively on Monday, according to a statement issued by the media wing of the Pakistan Army — the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The post near Pir Ismail Ziarat was targeted by terrorists, it said. In the exchange of fire "four-five terrorists were killed while around eight were injured" while "four soldiers were killed while six soldiers got injured."

In another incident, terrorists targeted an Frontier Corps vehicle with an improvised explosive device at Turbat and injured two soldiers.

"Such cowardly acts by inimical elements backed by anti state forces" said and added that they cannot sabotage the hard earned peace and prosperity in Balochistan.

It also said that the security forces are determined to neutralise their nefarious designs.

Resource-rich Balochistan for a long time has witnessed violence by the Taliban and Baloch nationalists. Terrorists had earlier

● **TERRORISTS HAD earlier launched twin attacks on soldiers on May 9, killing three of them and five others wounded in two separate terrorist assaults in Quetta and Turbat.**

launched twin attacks on soldiers on May 9, killing three of them and five others wounded in two separate terrorist assaults in Quetta and Turbat, according to an ISPR statement.

— PTI

"General Katumba has been rushed to hospital with bullet wounds and he is receiving treatment, the crime scene has been taken over by the investigators," he added.

"This could be a case of assassination by criminal elements but the investigations will establish the motive and those behind" the attack.

Witnesses to the attack told local television stations that four masked men riding two motorbikes fired scores of bullets at Wamala's vehicle.

Images from the scene showed Wamala's car — an official army vehicle

easily identified by its distinctive military green number plates — riddled with about a dozen bullet holes in the rear and driver-side of the vehicle.

Tuesday's shooting is the latest in a series of attempted killings of high-profile targets by motorcycle-riding assassins in Uganda's capital.

In June 2018 Ibrahim Abiriga, a leading politician from the ruling National Resistance Movement party, led by President Yoweri Museveni, was gunned down alongside his bodyguard in similar circumstances.

— AFP

Manhunt in Miami for three shooters

Miami, June 1: A manhunt continued into Memorial Day for three masked suspects who opened fire early Sunday morning outside a Miami banquet hall, killing two men and wounding 21 others, in a shooting authorities said had spread terror and grief through their communities.

That anguish was reinforced Monday by a grieving father who interrupted a news conference just as the Miami-Dade Police Department's director, Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez III, was decrying the weekend's gun violence and appealing for the community's help in tracking down the shooters.

— AP

FRANCE SUBMITS BEIRUT PORT BLAST REPORT

Beirut, June 1: Lebanon on Monday received a preliminary report from France regarding last year's massive port blast in Beirut that killed and wounded thousands, judicial officials said.

The officials said the French report is useful for the ongoing investigation in Beirut over the August blast, which decimated the country's main port and caused severe damage to surrounding areas. The officials declined to give details about the report.

— AP

11 suspected ultras nabbed in Indonesia

Jakarta, June 1: Indonesian police said Monday they have arrested 11 suspected Islamic militants accused of plotting attacks at several Christian churches in easternmost Papua province.

On Friday, the elite counterterrorism squad arrested 10 suspects in several raids in Papua's Merauke district after receiving information about planned attacks in the province, a predominantly Christian region in Muslim-majority Indonesia, Merauke police chief Untung Sangaji said.

The arrests led police to another suspect who was

detained Sunday, and led them to seize items from various locations including chemicals for explosives, modified air guns able to fire real bullets, jihadist books and documents on planned attacks, he said.

Sangaji said those arrested are suspected of being members of Jemaah Anshorut Daulah, which has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group and carried out a series of suicide bombings in Indonesia. "They allegedly planned to attack churches in several places in Merauke," Sangaji said.

— AP

8 jihadists 'neutralised' in Burkina army operation

Ouagadougou, June 1: Burkinabe soldiers have "neutralised" eight jihadists and captured three in an ongoing operation in the north and east of the poor West African state, the army said Tuesday.

Five were "neutralised" — the usual term for killed — by national soldiers and troops of the Burkinabe battalion of the G5 Sahel force on Friday near the

northern town of Tasmaka, the army chief of staff said in a statement, describing the operation as an "offensive reconnaissance mission".

"Three suspects were apprehended and taken to the gendarmerie for questioning," the statement said, adding that weapons and materiel were seized.

On Thursday, following an attack on civilians in

eastern Tialbonga, two assailants were killed during a search and sweep operation, it said. The unit killed another jihadist following an attack on army reservists in northern Gashole, the statement said.

The Burkina Faso army launched an operation in the north on May 5 named Houme which is expected to last more than a month.

— AFP

Nato meets to prepare Afghan withdrawal

Brussels, June 1: Nato's foreign and defence ministers were meeting Tuesday to lay the groundwork for the military alliance's first summit with United States President Joe Biden, setting aside four tumultuous years with the Trump administration.

The ministers will discuss a hefty communique being drafted for the June 14 summit in Brussels, which will reaffirm the unity of the 30-nation security alliance — which has been riven by infighting in recent years — and focus on future threats and challenges.

"This is a pivotal moment for our alliance, and our collective security," Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on the eve of the meetings.

"In a more competitive and unpredictable world, we need transatlantic unity," Chief among the challenges is dealing with an increasingly aggressive Russia, whose defence minister announced Monday that Russia would establish 20 new military units in its western sector this year to counter what it claims is a growing threat from Nato.

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The rise of China and the impact of climate change — two of the Biden administration's key interests — will also be discussed, along with missile defence, cyber and hybrid warfare, and the use of disinformation. The most pressing subject for debate will be winding up Nato's operations in Afghanistan.

Biden has pledged to have US troops out of the conflict-ravaged country

by Sept. 11, but many are likely to have left by the time the summit takes place. But major questions remain over exactly how Nato will continue to fund the corruption-ridden Afghan security forces, whether to continue training special forces troops somewhere outside the country, and exactly who might provide security for civilian workers, embassies and Kabul's airport.

— AP

Gala time for kids



Children play with soap bubbles in the centre of the Ukrainian capital of Kiev during a festive event organised by the police to mark International Children's Day on Tuesday.

— AFP

Russian authorities increase pressure on Oppn, arrest one

Moscow, June 1: Russian authorities have ramped up their pressure on dissent ahead of a parliamentary election, arresting one opposition activist and raiding several others' homes. Andrei Pivovarov, the head of the Open Russia movement that dissolved itself last week, was pulled off a plane at St. Petersburg's airport late Monday and was to be taken to Krasnodar in southern Russia Tuesday as part of a criminal probe against him.

Also on Tuesday, police raided a country home of

opposition politician Dmitry Gudkov, a former lawmaker who has aspired to run for parliament in September. At least two of his associates also had their homes searched.

The moves are part of a multi-pronged crackdown on the opposition that is widely seen as part of the authorities' efforts to prevent any opposition groups from mounting a challenge to the main Kremlin-backed United Russia party in September's parliamentary election.

United Russia's popularity has waned amid the

country's economic slowdown. Last week, Pivovarov announced that Open Russia was shutting down to protect its members from prosecution after the authorities had designated it as "undesirable."

The government already has outlawed more than 30 groups using a 2015 law that made membership in "undesirable" organisations a criminal offence.

Another bill now making its way through parliament tightens punishment for their members. Open Russia was financed by tycoon Mikhail Khodorko-

vsky, who moved to London after spending 10 years in prison in Russia on charges widely seen as political revenge for challenging President Vladimir Putin's rule.

In March, police briefly detained about 200 participants of a forum of members of municipal councils that Open Russia helped organise. Putin's most determined political foe, Alexei Navalny, was arrested in January upon his return from Germany, where he had spent five months recovering from a nerve agent poisoning.

