THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA KARIMNAGAR | MONDAY | 19 APRIL 2021





Forecast: Partly cloudy. Rain likely in evening. Max/Min temp. 38/23<sup>o</sup>C

#### **ASTROGUIDE**

Plava: Uttarayana Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Saptami till 11.57 pm Star: Punarvasu full day Varjyam: 5.55 pm to 7.39 pm Durmuhurtam: 12.40 pm to 1.30 pm; 3.10 pm to 3.59 pm Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am **HIJRI CALENDAR** Ramzan 6,1442 AH

**PRAYERS** Fajar: 4.55 am **Zohar:** 12.25 pm **Asar:** 4.38 pm Maghrib: 6.38 pm Isha: 7.48 pm SUNSET TODAY 6.33 PM **SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.56 AM MOONRISE** TODAY 11.08 AM

**MOONSET NA** 





You used to hoard pulses and onions? I am hoarding Covid vaccines and medicines!

### TAKES

### **India, Pakistan FMs in UAE**

Dubai: The foreign ministers of India and Pakistan made crossover visits to the United Arab Emirates this weekend, after it was revealed the Gulf nation has been mediating between the hostile neighbours "Good to be in the #UAE, Pakistan's Shah Mahmood Qureshi tweeted late Saturday. His Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar visited Abu Dhabi on Sunday.

### **APRIL EDITION OF JEE-MAINS POSTPONED**

New Delhi: Engineering entrance exam JEE-Mains scheduled to be held from April 27-30 has been post poned in view of the Covid-19 situation, Union education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said on Sunday. According to an official order by the **National Testing Agency** (NTA), "looking at the pre sent situation of COVID-19 pandemic and also taking into account the safety and well being of candidates and examination functionaries, it has been decided to postpone JEE-(Main) April session". "The revised dates will be announced later on and at least 15 days before the examination, the order said. - PTI

CIVIC | POLLS |

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC

HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

WORLD 5

Israel relaxes rule to wear mask in public



SPORTS 8

**ABD, Maxwell fire RCB** to third win **TABLOID** 

**'False Positive' costs** archery team dearly



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# Minister plays down top health Singh offers tips official's strong Covid warning

**BALU PULIPAKA I DC** HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

Health officials calling the attention of the public to the serious Covid-19 crisis gripping Telangana appears to have caused some consternation in the government. Worried over how the tough messages being issued by officials are going down, the government appears to have launched a rearguard action to assure the people that there is no reason for fear or panic.

The government, from day one, had been maintaining that there was no reason to worry. It has been consistent in its messaging — that the 0.51 per cent or 0.56 per cent rate of case fatalities is nothing to worry about, and a majority of Covid-19 patients do not even know they caught the disease and barely 5 to 6 per cent of them actually

end up being hospitalised. The fatality rates may be low, as claimed by the government, but the fact is when seen in actual numbers, this turns into 1,824 people killed by Covid-19 in TS in just over a year, at the rate of 140 a month since March last year.

■ Page 2: Covid in the air statement triggered panic **Dr G. Srinivasa Rao** *Director of Health Services* 

• The next 4 to 6 weeks are critical. We will continue seeing more cases and if people do not begin taking care, there may be nothing anyone can do to save people.

 The government, while doing all it can for all patients, by itself can no longer guarantee the safety of people.

 80 per cent cases are asymptomatic, around 12 per cent patients requiring hospitalisation.

The virus is now airborne, something that medical journal Lancet too has said.

 Some private hospitals have degenerated into exploiting panicstricken families of Covid-19 **Etala Rajendar** Health minister

• Our officials are doing good job of creating awareness among people, but may be also creating unnecessary fear.

There is no need to panic, the government will take

care of Covid patients, people must follow safety precautions.

95 per cent of cases are asymptomatic, only between 5 per cent and 6 per cent of people need hospitalisation.

I have been seeing Covid-19 for the past one year, I understand a thing or two, there is no official consensus that the virus is airborne.

 Private hospitals should not exploit patients, the government will take action against such hospitals.

### Covid cases cross 5K/day mark

**FACE-OFE** 

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

More and more Covid-19 cases are being reported in Telangana, as predicted by the state health depart-

ment, even as the number of people that the disease has claimed is increasing with each passing day. According to the figures released by officials for Saturday, the state had

5,093 new cases, yet another daily high since the arrival of the Coronavirus was first discovered in the state on March 2 last year.

■ Full report on Page 2

# to Modi on Covid

Invoke CL to let more firms make vaccine

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

Former prime minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggesting five measures to battle the Covid-19 crisis, including ramping up vaccination and boosting the supply of medicines.

In a letter to the prime minister, the veteran Congress leader said one must not look at absolute numbers but the total percentage of the population that has been vaccinated. Invoking compulsory licensing provisions for drug manufacturers and giving some flexibility to states to define categories of frontline workers who can be vaccinated even if they are below 45 years are some of the steps mooted by him. "The key to our fight against Covid-19 must be ramping up the vaccination effort. We must resist the temptation to look at the absolute numbers being vaccinated, and focus instead on the percentage," he said.

He said some states may want to designate school teachers, bus, three-wheel-

### Railways will run Oxygen Express load liquid medical oxy-

New Delhi, April 18: The Indian Railways on Sunday said that it will run 'Oxygen Express' over the next few days to transport liquid medical oxygen and oxygen cylinders

across the country.
Amid spiralling coronavirus cases in the country, the demand for medical oxygen in the country has gone through the roof. Empty tankers will begin their journey from Kalamboli and Boisar railway stations in and near Mumbai on Monday to gen at Vizag, Jamshedpur, Rourkela and Bokaro, officials said. "Maharashtra and MP

governments had earlier approached the railway ministry to explore whether liquid medical oxygen tankers could be moved by the rail network.

Liquid oxygen has to be transported through rollon-roll-off service with road tankers placed on flat wagons. Ramps have to be built at Vizag, Angul and Bhilai.

er and taxi drivers, municipal and panchayat staff, and possibly lawyers who have to attend courts as frontline workers. "I believe this is the time to invoke the compulsory licensing (CL) provisions in the law so that more number of companies are able to produce the vaccines under a licence.

This, I recall, had happened earlier for medicines to deal with the AIDS disease," he said.

Citing Israel's example, which has invoked the compulsory licensing, he said there is a case for India to do so as well.

Page 2: Be transparent on Covid orders, says Singh

### BJP enters Mum. row on remdesivir

BHAGWAN PARAB and SHAHAB ANSARI I DC MUMBAI, APRIL 18

The conflict between the Maharashtra government ply of the remdesivir drug, used for treating Covid, reached a flashpoint after the Mumbai police, late on Saturday night detained a director of the Daman-based pharma company for allegedly storing a huge quantity of the drug.

Furious BJP leaders have accused the state government of harassing remdesivir suppliers. The Mumbai police

detained and questioned the director, whose identity has not been revealed, of Daman-based Bruck Pharmaceuticals, after it got information that thousands of vials of remdesivir were to be flown out of the country.

Denying allegations levelled by the BJP leaders, the police said they had only "questioned" the pharma company executive because of rampant black marketing of the drug. The director was questioned for about 45 minutes at the Vile Parle police station.

DCP Manjunath Shinge clarified in a statement: 'We had received information from our network that a huge quantity of made Daman is being stored in

### **CENTRE PLANS CRACKDOWN ON HOARDING**

DC CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, APRIL 18** 

The Union home ministry is coordinating with police departments of all states and Union Territories to crackdown on those indulging in hoarding and over-pricing of essential medicines like remdisivir. Covid vaccines, and oxygen cylin-

Source said a team of officials has been set up in the ministry, which is in constant touch with all state police forces. The ministry has also assured states that paramilitary forces can also be provided for their assistance to check misuse of medicines and vaccines

■ Page 2: Pandemic's scale is massive, say officials

Mumbai and will be transported out of the country by air cargo.

He added: "We all know how important remdesivir is for treating Covid patients and it's a matter of life and death."

■ Page 2: Maha BJP leaders criticised police action

### RAHUL CANCELS HIS RALLIES TO FIGHT COVID

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday cancelled all his public ralcases in the country.

other politicians to think about the conselarge public rallies.

"In view of the Covid situation, I am suspending all my public rallies in West Bengal. I would advise all political leaders to think deeply about the consequences of holding large public rallies under the current circumstances," he said on Twitter.

The Congress has

Page 2: People's pain is more important: Cong

New Delhi, April 18: lies in poll-bound West Bengal following a rapid rise in Covid-19

He also advised all

"One has seen such a crowd of the sick and the dead for the first time," he said in another tweet in Hindi, apparently referring to the large crowds at Bengal rallies of BJP leaders.

been critical of Prime Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah for holding rallies amid the rise in coronavirus cases in the country. Congress

Senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram has accused the prime minister of shocking callousness.



2.5 MILLION of the 10 million

of the 1 million incremental jobs pledged by 2025

**3 LAKH** 



\$3 BILLION worth global exports enabled of the \$10 billion



Presenting three new initiatives as part of our commitment to building a brighter digital India

**Amazon Smbhav Venture Fund** 

\$250 million towards digitization of small businesses, agri-tech innovations and health tech

**Spotlight North East** To boost the local economy,

create jobs, accelerate financial inclusion, empower women and tribal communities

local shops 1 million offline retailers and neighbourhood stores to be digitally enabled by 2025 through

Enabling

Local Shops programme

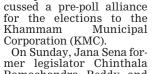




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At long last, the BJP and the

Jana Sena have come under one roof to fight elections.

On Sunday, leaders from

both parties met and dis-

mer legislator Chinthala Ramachandra Reddy and Jana Sena Telangana in- that the decision has been

cussed their respective strengths in Khammam.

BJP sources said they

offered 10 to 15 seats to the Jana Sena, which has been seeking 20-25 seats. In all there are 60 divisions in the KMC. However, there is uncertainty on whether the alliance was only for Khammam or for the entire state: Elections are also due to the Warangal Municipal Corporation and five other civic bodies. It is believed

charge Shankar Goud dis- left for a later meeting they would not have an between key leaders from

**BJP offers 15 seats to JS in Khammam civic body** 

BJP, JS tie up for Khammam

both parties.

Recently, Jana Sena supported TRS candidate Surabhi Vani Devi for the recent Legislative Council elections and not BJP nominee N. Ramchander Rao. Party leaders opined that this was because BJP did not take the Jana Sena cadre seriously.

It may be recalled that during the GHMC elections, BJP state president Bandi Sanjay had announced that how firm it is in Telangana.

alliance with any party in Telangana. Ironically, two days later. Union minister G. Kishan Reddy and the party's OBC Morcha president Dr K. Laxman met Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan and sought his party support in the GHMC elections. The actor-politician agreed and gave a call to his candidates to withdraw their nominations. There is confusion over the alliance and none is sure















### OTHER STORIES STRICT LOCKDOWN IN **ARMY QUARTERS**

Naveen Kumar I DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

The Army establishment in the twin cities has introduced a curfew system inside the canteen store facilities to prevent the possible spread of Covid-19 virus. It has introduced a token system wherein customers are let in alphabetically with a head-count of five persons per store. Cantonments in the city have been following government guidelines

and have temporarily issued guidelines for the Canteen Store Department (CSD) facilities in the fight against the sec-ond wave of Covid.

Sources revealed that jawans are sending trucks to the residential quarters for the families to buy vegetables and other essentials.

The Army had issued directions earlier this week to reduce physical attendance in its offices by 50 per cent. Those attending offices have been told to have staggered timings, ensure all Covid-19 protocols and avoid crowding. The directions stipulated

that meetings or conferences should be done virtually as much as possible. Strict rules are imposed for quarantine facilities for anyone who has been travelling and RT-PCR test is made compulsory, said an official,

requesting anonymity.
"In several parts of the country, we have to undergo a strict 14-day quarantine after a travel and must show a negative report in the RT-PCR test to join the force. All facilities have been provided inside the hospitals and pro-

tocols are maintained to control the spread," he said. Speaking about the controlled lockdown in the Army areas, a resident said that

every entrance and exit of the colonies is shut down by guards manning them. "Curfew is being maintained wherein details and purpose of visit are asked for during the day, with the gates being

shut after evening. The situation inside the Army base is better than he civil areas as we re under constant watch and families have to strictly follow lockdown norms. said an individual Meanwhile, the former Army

chief Gen. Ved Prakash Malik has raised concern over the frightening rise in the daily Covid-19 cases in India while slamming the ongoing election rallies, farmers' agitation and other

### **SECOND WAVE HITS ZOO HARD, VISITORS REDUCE DRASTICALLY**

T.S.S.SIDDHARTH I DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

The second wave of Covid-19 has severely hit revenues of Nehru Zoological Park with the daily number of visitors falling drastically.

Earlier, the zoo would attract 10,000 visitors on a regular and around 15,000 on weekends.

On extended weekends or festival holidays, the numbers used to go well past 20,000 a

day. Now it has come down to 1,000 and 1,500 visitors a day. With around 20 of the zoo staff falling victim to Covid-19 and currently under quarantine, zoo officials also stepped up sanitation to keep the animals

"There is a vaccination drive within the zoo for the staffers. Till now, the UPHC Chandulal Baradari has vaccinated 300 staffers," said a source from said a source from the park.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, curator of Nehru Zoological Park, VVL Subhadra Devi, said: "The inflow of visitors has come down drastically, which means the funds we acquired through the sale of entry tickets have come down." The authorities are digging into funds acquired through animal adoption programmes and leftover reserves to make ends

"We are getting a few donations, apart from that we are using the funds used for adop tions, spending last year's unused funds and in some cases asking the state government to chip in, as it did last

As of now, we have been able to manage but if the situation persists, we will have a dire situation on hand," she added. Last year, the state government provided around Rs eight crore towards feed costs and maintenance.

The officials spent around Rs 18 crore last year on animal food costs and soverheads.

# TS reports 5,093 cases in 24 hrs

Hyderabad, GHMC area reports 598 cases, highest in state, 12 die while being treated for Covid

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

More and more Covid-19 cases are being reported in Telangana, as predicted by the state health department, even as the number of people that the disease has claimed is increasing with each passing day.

According to the figures released by the health department for Saturday, Telangana had 5,093 new cases, yet another daily high since the arrival of the Coronavirus was first discovered in the state on March 2 last year.

Also on Saturday, 15 people died whle receiving treatment for Covid-19, marking second straight day of more than ten people dying from the disease in a single day in the state.

On Friday, the state reported the deaths of 12 Covid-19 patients.

The steep rise in Covid-19 cases that was previously restricted to Hyderabad and the surrounding districts of Medchal-Malkajgiri, of

Singh said the Centre should publicise vaccine

dose orders placed and

accepted for delivery over

the next six months. He

said the government

should indicate how vac-cine supplies are to be dis-

"If we want to vaccinate a

target number in this peri-

od, we should place enough

orders in advance so that producers can adhere to an

agreed schedule of supply,"

The former PM said the

government should indi-

cate how this expected vac-cine supply will be distrib-

uted across states based on

He suggested that the

central government could

retain 10 per cent for dis-

tribution based on emer-

gency needs, and states

should have a clear signal

of likely availability so

a transparent formula.

tributed to states.

he noted.

