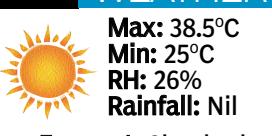


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 28 APRIL 2021

WEATHER



Max: 38.5°C
Min: 25°C
RH: 26%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Rain likely in some parts.
Max/Min temp. 39/25°C



WORLD | 9

China holds South Asian FMs meet



SPORTS | 12

Brett Lee donates bitcoin for Covid relief

TABLOID

IPL - To play on, or draw stumps?



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ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarakaya
Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Pournami till 9 am; Chaitra Bahula Dwitiya till 1.35 am (Thursday)
Star: Visakha till 5.14 pm

Varjyanam: 8.47 pm to 10.12 pm
Durmuhurta: 11.48 am to 12.38 pm

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Ramzan 15,1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.48 am

Zohar: 12.23 pm

Asar: 4.39 pm

Maghrab: 6.40 pm

Isha: 7.51 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.51 AM

SUNSET TODAY 6.35 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 5.56 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 6.57 PM

RAMZAN TIMINGS

IFTAR: 6.40 PM (TODAY)

SEHR: 4.25 AM (TOMORROW)

COUNTER POINT

HOARDERS

PVT LTD

OXYGEN

LPG

CO2

NITROGEN

OZONE

METHANE

CARBON DIOXIDE

AMMONIA

SULPHUR DISSULFIDE

METHYL CHLORIDE

METHYL BROMIDE

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AFTER DC EXPOSÉ, TIMS REFUSES TO GIVE HOME-MADE FOOD TO PATIENTS

Corrupt people vultures, says HC

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD APR 27

The management of Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (Tims) on Tuesday began cracking down on patient attendants placing restrictions on their access to the hospital premises, and making it clear that hence forth, no home-made food will be allowed to be brought by families for their members being treated at the hospital for Covid-19.

The hospital witnessed a flurry of activity following a report published by *Deccan Chronicle* 'Covid patients exploited at TIMS' on Tuesday, over the state of affairs at TIMS, and how patients and their families were being fleeced by hospital staff, even for something as simple as giving a patient some drinking water.

Families of some patients told *Deccan Chronicle* the hospital administrators went around all the floors and inquired about the details in the report published by *Deccan Chronicle* and attempted to find out who gave the information about the goings on in the hospital.

An attendant of a patient, who was among around 20 or so made to wait outside for hours in the morning with food they brought for their loved ones, said the hospital officials were upset at the news report in *Deccan Chronicle*.

"We have cross-checked with the staff and it was all made up by the patients here, I refuse to comment further on this," said Dr Ehsan Ahmed Khan, the superintendent of TIMS.

Incidentally, the "transactions" patients attendants had to make with hospital staffers for providing basic services for their loved ones in the hospitals, have left electronic trails of payments made through online payment apps.

Interestingly, the attendants were told by the hospital administration that while they will no longer be allowed to bring food from Wednesday, they could bring any medicines that are prescribed for the patients. This "permission" to bring medicines for patients from outside, flies in the face of the health minister Etala Rajendar's repeated claims that every government hospital is well stocked with every and any medicine required to treat Covid-19 victims.

The court put on record

FROM PAGE 1

A division bench of Chief Justice Hima Kohli and Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy also observed that those who are taking advantage of the present critical situation are nothing but "vultures preying on the people's flesh." The court advised the government to arrange hearses vehicles to shift the bodies and make available body bags for this purpose at the hospital.

Stressing that the "dignity in death" should also be maintained, the court said it was seeing reports bodies of the dead at hospitals and crematoria were left around or handled without proper care. It also went into reports of vested interests or rackets charging higher prices for oxygen supply, the seeking of bribe by government ambulance drivers and swindling of money by private ambulances to shift the patients or bodies of the dead from one place to another.

There were also reports about the charges being levied at cremation grounds. To all these, the bench observed that this was "nauseating" and directed the government to take adequate steps to rectify the situation.

Advocate Jeevan Kumar apprised his own experience before the court, saying how a demand was made at Gandhi Hospital for ₹20,000 to hand over the body of his deceased friend. He also explained how there was swindling of money by the ambulance driver to shift the body to the cremation ground and the higher amounts that had to be paid for the creation.

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The court put on record

that the state government is still trying to fudge the numbers of Covid deaths. Observed the CJ: "As long as the state furnished such (unrealistically low) figures, the general public will not be bothered about deaths due to Covid19. This will be more damaging and will harm the general public. Correct information will prompt the general public to get vaccination done on them fast so as to be safe."

The CJ advised advocate general BS Prasad to ensure that a proper record is maintained of the numbers of the dead brought in at various crematoria and burial grounds across the state, so that the figure furnished by the state can be matched with these numbers.

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IN BRIEF

Docs save baby by operating 2nd head

Hyderabad: Doctors at SLG Hospitals in Nizampet saved the life of a six-month-old baby girl born with a rare neural tube defect, which resulted in a head-sized lump near her brain. Due to this protrusion, the baby appeared as though it had a second head. Commenting about the procedure on the child, Dr H. Raghavendra, consultant neurosurgeon and spine surgeon, SLG Hospitals, said, as a result of the defect, the baby was unable to track objects and light. Doctors at the hospital successfully operated on the baby and saved her life.

11-MONTH-OLD BOY KNOCKED DOWN BY CAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

An 11-month-old boy playing in front of his house in Srinagar area of Kondapur was knocked down by a car. He was admitted to hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries on Tuesday.

Gachibowli police said Thota Jaswanth was severely injured on Monday when Thati Kiran, a civil engineer, driving in a rash and negligent manner hit the boy, who was immediately shifted to the Kondapur area hospital, where he died.

Based on a complaint filed by the family of the boy, Gachibowli police booked a case. Further investigation is underway.

CYBERABAD COPS IMPOSE TRAFFIC CURBS AT KOKAPET

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Cyberabad police have issued traffic advisory in view of HMDA works in Kokapet layout, where a trumpet and interchange is being constructed. Accordingly, from Wednesday to May 1, traffic coming from TSPA to Narsingi will be diverted to the right service road. Vehicles coming from Kokapet to TSPA and Narsingi will be diverted from NCC urban one service road.

QUICK SERVICE OUTLETS VIOLATE CURFEW, BOOKED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Kushiguda police have booked cases against KFC and Dominos in A.S. Rao Nagar for violating the night curfew norms. Police said while performing patrol duties on Monday around 11 p.m., a police constable found these restaurants open and making deliveries to their customers.

Further proceedings against these eateries are underway.

STATE SOUGHT MORE COVID TEST KITS FROM CENTRE

FROM PAGE 1

But this has not been the case as Telangana state is facing acute shortage of testing kits — particularly the Rapid Antigen Test kits — in which the government appears to have placed its faith in for their fast turn-around of results in around 15 minutes.

The gold standard RT-PCR tests are now taking 72 hours or more before the results can be communicated to those who undergo these tests in the state as more and more people are lining up to get these tests done. It may be recalled that health minister Etala Rajendar has already written a letter to the Centre urging it to ensure Telangana state receives additional supplies of testing kits. Meanwhile, on Tuesday, reports from many districts in the state said that hundreds of people were turned away from testing centres as they did not have enough kits. Incidentally, while the health department says that RAT tests are efficient and provide up to 80 per cent correct results, the best of them in the world are about 50 per cent reliable, and even among these, there is the real danger of 'false positive' results. "Even the gold standard RT-PCR test is only about 80 per cent efficient. For the state to claim that it trusts RATs, is laughable," a senior doctor told this newspaper.

Hostels profit despite crisis

Managements tie up with hospitals to rent out space for attendants of patients

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Private hostel managements in the GHMC areas are generating good revenue during the second wave of the Covid-19 crisis.

These hostels have tied up with hospitals and are renting out space to Covid-19 patient-attendants at an affordable rate of ₹300 to ₹500 per day. Attendants who throng the capital city from neighbouring districts are opting for hostel accommodation to avoid expensive lodges/hotels charging upwards of ₹1000 per day.

The private hostel facilities in Secunderabad, Somajiguda, Punjagutta, Begumpet, LB Nagar, Kukatpally and KPHB were mostly unoccupied ever since the Covid-lockdown season set in last year. After a long lull, this new opportunity beckoned them. They have started renting out the empty space to the growing number of Covid-19 attendants. While they generally charge ₹300 for stay, some ₹200 is taken for three-time food.

Aadi Narayana, one such attendant from a private hospital in Habsiguda, said his brother tested positive for Covid-19 at his

native village in Nalgonda a week ago. The family members were subsequently admitted to a private hospital. "Two of us have been attending to the Covid-19 patient in shifts for a week now and would need to stay for at least 10 days."

"The lodges in the vicinity charge ₹1,200 without providing food," he pointed out.

According to official data, there are two hostels Kapra circle, 17 hostels in Uppal circle, two in Hayathnagar circle, four in LB Nagar circle, 25 in Saroornagar circle, two in Malakpet circle, four in Santoshnagar circle, 14 in

Mehdipatnam circle, two in Karwan circle, three in Goshamahal circle, 42 in Musheerabad, 60 in Amberpet circle, 38 in Khairatabad circle, four in Yousufguda circle, five in Serilingampally circle, five in Chandanagar circle, one in Patancheru circle, two in Kukatpally circle and one in Begumpet.

There is no hostel in circles like Chandrayangutta, Charminar, Falaknuma, Rajendranagar, Jubilee Hills, Moosapet, Quthubulapura, Gajularamam, Alwal and Malkajgiri.

Hostel owner Venkat Laxmi (name changed) in Ameerpet said the business is good for her after January.

Since the lockdown last year, her hostel was mostly vacated for fear of the pandemic spread.

"Students as also private company employees have opted to work from home. Since January, hospital managements have tied up with hostels in the city and we are currently recovering from the losses we suffered last year," she said.

However, as hostels across the city are run in an informal manner, they required no trade licence from the GHMC. This is denting the corporation's income.

U.S. CONSULATE VISA SERVICES TO STOP MAY 3

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

The US Consul General, Hyderabad, on Tuesday announced cancellation of all visa services from May 3 until further notice. Similarly, it cancelled all appointments for American citizen services.

The Consul General, however, said emergency American citizen services and visa appointments will continue to the extent that local conditions allow. All attempts will be made to honour scheduled emergency appointments during the time of crisis, the consulate underlined.

● ALL ATTEMPTS will be made to honour scheduled emergency appointments during the time of crisis

Painful wait for attendants



Relatives and family members of Covid-19 patients who were admitted in Gandhi Hospital are forced to stay on footpaths as authorities failed to provide them any accommodation.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Covid increases cost of Muslim burials

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

The charges of Gassal (who gives a bath to the dead body) and rates of shroud material kits have escalated due to the rise in Covid-19 deaths.

On normal days, shroud material-kit contains 5 metres of white cloth for men and 7 metres for women, Itar (perfume) bottle, Abeer (Aroma) powder, camphor, rosewater, cotton bundle, two soaps and mat available for a cost of ₹1,500 and ₹1,700 respectively.

However, it is now costing ₹4,500 to ₹6,000. While the Gassal who used to charge ₹1,000 for their services are now demanding more than ₹3,000 for non-Covid bodies.

Most of the Muslims are avoiding the last ablution at homes on bodies due to Covid-19 and burying such bodies after they are sanitised at the hospitals.

Later, a phone call was received from the Markaz stating that the shrouding material amount (₹1,600)

● SHOPKEEPERS HAVE enhanced the rates of shrouding material two to three fold. Likewise, Gassals are demanding a higher amount.

and directly burying the wrapped body.

However, shopkeepers have enhanced the rates of shrouding material two to three fold. Likewise, Gassals are demanding a higher amount.

When a poor woman from Karwan, Sabira Begum, died on Sunday, her family hired a lady Nafeesa for bathing the dead body. She was paid ₹4,500 for shrouding material and her service charges, but she did not pay the amount for shrouding material to the Markaz Jamiat Ahle Hadees from where she obtained the material.

Mohsin Bin Hussain Alkasiri, an activist said police authorities should take action against such persons who are exploiting the people and charging abnormal prices. He said people who are in mourning and in short of time are forced to pay a higher amount.

Haj Committee of India CEO Maqsood Ahmed Khan, on instructions of Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, has issued a circular stating that Haj Houses in the country, which are located in independent buildings, could be used as Covid care centres.

The exclusive shops of the shrouding materials Anjuman Faiz-ul-Muslimeen Mutaliqa Tajheez-o-Takfeen, Nampally is charging ₹4,500 for shrouding material and ₹1,000 for the services of bathing.

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Reacting to the proposal, Telangana Haj Committee chairman Mohammed Saleem said

was not paid. When the family asked Nafeesa about it, she claimed that she charged ₹4,500 for her services and they have to shell out the money for the shrouding material to the Markaz.

Ayesha Begum, daughter of the deceased, lodged a complaint with the Tappachabutra Police Station against Nafeesa.

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Reacting to the proposal, Telangana Haj Committee chairman Mohammed Saleem said

TS Wakf refuses Haj centres for treating Covid

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Telangana State Wakf Board has overruled centre's proposal of using the Haj House in Hyderabad as a temporary Covid care centre for victims of Coronavirus.

Haj Committee of India CEO Maqsood Ahmed Khan, on instructions of Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, has issued a circular stating that Haj Houses in the country, which are located in independent buildings, could be used as Covid care centres.

● HAJ COMMITTEE chairman Mohammed Saleem said Haj House houses many other offices in same building

Haj House in Hyderabad could not be converted into a Covid care centre as there are many other offices working from the same building. In addition, there is no need to establish such centres as Hyderabad already has sufficient spaces for accommodating Covid-19 victims.

Reacting to the proposal, Telangana Haj Committee chairman Mohammed Saleem said

HC pulls up state on public hearing during pandemic

Court instructed government to stop all such hearings

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Telangana High Court on Tuesday faulted state government for allowing public hearings and gatherings despite a super-spread of Coronavirus.

The court instructed the government to stop all such hearings. It further advised the government to follow standard operating procedures and advisories issued by union home ministry with regard to such gatherings.