— AP

RESIDENTS' TRAUMA Owners flock to vet Qaddoura's clinic since May 21 ceasefire with Israel

In Gaza, Palestinians tend to shell-shocked pets

Gaza City, Palestinian Territories, June 1: A smashed goldfish bowl, panicked birds in a cage, scores of animals needing treatment. The loss or injury of treasured pets has added to the grief and trauma of Gaza residents after last month's deadly conflict.

Neriman, a nine-year-old Palestinian girl, clutched a glass jar holding her goldfish Hoor, delighted it had survived after her other one, Hooriya, died in an Israeli air strike in Gaza

City. In the latest war, Israeli strikes on Gaza killed 254 Palestinians, including 66 children, as well as some fighters, authorities there say.

Fire by Palestinian militants claimed 12 lives in Israel, including one child, a teenager and an Israeli soldier.

Pets also suffered, as well as the children who owned them.

"I was so sad that Hooriya died and I cried when I buried her in the field," said Neriman, of

her first fish, whose name meant "Mermaid" in Arabic.

"But I was so happy that Hoor had survived," she added of her second fish.

At an animal clinic in Gaza City, Amani Abu Shaaban held a fluffy cat to her chest as they waited to see a vet.

"My cat has been very scared since the war. She refuses to eat, and her hair is falling out," she said.

"Even the sound of a mobile phone ringing freaks her out."

Nearby, vet Mutasem Qaddoura examined two cats, one after the other.

One needed an operation for a broken leg, the other was dehydrated and malnourished.

Dozens of pets owners have flocked to his clinic since Gaza's May 21 ceasefire though supplies to treat them are scarce.

"The state of veterinary medicine is disastrous in Gaza," Qaddoura said.

"We use X-ray machines intended for humans and platinum screws meant to

fix children's bones to treat the animals."

Neriman and her family had been forced to flee their home on May 13, after an Israeli officer warned neighbours of an imminent strike on a nearby bank.

In the panic she left behind her fish, as well as two parakeets, Allooosh and Mallooosh, given to her by her father for her sixth birthday.

But soon after, she started worrying.

"I just had to go home

with my father to get them," she said.

When they returned, she found a special outfit she had laid out on her bed for the Eid holidays covered in rubble, the bed collapsed and the windows blown in. "I heard Allooosh and Mallooosh chirping under the rubble, and I found the fish bowl broken," she said.

Hooriya had died, but they saved Hoor, a scene shown in a video which has since gone viral on social media.

— AFP



DECCAN Chronicle

2 JUNE 2021

Stop misuse of sedition, all other laws to stifle dissent

The Supreme Court's observation that Section 124A of the IPC which deals with sedition will need interpretation, especially on its application with regard to freedom of the press, is welcome. It is all the more refreshing that it came along with a directive restraining the police from taking coercive action against two TV channels in Andhra Pradesh for airing news, and a query, albeit sarcastic, by a bench of the court as to whether sedition cases were being filed against TV channels which aired visuals of a body of a suspected Covid-19 victims being thrown into a river.

This is not the first time that the Supreme Court has taken a close look at the sedition law vis a vis Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution which guarantees freedom of speech and expression. A Constitution bench of the Supreme Court had in 1962 upheld the constitutionality of the law but held that its use must be limited to "acts involving intention or tendency to create disorder, or disturbance of law and order, or incitement to violence". The court had gone on to say that a citizen has "a right to say or write whatever he likes about the govern-

There are reports that 96 per cent of sedition cases in the last 10 years were registered after 2014... of the 405 such cases, 149 were booked against persons who spoke against the Prime Minister

ment, or its measures, by way of criticism or comment, so long as he does not incite people to violence against the government established by law or with the intention of creating public disorder". A month ago, the Supreme Court had, in fact, decided that it will review the constitutional validity of the law.

There are reports that 96 per cent of sedition cases in the last 10 years were registered after 2014. According to one report, of the 405 such cases, 149 were booked against persons who spoke against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and 144 against Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath. It is curious that the NDA dispensation, which scrapped about 1,500 redundant laws, chose to retain this relic of the Raj.

Given the propensity of the governments at the Centre and in the states to invoke this law, it is appropriate that the apex court get on to the exercise of its review at the earliest. It is, however, a bit baffling that the court talked of a review with regard to the press, though the Constitution makes no mention of freedom of the press and assures every citizen of the right to speech and expression. It is expected that the review would ultimately benefit every citizen of this country.

It is not just the sedition law that the governments now find handy to muzzle dissent or criticism. The Uttar Pradesh government had recently warned that those who publicly flag shortage of healthcare facilities Covid patients face will be booked under the National Security Act. It took a stern warning by the apex court that it will brook no violation of the right to free speech of a citizen when the country is going through a humanitarian crisis for the state government to halt its draconian moves. Another forceful and timely intervention by the Supreme Court is imperative if free speech were to survive and succeed in this country.

3 kids in China: It's demographics

The China Communist Party politburo's shift to a three-child policy comes amid a falling birthrate that has led to certain demographic challenges like an ageing society which may have 300 millions people in the 60+ category by 2025. The title of the world's most populated country may not remain much longer with China as estimates have it that India is behind by a mere five crore people and is being tipped to take the title in this decade itself. The question arises, then, whether a nation can over time cope with a rising population when the economic and social indicators are far from promising as they may have been in the past.

Can society support an ageing section of people even as it faces the challenge of providing jobs for millions of young people in an environment in which industry and to an extent services too are bound to get more automated and the traditional job and livelihood prospects are fast declining in the modern age? China's problem right now seems to be to sustain what was once a demographic advantage of a vast number of younger people in the working category driving an economy that steadily rose over the last four decades into one of the most powerful in the world.

More recently, India was thought to have the advantage in which those aged above 64 represent only about 6.38 per cent of the population while 26.62 per cent are younger than 14.

As education reached all, more and more couples adopted the one or two child norm in India where family planning is only voluntary and not State policy-driven as it is in China where resentment is rife over government's invasive control over women's bodies and where unwed or single mothers with children are not only frowned upon but also made ineligible for State benefits. There are far too many factors like economic pressures and social trends among women that govern birthrates. While policy planners may fret over demographic profiles, individual choice is more likely to govern population trends. Ultimately, it will be the economy and the environment that will dictate trends than fancy ideas of social engineering.

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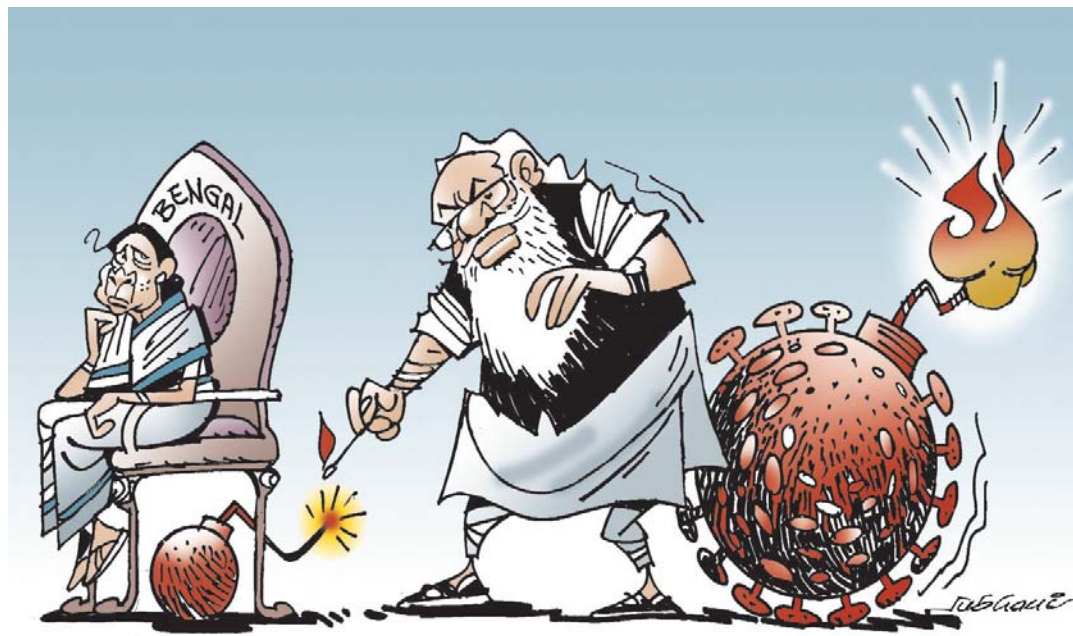
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Subhani



Game score at halftime: China — 1, Mankind — 0



Sriram Karri

Welcome. We are joined live by nearly billions of people across the world, but the telecast of this soccer game is not being broadcast live only in China. We are just a few minutes away from kick-off of the game to decide the winner of the ultimate trophy — world domination.