CASES RIS	SE IN STAT	E OVER A	WEEK	
Date	Daily	Active	Deaths	
April 11	2,251	21,864	6	
April 12	3,052	24,131	7	
April 13	2,157	25,459	8	
April 14	3,307	27,861	8	
April 15	3,840	30,494	9	
April 16	4,446	33,514	12	
April 17	5,093	37,037	15	

Sangareddy, has now become the norm in more than half of Telangana's 33 districts.

As many as 15 districts reported cases in their hundreds on Saturday with Hyderabad and the rest of the GHMC area reporting the most, 598

There were 435 cases n Medchal-Malkajgiri, 326 in Ranga Reddy, Nizamabad, Kamareddy, Jagtial, 168 Nalgonda, in Nirmal, Karimnagar,

Noting that India has emerged as the largest vaccine producer in the world,

he said at this time of a

public health emergency,

the government must

proactively support vac-

cine producers to expand their manufacturing facili-

ties quickly by providing funds and other conces-

With domestic supplies being limited, Singh said any vaccine that has been

cleared for use by credible

authorities such as the

European Medical Agency

or the USFDA, should be

allowed to be imported without insisting on domestic bridging trials.

"We are facing an unprecedented emergency and Lundovstand approximately asserted as a second control of the control

and, I understand, experts

are of the view that this

relaxation is justified in an

The relaxation could be

emergency.

136 in Warangal Urban, 121 in Mancherial, and 111 in Siddipet districts, according to the health department.

The department said 37,037 persons were classified as Covid-19 patients, with 12,881 of them admitted to hospitals for treat-

The total Covid-19 cases as on Saturday stood at 3,51,424 and the toll at 1,824, according to the health department.

Saturday, department said 1,555 people were declared as recovered from the disease in the state taking the total recovered cases

which the bridging trials

could be completed in India," he said.

A warning to all con-sumers of such vaccines be

given that these vaccines

are being allowed for use

based on the approval granted by the relevant

authority abroad, he said.

Singh said he is forward-

ing his suggestions for con-

sideration in a spirit of

constructive cooperation in which he has always

"I hope the government

will accept these sugges-

tions immediately and act

on them promptly," he said. Singh recalled how over the year, the world and

India have been grappling

with the COVID-19 pan-

demic with many parents not seeing their children

in over a year and many

people lost their liveli

believed and acted upon.

### Remdesivir injections now avaiable for purchase: Etala

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 17

Remdesivir injections, in great demand following the surge in Covid-19 cases requiring hospitalisation, will be available for purchase by individuals at a counter at the Drug Contoller's office in the city, health minister Etala Rajendar said on Sunday.

Any request for purchase must be accompanied by a prescription from the doctor treating a patient in a hospital.

Addressing a press conference at the makeshift State Secretariat at BRKR cautioned that remdesivir must be used sparingly and with caution only in cases where it is absolutely required.

He said that to remove bottlenecks, Telangana

to reduce the mandatory 15-day holding period of remdesivir doses by the manufacturers to one week, which will make availability of supplies

Rajendar said the situation regarding availability of the injections, along with oxygen and other medical supplies was being constantly moni-tored by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

Under the Chief Minister's guidance, the state administration was ensuring availability of everything needed, from PPE kits, medicines, kits for asymptomatic patients and those advised isola-tion at home, beds in hospitals, and availability of adequate doctors and hospital staff. Over the past couple of days, Rajendar said, he, along with minister K.T. Rama Rao had been speaking with drug manufacturers and oxy gen generators to ensure adequate supplies are available.

Dismissing fears over the rising Covid-19 cases, Rajendar said the state administration was geared up to take care of every single patient needing any attention and care. He said while reports of non-availability of beds in a few private hospitals were true, not everyone who tested positive requires hospital-isation or ventilator sup-

He said there were a total of 60,000 beds available in the state, including those at medical colleges and permission have been given to private hospitals with more than 20 beds to treat Covid-19 patients.

Sampath donates

plasma 22 times

### **ADDITIONAL DOSES OF VACCINATION** DC CORRESPONDENT

TS RECEIVES 2.7 L

HYDERABAD, APRIL 17

On a day state-run hospitals suspended their Covid-19 vaccination drive, Telangana on Sunday received 2.7 lakh additional doses. This will enable it to resume the vaccination drive on Monday. It may be recalled that the vaccination drive was suspended for a day with all government vaccination centres closed as the state ran out of vaccine supplies. Telangana has been administering anywhere between 1 lakh and 1.5 lakh doses of vaccine daily over the past few days.

Officials hope that more supplies will arrive before they run out of the latest stock that arrived on Sunday.

On Saturday, the state administered 1,50,464 vaccine doses including 1,39,994 first doses and the rest to others who completed their vaccination shots by receiving the second dose.

### **PANDEMIC'S SCALE IS HUGE: OFFICIALS**

FROM PAGE 1

"We are monitoring the situation round-the-clock across the country. All state police forces have been directed to take stringent actions against hoarders or those selling essential medicines, oxygen or other Corona related important health items at a much higher price than what is prescribed by the government. In addition, raids are being conducted by respective state police at various police during which remdisivir and Corona vaccine have been recov-

ministry official.

The home ministry officials admitted that mainhospitals or other Covid facilities is a huge challenge since people are likely to get agitated in view of the high casualty rate or not getting proper facilities like bed or oxy-

ered," remarked a senior

gen at hospitals.
"One needs to understand that the scale of Corona pandemic is massive and our heath warriors are working under tremendous pressure. But we understand that if someone loses a family member, the person is likely to get agitated and this could lead to violence at some places. So if required, security should be provided at such places," the official further added.

"RAIDS ARE being conducted by respective state police at various police during which remdisivir and Corona vaccine have been recovered.'

### **₹1 LAKH FOR COVID CARE TO STATE STAFF**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

The Telangana state

government on Sunday announced that all its employees, employees, and members of their families who are eligible for medreimbursement claims, can seek up to ₹1 lakh for Covid-19 treatment if they are admitted to a hospital under emergency conditions.

family welfare department said government employees in service and pensioners and their dependents and all

#### Be transparent on Covid **OVER 80 COVID CARE COACHES** orders, says former PM **READY FOR USE**

**DC CORRESPONDENT** HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

Central South Railway has about 80 Covid care coaches ready to be used by the government to house patients, sources said.

According to the Union health ministry guidelines, these converted coaches can be used by the state government when they exhaust their own medical facili-

The process of conversion of railway coaches entails removal of the middle berth, conversion of toilets into shower rooms and others.

A railway official said was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's idea to convert the coaches for Covid care.

The railways executed it on mission mode, the Moved by the news of a person who died over 21 receiving blood while undergoing some treat-ment at the Gandhi Hospital, Sampath Kumar started donating

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

He is the highest donor of plasma since the outbreak of Covid-19. He donated plasma 22 times.

The 42-year old Kota Shesa Sampath Kumar runs a beauty parlour and is a social worker.
Till date, he has donat ed blood 84 times and

platelets 133 times and

plasma 22 times, which is the highest in the He has received numerous awards for his service. He donated blood for

the first time in life in Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Kumar said, Donating blood used to be a taboo till 2000. After fevers, demand for blood and platelets increased;

ing it. I wanted to fight these taboos and set an example by donating and

as did taboos surround-

the highest in the state. He has received numerous awards for his service. He donated blood for the first time in life in encouraging others to do

42-YEAR old Kota

**Shesa Sampath Kumar** 

is a social worker. Till

date, he has donated

platelets 133 times and

plasma 22 times, which is

blood 84 times and

runs a beauty parlour and

Sharing his inspiration of how he started blood donation, he said, "I read a news article regarding a person's death due to unavailability of blood. The news moved me, so I decided to donate blood since then to whoever needed it.

During the lockdown last year, Kumar facilitated blood to thalassemia patients. He contracted Covid-19.

after recovering from which, he began giving plasma. His wife Jayashree is a

software engineer and daughter is studying MBBS, both of whom donate plasma.

#### CYDERABAD POLICE FLOODED WITH PLEAS FOR PLASMA DONATION **DURGA PRASAD** the police is off to facili-

Education minister

hails NEP at LPU

Pokhriyal

ranging

virtually

Lovely

Covid in the air

triggers panic

**SUNKU I DC HYDERABAD APRIL 18** 

TIRUPATI BYPOLL

**EVMS PUT IN** 

**STRONGROOMS** 

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

The Electronic Voting

Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs)

and other units pertain

ing to Saturday's Tirupati Lok Sabha by

elections received from

Chittoor district polling

stations were kept in the

strongrooms at S.V. Arts

College here on Sunday.

ended by 7 pm on

Saturday, it was only by Sunday morning that some of EVMs and

VVPATs reached Tiru-

pati. The machines were

kept in strong rooms in

the presence of candi-

dates and representa-

tives of various political

parties.
They were sealed in

the presence of election

observer Dinesh Kumar

Giridhar Lal, district

election officer and col-

lector M. Harinarayan-

an and AROs. Giridhar

Lal also reviewed the

scrutiny of the polling

process with the DEO

municipal commission

er P.S. Girisha, SPs S Senthil Kumar and Ch

Venkata Appala Naidu and joint collector

Veerabrahmam, polling

officials and representa-

tives of contestants. Addressing officials, Giridhar Lal said that

the central armed police

forces would safeguard

the strong rooms.

Although

(EVMs),

polling

TIRUPATI, APRIL 18

Machines

With a surge in Covid-19 the Cyberabad police is being flooded with requests for plasma

donation. Around 600 police personnel from Cyberabad commissionerate donated plasma during the first wave. However, as many of them are vaccinated, they have to wait for 28 days to donate plas-

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

Ramesh

stakeholders

Education minister Dr

'Nishank' told an interna-

tional conference that the

New Education Policy

(NEP) had been drafted in

consultation with all the

from students, teachers

addressing a conference

comprising top global universities, that was

organised by Lovely Professional University

Twelve senior academi-

cians from universities in

and scientists to NGOs

was

(LPU), on Sunday.

During the first wave of Covid-19 last year, Cyberabad Covid control room facilitated several plasma donations and benefiting many patients. Now, in the second wave,

Australia, and Cyprus

took part in the day-long

**Education Opportunities** 

About the NEP, Dr

Pokhriyal said the aspira-

tions of 33 crore Indian

students studying in 1,000

universities and 45,000

degree colleges were

reflected in the new poli-

cy. "It is the biggest inno-

vation, where participa-

It is the policy of the

country for the country,

by the country and of the

country," the minister

tion is from everyone.

in the Post-Covid World.

Higher

'Conference

International

tating plasma donations again. Assistant commissioner of police Hanumantha Rao said, 'There is a massive surge in requests from public in last few days.

### Maharashtra BJP leaders criticise police action

"There is a shortage of and Pravin Darekar, who this medicine and its export has been stopped government. Hence, we acted swiftly and called the owner of pharma company to question him about where the medicine has been stored in the city. We acted in good faith for the larger interest of the public," the DCP said.

DCP Shinge also said the supplier was called for an inquiry, that it wasn't an arrest and he was allowed to go after questioning.
However, the incident

turned out to be a highvoltage drama due to the intervention of BJP lead-

rushed to the Vile Parle station Saturday night objected to the police action. Fadnavis said: 'We have been trying to get ramdesivir Maharashtra by reaching out to pharma companies. Four days ago we requested Bruck Pharma to supply us remdesivir but they couldn't until permission was given. I spoke to Union minister Mansukh Mandaviya and also got the FDA's permission.

However, the police claimed the communication from the FDA to the pharma company was not shared with the

Maharashtra Congress chief demanded action against Fadnavis for intervening in the police action against the hoarders of Ramsedivir. "How did Fadnavis as an individual get permission for the storage of the drug? him and the BJP to do the blackmarketing remdesivir?" he asked. Bruck Pharma is one of

16 manufacturers remdesivir in India that has permission to export, but it does not have a marketing licence. In order to sell remdesivir, it has to approach one of seven have a marketing licence for remdesivir in India.

### CONG: PEOPLE'S PAIN IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN CAMPAIGN Gandhi's steps in public

FROM PAGE 1

said the Prime Minister should be at his eight-phase

Lauding Gandhi for cancelling his public rallies. Congress spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill said gance and follow Rahul

health and safety.
"Leaders lead by exam-

ple, Rahul Gandhi has set one by suspending election rallies in public interest — BJP leaders must follow Mr Gandhi's footsteps to end this naked dance of death being witnessed due to Covid19 explosion," he said in a

Shergill said Rahul Gandhi is leading by example by cancelling poll rallies in public health, public interest and public safety.

He said the BJP must realise that tending to

Covid-19 cases Sunday. — PTI

#### He had also been vocal about how the disease is

job, sitting at his desk and coordinating with chief ministers in handling the Covid pandemic. Modi has been addressing public rallies in West Bengal for the assembly elections in the state.

people's pain is more important than election campaign. India has been witnessing a massive coronavirus A record single-day rise

of 2.61.500 coronavirus infections has taken the country's total tally of 1,47,88,109, while active cases surpassed the 18-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on

In its circular, the health, medical and

eligible categories are allowed to secure treatment under emergency conditions and this provision will be applicable for Covid-19 treatment too, subject to a ceiling of ₹1 lakh.

#### Over the past few days, Director of Health Services Dr G. Srinivasa Health Rao, who has been leading the fight on the ground against Covid-19, has spoweeks. ken plainly and made it clear that the days ahead

would be dark and dangerous, and unless everyone steps up to do their bit things may get out of

Some families have lost

more than one member to

spreading through air more freely now than what was believed in the past and has made no bones about how the Covid-19 situation in the state is dire and likely to get only worse over the next six to eight In some ways, there

appears to be some stark contrasts in the ways the government, and the health officials, have been speaking about Covid-19 of

### OTHER STORIES **BJP LEADERS**

### **ARRESTED FOR ATTACKING COPS**

**DC CORRESPONDENT** KOMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD,

Police arrested BJP leader Palvai Harish Babu and his Veerabhadrachary and twenty villagers of Kondapalli in Penchikalpet mandal and eight villagers of Rebbena and produced them before the Magistrate of Sirpur (T) on Sunday. Palvai Harish Babu was remanded till April 30 and shifted to jail.

A few days ago, Palvai Harish Babu extended sup-port to the podu land cultivators and organised a hunger strike demanding the state government to issue pattas to the podu lands.

Police arrested the BJP leaders on the charges of provoking the villagers against the police and to encroach the forest lands being cultivated ille-

gally by the villagers.
Police put charges that three
women constables suffered injuries in the attack on the police by the villagers in the night on April 8.

### **REVANTH REDDY LIKELY TO VISIT INDRAVELLI**

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

News is making rounds in the political circles that TPCC working president, member of Parliament Revanth Reddy and Mulugu MLA Seetakka are likely to visit Indravelly to pay homage to Indravelli mar tyrs at the memorial on April

However, it is said that their visit to Indravelli is not a party program. It is said after paying tributes to the Indravelli martyrs, the two Congress leaders will visit Keslapur where they will offer puja to the serpentine God Nagoba diety.

It is said that the leaders will visit an Adivasi gudam in the same locality to interact with the Adivasis and will have community lunch and leave to Hyderabad.

### **RAMA NAVAMI FETE TO BE A LOW-KEY AFFAIR**

DC CORRESPONDENT

The celestial wedding of Goddess Sita and Lord Sitaramachandra Swamv in Bhadrachalam will be held without the usual crowds and pomp on April 21 in view of the Covid-19 situation.

