# **DECCAN**

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

**NELLORE | TUESDAY | 27 APRIL 2021** 





Forecast: clear.

Max/Min temp. 36/27 <sup>o</sup>C

#### ASTROGUIDE

Plava; Uttarayana Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Pournami till 9 am; Chaitra Bahula Padyami till 5.14 am (Wednesday) Star: Swati till 8.07 pm Varjyam: 1.03 am to 2.27 am (Wednesday) **Durmuhurtam:** 8.27 am to 9.17 am; 11.05 pm to 11.50 pm **Rahukalam:** 3 pm to 4.30 pm

**HIJRI CALENDAR** Ramzan 14,1442 AH PRAYERS (SHAHI MASJID)

Fajar: 4.36 am **Zohar:** 12.08 pm Asar: 4.31 pm Maghrib: 6.26 pm Isha: 7.40 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM **SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.49 AM MOONRISE** TODAY 06.48 PM MOONSET TOMORROW 06.42 AM





Shh! Don't say no oxygen. You might be booked under the Gangster Act!

### SHORT TAKES

### **IMD** predicts wet spell till April 30

New Delhi: The India over several parts of India including central, south and northeast India, from April 26 to 30. Thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds (speed reaching 30-40 km per hour) are very likely at over Telangana Kerala and Mahe from April 26. Lightning at isolated places likely over coastal AP, Rayalaseema, south interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

#### **SC** advances

#### summer vacation

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday decided to advance its summer vacation, which will now commence from May 8 in view of sudden surge in Covid cases. Chief Justice N.V. Ramana on his first working day held an "emergent meeting" with bar bodies to take stalk of rising pandemic situation.

### **Wear masks at**

### home too: Centre

New Delhi: The Centre said it is time people start wearing masks at homes as well, and refrain from inviting guests. NITI Aayog member Dr V.K. Paul said if there is a Covid-positive person at home, he or she must wear a mask to prevent others from getting infected.

Report on Page 4

### **Nomadland wins**

**Oscar glory** 

Los Angeles: Meditative road drama Nomadland got the Oscar for best picture as well as best director for Chloe Zhao, the first woman of colour to get the coveted trophy, at the 93rd Academy Awards. Anthony Hopkins won best actor award for The Father.

Report on tabloid



### WORLD 5

**Boris in soup for** taking deaths lightly

deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle



### SPORTS 8

**Ashwin withdraws, Covid scare in IPL** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

The Madras High Court came down heavily on the Election Commission (EC)

on Monday with scathing

comments on how it was

the "only institution" responsible for the second wave of the deadly coronavrius that is sweeping the country as it did not stop

political parties from hold-

ing election rallies.
A bench of Chief Justice

Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ra-mamoorthy, hearing a petition on whether there

vere adequate Covid safe-

ty procedures in place dur-

ing vote counting at the

Karur constituency, went so far as to say, "Election

Commission officers should be booked on mur-

"Despite repeated orders of this court going on like a broken record at the foot

of at least every election

petition entertained that

Covid protocol ought to be maintained during the campaign time the signifi-

cance of adhering to such

protocol may have been lost on the Election

Commission going by the

der charges probably.'

officers

### **TABLOID**

EC should be charged

**No more Maldives** vacation

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### Run for life



A man tries to escape the heat at a mass cremation of Covid-19 victims and others at Gazipur Crematorium in New Delhi on Monday.

### Jagan sets 2-yr deadline for rural Internet linkage

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 26

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday directed officials to ensure that all villages in the state have internet connectivity in the next two

Speaking at a review meeting on the rural internet connectivity and laptop scheme for students, the Chief Minister laid stress on providing inter-net connectivity with unlimited capacity or at least 20 GB capacity in villages to help the people adapt to the new 'Work From Home' model

He also called for provid-

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 26

Andhra Pradesh regis-

tered a slight dip in fresh

Coronavirus infections at

9,881 with 51 deaths on

Monday against 12,634

infections with 69 deaths

on Sunday. State health authorities

reported here on Monday that out of 74,041 samples

tested, only 9,881 persons

were found infected with

the Coronavirus indicat-

ing that despite more sam-

ples tested, caseload had

The health authorities

tested 62,885 samples and

found 12,634 persons infec-

ted with the virus on April

25. Out of a total number of

1,60,68,648 samples tested

so far in the state, 10,43,441

persons were found infect-

ed with the virus and of

them, 9,40,574 were recov-

ered while 95,131 are still

Among daily cases of

Nellore district

Coronavirus virus infec-

found to be the worst hit

active with the virus.

come down.

ing internet connectivity in the upcoming YSR Jagananna Colonies and instructed the authorities to come up with an action plan accordingly, keeping in mind the addition of 31 lakh houses. He directed the officials to lay under-ground cables in 108 cyclone-affected villages to ensure uninterrupted internet connectivity even

during the storms. He called for setting up YSR Village Digital Libraries at village secretariats and asked the officials to arrange six computers at each library by the time construction libraries was completed. With regard

Covid cases in AP slightly

slowed down on April 26

**14 STUDENTS** 

**TEST POSITIVE** 

**FOR COVID-19** 

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

Fourteen girls studying

in Balayogi Gurukulam at Adoorpalli village in

Chejerla mandal have

tested positive for Covid-

19 on Monday. School

authorities organiseu Covid tests for 73 students

after noticing Covid symptoms on April 20.

ted vacant classrooms at

the school to the infected

with 1,592 followed by

1,302 in East Godavari,

1,048 in Guntur, 1,030 in

Visakhapatnam, 906 in Srikakulam, 860 in

Chittoor, 629 in Kurnool,

616 in Vizianagaram, 522

Kadapa, 395 in Anantapur,

Prakasam, 483 in

The officials have allot-

organised

**NELLORE, APRIL 26** 

authorities

students.

CM said laptops must be provided to the students who opted for it on January 9. Earlier, the state government provided an option to the students pursuing Classes from IX to XII to either receive a laptop or money.

He said the laptops that are being provided to the students should come with a proper guarantees and warranty cards, along with 'service' support. If a laptop wasn't functioning well, the Chief Minister said the student should be able to hand it over to the concerned village secretariat, which will get it

**GOVT STAFF SEEK** 

**WORK FROM** 

**HOME MODEL** 

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 26

Government employees

have urged the state gov-

ernment to allow either 50

per cent of them to attend

to offices or permit them

to work from home, in the

wake of several of them getting infected with

They hoped the govern-

Full report on Page 2

ment would consider their

310 in Krishna and 188 in

West Godavari. Chittoor

and Srikakulam have hig-

hest active cases with 12,790 and 12,229 respec-

■ Page 3: Over 4,000 patients

get discharged in AP

Coronavirus.

request positively.

# puerile silence on the part of the Commission as cam-

G BABU JAYAKUMAR and D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, APRIL 26

The Tamil Nadu govern-Sterlite Industries to produce Oxygen at its Copper Smelter plant in even as Advocate General Vijay Narayan told the Madras High Court that most of the there was of industrial

Among the conditions laid out for Sterlite were that none of the other units in the Thoothukudi plant can be opened or operated and the that the oxygen produced in the next four months, which may be extended in view of the continuing pandemic, should be primarily supplied to hospitals in Tamil Nadu.

### Slams poll panel for allowing rallies, spreading Covid-19 'Close down' for 14 days in K'taka

for murder: Madras HC

Bengaluru, April 26: The Karnataka govern-ment on Monday announced more restrictions in what it termed as a 'close down' across the state for 14 days from Tuesday night in a bid to control the huge spike in Covid-19 cases in the state.

The state cabinet led by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa also decided to pro-vide Covid vaccinations free of cost at government hospitals for those between 18-44 years of age.

"Strict measures to control Covid will be taken. From tomorrow night till the next 14 days, there will be a close down for the

paigns and rallies were conducted without distancing norms being maintained and in wanton disregard of the other items of the protocol," the Bench

said. "Were you on anoth-

er planet when political rallies were being held?"

whole state," Yediyurappa

Speaking to reporters after a three-hour long Cabinet meeting here, he said shops selling essential commodities will be allowed to remain open only from 6 am to 10 am. The agriculture sector,

manufacturing sector, construction sector and medical and essential sectors will continue to operate," he said. Night curfew, which is in

place now between 9 pm to 3 am, would continue, the Chief Minister said. Transport services would not ply during the close down period.

measures had been put in

place to ensure Covid pro-

tocol during vote count-

ing. The court has asked

for a suitable blueprint from EC on how Covid

Serum, Bharat Biotech

tion and everything else comes second to it," the High Court stated in its The measures must not be limited to Karur, the court insisted and said, 'Similar appropriate meaevery counting centre and the chief justice asked EC's standing counsel when he told the court that it is upon ... regular saniti

sation, proper hygienic conditions, the mandatory wearing of masks and adherence to distancing norms should any count ing begin or be continued. The case listed the next

safety norms will be followed on counting day while saying that it could even stop the counting of votes on May 2.

"At no cost can the counting the counting of the counting

ing result in a catalyst for

a further surge, politics or

no politics, and whether

the counting takes place in

a staggered manner or is

deferred. Public health is

of paramount importance

and it is distressing that

constitutional authorities

have to be reminded in such regard. It is only when the citizen survives

that he enjoys the other

rights that ťhľs democratio

republic guarantees unto

him. The situation is now one of survival and protec-

### TN LETS STERLITE TO OPEN UNIT TO **MAKE OXYGEN**

Thoothukudi on Monday oxygen manufactured quality and not fit for medical use.

Though the nod to open the oxygen manufactur-ing plant alone was given for four months, on a temporary basis, at an all-party meeting, attended by representatives of 'recognised political parties,' leaders of a few other political parties came down heavily on the decision.

### told to cut vaccine prices Modi, Biden discuss

VINEETA PANDEY | DC with agencies input

parties over profiteering during a major health crisis, and many asking that there be uniform procing of vaccines for the Central and state governments, the BJP-led government on Monday asked Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech to the lower prices of their Covid-19 vaccines – Covishield and Covaxin, respectively.

It is learnt that the issue of vaccine pricing was discussed at a meeting chaired by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba on Monday after the two companies announced their vaccine prices. It is expected the two companies will now come up with revised, reduced pricing for their vaccines.

The price for Covaxin was fixed at ₹600 per dose for state governments and at ₹1,200 per dose for private hospitals, while Covishield was priced at ₹400 per dose for state governments and ₹600 per dose for private hospitals. Both vaccines are avail-

### Reacting to criticism from several states and political parties over profiteering Covid on telephone KUMARASWAMI | DC

NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached out to the US President Joe Biden who assured him of America's "shoulder-toshoulder steadfast sup-port and solidarity" by deploying resources such as oxygen-related supplies, therapeutics, venti-

In a phone conversation ate Monday evening, highlighted the Modi importance of smooth and efficient supply chains of vaccine raw materials

and medicines and Mr Biden assured him that the US would identify sources of raw materials to be made available for manufacture Covishield vaccines.

Prime Minister Modi also conveyed to the President American India's commitment to contain the Covid pandemic globally through vaccine "Maitri" (India's vaccine exports), and its participation in Covax and the Quad Vaccine Initiatives.

Page 4: PM, Suga firm on India-Japan bilateral ties

able to the Central government at a rate of ₹150 per Several states including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Delhi, Maharashtra and Rajasthan announced that they will administer these vaccines free of cost to their 18-plus population from May 1.

A huge rush for vaccines is expected as India continues to report a very high number of daily Covid-19 cases. On Monday, the country registered nearly 3.53 lakh fresh cases and 2,812 deaths, putting a huge load on an already fragile healthcare system.

### RIPPLE | EFFECT | Migrant workers return home in AP; spark fears of Covid spread

# Karnataka lockdown triggers exodus

**DC CORRESPONDENT** ANANTAPUR, APRIL 26

With the Karnataka government announcing a 14day lockdown from April night across the state and the closure of its borders, people from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state are returning to native places. Both states will stop running buses towards Bengaluru and also other districts like Bellary, Raichur, Bidar and Tumkur in Karnataka

from Tuesday. District administrations along the border in AP were alerted over the possible rise of positive cases

Though Karnataka CM B.S. Yediyurappa announced the construction, manufacturing, and agriculture sectors will be allowed to continue, the migrant farmers and settlers returning to their villages suspecting that the crisis would continue.

 District administrations along the border in AP were alerted over the possible rise of positive cases in villages following the return of migrant labourers from Karnataka.

in villages following the return of migrant labourers from Karnataka.

Though Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa announced the construction, manufacturing, and agriculture sectors will be allowed to continue, the migrant farmers and set-

tlers returning to their villages suspecting that the crisis would continue. A

nessed last year when the lockdown was imposed across the country.
Border areas like Madakasira, Kalyanadurgam, and Rayadurgam in Anant-

similar situation was wit-

Emiganur. and Mantralayam in Kurnool. Madanapalle in Chittoor district have close access with Karnataka. For instance, all five

mandals of the Madakasira Assembly segment covered by Karnataka from all four sides, except an R&B Road from Hindupur, and the area had connectivity with Bengaluru and Tumkur. The Mantralayam temple town is located in Andhra Pradesh closer to the Karnataka border and KSRTC operates a huge number of buses on normal

The sudden decision,

apur districts, Adoni, however, caused confusion for many who had to visit Karnataka to attend marriage and other important occasions. A man from Hyderabad had to travel to Hospet in Vijayanagar district of Karnataka on April 29 to get married. With no clear instructions about passes, the family was plunged into confusion and approached Karnataka officials. 'We got permission for

marriage at a function hall one week ago by following Covid-19 norms, but the sudden lockdown put things out of gear," the family members of the bridegroom said.

### TD's Ravi Kumar dies, Sabbam Hari serious Ravi Kumar was known

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, **APRIL 26** 

Telugu Desam leader and GVMC 31st ward corporator Vanapalli Ravi Kumar on Monday succumbed to Covid-19 at a hospital in Visakhapatnam in the early hours of Monday.

He was in home isolation for some time and when the situation became serious, he was rushed to the hospital located at Seethammadhara here.

Earlier, he was elected for the first time to council in 2009 and was most vocal in the proceedings.

for charitable and social work and served many people under Saipuja Voluntary organisation. Meanwhile, the condi-

tion of former mayor and Telugu Desam leader Sabbam Hari remained critical. Telugu Desam The

leader has been on ventilator and was undergoing treatment in a corporate hospital for the last one week. Telugu Desam national president Nara Chandra-babu Naidu and many other leaders called his family members and wished him a speedy recovery.

IN BRIEF

### **TIRUPATI CITY NOW CONTAINMENT ZONE:** SHOPS 7 AM TO 2 PM

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, APRIL 26

The entire city of Tirupati has been declared a containment zone until further notice, after a continuous spike in the number of Covid-19 cases. All commercial establishments in the city will remain open from 7 am to 2 pm, until the situation

is under control.