China, under its new coach, manager and captain, Xi, has prepared hard and meticulously for this match. Xi's strategy is unclear. The rival team, "All of Mankind", is unsure how to deal with Xi, even experts are divided. The excitement and tension among spectators is unbelievable, and it feels like a game of life and death.

Xi wins the toss against his rival captain, Donald T, who is shaking his head angrily, and claiming that the referee, Mr Who, is resorting to unfair play. Xi will kick off the ball. Against all rules, Xi has unveiled a new ball for the match. The sphere, green in colour, has tentacles on its surface. China has not revealed how or where the ball was made. Some experts feel that it was created in a lab, but a few say it was a natural mutation.

The jury is still out. But clearly China has an unfair advantage as they know a lot more about this ball, now dubbed Corona. By refusing to share information, clearly Xi is complicit as guilty as per the lab-leak theory. The game picks pace. Trump and his team mates are running around in confusion as Xi and his team are showing excellent coordination, dribbling the ball with practiced finesse, deflecting all attacks with nonchalance.

Trump is complaining about Who, the referee, who, however, is not entertaining any issues against China. "W" does not stand for Wuhan though, but World. There has been huge controversy over the selection of Trump for this match. Could he be changed midway, especially if he continues to fail in handling Corona? We will have to wait and watch.

Meanwhile, another feeble attempt at having a go into China's half has been thwarted. China is back on the attack again.

Meanwhile, the Chinese ball, Corona, is causing discomfort to many players, as if the entire ball-game has been changed. The US, UK, Italy, Spain, Hong Kong and India are all struggling. Each player is trying to figure a way to deal with the Corona ball but in a rapidly moving game, there is hardly time for them to regroup or share their learning on the go. China is meanwhile getting aggressive with certain players — Taiwan to begin with. Taiwan has been pushed but the referee ignores the Chinese foul. China has protested against the presence of Taiwan in Mankind's team before the game.

Now China is trying to elbow India hard but gets one back. The Mankind team protests but the referee, Who, does not stop the game or admonish China. The Corona ball game continues. Suddenly as China moves forward, Trump tries to stop Xi but fails. Xi trips Trump and the referee blows the whistle. Wait? What?

Unbelievable. Incredible. Xi fouls and Who hands him an extra. China gets a penalty kick. Mankind protests but China get a chance to take a lead. Xi prepares to kick

Mankind and he does it with ease. China takes the lead. 1-0.

The coach of Mankind is looking on carefully as Trump puts up a little fight back here, taking the ball into the Chinese side. It is the Quad strategy. The US, India, Japan and Australia are moving forward with some skill. But China is not giving it up.

It is using reverse aggression tactics and is targeting India again. The India-China scuffle momentarily distracts everyone. But India refuses to budge. China now kicks in other directions. China's selective aggression against the Philippines, Vietnam, Australia and Japan leads to anger in Mankind.

Meanwhile, the coach decides to substitute a player. No, not just any player, but the captain. Trump is out. Biden steps onto the ground but the exiting captain refuses to hand over the band. Some internal scuffle here... but matters seem to have finally settled nicely.

Can Biden change Mankind's strategy? He has experience and great understanding about China, having been a crucial player in Obama's Club before. Biden is pushing hard on the investigation flank. The ball is being held by Mankind for a tad bit longer as Wuhan keeps coming into the picture... Lab or natural mutation? The tactics are simple but are working. But will China wilt and relinquish its advantage? Traditionally, China believes in the Middle Kingdom domination

Can Biden change Mankind's strategy? He... is pushing hard on the investigation flank. The ball is being held by Mankind for a tad bit longer as Wuhan keeps coming into the picture. Lab or natural mutation?

strategy.

Biden is under great pressure, having taken charge after China took a lead. Will he go down in history as the captain who surrendered American global leadership, a trophy held since World War II? Or can he inflict enough high costs on Xi for his misadventures? Biden is getting his players to focus on the economy flank and pushing vaccine tactics. China is imitating the vaccine ploy but does not seem to have too many takers. Except Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the ball goes back to investigations into the origins of Covid. China is protesting. We are nearing the end of the play for the first half, with Xi's China holding on to the 1-0 lead. Mankind has not even reached China's half convincingly even once in this match, no mismatch. Europe has been disappointing in the game so far. Biden has another brief distraction on the field — it is Israel and Palestine having a go at each other.

Most Mankind players are looking on in disbelief while China is enjoying the distraction to catch its breath. We have just a few minutes left. It looks unlikely with the pace at which Covid is moving around the global field if there can be an equaliser. Clearly, the second half is when the fate of the match will be decided.

Will Mankind adopt a more aggressive challenge to China in response to their bio-warfare tactics? Will Mankind get together strongly to remove China from the UN Security Council? Or impose a fine of \$10,000 for each Covid death worldwide? Biden's response — military, diplomatic, economic, or a combination? We will find out when the game resumes after a break if he can make a strong comeback.

The referee blows the whistle. Halftime. The scoreline reads Mankind — 0, China — 1. All the players are walking out of the ground. We will take a short commercial break. Be right back...

LETTERS

CASTE SYSTEM

People are vexed with the caste system. Even as campaigns are run propagating an egalitarian society to give a message to the future generations politicians are turning hypocritical and supporting the quota system. This is despite the Supreme Court ruling that the 50 per cent quota cap imposed earlier must not be exceeded.

M.G. Sai Baba
Hyderabad

WORKING HOURS

Many citizens observed that the first wave lockdown helped them regulate their daily timings and be at home on time. I suggest that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao take advantage of this lockdown and make 6 am to 6 pm as a thumb rule for working and business hours for the future. This would help everyone to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Syed Amer Ahmed
Hyderabad

VAX POLICY

The Supreme Court is right in questioning the vaccination policy of the government n mandatory registration on Co-Win app. It is a matter of record that both in urban and rural areas there are many persons who being ignorant of online procedure are unable to register their names on Co-Win app.

Wasim Ahmed Khan
Secunderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Ex-Minister held for alleged link with Pak spies

CALCUTTA, June 1. Former United Front Minister Golam Yazdani and former member of Lok Sabha Syed Badruddoja were arrested this afternoon for their alleged involvement in the activities of a Pakistani spy ring.

Chief Minister Ajoy Mukherji told newsmen that the arrest was made under the Maintenance of Internal Security Ordinance 1971 with a view to prevent the two persons from acting in any manner "prejudicial to the defence of India and India's relations with foreign powers and the security of India."