The High Court was hearing two petitions complaining that Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) and Telangana Pollution Control Board are conducting a public hearing to get opinion from public on mining in their villages despite Covid infections

ducting a public hearing to get opinion from public on mining in their villages despite Covid-19 infections being very high in Jagityal, Mancherial and other districts.

The court cautioned Advocate General to advise state government not to go in for such gatherings at this moment.

No shortage of oxygen: Etala

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Telangana government is taking every possible step to control Covid-19, including ensuring adequate supplies of medical oxygen to hospitals. Steps have been also been initiated to add more beds, equipped with oxygen, at various hospitals, health minister Etala Rajendar said on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference, the minister maintained that there is no oxygen shortage in Hyderabad city. Supplies are also being made to hospitals in the districts. "We need around 270 tonnes of oxygen a day. Arrangements have been made to ensure arrival of around 400 tonnes of oxygen," he said; referring to empty tankers airlifted to Odisha, returning to the state by road with their oxygen loads.

Rajendar said Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's advice well in advance in terms of augmenting oxygen supplies, ensuring additional beds and other facilities have helped the state in dealing with Covid-19. He disclosed that the state will get five oxygen concentrators from PM CARES funds, even as Covid-19 services will begin at the ESI Hospital in Nacharam from Wednesday.

The minister said in all, TS has 10,000 oxygen beds currently. The state is all set to add 400 more such beds at Gandhi Hospital, the only hospital in the country with 600 ICU beds. He took serious objections to private hospitals not handing over bodies of dead till families pay bills. Calling them inhuman, he asked the hospitals to show humanity. At the same time, he warned the government will crack down on any private hospital overcharging patients and putting patients into difficult situations.

A truck carrying medical oxygen enters the Gandhi Hospital on Tuesday.

BHARAT BIOTECH TO GIVE PRIORITY TO TS FOR VAX

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

The state government has requested Bharat Biotech to give priority to Telangana and ensure supply of maximum doses of Covid-19 vaccine to facilitate free vaccination drive in state announced by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao recently.

Chief secretary Somesh Kumar on Tuesday held a meeting with Bharat Biotech MD Dr. Krishna Ella at BRKR Bhavan. The CS brought to the notice of Bharat Biotech that there will be a huge requirement of vaccines in Telangana as CM had announced to vaccinate entire population for free.

Dr Krishna Ella has responded positively to the request made by CS and assured that the company will ensure adequate vaccine supplies to Telangana.

IMD attributed the weather to an upper air cyclonic circulation over AP

New thunderstorm warning issued for TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has extended the thunderstorm warning for the state till May 1 saying thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph are likely to occur at isolated places in Telangana.

● IMD ATTRIBUTED the weather to an upper air cyclonic circulation, which is currently over Andhra Pradesh.

● THUNDERSTORMS accompanied by lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph are likely to occur at isolated places in Telangana.

isolated places over Assam and Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Marathwada, Telangana, Kerala and Mahe, and with lightning at isolated



places over Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura, Gujarat, Konkan, and Goa, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal.

— R. PAVAN



SHORT TAKES**HISTORY-SHEETER BOOKED UNDER PD ACT**DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Hyderabad city police commissioner Anjani Kumar has invoked Preventive Detention Act against a history-sheeter earlier arrested by Tukaram Gate police.

Dandugula Mohan, 43, a resident of Addagutta, East Marredpally, was arrested on April 23 as he was a habitual offender and even assaulted public servants. Police said Mohan has been frequently committing offences, including criminal breach of trust, wrongful confinement, and assault on public servants for discharge their lawful duties in the limits of Hyderabad Police Commissionerate.

Tukaramgate police remanded him to judicial custody after preventive detention order was served on Mohan. He has been lodged in Central Prison, Chanchalguda.

POLICE, SCSC LAUNCH COVID-19 TELE-FACILITYDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Amidst the massive surge in Covid-19 cases, Cyberabad police and Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC) have launched a Covid Tele-Medicine Consultation Call Centre facility for citizens of Hyderabad.

Police commissioner V. C. Sajjanar said this vertical, led by Dr. Rajeev Menon, has been launched to address the immediate and basic needs of Covid-related queries from citizens, thereby ironing out majority of their concerns and panic. SC secretary general Krishna Yedula said any citizen who is symptomatic or asymptomatic but tests positive may call +91 8045811338 for help.

PADDY FARMERS STAGE DHARNA OVER PRICINGDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, APRIL 27

Farmers staged a dharna in front of the revenue division office in Kallur demanding the government to lift the paddy from them and check the rice millers cutting the prices by claiming various reasons.

Appi Reddy, a farmer said that millers are cutting the price of the paddy by showing various reasons including the empty ears of corn. The loss is ₹35 per 75 kg bag and it is a massive loss to the farmers.

Appi Reddy said, "The millers completed the weighing and not sending the lorries to shift it to the mills. We fear rain may destroy the paddy." He said that the millers are not paying the money within time to the farmers.

Rama Rao, another farmer said that there is scarcity of the jute bags in the mandal and they are suffering a lot to bring the grain to the lifting centres. He demanded the government to make available sufficient bags to the farmers.

Parties campaign hard on last day**Pollsters see edge for TRS in civic polls**DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

The campaigning for the municipal polls scheduled to be held on April 30 ended on Tuesday.

Election Commission (TSEC) against the usual 48 hours. Elections will be held for Warangal and Khammam municipal corporations besides municipalities in Siddipet, Jagdehra, Atchampet, Nakrekal and Kothur.

The campaigning came to an end prior to 72 hours of polling due to Covid restrictions imposed by the Telangana State.

The ruling TRS is aiming for a clean sweep in the municipal polls and looks to repeat its clean sweep in municipal polls held in 2019. Pollsters see a clear edge for the ruling TRS in these polls as opposition parties failed to even field candidates for all the seats.

TRS president and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao and party working president and minister K.T. Rama Rao are

CONGRESS MPS A.

Revanth Reddy and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy led the party's campaign and targeted both the TRS and the BJP alleging anti-poor and anti-farmer policies by respective governments at the Centre and in the state under the TRS regime.

Congress MPs A. Revanth Reddy and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy led the party's campaign and targeted both the TRS and the BJP alleging anti-poor and anti-farmer policies by respective governments at the Centre and in the state. Ministers Errabelli Dayakar Rao and Satyavathi Rathod extensively campaigned in Warangal, while ministers T. Harish Rao and Puvvada Ajay Kumar covered Siddipet and Khammam respectively. Minister G. Jagadish Reddy campaigned in Nakrekal and ministers V. Srinivas Goud and S. Niraj Reddy campaigned in the undivided Mahbubnagar district.

SRLIP remains unfinished even after 7 yrs: KishanDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, APRIL 27

Minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy said that TRS government failed to complete the Sitarasam Lift Irrigation Project (SRLIP) and Bhakta Ramadasu Lift Irrigation though it commenced seven years back.

Kishan Reddy, who visited Khammam as part of election campaign in the Corporation elections, said that the TRS government is showing a step-motherly attitude towards the people of Khammam. He said that the people want BJP to come to power in these urban bodies. The roads from Khammam to Warangal and Khammam to Vijayawada were developed with the funds allocated by the Centre. The people of Telangana tested all parties and they are waiting to give a chance to BJP, Kishan Reddy said.

The Khammam town will be developed in all fronts if BJP is given majority divisions in Khammam.

secretariat. There is a scam in every project in Telangana and there is no accountability of the government," he said.

Bharatiya Janata Party will expose the corruption practices of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and minister for transport Puvvada Ajay after it came to power. He said that BJP is contesting in all five municipalities and two municipal corporations including Khammam. He said that the people want BJP to come to power in these urban bodies. The roads from Khammam to Warangal and Khammam to Vijayawada were developed with the funds allocated by the Centre.

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High court of Telangana & Andhra Pradesh Last rights at Swarg Dhan Alwal at 12.00 noon Today 28-4-2021 inserted by: Family members Ph: 9849079153, 9989933221

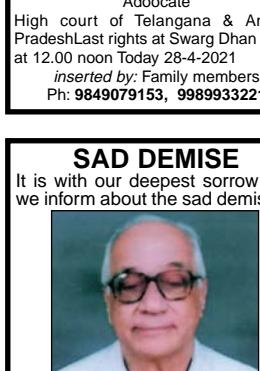
Sudden demise



Tera Mary Rosalind
W/o Late Kandikota Samuel Ravi Kumar
District Informatics officer, NIC (Scientist-C)
Has been promoted to glory on 27-4-2021
Inserted by: Bereaved Family Members



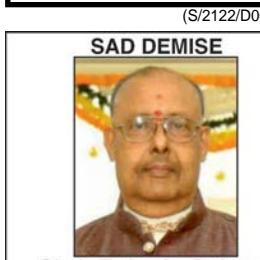
Sudden demise
P. Vinod Kumar
Advocate
High court of Telangana & Andhra Pradesh Last rights at Swarg Dhan Alwal at 12.00 noon Today 28-4-2021
inserted by: Family members Ph: 9849079153, 9989933221



SAD DEMISE
On 27th April' 2021.
He leaves a legacy which will inspire us all!
In Grief:
Rajeew, Anita & Shreeya Antoo
Staff Of Happy Service Center
+91 98490 21216 / +91 99086 97222



OBITUARY
Mr. DAVID PAKIARAJ
DOB: 6 March 1946
Called to Glory on 26 April 2021
Your Love will always remain in our hearts.
Inserted By:
Wife, Son, Daughter, Son-in-Law,
Daughter-in-Law, Grand children &
Near & dear.
Ph: 9963875909, 9866799892, 8688877740



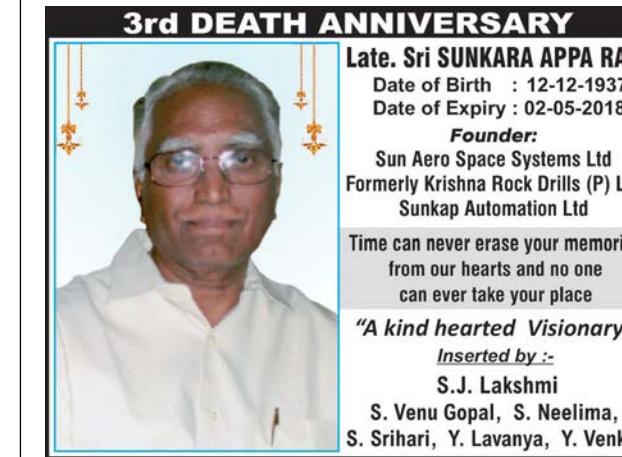
SAD DEMISE
Shri. Enigala Subash Chander Reddy
26- Feb-1954 - 27-Apr-2021
May his soul rest in peace.
Your memories are always remembered in our hearts with love.
Wife: Sandhya Reddy
Sons: Sandeep & Hardeep Reddy
Daughter in law: Umabharthi
Grand Daughter: Snigdha Reddy
9652056115, 9959526608

POLICE ARREST MAN WHILE BREAKING INTO UNION BANK ATMDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

A person trying to break an ATM machine of Union Bank in front of Super Theatre in Meerpet was intercepted by Blue Colts police. Police said the accused Mangali Raja

Shekar was caught red-handed while trying to break the ATM around 11 p.m.

The policemen recovered a cutting plier and iron rod from his possession. Meerpet police have booked a case and sent the accused into judicial custody.



3rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY
Late. Sri SUNKARA APPA RAO

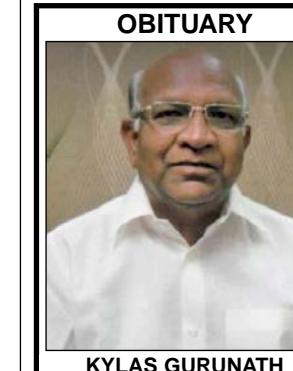
Date of Birth : 12-12-1937
Date of Expiry : 02-05-2018

Founder:
Sun Aero Space Systems Ltd
Formerly Krishna Rock Drills (P) Ltd
Sunkap Automation Ltd

Time can never erase your memories
from our hearts and no one
can ever take your place

"A kind hearted Visionary"

Inserted by:-
S.J. Lakshmi
S. Venu Gopal, S. Neelima,
S. Srihari, Y. Lavanya, Y. Venkat



OBITUARY

KYLAS GURUNATH

DOB: 29.03.1943 - DOD: 25.04.2021

Inserted by: A. Mahosh Kumar
S. Panduranga Rao - Kusuma
Juloori Gangadhara - Gayatri



SHRADHANJALI

Late Seth. S. JASBIR SINGH JI CHHABRA

S/o. Late Seth S. Sunder Singh Ji Chhabra

DOB: 25-03-1943 DOD: 28-04-1987

It is your guiding spirit that has been and will
always be the source of inspiration for us.

Inserted by:
Son : Samarjeet Singh Chhabra
Grand Son : Simran Singh Chhabra
Grand Daughter : Komal Kaur Chhabra
& CHHABRA FAMILY



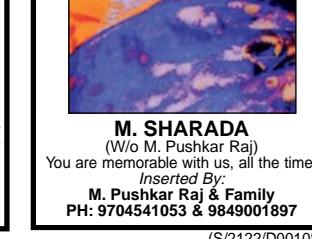
5th Death Anniversary

M. SHARADA

(W/o M. Pushkar Raj)

You are memorable with us, all the time.

Inserted by:
M. Pushkar Raj & Family
PH: 970451053 & 9849001897



10th ANNIVERSARY

D. VENKAT VITTA NAIDU

DOB : 10-05-1929 DOD: 28-04-2011

Your memories are still fresh in our hearts.

No day passes without your remembrance.