On Monday, city MLA B.
Karunakar Reddy, municipal commissioner P.S. Girisha, and Tirupati SP Venkata Appala Naidu chaired a meeting with the representatives of the Tirupati Chamber of Commerce and trade unions, and discussed the measures to be taken to control the spread of Covid-19 in the city.

"All shops and commercial establishments will have to be shut by 2 pm every day, from April 27, whereas all restaurants and food outlets will only provide take-away service. Pharmacies can function round the clock," Reddy said, while addressing the media.

He also warned that the state will initiate strict action against private hospitals who overcharge Covid-19 patients. Cautioning private hospitals and medical stores, he added that a task force committee, headed by an IPS officer, has been formed to keep a tab on them.

Stating that the entire city has been declared as a containment zone, Girisha said, "Almost all divisions under the civic body have active cases, and that too in high numbers, because of which they have decided to impose a curfew from 7 pm to 5 am every day."

'The government has issued orders to impose curfew from 10 pm to 5 am. However, the civic body, in coordination with the police department, has decided to implement the curfew from 7 pm daily, owing to the continuous surge in Covid-19 positive cases," he added.

The authorities, after thorough deliberation, have also decided to direct the Thathaiah Gunta Gangamma temple authorities to observe the 'Ganga Jatara' in solitude, given the Covid-19 situation in the country for the second consecutive year.

A decision was also taken to reduce congestion at the city vegetable market, by decentralising it across nearly six

#### **COLLECTOR DECLARES SRIKAKULAM TOWN** A CONTAINMENT ZONE

SRIKAKULAM, APRIL 26

The district collector late on Monday evening announced that the entire Srikakulam town has been declared as a containment zone effective from Tuesday due to the spurt in the cases.

He said 30 per cent of the population has been infected with Covid-19. The town has a population around 2 lakh. All the shops would be closed after 2 pm for a period of 14 days. The district reported 906 positive cases during the last 24 hours and the total active cases have gone up to 12,229.

### **CHINTA SUSPICIOUS OF EVMs USED IN** TIRUPATI BYPOLL

**DC CORRESPONDENT** TIRUPATI, APRIL 26

Tirupati Lok Sabha bypoll Congress candidate and former union minister Chinta Mohan here on Monday expressed suspicion over electronic voting machines (EVMs) used in the polling held in the Tirupati parliamentary con-

stituency on April 17.
Addressing the media, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) member came down heavily on the Election Commission, alleging that it has failed to act against the ruling dispositions at the Centre and AP, though they have indulged

in election malpractices. "BJP and YSRC have come to power in the 2019 general elections by indulging in electoral frauds. Modi and Shah were involved in this high-level fraud. The Central Election Commission (CEC) and CRPF have helped them in indulging such electoral frauds, while the Bengaluru-based company - BHEL, extended a major help to them by making tampered EVM machines that gained artificial votes for the BJP and YSRC," he alleged.

He alleged that the EC and official machinery extended help to the YSRC for casting nearly 3.50 lakh bogus votes in recently Tirupati LS bypoll.

## Govt to audit remdesivir, oxygen for optimal usage

Misuse of the two by any means won't be tolerated: Singhal

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 26

The Andhra Pradesh government will audit the supply and use of medical oxygen and remdesivir to avoid their misuse in the

Health principal secretary Anil Kumar Singhal media persons here on Monday that given the precarious nature of their availability, the state gov-ernment had to come up with a series of measures to ensure that the medical oxygen and remdesivir vials to be given only to the needy Covid-19 patients and to avoid issues related to their short supply.

The audit will also check mismanagement especially with remdesivir vials by hoarding and diversion to black market and also their sale at exorbitant

The senior official stated that they had got allotment of 340 tonnes of medical oxygen on Monday and added that their daily requirement was ranging from 320 to 330 tonnes at present when the demand for it peaked to 260 tonnes per day during the prevalence the first wave of the pandemic.

With regard to the management of medical oxygen at the hospitals, he said that they had asked for deputing a technical person at the district level so that in case of any trouble in handling the oxygen, he would rush to the hospital and attend to any technical issues to avoid mishaps.

On remdesivir vials he said that some private hospitals were procuring them directly from the manufacturers some hospitals are placing an indent with the state

**PVT HOSPITALS** 

**IN A FIX OVER** 

**DEMANDS OF** 

**PATIENTS, KIN** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

Doctors in the notified

with Covid patients are

in a fix over managing

the stocks of remdesivir

injections as most of the

patients are demanding

for the drug even when it

kin have been bringing

pressure on us to admin-

through influential per-

sons," the manager of a

He said patients are also asking them to pro-

vide oxygen whether it

is necessary or not apart

from drugs of their cho-

ice while expressing sur-

prise over the peculiar

He said they are also

worried over shortage

for oxygen as regular

suppliers expressing their inability to supply

Pointing to the pressure being applied by the

administration to incre-

ase the bed capacity in the private hospitals, he

said they cannot handle

additional beds with av-

ailable workforce unless

government deputes do-

ctors, nurses, and tech-

He admitted that some

GRAM SWARAJ

private hospitals are fleecing Covid patients.

the same henceforth.

situation.

nicians.

private hospital said.

"The patients and their

the injection

is not necessary.



woman sitting in an autorickshaw at a stadium in Vijayawada on Monday.

### JCs to take care of Covid management in districts

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 26

Joint collectors dealing with village/ward secretariats and development entrusted with the task exclusively for Covid-19 management.

The state government issued an order on Monday directing district collectors to entrust all other subjects being dealt by the Joint collectors

government for supply and added that the state government would supply asked and cautioned that its misuse by any means would not be toler-He said that when the

indent was placed for 8,352 vials, they had supplied

Singhal said that the gov-

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 26

Government employees

have urged the state gov-

ernment to allow either 50

per cent of them to attend

to offices or permit them

wake of several of them

Even though the second

wave of the Covid-19 pan-

demic has been affecting

thousands of people and

causing the death of sev-

eral people every day, no

exception was given to the

employees working in

both the government and

private sectors from

attending the offices.
In AP Secretariat, sever-

al employees have been

infected with Covid-19 and

so far five of them brea-

thed their last. In the AP

State FiberNet Limited of-

fice, nearly eight employ-

ees have been infected

with the virus and a 29-

year-old employee died

the state government will

take a decision positively

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 26

Telugu Desam to file a

public interest litigation

in the High Court seeking

immediate postponement or cancellation of Class X

"We are optimistic that

due to the virus.

infected with

work irom nome

getting Covid-19.

handling village/ward secretariats and develop-ment, to other JCs within the district.

With this, the Joint collectors will exclusively focus their attention of the functioning of government and Aarogyasri empanelled hospitals treating Covid patients and also on the functioning of district control rooms attending to 104

aged between 18 and 45 years as the Centre would provide the doses periodi-

He also announced curbs in public places by restricting only 50 persons to attend any functions and temporary closure of stadia, gyms and swimming pools while public transport and film theernment would take up atres to have only 50 per vaccination of people cent of their capacity.

Govt staff seeks to WFH

Even though the second

wave of the Covid-19 pan-

demic has been affecting

thousands of people and

causing the death of sev-

eral people every day, no

the employees working in

both the government and

on their appeal to allow

them either to work from

home or to allow only 50

per cent of staff to report

to work," said AP Secreta-

riat Employees Associa-

tion state president K.

At Andhra Pradesh Infrastructure Corpora-

infected and nearly 50 per

cent of them have been on

leave to take treatment. In

the directorate of Animal

Husbandry, nearly 15 employees have been

infected while one died of

the virus. In APSRTC's

office, several employees,

including some senior officials, have been infect-

TD national general sec-

retary N. Lokesh announ-

ced here on Monday that

their party obtained the

opinion of students, par-

ents and advocates on the

get infected with the remedy on the issue. Coronavirus. In a related develo

TD TO MOVE HC ON BOARD EXAMS FOR CLASS X, INTER

office, several

Venkata Rami Reddy.

employees have

exception was given to

private sectors from

attending the offices.

### **AP SETS UP 3-TIER STRUCTURE FOR COVID MANAGEMENT**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 26

The state government has set up a three-tier struc-ture by setting up a state-level task force, districtlevel clusters and districtlevel flying squads for effective implementation of Covid-19 management in the state.

The state government issued an order on Monday by setting up a state-level task force with special chief secretary, higher education, Satish Chandra as the chairperson and state Covid-19 Centre chairman Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy as a mem-

ber. Vigilance and enforce director K.V. ment Rajendranath health principal secretary Anil Kumar Singhal, health and family welfare commissioner K. Bhaskar and drugs control administration director general Ravi Shankar will be the other members.
At the district level, the

district collector will divide all private hospitals permitted to treat Covid-19 patients into clusters and appoint a district-level officer as in-charge to inspect these hospitals and receive complaints and take appropriate action.

A district-level flying squad with representatives from drugs control administration, vigilance and enforcement and medical and health to be constituted to keep tab and initiate strict action on hospital flouting the guidelines.

their offices for verifica-

tion of documents before

employees have urged the

government to allow the

'slot booking system.'

Under this system, those

who intend to register

their properties will be

given a specific time to

visit the office and complete their work in a few

minutes and go away

before another party is

permitted to enter the

office. In this model, there

will be no rush of people

which will protect the

employees and stop the

registration offices from

becoming the Covid hubs.

AP Revenue Services

Association state presi-

dent Bopparaju Venkateswarlu said, "We

appeal to the state govern-

ment to allow them to

work from home based on

viability so that it will also help curb the spread

In a related developme-

nt, he urged Governor Bis-

wabhusan Harichandan

to intervene to get the boa-

rd exams of Class X and

intermediate to be either

postponed or cancelled in

the wave of prevalence of

registering



**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

Telugu Desam national president and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said that the state government had failed to ensure proper supply of medical oxygen in hospitals treating Coronavirus-infected patients in the state.

In a statement issued here on Monday, Naidu turned critical on Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for not taking responsibility to extend necessary help to the patients and blamed the ministers for remaining

Referring to Maharaja hospital in Vizianagaram, Naidu alleged that several Covid-19 affected patients died for want of timely supply of medical oxygen and expressed shock and grief over

He also castigated the

There was also a call to avoid storage of cots, mattresses and furniture in the basements and rule out any chance for setting up any medical store in the basement.

PPE kits and medical waste dumped in open garbage bin and left exposed to the visi-

Guidelines issued to Covid

hospitals to ensure safety

tors inside the King George Hospital in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

Kitchen and canteen may be set up in a separate building, it was advised, and the need for providing proper training to doctors, nurses and the staff on how to shift the patients to safety in case of any fire mishap.

There was also a call to

stressed.

avoid storage of cots, mattresses and furniture in the basements and rule out any chance for setting up any medical store in the basement. Kitchen and canteen may be set up in a separate building, it was advised, and the need for providing proper training to doctors, nurses and the staff on how to shift the patients to safety in case of any fire mishaps has been stressed.

The fire authorities have been advised for use of BIS standard electrical equipment in hospitals

electricians. There is the need to fix fuses with proper rating to provide protection from power fluctuations. Use of miniature circuit break-

– P. NÁRASIMHA MURTHY

ers has been advised.

Hospitals should not allow people to charge laptops and mobile phones near the beds. Call 1912 for information pertaining to power related issues, it was advised.

In a separate develop-ment, deputy chief minister and minister for health Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas said the state government is taking all necessary steps to avoid shortage of medical oxygen and Remdesivir injections in the hospitals.

State Covid special offi-cer T. Krishna Babu inspected the Covid Care Centres at Gudavalli in Krishna district and Tenali in district Monday.

At Gudavalli, he said that 112 out of the space set apart for 500 patients on admission were taking treatment at present and facility for 25 more patients will be added shortly. At Tenali, he said there was the need to enhance

### **NAIDU SAYS GOVT FAILED TO SUPPLY** MEDICAL OXYGEN TO CORONA-HIT

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |

Andhra Pradesh fire serv-

ice authorities have come

up with a set of guidelines

for hospitals treating Coronavirus patients to avoid chances of fire

The managements of the

hospitals have been asked

to ensure proper function-

ing of the fire-fighting equipment installed in

their units and divide the

floors as fire compart-ments to avoid spread of

the fire. No obstruction should

be found on the ramps and

staircases and a ban is imposed against locking

Hospitals have to display

the 'evacuation plan' at places where fire-fighting

equipment is located and

The authorities have

asked the managements to

accord top priority to the immediate shifting of

patients to safety in case

of a fire mishap and sug-

gested posting a fire war-

of the fire exit doors.

also at exit ways.

den on each floor.

mishaps in the state.

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 26

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 26

mute spectators.

their death.

state government alleging that it was unable to provide correct information on facilities available at Covid hospitals.

### 2 Covid-hit die as oxygen pipe leaks DC CORRESPONDENT

VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 26

Two Covid patients died when oxygen supply was cut off due to technical snag developed in the supply system in Maharaia District Headquarters Hospital in Vizianagaram in the early hours of Monday. The officials detected the snag and shifted other patients to various hospitals and saved their lives. The supply was restored an hour later.

Reports from various sources said the officials detected oxygen supply interruption when an alarm was raised following the death of two patients due to lack of oxygen supply.

They immediately arranged ambulances drawn from different sources and shifted them to nearby Covid hospitals. The officials said 290 patients were undergoing treatment in the hospital and of them 25 were on the oxygen support.

'The whole process of shifting was completed in one hour," said a senior medical officer.

District collector Dr M Jawaharlal denied that the two patients died due to interruption in oxygen supply. He clarified that the two died due to Covidrelated complications.

He said tĥe leakage to the oxygen supplying pipe was detected and rectified immediately. The hospital has a storage capacity of 2kl and to compensate the loss, a tanker with 1kl capacity was sourced from Visakhapatnam Steel Plant with the help sought from the district minister Botsa Satyanaraya-

The collector said the hospital has a capacity for 200 patients only but on humanitarian grounds, 90 more patients were

Superintendent of Maharaja Hospital Dr Gowri Shankar said there was no shortage of oxygen in the district and adding 200 more beds shortly to meet the present demand.

A request was made to Visakhapatnam district collector V. Vinay Chand to reserve some beds in NRI Hospital, Visakhapa-

### The two ensured well-maintained roads, 100% collection of property taxes, improved sanitation

### Kakinada Rural mandal, G.Ragampet role model for other villages

coconuts from coconut

**VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC** KAKINADA, APRIL 26

In a boost for grassrootlevel governance, Kakinada Rural mandal and G. Ragampet in Peddapuram mandal have been recognised as role models for other villages in achieving

'Gram Swaraj'. These villages, with well-maintained roads and improved sanitation, also ensure hundred per cent collection of property

Further, planned planta-

been initiated in the villages to maintain ecological balance along with earning money through garbage

In these villages, the gram panchayat functions in a systematic manner, and local governance has also been impressive. In 2021. Kakinada rural mandal bagged the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Shashakthikaran Puraskar, while G. Ragampeta village secured the Gram Panchayat Development

and Intermediate exams to help the students not to of them voted for legal

The mandal and the village have been maintaining records, which are updated online from time to time. Further, the mandal is maintaining e-governance on an everyday basis, without causing any delays.