Aakar Patel



How Jaishankar put on mat in US over Hindutva and other issues

India's external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar was till Saturday on a visit to the United States. The first half of his trip was apparently not very productive as the person he had come to meet, US secretary of state Antony J. Blinken, had to go to the Middle East on an urgent visit. Mr Jaishankar met him only several days after reaching the US. In the meantime, the minister met the Indian teams at the United Nations and had sundry other meetings. He also had an interview with former President Donald Trump's national security adviser Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster. The general, who is familiar with India and has visited it, spoke about radicalism in the region and how extremism had hurt Pakistan. He then asked Mr Jaishankar: "I wanted to ask you about how you see political developments in your own country. You are not a partisan person. You have served with great distinction across many administrations. There is concern in the midst of the pandemic about some of these Hindutva policies that could be undermining the secular nature of Indian democracy... Are India's friends right to be concerned about some of these recent trends?"

Mr Jaishankar first corrected Gen.

McMaster to say that he was actually partisan: "Let me clarify something. I served multiple administrations when I was a civil servant. I am today an elected member of Parliament. Do I have a political viewpoint and political interest? Of course, I do. Hopefully I will be able to articulate the interest that I represent." He then says he will give two replies: a "straight political answer" and a "slightly more nuanced societal answer". His straight political answer is that in the past India had "votebank politics", but no longer does because democracy had deepened under the BJP. This had happened through "broader representation in politics and in leadership positions and in civil society of people... who are much more confident about their culture, about their language about their beliefs. These are people who are less from the English-speaking world, less connected to other global centres". Mr Jaishankar says there's nothing to be concerned about as there is no problem, and this set of people he is referring to are "judged politically harshly and it is often used to create a certain narrative".

His nuanced societal answer is that the BJP government doesn't discriminate, Mr Jaishankar says, as they gave extra rations to people in the pandem-

ic and put money in people's Jan Dhan accounts without separating them by religion.

We should perhaps be thankful to Mr Jaishankar that India so far hasn't decided to give entitlements to the poor based on religion. But while we are thankful, we should also note Mr Jaishankar didn't actually answer what was asked. Gen. McMaster's question was framed around the word Hindutva and its policies. What are they? They are the introduction of religion into citizenship. The United Nations and the European Union and members of the US Congress expressed disappointment and alarm over India's Citizenship Amendment Act.

The US International Commission on Religious Freedom report for 2021 identified laws in India that criminalise conversion, especially of women to Islam. These laws are the BJP's Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act 2018, Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act 2019, Madhya Pradesh Dharma Swatantrya Adhyadesh 2020, Uttar Pradesh Vidhi Viruddh Dharma Samparivartan Pratishedh Adhyadesh 2020 and Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act 2021. The USCIRF report (which recommends sanctions

against India) says while these laws "target inter-faith marriage in particular, several other states prohibit conversion based on vague criteria, including force, inducement, allurement, coercion, fraud, or misrepresentation. These anti-conversion laws are often the basis for false accusations, harassment, and violence against non-Hindus that occur with impunity. In 2020, for example, mobs — fuelled by false accusations of forced conversions — attacked Christians, destroyed churches, and disrupted religious worship services".

India under Narendra Modi has spent a lot of energy in drafting laws that go after minorities. The Gujarat Animal Preservation (Amendment) Bill 2017 punishes cow slaughter, that is ostensibly an economic crime, with life in jail. No other economic crime carries a life sentence. More than half of all arrests under the National Security Act in Uttar Pradesh in 2020 were for cow slaughter. This is a law that allows preventive detention, meaning the government locks up people without any crime. Muslim men are the only community for whom divorce is not a civil wrong but a criminal one. This is the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019. It criminalises a non-act. Triple

talaq in one sitting is not lawful in India. If I say talaq to my wife three times, our marriage doesn't end, and it is not a crime. If a Muslim man says it to his wife, their marriage doesn't end, but it is a crime.

India uses a 12-gauge shotgun firing birdshot into protesters in only one state. In no other state in India except Kashmir is the so-called pellet gun used on crowds. It has blinded and wounded thousands, including infants nowhere near the protest.

I could go on, but you get the picture. These are the things that India's friends are concerned about. They are new laws that are the gift to us of Hindutva, which is why Gen. McMaster used that term.

Mr Jaishankar replied to Gen. McMaster without once using the word "Hindutva", and without referring to any of the laws India was getting pulled up for around the world. The reason he ran away from the debate, of course, was that there is no defence. Obfuscation and avoiding the issue was the only way to respond to the accusation, which is a correct one, that India was harming itself and its own people through Hindutva.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	51,934.88	0.00
Nifty 50	15,574.90	-0.05
S&P 500*	4,203.77	-0.01
Dollar (₹)	72.90	0.38
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.37	0.42
Euro (₹)	89.18	0.77
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,892.285	0.58
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	70.18	1.24
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.025	0.05
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.632	0.039

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Move to exempt electric vehicles from RC fees

The ministry of road transport and highways has issued a draft notification proposing to exempt battery-operated vehicles (BOV) from payment of fee for issue or renewal of registration certificate (RC). The ministry said comments from the public have been sought within 30 days. "The ministry...proposing to exempt BOV from payment of fees for the purpose of issue or renewal of RC and assignment of new registration mark," it said.

Curbs on export of amphotericin-B injections



The government imposed curbs on export of amphotericin-B injections that are used for treatment of mucormycosis or black fungus infections. By a notification issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, export of the injections have been put in the restricted category. This means that an exporter would need permission or licence from the directorate for its outbound shipments.

Renault Triber gets 4-star adult safety rating

Renault India's seven-seater model Triber has received a four-star safety rating for adult occupants, vehicle safety group Global NCAP said. The model has achieved a four-star rating for adult occupants and three stars for child occupants as per the Global NCAP's latest round of crash tests. Vehicles are rated from zero to five based on their safety features and automobiles with a higher rating are considered safer for occupants.

Eli Lilly India gets nod for antibody combination

Eli Lilly and Company India said it has received permission for emergency use of its antibody drugs combination in the country. The company has received permission for restricted emergency use of its monoclonal antibody drugs, bamlanivimab 700 mg and etesevimab 1400 mg, used together for the treatment of patients with mild to moderate Covid-19, Eli Lilly said in a statement.



■ Reversal of stamp duty relief affects sales Mumbai property deals take bad hit

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, JUNE 1

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) recorded a sharp drop in property sale transactions in April-May 2021 over the Covid-19 second wave and the Maharashtra government's decision to discontinue the stamp duty waiver on property registrations from April 2021.

Sale transactions in April and May came down to Rs 10,979 crore and Rs 22,507 crore, respectively, against Rs 44,167 crore in March 2021.

The property sale transactions registered in MMR in February and January 2021 were Rs 21,696 crore and Rs 21,484 crore, respectively.

As per data from the Inspector General of Registration-Department of Registrations & Stamps Maharashtra, as on May 30, 2021, the stamp duty collection in MMR for the month was Rs 417 crore, as compared to Rs 725 crore in April 2021.

The stamp duty collection in MMR for the months of March, February and January 2021 were Rs 1,365 crore, Rs 648 crore and Rs 570 crore, respectively.

"We have started witnessing a 50 per cent dip in property sales after the Maharashtra government restored stamp duty back to 5 per cent in Mumbai and 6 per cent in the rest of Maharashtra from April 2021. The sales regis-

CONSTRUCTION TO RESUME BY MID-JUNE: ASSOCHAM

New Delhi, June 1: With several states started easing Covid-related restrictions, the employment-intensive construction industry should witness resumption in operations by the middle of June,



though at a curtailed level, industry chamber ASSOCHAM said on Tuesday. The chamber said it would take about two weeks for the contractors to put together again

the material and manpower at the sites after the disruptions of about 40 days in major states like

D e l h i , Maharashtra, UP, Rajasthan, Bihar and Haryana, among others.