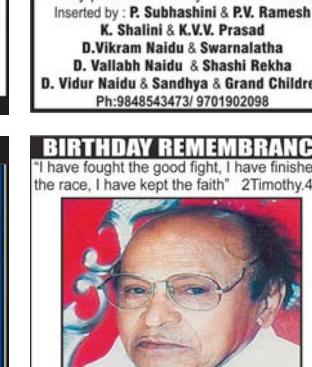
Inserted by : P. Subhashini & P.V. Ramesh

K. Shalini & K.V. Prasad

D. Vallabh Naidu & Swarnalatha

D. Vidur Naidu & Sandhya & Grand Children

Ph: 9848543473 / 9701902098



1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. N.V. AJAY KUMAR

S/o N.K.V. Menon

DOB: 24.06.1976 DOD: 26.04.2021

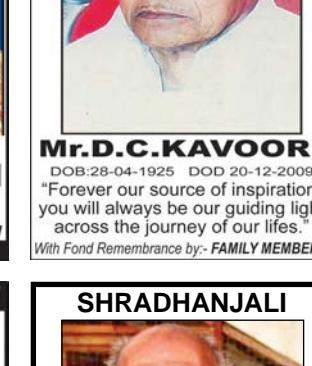
Your memories will remain

in our hearts for ever.

Inserted by: Father N.K.V. Menon

Son : A. Akhilesh

Cont. for details:
9866981529, 8121363041



8th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. PREM KUMAR SAHGAL

We miss you

Inserted by:
Wife: Santakanta Sahgal

Children:
Pratima, Prashant, Praful,

Priyadarshi and their Families



OBITUARY

G. RAJENDRANATH GOUD GARU

Chairman, Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple

Srinivaspuram, Chikkadpally, Hyd

Expired on: 27-04-2021

Inserted by: Wife: G.Suvarnalatha,

Son:G. Srinath Goud, Daughter-in-Law: Keerthi, Daughter:G.Jayakeertha,

Son-In-Law:Guru Shankara

Grand Child:Yashaswini



YOU WILL BE GREATLY MISSED

K. SARASWATHI BAI

15.8.1927 to 16.04.2021

Left for Heavenly abode leaving

behind a treasure of memories

for us to cherish forever

with profound grief

Grand Children & Great Grandchildren



IN LOVING MEMORY

PREMA B. R. RAO

Dd: 28-04-2008

Your memories are always with us.

IN BRIEF
**WAITING FOR BED,
BABY DIES IN
AMBULANCE**

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 27

Waiting for a bed, a one-and-a-half-year old child died of Covid-19 in an ambulance near CSR Block of King George Hospital in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. The child, suffering from congenital heart disease, was shifted to King George Hospital from a private hospital in Gajuwaka. The baby also contacted Covid-19. As her condition worsened, she was rushed to KGH in an ambulance and her parents made frantic efforts to get her admitted in the CSR block. As the waiting was too long, the baby succumbed to the virus in the ambulance by afternoon. All along the baby was on oxygen support in the ambulance.

The parents were seen squatting on the ground near the hospital wailing for their dead child in their arms. Passersby tried to console them but in vain. The young couple wailing with the baby in arms became viral in the social media.

**HC QUIZZES AP
OVER COVID
PREPAREDNESS**

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

The Andhra Pradesh High Court asked the state government to submit details on the measures it is taking to handle the spread of Coronavirus pandemic.

A division bench of Chief Justice A.K. Goswami and Justice C. Praveen Kumar heard a petition filed by APCLA joint secretary Mohan Rao seeking details as to whether the state government is following Covid control guidelines and the number of tests being done, among other aspects. The court sought details on the availability of beds in hospitals for the infected, the number of Covid tests every day and the timing of release of the test reports, the status of medical oxygen availability and whether oxygen manufacturing plants were set up as per directions issued earlier by the Centre.

Government pleader C. Sumon submitted the details to the court. Later, the court directed the state to submit details to petitioner's counsel and to the court and posted the case for next hearing to Wednesday.

In a separate development, the court heard a 'quash petition' filed by ex-MLA Dhulipala Narendra on the ACB filing a case against him in relation to alleged irregularities in the Sangam Dairy.

Jain temple at Karwan holds 203rd flag hoisting function

Fewer devotees take part in ceremony in view of Covid-19 pandemic

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Karwan Jain Temple on Tuesday celebrated its two hundred and third flag hoisting ceremony at its premises on Tuesday. This Jain Swetamber Temple, which is famous as Dadawadi Jain Temple, annually hoists the Dhawaja (flag) on "Chaitra Sudi Purnima" as per the Hindu calendar each year.

This year, however, the temple's authorities restricted the festivities to fewer devotees due to the second wave of Coronavirus pandemic.

Chaiya Kankariya Jain temple in-charge said, "Generally, it is an event of grandeur with more than a thousand devotees participating."

This year, however, only 20 persons were present for "Pooja and Dhawaja," she stated.

The temple is spread of eight acres. It also provides refuge to elderly dis-owned by their children. Currently, around 45 inmates are staying here.

AP RECORDS 64 COVID DEATHS IN JUST ONE DAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

Andhra Pradesh registered 11,434 fresh Coronavirus infections and 64 deaths in the last 24 hours. State health authorities reported here on Tuesday that 11,434 out of 74,435 samples tested were found infected with Coronavirus.

Out of a total number of 1,61,43,083 samples tested, 10,54,875 persons were found infected; of them, 9,47,629 have recovered and 99,446 are still under treatment.

Among daily cases, all 13 districts registered more than 250 infections each, with Guntur recording the highest at 2,028. Chittoor district continues to be the worst-affected with the highest number of Coronavirus cumulative active cases at 13,716, followed by 12,883 in Srikakulam.



Devotees take part in the 203rd Dhwaja (flag hoisting) ceremony at the Jain temple in Karwan which is famously known as Jain Dadawadi on Tuesday.

R. PAVAN

Praveen Jain Nahata, a devotee, pointed out: "This is the biggest and oldest Jain temple in the city. Devotees from throughout Hyderabad and Secunderabad visit this temple, mostly on Mondays. There are special prayers on full moon days. Chandra Bagrecha Jain recalled that Mahaveer Jayanthi on Sunday too was low key affair as the Covid-19 situation is worsening. All Jain devotees avoided the temple and offered prayers from their home, he stated.

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DECCAN Chronicle

28 APRIL 2021

EC failed in duty, sharp rebuke by HC welcome

The decision of the Election Commission of India to ban victory processions once the results in the elections to the legislative assemblies of four states and a Union territory are announced justifies the sharp criticism of the Madras high court on the role of the constitutional body in triggering a second wave of pandemic Covid-19 in India. The commission's decision to allow only two persons to accompany the winning candidate to receive the certificate of election from the returning officer also goes with the spirit of the observations and the order of the court which had asked the commission to draw up a programme without which it would be inclined to stop the counting scheduled for May 2.

A bench of the court, comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy, while hearing a petition seeking a direction for adherence to a strict protocol on the day of counting, singularly held the commission responsible for the second wave and went to the extent of suggesting that its officials be booked for murder. The court's rebuke of the panel, which stood as a mute spectator of the mammoth rallies which lakhs of people attended in utter disregard of Covid-appropriate protocols, will be welcomed by the people who in their lakhs fall sick every day. The court did not mince its words when it asked the commission whether its members were on a different planet when these rallies were taking place. It also reminded the poll panel of the fact that the fruits of democracy could be enjoyed by citizens only if they are alive. Or, in other words, elections are not for elections' sake, but for the people's sake. The Calcutta high court had also made similar remarks last week, after observing that the commission had failed to implement its own guidelines while conducting elections during the pandemic.

The judges were reflecting the minds of all right-thinking people in this country, or even in the world, who have been petrified by the dance of death the pandemic has let loose in India. It did not demand superior wisdom to understand that the convergence of lakhs of people at a place to listen to leaders would eventually end up as a superspreader event. The commission had the power to stop them but it looked the other way when leaders, including the country's Prime Minister, took pride in and announced that they have addressed the largest rallies of their lives during these elections. The explanation that it followed up on the procedure it had deployed in Bihar elections hardly wash. That a mishap did not happen is no reason why one should go easy on the rules especially while negotiating the fatal curves an extremely dangerous pandemic leaves behind.

The election process is not over yet but the commission has already entered the dock for failing the people on many occasions in recent times; the vacillations on pandemic rules are just one instance. Its overenthusiasm while taking on the Opposition while going easy on the ruling party is another. It will do well not to invite non-complimentary comments from other constitutional bodies such as courts in future.

Opinions still matter

Newspapers are in the news these days, including a couple who have forsworn reporting of IPL cricket in the time of the pandemic. *New York Times*, a newspaper of record from the Big Apple, is in focus at the moment for deciding to do away with the term "Op-Ed", or "Opposite Editorial" page, because there seem to be more viewers of newspapers online in America than are consuming the old-fashioned printed version, which still come crackling paper form in the morning with a smell of fresh ink. But the definition of the spatial has changed in the digital age, the old geography skewed by there being no flipping of pages, only scrolling from one page to another.

The "Op-Ed" was much more than a defining physical term at the top of the page. It symbolises a space for the expression of opinions that were often at odds with those of the newspaper editors, who however are free to express themselves, even if anonymously, in editorials on the "Edit" page. A diversity of thought was always considered good for society, however opinionated the reader or viewer himself may be regarding the great societal issues of the day. The more blunt "Opinion" will probably mark the section that carries a variety and range of opinion that newspapers still invite from thinkers, activists, intellectuals and politicians too, for who can have stronger opinions one way or the other than politicians.

It might appear that the day and age is somewhat perilous for those stating opinions in public space, be it in the Edit and Op-Ed sections of newspapers or in online news and opinion websites or in the more equitable space of social media. As the free and the fair cringe in the face of official India and trolls for opinions expressed without fear or favour, the stating of opinion is far too important to be sacrificed, however tilted the world may seem against honest opinions. The term "Op-Ed" may seem outdated but opinion still matters. But, as the Bard said, what is in a name?

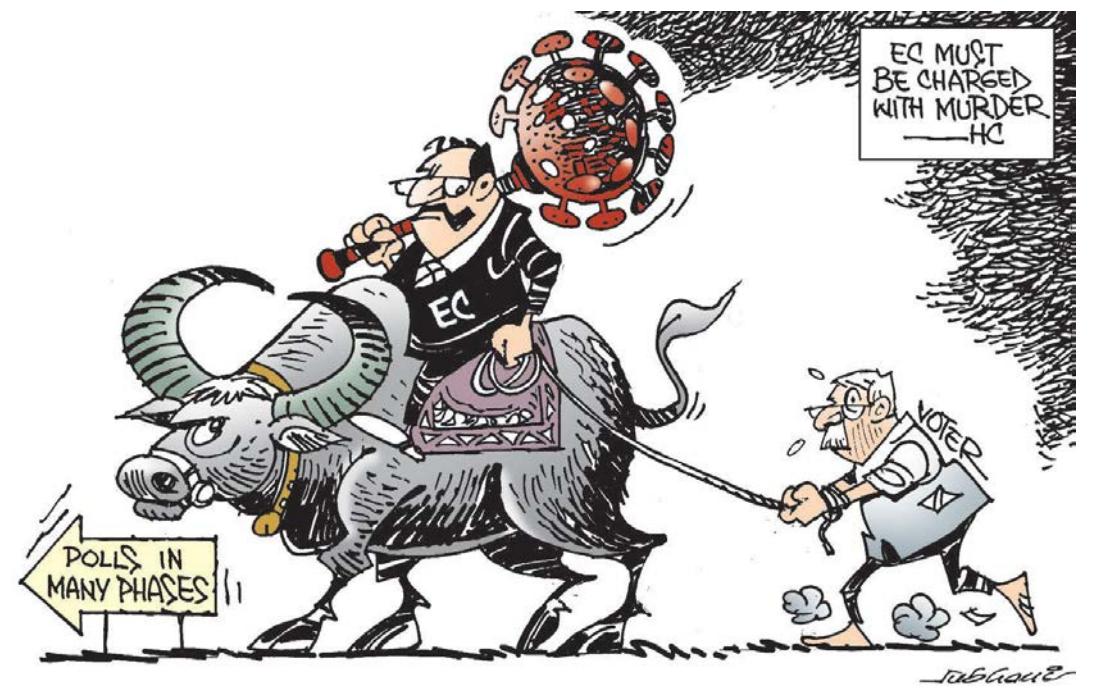
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Subhani



Caring governance vital to save lives & India's future

Sunanda K.
Datta-Ray

Reflections

When the newspapers recorded that over 20 Covid-19 patients had died in a leading New Delhi hospital for lack of oxygen, they also reported that India's richest man, Mukesh Ambani, had paid ₹57 million (₹592 crores) for the Stoke Park estate in England. Another tycoon, Adar Poonawalla, CEO of Serum Institute of India, had rented a mansion in London's Mayfair for ₹50,000 a week. Wallowing in India's cricket victory over England may have been counter-productive. Cricket crowds, religious jamborees like the Kumbh Mela, packed cinema halls and the BJP's resolve to extend its control through elections in five states/UTs contributed to today's crisis. The Covid-19 protocols were completely abandoned and the virus was able to mutate into new vaccine-resistant forms. West Bengal's ten-fold rise in infections is being squarely blamed on political rallies.

"With made-in-India solutions, we controlled the spread of the virus and improved our health infrastructure", Prime Minister Narendra Modi had boasted. "Our vaccine research and production capacity have given a shield not just to India but to many other countries in the world." The complacency and vanity ignored India's decrepit medical infrastructure. Monday's official figures of 16,960,172 infections and 192,311 deaths may be a gross understatement. Even without deliberate fudging, there are few means of accurate assessment in India's remote villages, for whose innocent inhabitants all illnesses are just "bemaari", or fever.

Reflecting official Indian priorities, the system virtually ignores both the countryside, where 70 per cent of 1.3 billion Indians live, and the poor who numbered 364 million (28 per cent of the population) in 2019, according to the

United Nations. As studies elsewhere have shown, hypertension, diabetes, respiratory disorders and nutritional deficiency are the highest in lower income groups.

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The BJP's smug pundits should rue the Tiffany day when, swept away on the tide of servile sycophancy that is the hallmark of our political culture, they hailed Prime Minister Modi as a visionary who had "defeated" Covid-19. This has become routine adulation. Even in 2018 the party's national executive had passed a resolution applauding his "visionary and disruptive leadership" (echoing Joseph Schumpeter's theory of "creative destruction") and claiming that his "new confident India" would reach "new heights in each and every field" by 2022. Another eight months to go before that Elysium dawns!