In order to solve water scarcity problems, the mandal set up a central water protection scheme in Panduru village, and a separate water system was established at Turangi. "We found other sources

trees in government sites, we established solid waste management centre sheds to make vermicompost. which is being sold to the farmers. The MPDO meeting hall is being given on rent for various functions. We have earned nearly ₹10 lakh as additional income. Besides, the routine revenue from property taxes was between ₹10 to ₹12 lakh," said P. Narayan Murthy, the development officer for Kakinada rural

Further, he said that several other issues such as modification of the electrical systems in Primary Health Care centres, development of school buildings, and other grievances are being sorted out in a

time-bound manner. Adding that the mandal falls under agriculture minister Kurasala Kannababu's Kakinada constituency, Murthy said that the minister paid more attention towards the development

G. Ragampet village has also become a role model

for other villages, with its green cover and cleanli-A. Ramana Reddy, the development officer for

Peddapuram Peddapuram mandal Parishad, said, "The villagers have given full support to implement government schemes in the vil-

Neethipudi Selat Raju, the grade-I secretary of the village, said that wet and dry garbage is sepa-

with vermicompost, which is sold at ₹5 per kg to the

farmers.

A park has also been developed using the vermicompost.

Additionally, cent percent property tax been amounting to nearly ₹25 to ₹35 lakh. Open defecation has also been completely prohibited, with every house having its own toi

"These activities will also continue in the future," he added.

IN BRIEF

### **Special trains**

for summer

Visakhapatnam: The railways has launched special trains to clear the summer rush. The trains include Agartala-Bengaluru Cant. special, Villupuram and Kahargpur and Howrah-Yesvantpur Special express. Visakhapatnam-Raipur special train is cancelled on April 27 due to safety relat-ed works being taken up in the Sambalpur division of East Coast Railway

### **OVER 4,000 PATIENTS GET DISCHARGED**

FROM PAGE 1

Officials have reported 10,169 Covid cases in East Godavari, 9,129 in Guntur, 9,077 in Nellore, 8,017 in Kurnool, 7,692 in Visakhapatnam, 6,921 in Krishna, 5,822 in Anantapur, 4,869 in Prakasam, 4,302 in Vizianagaram, 2,404 in Kadapa

and 1,710 in West Godavari. The state health authorities discharged 4,431 Coronavirus infected patients after recovery in the last 24 hours in the

Among daily cases of deaths of Coronavirus infected patients, Chittoor recorded six followed by five each in Kurnool and Vizianagaram, four each in Apartony. Foot four each in Anantapur, East Godavari, and West Godavari thee each in Guntur, Kadapa, Krishna, Srikakulam, and Visakhapatnam and two in Prakasam. With this, the death toll rose to 7,736.

### MAN KILLS KIN, **SURRENDERS BEFORE POLICE**

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, APRIL 26

person of Proddatur in Kadapa district on Monday killed his younger brother, sister and mother, upset that they are not cooperating with him in settling a dispute with his wife. He subsequently surrendered to the police.

Police said Karimullah, who lived on Hyderkhan Street near Proddatur One Town police station, was not on good terms with his wife. He had been blaming his family mem-

bers for the same. On Monday night, he stabbed his mother Gulzar Begum, younger brother Mohammad and younger sister Karimunsisa while they were sleeping after breaking their Ramadan fast.

Police have registered a case

### VASANTHOTSAVAM **AT TIRUMALA** CONCLUDES

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, APRIL 26

The three-day annual festival of Vasanthotsavam was concluded at the Srivari temple in Tirumala on Monday.
On the final day, Lord

Malayappa Swamy along with his consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi, Lord Sri Rama with Goddess Sita Devi. Lakshmana Swamy and Anjaneya Swamy and Lord Sri Krishna with Rukmini Devi were rendered celestial bath at the Kalyanotsava Mandapam

inside the temple. The snapana Tirumanjanam to all the nine Utsavarlu took place between 2 and 4 pm. In view of the Covid-19 restrictions, the TTD has performed the event in the Kalyanotsava Mandapam this year instead of Vasanthotsava Mandapam, located backside of the

In the evening Asthanam was held and at night the utsava idols of Lord Malayappa and his consorts were paraded on the Mada streets.

Tirumala temple.

Tirumala pontiffs Jeeyar Swamy and Chinna Jeeyar Swamy, TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy couple, CVSO Gopinath Jatti, Srivari temple DyEO P. Harindranath and other officials were pres-

The snapana Tirumanjanam to all the nine Utsavarlu took place between 2 and 4 pm. In view of the Covid-19 restrictions, the TTD has performed the event in the Kalyanotsava Mandapam this year instead of Vasanthotsava Mandapam, located backside of the Tirumala temple.

 In the evening Asthanam was held and at night the utsava idols of Lord Malayappa and his consorts were paraded on the Mada streets.



Huge numbers of people gather around the Sanjeevini Bus after they get registered themselves for the swab test for Covid-19 at Government

# Wait for hosp beds goes up

People booking beds in advance; politicians recommend patients

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL

The waiting list at the government hospitals notified for Covid-19 treatment is getting longer with each day

Visakhapatnam. Patients with their attendants were seen mostly at the 500 bed CSR block of King George Hospital, premier hospital in the government sec-tor with round the clock attendance by experts and uninterrupted oxygen supply. The patients were seen waiting under a tree with despair while their attendants making frequent visits to the reception counter. Many blamed the authorities for not maintaining the queue and taking patients recommended by politicians and senior

"All the beds are full as on date and we are ensuring that the queue is followed strictly. Vacancies can be filled only after and this we have been telling the people. Some social media posts are misleading the people," said KGH superintendent Dr P. Mythili. The other government

**OFFICIALS GET** 

**NOTICE FOR** 

**FAILURE TO** 

**SERVE FOOD** 

Collector

DC CORRESPONDENT

ANANTAPUR, APRIL 26

Chandrudu issued show

cause notices to four

incharge for Covid hos-

pital in the district on Monday for negligence

Super Specialty Hospital nodal officer

and Drug Control assis-

tant director Ramesh

Reddy, Super Specialty

Hospital Superintendent

Dr K.L. Subramanyam,

Cancer Hospital nodal

officer Tilak Vidyasagar

and Government Cancer

Hospital superintendent

Dr K. Bhaskar were

served with notices.

in serving food.

Gandham

Action against doctors absent without permit He said they made the adjacent Girijan Bhavan

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, APRIL 26

Visibly angry with the absence of some duty doctors at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Prak-asam collector Pola Bhaskar said that they would take stringent action against doctors ignoring their duties.

During a surprise visit to the RIMS Hospital in Ongole, he said they would initiate action against the doctors who went on leave without

hospital in demand is the

Visakha Institute for

Medical Sciences (VIMS)

which has 200 beds with

few ICU units. This hospi-

tal is also witnessing long

notified 40 private hospi-

tals and of them GITAM,

Gayatri and Prathama put under A grade is

entirely dedicated to

DC CORRESPONDENT

patients are running

from pillar to post for

admission in the hospi-

tals, 1,592 fresh Covid-19

positive cases, highest

in the state, have been detected and six people

succumbed to the virus

in SPSR Nellore district

With the new cases,

7,113 samples tested on

on Monday.

as Covid-19

NELLORE, APRIL 26

Even

under

The administration also

waiting.

services are required for Covid-19 patients. He said that they have arranged 200 ICU beds at RIMS based on the number of doctors and technicians and adding additional beds with oxygen facility. Referring to the pressure for beds at RIMS in

view of the steep increase in Covid-19 cases, he said priority is given based on the intensity of the disease and is being taken to avoid any inconvenience

**GITAM** Aarogyasri. became fully operational with 200 beds from

Monday onwards. The remaining hospitals made mandatory to reserve 50 per cent for the government sponsored

The private hospitals are shooing away patients and refusing to tell when the next bed

1,592 fresh +ve cases

detected in Nellore

to their brim

The Intensive Care

Units and oxygen beds

in all the major hospi-

tals in Nellore are full

cases have been detect-

ed in Nellore City alone

Monday. Among them,

as many as 607 cases

have been detected in

The Intensive Care

Nellore City alone.

As many as 607

CPI leader S. Murali.

bed capacity," Bhaskar informed.

as part of RIMS Hospital

and beds are arranged at

the quarters of senior

residents as well as at the

Centre.
"We have asked the

management of Bhash-yam School located oppo-

site RIMS to give the

building to add 100 more

beds in the premises. There are also proposals to secure other buildings

around RIMS to enhance

Empowerment

Social

"The rich have reserved getting tested for Covidand health officer Dr P. Suryanarayana.

He said that after watching electronic and social media reports, people are

100 beds earmarked for

Covid-19 patients are full in MediCover hospi-

tal and the situation

with respect to 50 beds

in Apollo is no different.

The official data indi-

cates the availability of

few beds at GGH, Narayana Hospital, and

KIMS Hospital among

In the neighbouring

Prakasam district, 522

Covid positive cases

### **COPS INITIATIVE HELPS TIMELY**

DC CORRESPONDENT **NELLORE, APRIL 26** 

The initiative of Siddharth Kaushal, Superintendent of Police, Prakasam district helped for the timely arrival of an oxygen tanker to save the lives of patients undergoing treatment at the RIMS Hospital in Ongole on Monday.

The tanker carrying 20,000 litres of oxygen from Visakapatnam to RIMS in Ongole was stranded on the national highway near Bollapalli plaza Narnivaripalem because

of mechanical problems including brake failure around 4 am on Monday.

On noticing the station beds for themselves and ary tanker, the police offifriends in advance in cials of J. Pangalore most of the corporate Highway Mobile spoke to hospitals even without the driver Rajesh Kumar Ram. They alerted the Police Control Room after learning that the engine had failed due to mechanical and electrical brakes.

Police rushed to spot along with three mechan-

### **02 TANKER ARRANGED FOR NELLORE**

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, APRIL 26

Minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav said they have arranged a tanker to bring oxygen to Nellore by Monday evening to address the needs of the

hospitals in the city. During a review with the managements of private hospitals in the city along with collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu and joint collector N. Prabhakar Reddy on Monday, the minister claimed that remdesivir injections have been made available to the

being sent to Nellore following the intervention of the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

# Sri Kodandarama Kalyanam held at Vontimitta temple

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, APRIL 26

was a grand spectacle of Rama and Sita wedding at Sri Kodandaramaswami temple of Vontimitta in the YSR Kadapa district on Monday night. The divine fete organised by the TTD as part of the ongoing annual Rama Navami Brahmotsavams was conducted in ekantham (solitude) as per the Pancha Ratna Agama traditions

from 8 pm to 10 pm. The event commenced at 8 pm under the stewardship of Kankana Bhattar (head priest) Rakesh Bhattar with Vignapana,

Havachanam and Sankalpam for global wellbeing. Thereafter, Raksha Bandhanam, Yajnopavita dharana, Kanya varanam and Madhu parkarchanam

were performed.
After Maha Sankalpam and Kanyadanam, the pravaras of both Sita and Rama were recited and family pedigree of both were

chanted . It was followed by programmes Mangalasutra Mangalasutra Dharana and Akshataropana. The kalyana episode concluded with Swami Nivedana, Veda Swasti Mahadashirvachanam. To facilitate the devotees to witness the spiritual programme from their homes during Covid-19 situation, the TTD had organised the live telecast of the Rama

Sita Kalyana episode by the

SVBC channel.

AP endowment minister Velampalli Srinivasa Rao on Monday presented pattu vastrams and pearls to Sri Kodandaramaswami temple on behalf of the the AP government. It is an age-old practice to present vas-trams and pearls officially on the occasion of the of the kalyanam in the Vontimitta temple. Srinivasa Rao, Kadapa district incharge minister Adimulapu minister Adimulapu suresh, Rajampet MLA and TTD board member Meda Mallikarjun Reddy



Priests perform Rama and Sita wedding at Sri Kodandaramaswami temple of Vontimitta on Monday.

### Date extended for Sri Kalyanamastu

DC CORRESPONDENT

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has extended the last date for unwed young couples to apply for the Sri Kalyanamastu (common wedding for poor) programme up to April 30.

It may be recalled that I'I'D had decided to roll out its yesteryear's flagship program, Kalyanamastu at all the major towns of the 13 districts of AP.

The mass marriages programme is intended to provide blessings of Lord Venkateswara and support the poor for meeting wedding costs of their children by conducting community weddings under the Sri Kalyanamastu programme.

The TTD has finalised three auspicious dates in 2021 including May 28

between 12.34 pm and 12.40 pm, October 30 between 11.04 am and 11.08 am and November 17, between 9.56 am and 10.02 am. In this regard, TTD has invited applications from interest ed unmarried youth wanting to participate in the Kalyanamastu programme during the first phase which is scheduled on May 28.

were asked submit applications with all details on or before April 25 As the Covid-19 cast a shadow on several programs and developments, the TTD has extended the application date up to April 30.

Now, devotees can submit the applications at the offices of District Kalyana Mandapams on or before April 30. Interested youth and parents could gather the details of the programme including the pro-

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★ History & Geography (Class IV to X)

★ Computer Science, Accountancy, Commerce, Economics, Political Science (Class XI to XII)
 ★ Typist (English, Telugu & Hindi) with Page Maker & Photoshop

NOTE: Qualification for ICSE (Graduation/PG with B.Ed.) / Qualification for ISC (PG with B. Ed.)

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#### the total number of positive cases detected in Units and oxygen beds were detected taking the district reached in all the major hospitotal positive cases to 75,889 and active cases tals in Nellore are full to 68,916 and two persons to 9,077 as of Monday. their brim and the died on Monday. The private hospitals.. According to medical patients suffering from death toll because of He said that oxygen and health wing data, the 1,592 fresh cases Covid-19 became 612 in shortness of breath are finding it very difficult the district after the outhave been detected from break of the virus last to secure oxygen beds in

**COVID I MANAGEMENT Testing labs will be set up in Kadapa, Proddatur soon** 

Prevent Covid spread, says minister

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, APRIL 26

Deputy Chief Minister S.B. Amjad Bhasha and district inminister Adimulapu Suresh have directed the authorities to strictly implement control and preventive measures against the second wave of Covid-19 in the district. They attended a high-level review meet-

ing chaired by district registered. The overall

collector Harikiran on Covid-19 in the Spandana hall of the collectorate.

The review meeting first outlined through a powerpoint presentation on the measures taken to prevent and control the rapidly growing Covid-19 outbreak in the district.