The major challenge is bringing back the construction workers, ASSOCHAN said, adding, fFast vaccination of the labour force would be a big morale booster for them and their families. —PTI

tered in the month of April & May are due to the overflow of registrations from the previous quarter where many homebuyers took advantage of the stamp duty benefit before the March deadline and registered their properties later," said Ashok Mohanani, president, Naredco Maharashtra.

"Due to the impact of the second wave of Covid-19 and the Maharashtra government's decision to discontinue the stamp duty waiver on property registrations from April 2021, there has been a decline in the property sales in the months of April and May 2021," real estate experts said.

"The second wave which has been more deadly than the first wave made the homebuyers more cautious to save money for emergencies rather than

investing in properties. Amid the sudden surge in Covid cases and the various curbs due to the lockdown in the state, the sector faced a gradual slowdown, which made it extremely difficult to sustain the momentum...the homebuyers took advantage of the stamp duty benefit before the March deadline," said Pritam Chivukula, co-founder & director, Tridhaatu Realty.

"For the second consecutive month in a row, the real estate sector faced a dip in sales due to the second wave of the pandemic. Even the festive occasions of Gudi Padwa and Akshaya Tritiya saw buyers shying away from auspicious purchases due to the surge in Covid-19 cases," Ram Naik, executive director, The Guardians Real Estate Advisory.

Guidelines for pharma PLI issued

New Delhi, June 1: The government on Tuesday issued operational guidelines for the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for the pharmaceutical industry.

The Department of Pharmaceuticals has notified the 'Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Pharmaceuticals, for which the approved outlay is Rs 15,000 crore, the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers said in a statement.

"The scheme envisages to create global champions out of India who has the potential to grow in size and scale using cutting-edge technology and thereby penetrate the global value chains."

The scheme is now open to applications from the industry, the ministry said.

The applications are invited in the three groups, based on the global manufacturing revenue of FY20 of the applicants. A special carve-out for MSMEs has been kept under the scheme. The application window is for 60 days starting from June 2 to July 31, 2021.

"The products covered under the scheme are formulations, biopharmaceuticals, active pharmaceutical ingredients, key starting material, drug intermediates, in-vitro diagnostic medical devices, etc," it added.

A maximum of 55 applicants will be selected. An applicant, via a single application, can apply for more than one product. —PTI

Nestle working to update nutrition, health strategy

New Delhi, June 1: Swiss FMCG major Nestle SA said it is looking across its entire portfolio to increase the nutrient profile of its products, following international media reports that 60 per cent of the company's mainstream food and drinks portfolio failed to meet a 'recognised definition of health' and nutrition.

Nestle is working on a company-wide project to update its nutrition and health strategy. It is looking at its entire portfolio to ensure that its products are helping meet their nutritional needs and supporting a balanced diet, a Nestle SA spokesperson said.

On Monday, *Financial Times* reported that the majority of Nestle's mainstream food and drinks portfolio failed to meet recognised standards of health and nutrition. "The world's largest food



company, Nestle, has acknowledged that more than 60 per cent of its mainstream food and drinks products do not meet a 'recognised definition of health and that some of our categories and products will never be healthy' no matter how much we renovate', the *Financial Times* report said quoting a Nestle document.

A presentation circulated among top executives this year, seen by the *Financial Times*, said that only 37 per cent of Nestle's food and beverages by revenues, excluding products such as pet

food and specialised medical nutrition, achieve a rating above 3.5 under Australia's health star rating system.

"Within its overall food and drink portfolio, about 70 per cent of Nestle's food products failed to meet that threshold, the presentation said, along with 96 per cent of beverages—excluding pure coffee—and 99 per cent of Nestle's confectionery and ice cream portfolio," the media report noted.

While issuing a global statement, Nestle—maker of KitKat, Maggi and Nescafe—said it is working on a company-wide project to update its nutrition and health strategy. "We are looking at our entire portfolio across the different phases of people's lives to ensure our products are helping meet their nutritional needs and supporting a balanced diet," he said. —PTI

Lending to MSMEs up 3% in FY21

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 1

Credit offtake by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) increased by 3 per cent in the last fiscal year (FY21) against a marginal de-growth in FY20. However, the second Covid wave has hit incremental credit growth in April this year.

At Rs 12.43 lakh crore at the end of FY21, the total bank credit outstanding to MSMEs grew 3.19 per cent. At the end of the previous

fiscal, the outstanding had degrown 0.21 per cent.

While micro and small enterprises (MSEs) registered a growth of 4.22 per cent in credit offtake in FY21, outstanding by medium enterprises grew 5.14 per cent. The manufacturing sector recorded a growth of 3.07 per cent in FY21 against a degrowth of 6.15 per cent in the previous year. Services bettered growth from 3.89 per cent in FY20 to 4.83 per cent in FY21.

Some of the key policy

measures provided by the government during the pandemic led to the growth in bank credit. This includes the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme.

However, since the second wave of the pandemic started hitting industries, there has been a decline of bank credit.

In April 2021, incremental bank credit to the MSME sector fell by 3.2 per cent compared with a negative growth of 0.2 per cent in April 2020.

MANUFACTURING PMI SLIPS IN MAY

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, JUNE 1

With the Covid second wave and subsequent restrictions across many states, India's manufacturing activity slipped in May. India witnessed the loss of growth momentum last month due to the pandemic's negative impact on demand, slowest rise of new work orders and job losses, a private sector survey showed on Tuesday.

According to the monthly IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index survey, manufacturing PMI stood at a ten-month low of 50.8 in May, down from 55.5 in the previous month of April. "Although the health of the Indian manufacturing sector continued to improve in May, the latest results showed a significant loss of growth momentum," the survey showed.

Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit, said, "The Indian manufacturing sector is showing increasing signs of strain as the Covid-19 crisis intensifies. Key gauges of current sales, production and input buying weakened noticeably in May."

Moderate impact of 2nd wave seen

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 1

The impact of the second wave of pandemic on different sectors will be largely moderate compared to the first wave last year, says Brickwork Ratings.

Engineering goods, automobiles and ancillaries, BFSI and media and entertainment, which were in the "high impact" category in the first wave are now in the "moderate" category. Partial opening of economic activities, declining

interest rates and a pick-up in execution are helping engineering goods. As for automobiles, demand revival over the low base of last year, robust delivery channels and pent-up demand might be supportive. Revival in the collection cycle will support BFSI. Localised and less stringent restrictions allow a slight scope of growth for media.

However, hotels and tourism, gems & jewellery and transportation will remain highly impacted

due to restricted mobility and lower disposable incomes.

Textile and accessories, metal & metal products, real estate, infrastructure, construction & construction materials, chemicals & chemical products, power and consumer durables continue to be moderately impacted as last year.

IT and ITeS will have a low impact compared to a moderate impact in the first wave due to higher demand and better economic prospects in the US.

Lockdowns drag down auto sales

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, JUNE 1

therefore, sales comparison is made to April 21 to gauge the market trend.

Vehicle sales at Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors, Kia, Mahindra and Mahindra, Honda Cars, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, and MG Motor fell sharply in May amid the pandemic, which hit the rural market hard this time round.

Maruti Suzuki on Tuesday reported a 71 per cent decline in total sales to 46,555 units in May as compared to 1,59,691 units in April. The auto major had also shut production from

May 1 through May 16 so as to divert oxygen from industrial use for medical purposes.

Sales at Hyundai dipped to 49 per cent at 25,001 units last month against 49,002 units in April.

The passenger vehicle sales at Tata Motors declined 40 per cent to 15,181 units in May, down from 25,095 units in April this year.

Sales at Kia India clocked 11,050 units, making it the 4th most sold car brand last month. It had sold 16,111 units in April 2021.