As part of it, all rituals and sevas being held in the Antharalayam will be cancelled from Monday to April 30. Only Seeghradarsham will be allowed in the temple distribution prasadam and theertham has been cancelled.

The same system will be followed in the Rama temple of Parnasala. Food distribution in Nityannadana Satram in Bhadrachalam will be done through packets. VIPs including ministers A. Indrakaran Reddy, P. Ajay Kumar and officials apart from the priests, temple personnel and security will be allowed in the temple during the Kayanam, which will be held in the temple

premises. Bhadradri additional collector Venkateswara Rao said that those not wearing masks will not be allowed and sanitisers will be placed everywhere in the temple

premises for use. The Sri Krishna Chaitanya Sangham, Korukonda, in East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh brought 250 kg thalabralu that were made by devotees by following sacred rituals. The devotees handed over it to the

Bhadradri Prantha Parirakshana Samithi chairman B. Sankar Reddy requested the temple authorto conduct the Kalyanam by referring to the gotranama of Lord

Sriramachandra. He said that the temple authorities should take all measures not to violate the traditions and customs of the temple.

VIPS INCLUDING ministers A. Indrakaran Reddy, P. Ajay Kumar and officials apart from the priests, temple personnel and security will be allowed in the temple during the Kayanam, which will be held in the temple premises.

# Row over polluted water Villagers in Adilabad forced to drink water from rivulets to drink water from rivulets engaged in measures to

### Decomposed waste found polluting Mid Manair Dam reservoir

DC CORRESPONDENT KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 18

Officials are finding it difficult to supply water for drinking and irrigation needs with the decrease in water level.

in Mid water Manair Dam (MMD) reservoir is also becoming increasing polluted due to decomposition of organic and inorganic remains of plants and animals.

It may be noted here that the MMD is one of the most important reservoirs in the prestigious project of Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) for supplying water to the people for both irrigation and drinking needs.

It is the main source for supplying drinking water to Sircilla, Vemulawada, Choppadandi constituencies and for Karimnagar Municipal Corporations (KMC) limits through Lower Manair Dam (LMD) under Mission Bhagiratha project.

Last year, the water storage level in MMD was about 25 tmc ft but in the last month, the water level was decreased to 15 tmc ft as there is no water supply from KLIS project.

With the supply of 11 tmc ft of water for irriga-tion needs to Warangal, Medak and Nalgonda districts, the water level in MMD has fallen to rock



Municipal commissioner V. Kranthi inspects the water supply through municipal taps at Mukarampura colony in Karimnagar —BY ARRANGEMENT

bottom level. Moreover, the drainage water from Sircilla and Vemulawada municipalities is flown into the MMD making it unfit for supply.

The Superintending Engineer of pollution department, Krishna Rao, said that at the time of MMD project construction, some of the villages were submerged under the project and the remains of plants, dust and wastes materials along with damaged houses of such villages were mixed up in water and were decomposed.

Due to the chemicals released from the decomposed waste, the colour of the water has changed to light green and it is emitting foul smell.

Steps are taken to remove the silt present in all the canals, tanks and

Police commissioner V.B. Kamalasan Reddy inaugurates the mask wall at the RTC

IYSO sets up mask wall in

Incidentally, police are collecting a fine of Rs.

1,000 from people who are

found on roads without

wearing a mask. "It is the

minimum responsibility

of people to follow orders

issued by the state govern-

ment on wearing masks

compulsorily," the com-

IYSO founder president

Ghansham Ojha called on

people to understand the

grave situation the coun-

try is going through following the rapid spread of

Coronavirus in its second

Family members of Murali Yadav and Koppu Raju, who had committed

suicide seeking issue of

these notifications, offered

her lemon water for end-

ing her 'nirudhyoga deeskha'. Addressing a

gathering on the occasion.

Sharmila accused Chief

SHARMILA ENDS HER THREE-DAY HUNGER STRIKE

People

missioner pointed out.

Karimnagar bus station

reservoirs and to filter the water before supplying it for drinking purposes, he

The state leader of BJP SC Morcha, Durgam Maruthi, alleged that for the past two weeks onwards, the drinking water supplied by the KMC through taps under Mission Bhagiratha is emitting foul smell and is with a lot of dust and pollutants. People panicked on drinking the water.

They complained that they are suffering from throat infection even after boiling and filtering the water. The water is not useful either for drinking or for irrigation needs. Not only the health of the people but also crops are being affected.

The KMC is supplying drinking water through LMD without taking any

Karimnagar district must

take all safety precautions

to save themselves from

Coronavirus, including by

Srinivas, ACP Ashok Kumar, SHO Ch. Vijay

Kumar and Tirumal, S.

Srinivas, apart from IYSO

Balram, Md. Fayaz, Rakshanda Ojha, Anmol

Ojha and Pavan Kumar

were among those who

were present on the occa-

sion along with officials of Traffic police department.

Minister K. Chandrash-

ekar Rao of taking the lives of unemployed peo-

ple by not providing them

jobs, even though there are

1.9 lakh vacancies in all

government departments. But the TRS government

has not bothered to issue

any job notifications.

DCP

Vishwanath

underlined

members

Additional

water and playing with the lives of people. The government must take immediate steps for installation of water filter machinery using advanced technology and must use the water after testing it, he demanded.

The officials of KMC are not showing any interest for filtration of such polluted water which is supplied to LMD. Under the reign of the TRS government in the Karimnagar smart city, people are supplied with the polluted water to drink. Is this the development, the TRS is boasting of, he questioned. Meanwhile,

Municipal commissioner Valluri Kranthi inspected the water supply in Mukarampura and Mukarampura and Godamgadda areas few days back said that compared to last week the quality of water was increased to 90 percent pure and further steps will be taken for supplying 100 percent safe drinking water to the people under KMC limits.

She ordered the officials concerned to test the quality of water daily before supplying it to the households along with fixing the perfect time for supply of water and urged the people to boil and filter the water before they drink it

### **CONG WILL WIN MAJORITY SEAT** IN KMC: BHATTI

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, APRIL 18

Congress Legislature Party leader Bhatti Vikramarka asserted that Congress will win majority of divisions in the Khammam Municipal

Corporation elections.
In support of his contention, he said many leaders from TRS, who are vexed with corrupt deeds of transport minister Puvvađa Ajay Kumar, have joined Congress. Incidentally, K. Sarita, TRS corporator, joined Congress in the presence of Bhatti.

The Congress leader said corruption is rampant in state with Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and his son and minister K. T. Rama Rao busy accumulating wealth through corruption means, particularly by way of kickbacks in Kaleswaram Project and Mission Bhagiratha.

TRS leaders are busy exploiting natural resources of the state for their own benefit, instead of serving the people, he said. He maintained that people of Telangana are keen on teaching TRS leaders, including minister Ajay Kumar, a lesson for their corrupt deeds. He charged that no contract works in Khammam and Bhadradri districts could be sanctioned without the consent of Puvvada.

Bhatti said Congress will expose all the misdeeds of TRS government in Khammam elec-

### engrossed in repairing Mission Bhagiratha pipes and connecting them to

ADILABAD, APRIL 18 Despite rising instances of

SRINIVAS I DC

Covid positive cases, offi-cials have failed to ensure supply of drinking water to villages that are facing acute water problems in old Adilabad district.

Many water bodies have dried up due to high tem-peratures and quite early this summer. To make it worse, gram

panchayat and rural water supply departments neglected drinking water supply to the villages. The officials are engrossed in repairing Mission Bhagiratha pipes and connecting them to villages while the locals remain dependent on far-

villages while the locals remain dependent on faroff streams and rivulets for their drinking water

off streams and rivulets for their drinking water

needs.

The problem is high in Gadeguda, Sirikonda, Indravelli , Utnoor and Jainoor, Kerameri, Tiryani, Sirpur (U), Lingapur, Ichoda, Bharajarhathnoor man-

dals. Meanwhile, revenue and

control the spread of coronavirus.

The state government has not released any spe-cial funds to mitigate the drinking water problem during this summer and zilla parishads are not making arrangements to bring relief to the vil-

Given the grim Covid sit-uation, villagers are not allowing anyone from other villages to take water from their agriculture wells.

In some villages, people are buying purified drinking water cans from water plants in towns with some bringing them on their bikes or autos spending up to ₹20 on each can of purified drinking water.

### TRS picks Sudharani to be Warangal's Mayor

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, APRIL 18

The nomination papers for the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation elections are still underway but the TRS seems to have ended the race for the Mayor's seat.

Without leaving anything to suspense, the party leadership is said to have sent signals to its leaders that Gundu Sudharani, former Rajya Sabha MP and TRS women's wing state president, would be the party's nominee. As expected, she filed her papers on Sunday.

The caste equation came into play for Sudharani to be just one step away from becoming Warangal Mayor. Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao who evidently wanted to address the criticism of not giving much prominence to the Padmashali community,

Sudharani who has so far maintained a clean image. She joined the TRS from the Telugu Desam in November 2015 when she was a member of the Rajya Sabha. She held the position of chairperson of the Women's Cooperative Finance Corporation until recently. The TRS leader-

ship took the key decision despite pressure from the other top leaders especially those hailing from the Munnuru Kapu community. With both the TRS MLAs from Warangal Urban dis-

trict belonging to the Munnuru Kapu community, the party leadership seems to have decided that handing over another big post to the same community does not augur well with the masses. Leaders close to TRS

working president and minister K.T. Rama Rao have been lobbying hard for the mayoral seat for some time now. In particular, Nagurla Venkateshwarlu, chairman of the Debt State Relief Commission, has worked hard for the mayoral seat. While he initially got positive signs, he reportedly was shut out in the last minute. Dasyam Vijay Bhaskar,

the brother of Warangal West MLA Vinay Bhaskar, Vaddiraju Ravi Chandra, businessman. Gundeti Narender, TRS



# Many bizmen in KMC electoral fray

**RAVINDRA SESHU | DC** KHAMMAM, APRIL 18

Nearly 35 businessmen and real estate players have filed their nominations for the ensuing elections to Khammam Municipal Corporation (KMC). About 281 nominations have been filed in 60 divisions by candidates from TRS, Congress, BJP, CPI, CPI-M and Jana Sena apart from independents by Sunday, the last day for filing nominations.

Interestingly, ticket aspirants of different political parties were told by their respective in-charge leaders to contest only if they could spend ₹50 lakh. The message on election expenditure is clear and loud. With this, many businessmen and those from real estate evinced interest in contesting as TRS nominees, followed by Congress and BJP.

Vaddeboina Narasimha Rao, who was elected as councilor and later corporator for the last five times from Congress in Khammam, has decided not to contest, this time around. D Poornachander, a Congress loyalist was given a party ticket from his division. said. Vaddeboina

"Congress fielded Poornachander to disprove the

political parties were told by their respective incharge leaders to contest only if they could spend ₹50 lakh. belief that cash-flow is a

INTERESTINGLY, ticket

aspirants of different

key point to win. We as Congress workers take it seriously and will strive for his win'

BJP and Jana Sena are having an alliance in KMC. The latter is contesting from 12 divisions as part of the understanding. Congress and CPI-M have an alliance Khammam and their leaders are working out seat sharing in the corpora-

TD district president Kurapati Venkateswarlu said that the party decided not to have alliance with any party and is contesting from 12 divisions.

Surprisingly, ten persons from TRS, with business interests, filed their nominations on Sunday after taking out a massive rally. Koinni Venkanna filed his nomination for 50th division and Jana Vgnana Vedika Telangana JAC and Lambadi Hakkula Porata Samiti are extending support to

senior leader from the Padmashali community, are said to be top runners. aspirants have

reportedly not given up hope and are trying their level best to try their luck till the last minute.

DC CORRESPONDENT

Karimnagar, April 18

Members of Indian Youth

Secured Organisation

(IYSO) Team India have

established a Mask Wall at

Karimnagar and are dis-

tributing masks for free to

prevent Coronavirus from

spreading in the district.
Police commissioner V.

B. Kamalasan Reddy inau-

gurated the Mask Wall.

Appreciating IYSO, he

also took part in free dis-

tribution of masks among

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

Y.S. Sharmila on Sunday

hunger strike demanding

that the state government

issue notifications for pro-

viding jobs to unemployed

in Telangana.

three-day

Bus Stand in

### **CORONA I CRISIS** Seethakka warns that Covid second stage is deadly, dangerous

## MLA urges NGOs to help needy

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

Mulugu MLA Danasari Anasuya alias Seethakka has urged the social service organisations to come forward to help the needy to get through the coronavirus pandemic, who reside in interior forest

She distributed essentials to 47 families in Saralamma Adivasi Gothi Koya Gudem in Bayakkapeta village and Gothi Kova Gudam next to Elubaka along with representatives of the Blue foundation Kranti,

and Ashok.

Kiran, Kishore, Madhu They also distributed rice, pulses, oil, wheat flour, face masks, other essentials and toys to children Thakkallapalli Adivasi Gothikoyagudem

Bayakkapeta village. Speaking on this occa sion, Seetakka said that such acts help the poor to get through these hard

She warned that the second stage of the corona is exacerbated and called on the people to take physiprecautions to repel the Coronavirus epidemic by not leaving their homes unless there is dire requirement.

She thanked the representatives of the Blue Foundation for their support. Youth Congress district

SEETHAKKA CALLED on people to take physical precautions to repel the Coronavirus epidemic by not leaving their homes unless there is dire requirement.She thanked the representatives of the Blue Foundation for their sup-

president Banoth Ravi Chander, former MP Enaganti Ramaiah, Kisan cell constituency president Sanjeeva Reddy, Kisan cell district secretary Chakrapu Raju, Youth Congress constituency spokesperson Vamsi Krishna were present among others.



distribute essentials need to tribals, in Bayakkapeta BY ARRANGEMENT village, on Sunday.



#### **PROPERTY**

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### RAIPUR HOSPITAL **FIRE: PROBE ORDERED**

Raipur, April 18: Authorities after five Coronavirus patients died in a fire at the Covid-19

died in a fire at the Covid-19 ward of a private hospital in Chhattisgarh's capital city Raipur, police said on Sunday. Raipur collector Dr S. Bharathi Dasan has ordered an investigation into the incident. Officials have been directed to a product of the conduct of the conduc directed to conduct safety check at Coronavirus hospi

The fire broke out at Raipur's Rajdhani hospital on Saturday, police said. "Five Coronavirus patients died in the incident One was charred to death and the others died due to suffoca tion," a police official said, adding a case of negligence will be registered against the owners of the hospital.

A supervisor saw smoke coming out of the ward and informed the hospital authorities, who alerted the police The fire brigade and hospital staff rescued the other patients. "The fire broke out in the Covid-19 ward of Rajdhani Super Speciality Hospital located at Pachpedi Naka under Tikrapara police station at 4.30 pm and was brought under control by the firefighters in 20 minutes," tikrapara station house officer Sanjeev

Mishra said.
When the fire broke out, there were around 30 patients in the ward, Mishra said. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel expressed grief over the incident and announced a compensation of ₹4 lakh each to the families of

### **CENTRE NOD TO BOOST MEDICAL OXYGEN SUPPLY**

New Delhi, April 18: The Centre has sanctioned instal lation of 162 pressure swing adsorption (PSA) plants in public health facilities in all states, the health ministry said on Sunday, as demand of medical oxygen goes through the roof amid spiralling Coro-

navirus cases in the country. The PSA plants manufacture oxygen and help hospitals become self-sufficient in their requirement for medical oxygen, while also reducing the burden on the national grid for its supply of medical oxy-

A total of 162 PSA oxygen plants have been sanctioned by the government for installation in public health facilities in all states, the ministry tweeted. "These will augment medical oxygen capacity by 154.19 MT.