The district has so far conducted 8,43,936 tests,

registered. The overall positivity

positivity rate was 7.32 per cent. of which a total of 61,822 Harikiran positive cases have been

conducted 8,43,936 tests, of which a total of 61,822 positive cases have been

The district has so far

rate was 7.32 per cent.

explained that so far 552 people have died of Covid-19 in the

month, 80,349 tests have been done and 4,542 positive cases have been received, with a positivity rate of 6 per cent. In the last one week, 13 deaths have been reported. "We are currently conducting 3,500 tests per day in the district. The average positivity rate last week was 8.4. Plans are afoot to increase these tests to 6,000 per day. Testing labs will be

district. So far this set up in Kadapa, Proddatur, Pulivendula, Rayachoti, Badvel and Jammalamadugu towns in the district this week, he said. Railway

Rajampet and Mydukur towns are also being considered for setting up of labs. He said steps were being taken to identify primary and secondary contacts immediately and prevent the spread of the

### SHORT TAKES

### **PM, SUGA FIRM ON INDIA-JAPAN BILATERAL TIES**

**SRIDHAR** KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

In a "summit telephone talk" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday that lasted 25 Japanese Prime Yoshihide "expressed serious concerns about China's continued and strengthened unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas, including the Coast Guard Law"

The reference to China was made in a statement on the telephone talk released by Japan but there was no reference to it in a separate statement on the conversation that was released by New Delhi.
The Japanese statement The Japanese statement reflects increasing alarm in Japan over Chinese strategic intent, with a reiteration of the concerns first raised by PM Suga when he earlier spoke to PM Modi last month. "The two leaders confirmed

the importance of Japan-India bilateral cooperation and multilateral cooperation, including Japan-Australia-India-U.S. quadrilateral cooperation, towards realising a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. They also shared the view to continue their effort on building a rules-

based free and open international order," Japan said.
Japanese Foreign Ministry further said, "PM Suga stated that he hopes to further developments according to the control of the second state." op the cooperation.'

### **PM, CDS REVIEW COVID OPERATIONS BY ARMED FORCES**

**PAWAN BALI | DC** NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday reviewed with Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat the preparations and operations undertaken by the Armed forces to assist in Covid-19 sit-

uation in the country.
CDS briefed the PM that all medical personnel from armed forces who have retired or taken pre-mature retirement in the last 2 years are being recalled to work in Covid facilities within proximity of their present place of residence. Other medical officers who retired earlier have also been requested to make their services available for consultation through medical emergency

Prime Minister was also informed that all medical offi-Command Headquarters (HQ) Corps HQ, Division HQ and similar HQ of Navy and Air-Force will be employed at hospitals.

The CDS informed the Prime Minister that nursing personnel are being employed in large numbers to complement the doctors at the hospitals. CDS said that oxygen cylinders available with armed forces in various establishments will be released for hos-

The CDS also said that they are creating medical facilities in large numbers and where possible military medical infrastructure will be made available to civilians

### **COVID REPORT NOT REQUIRED: HC TO HOSPITALS**

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

The Delhi High Court on Monday directed hospitals in the national capital to "scrupulously follow" the AAP government's circular on not to insist on Covid positive test reports before admitting patients showing symptoms of Coronavirus.

A bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jasmeet Singh also directed the Delhi government to "widely publi-cise" its April 23 circular on the matter.

The order came while disposing of a PIL seeking directions to the Delhi government to order hospitals not to insist on Covid positive reports to hospitalise patients who show symptoms of Coronavirus.

The petitioner, Jaideep Ahuja, told the bench that the Uttar Pradesh government has passed such a direction on not insisting on RT-PCR positive test reports for admitting

The Delhi government told the court that its Health department has issued a circular on April 23 directing hospitals in the city not to insist on Covid positive test reports to admit patients who are showing symptoms of Coronavirus infection.

# Assam rules out full lockdown

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, APRIL 26

Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma here on Monday said that there will be no shortage of oxygen, ICU and isolation beds in the state for next 10 days and in between state has started augmenting its resources to build up its capacity to face any eventuality due to pan-

Pointing out that the state government has made arrangements to import oxygen from neighbouring Bhutan, Sarma told reporters that the oxygen production capacity of the state has reached to 61 MT per day while storage capacity has already been expanded to 468

Informing that they are going to operationalise three more oxygen plants soon, he said that there will be no shortage of Remdesivir too as he requested drug manufacturer Pharma to expedite the production at its Palasbari plant to 80,000

vials per week.
Sarma said that he visited Sun Pharma's Palasbari plant near Guwahati on Sunday and requested them to scale up production to ensure that there is no shortage in the state. "The Sun Pharma's production unit in Guwahati can produce 80,000 Remdesivirs every

week," he added.

He said, "There is a new oxygen plant being set up in Bhutan. We have made arrangements to procure oxygen from there if required.

Sarma said that the Assam government was not aware of an oxygen plant in Dimapur in Nagaland, and now it

will sign a
Memorandum of
Understanding with the
neighbouring state for procurement.

'The oxygen level that we are able to manage, I think there will not be any problem until sever-al thousand patients arrive at the hospitals,"

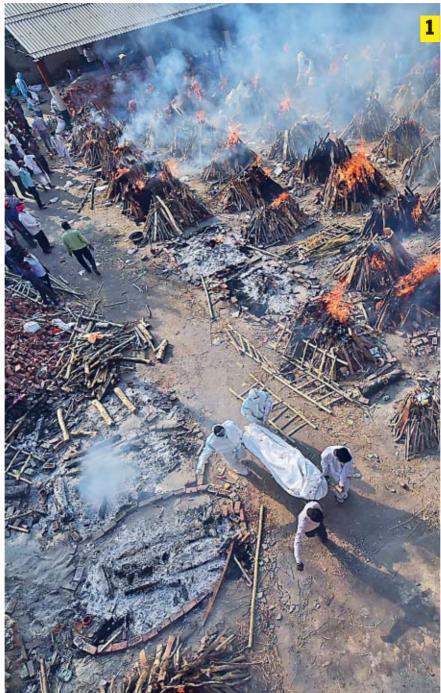
"ICU beds have also been ramped up. I believe we will be able to manage the Covid-19 crisis very fast like last year," Šarma who also expressed surprise over the Congress memorandum to the Election Commission accusing violating election code of conduct for his initiative to face Covid situation, said.

About the possibility of lockdown in Assam, he said that there is no necessity for any such drastic step at this moment

do 'When announce a lockdown? It is done when there is no oxygen, injection, medicine, kit in hospitals, then we get temporary relief by implementing lockdown," said the minister adding that Assam is fully geared up to face

the Covid crisis. "We have already placed the order for the vaccine also. In a day or two we will come to delivery process and accordingly the state will plan out its vaccination drive for 18 plus citizens," said the





1) Mass cremation of Covid-19 victims and others takes place at Gazipur Crematorium, in New Delhi on Monday,

2) Relatives of Covid-19 patients wait to refill cylinders with medical oxygen, during

the second wave of Coronavirus pandemic, in Gurugram on Monday. 3) People wait in a gueue to receive a dose of the Covid-19 vaccine at NESCO Jumbo

Covid-19 Vaccination Centre at Goregaon in Mumbai on Monday.



### Covid-19 crisis to worsen in Punjab, lockdown not an option: Amarinder

**Chandigarh, April 26:** Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh here on Monday said he is against the imposition of a Coronavirus lockdown even as he predicted that the pandemic situation is expected to get worse in the state.

The Chief Minister made the comment at a meeting, a day after the daily infection count in the state crossed the 7,000mark, the highest singleday rise since the outbreak of the pandemic last

The Chief Minsiter said the situation is expected to worsen, especially in south Punjab. He said Ludhiana district alone reported 1,300-plus cases on Sunday.

According to a statement, the Chief Minister said while stringent measures are being taken to tackle the surge in cases, he is not "proposing" a lockdown in the state as it  CHIEF MINISTER said while stringent measures are being taken to tackle the surge in cases, he is not 'proposing' a lockdown in the state as it leads to economic woes and the exodus of migrant workers.

• HE DIRECTED health department to follow up with Centre for vaccine supplies as the state presently has only 1.76 lakh Covishield and 22,000 Covaxin doses left.

leads to economic woes and the exodus of migrant

workers.
The Chief Minister said at another meeting that the state government is making all efforts to secure medical oxygen to supplement its depleting

Of the 105 tonnes of medical oxygen quota, the state is getting only 85 tonnes as the rest is being diverted to the PGIMER,

Chandigarh, he said.
The Chief Minister also directed the health department to follow up with the Centre for vaccine supplies as the state presently has only 1.76 lakh Covishield and 22,000

Reacting to reports of threats of a strike by health workers, the Chief

Minister said such actions will be met with dismissal 'as we cannot tolerate this kind of nonsense in a warlike situation". Meanwhile, the Armv

Western Command assure revive the state's defunct oxygen plants.

Lt Gen R.P. Singh, General Officer General Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Command, at a virtual meeting with the Chief Minister offered to provide staff to run a 100bed Covid facility proposed to be set up at the building loaned to the state government by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research for the purpose. 15 trained nurses have already been sent to

Patiala to support the

civic staff, he said. Army officials said though their resources were stressed on account requirements from other states, they will extend all possible help to Punjab to tackle the situa-

The Chief Minister later said the government will also approach the Union home ministry to provide manpower and ICU beds through the Border Security Force (BSF).

Health secretary Hussan Lal told the Chief Minister at a meeting that 2,000 beds will be added at government and private hospitals. While 900 beds will be added at government medical colleges in Patiala, Amritsar and Faridkot, 542 will be added at private colleges, he said. -PTI

### over 75% vote slogans at him. He was soon seen leav-

7th phase by and large peaceful,

RAJIB CHOWDHURI & PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI | DC with agency inputs KOLKATA/BERHAMPORE,

The seventh phase of the Assembly elections in 34 seats spread over five districts in West Bengal recorded 75.06 per cent polling that went off peacefully except some stray incidents of violence in Murshidabad on Monday.

While nine seats in Murshidabad saw voter turnout of 80.30 per cent, six constituencies in South Dinajpur of North Bengal saw 80.21 per cent polling with 78.76 per cent and 70.34 per cent voting in six seats of Malda and nine in Burdwan West respectively from 7 am to

However four hot seats Bhowanipore, Rasbehari, Ballygunge and Kolkata Port - in South Kolkata clocked only 59.91 per cent polling during which chief minister Mamata Banerjee and her MP nephew cast their votes. A revised figure of polling is expected from the Election Commission on Tuesday.

Unlike other districts, Murshidabad remained tense since morning.

At Senapara, Raninagar Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Mashwara Khatun's car was attacked and her polling agent was beaten up by armed Trinamul Congress workers. The police had to rescue her.

Allegations again surfaced against the Central paramilitary forces of ransacking Raninagar ransacking Raninagar block TMC president Mizanur Rahman's residestroying food. When district TMC president and MP Abu Taher Khan went there. angry workers of his

party shouted "Go Back"

ing in his car in face of the protest. At Gurapasla School Nabagram, the Central forces allegedly beat an elderly TMC worker so much that he had to be admitted at Nabagram Hospital.

Later the CM, while lashing out at the Central forces over its excessive use of force, said, "We will lodge an FIR against the CRPF in these inci-

In Farakka, an aged TMC worker, Janmejoy Mondal, was injured in attack Bharatiya Janata Party workers armed with sharp-cutting weapons. He was admitted at the Farakka Hospital.

Murshidabad Congress candidate Niyazuddin Sheikh was caught by the TMC workers distributing money hidden in masks at a booth in Gudhia High School. But Mr Ahmed claimed that he distributed only masks to the voters for their protection from Covid-19. The Election Commission has sought a report of the incident.

Also, Jalangi Sanjukta Morcha candidate Saiful Islam Mollah from the CPI(M) and his three associates were attacked by the TMC workers with bamboo poles and sticks

at Choanpara. Meanwhile, the Election Commission transferred a few police officers as West Bengal voted in the

seventh phase of assembly polls on Monday, officials said. Shantanu Sinha Biswas, an inspector at the Directorate of Economic

Offences, was transferred to the office of the DIG Jalpaiguri Range as a crime inspector, they

### **SAFETY | FIRST | Government urges people to avoid stepping out unnecessarily**

# Mask up even indoors: Centre

New Delhi, April 26: As a second wave of the Coronavirus pandemic about wearing it outside homes, but the way the infection has spread, it rips through the country, the government on Monday said it is time people start wearing masks inside their homes as well, and refrain from inviting

Addressing a press conference here, NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr V.K. Paul said if there is a Covid-positive person inside the house, he or she must wear the mask so as to prevent other family mem-

bers from getting infected. "Rather, I'll say that the time has come that we start wearing masks even

will be better if we wear mask inside our homes if we are sitting with some-

one," he said.
"But, definitely, if there is a Covid-19 positive person, that person must wear the mask and others inside the house also must wear a mask and the positive person should be kept in a different room," Paul underlined.

His statement came days after a new assessment published in The Lancet journt, strong evidence to prove that the SARS-CoV-2 viotherwise inside our rus, behind the pandemic, homes. We used to talk is predominantly transrus, behind the pandemic.

mitted through the air. Paul added that people should also avoid stepping out of their houses unnecessarily and not invite guests at home.

He also suggested if the house lacks such facilities for isolation, then people may go to isolation centres, known as corona care centres. Getting admitted to a hospital is not the only option, Paul "Hospital beds are used

for the needy people."
Highlighting the importance of vaccination, Paul said, "We cannot let the pace of Covid-19 vaccination decline or slacken in the face of the emerging

intent the government of India brought a revised (vaccination) policy. We believe and are confident that will bring in more acceleration," he said.

AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria, who also addressed the press conference, sought greater community participation to ensure optimal utilisation of hospital facilities.

"We see now there is unnecessary panic among people which is causing more harm than good. Those who test positive even if their oxygen saturation levels are normal and have mild symptoms, they also

want to get admitted. situation. In fact, it should be escalated and with that "It is causing a lot of rush outside hospitals and

There should be judicious use of oxygen therapy, he said, adding, hospital authorities should make sure there is no leakage of oxygen at their facilities, and also advised proning to increase oxygen levels in the body. — *PTI* 

suffering to

patients as they do not get

proper treatment. Also,

hoarding of drugs at

homes is causing unnecessary shortage of essential

drugs in markets and also

Underlining the impor-

tance of oxygen in the treatment strategy for

Covid-19 patients, Dr

Guleria said its misuse

must be avoided.

leads to misuse of drugs,

els in the body.

### IN BRIEF

### **Russia expels Italian diplomat**

Moscow, April 26: Moscow said Monday it was expelling an Italian diplomat in response to the "unfriendly" removal of two Russian officials from Rome in March over an espionage scandal.

The foreign ministry said it had summoned Italy's ambassador and informed him that Russia was declaring "persona non grata" Rome's naval attache in Moscow, who would have

24 hours to leave the country. Rome announced late last month it was expelling the two Russian officials after an Italian navy captain was caught by police selling confidential military documents to a Russian embassy official.