Investors cheer after RBI clarifies crypto trading isn't banned

SUVASHREE GHOSH
JUNE 1

The Reserve Bank of India's clarification that cryptocurrency trading isn't banned in the country is a welcome relief for a community facing push-back from traditional lenders needed to help settle these deals.

The regulator late on Monday told banks not to cite a 2018 central bank circular as a reason to hinder crypto trades, given the Supreme Court has since squashed the order. Banks must continue with other routine due diligence measures on the deals, the central bank said.

The RBI order follows local media reports that financial firms, including SBI Cards & Payment Services Ltd, one of India's biggest credit card issuers, and the nation's largest private-sector bank, HDFC Bank, had cautioned cus-

tomers against dealing in virtual currencies. Indian authorities have repeatedly expressed concern that crypto assets could be used for criminal activity such as money laundering and funding terrorism.

"Investing in crypto has always been 100 per cent legal in India and the new RBI circular clearly confirms the right to do business with crypto firms," said Avinash Shekhar, co-chief executive officer at ZebPay, India's oldest crypto exchange. He added that the clarification would attract more investors to the virtual currencies.

The RBI's broader concerns and banks' worries around money laundering should help to spur regulations and make the industry safer and stronger, said Sumit Gupta, CEO and co-founder of crypto exchange CoinDCX.

— Bloomberg

KKR, CD&R TO BUY OUT CLOUDERA

LIANA BAKER
JUNE 1

KKR & Co. and Clayton Dubilier & Rice LLC struck a deal to take Cloudera Inc private in an all-cash deal valuing the company at about \$5.3 billion, opening a new chapter for a once high-flying enterprise software firm that struggled to sustain growth against larger rivals.

Cloudera has explored a potential sale since mid-2020 after receiving takeover interest. The startup has seen revenue growth plunge to single digits over the past year from more than 80 per cent two years ago, hurt in part by competition from larger rivals Amazon.com Inc, Alphabet Inc and Microsoft Corp in its field of cloud software products. — Bloomberg

TACKLING EMISSIONS

Dairy firms are under pressure to clean up their supply chains

Now, a cow mask that traps methane burps

AGNIESZKA DE SOUSA
JUNE 1

Agriculture giant Cargill Inc will start selling methane-absorbing wearable devices for cows, putting its support behind an experimental technology that could help the industry cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The mask-like accessory was developed by UK startup Zelp Ltd, which claims it can reduce methane emissions by more than half. Cargill said on Tuesday it expects to start offering the devices to European dairy farmers in 2022. The companies haven't set a price yet, but Zelp says an annual subscription fee may start at about \$80 a cow.

Tackling methane emissions from livestock is one of the most critical and most difficult-climate issues for meat and dairy companies that are under increasing



pressure to clean up their supply chains. Having access to Cargill's vast customer network could help Zelp secure demand as it prepares to roll out a product that's still under development.

"Cargill has an impressive reach across dairy farms in Europe," said Zelp chief executive officer Francisco Norris. "They are uniquely positioned to distribute our technology to a large number

of clients, both farmers and dairy companies, maximising the roll-out from the very first year we hit the market."

Some 95 per cent of methane released by cows comes out as burps and through the nose. The gas traps 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide in its first 25 years in the atmosphere. Zelp's wearables, placed above cows' mouths, act a bit like the catalytic converter on a car. A set of fans powered by solar-charged batteries sucks up the burps and traps them in a chamber with a methane-absorbing filter. Once the filter is saturated, a chemical reaction turns the methane into CO₂, which is then released.

Zelp is working on miniaturising the technology and optimising the energy inside the device, Norris said. It's in talks with a number of potential manufacturing partners and aims to be ready

for mass production at the end of the year. It aims to produce 50,000 units in the first year and as many as 200,000 units the next. The company is close to completing its next financing round, according to Norris.

Cargill was attracted to the masks because they can be used in combination with other solutions, said Sander van Zijderfeld, the company's ruminant strategic marketing and technology lead for West Europe. Several food suppliers are testing or have begun using feed additives which inhibit microbes in cows' stomachs to help them produce less methane.

"The nice thing about Zelp is that it could complement a cow that is already receiving feed additives to reduce methane emissions," he said. "It could still capture the methane that is coming out. We could reduce it even more." —Bloomberg

SUTTINEE
YUVEJWATTANA
JUNE 1

Thailand's government approved a set of economic stimulus measures worth 140 billion baht (\$4.5 billion) to counter the impact from the nation's biggest coronavirus outbreak yet.

The measures—which include cash handouts to welfare-card holders and special groups, co-payments and cash rebates—are expected to be implemented from July, Anucha Burapachaisri, a government spokesman, said on Tuesday.

Thailand's economy is facing strong headwinds from the country's latest Covid outbreak, which has totalled more than 130,000 cases since it began in Bangkok nightlife venues in April.

The latest aid is on top of an \$5.5-billion baht package last month that extended two cash hand-out programmes implemented. The two latest packages will be financed by borrowing under a 1 trillion baht programme approved in April 2020, Anucha said.

The package announced Tuesday includes: 93 billion baht in co-payments for consumer purchases, targeted at 31 million people; 16.4 billion baht in cash handouts to 13.65 million holders of welfare cards; 3 billion baht cash handout to 2.5 million people considered members of special groups, such as the disabled; A 28 billion baht cash-back measure aimed at 4 million high-income people.

The new outbreak has weakened prospects for an economic recovery, with Thailand's central bank and the economic-planning agency warning of risks to their growth forecasts. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Coach booked for raping teen

Jaipur: A lawn tennis coach at a sports training centre in Jaipur allegedly raped a 17-year-old player on the pretext of selecting her for a domestic tournament, police said on Tuesday. According to a complaint filed by the girl, coach Gaurang Nalwaya would call her to the Sawai Man Singh Stadium for training and sexually assault her. On the latest instance, the coach allegedly raped her on the pretext of selecting her for a tournament in Udaipur, the police said.

"A case has been lodged against the coach. Investigation into the complaint has been initiated and a search is on for the accused," Jyoti Nagar police station SHO Saroj Dhayal said. — *PTI*

Shafali maintains top spot in T20s

Dubai: Indian teen sensation Shafali Verma maintained her pole position among T20 batters while Kathryn Bryce became the first woman from Scotland to make it into the top-10 in the latest ICC rankings published on Tuesday. Shafali is holding onto her top rank with 776 ranking points well ahead of Australians Beth Mooney (744) and Meg Lanning (709). India's T20 vice-captain Smriti Mandhana is ranked fourth while Jemimah Rodrigues is the third Indian batter at ninth position. India also has two bowlers in the top-10 list with off-spinner Deepti Sharma at sixth and left-arm spinner Radha Yadav just a notch below at seventh. — *PTI*

Kahn to occupy Bayern big chair

Berlin: After 30 years in charge of Bayern Munich, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge will step down as chairman at the end of the month and be replaced by former Germany captain Oliver Kahn, the Bundesliga giants confirmed Tuesday. Rummenigge had been due to see out his contract which expires at the end of 2021, but is leaving six months early to meet the end of the financial year on June 30. Rummenigge's departure represents the start of a new era at Bayern with Julian Nagelsmann, 33, also replacing Hansi Flick as head coach going into next season. "It is strategically the most sensible and logical point in time," said Rummenigge, 65, with Kahn, 51, to be Bayern's chairman when the new season starts in August. — *AFP*

Scotland player +ve ahead of Euro

Glasgow: The Scotland team reported their first player testing positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday at a training camp in Spain ahead of the European Championship. The national federation said midfielder John Fleck is self-isolating and will not travel to Portugal for a warm-up game on Wednesday against the Netherlands. "The rest of the squad was retested for Covid-19 and returned negative results," the federation said. — *AP*

Covid positive Vidal in hospital

Santiago: Inter Milan's Chilean midfielder Arturo Vidal is receiving hospital treatment after testing positive for coronavirus, his national team said Monday. The diagnosis means the 34-year-old will miss Thursday's World Cup qualifier between Chile and Argentina. "The medical team of the Chilean national team emphasizes that at the request of the player Arturo Vidal, it is announced that he has been diagnosed positive for Covid," the national team said on its official website. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

England vs New Zealand: First Test, Day 1 from 3.30 pm on Sony Six

FOOTBALL

Euro Pre-Tournament Friendlies: England vs Austria on Sony Ten 2; Germany vs Denmark on Sony Six; France vs Wales on Sony Ten 1 from 12.30 am (Thursday)

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OH!SAKA

Osaka reveals 'bouts of depression' after Paris pullout

Paris, June 1: Naomi Osaka withdrew from the French Open on Monday following the bitter fallout from her decision to boycott all media activity at the Grand Slam event, revealing she has "suffered long bouts of depression" and will "take some time away from the court".