Thirty-three of the 162 PSA plants have been installed five in Madhya Pradesh, four in Himachal Pradesh, three each in Chandigarh, Gujarat and Uttarakhand: two each in Bihar, Karnataka and Telangana; and one each in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi Haryana, Kerala, Mahara-shtra, Puducherry, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, it said

Fifty-nine more PSA plants will be installed by April-end, while 80 more will be installed by May-end.

### **BSY IN HOSP FOR COVID, STABLE** AND RECOVERING

Bengaluru, April Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa who is undergo ing treatment for Coronavirus at a private hospital is now stable and recovering, his office

said on Sunday. "The Chief Minister who was admitted in a hospital on Friday for Covid treatment is being monitored by a team of expert doctors. The health of the Chief Minister is stable and he is recovering," the office of the Chief Minister

tweeted on Sunday. Yediyurappa is spending his time in the hospital reading his favourite books and is in touch with officials to give them necessary directions, the

tweet further said. The Chief Minister had fever on Friday and when he got himself tested, the report came positive for Coronavirus.

Accordingly, he got admitted to the hospital. This is the second time Yedivurappa contracted

Coronavirus. This was despite the fact that the Chief Minister took the first dose of Covid-19

vaccine. He was supposed to chair an all-party meeting on Sunday to take a stringent measure in view of rising Coronavirus

cases in Bengaluru. However, the meeting has been postponed to Monday and revenue minister R. Ashoka will now preside over the meeting.



City streets wear a deserted look during weekend lockdown to curb Covid-19 cases in Agra on Sunday.

# With 2.71 lakh new cases, India sees highest ever rise

States running out of beds, oxygen, drugs; govts scrambling to save lives

VINEETA PANDEY | DC with agency inputs NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

With 2,71,204 new cases, India saw the highest ever daily spike of Covid-19 on Sunday. The daily positivity rate in the last 12 days has doubled from 8 per cent to 16.69 per cent and the death in the last 24 hours due to the virus was 1,570. As states are running out of hospital beds, medical oxygen, and several life saving drugs, the union and state govern-ments are scrambling to save lives.

Railways is gearing up to transport Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) and Oxygen Cylinders through "Oxygen Express" via green corridors to ensure fast movement of these trains. This came after Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra state governments approached the Ministry of Railways to explore whether Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) tankers could be moved through it.

In Delhi, the weekend curfew ends on Monday but traders in Chandni Chowk have decided to pull the shutters down till Sunday. Delhi government has filed FIR against four airlines under DDMA Act

**BIHAR IMPOSES** 

**NIGHT CURFEW** 

**ALL OVER STATE** 

NAYYAR AZAD | DC

### Delhi oxygen quota given to other states: Kejriwal

official has rejected Kejri-

wal's claims as "blatant

lies" and said there was no

New Delhi, April 18: Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said Delhi is facing an "acute shortage" of oxygen for Covid-19 patients and alleged that the quota of the city has been diverted

to other states.
The Chief Minister's remarks came hours after he wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his help in enhancing the number of hospital beds and immediate oxygen supply for patients in Delhi. A central government

for not checking RT-PCR negative reports of incoming passengers. It is expected that the Delhi government may extend the weekend curfew for few more days as huge surges in daily cases continue. The decision in this regard is expected after a meeting between Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal on Monday.

panic situation in industries minister Pivush Goyal urging him to ensure "uninterrupted" supply of 700MT of oxygen on daily basis and restore supply of 140MT of oxygen by a supplier INOX. The output of INOX, one of the major suppliers to Delhi hospitals, has been

"diverted" to other states which has already started causing "critical short-ages", he charged in the

Maharashtra minister Aditya Thackeray said the state is preparing for a third wave though it cannot be determined now if it will be as strong or weak. "We have come to the genuine belief that under-reporting is not going to help...Now we are preparing for the third wave. We have five lakh

beds, 70 per cent of them oxygenated," said

Thackeray. Prime Minister Nare-ndra Modi on Sunday held a review meeting to see Covid containment measures in his constituency Varanasi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi announced to suspend all his election public rallies in view of rising cases.

A senior official in the

According to official fig-ires, Delhi hospitals

received 254 MT of med-

received 254 MT of medical oxygen on April 16 and 612 MT on April 17. As of April 17, the daily demand of oxygen from Delhi was 197 MT. The total stock at INOX and

Goyal Gas, Linde, Air Liquide for Delhi is 311 MT and the total stock position of oxygen in the capital is 700 MT. — PTI

Commerce Ministry said that the allegations made by the Delhi CM are "bla-

tant lies'

Meanwhile, facing acute shortage of Covid-19 vaccines, Odisha government on Saturday halted its innoculation drive in over 1,000 session sites includ-ing in the hotspot Nuapada district, a senior health department official said. The states vaccine stocks will be exhausted in two days, family welfare director Bijay Panigrahi said.

Only 56,472 people were

given jabs at 465 session sites on Saturday against 91,195 who had been vacci nated in 781 centres on Friday, he said. The state has so far vaccinated 49,58,447 people, the health department official said.

Panigrahi said that the vaccination drive could not be taken up in rural Odisha due to the scarcity of Covishield vaccines. Covaxin is being administered in Bhubaneswar, while it is Covishield in the rest of the state.

More than 6,000 people have been vaccinated against Covid-19 at 'mandis' in Punjab during the ongoing procurement of crops, according to an official statement on Sunday.

In addition to putting in place adequate protocols at the 154 mandis (wholesale markets), the state government has started special camps to inoculate all stakeholders and has so far vaccinated more than 6,000 eligible persons.

### **MP: Row over** death of 10 in govt hospital

Ten Covid-19 patients died reportedly due to lack of oxygen in a gov-ernment hospital in Madhya Pradesh, trigger

ing an outcry.

The incident took place in the medical college hospital in Shahdol late on Saturday night.

While six patients died around midnight on Saturday, four others passed away in the early

morning.
"Six people admitted in the ICU died last night. The deaths were not due to lack of oxygen. There were 62 patients in the ICU. Overall, there were 255 Covid-19 patients in the Covid hospital last night. Out of them, 155 were on oxygen", Milind Shiralkar, dean of the medical college hospital said on Sunday. The hospital has its own

oxygen plant.
He, however, said the oxygen pressure was going down in the system since Saturday evening. He has reported the matter to the local administration and sought liquid oxygen pillars to resume

however, claimed some patients in the ICU were seen gasping for oxygen when the pressure in the oxygen supply system had gone down.

oxygen supply to the sys-

However, no provision of liquid oxygen pillars was made till two in the morning.

Oxygen was supplied to the patients through oxygen cylinders, he added. The dean said a probe was ordered into the inci-

Kin of the deceased, however, claimed some patients in the ICU were

seen gasping for oxygen when the pressure in the oxygen supply system had gone down. "I watched my brother

dying due to lack of oxygen in the ICU", Ravi Kumar Jaiswal whose brother was admitted in the ICU told visiting reporters.

State medical education minister Vishwas Sarang denied that lack of oxygen had caused the death of ten Covid-19 patients in Shahdol medical col-

### 14-day quarantine must for Kumbh mela returnees

SAHOO | DC with agency inputs BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 18

Apparently worried over the sudden surge in Covid-19 cases across Odisha and Delhi, the state governments on Sunday made 14-day quar-antine mandatory for Kumbh Mela returnees.

Several thousands of people, most of them from western Odisha, had visited Kumbh mela at Haridwar Uttarakhand.

"The whole country is witnessing a surge in the number of Covid-19 cases. Spurt in the number of cases in the neighbouring states specially Chhattisgarh is affecting the border districts of Odisha," said director of public health Niranjan Mishra.

"As Kumbh mela has ended, it is expected that many participants will return to the state and it may worsen the situation. A list of the returnees has been prepared and it has been sent to all the district administrations. All the returnees have to stay in compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Even the quarantine period is mandatory for the returnees with Covid-19 negative certificates," said Mishra.

"If situation gets out of control in these states, the migratory Odias working there will be forced to return to the state. Odisha government is preparing a master plan to deal with any kind of eventualities," added Mishra.

Meanwhile, Delhi residents who have visited the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar or are planning to do so will have to undergo compulsory 14day home quarantine on their return and upload their details on an official

Authority said in an order.

The order issued on Saturday said those who visited Kumbh from 4 April onwards or those who plan to do so till end of the religious congregation at Haridwar on April 30 will have to upload their personal details, ID proof and dates of departure and arrival back to Delhi at the website www.delhi.gov.in. "All residents of Delhi

who have visited or are going to visitKumbh 2021 at Haridwar, shall be required to compulsory home quarantine themselves for 14 days on arrival to Delhi," said the order issued by Vijay Dev, chief secretary and chairperson on executive committee of DDMA.

If a person returning from Haridwar Kumbh fails to upload his particulars on the Delhi government portal, he will be sent to institutional quarantine centre for 14 days by district magistrates concerned, the order said

Violators of the DDMA order will be liable to be proceeded against under the Disaster Management Act 2005 and other legal provisions, it added.

A total of 1,701 people had tested positive for Covid-19 in the Haridwar Kumbh Mela area from April 10 to 14 confirming fears that one of the world's largest religious gatherings may con-tribute further to the rapid rise in Coronavirus A majority of the 48.51

lakh people who took part in the last two royal baths (shahi snan) held on the occasion of Somwati Amavasya on April 12 and Mesh Sankranti on April 14 were seen openly violating norms like wearing of face masks and social

# TN imposes night curfew from April 20, full lockdown Sundays

PATNA, APRIL 18 Bihar Chief Minister

Kumar Sunday imposed new restrictions including a statewide night curfew from 9 pm to 5 am to control the surge in Coronavirus.

According to the state government's directives, all educational institutions, religious places, malls, cinema houses and parks have been shut till May 15. Offices and shops have

also been asked to follow strict Covid-19 guidelines and close after 5 pm. The decision to impose new restrictions was taken after a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Nitish

Kumar. Briefing reporters after his meetings with the health ministers and administrative officials, Kumar said "the decision has been taken to control the surge in Coronavirus Government and private offices will be open till 5 pm. Market places and mandis have also been asked to close after 5 pm. Bihar government has also decided to provide one month salary as a

ple across the state' Officials said that the steep rise in cases across the state has prompted the Bihar government to impose new restrictions

bonus to all health work-

ers who have been work-

ing for the safety of peo-

R. MOHAN & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, APRIL 18 It's back to basics again in

the fight against Covid-19 in Tamil Nadu, Curfew at night (10 pm to 4 am) and a total Sunday lockdown have been ordered to kick in from Tuesday, April 20. The decision to try and clamp down was taken after a lengthy meeting at the Chief Minister's residence on Sunday.

In a statement released late evening, the government spelt out the measures it will be putting in place to try and stem the tide of the Coronavirus that has been infecting close to 8,000 people a day in its second wave before exploding past the 10,000-mark **STALIN URGES MODI TO SUPPLY 20L** DOSES OF VACCINE FOR TAMIL NADU

Chennai, April 18: DMK Covid-19, 'universal vaccipresident M.K. Stalin on Sunday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to direct officials to send 20 lakh Covid-19 vaccine doses "requisitioned" by the Tamil Nadu govern-ment immediately and ensure supplies commensurate with the state's population.

In view of rapid increase in the number of people getting infected by

on Sunday when 10,723 new cases pushed the

caseload to 9.91 lakh and

total fatalities to 13,113.

nation' is the need of the hour to protect lives, the DMK chief said in a letter to the Prime Minister and appealed to him to "take a policy decision swiftly' over it.

Tamil Nadu would need more vaccine doses than allotted now to accomplish effective vaccinations, break the cycle of infection and flatten the curve, he said.

The night curfew will be total with autos and taxis also banned. In normal times, autos and taxis are

expected to ply only for medical emergencies and to serve train and air travel passengers. There will be strict SoPs on public transport on working days. State Board exams for Cla ss 12 have also been post poned and classes can be held only online and summer camps are banned.

Inter-district and interstate transport will not be allowed either and only persons driving in an emergency will be allowed on the road. Of course, essential services like the carrying of milk and making newspaper deliveries and hospital emergency service vehicles will be allowed Transportation of petrol diesel and LPG will also be

### SEVERE | SHORTAGE | Gujarat reported 10,340 new Covid-19 cases and 110 deaths on Sunday

# CM admits shortage of beds, health infra

Ahmedabad, April 18: more patients, it fell short health department and refuse to admit patients. Gujarat deputy chief min-ister Nitin Patel on Sunday admitted that the present requirement of beds and other healthcare facilities in the wake of the spike in Coronavirus cases is more than the administrations'

who handles portfolio, said health though the state government is adding more facilities and beds at regular

of demand. "Over 9,000 new Çoronavirus cases are emerging

Gujarat everyday. Though we are adding new facilities and beds at regular intervals, it falls short against the demand as the inflow of Coronavirus patients is much higher,' Patel told reporters at civil

hospital campus here. "Requirement for beds and other healthcare facil-

ities in the present situa-

tion is higher than the

administration's capacity. In view of the spike in cases, we are adding more beds to accommodate the patients," he said. Commenting on the long

queue of ambulances car-Coronavirus rving patients outside the civil hospital, Patel said it is the government's obligation to save each and every patient turned away by other hospitals.

"Long queues happen because other hospitals Such patients then come to us for treatment. Such queues are not a pleasant sight, but it is our obligation to save each and every patient. Till they are admitted in the hospital, till they are in ambulance, we try to keep them alive by giving oxygen," he added. Gujarat reported 10,340 cases and 110 deaths on

Sunday, the highest oneday case count and death toll for the state since the pandemic began.



A Covid patient receives primary treatment outside Kanpur LLR Hospital in Uttar Pradesh on Sunday. -PTI IN BRIEF

### **Afghan mosque** hit kills eight

Jalalabad, Afghanistan, April 18: Eight members of the same family were gunned down in an attack on a mosque in eastern Afghanistan, officials said Sunday. The shooting happened on Saturday night in the city of Jalalabad in Nangarhar province, and was believed to be over a land dispute, the province's governor Zaiulhaq Amarkhil said.

Five brothers and three of their male cousins were killed.

The incident is under investigation but initial information shows a land dispute has caused the incident," Amarkhil said. Fareed Khan, a spokesman for Nangarhar police, confirmed the attack.

### 4 cops sprayed, hospitalised

Sacramento (US), April 18: Four Sacramento police officers were hospitalised with injuries after they were sprayed with a liquid irritant during protests Saturday night, police told *KCRA TV*.

The demonstrators had gathered at the state Capitol downtown to protest the police shooting deaths of Daunte Wright in Brooklyn Center, Minnes ota, and Adam Toledo in Chicago. Protesters met at the Capitol Rose Garden after 8 p.m. and began marching around the downtown area later in the night, KCRA reported.