#### **Romania to expel Russian diplomat**

Bucharest, April 26: Romania said Monday it will expel a Russian diplomat, the latest European country to do so in solidarity with the Czech Republic, which is involved in a spat with Moscow.

The deputy military attache

at the Russian embassy in Bucharest, Alexei Grichayev, would be declared "persona non grata... in view of his activities and actions contrary to the Convention of Vienna on diplomatic relations," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Romania's foreign minister Bogdan Aurescu summoned Russian ambassador Valery Kuzmin to his offices on Monday, according to the state-

#### Jihadists kill 31 **Nigerian soldiers**

Kano, Nigeria, April 26: At least 31 Nigerian soldiers were killed when IS-aligned jihadists ambushed a military convoy escorting weapons and overran a base in northeast Nigeria's Borno state, military

sources said on Monday. Fighters from the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) attacked the convoy with rocket-propelled grenades on Sunday in the town of Mainok outside the regional capital Maiduguri before storming the nearby base.

The attack was the deadliest this year against Nigeria's army which has been battling a decade-long jihadist insurge ncy in the region that has killed 36,000 people.

#### '14 protests: 108 on trial in Turkev

Ankara, April 26: Turkey on Monday put 108 Kurdish politicians on trial for their alleged roles in deadly 2014 protests that erupted as jihadists from the Islamic State group overran the Syrian town of Kobane

The case against current and former members of the pro-Kurdish HDP party — including its two former co-leaders - stems from one of the darker episodes of the decade-long Syria war. Thirty-seven people died in violent demonstrations against the Turkish army's inaction in the face of an IS offensive against the largely Kurdish northern Syrian town.

The jihadists were driven out of Kobane in January 2015 by US-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters that Turkey officially views as terrorists.

#### **AFGHANISTAN ATTACKS KILL 12 POLICEMEN**

Kabul, April 26: At least 12 Afghan policemen were killed on Sunday, including seven who were ambushed by the Taliban south of the capital, officials said, as fighting continued in the violence-wracked

The two separate attacks in the provinces of Logar and Kandahar came as the top US military commander in Afghanistan, General Scott Miller, said work had begun to withdraw the remaining American forces as ordered by President Joe Biden this month.

'Seven policemen were killed and three wounded when the Taliban ambushed their vehicles in Mohammad Agha district of Logar province," Dedar Lawang, spokesman for

the provincial governor, said. The policemen were part of a security force guarding copper

mines in Logar, south of the capital Kabul. Police from Logar province

confirmed the attack

Afghanistan, whose economy has been severely impacted by decades of conflict and endemic corruption, has reserves of copper, iron, cobalt and lithium. In a separate attack on Sunday, a suicide bomber ran an explosives-laden car into a police vehicle in the southern Taliban bastion of Kandahar, killing five policemen.

## EU mounts legal action on **AstraZeneca for vax delay**

Charges vaccine maker for failing to respect terms of contract

Brussels, April 26: The European Commission on Monday said it has launched a legal action against vaccine maker AstraZeneca for failing to respect the terms of its contract with

Spokesman Stefan De Keersmaecker said, "The Commission has started last Friday legal action against the company AstraZeneca on the basis of breaches of the advance purchase agreement." He said that the reason for the legal action was that "some terms of the contract have not been respected" and that "the company has not been in a position to come up with a reliable strategy to ensure a timely delivery of doses". Contract with EU foresaw an initial 300 million doses for distribution among the 27 countries, with option for a further 100 million. But only 30 million doses were deliv-

Burj Khalifa lit up

second Covid-19 wave, the

official WAM news agen-

gruesome war against

#COVID19, its friend #UAE sends

star @BurjKhalifa in

#Dubai lits up in Flag of

India to showcase its sup-

port," Indian Embassy in the UAE tweeted on Sunday. The embassy also

tweeted a video of the

Burj Khalifa displaying

the Indian flag and #stay-strongIndia. — PTI

damaging war of words with his former top aide

Dominic Cummings over

last year and financial

Wallace said the Daily

Mail report, based on

unnamed sources, was "not true" and had been

"categorically denied by

"None of this is serious.

The prime minister has

been utterly focused on

Cabinet colleagues, the response to Covid," he

en, ventilators and perso-

nal protective equipment

to India as part of an

immediate support pack-

age to the country which is battling with the latest

surge of the Covid-19 cas-

es, Health Minister Greg

The federal government

was in the process of con-

sidering what it could send to help, the *Australi*-

an Broadcasting Corpo-

ration news channel quot-

ed Hunt as saying.
"India is literally gasping for oxygen," the feder-

And while we can assist

with the national medical

stockpile, their particular

request is for assistance

al health minister said.

Hunt said on Monday.

alongside

-AFP

oxygen for India

Oz ventilators, PPE,

**Melbourne, April 26:** with regards to the physical supply of oxygen.

practically everyone"

delivering,

told Sky News.

dealings.

"As #India battles the

its best wish-

es. Glowing

cy reported.

with Tricolour

Dubai, April 26: Promi-

nent iconic buildings, including the Burj Khalifa,

in the UAE were lit up

The Abu Dhabi Natio-

nal Oil Company (ADN-

OC) headquarters and the world's tallest build-ing, Burj Khalifa, in

Dubai were lit up with the colours of the Indian

flag in solidarity with India as it responds to a

London, April 26: Briti-

sh Prime Minister Boris

Johnson faced a call to re-

ms he dismissed the pro-

spect of thousands dying

from Covid-19, as a row over government "sleaze"

In a front-page headline,

the *Daily Mail* newspaper

reported Johnson had

said he would rather see "bodies pile high in their

thousands" than impose a

third Coronavirus lock-

down. Ultimately, Johns-

on did order a new round

of restrictions in January.

THAILAND

**FINE OF UP TO** 

**\$640 FOR NOT** 

**WEARING MASK** 

Bangkok, April 26:

Authorities in Thailand

are imposing fines of

up to 20,000 baht (\$640)

for people who fail to

wear face masks in pub

lic in 48 provinces, as

the government strug-

gles to cope with a new

wave of coronavirus cases that is straining

The capital, Bangkok

which has the largest

number of cases, is also

closing more than 30

types of businesses and

services, including cin-

emas, parks, zoos, bars,

pools and massage par-

lours. Gatherings of

more than 20 people are

the medical system.

But he is now locked in a

India as it

grapples

with a grow-

ing Covid-19 crisis.

solidarity with



A lone woman walks past stalls in an almost-empty shopping alley in Bangkok on Monday, amid an expansion of lockdown restrictions to halt a surge in Covid-19 cases.

Google, MS Indo-American CEOs pledge aid to India

Houston/Washington, April 26: Google CEO Sundar Pichai and his Microsoft counterpart Satya Nadella have assured help to India. "Devastated to see the worsening Covid crisis in India. Google & Googlers are providing ₹135 crore in funding to @GiveIndia, @UNICEF for medical supplies, orgs supporting high-risk com-munities, and grants to help spread critical infor-

Google CEO Pichai said in a tweet. Nadella said that his

**UK VAX FOR ALL** 

**AGED 44, ABOVE** 

vone aged 44 and above in

Britain will now be able to

book their Covid-19 jab

starting on Monday as the

Service (NHS) vaccine

programme expands fur-

ther to more vounger age

groups. Around half a

million 44-year-olds will

receive a text message

inviting them to get their

cal supply of oxygen. That will be one of the

things we are looking at,

in particular with the

The federal government

states, the minister said.

also confirmed to send

oxygen, ventilators and

personal protective equip-

ment to India as part of

an immediate support

package to be announced

on Tuesday, according to

would not send vaccines.

Hunt further said: "We

are in a strong position on that front because we

don't need them at this

point in time. We will still

keep a reserve, but if they

can be of assistance (they

will be donated)." -PTI

Australia

the report.

However,

National Health

Defence Secretary Ben London, April 26: Ever-

company will continue to use its resources and technology for relief efforts and support for buying oxygen devices. Nadella said he was "heartbroken" by the current Coronavirus situation in India. "I am heartbroken by the current situation in India. I'm grateful the US government is mobilising to help. Microsoft will continue to use its voice, resources, and technology to aid relief efforts, and support the purchase of criti-

US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have assured India and its people of providing all assistance, including urgently sending necessary medical lifesaving supplies and equipment, to help the country combat the deadly crisis. "Just as India sent assistance to the United States as our hospitals were strained early in the panto help India in its time of need," Biden said. — *PTI* 

cal oxygen concentration Boris in soup for 'dying' talk World military spending grows

Stockholm, April 26: Mi- think military spending would decrease," he said.
"But it's possible to conlitary expenditure worldwide rose to nearly \$2 trillion in 2020, defying the economic impact of clude with some certainty that Covid-19 did not have the Covid-19 pandemic, a significant impact on researchers said Monday. global military spending,

Global military spending increased by 2.6 percent to \$1,981 billion in 2020, when global GDP shrank 4.4 percent, according to a report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Diego Lopes da Silva. one of report's authors, said the development was unexpected. "Because of the pandemic, one would

### **MISINFORMATION OF VIRUS: FB BLOCKS OZ MP**

Sydney, April 26: Face book removed Australian member of parliament Craig Kelly's page for repeatedly peddling pandemic misinformation, the social media giant said Monday.

Kelly previously had posts blocked on the platform and was forced to quit the governing Liberal Party, amid controversial statements on vaccine safety, lockdowns and unproven Covid treatments.

Facebook said removed his popular page permanently after "repeated violations" of its policies. -AFPits policies.

nature of military spending, it could take time for countries "to adapt to the shock". The fact that mili-

in 2020 at least," Lopes da

Silva said. He cautioned however that due to the tary spending continued to increase in a year with an economic downturn meant the share of military spending out of total GDP had risen.

### **CHINA CARGO FLIGHTS TO INDIA SUSPENDED**

Beijing, April 26: China's state-run Sichuan Airlines has suspended all its cargo flights to India for 15 days, causing major disruption to private traders' efforts to procure the much-needed oxygen concentra-tors and other medical supplies from the country despite Beijing reiterating its readiness to help India. "China has been following the situation in India and exprereadiness to help curb the latest surge, FM spokesman Wang Wenbin said. — *PTI* a blunt comments n's 2015 nuclear deal with ding of Iran's foreign min-

limits of power within the Islamic Republic has leaked out publicly, providing a rare look inside the country's theocracy. The release of the comments by Mohammad Javad Zarif set off a firestorm within Iran, where officials carefully mind their words amid a cut-throat political environment that includes the powerful paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, ultimately overseen by der. Zarif has been sugges-

Zarif's leaked

ister offering a blunt appraisal of diplomacy and the

recording offers

ntial election as well. Outside of Iran, Zarif's esidency. comments could also affect talks in Vienna aimed at finding a way for Tehran and the US to both come into compliance with Ira-

ted as a possible candidate for Iran's June 18 preside-

world powers. Already, sabotage target-

ed Iran's nuclear facility at Natanz during the talks as Tehran has begun enriching a small amount of uranium up to 60% purity, which edges the country closer to weapons-grade levels. After the leak became public, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh did not dispute the tape's authenticity. He told journalists on Monday that the recording represented just a portion of a seven-hour interview Zarif gave to a well-known economist that was to be held for posterity by a think tank associated with the Iranian pr-

Khatibzadeh called the release of the recording "illegal" and described it as "selectively" edited.

### Germany flays Navalny curbs

Berlin, April 26: Germany condemned an order by Russian prosecutors Monday to suspend all activities by jailed opposi-tion figure Alexei Naval-Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) and its

regional network Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said "using the instruments of fighting terror against politically undesirable opinions is in no way compatible with the principles of the rule of law".

A Moscow court had be-

gun a preliminary hearing into designating FBK and its regional offices as "extremist" after prosecutors requested they be added to a list of "terrorist and extremist" organisations run by Russia's Anti-Terrorism Committee.

The Moscow City Court confirmed that the activities of the group's regional network were suspended, but clarified that prosecutors had the power to make the decision and

designating the group as extremist was still due.

Russia's list of extremist organisations currently consists of 33 including the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda and the Jehovah's Witnesses

The groups are banned from operating in Russia and participating in their activities can result in lengthy prison terms.

Navalny, Russian President Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponent, was arrested in January on returning to Russia from Berlin after recovering from a near-fatal poisoning attack he says was by orchestrated Kremlin.

Moscow denies the allegation.

He is serving two-and-ahalf years on old fraud charges — which he says are politically motivated in a penal colony in the town of Pokrov east of

### Suu Kvi court date postponed

Yangon, April 26: Myanmar's junta again post-poned court proceedings against deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi on Monday her lawyers said, as they fight for permission to visit her 12 weeks after she was detained.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military ousted the Nobel laureate in a February 1 coup, shunting the country back into junta rule after a brief experiment with democracy. Large swathes of the population have taken to the streets in protest, with security forces unleashing a brutal campaign to quell the massive

Meanwhile Suu Kyi has been under house arrest, with the junta charging her under six cases including for sedition and having unlicenced walkietalkies. But movement on her case was once again delayed until May 10, her lawver Min Min Soe said Monday after a hearing. Twelve weeks since Suu

Kyi was detained, Min Min Soe said they still have not received permis

sion to meet their client face-to-face many hurdles the team has faced.

"When the judge asked (police) which stage they have reached, they replied they couldn't tell specifi-cally," she said, adding that Suu Kyi was frustrated by the slow pace.

"I think she is not getting access to watch news and TV. I do not think she knows the current situation happening in the country," she said.

Besides not being able to meet with Suu Kyi, juntaimposed mobile data shutdowns have also prevented video-conferencing in

previous hearings. The most serious charge Suu Kyi faces falls under Myanmar's official secrets law, with a hearing due in

Yangon on May 6. Nationwide protests continued Monday, with de-

monstrators holding signs that said "Free our leaders" and waving red flags emblazoned with a golden peacock — the symbol of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy Party.

### 22 given death in Libya 'sham' trials

Tripoli, April 26: Eastern Libyan military courts have sentenced at least 22 people to death and jailed hundreds more since 2018 "sham, torture-tainted" trials to exert control,

Amnesty International said Monday. "Military courts have convicted hundreds of

civilians in eastern Libya

in secret and grossly

the London-based rights

unfair military trials,

The trials were "aimed

torn by conflict since the toppling and killing of dictator Moamer Kadhafi in a Nato-backed uprising a decade ago.

at punishing real or perceived opponents and critics" of the forces loyal to eastern military strongman Khalifa Haftar, it Oil-rich Libya has been

Ukraine marks 35 years since Chernobyl Volodymyr Zelensky was due Monday to visit the

Chernobyl exclusion zone and address Ukrainians to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the world's worst nuclear disaster. The exclusion zone is a

30-kilometre (20-mile) radius around the nuclear power plant that was evacuated in the aftermath of an explosion and was deemed unsafe for humans to

**Kiev, April 26:** President live for thousands of yea-Volodymyr Zelensky was due Monday to visit the dozens of people gathered in the nearby ghost town of Pripyat and held an overnight vigil with candles in memory of the those who lost their lives in the accident.