"The best thing for the tournament, the other players and my well-being is that I withdraw so that everyone can get back to focusing on the tennis going on in Paris," the world number two wrote on Twitter.

The 23-year-old Japanese star was fined \$15,000 on Sunday and threatened with disqualification after she refused to carry out a mandatory news conference following her first round win.

She claimed on the eve of Roland Garros that such post-match inquests were akin to "kicking people when they are down" and that they had a detrimental effect on her mental health.

"I never wanted to be a distraction and I accept that my timing was not ideal and my message could have been clearer," the four-time Grand Slam title winner said in her statement. "The truth is I have suffered bouts of depression since the US Open in 2018 and I have had a really hard time coping with that."

She added: "In Paris, I was already feeling vulnerable and anxious so I thought it was better to exercise self-care and skip the press conferences."

"I announced it preempt-



Japan's Naomi Osaka celebrates after defeating Romania's Patricia Maria Tig in the French Open first round match in Paris on Monday. — *AFP*

tively because I do feel like the rules are quite out-dated in parts and I wanted to highlight that.

"I am going to take some time away from the court now."

Osaka said she has also apologised to organisers over the affair.

French Tennis Federation president Gilles Moretton had described her vow of silence as "a phenomenal error".

On Monday, he said in a statement: "We are sorry and sad for Naomi Osaka.

The outcome of Naomi withdrawing from Roland Garros is unfortunate."

HIGHEST EARNING FEMALE ATHLETE

Osaka is the world's highest earning female athlete, making \$37.4 million in 2020.

She burst onto the scene in 2018 with a maiden Slam win at the US Open. She has gone on to win another title in New York as well as two Australian Opens.

Mari Osaka, a former player herself, said her

sister had been struggling to cope in the run-up to Paris. "Naomi mentioned to me before the tournament that a family member had come up to her and remarked that she's bad on clay," Mari wrote on Reddit.

"At every press conference she's told she has a bad record on clay."

"When she lost in Rome, she was not OK mentally. She was completely shattered and I think everyone's remarks and opinions have gotten to her head." — *AFP*

WHAT THEY SAID

The only thing I feel is that I feel for Naomi. I feel like I wish I could give her a hug because I know what it's like.

— **SERENA WILLIAMS**
Former world No.1

I am so sad about Naomi Osaka. I truly hope she will be ok. As athletes we are taught to take care of our body, and perhaps the mental & emotional aspect gets short shrift. This is about more than doing or not doing a press conference. Good luck Naomi- we are all pulling for you!

— **MARTINA NAVRATLOVA**
Tennis legend

We are sorry and sad for Naomi Osaka that she has withdrawn from the tournament.

— **GILLES MORETTON**
French tennis federation president

Stay strong (love heart emoji). I admire your vulnerability.

— **COCO GAUFF**
American teen sensation

You shouldnt ever have to make a decision like this-but so damn impressive taking the high road when the powers that be dont protect their own. major respect @naomiosaka.

— **STEPHEN CURRY**
NBA star

Everyone talks about mental health after someone commits suicide but ridicules everyone who tries to protect their mental health. You are strong for standing up and speaking out and even giving up the game you love to protect your mental health. I salute you young queen.

— **CARLOS BRATHWAITE**
West Indies cricketer

The challenge today is to convince people of the value of truth, honesty, compassion and a concern for others.

— **VICTORIA AZARENKA**
Two-time Grand Slam champion

Mental Health is nothing to criticize. Nothing to joke about. Pls take your mental health seriously. Without my support system, I truly believe I would not be here today. Here for you @naomiosa-ka.

— **MARDY FISH**
Former top-10 ATP player

I respect her decision. I respect what she does. I can't really comment on that. I feel like everyone's dealing with their own stuff."

— **SOFIA KENIN**
American fourth seed

THE RESULTS

Men's first round: James Duckworth (AUS) bt Salvatore Caruso (ITA) 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2; Ricardas Berankis (LTU) bt Ugo Humbert (FRA x29) 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4; Alex De Minaur (AUS x21) bt Stefano Travaglia (ITA) 6-2, 6-4, 7-5 (7/4); Marco Cecchinato (ITA) bt Yasutaka Uchiyama (JPN) 3-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-4; Mikael Ymer (SWE) bt Roberto Carballes Baena (ESP) 6-4, 0-6, 4-6, 6-2, 6-2; Gael Monfils (FRA x14) bt Albert Ramos Vinolas (ESP) 1-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-4, 6-4; Alijaz Bedene (SLO) bt Adrian Mannarino (FRA) 7-5, 3-6, 7-5, 6-2; Aslan Karatsev (RUS x24) bt Jensen Brooksby (USA) 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; Facundo Bagnis (ARG) bt Benjamin Bonzi (FRA) 7-5, 6-3, 6-4.

Women's first round: Ashleigh Barty (AUS x1) bt Bernarda Caruso (USA) 6-4, 3-6, 6-2; Astra Sharma (AUS) bt Irina Maria Bara (ROM) 7-6 (7/5), 6-2; Ons Jabeur (TUN x25) bt Yulia Putintseva (KAZ) 7-5, 6-2; Fiona Ferro (FRA) bt Liang En-shuo (TPE) 6-1, 1-6, 6-4; Jennifer Brady (USA x13) bt Anastasiya Sevastova (LAT) 6-3, 6-3; Barbora Krejickova (CZE) bt Kristyna Pliskova (CZE) 5-7, 6-4, 6-2; Ann Li (USA) bt Margarita Gasparyan (RUS) 6-0, 6-1; Elina Svitolina (UKR x5) bt Oceane Babel (FRA) 6-2, 7-5; Maria Sakkar (GRE x17) bt Katarina Zavatska (UKR) 6-4, 6-1; Jasmine Paolini (ITA) bt Stefanie Voegels (SUI) 7-5, 6-1; Kristina Mladenovic (FRA) bt Anna Karolina Schmiedlova (SVK) 6-4, 6-0.

INDIA GETS TIME TO DECIDE ON T20 WORLD CUP

New Delhi, June 1: The International Cricket Council has given BCCI time till June 28 to take a call on whether it would host the marquee T20 World Cup in India amid the threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The ICC Board met virtually on Tuesday with India being represented by BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah. The T20 World Cup is due in October-November this year. "Yes, the ICC board has agreed to BCCI's request and they will have time till June 28 to decide on hosting the T20 World Cup in India. They will come back to the Board next month with a concrete plan," a source said.

If the BCCI is unable to host the event in India given the looming threat of a third wave of the pandemic, the tournament will shift to the UAE after it gets done with hosting the IPL, which finishes likely on October 10.