Demonstrators briefly sat in the streets in the Lavender Heights area before marching back toward the Capitol. The protest ended about 11 p.m.

### Syria prez poll on May 26

Damascus, April 18: (AP) Syria's parliament speaker announced Sunday that presidential elections in the warravaged country will be held

Speaker Hammoud Sabbagh said the window for nomina-tions will be open for 10 days starting Monday. Syrians abroad will vote May 20, he said. The election is widely expected to give President Bashar Assad a fourth sevenvear term.

It is unclear whether any candidates will run against him but any such runs would be symbolic.

The United States last month warned Assad that the Biden administration will not recognise the result of its presidential election unless the voting is free, fair, supervised by the United Nations and represents all of Syrian society.

Syria has been in the throes of civil war since 2011.

# **FIVE NIGERIAN**

Kano, Nigeria, April 18: Five Nigerian soldiers were killed, four injured and dozens missing when IS-aligned jihadists attacked a military base in northeast Nigeria's Borno state, two military officers told AFP Saturday.

Fighters from the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) on Friday dislodged troops from a base in Kamuya village, 35 kilometres (22 miles) from regional district Biu after a gunfight.

The terrorists killed five soldiers and injured four others in the attack on the Kamuya base," a military officer told AFP. The insurgents sacked the base, forcing troops to withdraw in disarray, said a second military officer, who gave the same toll.

"So far 41 troops have returned while 58 are still missing and are presumed to have escaped the attack," said the second military officer.

Search and rescue operation was ongoing to "locate the missing soldiers", the officer added. Kamuya is the home village of Nigeria's former army chief Lieutenant-General Tukur Buratai which has been repeatedly targeted by jihadists, prompting the set-ting up of a base to end the attacks. ISWAP has focused on targeting military installations and troops since it split from mainstream Boko Haram in 2016 and rose to become a dominant group.

More than 20 people were killed following days of attacks on the town of Damasak this week where the militants burnt offices of international aid agencies and several homes. The attacks have forced 65,000 residents to flee into neighbouring Niger, according

to the UN. The 12-year jihadist conflict has killed 36,000 people and displaced around two million from their homes in Nigeria's northeast. The violence has spread to neighbouring Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

## Masks off as Israel vaunts virus win

Marks key milestone as the country vaccinates its way out of a Coronavirus nightmare

**Jerusalem, April 18:** Israelis stepped into the streets without masks on Sunday for the first time in a year, a key milestone as the country vaccinates its way out of a Corona-virus nightmare.

"It's very strange but it's very nice," said Eliana Gamulka, 26, after getting off a bus near the busy Jerusalem shopping boulevard of Jaffa Street and removing her face cover-"You can't pretend that you don't know any-

one any more," she smiled. With over half the population fully vaccinated in one of the world's fastest anti-Covid 19 inoculation campaigns, the health ministry announced on Thursday that masks would no longer be required in public outdoor spaces.

For Gamulka, a project manager, the good news came at the perfect time: just two weeks before her wedding. It will be "very nice to celebrate with everyone, now without masks," she said. "The pictures will be great! I'm very relieved. We can start living again.

The vaccination of close to five million people has sent Israel's Coronavirus caseload tumbling from some 10,000 new infections per day as recently as mid-Jan., to around 200 cases a day. That has allowed the re-opening of schools, bars, restaurants and other indoor gatherings — although masks are still required in indoor public

And even before Health Minister Yuli Edelstein's announcement came into effect, punters in the popular bars of Jerusalem's Yehuda market were mask-free and smiling on Thursday evening.

Yet on Sunday, office worker Ester Malka said she wasn't quite ready to let down her guard. "We're allowed, but I'm still afraid, I got used to (wear-

ing a mask)," she said.
"I feel like it's part of my life. We'll see what happens when everyone has taken them off. If it goes well for a couple of months, then I'll remove mine." Israel just months ago had the world's highest infection rate, a Coronavirus outbreak that left 6,300 people dead among

836,000 cases. But the Jewish state sent its coronavirus caseload tumbling after striking a deal for a vast stock of Pfizer/BioNTech jabs.

pay above market price and share data it gathers on the recipients, using



A woman walks along a closed vaccination centre in the city of Nice, France, on Sunday, amid the spread of the

sophisticated medical data

systems.
Since Dec., some 53 percent of Israel's 9.3 million people have received both doses of the jab, including around four-fifths of the population aged over 20.

As recently as Jan. it was registering 10,000 cases per day. But as the effects of mass vaccination kicked in, by March it was able to implement a gradual reopening.
"There's no better adver-

tisement for Pfizer," said Shalom Yatzkan, a computer programmer who had been in quarantine after catching the virus.

"I was sick for three days, I had neck pains and felt weak," he said as he walked through central Jerusalem. "I just hope the new variants don't catch up with us.

Another Sunday landmark in Israel's exit from Coronavirus restrictions was the full resumption of the country's educational system, without restrictions on the numbers of pupils in classrooms.

Speaking at a Jerusalem high school, Prime Minis ter Benjamin Netanyahu hailed the "festivity" of the day for the schools, while warning of compla-"We're not done with the Coronavirus yet, since it can return," he said, stressing the need to obtain "millions more vac-

"Sooner or later, we'll (dose)," he said. The situa-tion in Israel is in stark contrast to the occupied

B'desh arrests hardline

### Canada records second case of rare blood clot

Toronto, April 18: Canadian health authorities said Saturday the country has recorded a second case of rare but serious blood clotting linked AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine, but still recommend the shot for use.

The patient, who lives in the western province of Alberta and received a version of the AstraZeneca vaccine supplied by the Serum Institute of India, "has received treatment and is recovering," Cana-dian health authorities wrote on Twitter.

Canada reported its first case of blood clotting associated with low platelets on Tuesday in a Quebec

BLOOD CLOT formations linked to the Astra-Zeneca vaccine "remain very rare" and Canada still believes that the vaccine's benefits "outweigh the potential risks".

woman who received the same shot.

Blood clot formations linked to the AstraZeneca "remain very rare" and Canada still believes that the vaccine's benefits "outweigh the potential risks," Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada said. Canada's health authorities added that they

ID19 vaccines closely and examine and assess any new safety concerns." At the end of March Canada's National Adviso-

would "continue to moni-

tor the use of all #COV-

ry Committee on Immunisation (NACI) recommended suspending the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine in people under the age of 55 while it evaluated the risks. Health Canada said that limiting the use of the vaccine to certain populations was not necessary for the moment.

After a slow start, Canada's vaccine campaign is gaining momen-

claims three lives

**HIGHEST DAILY** 

**SPIKE OF 6,000** 

Islamabad, April 18:

reported its highest sin-

glė-day Coronavirus spike

this year with over 6,000

new cases and about 149 deaths, as the country struggled to speed up its

vaccination programme.

The previous highest

surge was recorded last year on June 20 when the country reported 6,825

infections and 153 deaths.

reported 6,127 new cases

pushing the country's infection tally to 756,285. The death toll rose to 16,243 with 149 more fatal-

ities. The government announced that it will

start vaccinating people

in the 50-59 age group from April 21. -PTI

**SUNDAY BLESSING** 

Vatican City, April 18: Pope Francis says he is

happy to be back greeting

the faithful in St Peter's

Square for his traditional

Sunday noon blessing aft-

er weeks of lockdown me

asures. Italy later this

month will start gradually

lifting some anti-pandem-

ic restrictions, allowing,

for example, outdoor din-

ing at cafes and restaurants in areas of the coun-

try where the Covid-19

outbreak has been show-

ing signs of improvement.

A couple of hundred people, including nuns and families, standing a

safe distance apart in the

vast square, turned out to

see the pope speak from a window of the Apostolic

POPE BACK TO

**IN-PERSON** 

The country on Sunday

on

**CASES IN PAK** 

Pakistan

Alexei Navalny

### 'ÇONSEQUENCES' IF NAVALNY DIES, WARNS U.S.

Washington, April 18: US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan warned Sunday that Russia will face "consequences" if hunger-striking Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny dies.

Jailed opposition lead er Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponent, was arrested in Jan. upon returning to Russia after recovering from a near-fatal poisoning attack he says was orchestrated by Moscow.

'In terms of the specif ic measures we would undertake, we are look ing at a variety of different costs that we would impose, and I'm not going to telegraph that publicly at this point," Sullivan told *CNN*. "But we have commu-

nicated that there will be consequences if Mr.
Navalny dies." The 44year-old Russian began a hunger strike on March 31 to demand proper medical treatment for back pain and numbness in his legs and hands.

On Saturday, Navalny's doctors said his health had rapidly deteriorated and demanded prison officials grant them immediate access.

"Our patient can die any minute," cardiologi-st Yaroslav Ashikhmin said, pointing to Naval ny's high potassium levels and saying he should be moved to intensive care. Both France and Germany on Sunday joined a growing international chorus of protest at Navalny's treatment.

Sullivan said the White House had told the Kremlin that Moscow would be "held accountable by the international community" for what hap pens to Navalny while in Russian custody. US President Joe Biden said that Navalny's situation was "totally unfair," but he is facing criticism for not bringing up the disphone call to Putin last week or being more forthright in his public

# 80K Germans remembered

Berlin, April 18: Germany is paying tribute on 80,000 people it has lost to the Coronavirus, even as the country struggles to get a grip on another rise

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier will lead a other top officials at Berlin's Konzerthaus concert hall. His office says it bereaved who could not accompany their relatives when they died and for whom important and comforting rituals of mourning were not possible.

Germany's confirmed death toll from Covid-19 stood at 79,914 on Sunday, an increase of 67 over the at is the fifth-highest total in Europe, after the UK, Italy, Russia and France. Germany had a compar-

Washington, April 18: Influential American law-makers and Sikh commu-

nity leaders have sought a

thorough investigation

into the mass shooting at a

FedEx facility in the US state of Indiana as a potential hate crime that

killed eight people, includ-

Indian-American Congr-

essman Raja Krishnamoo-

rthi on Saturday called for investigation of potential

anti-Sikh motivations in

the incident that took

place late Thursday night.

and Sikh communities

continue to mourn, and as

the rest of our country

mourns with them, inves-

tigators must also deter-

mine if this mass shooting

was a hate-motivated

While the Indianapolis

ing four Sikhs.

atively small number of deaths in the pandemic's first phase, but saw much higher infection levels in the fall and winter. In Jan., more than 1,000 deaths per day were reported at times in the country of 83 million people.

Infections have increasfirst detected in Britain took hold. Germany has

Kenosha, April 18: A

shooting at a tavern in

Wisconsin killed three pe-

ople and seriously injured

two others early Sunday, a

sheriff's department offi-

at Somers House Tavern in the Village of Somers,

Kenosha County Sgt. David Wright said. The

suspected shooter was not

immediately captured. Wright said the shooting

appeared to be a "targeted and isolated incident,"

and authorities didn't believe the general public

was in danger.

The shooting happened

cial said.

reported 3.14 million cases since the pandemic began. Chancellor Angela Merk

el is trying to get a bill through parliament that would mandate an emerbrake in areas where there are more than 100 weekly new cases per 100,000 inhabitants. The months as a more contagious Coronavirus variant 162 on Sunday. It would require the closure of stores, cultural and sports

Officials were still work-

ing to determine the iden-

tities of the people who

died. The two people who

were wounded were taken

to area hospitals, Wright said. The road leading up

to the tavern remained cl-

osed early Sunday as offi-

cials investigated the late-

st in a string of recent

shootings. Last month,

four people were killed at

an office shooting in Cali-

fornia, eight people were

fatally shot at massage

businesses in the Atlanta

area, and 10 died in gun-fire at a supermarket in

Boulder, Colorado. -AP

Mission equal to Wright Brothers' 1903 flight

### Sikhs seek probe into shooting Wisconsin shooting **ONE KILLED IN OMAHA MALL SHOOTING**

Omaha (US), April 18: A

shooting at a Nebraska

mall left one person dead

and another wounded as

terrified shoppers ran for

cover Authorities believe

the shooting at Westroads

Mall in Omaha was an iso-

lated incident, and not a

random attack. Police

determined the suspects

had fled the scene after

searching the mall, acco-

rding to Omaha police Lt

Neal Bonacci. Officers first gave the "all clear"

around 1 p.m. — about an hour after multiple shots were fired.

leader of Islamist group **Dhaka, April 18:** An influential hardline cleric A joint team of police anonymity said the group and detectives raided an Islamic seminary in planned to face the cases constituting a strong lawyers' panel. Mohammadpur area of the capital Dhaka on Dozens of Hefazat lead-

of an Islamist group was on Sunday arrested in Bangladesh on charges of instigating deadly violence in the Muslim-majority country. A joint team of police and detectives raided an Islamic seminary in Mohammadpur area of the capital Dhaka on Sunday and arrested Hefazat-e-Islam Joint Secretary General Mamunul Hague, who has been in the limelight due to some recent controversies, officials said.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Joint Commissioner (Detective Branch) Mahbub Alam said that 47-year-old Haque was arrested around 12:30 pm. Teachers and students of the seminary initially staged protest and tried to obstruct the raid. However, Haque was detained from a room on the first floor of the building, officials said. Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Commissioner Harun-ur-Rashid said that Haque and other Hefazat leaders had been accused in several cases, including attacks on law enforcers and police stations and vandalism. These cases

are being investigated. He had been watched for some time now, said the senior officer. The Hefazat leader has been sued in several cases filed over violence in Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in Dhaka and following his confinement with a womSunday and arrested Hefazat-e-Islam Joint Secretary General Mamunul Haque, who has been in the limelight due to some recent controversies, officials said.

TEACHERS AND students of the seminary initially staged protest and tried to obstruct the raid. Haque was detained from a room on the first floor of the building, officials said. HAQUE AND other

Hefazat leaders had been accused in several cases, including attacks on law enforcers and police stations and vandalism.

rt. DB officials said Haque is also an accused in a number of cases.

Earlier, the Hefazat leader made the headlines by his controversial remarks regarding sculptures. He is also accused of threatening the government in the past. In Nov. last year, he demanded an immediate halt to the installation of a sculpture of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the capital's Dholaipar. The Islamist group is yet to

issue any statement over

ers and activists have been arrested in recent weeks after the hardline Islamist group waged anti-government protests. Officials said Haque and fellow Hefazat leaders were likely to be charged for instigating violence during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bangladesh tour last month and ruthless demonstrations in 2013 when several other people were killed as the group was demanding a blasphemy law. Seventeen people were killed and scores injured in violence in different parts of Bangladesh during the protests in late March.

Meanwhile, a local court in Dhaka on Sunday placed Hefazat-e-Islam Dhaka city President Junayed Al Habib and its Assistant Secretary General Jalah Uddin on seven-day remand each in a case lodged over the group's 2013 violence in the capital. Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Shahinur Rahman passed the order as police produced them before the court and pleaded to place them on 10-day remand in the case lodged with the capital's Paltan police station. Separate units of police arrested Junayed from the capital's Baridhara area and Jalal from the Mohammadpur

Nasa's Ingenuity Mars from that plane has Helicopter could make its been tucked inside first flight over the Red Ingenuity in honour of Planet as soon as Monday, the US space agency reported, following a delay that feat. of more than a week due to a possible technical

> mini-helicopter's The trip will mark the first-ever powered, controlled flight on another planet, and will help Nasa reap invaluable data about the conditions on Mars. "Nasa is targeting no earlier than Monday, April

19, for the first flight of its Ingenuity Mars Helico-

pter," the space agency reported Saturday. Data will return to Earth 'a few hours following the

autonomous which would take off at approximately 3:30 am (0730 GMT), Nasa said. Ingenuity's first trip was

Sunday, but was delayed after a potential issue emerged during a high-speed test of the four-pound (1.8 kilogram) helicopter's rotors.