The deaths of some 30 people were directly linked to the explosion in the fourth reactor at Chernobyl during a safety test on April 26, 1986.

But thousands more are feared to have died in the years that followed from radiation poisoning across Ukraine as well as its northern neighbour Belarus and Russia to the east.

NUCLEAR | DISASTER | Dozens gather in ghost town of Pripyat, hold candle vigil

The exact number of victims remains a subject of intense debate because the Soviet authorities kept most of the information about the disaster hidden. Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated

region. About 600,000 emergency workers and state employees who became known as "liquidators" were dispatched with little or no protective gear to help clean up the aftermath of the disaster.

A 2005 United Nations report estimated that up to 4,000 people could eventu-

from the area around the disaster site, and the exclally perish from the invisible poison in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. usion zone has now beco-The Greenpeace environme a ghostly uninhabited

mental group issued its own study the following year estimating that 100,000 people had already lost their lives as a result of the accident.

In November 2016, a massive metal dome was erected over the remains of the

-AFP

DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | TUESDAY | 27 APRIL 2021

# **Chronicle**

### Govt must wake up to reality, do a course correction swiftly

he world is waking up to the tragedy that India has found itself in, with scores of people dying for want of oxygen and critical drug shortages in several parts of the country. The United States, which had only last week insisted that its job was to vaccinate Americans first and held back critical raw materials for vaccine production in India, has now promised to speed up the delivery of such goods; and it is now "pursuing options to generate oxygen on an urgent basis" in India. Going by reports, these will include oxygen aggregators and concentrators. The European Union, France, Russia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have also started sending vital medical supplies. Even Pakistan has offered to send help to India.

The world media is awash with the details on how the NDA government's lackadaisical approach during the interregnum between the first and second waves of the pandemic have landed India in the mess. And they cannot be faulted. Reports of the parliamentary committee on health in February warning about "an unprecedented increase in the demand for non-invasive oxygen cylinders and instances of lack of oxygen cylinders" have already appeared. It had also recommended that the government "encourage adequate production

Reports of the parliamentary committee on health in February warning about "an unprecedented increase in the demand for non-invasive oxygen cylinders and instances of lack of oxygen cylinders" have already appeared.

of oxygen for ensuring its supply as per demand in the hospitals". It's not that the government had done nothing; it had initiated steps but not with the urgency with which a nation prepares for a second wave which experts had warned was coming. The Prime Minister's Office had on January 5 announced the PM-Cares Fund had allocated ₹201.58 crore for installing 162 dedicated pressure swing adsorption (PSA) oxygen generation plants in public health facilities. However, only 33 had been built by April 18. The procurement of the plant was to be done by the Central Medical Supply Store, an autonomous body under the

Union health ministry. It may be hoped that the 551 new PSAs the PM Cares Fund has newly sanctioned will not meet with a similar fate. From the responses, one cannot be faulted if one thought that the Government of India was the last to get a grip

Augmenting healthcare infrastructure is a long-term programme even in the face of a pandemic. The immediate, effective and assured tool to fight it is universal vaccinations, but the government has been displaying a lack of urgency about that too. The mandarins deciding vaccine policy are yet to wake up from their slumber and see the unfolding events. Parliament has passed a budget with a sum that will be sufficient to inoculate every eligible Indian free of cost if it bought the doses at the price the manufacturers decided in the first phase. The government has several legal and administrative options, including the compulsory licensing route, to enhance production. However, it seems to be in no hurry and, worse, it has passed the responsibility for inoculation first to the state governments and then to citizens. The government may, at least now, make a course correction in order to obviate a similar global initiative to vac-

### Oscars in pandemic times

asanitised Oscars ceremony was befitting in the dark times the world is going through. Even then, it didn't have to end the way it did with the oldest actor to win the coveted prize, Anthony Hopkins, not tuning in even by video from his home in Wales. Hollywood, well-known for its love of a cinematic climax to all stories big and small, also didn't quite time it right. An empty stage with a golden Oscar statuette and then just the titles was a strange but, perhaps, symbolic climax to a ceremony which, clubbed with a narcissistic red carpet and extravagant parties, used to represent the glitz and glamour

"It has been quite a year, and we are still smack dab in the middle of it,"
Regina King said in reference to the pandemic as well as the verdict on the
George Floyd killing. "Our love of movies
helped to get us through,"she added. That is sig-

This year's awards were a "woke" Hollywood's ode to diversity, with Chloe Zhao, of Chinese oriwoman of colour to win the best director

nificant because in many people's reckoning some parts of life must go on despite the pan-demic. And what can be better than entertainment brought to people's homes on a screen? We would do well to remember that 97 per cent of people have proved immune to the infernal gin, becoming the first pathogen. Perhaps much the same argument drives the IPL, which is India's biggest entertainment extravaganza. This year's awards

Hollywood's ode to diversity, with Chloe Zhao, of Chinese origin, becoming the first woman of

colour to win the best director statuette. Predictably too, China rubbed her out because she is not in sync with its nationalistic ideals. Empathy was at the very heart of the prize that went to Frances McDormand who starred in Nomadland, with real-life actor-nomads from marginalised, itinerant communities in a post-recession United States reflecting an American dream gone awry. The greatest disappointment may have been in black actor Chadwick Boseman not winning best actor posthumously while Hopkins won it for portraying an older man with dementia in *The Father*. It was, however, a historic day for women and people of colour, and no one can complain about that.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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K. SUDHAKAR

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# Covid mess to cost govt dear at home & abroad



K.C. Singh

n March 12, US ned the inau-gural summit "Quad" countries, comprising Australia, India, Japan and the Unit ed States, held in a virtual format. Their joint state-ment headlined "The Spirit of the Quad" emphasised the combating of Covid-19. In the last paragraph, they committed to combining medical, financing, manufacturing and delivery as well as development capabilities to address the "historic crisis". India was seen as the hub of vaccine manufacture and the vanguard

in this battle.

Covid-19's second wave hit India soon afterwards, with India's leadership preoccupied with crucial state elections, the Kumbh Mela and cricket. The mutant virus had begun havoc Britain. Unmindful of this, India was exporting Astra-Zeneca (Covishield) vaccines to friendly developing countries and fulfilling its Covax commitments. The cases began spiking, first in Maharashtra and Punjab, and finally in the nation's capital, Delhi. Two virus variants, the British B.1.1.7 and a local double mutant B.1.617, may have accelerated the spread. The Quad spirit of cooperation ran into vaccine nationalism when India's pleas to the US for assistance were rudely rejected. The public discourse started getting toxic, especially in the social media, with escalating criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his deputy, home min-ister Amit Shah, for campaigning without masks amidst mammoth crowds. The Election Commission too irresponsibly conceded the BJP's desire for the eight-phase, monthlong polls in West Bengal.

Alongside, the lack adaisical vaccination prostarted, with frontline workers and

then the older, more vulnerable population. But as the vaccination was stepped up, the demand began outpacing the supply. Instead of being the "Vishwa Guru" and global factory for viscina India new for vaccines, India now blocked exports. The Ser-um Institute of India, producing the AstraZeneca vaccine Covishield, and Bharat Biotech, producing Covaxin, fell behind their production targets. The European Union sued SII for breach of commitments. In turn, it complained its production was being hampered by US restrictions on raw mater-

India-US relations came under strain as public opinion in India soured. Both sides failed to communicate their respective concerns properly. In America, newly elected President Joe Biden assumed office, promising to undo the harm done by the unscientific and populist approach of his predecessor Donald Trump. He invoked the old Defence Production Act (DPA), within two weeks of assuming office, to marshal all resources. His target of 200 million shots in the first 100 days was achieved before time. The US also started building up a strategic reserve of vaccines, now amounting to over 300 million surplus shots. But the DPA constrains the export of vaccines. Consequently, the four million doses given to Mexico and Canada were called a loan.

ial exports.

The US had other considerations for not sharing its vaccines. Both Pfizer and Modena have obtained liability protection from the US government for civil or criminal liability for any untoward health episode post-vaccination. If exported, they would seek similar protection from the importing nations. Only about one-third of the US population has been fully vaccinated so far and thus a fresh surge of cases was troubling. The new spike is driven by mutated ver-

sions, the efficacy of vac-cines against which is still unclear. The British mut-ant B.1.1.7 is believed to be 60 per cent more contagious and 67 per cent dead-lier. As per the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) data, adults in their 20s to 50s are getting hospitalised in the Midwest, South and Northwest. The New York Times said: "From Minnesota to New Jersey to North Carolina, younger people are making up a growing share of hospitalisations"

Currently, 45,000 persons are hospitalised in the US. Thus, an India unprepared for the second surge ignored US concerns when publicly seeking relax-ations of DPA restrictions on the export of vaccine production raw material and a possible loan of unused AstraZeneca vaccines, so far unapproved for emergency use. The initial rejection was taken as a snub and allowed to play in public. China's glee was palpable as its English mouthpiece Global Times chided India for depending on the US and not seeking Beijing's help. Russia also rushed to supply oxygen,

etc.
When India's mishandling and the fresh surge became lead news in the US media, and after mass cremation pictures appe ared on the front pages of its major newspapers, the Democrats and the Biden administration finally woke up. The liberal wing of the Democratic Party, which the Indian government and especially external affairs minister S. Jaishankar chided over their criticism of India's Kashmir policy, now came to India's rescue. US national security adviser Jake Sullivan tweeted on April 25 that after he talked to India's NSA Aiit Doval the US agreed to deploying more supplies and resources" to aid India as both nations had the greatest number of cases globally. Among this

When India's mishandling and the fresh surge became lead news in the US, the Democrats and the US administration finally woke up.

would be raw materials, protection kits, therapeutics, rapid diagnostic kits, ventilators, etc.
The US Development

Finance Corporation will

aid the expansion of vac-cine manufacture by Hyderabad-based Biological E Ltd, which has finished its Phases 1 and 2 trials. Baylor Medical College has provided the proven and simpler yeast-based expression technology. The company is to produce one billion doses by the end of 2022 at an affordable price. This is the magic bullet for the developing and underdeveloped world, now without access to a vaccine. Africa doesn't have even a vaccine producer now. Globally, the developed nations, with 16 per cent of the world population, have cornered 52 per cent of vaccines. But the US has still not cleared the export of unused AstraZeneca vaccines. President Joe Biden said the US was helping India in its hour of need as India it them in the past, but the focus is on capacity build-

being seen as the world's vaccine hub rather than a troubled victim? Political mismanagement, electoral partisanship, religious pandering and the lack of religious foresight have damaged India's image. It has left China smirking, though on the positive side Pakistan's political comments and public opinion have been empathetic. The current electoral cycle ends on April 29 in West Bengal, but immediately another begins as the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election is due in February 2022. Has the government learnt the lesson that public health and safety must remain above politics Also, US help will come laced with unsaid conditions. For one, majoritarianism and the democracy deficit may invite more forceful US intervention. India's Kashmir, Pakistan and Afghanistan policies will also see closer US monitoring. The misman aged pandemic at home will diminish the govern ment's political space both

How does India return to

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh

at home and abroad.

very great. Gujarat was low on the

#### **HEIGHT OF SLAVERY**

There is so much bootlicking, obsequies and servile behaviour from juniors to appease the seniors (Covid-hit cop blames seniors, DC, April 26). This incident is just a chip of the bark. Nobody is courageous enough to speak against this in the department. Except for a few, all are living like slaves and are tongue tied because of corruption. If these policemen want to be free from this slavery, they ought be honest.

**Dr Syed Sarmad** 

#### AAROGYASRI COVER

government's Aarogvasri scheme is the best plan for needy citizens. This is virtually a life saver for the downtrodden. Hope this programme will continue.

Mahesh Kumar Kachhawah

### **WAKE UP TIME**

Better late than never (Modi orders installation of Oxygen plants swiftly, DC, April 26). Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government had enough time to ponder over the problem and plan a course of action for the second wave. Now, it is a fire-fighting situation and May might go down in Indian history as the darkest ever thanks to the poor foresight of our rulers and people who neglected safety.

Govardhana Myneedu Vijayawada

### YEARS AGO IN hronicle **h**

#### **Curbs imposed on** diplomats, others

NEW DELHI, APRIL. 26 Relations between India and Pakistan headed for a diplomatic show-down today with India ordering retaliatory measures on the movement of Pakistani diplomatic and other personnel in

Under the new measures, effective from 1800 hours today, all diplomatic officers of Pakistani missions in India, their wives, children and domestic servants of Pakistan nationality will be required to obtain prior permission of the Government of India for their exit from India.

In a note handed over today to Mr. Sajjad Haider, Pakistan's High Commissioner here, India outlined the measures it has imposed following those already enforced by Pakistan.

Aakar Patel



India's health calamity has exposed flaws in Guj Model

ust before the 2014 election, two of India's most famous economists had a public quarrel. Because they were academics the language was mostly polite, but the disagreement was not minor. It was about the so-called "Gujarat Model". Jagdish Bhagwati took the side of Narendra Modi, and Amartya Sen took the opposite side. In brief, the Bhagwati-Modi view was to prioritise economic growth over social spending. Sen's view was that economic growth was not possible without social spending.

Sen did not oppose a liberalised business environment: his concern was primarily what the government did. Bhagwati did not oppose social spending: his concern was what the government should not do.

Both sides had rational arguments, but Sen had one unanswerable question: Could anyone name a nation that had become developed without a healthy and well-educated population? The answer to that was no. There is no nation on the world that has ignored investing in the health and education of its population and become developed. It is social spending that leads to growth and not the other way around. You cannot have a population that is not very literate and not very healthy and expect that industrialists will do all the work necessary to make a nation developed. The state and the government have the primary responsibility and function in this area

The "Gujarat Model believes that if the government supports industrial-ists by offering them subsidies, ease of doing business, freedom from workers' unions and holding vibrant Gujarat melas — if it does this for a sufficiently long period, then the benefits will accrue to the general population because it is business that makes the economy strong.

The Sen model believes that a healthy and educated population is both an end in itself and a means to achieving economic prosperity. It was in fact possible for the government to create a healthy and educated population even when it had no real economic strength, and Cuba is an example of this. There is no example of a developed nation that had a Third World education and health care system. For this reason, the State must focus on building a strong education system and a strong healthcare system and prioritise its spending in these areas. Sen supports schemes like MNREGA and the right to food, Narendra Modi opposed MNREGA and called it a monument to failure. The Congress Party said this week that in 25 years under the BJP, including 12 years under Mr Modi, Gujarat did not build a single new government hospital. The BJP has not denied the claim, meaning that it is correct. Of course, many Vibrant Gujarat summits were held. What did they produce ultimately? The answer is not development, whatever definition we can use for it. Yes, it is true that some Gujaratis have become very wealthy, a few even managing to triple their wealth in 2020 a year, when many of us lost work. But for the majority there was no benefit. The large industries that came up in Gujarat did not employ a lot of people. This is why the most dominant political community of the state, the Patidars, took to the streets demanding reservations in jobs.