Meanwhile, pictures of the dead and dying, of coronavirus patients gasping for breath on pavements outside hospitals and of cremation fires smouldering night and day have gone viral on the world's television screens.

"I weep for your nation" — messaged Doug Jackson, a journalist from the North of England with whom I had worked 63 years ago and who is now

an authority on Tiffany glass, the author of *Mosaic: The Story of Joseph Briggs, the English Tiffany*.

"It sounds ghastly", commented Colin Smith, the author of *England's Last War Against France and Singapore Burning*, and once star writer for London's *Observer* newspaper. In that capacity he had trekked to Dhaka from what was then Calcutta during the 1971 Bangladesh war, encountering hordes of fleeing East Bengal refugees who thought him mad for walking in the opposite direction. "Wish London would at least make a gesture and send a squadron of RAF transports heavy with oxygen" Colin Smith added.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has responded since.

But tiny Singapore made the unpublicised first gesture with four cryogenic oxygen containers. "We stand with India in its fight against Covid-19", said Singapore's high commission in New Delhi. But whatever Britain — or for that matter any other country — does, the answer lies in Indian hands. Neither another Marshall Plan or PL-480 wheat (or its equivalent) can resolve India's trauma now.

India alone can save its own future through more responsible and caring governance.

As the virus shifts to smaller towns and villages or moves down the age scale in a land where 65 per cent of the population is under 35, as vast swathes of people are

felled because only 1.3 per cent of the population has been fully vaccinated, the BJP's religion-obsessed caste-ridden bigots must face up to the stark facts. Death and disease do not spare the rich because they are Hindu. Nor is there a quick fix to compensate for the neglect of decades. The situation might well deteriorate before it improves.

Everything in India now is geared for the rich. Their private jets may fly the Ambanis and the Poonawallas to Geneva or New York for a toothache, but the system by and large gives reasonably good service to the next rank of the wealthy and the politically influential. It neglects all the others.

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LETTERS

VACCINE SUPPLY

Supply of Covaxin has been stopped. Those who took the first dose are running from pillar to post for the second dose. When will the supply going to resume?

K. Gopal
Hyderabad

VACCINE DIVERSION

Hospitals are misusing vaccine quotas of registered users for their own contacts. In Princess Ezra Hospital listed on CoWIN site for paid vaccine, my father, an 85-year-old retired government doctor, was due for his second dose. I was given a slot between 9 am and 11 am. The hospital staff gave excuses to deny my father the vaccine. When I showed the CoWIN confirmation, they asked us to wait. However, a resident doctor walked in and was able to register her friends on the spot for vaccine. After waiting for three hours, they asked us to leave without giving the vaccine.

Krishna Prema
Hyderabad

DON'T LOCK DOWN

The government should compulsorily vaccinate everyone on a war-footing. Vaccination booths must be modelled after voting booths. Each district or four sectors in a city can be administered vaccine on a particular day. All businesses must be closed on vaccination day. Vaccinate all and ink mark them like polls so that they can be allowed to road free. Do not go in for lock down.

Dr Md. Iqbal Jawed
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

33 held in City for defying ban order

HYDERABAD, April 27
 Thirty-three persons were taken into custody by the police for defying prohibitory order in force in City on the 16th day of the indefinite strike by the State Government employees today.

The strikers were arrested, when they picketed before the Secretariat. Later, they were produced in the court and the case was posted for hearing on May 7. All of them released on personal bonds. Mr J.B. Ramakrishna Rao, Convenor, Joint Council of Employees' Unions and Associations in a statement claimed the strike was total in all departments throughout the State.

March, US Customs and Border Protection stopped nearly 200,000 people who were trying to enter the country, including tens of thousands of unaccompanied children. Mr Biden's White House recently admitted that the situation has reached "crisis" levels.

To his admirers, Mr Biden is finding a third way between the old centre and the new left. Because he campaigned as a moderate, they say, he can govern as a radical. His impressive vaccine rollout is drawing worldwide praise. Add to that his gargantuan spending packages, and patter about new deals and transforming the soul of America: he can still be hailed as a 21st-century ancestor to Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

But many of the problems blamed on Mr Trump are only getting worse under Biden. His administration so far has been defined by a kind of geriatric wokeness. "I want to change the paradigm," he said in that only presidential press conference. He has been using stock phrases for more than 50 years and so have most American politicians. The language of progress never changes.

By arrangement with the *Spectator*

Freddy Gray

Joe Biden, 46th President of the United States, has never been able to keep his mouth shut. Throughout his absurdly long career in politics, he has always said too much, made stuff up, gone too far. His friends and fans just shrug it off: "That's our Joe".

The trouble is: Mr Biden is now America's commander-in-chief, leader of the not-so-free-anymore world, and his loquaciousness is a problem.

Take, for instance, his decision this week to intervene before the jury reached its verdict on the trial of Derek Chauvin, the white police officer found guilty of the murder last year of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. "I'm praying the verdict is the right verdict. I think it's overwhelming in my view," Mr Biden said. "I wouldn't say that unless the jury was sequestered," he quickly added — as if there were nothing untoward in a President weighing in pre-emptively on the most racially charged legal trial in America since the O.J. Simpson case in 1995.

As things turned out, the jury agreed with Mr Biden and found Chauvin guilty on all three counts. Yet what ought to have been a calm vindication

of American justice was treated as a grubby political show trial. Angry right-wingers will regard the verdict as a sop to left-wing mobs who would have set fire to cities across America had Chauvin not gone down.

So far, the new President's aides have done an impressive job of keeping his promiscuous verbosity under wraps. His public appearances are carefully managed, his speeches tightly scripted. In the coming week, he will mark his first 100 days in the White House, and yet has only given one real press conference.

After the political earthquake of Donald Trump's presidency, everybody in Washington is eager to make out that sanity is back in charge. Under Mr Biden, the headlines have certainly been a lot less sensational. Pay attention to what he's been saying, though — and you realise America's executive branch is as mad as ever.

Mr Biden has brought back civility to politics and international affairs, we are told. Yet he's already called Xi Jinping a "thug" and Vladimir Putin a "killer". His presidency would restore America's clout in the world, we're told. From Bush to Obama to Trump

and now to Biden, America's great power continues to wane.

But who cares when the money keeps flowing? Mr Biden is carrying out the biggest government spending splurge of all time. His Covid relief package alone came to \$1.9 trillion: to be poured on top of what looks set to be the world's strongest economic recovery. For now, polls suggest people like the free cash. Those who worry about the deficit or inflation are told they don't understand modern economics.

Next comes the \$2.5 trillion infrastructure bill, to which Democrats are tacking all sorts of spending commitments for pet causes.

Mr Biden is canny enough to have succeeded at some level that won the Democratic nomination and the presidency precisely because the public didn't think he was rabidly left-wing. He's also sufficiently sharp to recognise that he must keep appealing the radicals who increasingly dominate the airwaves and his party.

At some stage, probably next year as the mid-term elections approach, Mr Biden will try to drag the Democratic donkey back towards the middle ground. For now, he seems happy to let the woke warriors take him for a

wild progressive ride. On Tuesday, after the Chauvin verdict, Mr Biden did do the presidential thing of calling on the nation to come together.

"Not enough" might be the leitmotif of Mr Biden's presidency so far. It sometimes feels as if the President is in an abusive relationship with the radical Democratic fringe. He promises ever more urgent and expensive solutions to global climate change, and his party just demands more. He talks about the nobility of the American ideal, yet his UN ambassador, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, claims: "White supremacy is woven into our founding documents and principles."

"Words have consequences", Mr Biden used to say over and over when campaigning against the loudmouth Donald Trump. But that does not appear to be a lesson he has learned. As a candidate, for instance, Mr Biden was desperate to emphasise his enthusiasm for all immigration. In a televised debate, he said: "I would in fact make sure that we immediately surge to the border all those people seeking asylum."

Inevitably, as soon as he became President, migrants did as he asked. The result has been a catastrophe. In

SHORT TAKES

VAJPAYEE'S NIECE KARUNA DIES OF COVID-19

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC RAJPIUR, APRIL 27

Former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's niece Karuna Shukla who played a key role in dethroning Raman Singh government in the 2018 Assembly elections, died of Covid-19 in a private hospital here early on Tuesday morning. She was 70 and is survived by her husband, daughter and son. The senior Congress leader was admitted to the Ramakrishna Hospital in Raipur last week when she tested positive and succumbed to the virus early on Tuesday morning, her family members said. Her last rites were performed in Baloda Bazar in Chhattisgarh.

Shukla had begun her political career in BJP and was elected to the Madhya Pradesh Assembly 1993 and to the Lok Sabha from Janjir in Chhattisgarh in 2004 as BJP candidate. She, however, had fallen out with former chief minister and BJP national vice-president Raman Singh and snapped her 32-year-long ties with BJP in 2014. She later joined Congress.

She was fielded against Singh in Rajnandgaon Assembly seat in Chhattisgarh by Congress in 2018 polls. She, however, had lost the poll.

Late Shukla, a firebrand leader, had played a key role in the return of Congress to power in Chhattisgarh in 2018 Assembly polls after a gap of 15 years.

She had vowed to defeat BJP in Chhattisgarh in the 2018 Assembly poll in Chhattisgarh and campaigned against BJP extensively in Chhattisgarh in the 2018 Assembly elections. She was appointed president of Chhattisgarh state social welfare board when Bhupesh Baghel government came to power in the state.

MAHA MIN: NOT ENOUGH SUPPLY TO GIVE SHOT TO ALL

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, APRIL 27

Citing shortage of Covid vaccines, Maharashtra has raised a question mark over the implementation of vaccination drive for people above 18 years of age. Maharashtra home minister Rajesh Tope has expressed inability to start the vaccination from May 1 if sufficient doses are not provided.

Amid a massive Covid surge in the country, the Centre has allowed vaccination for all 18-plus citizens from May 1. Earlier the inoculation was restricted only for people above 45 years and frontline workers.

According to Tope, Maharashtra has 5.71 crore people in the age group of 18-44 years and, for their two-dose vaccine and taking wastage into account, 12 crore doses will be needed.

"But if we don't get vaccines, how will we start vaccination from May 1? This is not just our situation, this is a situation every state in India is facing," he said on Tuesday.

The Serum Institute of India (SII) has informed the State government that it can supply the 'Covishield' vaccine only after May 20. They have told us that till May 20 their stock is blocked by the central government. Maharashtra needs a week's quota delivered at one time in order to vaccinate a maximum number of people, the health minister said.

The state government has sent letters to the SII and Bharat Biotech two days ago, asking about the schedule of vaccine supplies in such large quantities, and is awaiting their reply, Tope added.

RELIGIOUS AFFAIR

Nearly 2,000 seers of 13 'akhadas' had taken a dip in the Ganga at Har Ki Pari ghat

Kumbh: Seers keep last Shahi Snan symbolic

Dehradun/Rishikesh, April 27: The last 'shahi snan' at the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar on Tuesday was a subdued affair with seers keeping the ritual symbolic in view of a nationwide surge in Covid-19 cases.

Till the conclusion of the royal bath, nearly 2,000 seers of 13 'akhadas' (sects) had taken a dip in the Ganga at Har Ki Pari ghat which was reserved exclusively for them, officials said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 17 had appealed to sadhus to observe the remaining duration of the Kumbh only in a "symbolic" manner.

Following this different 'akhadas' had agreed to keep their participation symbolic.

Crowds at the ghats of the Ganga started thinning down drastically since last week after the key 'akhadas' of seers began pulling out of the Maha Kumbh, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, citing the spike in the number of Coronavirus cases.

Many spots wore a deserted look on Tuesday at the Kumbh which will formally close only on April 30.

With 32,144 people testing positive for Coronavirus infection in a day, India's



Devotees gather for last Shahi Snan of Kumbh 2021 on the day of Purnima, or full moon, in Haridwar on Tuesday. — PTI

total tally of Covid-19 cases has climbed to 1,76,36,307, while the national recovery rate has further dropped to

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82.54 per cent, according to the Union health ministry data updated on Tuesday.

Uttarakhand reported 5,058 Covid-19 cases on Monday with Dehradun registering 2,034 cases and Haridwar 1,002 cases.

Around 2,000 seers of the Joola, Agni, Avahan, Kinnar, Udasin, Bada and Naya Udasin, Nirmal and

Niranjan akhadas and three Bairagi akhadas kept the 'snan' symbolic on Chaitra Purnima, Zonal Officer of LIU, Haridwar, Sunita Verma said.

Kumbh Mela officer Deepak Rawat, Inspector General (Kumbh Mela) Sanjay Gunjal and Senior Superintendent of Police, Kumbh Mela, Janmejay Khanduri reviewed the arrangements at Har ki Pari before commencement of the bath on Tuesday.

Talking to reporters, Rawat thanked the seers for scaling down the shahi snan in response to the Prime minister's appeal. — PTI

increased during the current second wave of Covid-19. "We have been helping conduct the last rites of victims, irrespective of their religion, for the last 14 to 15 months. So far, we have buried or cremated over 1,200 victims in Pune city and adjoining villages in Maharashtra district," said Ummat Foundation member Javed Khan.

"Our volunteers in PPE kits reached there with a body bag, brought the mortal remains to a crematorium and conducted the last rites as per their rituals," he said. — PTI

Assam imposes night curfew from 8pm-5am

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, APRIL 27

the state's highest for this year. The state has 17,764 active cases at present.

In view of the gradual growth in Covid positive cases, Assam government on Tuesday decided to impose night curfew — from 8 pm to 5 am — across the state with immediate effect, till May 1.

Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also announced that the state has received four lakh doses of Covishield and one lakh Covaxin. Informing that now the state has the total stock of 6,57,180 vaccines, the minister in his social media post said that they are going to step up vaccination drive further.

"There shall be no restriction on inter-state and intra-state movement/transportation of essential/non-essential goods. No separate permission shall be required for such movement," the order said.