Nasa calls the unprecedented helicopter operation highly risky: The flight is a challenge because the air on Mars is so thin — less than one percent of the pressure of Earth's atmosphere.

The helicopter arrived on Mars attached to the underside Perseverance rover, which

Nasa Mars copter flight 'today' February 18. After the helicopter's flight, Ingenuity will send Perseverance technical data on what it has done, and that information will be transmitted back to Earth.

The helicopter mission is be the equivalent on Mars of the first powered flight on Earth — by the Wright brothers in 1903 in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. A piece of fabric from that plane has been tucked inside Ingenuity in honour of that feat.

Haque's arrest but one of an at the Sonargaon reso-

area on Saturday.

# **Chronicle**

19 APRIL 2021

### Vital shortages hit India amid Covid's 2nd wave

rime Minister Narendra Modi's call to the people concerned to use the entire national capacity in the production of vaccines against Covid-19 comes at a time when poor anticipation and planning coupled with a lackadaisical approach of the government he heads have started having a telling impact on the pandemic situation in the country. For more than a year, the world has been under the grip of the fear the micro-organism has unleashed, but the nation which the government and the Prime Minister have been tom-tomming as the pharmaceutical hub of the world is now facing a shortage of everything that the healthcare workers need to fight the virus and save lives — hospital beds, antiviral life-saving drugs, vaccine, oxygen, intensive care units and ventilators. This, despite the fact that the government has set up a dedicated fund — PM-Cares to promote initiatives to fight the virus.

The nation has no idea whether the government was, like most people in India, thinking if the pandemic had vanished, given the very little effort it was seen to be taking to face an exigency like the one we are facing now. There was little or no extra investment made to augment healthcare infrastructure in the country in the

every institution, state or otherwise, to enforce Covid-appro-

interregnum or to step up production capacities **The government must** of the same materials, which we now face a shortinvest in health infra-structure, ban gather-structure, ban gather ings and work with union belonging to the Sangh Parivar to which Mr Modi's BJP belongs, has cautioned about the reverse migration of guest workers from the rce Covid-appro-priate behaviour towns and cities to the villages, in anticipation of another nationwide lockdown. It is stating the obvious that the government did not show as much alacrity as the guest workers did about

planning for the future in the face of a pandemic attack. It must not also go unsaid that the government had been busy plucking the low hanging fruits from the beginning of the corona fight. It started with the premature show of gratitude to the healthcare fraternity even before they started the real fight. Even the Indian Air force was dragged into the farce of showering flower petals on them from the skies when, on earth, they were fighting the virus with their back to the wall, with little availability of infrastructure and consumables The government missed no chance to advertise the world's largest vaccination programme with little idea about the number of people it will have to vaccinate or the quantity of vaccine it would require or how to produce and distribute the same. Today, the vaccine manufacturers are running pillar to post seeking financial help to augment production capacity but the government does not seem to understand it at all; we heard no firm and immediate commitment from the government till

But it's not all lost as yet — the government must launch massive investment programmes in healthcare infrastructure, put its foot down firmly and ban all social, religious and political gatherings that can turn superspreaders, and work with every institution, state or otherwise, to enforce Covid-appropriate behaviour. Every rupee, every action and every moment count now.

### Don't recoil from scrutiny

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, in a majority vote, has expressed concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in India. It has pointed out that "human rights defenders and journalists in the country lack a safe working environment" and commented on "concerns about the difficult situation faced by Indian women and minority groups, caste-based discrimination". This could not have come as sweet music to the ears of the rulers who seem convinced that vaccine diplomacy and a presence in Quad as a counterbalance to China in the difficult time of the pandemic proves that India enjoys a

pride of place in the international community.

The EU stance on India's recent human rights record only adds to concerns already expressed by US freedom watchdogs and the UN. While an ostrich-like posture is easy enough to adapt on foreign perceptions of what ails Indian democracy now, a moment's reflection might show what the reality is. Dispassionate observers have signalled that India has been guilty of demonising its minorities, subverting institutions, intimidating journalists and social media executives, criminalising dissent and whimsically controlling the Internet. The incarceration of so many who opposed the CAA and the harsh treatment meted out to those supporting the months-long farmers' protest by lending their voices to global social media criticism are symptomatic of contempt for a dissenting opinion, be it from celebrities, academics and media-persons.

doxical that whil selves on the back when we come in for praise, we recoil from any kind of scrutiny. Beyond reflection, there is a need to accept criticism, understand the reasons why and act on it to move away from an undemocratic path. Corrective action can begin even in a small way by looking first at why a few elderly academics and activists are in prison for interminable periods without even getting a trial, which in the Indian system inflicts inordinate delays and is the equivalent of extended imprisonment. It is no democracy which shows no inclination to support the right to dissent and, on the contrary, throttles it.

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# Ideology or competence: What do the voters want?



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

here are many versions Murphy's Law. The most popular one states that if something can go wrong, it will. Among the many versions the oldest one is attributed to a British merchant, engineer and owner of ships, Alfred Holt, who told his fellow engineers in 1877: "It is found that anything that can go wrong at sea generally does go wrong sooner or later."
That proposition became popular as Murphy's Law when an American aerospace engineer, Edward declared: "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong." From the sea to space, engineers devised systems that could be as failsafe as possiforewarned

Murphy's Law. As an analyst of Indian political, economic, social and governance systems I have long held the view that in India Murphy's vengeance. Anything that can go wrong, invariably goes wrong. The unfortunate downside to that reality is that most Indians have come to accept a certain degree of incompetence in most systems. Given the generally high level of citizens' tolerance for incompetence, it rarely becomes

an election issue. Politicians are voted in and voted out for a variety of reasons, ranging from their charisma, caste, community, money power and so on, but rarely have they been voted out for incompetence. The Indian voter has come to live with power outages, limited access to drinking water, uncollected garbage in the neighbourhood, inade quate law and order, difficulty in securing access to education and healthcare, and so on. Rarely have any of these become issues that determine the outcome of elections. I

cannot recall the last time a politician went to the polls campaigning on a platform of competence, rather than loyalty or grievance based on caste, community or some other

So, why should it surprise anyone that the voter has come to terms with the incompetent management of the Covid-19 pandemic and that this is not a defining issue in the ongoing elections to state legislatures? Caste and communal identity, allegations of corruption and nepotism seem to ignite political passions more during elections than the competence or incompetence of contending candidates in handling a pandemic.

India is no exception. Consider the fact that in the United States, Donald Trump secured more votes in the 2020 election compared to the 2016 election even though every medical professional in the United fact that his administration's response to the Covid-19 pandemic was "incompetent". Trump's incompetence did not defeat him. The unity of non-white voters finally

For all his continued popularity, at least as shown in the opinion polls, the fact is that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been at the head of an incompetent administrative response to the pandemic. One can argue about the relative responsibility of the Centre and the state governments and which of the states have responded more competently, one can differ on how one would define competence, but what is very clear is that the question of competence or incompetence in governmental response to the pandemic has not yet become a political issue.

In part this could be because, as the old adage

sab nangey hain. In short, all political parties in government across different states have been equally guilty of an incompetent response. Many public health experts believe Kerala is an exception, but it is interesting that the Left Front's competence in dealing with the pandemic has not been an overt political issue in the recent elections. As more and more evi-

dence mounts up of administrative and political incompetence in dealing with the pandemic, it remains to be seen if Indian voters will just shrug their shoulders, throw up their hands, point to the gods above and quote Murphy's Law. Or, will they hold their elected representatives and governments accountable? In the last two years more doctors and nurses have died fighting the pandemic than soldiers in fighting the nation's enemies. While politicians become all patriotic when it comes to the death of soldiers and demand votes in the name of nationalism, why don't the deaths caused by incompetence stir voters'

emotions? There have been many examples of competent criand they stand in contrast to the present incompetence in dealing with the pandemic. As chief miniser of Gujarat, Narendra Modi took great pride, and rightly so, in his government's handling of the Kutch earthquake in 2001. Why has the same Gujarat state been so incompetent in dealing with the Covidpandemic? Gujarat's voters now punish their government for

Covid-19 mismanagement reveals either administrative incompetence or the fear of professionals to speak their mind to politicians in power. Either way, the citizen pays the price.

tive system was built on the assumption that a meritocratic and technocratic bureaucracy would com-pensate for the lack of experience in governance of an elected political leadership. This assumption worked as long as the civil service was willing to speak its mind and politicians in power were willing to listen to them. When civil servants and professionals in government are either scared to speak their mind or have little to contribute and politicians imagine

they know everything on

anything, one ends up with

incompetent response to

administrative challenges. For all its lack of democ-Communist Party has created an internal meritbased bureaucracy that allows political leaders to rise to the top only after proving their administrative and governance credentials at every step of the power ladder. The Chinese people have sacrificed democracy at the altar of meritocracy and the Communist Party of China has for long functioned like the Indian Administrative Service, creating a "man-

In India, the gap between political power and administrative competence has widened with an increasing number of elected politicians taking charge of day-to-day functioning of the government and an increasing number of civil servants either abdicating their responsibilities or doing the bidding of politicians in office without consideration for the merits of a policy or a decision. All this gets revealed in times of a crisis. Covid-19 mismanagement reveals either administrative incompetence or the fear of professionals to speak their mind politicians in power. Either way, the citizen pays the price.

darinate", so to speak. This

has made China's response

to Covid-19 crisis more pro-

The writer is an economist, a best-selling author and former adviser to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. His latest book is India's Power Elite: Class, Caste and a Cultural Revolution.

### **LETTERS**

### **VOTES, VOTERS**

Voters are more important than votes. The government should ban all religious gatherings and political rallies. It must shut down gyms, swimming pools and religious places. States are requesting oxygen and vaccines but Prime Minister Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah are busy with the elections. Funds must be provided to vaccine firms to ramp up production. The age limits for vaccination must be removed.

#### Vikas Panchareddy Hyderabad

The lack of concern shown by the government to address the health crisis has never been more evident as it is now. It is a shame that leaders consider opponents as enemies instead of the deadly virus. Kshirasagara Balaji Rao

### VACCINE SHORTFALL

It is shocking that vaccine is not available for our own people (TS runs out of vaccine, halts the drive for a day, DC, April 18). Will the government at the Centre and state take steps to ensure its availability? We not only need vaccines but also hospital facilities quickly **Dr G.V. Kumar** 

The Centre must take steps to increase vaccine supply, even if it production. Also, elections to civic bodies must be postponed to avoid

Hyderabad

### **50** YEARS AGO IN Chronicle Al's first Jumbo jet

rallies and people gathering.

arrives in Bombay BOMBAY, APRIL. 18 Air India's first Boeing 747, Emperor Ashoka arrived here this morning on its delivery flight to the tumultous welcome of thousands of citizens at Bombay airport led by the airline Chairman J.R.D. Tata and State Governor Ali Yavar Jung.

The quiet giant 346-seater pilot ed by Capt. D. Bose and escorted by two IAF MIGS in formation flight and another MIG in the lead, touched down on the Bombay airport at 8.26 a.m today.

Anand K. Sahay





The idea behind capturing power in any kind of way: fair or foul

ne BJP may or may not win the Assembly elections in Assam. In West Bengal, its chances may be considered to be less bright than in Assam on account of the structural makeup of the state, notwithstanding the pre-Partition communal politics rampant in undivided Bengal. But winning a poll fair and square is not the metric any longer. We have seen popular verdicts being overturned in state after state to the BJP's benefit.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his principal operative, Union home minister Amit Shah, the saffron party's new *sutra* is to form a government in a state through any means. The capture of power is evidently crucial for erecting a scaffolding — a formal platform — for the systematic spread of ideas in the public realm through unrestrained heavy-duty propaganda, the rapid dissemina-tion of communal politics through enabling instruments of State power (the police and the hypergraphs) and (the police and the bureaucracy), and the unleashing of policy with a communal slant.

The last indubitably means going out of the way to disadvantage and

"other" those who are not the majority, leading to the making of such patently unjust policies — which defy the idea of equality before the law the new normal in a sharp deviation from the political tradition whose roots were laid over 70 years ago.

The Westminster system of party politics, which is enshrined in our Constitution, has been stood on its head in the post-Atal Behari Vajpayee BJP. When the BJP fails to bag the numbers in an election, it simply sets up a trade mart in which MLAs become the commodity. The gomashtas, or middlemen, and auctioneers

are out in strength. When elected legislators on party tickets other than BJP fail to take the bait (offered in the form of incentives), the punitive element kicks in and various agencies of the Central government raid and begin so-called investigations against the BJP's opponents. The law courts simply watch helplessly. The Election Commission has little say. The governors of various states frequently\_don the garb of apparatchiks. The Speaker is happy to

receive instructions remotely. The RSS is the ideological mentor of

the BJP and several dozen allied organisations that are the repository of the notion of the "Hindu Rashtra" (the idea that the land mass of India – in its present political geography as well as in its mythological connotation

is the natural home of the Hindus of

the world, where all others must resign themselves to the fate of being less equal).
The RSS lays claims to being exalted. Its propagandists and adherents have prided themselves on being seekers of

a higher morality and ethical conduct in the family, society, and the "nation", the last being an expression which in its most recent manifestation in India has been so thoroughly weaponised as to cause unease among "citizens" — namely, those Indians who are not swayed by their religious identity alone in the running of public affairs and policymaking

It was expected that the self-appointed custodians of the "culture" of the Hindus would object to such weaponisation in the interest of political hygiene and harmony in society. They have not done so.

When after an election, newly elected MLAs of non-BJP parties are pursued with serious intent to switch sides so that the BJP may unfairly get to form the government and make a mockery of the people who voted for them and against the BJP, a small hint from the top levels of the RSS leadership may have done wonders. It would have worked as a discouraging factor. But the RSS top brass have little to say. The inference is that they approve of dishonourable conduct in the interest of making an ideological conquest.

Whether it is an election to a panchayat, a district board, a trade union, a social club, a professional association — and not just the state or national legislature — the BJP uses every trick in the book to "capture" the body. Only then can it pass rules, regulations, laws, to influence civil society as well as the government.

More, only then does it gain the formal legitimacy and the authority to direct the making of budgets and play the lead hand in the disbursal of funds to its favourite schemes and outfits. The stamp of approval is thus gained to promote unworthy communal agendas. The general media tomtoms this, rather than interrogate the phenomenon.

Awestruck by the energy brought to bear by the BJP to win all elections, big or small, some commentators have urged other parties to emulate the saffron party's methods. This is misconceived advice. It leaves out of account the fundamental proposition — that the BJP is unlike any other party that

It sanctions the use of majoritarian force (which may be unseen), rather than the commonly understood constitutional methods. Ordinary civil society sometimes transforms into uncivil society under its gaze. This is a phenomenon that is anathema to a democratic order.