The sacrifice that was made by the population for the Gujarat Model was

Human Development Index and in 2012 Mr Modi told the Wall Street Journal that malnutrition in his state was high because its girls were "fashion conscious" and didn't want to drink milk. This sort of contempt and ignorance of fundamental issues has come at a cost to India. The Sen model is not only about expenditure, it is also about the focus of the State. A government which believes that it is the well-being of its citizenry as measured through their health and education will be geared and organised in a particular way. It will not be caught scrambling one year after a global pandemic because it does not have enough oxygen or medicines or beds. The Guiarat Model expected that the private sector would take care of health because it was a business and there would be consumers. That is not how the rest of the world has achieved it. It is not necessary to say today that

Bhagwati was totally wrong because he was, and we can see that all around us. As India suffers and the ruling party is on the defensive, the

truth is that the only way that this wave will pass is if exponential growth of the virus stops on its own. The intervention of the government is so poor and so weak that it cannot by itself do anything significant to save us. In the short term we have to suffer the consequences and there is

no option. This is the reason why Prime Minister Modi has been missing from the public eye after stopping his rallies in West Bengal abruptly. The reason why Mr Modi was furious that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal showed their interaction to the rest of us was not because it was a breach of protocol but because the truth was exposed and it was embarrassing. At a moment of crisis, we are choosing to run away from the fact that core beliefs about what the government should do have been proven wrong. We should have an honest discussion once again about the Bhagwati and Sen debate and what we should do in the medium and long

> The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

# quick BITES

<b>INDICATOR</b>	S	%
Sensex	48386.51	1.06
Nifty 50	14485.00	1.00
S&P 500*	4,189.51	0.22
Dollar (₹)	74.73	0.39
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.99	0.11
Euro (₹)	90.41	0.04
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,976▼81	0.17
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	65.57	-0.82
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.038	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.568	0.001
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

### **Mankind Pharma** to give ₹100 cr to families of dead

Mankind Pharma will donate Rs 100 crore to the families of deceased doctors, police officers, pharmacists, and other healthcare workers who have lost their lives fighting the pandemic. The firm plans to start releasing the money with immediate effect and hopes to complete it within three months, Mankind said in a statement. The firm said it is standing alongside the families of the heroes who lost their lives.



### ■ Age ceiling for top tier set at 70 years

# **Bank chief's tenure** capped at 15 years

**FALAKNAAZ SYED** MUMBAI, APRIL 26

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday fixed the tenure of managing directors and chief executive officers (MD & CEO) and whole-time directors (WTD) in private sector banks at 15 years and prescribed the maximum age of 70 years for such functionaries.

The central bank also said a CEO, MD or WTD, who is a promoter or major shareholder of a bank as well, will not be eligible to hold these posts for more than 12 years, with an extension of up to 15 years permitted at its sole discretion. Bank chiefs and WTDs who are not promoters will be eligible for a second-term even after the 15year period after a threeyear break. During this three-year gap, the individual shall not be associated with the bank or its group entities in any capacity. The RBI also said the must be an independent director. It also listed other

guidelines on the pay of non-executive directors, age limits and setting up of audits, remuneration and risk-management commit-The RBI has given banks until October 1 to comply

with the rules. Analysts pointed that promoter Uday Kotak, who has been at the helm of Kotak Mahindra Bank for over 12 years, had been reappointed for a term of years starting

immediately impacted. Similarly, the RBI approved the reappointment of N. Kamakodi, MD & CEO of City Union Bank,

January 2021, may not be

May 1, 2020 will continue. Kamakodi has been heading the bank since 2011.

However, one will have to wait and see as to what view the RBI takes on Bandhan Bank. Does the limit include the MD and CEO's tenure when he was heading Bandhan as an NBFC? Similarly, the MDs of Federal Bank, DCB Bank and RBL Bank have been there for long but the upper limit of 15 years may not have an immediate impact on these banks. said an analyst.

J.N. Gupta, former executive director of Sebi, said, "I am unable to understand as to why the RBI feels that independent directors and non-executive directors should be paid a fixed sum which is in total contradiction with the provisions of Companies Act. Secondly, how can a promoter who owns substantial equity in the bank be asked to sit on the fence and watch non-interested parties manage the bank.

#### **AUTO INDUSTRY VETERAN JAGDISH KHATTAR PASSES AWAY**

New Delhi, April 26: Former managing director of Maruti Suzuki India, Jagdish Khattar, passed away Monday morning following a cardiac arrest, according to people close to

chairman of the board

Khattar (79), a former bureaucrat, was considered as one of the most high profile leaders of the



growth after the government began its disinvestment in 2002 and gradually exited from its joint venture with Suzuki Motor

He had joined the then the founda-Maruti Udyog Ltd in July tion for Maruti's 1993 as director (marketfuture

Maruti Suzuki chairman R. C. Bhargava, who persuaded Khattar to leave IAS and join Maruti, termed him as a "first class person" and his demise as a "big loss" both personally as well as for the automo-

### **MPHASIS OWNERSHIP CHANGE TO SET OFF OPEN OFFER**

New Delhi, April 26: Shares of Mphasis Ltd closed with a gain of over 1.6 per cent on Monday after Black-stone said funds managed it will acquire a majority stake in the mid-sized IT firm.

This, the private equity firm said, will trigger an open offer for acquisition of up to 26 per cent stake for about Rs 8,262 crore.

A wholly owned subsidiary of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, UC Investments (Office of the Chief Investment Officer of The Regents, University of California) and oth ers will co-invest with Blackstone PE fund in the company, a statement said. A different fund man-

aged by Blackstone had acquired a controlling stake in Mphasis from Hewlett Packard Enterprise in September 2016. Based on the open offer subscription, the blended purchase price will vary between Rs 1,452 and Rs 1,497 per share and the purchase consideration will vary between Rs 15,200 crore and Rs 21,000 crore (about \$2 bn-2.8 bn), the statement said.

At the end of March 2021 quarter, Marble II Pte Ltd, a fund managed by Blackstone, held 56.03 per cent stake Mphasis.

Mphasis in a regulatory filing said Marble II will sell up to 55.31 per cent stake as part of a share purchase signed on Monday.-

### Price gap of ready and under construction houses narrows

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 26

Sluggish demand has narrowed down the price difference between ready-tomove-in and under-con-struction residential units to as low as 3 per cent.

The price gap between ready and or under-construction housing, which has been narrowing since 2017, has come down to 3 to 5 per cent, indicating the sluggishness in demand in the market, finds Anarock

Property Consultants.
In 2017, the price gap stood at 9 to 12 per cent and it had narrowed to 5-8 per cent in 2018.

In Mumbai, the price difference shrunk from 12



per cent in 2017 to 3 per cent in Q1 2021. In the case of Bengaluru, it was 12 per cent and 4 per cent and Pune, the gap narrowed from 12 per cent to 5 per cent.

NCR were Rs 4,650 per sq.

According to Anarock, average prices of ready-tooccupy homes in Delhi

ft. and for under-construc tion ones Rs 4,500 per sq. ft. In Mumbai it stood at Rs 10,700 per sq ft and Rs 10,350 per sq ft respectively Apart from sluggish demand, unsold stock too held back the price rise of ready-to-occupy homes in these years. Construction delays and stalled projects also made customers averse to investing in under-construction units. Further, ready-to-occupy homes do not attract GST and this has been an added attraction.

"The shrunk price gap works well for end-users as well as investors," said Anuj Puri, Consultants.

### **BUSINESS**

### **TECH MAHINDRA Q4 NET UP 34.6% TO ₹1,080 CR**

Mumbai, April 26: Tech Mahindra reported a 34.6 per cent jump in net profit to Rs 1,081 crore for the March 2020 quarter and guided towards targeting for a double-digit revenue growth in FY22. Its post-tax net profit grew 9.8 per cent to Rs 4,428 crore in 2020-21, on the back of a 2.7 per cent growth in overall revenues to Rs 37,855 crore. CEO and MD C. P. Gurnani said 2020-21 was the "repair" year when the company faced the pandemic impact, and promised 2021-22 to be a "growth year".

### TATA MOTORS TO CUT PRODUCTION

Pune, April 26: Tata Motors said it has decided to "calibrate" production of its vehicles with actual demand to prevent oversupply and a pile up of inventory at the company and dealers. It did not give any details about the likely quantum of interests of its customers, dealers and -Michael Gonsalves

### **POWERGRID INVIT'S IPO THIS WK**

reduction in production. "The lock-

down enforced in various parts of the

country is expected to impact vehicle

demand temporarily," the auto major

said, adding, Hence, the firm has set in

motion a comprehensive 'Business Agility Plan' to protect and serve the



Mumbai, April 26: Powergrid InvIT will come out with India's first PSU infrastructure investment trust IPO on Thursday, April 29. The IPO seeks to

raise Rs 7,734.92 crore from units sold at a price band of Rs 99 to Rs 100 apiece. IRB InvIT and Indi Grid InvIT are already listed on the stock exchanges. An InvIT is a collective investment scheme similar to a mutual fund that inve4sts in infrastructure projects. The Powergrid InvIT IPO comprises fresh issue of units for up to Rs 4,993.48 crore and the selling unitholder is offering units aggregating up to Rs 2,741.50 — Ravi Ranjan Prasad

### **GAMES**

#### SHORT TAKES

### **Hockey captain**

#### Rani. 6 others +ve

New Delhi: Seven members of the Indian women's hockey team, including captain Rani Rampal, and two support staff members on Monday tested pos-itive for Covid-19 ahead of a training camp at the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Centre

in Bengaluru. All the players and support staff are asymptomatic and have been placed under observation at the SAI centre.

"They were tested on April 24, post quarantine after their return from their respective home towns to their training base at SAI Bengaluru, as per the laid down protocol," the SAI said in a

### **Nadal bags 12th**

#### **Barcelona crown**

Barcelona: Rafael Nadal saved a championship point to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 6-7 (6/8), 7-5 on Sunday and claim a 12th Barcelona Open title in the ATP's longest match of 2021. He secured his first title of the year and 87th of his career, denying Tsitsipas back-to-back triumphs following his maiden Masters 1000 title at Monte Carlo last week. Nadal avenged his Australian Open quarter-final loss to Tsitsipas and will return to second in the ATP rankings on Monday by climbing back above Daniil Medvedev after his

### **Cirstea wins WTA**

marathon 3-hour 38-minute win.

### title after 13 years

Istanbul: Romania's Sorana Cirstea said she "didn't expect" to win the Istanbul claycourt tournament on Sunday, her second career title coming 13 years after her first. The 31-year-old Romanian

defeated top-seeded Elise Mertens of Belgium 6-1, 7-6 (7/3) in the final having not dropped a set all week.

Cirstea, ranked at 67 in the world, captured her maiden title at Tashkent in 2008. Sunday was her fifth final, having made her maiden championship

match as a 17-year-old qualifier at Budapest 2007. "I'm very, very happy for this trophy," Cirstea said at the winner's ceremony. - AFF

## FOUR IN A ROW FOR CITY

### Guardiola's men outclass Tottenham to retain League Cup in front of fans

**London, April 26:** Manchester City manager Pen Guardiola said win ning felt much better with fans in attendance after beating Tottenham 1-0 at Wembley to lift the League Cup for the fourth consecutive year in front of 8,000 supporters on Sunday.

Aymeric Laporte's header eight minutes from time finally rewarded a dominant performance from City as they extended Spurs' 13-year wait to win a trophy.

For the first time in 13 months, a football match in England had designated fans from both teams inside the stadium in one of a series of test events at the 90,000 capacity Wembley as coronavirus restrictions are eased.

"It's not full, but it is nuch better," said Guardiola. "To celebrate with them is much better. "We played really well. We are incredibly happy to win the first title, four in a row in this competition,

Defeat by Chelsea in the FA Cup semi-finals last weekend means City cannot claim an unprecedent-

April

Atletico Madrid's title

hopes suffered a setback

on Sunday as a shock 2-1

defeat at Athletic Bilbao handed Barcelona the

upper hand in a thrilling

race at the top of La Liga.

Real Madrid's draw with

Real Betis on Saturday

gave Atletico the chance to pull further clear but

instead they ended the

weekend with their lead

reduced, a loss at San

Mames the latest twist in

Europe's most unpredictable domestic chase.

Barcelona had earlier

Griezmann's

beaten Villarreal by the same scoreline, with

quick-fire double becom-

ing all the more valuable

Antoine

**ATLETICO DEFEAT BY BILBAO** 

HANDS INITIATIVE TO BARCA

but especially because in

the last 33 games, we won



Manchester City players celebrate with the trophy after winning the League Cup final against Tottenham Hotspur 1-0 at the Wembley Stadium in London on Sunday.

ed quadruple of trophies

However, they remain on course for a treble with the first leg of their Champions League semifinal against Paris Saint-Wednesday before possibly

after another Atletico slip.

overlooked as possible

champions in Spain but

they are right in the mix

as well now after a 2-1 win

over Granada puts them

just three points off the

top and one behind Real

Yet Barcelona were the biggest winners, with Ronald Koeman's team

able to go top of the table

if they win their game in

hand at home to Granada

on Thursday, even if Atletico might have a way

back given they are still to

play at Camp Nou on May

Real Madrid host Sevilla

Madrid.

a day later.

Sevilla have largely been

the Premier sealing League title next weekend. Victory takes Guardiola's personal tally of major trophies to 25 across his spells in charge of Barcelona, Bayern Munich and City, seven of which have come in England.

"I was in big clubs: Barcelona, Bayern Munich and here, that's why it is easier to do it," added the Catalan modestly.

By contrast, Tottenham's long wait for just one goes on. Spurs could have no complaints, though, at the

them sack Jose along with City and four other English clubs, pull out of a proposed European Super League amid fan fury.

end of a chaotic week that

Son Heung-min was reduced to tears after fulltime, but in caretaker boss Mason's second game in charge, Spurs completely were classed by a far superior

"It's difficult to take for everyone associated with the football club," said for-mer Tottenham midfielder

"It hurts. I know that feeling and it is normal that they are hurting. This group of players care deeply about this football club. We tried, it wasn't enough today and it's tough to take.