Personnel related to food products, animal fodder, medicines, medical equipment, banks, insurance offices, telecommunications, internet, IT services, petrol pumps, LPG units, electricity generation and supply, cold storage and warehousing, private security agencies, manufacturing units of essential commodities and units that require continuous production are also exempted from the curfew.

This has come close on the heels of the state government's earlier order closing down all shops and business establishments to contain the spread of the disease.

Assam on Monday recorded 3,137 new cases and 15 deaths — both figures

Guj: Night curfew in 9 more cities

AHMEDABAD, April 27: The Gujarat government on Tuesday decided to impose night curfew in nine more cities of the state in a bid to stem the spread of Coronavirus. With this, the night curfew is now being enforced in 29 cities of Gujarat.

The state government also announced new restrictions in these 29 cities, including closure of restaurants, swimming pools, cinema halls, shopping complexes and water parks in these 29 cities till May 5.

Other establishments like beauty parlours, gardens, salons, gyms, auditoriums and malls would also remain shut in these cities, it said. Besides all the APMCs (agriculture produce market committees) across the state will also remain closed, and only market yards trading in vegetables and fruits will be allowed to function.

All religious places in the state will also remain shut for the public, and only 20 people will be allowed at a funeral, the release said, adding that the upper limit for marriage gatherings is 50.

Public transport buses across the state would function with 50 per cent capacity, it added.

Gujarat's Covid-19 tally crossed the 5 lakh-mark on Monday to reach 5,10,373 with the addition of 14,340 new cases, the highest rise in a single day so far. With a record 158 fatalities in a day, the Covid-19 toll rose to 6,486, as per the state health department. — PTI

Bodies of 22 victims stuffed in one ambulance

Medical college's Dean cites lack of ambulances, managing transportation of patients as reason

Aurangabad, April 27: The bodies of 22 Covid-19 victims were stuffed in one ambulance while being taken to a crematorium at Beed in Maharashtra, with the district administration citing lack of medical transport vehicles as the reason for it.

The incident took place on Sunday when the bodies, kept in the mortuary of the Swami Ramanand Teerth Rural Government Medical College at Ambajogai in Beed, were being transported for the last rites.

"This happened because the hospital administration does not have enough ambulances," said the medical college's Dean, Dr Shivaji Sukre.

He said they had five ambulances during the first wave of Covid-19 last year. Out of them, three

were later withdrawn and the hospital was now managing the transportation of Covid-19 patients in two ambulances.

"Sometimes, it takes time to trace the relatives of a dead patient. The bodies from the Covid-19 centre at Lokhandi Sawargaon village are also sent to our facility as they don't have a cold storage," the official said. He said that they wrote to the district administration on March 17 to provide them three more ambulances.

"To avoid the chaos, we have also written to the Ambajogai Municipal Council to conduct the last rites of the victims between 8 am and 10 pm and the bodies will be sent to the crematorium from the hospital ward itself," he said.

Meanwhile, BJP MLC

Suresh Dhas alleged that the hospital and the local civic body were passing the blame on each other.

Talking to a TV channel, the legislator from Ashti in Beed said, "There is no control left and the government is not acting swiftly. The state administration has permitted ambulances to be provided from the MLA fund, but the technical sanction for it is given from Mumbai."

Ambajogai Municipal Council's chief officer Ashok Sabale said it was the responsibility of the medical college to transport the bodies to the crematorium on Mandwa road (designated for the last rites of Covid-19 victims).

"Our teams are there at the crematorium for conducting the last rites. A meeting was held on Monday over the issue during which the medical college dean said they do not have enough ambulances. If it is the case, didn't they have any review mechanism? Why didn't they act on it?" Sabale asked.

Municipal council president Rajkishor alias Papa Modi also expressed concern over the incident and said the same day, eight more bodies were transported in another ambulance for cremation.

"We are going to provide one ambulance to the medical college and another two will be made available from the district administration," he said.

The official said the local medical infrastructure is "stressed" as critical patients from nearby districts are also brought to Ambajogai.

A senior group member said their workload has

increased during the current second wave of Covid-19. "We have been helping conduct the last rites of victims, irrespective of their religion, for the last 14 to 15 months. So far, we have buried or cremated over 1,200 victims in Pune city and adjoining villages in Maharashtra district," said Ummat Foundation member Javed Khan.

Two days ago, they got a call about the death of an elderly member of a Brahmin family which was in isolation after contracting the viral infection, he said.

"Our volunteers in PPE kits reached there with a body bag, brought the mortal remains to a crematorium and conducted the last rites as per their rituals," he said. — PTI

PUNE, April 27: A social welfare group is working round-the-clock with the Pune civic body to give a dignified farewell to Covid-19 victims, irrespective of their religion, and claimed to have performed the last rites of over 1,200 victims since the pandemic began last year.

The organisation comprises about 40 members, including some auto-rickshaw drivers and mobile technicians, in the age group of 22 to 64 years.

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increased during the current second wave of Covid-19. "We have been helping conduct the last rites of victims, irrespective of their religion, for the last 14 to 15 months. So far, we have buried or cremated over 1,200 victims in Pune city and adjoining villages in Maharashtra district," said Ummat Foundation member Javed Khan.

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Fighting spirit on



Family members of Covid-19 patients wait outside an oxygen-filling centre to refill their empty cylinders, as demand for the gas rises due to spike in Coronavirus cases, at Naraina in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI



(Top) Health worker move Covid-19 positive patient inside Coronavirus OPD at a Covid-19 hospital, amid the ongoing surge in Coronavirus cases, in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. — PTI

(Left) Senior citizens wait on wheelchairs to receive a dose of the Covid-19 vaccine at a Vaccination Centre in Mumbai on Tuesday. — PTI

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SHORT TAKES
**'ARGUING OVER
NOS WON'T BRING
BACK THE DEAD'**

Rohtak (Haryana), April 27: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has said it was pointless to argue over Covid-19 fatality figures as the dead won't come back to life, and the focus should be on helping those suffering now.

Khattar was replying to questions on the alleged under-reporting of deaths due to coronavirus - at many places the scenes at crematoriums and burial grounds do not reflect the official numbers.

The kind of difficult situation we are going through, we don't have to play with data. Our entire focus should be on how people will recover and how we can provide them relief, he told reporters here on Monday. And those who have died will not come back by creating a furore over it, he said at one point, arguing that there was no point in getting into a debate on whether the official number of deaths was correct.

The opposition Congress was quick to slam his remarks with party general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala saying, "These can only be the words of a merciless ruler. There is a need to make a noise over every death which is the result of the government's inefficiency, so that the deaf BJP government can hear the echo," he said.

Adampur MLA Kuldeep Bishnoi also condemned the CM's comment. These remarks are shameful. I strongly condemn the thinking of the chief minister, the Congress leader tweeted. Khattar had visited Rohtak, Panipat, Hisar and Faridabad to review the supply of oxygen and other facilities for Covid patients.

We will do everything possible so that lives are saved. Whether the deaths are less or more, there is no point getting into this debate, he said.

Whether we are able to set the systems right is the question. From our side, we are setting the systems in place, he added. Khattar said nobody had expected this kind of a situation. Who knew this pandemic will come, neither you knew nor we. To fight this, we need everyone's cooperation including yours, mine, the patients'. Therefore, these issues should not be the topic of any controversy.

The CM was asked to comment on the PGIMS hospital in Rohtak briefly stopping admission to new Covid-19 patients on Sunday night after facing a "shortage" of medical oxygen.

**YOUR SYSTEM
HAS FAILED, HC
TELLS AAP GOVT**

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 27

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday said the Aam Aadmi Party government's 'entire system has failed' as black-marketing of oxygen cylinders and crucial medicines for treating Covid-19 patients is going on. A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli observed it was not the time to become vultures.

"Are you aware of black-marketing? Is it a good human gesture?" the bench said to oxygen refillers. The bench further said, "This is a mess that the state government has been unable to resolve. You have the power, take action against those engaging in black marketing of oxygen cylinders and medicines," it said.

"This is a mess that you have been unable to resolve," the court said. The court said, "If you (Delhi Government) are not going to be able to manage then tell us, we will ask central government officer to take over (the refilling unit)."

The Court directed the AAP government to check black marketing of oxygen cylinders and crucial medicines for Covid-19 patients and address the issue of oxygen distribution to hospitals as well as individuals. It directed the Delhi government to file a report on the number of deaths of Covid-19 patients in hospitals and nursing homes due to the shortage of oxygen.

The high court also directed the government to take over the plant of an oxygen refiller for not supplying gas to hospitals and allegedly giving it in black market, and made it clear that the same action should be taken with regard to other suppliers who refuse to fall in line.

Besides, it asked the Delhi government to take account of stock and sale of medicines such as Remdesivir, Fabiflu and Tocilizumab at hospitals' pharmacies, as people are unable to get these drugs which are being sold at much higher rates in black market.

AS TOLL SPIRALS, CORPSES WAIT IN 20-HR QUEUES FOR LAST RITES IN DELHI

Crematoriums struggle to cope with the deluge of the dead arriving at a frightening pace

New Delhi, April 27: The high tin roof, 50 funeral pyres burned fiercely on Tuesday, the hot air filled with smoke, fine ash and muted sobs of shell-shocked families.

Nearby, lying unattended on the floor, and in scores of parked vehicles, more corpses awaited their turn, which relatives were told would come 16 to 20 hours later.

Shaking Delhi's spirit and soul, an unimaginable tragedy is unfolding at New Delhi's crematoriums struggling to cope with the deluge of the dead arriving at frightening pace.

"I have not seen such a bad situation ever before in my life. People are moving with the dead bodies of their loved ones from pillar to post ... almost all Delhi crematoriums are flooded with dead bodies," Vineeta Massey, the owner of Massey Funerals said.

By official count, 3,601 people have died this month, of them 2,267 in the last seven days alone in the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic which is terrorising and tormenting the city. In all of February, the death toll was 57, and in March 117.

As if the trauma of losing a loved one to the virus so suddenly is not enough, there is more grief in store for relatives who are not even able to give them a proper send-off.

They arrive at crematoriums with bodies, only to be turned away. They drive to another facility, and yet another, traversing the city with the mortal remains in personal cars or ambulances, desperately seeking a graceful exit for their father, mother, son or daughter from the material world.

The trauma is no less for the relatives of those who died of non-Covid causes but are being swept up in the collective national tragedy driven by the pandemic.

"Apna dead body uthao aap udhar line mein ja ke khade ho jao (Pick up your dead body and go stand in line)," said a young staff.

A woman in her 40s was so stunned she couldn't make out what was *nabhi* (navel) or *chhati* (chest) when a staff member asked her to place sandalwood sticks on the body of her father who had died of Covid.

The body was still packed in a white sack, which was placed on the pyre without opening.

Holding the sandalwood sticks in trembling hands, she moved around the body before being helped by someone.

"I didn't even see the face of my father," wailed the woman, who was alone.

Manmeet Singh, a 40-year-old assistant professor, also carried his father Gurpal Singh's body in his car to the Subhash Nagar crematorium on Monday afternoon.

"What could I have done when there was no space? We kept the body in a rented fridge and have come early today (Tuesday)," said Aman, waiting for his turn as many other people milled around silently with dead bodies lying on the floor.

Outside, ambulances and cars honked and competed for parking space but inside all one could hear was the crackling of dry wood from the burn-



Bodies lined up for cremation at Subhash Nagar Crematorium for the last rites in New Delhi on Tuesday. Under the high tin roof, 50 funeral pyres burned fiercely on Tuesday, the hot air filled with smoke, fine ash and muted sobs of shell-shocked families. - PTI

Release bodies only if there is no waiting period, says HC

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, APRIL 27

Observing that dead bodies of Covid patients cannot be kept lying for hours waiting to be cremated, the Bombay High Court on Tuesday asked the Maharashtra Government and the BMC to inform the court about the condition of crematorium across the state including Mumbai.

The court suggested bodies should not be released from the hospital if there is a waiting period at crematoriums. The court also questioned how an individual, BJP MP from

Ahmednagar, procured 10,000 vials of Remdesivir injections while companies are supposed to provide this drug to only the Central government.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing a bunch of petitions pertaining to shortage of Remdesivir injections, oxygen supply, availability of beds and other issues arising due to Covid.

Justice Kulkarni cited an incident in Maharashtra's Beed district, where 22 bodies of Covid victims were

stuffed in an ambulance while being transported to the crematorium. The bench said that in several crematoriums there is a waiting period before bodies are cremated and relatives of the victims are forced to queue outside the crematoriums.

The court said that the Maharashtra government and all other civic authorities will have to come up with some mechanism to address this issue. "Bodies cannot be left lying like that for hours together. They are corpses," the bench said.

The bench suggested that if there is a waiting period at a crematorium, the body should not be released from the hospital. The court also heard a PIL filed by advocate Sneha Marjani alleging improper management in the State during this pandemic and seeking directions pertaining to shortage of Remdesivir injections and oxygen among other things.

The court took note of the alleged distribution of over 10,000 vials of Remdesivir by BJP's MP Dr Sujay Vikhe-Patil from Ahmednagar after buying it from Delhi.

GURUDWARAS IN DELHI OFFER 'OXYGEN LANGARS'

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 27

The country on Tuesday recorded about 3.23 lakh fresh cases of Covid-19 and 2,771 new deaths amid allegations of under testing and under reporting of corona related deaths.

The number of new cases in Maharashtra and Mumbai are showing a decline and Reproduction number (one of the tools to measure spread of disease) in Maharashtra has dropped to 1.1 compared to 1.7 last month.

In several parts of the country, patients continued to beg and plead for hospital beds and Oxygen while in Delhi some Gurudwaras have started offering "Oxygen Langars" to briefly aid the gasping patient and help improve their Oxygen levels while their families searched for hospitals.

While the bad news is that hospital beds and Oxygen cylinders are not easily available, the good news is that Medical Oxygen has started arriving hospitals in Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.

Interestingly, amid all this chaos and crisis, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said that the country is at present "better prepared mentally and physically with more experience to beat the pandemic" as compared to 2020.

The Centre on Tuesday informed the Supreme Court that Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi and union Home Minister Mr Amit Shah are directly monitoring Oxygen supplies on "a war footing" level.