In both Assam and West Bengal, the political actors in the fray, as well as the general public, need to remain alert to the "capture" and "takeover" syndrome. A successful takeover bid may be expected to give rise to the unbridled spread of communal fires in (fragile) border states. The Congress and the Left parties have given little evidence of understanding the parallelogram of forces at work, especially in West Bengal. They may live to rue the

# quick BITES

INDICATORS %				
Sensex	48,832.03	0.06		
Nifty 50	14,617.90	0.25		
S&P 500*	4,185.47	0.36		
Dollar (₹)	74.35	0.76		
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.46	0.85		
Euro (₹)	89.06	0.77		
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,431 <b>▼</b> 9	0.00		
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	66.82	0.18		
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.088	-0.02		
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.578	0.048		
* As of Friday/Saturday				

### Steel prices may take 2 yrs to cool down: JSPL MD

Steel prices might take at least two years to cool down as its demand is consistently increas ing. In the current financial year. the demand for steel in India is also expected to exceed the production numbers, Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) managing director V. R. Sharma told PTI While the demand in FY22 will be in the range of 140-150 million tonnes, the country's production is expected to be somewhere around 125 mt, he said.



### ■ Govt holds 93% stake in Pune-based bank, may sell 51% now

# **BoM seen as first selloff pick**

**MADHUSUDAN SAHOO** 

With the bank privatisaprocess gaining , state-owned lender of Maharashtra (BoM) has emerged out to be the first strong candidate for the government's proposed disinvestment plan. Weighing in all options, both Niti Ayog and the finance ministry officials have already discussed the pros and cons of privatisation, a top finance ministry source

"The government is actively looking for ways to elicit strong interest from investors for staterun banks that are up for privatisation. Though we have shortlisted four public sector banks, initially we received huge response



the prospective from investors for Bank of Maharashtra," the source

There is a wide media speculation that the four PSBs shortlisted are Bank of Maharashtra, Bank of India, Indian Overseas and the Central Bank of India. It is also expected that the government is considering midsized or small banks for

sation, and may later go with large banks for divestment.

Bank Maharashtra stock moved up nearly 70 per cent from mid-February when an agency report named the lender among the privatisation candidates. Last Tuesday, the BoM stock moved up nearly 20 per cent with high volumes on renewed market buzz about its privatisation.

Attempts made by Financial Chronicle to reach out to the bank's MD & CEO A.S. Rajeev proved futile. He had earlier told the media that BoM would aim at growing at 10 per cent per annum and that only Rs 1,000 crore loan book now against Rs 15.000 crore in 2016 were required to be restruc-

government currently holds 93 per cent stake in the Pune-based BoM. Additionally, LIC holds 4 per cent. The remaining 3 per cent hold-

ing is with the public. The government is likely to divest 51 per cent in the current round and reap the benefits of privatisation in the balance 42 per cent holding in later years.

As per a report by Denofwealth, Pune-based giant Bajaj corporate Group, which has a signif icant presence in the financial sector, could be a strong aspirant for the BoM buyout. Besides, two other corporates that are also reportedly throwing their hats into the ring are Tata Capital and Catholic Svrian Bank

### Future's board approves debt recast plan

**SANGEETHA G** CHENNAI, APRIL 18

Future Retail's board has approved a resolution plan to restructure the existing secured financial debt from the bankers. This has been permitted under a Resolution Framework for Covid-19 related stress announced by the Reserve Bank of India.

The resolution plan, already approved by the lenders, is subject to the approval of the expert committee under the chairmanship of K. V. Kamath.

The debt raised through the non-convertible deben-tures also will be restructured. The company has received the written consent of all the holders of the NCDs to amend the terms and conditions of the NCDs as per the resolution plan.

Debt from 28 banks and institutions, financial including working capital demand loans, term loans, cash credit, short term loans, NCDs, purchase bill discounting limits, other working capital loans and unpaid interest which became overdue will be restructured.

According to the company, the pandemic has deeply impacted the longterm business viability and led to significant financial stress across the industries. "The debt burden has become disproportionate relative to the cash flow generated by the company owing to the multiple lockdowns since the pandemic surfaced, posing sig-



nificant financial stability risks to the business Hence, the restructuring of the debt is crucial and essential," it said in a stock exchange filing.
As per the plan, repay-

ment of short term loans, term loans, NCDs, overdue working capital loans (con-Working verted into Capital Term Loans) will be extended up to a maximum of two years. Interest during the moratorium period between March 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021 shall be converted into Funded Interest Loan, which shall be payable by December 2021. Cash Credit will be continued at a reduced level based on bank assessment.

All securities created on the company's assets shall continue to operate in favour of the lenders in the ranks assigned originally, exception being extension of second charge on movable fixed assets being extended to working capital consortium lenders as a part of the restructuring. All charges, default premiums, processing fees unpaid since March 2020 to implementation date will be waived off fully.

# Global jewellery brands fear inventory delay

**SANGEETHA G** CHENNAI, APRIL 18

After a robust March international jewellery brands are now worried about "inventory delay" due to the surge in Covid-19 cases in India. They fear the delays could impact their full year

**US-based** Signet Jewellers, in its quarterly update, said that it has evaluated the impact of inventory delays related to recent Covid-19 surges in India and other parts of

"At this time, the companv believes it has mitigat-

impacts; however, if the duration and magnitude of these inventory slowdowns intensify, there could be future negative impacts on the company's full year guidance," Signet cautioned.

Signet had posted stronger-than-expected conversion and average ticket values in the first quarter and also upped its full-year revenue guid-

Similarly, French luxury goods Louis Vuitton's watches and jewellery division recorded revenue growth of 138 per cent in the March quarter com-



pared to the same quarter of 2020 and 80 per cent compared to that of 2019. Russian diamond miner Alrosa too saw demand from end consumers for diamond jewellery showing robust growth across and China owing to Valentine's Day and Chinese New Year and improved consumer senti-This robust demand had

reflected in the March exports of cut and polished diamonds, which grew 123.55 per cent com-pared to the same month in 2020.

However, chances of disruption in exports cannot be dismissed. Bharat Diamond Bourse was closed in the first week of April due to rising Covid cases in Mumbai. "BDB has been closed and if Mumbai port is also closed, then it can affect the exports," said Prakash Pincha, chairman, eastern region, Gems and Jewellery Export Council. Promotion frequency of

flights too can hit exports. According to an indus-try insider, the diamond certification process is causing the current delay in shipments and the backlog is swelling owing

to fewer staff.
Part of the labour force in Surat's polishing units also have gone to their hometown to leave their family back there, fearing a lock-down, said Dinesh Navdiya of the GJEPC.

SHORT TAKES

#### **Srihari creates** national record

Tashkent: Ace Indian swimmer Srihari Natarai created a national record in 50m backstroke while winning his second gold of the Uzbekistan Open Championship here. The 20-year-old clocked 25.11 seconds to bag the top prize in the FINA-accredited Olympic qualifying event on Saturday night.

Indian swimmers enjoyed a rich haul of 29 medals - 18 gold, seven silver and four bronze - in the meet It was Srihari's third national

record in two days as the Bengaluru swimmer had rewritten the national marks twice in 100m backstroke, his pet event. earlier this week. - PTI

### Krishna Poonia

### tests covid positive

New Delhi: Delhi Commonwealth Games gold medallist and sitting Rajasthan MLA Krishna Poonia on Sunday tested positive for Covid-19 and is undergoing treatment at a Jaipur hospital. The 43-year-old Krishna, who became the first Indian woman to bag an individual gold in the CWG by winning the discus throw event in 2010, is now admitted at the Raiasthan University of Health Sciences hospital. "She had cough and mild fever and she took a test on Saturday but the virus could not be detected. Today, we went to RHUS and doctors there took a CT scan from which it was diagnosed for Covid-19," her husband Virender Poonia said. - PTI

### **Federer confirms French Open entry**

Paris: Roger Federer confirmed Sunday that he will play the French Open at Roland Garros this year having skipped the 2020 edition to recover from

knee surgery. "Hi everyone! Happy to let you know that I will play Geneva and Paris. Until then I will use the time to train. Can't wait to play in Switzerland again," the 39 year-old said on Twitter.

Federer, a 20-time Grand Slam winner, captured Roland Garros for the only time in 2009. In March, Federer competed at the Qatar Open in Doha, marking his first tournament since the 2020 Australian Open. - AFP

# Nketiah saves Arsenal blushes

### Eddie scores last-gasp equaliser to earn a 1-1 draw against lowly Fulham

London, April 18: Eddie Nketiah delivered a hammer blow to Fulham's bid for Premier League survival as the Arsenal striker's last-gasp goal rescued a 1-1 draw at the Emirates Stadium on Sunday Mikel Arteta's side were

seconds away from a first ever home defeat against Fulham as they laboured to find a response to Josh Maja's second half penalty. But Nketiah pushed Fulham closer to relegation deep into stoppagetime when he tapped in

after the visitors failed to clear a corner. It was a major setback for third bottom Fulham, who are six points behind fourth bottom Burnley and

fifth bottom Brighton with just five games left. After losing their previous four matches, Fulham were on course to mark Scott Parker's 100th match

rable scalp. Instead, they slipped closer to an immediate to return

in charge with a memo-

Championship.
Next up for Fulham is a west London derby at Chelsea Saturday before a decisive clash with Burnley on May 8.

Ninth placed Arsenal are nine points adrift of the top four and their best hope of reaching next season's Champions League is winning Europa the

men face Arteta's



Arsenal's Eddie Nketiah (right) scores against Fulham in an English Premier League match at the Emirates Stadium in London on Sunday.

Villarreal in the semifinals after cruising to a 4victory at Slavia Prague in the quarter-final second leg on Thursday.

#### **HEARTBREAK FOR FULHAM**

The Spaniard made five changes to the side that thrashed Slavia, with Gabriel Martinelli among those to come in as Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang absent remained

malaria. Martinelli should have given Arsenal the lead inside 40 seconds when he onto Alexandre Lacazette's pass and

clipped his shot just wide. Martinelli threatened again with a low shot on the turn from Emile Smith Rowe's cross, but Alphonse Areola sprawled to his left to make a good save.

Arsenal thought they had taken the lead when Dani Ceballos looped his header past Areola from Hector Bellerin's cross.

But the Spaniard was denied his first Premier League goal after VAR ruled Bukayo Saka's toes were in an offside position in the build-up.

Saka hit the outside of the near post with a crossbefore Fulham received another helping hand from VAR in the 59th

Jhilli lifts gold at Asian meet

### **BLUES END CITY'S QUEST TO REACH**

London, Chelsea ended Manchester City's quest for a historic quadruple of trophies as Hakim Ziyech's goal earned a 1-0 win to take the Blues into the FA Cup final on Saturday.

A damaging day for City also saw them lose Kevin De Bruyne to an ankle injury just over a week away from the League Cup final, where they face Tottenham, and the first leg of their Champions League semi-final against Paris Saint-Germain. Chelsea were good value

for another impressive win under Thomas Tuchel and will be favourites for the German's first silverware in English football when they face Leicester or Southampton May 15. Tuchel could land an

even bigger prize in the Champions League just months after replacing the sacked Frank Lampard in January. His side showed they can

get the better of City in what could be a dress rehearsal for Champions League final should the English clubs see off PSG and Real Madrid in the last four.

### Messi wins Copa crown for Barca

Madrid, April 18: Lionel including a stunning solo goal, as Barcelona blew away Athletic Bilbao to win the Copa del Rey on Saturday, consigning their opponents to a second final defeat in two weeks.

The cup was won and lost in a whirlwind 12 minutes in Seville, which saw Barca score four times to clinch an emphatic 4-0 victory, with Messi at his devastating best. It remains to be seen if

his seventh Copa del Rey triumph is the last trophy Messi lifts in Barcelona colours but if this was to be a final flourish, the 33vear-old crafted a fitting farewell. "It's very special to be captain of this team where I have spent my whole life and very special to be able to lift this cup,' Messi said.

His first goal, and Barca's third, started with the Argentinian in his own half before a charging run down the right and a surge forward into the penalty area gave him the chance for a simple

With the club's new president Joan Laporta in the crowd, Ronald Koeman's first title as Barcelona coach should also significantly boost his chances of remaining in charge

It remains to be seen if his seventh Copa del Rey triumph is the last trophy Messi lifts in Barcelona colours but if this was to be a final flourish, the 33-year-old crafted a fitting farewell.

beyond the summer. "To win a title is important for me," Koeman admitted afterwards.

Yet Laporta was notice ably evasive when asked about Koeman's future. "He is doing well," he said.

Koeman took over a team at rock bottom, humiliated by an historic loss to Bayern Munich and wounded by the attempts of Messi to leave the club

for free. But this 31st Copa del Rey success for the club is a testament to progress made and Koeman will hope it not only helps convince Messi to stay but gives Barca momentum now in a neck-and-neck

title race in La Liga. "Despite the changes at the club and the young players, at Barca you have to always fight for trophies," Koeman said.

### **FIVE INDIAN BOXERS ENTER QUARTERS OF YOUTH WORLDS**

New Delhi, April 18: Five Indian boxers advanced to the quarterfinals of the youth world championships for men and women after clinching comfortable victories in their last-16 stage bouts in Kielce, Poland.

Among the women, Gitika (48kg) made the

last eight on Saturday. From the men's contingent. Asian silver-medallist Ankit Narwal (64kg), Bishwamitra Chongtham (49kg), Sachin (56kg) and Vishal Gupta (91kg) stood

just one win away from ensuring a medal for the country. However, the campaign

ended for Nisha Gurjar (64kg) after a 1-4 loss to Latvia's Beatrise Rozentale. Earlier, Gitika defeated Kazakhstan's Arailym

Marat 5-0. Narwal went Oliwier Poland's Zamojski 4-1, while Vishal out-punched Croatia's Borna Loncaric in his prequarterfinal bout.

**Tashkent, April 18:** India's Jhilli Dalabehera clinched the gold medal in the 45kg category in a severely depleted twolifter field at the Asian Weightlifting Championship here on Sunday.

Jhilli, a junior world championship bronze medallist, lifted 69kg in the snatch and followed that up by 88kg in clean jerk for a total of 157kg to finish on top of the podi-um in all three categories of the gold level Olympic qualifier event which was postponed last year due to the pandemic.

#### However, 45kg is not a Olympic weight category. The silver medal went to Philippines' Mary Flor Diaz for her effort of

135kg (60kg+75kg). With the win, Jhilli bettered her silver-winning performance in the last edition. However, it was an underwhelming performance as she had lifted 162kg (71kg+91kg) at the

same event in 2019. The other Indian in the fray. Sneha Soren finished

third in group B of the women's 55kg event. The 20-year-old from Odisha lifted a total of

164kg (71kg+93kg) in the four-woman field. Her final standing will be determined after the end of the group A proceed-

Jhilli's gold was India's second medal of the tourmament as weightlifter Mirabai Chanu had smashed the world record in the clean and jerk category enroute a bronze medal on Saturday. The Olympic-bound Chanu lifted 86kg in snatch and a world record of 119kg in clean and jerk for a total of

# **VERSTAPPEN EMERGES ON**

Imola (Italy), April 18: Max Verstappen kept his cool to claim a chaotic rain-hit Emilia Romagna Grand Prix on Sunday as seven-time Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton recovered from a rare mistake to sneak in second. Red Bull driver Verstappen muscled past pole sitter Hamilton on the first corner at Imola to set up his impressive first win of the sea-

"I surprised myself. We worked really hard to make that better. In these tricky conditions we did a great

job," Verstappen said. Lando Norris in a McLaren took third for the Briton's second successive podium ahead of Charles Leclerc for Ferrari. The outcome of a compelling second leg of the Formula One season confirmed Verstappen's stature as a formidable obstacle to Hamilton's quest for an unprecedented eighth drivers' crown. After winning the season-opener in Bahrain and putting in the fastest lap on Sunday Hamilton leads Verstappen by one point ahead of the Portuguese Grand Prix next time out.