ICC TO EXPAND 50 OVER WORLD CUP

The T20 World Cup will be held every two years during the next eight-year Futures Tours & Programme (FTP) cycle while the 50-over event will be a 14-team affair from the 2027 edition, ICC said.

Also as per earlier report, the World Test Championship will have four editions in the next cycle apart from two Champions Trophy. — *PTI*

Boult wants NZ to 'create history'

Mount Maunganui (New Zealand), June 1: The qualification process for the World Test Championship final is still a bit of enigma for Trent Boult but the New Zealand pace spearhead is confident that his team is capable of creating history when it clashes with India for the inaugural title.

The WTC final is scheduled to be held in Southampton from June 18-22. "The way the group has travelled and performed around New Zealand and the world, the boys are in a great place to hopefully create a bit of history," Boult said at the Bay Oval.

"Everything is feeling good with what lies ahead, a big stage for the World Test Championship final, and hopefully I can get over there and be part of that second Test (against England) as well," he added.

"I've taken a while to understand the process with qualifying, how everything works with the points, still think no one knows how that actually works, but to get into that final the excitement is ramping up now," Boult said.

Talking about the Dukes ball, which will be used for the WTC final, the 31-year-old said: "I haven't had too much experience with it, played a handful of Tests over in England. It reacts a lot differently, then you have to weigh in



Trent Boult

all these different venues."

"I'm sure the boys are very excited to get it in their hands and see it move around. Hopefully we can entertain you a little bit over the next wee while."

Boult, who has snared 281 wickets in 71 Test, will be unavailable for the first Test as he has opted to spend time with his family after the suspension of the IPL mid-season. However, the seamer, who will leave for the UK on Thursday, is hoping to be a part of the second fixture.

"Once I step foot in the UK, get that chance to smell the English fresh air and see the ball move around a little bit I'll definitely be excited," he added. — *PTI*

FAMILIES CAN ACCOMPANY PLAYERS ON ENGLISH TOUR

New Delhi, June 1: The families of players and support staff of both the Indian men's and women's cricket teams will be allowed to accompany them during their lengthy tour of England this month, a senior BCCI source revealed on Tuesday.

The BCCI had put in a request that the players be allowed the company of their loved ones given that they have to spend a considerable amount of time in a bio-secure bubble because of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it is learnt that none of the BCCI office-bearers, including president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah will be present for the World Test Championship final against New Zealand in Southampton from June 18 to 22, due to the strict quarantine rules of the country.

"Yes, it's good news that players will have their families during the tour of UK. Ditto for the women's team who can also have their families around. These are times when mental well-being of players is paramount," the source said. — *PTI*

CORRUPTION | CASES

HCA heavyweights under the hammer

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

In a jolt to Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) heavyweights the Telangana High Court on Tuesday rejected their pleas to stay the proceeding against them in the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) Court.

Former president Arshad Ayub, secretary N. Shivlal Yadav and office-bearers D. S. Chalapathi, Naresh Sharma, John Manoj, P. Yadagiri, Syed Moizuddin, Surrender Agarwal, R. Devaraj were among those accused of corruption in allotting developmental works of the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium at Uppal, Hyderabad.

Justice K. Lakshman of Telangana High Court dismissed the three petitions filed by these accused, who sought to quash the FIRs registered against them by ACB and to stay the trial proceedings at ACB court.

ACB had registered three cases against the accused, who are allegedly involved in misappropriation of funds with regards to construction works of RGICs at various stages.

The construction cost was estimated at ₹31 crore (the successful bidder had quoted ₹30,26,55,587) but over a period of time the cost was enhanced to ₹108 crore. Also, the bidder did not comply with the agreed terms, majorly non-fitting of fire fighting system and non construction of fire pump house.

There were irregularities in selling of tickets, investment of ₹83 lakh on three playgrounds at Mathrusri Engineering College, Qutubullapur and Osmania University. Irregularities have been found even in the installation of floodlights at the Stadium.

There are specific allegations that the committee has paid ₹910 for each bucket chair, whereas in the open market the cost is ₹450. The committee has paid an amount of ₹ 2.7 crore excess by taking huge kickbacks from the supplier; the court observed.

Cases were registered in 2016, 2017 and 2020 by Aijaj Ali Qureshi, secretary of Shalimar Cricket Eleven Club and C. Babu Rao Sagar, secretary of Sagar Cricket Club, following

● **High Court rejects pleas of several former and current office-bearers to stay graft proceedings against them in ACB Court.**

which ACB authorities had investigated and filed a chargesheet against the accused. The trial was going on at ACB courts.

Meanwhile, the accused persons approached High Court seeking to quash the cases against them and to stay the proceeding in the trial court.

The accused contended being Managing Committee Members of HCA they never discharged their functions as public servants. Therefore, the provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, does not attract against them. HCA never received any aid or grant from the Government and therefore, it is not a public authority and the accused are not public servants. The offences alleged against the accused under the provisions of the PC Act are not maintainable.

ACB Counsel submitted that there is an aid from the Government to HCA including providing of land on lease (23 acres at a nominal rent of ₹1 lakh per annum) and grants from 1963-1981. Therefore, it is a State as defined under Article 12 of the Constitution of India and provisions of PC Act are applicable.

The accused, being Managing Committee Members of the said Association, discharged public duties and therefore, they are public servants in the eye of law.

"Prima facie, there are serious allegations against the petitioners herein. However, whether the HCA has received any aid or financial assistance, whether the office bearers of HCA have discharged public duty and whether they are the public servants as defined under the provisions of the PC Act is a question of fact and triable issues. The same will be decided during the course of trial. The petitioners have to face trial and prove their innocence by leading evidence. Thus, the said issue cannot be decided in the present proceedings," the order read.

SHUTTLE ACE MARIN HURT, OUT OF TOKYO OLYMPICS

Madrid, June 1: Spain's Carolina Marin, the women's Olympic badminton singles champion, will miss the Tokyo Games after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament and meniscus in her left knee.

The 27-year-old will undergo surgery in the coming days after suffering the injury during a training session last week.

"This is another blow that I have to deal with, but I will certainly be back," she wrote on social media.

The three-time world champion also ruptured the ACL in her right knee in 2019 and missed that year's world championships. — *AFP*

Southern flavour on sports watch

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 1

It's the best of both worlds in sport, especially south. Sony Pictures Sports Network has launched an exclusive channel in Telugu and Tamil, Ten 4, on Tuesday. It began with quite a boom, as regional commentary accompanied the WWE wrestling live action.

The big feast would be 10 days later though, when the biggest international football tournaments of the year, Euro and Copa America, kick off. Euro will be telecast in six languages — English, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam while Copa will drop Hindi from the list.

"During these difficult times, the festival of football is something to cheer about for the fans. We are very excited," says Rajesh Kaul, Chief Revenue Officer, Distribution and Head — Sports Business, Sony Pictures Networks India.

"We have four months of

top class sport lined up — Olympics, India's cricket tours to Sri Lanka and England. We couldn't have asked for more," he adds.

"We are pioneers in trying out sports content in different languages... we have been doing this for all the marquee events. We will have commentary by different experts on the cricket series and other big competitions in local languages for sure. People are going to love it," he says, adding "Apart from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, we are trying to reach more languages across the country. We already have Bengali, Malayalam and Hindi feeds."

Sony also announced their panelists for Euro that features footballers Bhaichung Bhutia, Sunil Chhetri, Lohith Saha, Luis Garcia, Don Hutchison, David James, Terry Phelan, Mark Seagraves, Ashley Westwood, Jofre Mateu, Purushottam Singh Sandhu, Sandesh Jhingan and Robin Singh.