The Central government officials said that to address shortage of Oxygen tankers in the country, the Union Government has imported 20 cryogenic tankers of 10 MT and 20 MT capacity and allocated them to States.

Besides, Railways has so far delivered 450 metric tonnes of liquid medical Oxygen to Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi through 26 tankers covering more than 10,000 km of journey.

Now, Odisha also stares at shortage of Remdesivir

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 27

Odisha is currently staring at shortage of Remdesivir injection used in the treatment for Covid-19 as the Covid-19 graph continues to show an upward trend.

The state on Tuesday recorded 6,073 new coronavirus positives, taking the total number of active Covid-19 cases 50,958. The casualty climbed to 2,007 with 10 more fatalities.

Admitting the scarcity

in the stocks of the essential medicine, State Drugs Controller Anna Sankar Das on Tuesday said that the Centre has now brought the distribution of the essential drug under its control. And, accordingly, it (the Centre) is allocating the antiviral drug (Remdesivir) to different states considering the Covid-19 caseloads.

Normally in Odisha, the State Drugs Controller used to supply Remdesivir to private hospitals while the state-owned Odisha

Medical

Corporation supplied the essential Covid-19 drug to government hospitals across the province.

"Odisha will be allocated 21,000 vials of Remdesivir for a period between April 21 and April 30. The requirement was nearly 2,000 vials on Monday, but the state received only 92 vials. We have got information that even fewer vials are reaching today, but we have no information about the exact quantity," said Das.

The

RISKY AFFAIR Marriage takes place despite the Ratlam groom testing Coronavirus positive

MP couple ties knot wearing PPE suit

RABINDRA NATH
CHOWDHURY | DC
with agency inputs
Bhopal, April 27

A couple in a Madhya Pradesh town went ahead with their plan to get married despite the groom being reportedly tested positive for coronavirus.

The couple, Akash Verma and Sanjana, got married by wearing PPE (personal protective equipment) suit to ensure that the groom did not spread the virus to the bride as well as their kin who were present on the occasion.

The marriage was held in a private guest house in

Ratlam on Monday, official sources said on Tuesday.

The kin of the bride and groom also wore PPE kit while attending the marriage function.

Local tehsildar Navin Garg reportedly rushed to the spot along with a team of district officers to stop the marriage after he was tipped off on the marriage function.

However, they were allegedly resisted by the relatives of the bride and groom who were present on the occasion, forcing them to remain mute spectators.

The groom reportedly tested positive on April 19. However, the family members of the bride and the groom had decided to go

ahead with the marriage plan, scheduled on April 26, in spite of the development.

The issue has snowballed into a controversy with the locals pulling up the local administration not taking the couple and others to task for this. The officials however were tightlipped on the incident.

When contacted, Ratlam district superintendent of police G K Tripathy said, "I am not aware of the development. Let me check it."

Sources however said the state government has taken note of it and sought

a report from the district administration in this regard.

"No case has been filed in connection with the incident in police station so far", a spokesman of the state government said.

Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Tuesday denied that there was underreporting of Covid-19 deaths in the state. The pandemic was a global calamity and there was no reason to hide the number of deaths, he told reporters here.

He was replying to a question about the mismatch between official

Covid-19 death figures and the number of dead bodies ending up at crematoriums and cemeteries.

"Why would anyone hide the actual Covid-19 death figures? It is a pandemic. People are not dying in riots. Covid-19 is a natural calamity which is not confined to Madhya Pradesh but has hit the entire world," the minister said.

Notably, on April 21 managers of two crematoriums and a cemetery in Bhopal had claimed that the last rites of 137 Covid-19 victims were performed that day, while the official death figure for the state capital was only five.

SHORT TAKES

EUROPE TESTS AUTOMATED ASTEROID SPOTTER

Berlin, April 27: Scientists said on Tuesday they have switched on a new telescope at the European Southern Observatory as part of an effort to create an automated network for spotting asteroids that might pose a risk to Earth.

The 56-centimeter telescope that's now seen "first light" at the La Silla Observatory in Chile, known as TBT2, will work together with a twin in Cebreros, Spain, to test whether the same object in space can be detected with one device and then tracked by another.

The tests are a precursor to a planned network of automated telescopes being developed by ESO and the European Space Agency. The project, called Flyeye, will survey the night sky for fast-moving objects and flag those that could become a threat to human researchers for further investigation. More than 9,000,000 asteroids have been catalogued in the Solar System and about 25,000 have an orbit that brings them close to Earth.

'DRONE' BOAT TARGETS SAUDI PORT OF YANBU

Dubai, April 27: A remotely piloted boat packed with explosives targeted the Saudi port of Yanbu in the Red Sea on Tuesday, the kingdom said, with the blast sending black smoke into the sky off the coast.

Saudi Arabia claimed to have intercepted and destroyed the attack boat. However, private security firms suggested commercial traffic near the port may have been hit in the assault.

Details remained scarce, but the incident comes after a series of attacks on shipping in the wider Mideast region amid a shadow war between Iran and Israel and against the backdrop of ongoing negotiations between Tehran and world powers over Iran's tattered nuclear deal.

The incident also comes amid the kingdom's yearslong war against Yemen's Houthi rebels. The Houthis have in the past used bomb-laden drones and explosive-packed boats in attacks targeting the kingdom. However, the rebels did not immediately claim any assaults on Tuesday and did not respond to a request for comment.

TWO SPANISH CITIZENS KILLED IN AMBUSH ATTACK

Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), April 27: Two Spanish citizens have been killed in an ambush in eastern Burkina Faso, the Spanish government said on Tuesday. The Spanish journalists and an Irish citizen went missing during an attack by gunmen Monday near a national park, said Arancha González Laya, Spain's foreign affairs minister in a press conference. The two Spaniards are from northern Spain and were working on a documentary on how Burkina Faso's authorities were tackling poaching and on the communities of people living in the park.

At the time of the attack, they were traveling with an anti-poaching patrol with about 40 people, she said. "It is a dangerous area where terrorists, bandits, and jihadists usually operate," said Gonzalez Laya. The Irish government said it was "aware of the reports and is liaising closely with international partners regarding the situation on the ground."

TOYOTA ACQUIRES LYFT'S SELF-DRIVING UNIT

Tokyo, April 27: Toyota Motor Corp has acquired the self-driving division of American ride-hailing company Lyft for \$550 million, in a move that highlights the Japanese automaker's ambitions in technology.

The acquisition, announced Tuesday, was carried out by Woven Planet Holdings, a Toyota subsidiary that began business in January and focuses on innovations and investment in projects such as smart cities, robotics and automated driving. Of the payment, \$200 million will be paid upfront, and \$350 million over a five-year period, according to Toyota.

The Woven Planet project will bring together engineers and researchers in mobility services, software and sensor assets and automated driving systems to further develop the technology, according to Toyota.

Citizens against genocide



People hold a banner reading in Turkish 'No power can slander the Turkish people with genocide!' during a protest outside the US embassy, in Ankara, Turkey on Tuesday. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that he was 'highly saddened' by US President Joe Biden's decision to mark as genocide the mass deportations and massacres of Armenians in the early 20th century Ottoman Empire, calling it baseless and unjust. — AP

Sri Lanka approves burqa ban citing national security concerns

Colombo, April 27: Sri Lankan Cabinet on Tuesday approved a proposal to ban all forms of face coverings in public places, citing a threat to national security.

However, wearing face masks to combat Covid-19 is allowed. The move came weeks after Minister of Public Security Sarath Weerasekara signed a paper in March, seeking the approval of the Cabinet to ban burqas — outer garments that cover the body and face worn by some Muslim women. The Cabinet has decided to ban all forms of face coverings in public places, Cabinet spokesperson and information minister Keheliya High

● LAST MONTH, Pakistan's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Ambassador Saad Khattak had criticised the proposal to ban the wearing of burqas in the country.

Rambukwella told reporters here, without specifying burqas. "All forms of face covers are a threat to national security," he said.

The covering of the full face will automatically include burqa and niqab. The proposal now must be approved by Parliament to become a law. Last month, Pakistan's High

Commissioner to Sri Lanka Ambassador Saad Khattak had criticised the proposal to ban the wearing of burqas in the country, saying such "divisive steps" in the name of security will not only hurt the sentiments of Muslims but also strengthen wider apprehensions about the fundamental human rights of minorities in the island nation.

Meanwhile, Weerasekera in a Facebook post wrote that the Cabinet has approved the proposal to ban all face coverings, including the burqa. The Buddhist-majority nation in 2019 had temporarily banned wearing of burqas under emergency regulations.

Ethnic minority Tamils, who are mainly Hindus, comprise about 12 per cent, while Christians account for over 7 per cent of the population. — PTI

tions following the Easter Sunday attacks in which nine suicide bombers belonging to the local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) carried out a series of blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels, killing 270 people, including 11 Indians, and injuring over 500. Muslims make up about 9 per cent of the 22 million people in Sri Lanka, where Buddhists account for more than 70 per cent of the population.

Meanwhile, Weerasekera in a Facebook post wrote that the Cabinet has approved the proposal to ban all face coverings, including the burqa. The Buddhist-majority nation in 2019 had temporarily banned wearing of burqas under emergency regulations.

Ethnic minority Tamils, who are mainly Hindus, comprise about 12 per cent, while Christians account for over 7 per cent of the population. — PTI

French soldiers face punishment

Paris, April 27: The French government has threatened to punish soldiers who signed an open letter by retired generals warning President Emmanuel Macron the country is headed for "civil war" unless he cracks down on Islamists, anarchists and anti-racism activists.

A number of serving defence force members signed the dramatically-worded letter published last week in the right-wing Valeurs Actuelles magazine, which warned that "laxist" policies would result in chaos requiring "the intervention of our comrades on active duty in a perilous mission of protection of our civilisation values".

"There will be consequences, naturally," Parly said on Monday, adding that she had instructed the army chief of staff to discipline them. — AFP

unnamed groups who "scorn our country, its traditions and its culture" will lead to "civil war" and deaths "in the thousands", the signatories warned.

The government and left-wing parties strongly condemned the letter, which was published on the 60th anniversary of a failed coup d'état by generals opposed to France granting independence to Algeria.

"These are unacceptable actions," Defence Minister Florence Parly said on Monday, adding that serving military members, who in signing the letter flouted a law requiring them to remain politically neutral, would be punished.

"There will be consequences, naturally," Parly told France Info radio, adding that she had instructed the army chief of staff to discipline them. — AFP

The protesters defied a ban and rallied in the capital N'Djamena and in the south of the semi-desert country where civilian rule was suspended following Deby's death.

Police were deployed in N'Djamena to break up the planned demonstrations against the so-called Transitional Military Council (TMC) called by the opposition and civil society groups.

Deby's 37-year-old son Mahamat now leads the council, and has pledged to hold elections in 18 months. But the opposition called the TMC an "illegal and illegitimate organ endorsed by France which thinks it can impose a new military dictatorship" on its former colony.

Police used tear gas to disperse small groups of demonstrators in the capital, some of whom burned tyres, AFP journalists saw.

A woman died when anti-junta protesters attacked a bus in N'Djamena's Dembe district, a prosecutor told AFP.

"Some passengers fled but a woman remained and was killed by the protesters," N'Djamena prosecutor Youssouf Tom told AFP.

Police used tear gas to disperse small groups of demonstrators in the capital, some of whom burned tyres, AFP journalists saw.

A woman died when anti-junta protesters attacked a bus in N'Djamena's Dembe district, a prosecutor told AFP.

"We do not yet have the exact circumstances of the death, he is a young man of 21," Mondou prosecutor Ali Kolla Brahim told AFP. But a high-ranking state media official, Ahmed Malloum, told AFP by telephone from Mondou that police fired live ammunition on a stu-

dent who had thrown a stone at a police car.

"The student died instantly," Malloum said. A leading rights group called on its activists for "peace and justice" to turn out massively on Tuesday.

French President Emmanuel Macron condemned "with the greatest firmness the repression of demonstrations and the violence that took place this morning in N'Djamena." The French leader was speaking during a visit to Paris of DR Congo President Felix Tshisekedi, currently head of the African Union.

France has been a key ally in Chad's battle against a jihadist revolt that has swept across the Sahel, though Macron has said he intends to eventually reduce the 5,100-strong Barkhane force.

Police used tear gas to disperse small groups of demonstrators in the capital, some of whom burned tyres, AFP journalists saw.

RUSSIAN SYNDICATE ATTACKS DC POLICE DEPARTMENT

Washington, April 27: The Washington, DC, police department said on Monday that its computer network was breached, and a Russian-speaking ransomware syndicate claimed to have stolen sensitive data, including on informants, that it threatened to share with local criminal gangs unless police paid an unspecified ransom.

The cybercriminals posted screenshots on their dark web site supporting their claim to have stolen more than 250 gigabytes of data.

The District of Columbia's Metropolitan Police Department said in a statement that it had asked the FBI to investigate the "unauthorized access."

There was no indication that any police operations were affected, and the department did not immediately say whether it had been hit by ransomware.

The Babuk group, a relatively new ransomware gang, said on its website that it had "downloaded a sufficient amount of information from your internal networks" and gave the police three days to contact it or "we will start to contact gangs in order to drain the informants."

Screenshots it posted suggested it has data from at least four computers, including intelligence reports, information on gang conflicts, the jail census and other administrative files. One of the images, apparently of network locations accessed by the criminals, showed a text document entitled "How To Restore Your Files."

— AP

FINANCIAL BUNGLED Japanese bank said damage closer to \$3 billion, it would be open probe

Archegos fiasco deals new blows to UBS, Nomura

Tokyo, April 27: Global bank losses from the collapse of US hedge fund Archegos jumped past \$10 billion on Tuesday as Japan's Nomura reported a bigger financial impact than expected and Switzerland's UBS disclosed a surprise hit.

Shockwaves rippled through global financial markets and institutions last month when then little-known Archegos sold at least \$20 billion in stocks as it sought to cover obligations to its lenders.

The debacle hit firms including Credit Suisse, Morgan Stanley and sever-

open an investigation.