• RAJASTHAN ROYALS • ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE • SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS
 DELHI CAPITALS
 KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
 MUMBAI INDIANS
 PUNJAB KINGS

**PURPLE** 

Harshal Patel, RCB

Rahul Chahar, MI **Avesh** 

Khan, DC Off the field



Robin Uthappa's son Neale Nolan

### Rohit bats for 'save corals' campaign

Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma has envi-ronmental issues very close to his heart, it seems. The cricketer came out on the field against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Saturday wearing shoes with "Save the Corals" art on them. Against the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), Sharma was seen wearing spikes with "Save the Rhinos" art, while in the second tie against the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on April the stylish India player had "Plastic-free Ocean" art

### **Warner lambasts** poor SRH batting

Sunrisers Hyderabad cap-tain hit out at his side's poor batting after they lost their third successive match in this year's IPL. Warner and Jonny Bairstow had provided their side a platform with a quick 67-run opening-wicket partnership. But the batsmen that followed disappointed.

Manish Pandey, newcomers Virat Singh and Abhishek Sharma threw their wickets

"I don't know how to take that. Obviously disappointing. Two of us were set but it proves that if you don't bat deep, you can't win. If you get a partnership and if there is one person at the end, you can chase it down," said a disappointed Warner.

'These scores are very chaseable, it's just poor bat-ting. The guys need to play smart cricket in the middle. The bowlers have been fantastic," added the left-handed

#### Murali undergoes angioplasty

Sri Lankan cricket legend Muttiah Muralitharan, who is part of the Sunrisers Hyderabad support staff in the ongoing IPL, has undergone an angioplasty at a private hospital in Chennai. ESPNcricinfo reported that the champion off-spinner "had a stent fitted to unblock an artery, and will rejoin Sunrisers Hyderabad when discharged".

The 49-year-old is the leading wicket-taker in international cricket with 1347 scalps. Muralitharan represented Sri Lanka in 133 Tests.

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# DHAWAN & ONLY

### Shikhar's 49-ball 92 powers Delhi to 6-wicket win over Punjab

**Mumbai, April 18:** Delhi Capitals beat Punjab Kings by six wickets in the IPL here on Sunday. Mayank Agarwal top-scored for Punjab with 69 off 36 balls while his opening partner and skipper K Rahul made 61 off 51 balls, taking them to 195 for four.

In response, Delhi Capitals chased down the target rather comfortably in 18.2 overs with Shikhar Dhawan scoring 92 off 49

Dhawan said: "It was a conscious effort from my side to increase the strikerate and I started taking more risks. I'm not afraid of changes. I'm always open towards changes and I make sure I give it a good try in the nets and then in the games. I've worked on the leg-side shots, coming in the crease, using the pace of the bowler.'

Earlier, Mayank and captain Rahul stitched a century-run opening stand to guide Punjab Kings to a challenging 195 for four. Agarwal made 69 off 36 balls, while Rahul scored 61 off 51 deliveries as Punjab made a flying start to their innings.
Delhi Capitals skipper

Rishabh Pant's decision to bowl after winning the toss backfired as the opening duo of Agarwal and Rahul took the attack to the opposition bowlers from the onset, hitting boundaries and sixes at

While Agarwal was the aggressor of the two initially, Rahul upped the ante after a relatively sedate start.

Agarwal and Rahul adopted an aggressive approach against debutant Lukeman Meriwala and Kagiso Rabada, taking their team to 94 for no



Delhi Capitals opener Shikhar Dhawan plays a shot during the match against Punjab Kings in the IPL on Sunday.

dangerous during his 36ball knock and ended up hitting seven boundaries and four hits over the fence. But DC dismissed both the batsmen in quick succession to make a

Agarwal was looking comeback into the match. While Agarwal was the first to depart, slicing a Meriwala to straight Shikhar Dhawan at sweeper cover in the 13th over, Rahul handed a simple catch to Marcus Stonis at midwicket off Rabada.

Rahul's knock was laced with seven boundaries and two sixes. Chris Gayle (11) failed to make a mark. perishing soon in search

#### **SCORECARD**

Punjab Kings: KL Rahul c Stoinis b Rabada 61, Mayank Agarwal c Dhawan b Meriwala 69, Chris Gayle c sub (RV Patel) b Woakes 11, Deepak Hooda (not out) 22, Nicholas Pooran c Rabada b Shahrukh Khan (not out) 15. Extras (lb 6, nb 2) 8. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs)

FoW: 1-122, 2-141, 3-158, 4-179. **Bowling:** Chris Woakes 4-0-42-1. Lukman Meriwala 3-0-32-1, R. Ashwin 4-0-28-0, Kagiso Rabada 4-0-43-Lalit Yadav 1-0-11-0, Avesh Khan 4-0-33-1. Delhi Capitals: Prithvi c Gayle Shaw Arshdeep Singh 32, Shikhar Dhawan Richardson 92, Steven Smith c Richardson b Meredith 9, Rishabh Pant c Hooda b Richardson 15, Marcus Stoinis (not out) 27, Lalit Yadav (not out) 12. Extras (lb 2, nb 3, w 6) 11. Total (for four wickets in 18.2 overs)

FoW: 1-59, 2-107, 3-152, Bowling: Arshdeep 3-0-22-1, Mohammed Shami 4-0-53-0, Jalaj Saxena 3-0-27-0, Jhye Richardson 4-0-41-2, Deepak Hooda 2-0-18-O, Riley Meredith 2.2-0-

Nicholas Pooran (9) yet again but failed Deepak Hooda (22 not out 13) and Shahrukh Khan (15 not out off five) provided the much needed big hits towards the end.

INTERNATIONAL

Versatile South African cricketer AB de Villiers

April

**COMEBACK** 

Chennai,

others also step up. **ABD GAME FOR** 

> England all-rounder

#### **Net RR** 0 +0.7500 +0.453 0 +0.367 +0.052 - 0.633 - 0.967

POINTS TABLE

# CSK, Rajasthan in battle royale

time champion Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals would look to build on their first wins and gain momentum when they clash in the Indian Premier League (IPL), here on Monday. The two sides bounced back after losing their opening fixtures with wins, albeit in contrasting

While the MS Dhoni-led CSK had it easy against Punjab Kings, the Royals scraped through against Delhi Capitals in the final over. Both teams would be eyeing a second win to give their campaign a boost.

CSK hit back superbly after a chastening defeat to Capitals with Deepak Chahar putting his hand up with a four-wicket haul to break the back of the Punjab batting line-up, setting up a six-wicket victory. Skipper Dhoni would have been happy with the bowlers' performance after they had been taken to the cleaners by Prithvi Shaw

and Shikhar Dhawan in the opener. Chahar, in particular, came up with a fine spell, which helped CSK restrict its opponent to a below par 106 which the batsmen chased down without

much trouble. The Super Kings will expect Chahar to continue the good work while also hoping that Sam Curran, Shardul Thakur and the

Also, South African pacer Lungi Ngidi is out of quarantine and could be drafted into the playing XI to give more teeth to the CSK pace

Moeen Ali was in the thick

Live on TV Chennai Super Kings vs Rajasthan Royals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD1

**HEAD to HEAD** 

Matches

CSK 14 RR

FOR THE RECORD

Suresh Raina's 609 runs at an average of 29.00 in 21 innings is the second most against Rajasthan in after AB de Villiers (648). Deepak Chahar who has claimed

45 innings needs just two wickets to become the sixth bowler to complete to wickets for CSK. **LAST YEAR'S MATCHES** 

48 wickets at an average of 25.10 in

Rajasthan beat CSK by 16 runs at

Rajasthan beat CSK by 7 wickets

**STATS:** S. PERVEZ QAISER

of action in the win over Punjab and that should please the CSK think-tank. He picked up a wicket with his off-spin and batted flu-

Faf du Plessis made an unbeaten 36 despite not being at his fluent best and would hope to build on the knock while the likes of Ruturaj Gaikwad and Ambati Rayudu need runs to get their confidence back. Suresh Raina's presence has certainly boosted the CSK batting unit and his form will be crucial in the long run. He will be keen to get a big score after returning to the IPL with a fifty Dhoni didn't bat in the game against Punjab.



Rajasthan Royals allrounder Chris Morris during a training session.

April 18:

Sunrisers Hyderabad men-

tor VVS Laxman rued that

his batsmen could not

rotate the strike when get-

ting boundaries was tough

against Mumbai Indians

bowlers on a tough Chepuk

wicket. Chasing a modest 151-run target, SRH could

manage only 137 in 19.4 overs as their batsmen

struggled to score runs in

the middle overs on

and twos) a very important skill especially on these

kind of wickets because it

is not easy to hit through

the line. You can't rely on

Laxman.
"It's very important to

keep the dot-ball percent-

age low, and the only way

you can do it is by manipu-

lating the field by rotating

the strike. That is one

aspect of the game which

is very important on these

not able to do that especial-

ly when Rahul Chahar was bowling and even when

"Unfortunately we were

kind of wickets.

just boundaries and sixes,'

'That's (taking singles

**ROTATING STRIKE CRUCIAL ON** 

## RCB make it three in three

**Chennai, April 18:** Glenn Maxwell was good but AB de Villiers was better as Royal Challengers Bangalore bested Kolkata Knight Riders by 38 runs in their IPL match here on Sunday. Batting first, De Villiers' master class and Maxwell's counter-attacking half-century propelled RCB to an imposing 204 for four. In reply, KKR were stopped at 166 for eight as RCB regained the top spot in the pecking

RCB's AB de Villiers during his unbeaten 76 against Kolkata Knight Riders in Chennai on Sunday.

RCB smashed 56 runs in the last three overs, including 21 in the final six deliveries, thanks to de Villiers 34-ball 76 not out.

Maxwell blazed away to 78 off 49 deliveries, hitting nine boundaries and three maximums before the genius from South Africa strode in and struck the same number of fours and sixes as his teammate from Australia.

The Knight Riders were off to a brilliant start with leg-break bowler Varun Chakravarthy leaving RCB in early trouble at 9/2 with the big wickets of After skipper Virat Kohli (5) and Rajat Patidar (1) in

### **SCORECARD**

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Virat Kohli c Tripathi b Varun 5, Devdutt Padikkal c Tripathi b Prasidh Krishna 25, Rajat Patidar b Varun 1, Glenn Maxwell c Harbhajan Singh b Cummins 78, AB de Villiers (not out) 76, Kyle Jamieson (not out) 11. Extras (nb 3, w 5) 8. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs) 204. FoW: 1-6, 2-9, 3-95, 4-148. Bowling: Harbhajan 4-0-38-0, Varun Chakravarthy 4-

0-39-2, Shakib Al Hasan 2-0-24-0, Pat Cummins 4-0-34-1, Prasidh Krishna 4-0-31-1, Andre Russell 2-0-38-Kolkata Knight Riders: Nitish Rana c Padikkal b

Chahal 18, Shubman Gill c sub (DT Christian) b Jamieson 21, Rahul Tripathi c Mohammed Siraj b Washington Sundar 25, Eoin Morgan c Kohli b Patel 29. Dinesh Karthik Ibw b Chahal 2. Shakib Al Hasan b Jamieson 26, Andre Russell b Patel 31, Pat Cummins c de Villiers b Jamieson 6, Harbhajan Singh (not out) 2, Varun Chakravarthy (not out) 2. Extras (w 4) 4. Total (for eight wickets in 20 overs) 166.

FoW: 1-23, 2-57, 3-66, 4-74, 5-114, 6-155, 7-161, 8-162. Bowling: Mohammed Siraj 3-0-17-0, Kyle Jamieson 3-0-41-3, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-34-2, Washington Sundar 4-0-33-1, Glenn Maxwell 2-0-24-0, Harshal Patel 4-0-17-2.

the second over. Opening the bowling for KKR, veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh bowled a tight line and length to stifle the RCB batsmen in his first two overs. Chakravarthy

delivery that drifted away from the right-hander, Rahul Tripathi pulled off a sensational catch running back from extracover. The top batsman was nowhere close to the ball

lured Kohli to go over cover with a tossed-up Chakravarthy then went through the defence of

Patidar with one that dart ed back on landing. Mixing aggression with

Maxwell and caution, Devdutt Padikkal (25) revived the RCB innings after the early blows.

While the young Indian seemed content playing the second fiddle, the swashbuckling Australian counter-attacked in fine fashion and played the big shots with consummate

in-form Maxwell The upped the ante when he cleared his front leg to plonk Shakib Al Hasan over long-on for his first maximum in the sixth

one bowled by Shakib turned out to be a productive over for RCB as they got 17 runs off it. Morgan's decision to out

Chakravarthy Harbhajan at a time when they were bowling well was baffling, but RCB did-n't mind at all as they capitalised on the surprising

After reaching 45 for two at the end of the six powerplay overs, Maxwell shifted gears. — Agencies

# on Sunday said it will be "fantastic" to make an

Chennai,

Saturday.

international comeback ahead of the upcoming T20 World Cup. The T20 World Cup is scheduled to be held in India in October-November. "If I can slot in, it will be fantastic," de Villiers said after he played another match-winning innings for his franchise Royal

Challengers Bangalore in the IPL here. The prolific batsman added he will be fine with it even if he is not able to make a comeback.

De Villiers, 37, said he is going to communicate with South Africa head coach Mark Boucher towards the end of the

"I am absolutely interested, with regards to my form, my fitness, we have to get the best 15 together, we will plan accordingly. I am speaking with Boucher towards the end of IPL," he added.

On Friday, Boucher had hinted at de Villiers' possible international come back.

Boucher, a former South Africa wicketkeeper-batsman, has also revealed about the conversation he had with the RCB star ahead of the IPL 2021.

"I did chat to him before he went to the IPL, Boucher had said.

The conversation is still very much open. AB being the person he is, he wanted to perform very well at the IPL, to prove to himself and everyone else that he is still a very key figure in world cricket and could dominate at that level," Boucher had

In May 2018, de Villiers had announced his retirement from international cricket. He played 114 Tests, 228 ODIs and 78

- Agencies

**SLOW TRACKS, SAYS LAXMAN** It's very important to keep the dot-ball percentage low, and the only way you can do it is by manipulating the field

by rotating the strike. - VVS LAXMAN SRH mentor

other fast bowlers were bowling in the middle

Laxman said as the ball got old in the second half of the innings, playing aggressive was challenging. He also stressed the importance of using the powerplay. "The ball was just stopping on the wicket and it is two-paced. And also the spinners are extracting turn along with bounce. That is one of the aspects we definitely dis-cussed. If you see the way Jonny Bairstow and David Warner capitalised on the powerplay, that will be very important going forward

especially when you are

playing on slow tracks.'