In its earnings report, Nomura announced it had booked a loss of 245.7 billion yen (\$2.3 billion) in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. In addition, the bank expects losses of around \$570 million for the fiscal exercise ending March 2022.

In Zurich, UBS said it had suffered losses of \$774 million (640 million euros) related to Archegos in the first quarter, although it still reported increased profits.

That was far less than its Swiss rival Credit Suisse, which last week said it would lose a total of 5.0

billion Swiss francs (\$5.5 billion) to cover damage related to Archegos across the first and second quarters. US family-owned hedge fund Archegos, run by former Tiger Asia director Bill Hwang, had taken huge bets on a few stocks with money borrowed from banks.

When several of those bets turned sour, the fund was unable to meet "margin calls" — when the banks demand extra cash or assets to cover losses in a brokerage account.

Nomura said Tuesday it has "unwound over 97 per cent of its outstanding

Biden to sign order for minimum wage

Higher wages to lead to greater productivity

Washington, April 27: President Joe Biden is set to sign an executive order to increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for federal contractors, providing a pay bump to hundreds of thousands of workers.

Biden administration officials said the higher wages would lead to greater worker productivity, offsetting any additional costs to taxpayers.

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations ahead of Tuesday's signing. The officials could not provide an exact figure on how many workers for federal contractors would receive a raise, only that it would be hundreds of thousands.

There are an estimated 5 million contract workers in the federal government, according to a posting last year for the Brookings Institution by Paul Light, a public policy professor at New York University.

The increase would need to include the higher wage in new contract offerings by January 30 of next year.

By March 30, agencies

would need to implement the higher wage into new contracts. The increase would also be in existing contracts that are extended. The wage would be indexed to inflation, so it would automatically increase with each year to reflect changes in prices.

The tipped minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour for federal contractors would be replaced by the standard minimum by 2024. Biden has pushed to establish a \$15 hourly minimum wage nationwide for all workers, making it a part of his Coronavirus relief package. But the Senate parliamentarian said the wage hike did not follow the budgetary rules that allowed the \$1.9 trillion plan to pass with a simple majority, so it was not included in the bill that became law in March.

● THE INCREASE could be dramatic for workers who earn the current minimum of \$10.95 an hour. Those workers would receive a 37% pay hike, though the increase would be rolled out gradually.

increase with each year to reflect changes in prices.

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The two spoke late on Monday on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door talks. The intelligence official said Hamas wants the elections to go ahead but that no faction wants to proceed without guarantees from the international community that voting will be held in east Jerusalem.

An Egyptian diplomat and an intelligence official said that they had been briefed on the decision, which will be announced on Thursday

at a meeting of Palestinian factions. They said Egypt is in talks with Israel to reach a compromise to allow voting but those efforts have so far failed.

The two spoke late on Monday on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door talks. The intelligence official said Hamas wants the elections to go ahead but that no faction wants to proceed without guarantees from the international community that voting will be held in east Jerusalem.

The official said the factions are discussing the formation of a unity government instead that would include Hamas. A

Palestinian official said no decision will be made until the factions meet on Thursday, and that if Israel decides to allow voting in east Jerusalem, the May 22 elections will go ahead as planned.

The official said Fatah is opposed to holding elections without east Jerusalem because it would mean accepting Israel's annexation. The official was not authorised to talk to reporters and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Palestinian Election Commission says 6,000 voters in east Jerusalem would need to submit their ballots through Israeli post offices in accordance with past agreements.

— AP

The additional losses realised in April "will drag down Nomura's earnings in fiscal 2021", he added. For the last fiscal year, Nomura reported net income fell 29 per cent to 153.1 billion yen.

On Monday, Nomura appointed a new CEO at the US subsidiary involved in the losses.

The firm also said Tuesday it had launched a wide-ranging investigation of facts surrounding the debacle and various reviews of its outstanding exposure and risk-management processes.

— AP

quick BITES

| INDICATORS | % |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Sensex | 48,944.14 |
| Nifty 50 | 14,653.00 |
| S&P 500* | 4,188.44 |
| Dollar (₹) | 74.65 |
| Pound Sterling (₹) | 103.67 |
| Euro (₹) | 90.07 |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹) | 46,906.69 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)* | 65.90 |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield | 6.055 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 1.584 |
| As of 8:30 PM IST | 0.014 |

* As of 8:30 PM IST

TVS Motor profit rises four-fold to ₹319 cr in Q4

TVS Motor Company posted nearly four-fold increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 319.19 crore for the March quarter, on the back of robust sales in the domestic and international markets. The company had reported a net profit of Rs 81.84 crore a year ago. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 6,131.90 crore from Rs 4,104.71 crore. Total two- and three-wheeler sales stood at 9.28 lakh units in Q4, up 47 per cent.

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■ Bid to avert IL&FS, PNB-like scams Lenders require RBI nod to hire auditor

FALAKNAAZ SYED

MUMBAI, APRIL 27

In a bid to improve the quality of financial reporting of lenders and to prevent IL&FS and Punjab National Bank-like scams, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday made it mandatory for lenders to take its prior approval for the appointment and re-appointment of statutory central auditors (SCAs) and statutory auditors.

The apex bank also mandated that the statutory audit for entities with an asset size of at least Rs 15,000 crore at the end of the previous year should be conducted by a minimum of two audit firms.

All other lenders of lesser size should appoint at least one audit firm to conduct the statutory audit, the apex bank said in its guidelines on appointment of statutory auditors of commercial banks (excluding regional rural banks), primary (urban) co-operative banks (UCBs) and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs). The guidelines will be applicable to commercial banks from financial year 2021-22.

However, UCBs and NBFCs shall have the flexibility to adopt these guidelines from H2 of FY22 so that there is no disruption.

The guidelines provide instructions for appointment of SCAs/ SAs, the number of auditors, their eligibility criteria, tenure and rotation, etc. while ensuring the independence of auditors. "The

revised Guidelines being issued will ensure that Statutory Auditors are appointed in a timely, transparent and effective manner," the RBI said.

Makarand Joshi, founding partner, MMJC and Associates—a corporate compliance firm—said, "Rotation of auditors is heavily relied upon by regulators to ensure that any element of true and fair view cannot be kept under wraps for a fairly long period. The issues in large NBFCs like IL&FS and DHFL witnessed over the past few years has been a wake-up call for the regulator. This is an attempt to improve transparency and reliability.

The new norm would mean that management will have to invest time to make a new auditor familiar with working of NBFC or financial institution more frequently."

Commercial banks have to allot the top 20 branches (to be selected in order of the level of outstanding advances) to SCAs to cover a minimum of 15 per cent of the total gross advances

of the bank by SCAs. For other entities—excluding payment banks and core investment companies—SCAs/SAs shall visit and audit at least the top 20 branches/top 20 per cent of the branches of the entities (in case of entities having less than 100 branches), to be selected in order of the level of outstanding advances, to cover a minimum 15 per cent of their total gross advances.

Commercial banks (excluding RRBs) and UCBs will be required to take prior approval of RBI (Department of Supervision) for appointment/re-appointment of statutory central auditors and statutory auditors, on an annual basis, the banking regulator said.

In order to protect the independence of the auditors, lenders will have to appoint the SCAs/SAs for a continuous period of three years. Commercial banks and UCBs can remove the audit firms during this period only with the prior approval of the department.



Lenskart to hire 100+ for tech centre

FC BUREAU

HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

Lenskart, India's omnichannel eyewear brand, on Tuesday said that it will hire 100 engineers and designers for its newly opened technology centre in Hyderabad. This would be the latest addition to technology and research centres that several companies have set up in Hyderabad.

"To accelerate the ongoing, Lenskart is looking to hire 100+ people, across engineering, product & design in the coming six months," said Ramneek Khurana, co-founder, Lenskart.

He also revealed that the company has acquired Hyderabad-based e-commerce startup DailyJoy and would utilise the services of the target company's technicians to manage its Hyderabad technology centre. The cost of the acquisition, however, was not made public.

Currently, Lenskart has a team of 150 staff. In the next six months, it would reach 250 with a majority of them working from Hyderabad.

The new recruitment, he said, would be in engineering, product and data science functions.

Lenskart has posted a modest rise in sales during the last fiscal because of the Covid-induced restrictions and change of customer behavioural pattern. However, it has witnessed a 50 per cent increase in its online sales.

Maruti expects second wave to boost car sales

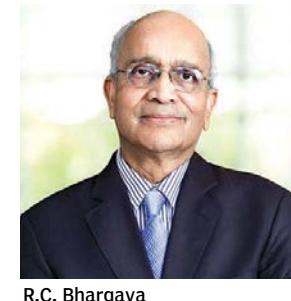
MICHAEL GONSALVES

PUNE, APRIL 27

Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest carmaker, on Tuesday said a fresh surge in coronavirus cases in the country would strengthen demand for personal mobility, and that lockdowns in some cities had not yet hurt the carmaker's sales or production.

Following a steep fall in car sales last year when the pandemic first hit, Maruti's sales picked up in India over the past two quarters as people opted out of public transport and poured their lockdown-led savings into big-ticket items such as cars.

Still, Maruti's fourth-quarter results took a hit due to rising commodity prices and supply chain disruptions. Maruti has passed on some of the



R.C. Bhargava

costs to customers and already bumped up car prices twice this year.

"With this second pandemic wave, the demand for personal transport will, if anything, strengthen, not weaken. Because more and more people will want to have their personal transport," R.C. Bhargava, chief executive of Maruti Suzuki told reporters after Maruti posted a near 10 per cent drop in quarterly profit.

"If the current demand situation continues, April-June should be 'decent,'" he said.

The carmaker, which sells one out of two bought in the country, reported a 9.7 per cent year-on-year (YoY) decline in profit at Rs 1,166 crore for the March 2021 quarter, on the back of weak demand and higher commodity costs but revenue was strong.

The New Delhi-based company reported a profit of Rs 1,291.7 crore in the year-long period.

Revenue from operations in Q4 FY21 stood at Rs 24,023.7 crore, up 32 per cent from Rs 18,198.7 crore in the year-ago period.

Maruti Suzuki sold 4,92,235 vehicles in the March quarter, up 28 per cent YoY.

MARKET SENTIMENTS LOOK UP

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

MUMBAI, APRIL 27

The Sensex gained over 500 points for the second day in a row, after the Covid scare seemed to come down due to a drop in fresh daily cases. The Sensex closed 558 points, or 1.15 per cent, up at 48,944 while Nifty-50 rose to 14,653, up 168 points.

The BSE Mid-cap and Small-cap indices up 1.04 per cent and 1.49 per cent.

The daily Covid cases on Monday was lower at 3.23 lakh compared to around 3.5 lakh on Sunday and Maharashtra also reported lower daily infections at 48,700.

The market sentiment also got a boost as help started pouring in from many countries. "Investors' expectations from earnings outcome by heavyweights, the progress of the vaccination drive and a dip in the Covid cases further boosted sentiments," said Ajit Mishra, VP research, Religare Broking.

On Tuesday, FPIs were net sellers by Rs 1,454.75 crore.

RETAIL TRADE COUNTS LOSSES

SANGEETHA G

CHENNAI, APRIL 27

Lock-down and restrictions in a few states has caused a business loss of Rs 5 lakh crore to unorganised traders, while the organised retail too estimates around 40 per cent loss in states affected by the second wave.

The Confederation of Indian Traders says curfew and other restrictions has caused a business loss of about Rs 5 lakh crore in the past 25 days nationally. Out of Rs 5 lakh crore, the loss of retail traders is estimated to be about Rs 3.5 lakh crore and wholesale business of Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

Delhi alone recorded a business loss of more than Rs 25,000 crore. The calculations are based on the trader feedback from 14 states, including West Bengal, NE, Punjab, Haryana, J&K and Goa.

Interstate trade and loading and unloading activities also are getting affected due to night curfews.

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Boxer injured in Worlds bout dies

Lausanne, Switzerland: An 18-year-old boxer from Jordan has died after being seriously injured in a bout at the World Youth Championships. The International Boxing Association said on Tuesday. Rashed Al-Swaissat was treated in the ring and then hospitalised after being knocked out in his preliminary-round lightweight fight against Estonian boxer Anton

Vinogradov on April 16 in Kielce, Poland. "It is with deep sadness that we learned of the passing of

Rashed Al-Swaissat of Jordan, who had been admitted to hospital on April 16 further to his fight during the AIBA Youth World Championships," AIBA said. — AP

FC Goa play out yet another draw

Margao: FC Goa conceded an 89th minute goal to squander the chance to become the first Indian club to win a match in the prestigious AFC Champions League as they played out a 1-1 draw with Al Rayyan of Qatar here Monday.

Jorge Ortiz gave FC Goa the lead in the third minute of the Group 'E' match but Ali Ferydon equalised with just a minute left in regulation time.

The Indian Super League side went out of reckoning for a knockout berth after Al Wahda of UAE beat Persepolis FC 1-0 in another Group 'E' match. — PTI

Correa keeps Lazio in CL hunt

Joaquin scores brace to beat AC Milan, Napoli blank Torino to go third



THE RESULTS

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Torino | 0 |
| Napoli | 2 |
| (Bakayoko 11, Osimhen 13) | |
| Lazio | 3 |
| (Correa 2, 51, Immobile 87) | |
| AC Milan | 0 |

"He looked at it again and from the replay you cannot say Leiva doesn't catch Calhanoglu and completely miss the ball."

Napoli moved into third thanks to first-half goals from Tiemoue Bakayoko and Victor Osimhen earlier on Monday.

They could have been further ahead at the break following a dominant opening period in which Piotr Zielinski hit the post and Matteo Politano was unlucky to see his deflected shot slide wide.

Lorenzo Insigne, playing his 300th Serie A match for Napoli, also hit the upright with a curling shot just before the hour mark.

They failed to add to their tally but ran out winners to put pressure on their rivals.

— AFP

SOCIEDAD EDGE PAST EIBAR TO KEEP HOLD ON EUROPA SPOT

• The win left Sociedad three points ahead of sixth-placed Real Betis and four points in front of seventh-placed Villarreal with five rounds remaining.

It stayed seven points from escaping the relegation zone.

Isak scored at Eibar's Ipurua Stadium with a shot from close range in the 26th minute.

Sociedad next visit Huesca, while Eibar host Alaves, another relegation-threatened team.

Leicester (United Kingdom), April 27: Leicester strengthened their grip on third place in the Premier League as Kelechi Iheanacho's superb strike capped a spirited fightback in Monday's 2-1 win against Crystal Palace.

Brendan Rodgers' side trailed to Wilfried Zaha's first half goal. But Timothy Castagne equalised soon after the interval with his first goal since September. And Nigeria striker Iheanacho sealed Leicester's second successive victory when he scored with a thunder-

ous finish 10 minutes from full-time.

Leicester are four points clear of fourth placed Chelsea and seven ahead of fifth placed West Ham as they bid to qualify for next season's Champions League.

"It was a very important win for us. It was the third game in nine days so a tough schedule," Rodgers said.

"Going one behind against Palace, they're super organised and tough to break down. I thought the players were outstanding. They kept the calmness and control

and scored two very good goals."

With five games left, the FA Cup finalists have already matched their total of 62 points from last season.

A late collapse cost the Foxes a place in the Champions League in 2020, but Rodgers' men are firmly on course to make amends thanks to the sparkling form of Iheanacho.

"We spoke about it at the start of the season and put it to bed them. Our performance levels this season have shown that is in the past," Rodgers said.

— AFP

Iheanacho leads Foxes fightback to sink Palace

TOKYO | OLYMPICS

Host towns pull out over corona

Tokyo, April 27: Hundreds of Japanese towns and cities have been forced to rethink plans to host Olympic teams because the coronavirus will prevent public appearances and require costly safety measures.

The western town of Okuizumo spent more than \$5 million preparing to welcome India's hockey team for a pre-Games training camp, only to scrap the visit because of Covid-19.

keep everyone safe.

Instead of giving residents the chance to meet elite athletes and try out new sports, towns will have to ditch any physical contact, school visits and public training sessions.

Kurihara city in northern Miyagi prefecture was planning to host South Africa's hockey team, but decided



IPL

14

• CHENNAI SUPER KINGS • DELHI CAPITALS • KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS • MUMBAI INDIANS • PUNJAB KINGS
• RAJASTHAN ROYALS • ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE • SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

DECCAN CHRONICLE, HYDERABAD, WEDNESDAY, 28 APRIL 2021

pg 12

| ORANGE | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Shikhar Dhawan, DC | 265 |
| KL Rahul, PBKS | 240 |
| Glenn Maxwell, RCB | 223 |
| PURPLE | |
| Harshal Patel, RCB | 17 |
| Avesh Khan, DC | 12 |
| Rahul Chahar, MI | 9 |

Off the field

Sunrisers fast bowler T. Natarajan underwent a knee surgery on Tuesday.

— Twitter

Franchises focus on mental health now

Despite the withdrawal of four players from the ongoing IPL, the franchises say that there are no major problems concerning mental health of the players.

"Covid is being discussed every single day in meetings and we are aware of the threat. We are trying to bring distraction from it through activities, celebrations of birthdays etc," a team official said.

Most franchises are quite open with their players, a couple of officials claimed. "This is exactly why these four managed to leave the tournament quickly and without delay. The management is very open. If there is any problem with anyone, we have told them to reach out to us," said an official of a franchise affected by the departure.

Lee donates bitcoin worth ₹40 lakh

Inspired by his countryman Pat Cummins' gesture, former Australian pacer Brett Lee on Tuesday decided to donate one bitcoin (approximately ₹40 lakh) to help India in its fight against the raging COVID-19 pandemic. "It saddens me deeply to see people suffering due to the ongoing pandemic. I feel privileged to be in a position of making a difference and with that in mind, I'd like to donate 1 BTC (Bitcoin) to Crypto Relief to help with the purchase of oxygen supplies for the hospitals across India," Lee said.

"India has always been like a second home for me. The love and affection that I have got from the people of this country both during my professional career and even after my retirement, holds a special place in my heart."

Kuggeleijn signed up as replacement

New Zealand pacer Scott Kuggeleijn was on Tuesday announced as a replacement for Kane Richardson in the Royal Challengers Bangalore squad for the remainder of IPL 14. Along with compatriot Adam Zampa, Australian Richardson quit the tournament midway citing personal reasons. No replacement has been named yet for leg-spinner Zampa.

Regd. No. HQ/SD/509/2021-23

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RETURN ASSURANCE

BCCI guarantees safe return to foreign players

New Delhi/Melbourne, April 27: The BCCI stepped in to assuage apprehensions of foreign cricketers, especially Australians, at the IPL as a second wave of COVID-19 infections battered India, prompting the government Down Under to suspend air travel with the country besides asking players to make their "own arrangements" for return.

The fear of being locked out of their own nation drove the likes of Andrew Tye to take an early flight back to Australia while Kane Richardson and Adam Zampa also exited their franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore's bio-bubble on Monday.

A day later, Australia announced that it was suspending air travel to and from India till May 15 amid the swirling COVID-19 cases. The BCCI wrote to the foreign players telling them that their safe return home will be its responsibility once the tournament ends on May 30.

"We understand that many of you are apprehensive about how you will get back home once the tournament concludes... We want to apprise you that you have nothing to worry about," BCCI COO Hemang Amin said in a letter addressed to the players.

"The BCCI will do everything to ensure that you reach your respective destinations seamlessly. The BCCI is monitoring the situation very closely and is working with the gov-



RCB's Glenn Maxwell boards a flight to Ahmedabad.

ernment authorities to make arrangements to get you home once the tournament concludes.

"Be rest assured that the tournament is not over for BCCI till each one of you has reached your home, safe and sound," he added.

AUSSIE PM RULES OUT GOVERNMENT HELP

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison ruled out any government assistance and said that those in the IPL will have to make their own arrangements for return.

"They have travelled there privately. This wasn't part of an Australian tour. They're under their

own resources and they'll be using those resources too. I'm sure, to see them return to Australia in accordance with their own arrangements," Morrison was quoted as saying by *The Guardian*.

The crisis outside the IPL's bio-bubble has led to some talk about whether it is appropriate for the league to go on and whether its organisers and participating players should be doing more to express empathy.

Amin lauded the players for carrying on and giving some joy amid the gloom.

"When you all walk onto the field, you are bringing hope to millions of people who have tuned in," he said.

"While you are professionals and will play to win, this time you are also playing for something much more important," he added.

As of now, the IPL still has 14 Australian players, including big names like Steve Smith (Delhi), David Warner (Sunrisers) and Cummins.

Ricky Ponting (DC) and Simon Katich (RCB) are among the high-profile Australian coaches, while iconic former players such as Matthew Hayden, Brett Lee and Lisa Sthalekar are part of the commentary team. — PTI

LYNN ASKS CA TO ARRANGE A CHARTER FLIGHT

New Delhi, April 27: Mumbai Indians batsman Chris Lynn has requested Cricket Australia to arrange a chartered flight to take its players home after the IPL is over and revealed that his franchise will get all members of the team vaccinated next week. "I texted back that as Cricket Australia make 10 per cent of every IPL contract was there a chance we could spend that money this year on a charter flight once the tournament is over?" Lynn told *News Corp media*.

"I know there are people worse off than us. But we are going from a really tight bubble and are getting vaccinated next week so hopefully the government will let us get home on a private charter."

"We are not asking for shortcuts and we signed up knowing the risks. But it would be great to get home as soon as the event is over."

"Obviously India is in chaos at the moment. But we are at least giving people something to smile about by playing the tournament," Lynn said.

While some Australian players have returned home, their New Zealand counterparts have no such plans.

— PTI

Felt vulnerable in bubble: Zampa

New Delhi, April 27: Australian leg-spinner Adam Zampa on Tuesday said he decided to quit the IPL midway as it was the "most vulnerable" bio-bubble he has been a part of and the tournament should have been held in UAE, like last year. Zampa and Kane Richardson, who were part of the Royal Challengers Bangalore squad, are set to fly back home later on Tuesday, having pulled out citing personal reasons.

Speaking to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Zampa said he felt a lot safer in the UAE where the IPL was held last year.

Zampa said a lot of factors contributed to his decision to leave the IPL.

"Obviously the COVID situation over here is pretty dire. I just felt, rocking up to training and stuff, obviously, I wasn't playing in the team as well. I was going to training and I wasn't finding the motivation." — PTI

| POINTS TABLE | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|-----|--------|--------|
| Teams | P | W | L | N/R | Points | Net RR |
| RCB | 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 10 | +0.089 |
| CSK | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 8 | +1.612 |
| DC | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 8 | +0.269 |
| MI | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 4 | -0.032 |
| KKR | 6 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 4 | -0.305 |
| PBKS | 6 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 4 | -0.608 |
| RR | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 4 | -0.681 |
| SRH | 5 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | -0.180 |

Sunrisers face an uphill challenge

Live on TV

Chennai Super Kings vs Sunrisers Hyderabad
from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD1**HEAD TO HEAD**

Matches 14

CSK 10 SRH 4

FOR THE RECORD

• David Warner with 199 sixes in 147 innings needs just one more to become the eighth batsman to complete a double century of sixes in IPL.

• Suresh Raina with 4,994 fours in 193 innings needs just one more to become the fourth batsman to complete 500 fours in IPL.

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

• Sunrisers beat CSK by 7 runs at Dubai.

• CSK beat Sunrisers by 20 runs at Dubai.

STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISER

order and over-reliance on the top order.

The inability of the team's Indian middle-order to step up has cost SRH more often than not and the think-tank needs to get the combination right if they have to move out of the last spot on the points table which they currently occupy.

Warner needs to shrug off his poor run and for that he needs to negotiate CSK pacer Deepak Chahar, who has impressive ability to strike upfront, well.

Apart from Chahar, spin all-rounder Jadeja and veteran Imran Tahir form a strong bowling unit. — PTI

RCB edge Capitals in thriller



RCB's AB de Villiers en route to his half-century against Delhi. — PTI

off Ishant in the first over. The duo hit five fours. However, that changed as DC bowlers effected back-to-back blows.

Pacer Avesh provided the Capitals with the first breakthrough, dismissing the RCB captain for 12 in the fourth over. In the very next ball, Ishant, playing his first match of the season, got rid of compatriot Steve Smith of leggie Mishra as RCB reached 68

With two new batsmen in the middle, the seasoned speedster went on to bowl a wicket maiden to slow down the proceedings as RCB collected 36 runs for the loss of two wickets in the Powerplay.

Maxwell played a short cameo, smashing two maximums and a boundary but was caught at long on by compatriot Steve Smith of leggie Mishra as RCB reached 68

for three at the hallway mark.

Patidar, who hit 31 off 22 deliveries, and de Villiers steadied the ship by stitching a 54-run stand but all-rounder Axar Patel, who accounted for the Indian in the 15th over.

Barring de Villiers all RCB batsmen were guilty off not capitalising on good starts.

— PTI

SCORECARD**Royal Challengers Bangalore:**

Virat Kohli b Avesh Khan 12, Devdutt Padikkal b Sharma 17, Rajat Patidar c Smith b Patel 31, Glenn Maxwell c Smith b Mishra 25, AB de Villiers (not out) 75, Washington Sundar c & b Rabada 6, Daniel Sams (not out) 3. Extras (w 2) 2. Total (for five wickets in 20 overs) 171.

FoW: 1-30, 2-30, 3-60, 4-14, 5-139.

Bowling: Ishant 4-1-26-1, Kagiso Rabada 4-0-38-1, Avesh Khan 4-0-24-1, Amit Mishra 3-0-27-1, Axar Patel 4-0-33-1, Marcus Stoinis 1-0-23-0.

Delhi Capitals:

Prithvi Shaw c de Villiers b Patel 21, Shikhar Dhawan c Chahal b Jamieson 6, Steven Smith c de Villiers b Mohammed Siraj 4, Rishabh Pant (not out) 58, Marcus Stoinis c de Villiers b Patel 22, Shimron Hetmyer (not out) 53. Extras (lb 4, w 2) 6. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs) 170.

FoW: 1-23, 2-28, 3-47, 4-92.

Bowling: Daniel Sams 2-0-15-0, Mohammed Siraj 4-0-44-1, Kyle Jamieson 4-0-32-1, Washington Sundar 4-0-28-0, Harshal Patel 4-0-37-2, Yuzvendra Chahal 2-0-10-0.

of playing sport, rewards of fame and money etc may not matter after a point.

Others, however, who may see the same situation differently. Shortly after news filtered through of the players pulling out, Pat Cummins, Australia's vice-captain, reiterated his commitment to play, and in fact donated \$50,000 to the Prime Minister Cares Fund.

Cummins believed that the tournament provided some relief to the Indian public otherwise besieged by the pandemic. Fellow Aussie, former captain Ricky Ponting holds a similar view. There will be many in agreement with this point of view too.

This polarisation spills over outside the bio-secure bubbles, in everyday life.

One section of people believes that the IPL's celebratory and brazenly commercial ethos is out of sync with the havoc and mocks the tragedy that the country is currently experiencing.

The opposite point of view is that the IPL should not be seen only for its gloss, glamour and clout, but for the thousands of jobs it provides, apart from the modicum of relief for people from the anguish they are undergoing.

The BCCI, meanwhile, has said that it will not call off the tournament. One assumes that this will depend on how the country copes with the pandemic on a daily basis.

Canceling the IPL will not mitigate the colossal tragedy inflicted by the current Covid tsunami.

The tournament is not a super spreader, like multi-phased elections and religious events to which those in authority turned a blind eye despite all warning signals.

The IPL is being played without fans, with all precautions taken on health safety procedures.

However, the BCCI can be faulted for being insensitive to the extenuating circumstances. With a little imagination, the phenomenal reach of the league could have been exploited for more meaningful messages (with connivance of franchises, players, broadcasters) rather than just regular PR stuff.

A major accusation is that players — especially Indians — have not coughed up money for relief. As high-income