After a slight dip in form in recent weeks, City were back to their best as they pinned Tottenham back from the first whistle and should have won by a far more comfortable score-

Hugo Lloris's goal lived a charmed life, particularly

### during the first half.

### Italian clubs in rebel league to be banned from Serie 'A' acknowledging the failure

Rome, April 26: The Italian football federation (FIGC) said on Monday that clubs who join a breakaway league would be banned from all domestic competitions including

Three Serie 'A' clubs — Juventus, Inter Milan and AC Milan — were among 12 major European sides who were involved in the plans to launch a European Super League last week

"(Clubs) who plan to play in competitions outside of FIFA or UEFA will lose their affiliation to our championship," FIGC championship," FIGU Gabriele president Gabriele Gravina said after a meet-

clubs — Juventus, Inter Milan and AC Milan — were among 12 major **European sides who** were involved in the plans to launch a **European Super** League last week.

Three Serie A

ing on Monday. Inter Milan announced their withdrawal from the English clubs.

proposed Super League last Wednesday after the departure of the 'big six' But Juventus and AC

Milan were less clear,

were leaving the project. "It is obvious that if, on

June 21, the closing date for applications for registration, some wanted to participate in competitions of a private nature, they would not take part in our championship," said Gravina in a state-

of the plans without speci-

fying whether or not they

"At the moment, we have no information on who stayed and who left the Super League. The new rule will be

added to the licenses of the clubs and into the reg-ulatory texts of the FIGC.

### Deepika, Atanu trap triple gold

Guatemala City, April • This was the best 26: Indian archery's star ever World Cup couple Deepika Kumari and Atanu Das led the show with two individual gold medals as the country capped its best ever performance in a World Cup, claiming three golds and a bronze in the tournament's first stage here.

Former world number one Deepika claimed her career's third individual World Cup gold to add to the team's triumph, while her husband Das grabbed his first ever World Cup individual medal in style winning the men recurve individual final. men's

The two are now automatically qualified for this season's most-coveted Archery World Cup Final.

'We travel together, train together, compete together and win together," Das, who got married to Deepika in June last year after a two-year courtship, said after claiming the gold medal on Sunday.

"She knows what I like, and I know what she

This was the best ever World Cup finish by India's recurve archers with two individual and one team gold medals in their return to the top International calendar year event after almost two years.

Also, this was India's ever individual recurve men's result since

finish by India's recurve archers with two individual and one team gold medals in their return to the top International calendar year event after almost two

Jayanta Talukdar triumphed in Croatia way back in 2009.

vears.

India started with the women's trio of Deepika, Bhakat Ankita Komalika Bari winning the first team gold after seven years. They scripted a stunning turnaround to down fancied Mexico 5-4 (27-26) in an intriguing shoot-off.

The performance rubbed off on the mixed pair of Das and Bhakat as they bagged a bronze, upsetting top seeds USA 6-2 with yet another fightback at the Sports Complex Los Arcos

But the icing on the cake came in the individual events later in the day when Deepika and Das bagged two individual golds in their respective events.

This was Deepika's third career stage win and first since Salt Lake City 2018.

### **TOKYO TO DECIDE ON FAN** LIMIT BY END OF MONTH

Tokyo, April 26: Tokyo 2020 President Seiko Hashimoto said on Monday that she will decide the upper limit of spectators for the Olympics and

Paralympics by the end of April. "As for the upper limit of spectators, we will make a decision on that regard by the end of April. In order to flexibly address the virus situation including the state of emergency, we will work closely with the IOC, IPC, the central government and the Tokyo metropolitan government in order to gain consensus," said Hashimoto during Tokyo 2020 executive board meet-

ing held in the capital. Hashimoto noted that she was highly aware of concern about the virus resurgence as the state of emergency has been issued in Tokyo and three other prefectures but will have anti-virus measures that address all the possible issues that may be caused by holding the games amid the pandemic.

• RAJASTHAN ROYALS • ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE • SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

**DECCAN CHRONICLE, NELLORE, TUESDAY, 27 APRIL 2021** 

Shikhar Dhawan, DO KL Rahul,

**PBKS** Faf du **Plessis**, CSK

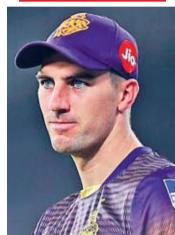
**PURPLE** 

Harshal Patel, RCB

**Avesh** Khan, DC

Rahul Chahar, MI

Off the field



KKR pacer Pat Cummins.

#### **Cummins donates** \$50K to PM fund

Kolkata Knight Riders'
Australian pacer Pat Cummins on Monday announced a \$50,000 donation towards PM CARES Fund for oxygen supplies in India's COVID-19 ravaged hospitals and backed the IPL to contin-"advised" that the Indian government views it "as few hours of joy" in a difficult time. "As players, we are privileged to have the platform that allows us to reach millions of people that we can use for good. With that in mind, I have made a contribution to the PM CARES Fund, specifically to purchase oxygen supplies for India's hospitals," he stated.

#### Cricket Australia monitors situation

Cricket Australia have said they are in touch with their player after three of them pulled out of the IPL and returned home. "We will continue to listen to feedback from those on the ground in India and the advice of the Australian Government. Our thoughts are with the people of India," it added.

The Sydney Morning Herald on Monday reported that many Australian players are "nervous about securing safe passage back home after the Scott Morrison government reduced the number of incoming passengers allowed from India.

#### **Coulter-Nile feels** safer in bio-bubble

Australian pacer Nathan Coulter-Nile understands why some of his compatriots decided to leave home midway from the IPL but he feels safer being part of the Mumbai Indians' bio-bubble.

"Everyone's got their own opinions on it and different situations for them." Coulter-Nile told cricket.com.au where more than 20,000 cases have been reported daily for the past one week.

"I was surprised to see AJ go home, and then Zamps and Richo, but when you speak to them, you definitely understand where they're coming from. I spoke to Zamps a little while ago and he made a very compelling argument for going home. But for me, I feel like it's safer for me to stay in

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Editor: Kaushik Mitter

# **BUBBLE WOBBLES**

### Pressure mounts as Ashwin and two more Aussies pull out

New Delhi, April 26: Anxiety pierced through IPL's bio-secure bubble on Monday with leading off-spinner Ravichandran and some Australian players withdrawing from the league amid the escalating COVID-19 crisis in India even as the BCCI insisted that the glitzy league will go on.

The 34-year-old Ashwin, competing for Delhi Capitals, decided to take a break saying that his family is currently "putting up a fight against COVID-19" and he wants to sup-port them. He hopes to return to the side "if things go in the right

However, the duo of Kane Richardson and Adam Zampa (both Royal Challengers Bangalore) withdrew as apprehension set in after a couple of weeks went by smoothly for the league being held in front of empty stands across six venues.

#### **FEAR OF GETTING LOCKED OUT**

Zampa and Richardson have not yet spoken about their "personal reasons" for leav-Andrew (Rajasthan Royals) who pulled out on Sunday said he feared getting locked out of his own country owing to mounting quarantine cases from India in his hometown Perth.

"I just thought to try and get on the front foot and get home before I got locked out of the country...think I've had 11 days at home out of the bubble since August, so for me I just wanted to get home," Tve told *SEN Radio* from Doha, the transit point before his flight to Perth.

#### **BCCI KEEN ON**

The BCCI, on its part, insisted that the event will continue and it wouldn't come in the way of those wanting to leave.

"As of now, IPL is going ahead. Obviously, if anyone wants to leave, that's a senior Board official said on con- May 30 in Ahmedabad.

New Delhi, April 26: Kolkata Knight Riders

few other Australians a

bit nervous about getting

back into Australia,'

Hussey, a former Australia international,

told the Sydney Morning

Lead Australia pacer

be nervous about the cur-

Chennai, April 26: The

IPL has created the

"safest" bio-hub for its

participants but Delhi

Capitals head coach Ricky

Ponting says he is also well aware of the "grim"

COVID-19 situation out-

side the bubble in India

and often discusses it with

his players. The Australian great, while admitting that IPL

can be a welcome distrac-

tion in these tough times,

said that COVID-19 has

dominated the conversa-

more than any other, has

become more about what's

happening on the outside

rather than what's hap-

"This IPL, probably

tions within his team.

rent situation in India.

of the KKR squad.

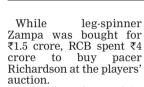
Herald.

19 surge in India.



My family and extended family are putting up a fight against #COVID19 and I want to support them during these tough times.

> — R. ASHWIN DC off-spinner



Richardson featured in one match for RCB, returning figures of 1 for 29 in three overs against Rajasthan Royals in Mumbai, but Zampa couldn't make it to the playing XI this season.

The 34-year-old Tye had also not got a game with the Royals so far and his contract with the franchise was worth ₹1 crore. Several England and New Zealand players are also competing in the event but haven't yet spoken about their concerns.

### **ECB TO WORK WITH**

"We continue to monitor and work with the players on an individual basis. Our thoughts are with the people of India during these difficult times," a spokesperson of the Wales England and Cricket Board said.

The players from New Zealand, including Kane Williamson and Trent Boult, are expected to leave early in any case as they have a Test series against England starting June 2. They will have to head back in last week of May to be available for it because of quarantine rules. The IPL final is



Sunrisers Hyderabad players Kane Williamson (left) and David Warner don PPE kits

### Royals down with just four foreigners, seek player loans

New Delhi, April 26: Rajasthan Royals have approached fellow IPL teams to loan players after the departure of their four foreign players due to various reasons that include injuries, bubble fatigue and COVID-19 fear.

Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer are out of the IPL due to injuries while Liam Livingstone had back home citing fatigue.

Sunday, Andrew Tve left for Australia, citing fear due to surge of COVID-19 cases in India, making Royals the worst affected team from player pull-outs. "The team is looking to loan players and has written to other franchisees but nothing is decided at this point," a source close the team

management said. The IPL loan window

the game and try to enter-

tain people around the world," said Hussey.

players are pragmatic and want the tournament

nervous about what's

going on over here, but

they're also pragmatic. A couple of players, their

fathers have passed away.

One person in particular,

he's one of the staff mem-

bers with us and his

father passed away last year from COVID, and he

was really pragmatic by

saying it was his time to

to go on.

'Everyone's

However, he said the

sion of the league stage Tye, who had not played a game this season, flew back home on Sunday fearing being locked out of his own country with India reporting record COVID-19 infections for the past few days.

IPL rules state that a player who have played less than two matches in the season can be loaned and cannot play against his home franchise.

### **TYE QUESTIONS 'INSANE MONEY' SPENT IN IPL**

**Melbourne, April 26:** Rajasthan Royals pacer Andrew Tye, who left for Australia midway the IPL in the wake of COVID-19 surge in India, was critical of the franchises spending "insane money" on cricket at a time when their country is facing an unprecedented health cri-

Tye, however, said the league should go ahead if it was a means to relieving stress.

"How are these companies and franchises spending so much money when there's people not being able to get accepted into hospital?," he asked. He said players in the

IPL are safe now but at the same time asked "if it's going to stay safe"

home after the match

'Guys living in Chennai,

win against Mumbai

crossed and hope people on the outside remain

safe. Players can take care

"We can keep our fingers

Hyderabad.

SunRisers

	POINTS TABLE						
Teams	Р	W	L	N/R	Points	Net RR	
CSK	5	4	1	0	8	+1.612	
DC	5	4	1	0	8	+0.334	
RCB	5	4	1	0	8	+0.096	
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	

### KKR return to winning ways

**Ahmedabad, April 26:** Kolkata Knight Riders recovered from initial iitters to successfully chase down a modest 124-run target against Punjab Kings

in 16.4 overs in an IPL match here on Monday.
For Punjab, opener Mayank Agarwal top-scored with a painstaking 31 off 34 balls but Chris Jordan's 30 off 18 balls took them past 120-run mark.

Prasidh Krishna had best figures of 3 for 30 while Pat Cummins and Sunil Narine also chipped in with a couple of wickets While chasing, KKR were

in trouble at 17 for 3 before Rahul Tripathi (41 off 32 balls) and skipper Eoin Morgan (47 not out off 40 balls) put them on course with a 66-run fourth wicket

After suffering four defeats on the trot in Chennai and Mumbai, the bottom-placed KKR's campaign finally got some boost as the bowling unit led by Pat Cummins fired in unison.

Youngster Shivam Mavi (1/13) started it all, tying things down with the new ball, bowling 15 dot balls in his four overs on the trot, before Cummins (2/31) and Prasidh Krishna (3/30) tightened the noose sharing five wickets between them at the death.

The pace troika removed the top three KL Rahul (19), Chris Gayle (0) and Deepak Hooda (1) in space of 12 balls for six runs to leave PBKS in a disarray in the

SCORECARD

Punjab Kings: KL Rahul c Narine b Cummins 19, Mayank Agarwal c Tripathi b Narine 31, Chris Gayle c Karthik b Shivam Mavi O, Deepak Hooda c Morgan b Prasidh Krishna 1, Nicholas Pooran b Varun 19, Moises Henriques b Narine 2, Shahrukh Khan c Morgan b Prasidh Krishna 13, Chris Prasidh Krishna 13, Chris Jordan b Prasidh Krishna 30, Ravi Bishnoi c Morgan b Cummins 1, Mohammed Shami (not out) 1, Arshdeep Singh (not out) 1. Extras (lb 1, w 4) 5. Total (for nine wick-ets in 20 overs) 123. FoW: 1-36, 2-38, 3-42, 4-60, 5-75, 6-79, 7-95, 8-98, 9-121. Bowling: Shiyam Mayi 4-0-

5-7-9, 6-79, 7-95, 8-98, 9-121. **Bowling:** Shivam Mavi 4-0-13-1, Pat Cummins 3-0-31-2, Sunil Narine 4-0-22-2, Prasidh Krishna 4-0-30-3, Andre Russell 1-0-2-0, Varun Chakravarthy 4-0-24-1.

Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubman Gill Ibw b Mohammed Shami 9, Nitish Rana c Shahrukh Khan b Henriques O, Rahul Tripathi c Henriques O, Rahul Tripathi c Shahrukh Khan b Hooda 41, Sunil Narine c Ravi Bishnoi b Arshdeep Singh O, Eoin Morgan (not out) 47, Andre Russell run out (Arshdeep Singh/Rahul) 10, Dinesh Karthik (not out) 12. Extras (Ib 6, w 1) 7. Total (for five wickets in 16.4 overs) 126. FoW: 1-5, 2-9, 3-17, 4-83, 5-FoW: 1-5, 2-9, 3-17, 4-83, 5-

**Bowling:** Moises Henriques 1-0-5-1, Mohammed Shami 4-0-25-1, Arshdeep Singh 2.4-0-27-1, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-19-0, Chris Jordan 3-0-2 Deepak Hooda 2-0-20-1.

On a pitch where ball stayed low and gripped a bit, the Punjab batsmen failed to apply themselves with Sunil Narine (2/22) and Varun Chakravarthy denting



### Capitals, RCB in battle of equals

Ahmedabad, April 26: Seeing the loss in their previous game as a blip, Virat

Challengers Bangalore will have to be at their best to beat a formidable Delhi Capitals unit in the IPL here on Tuesday. While RCB will have to

shrug off their 69-runs thrashing at the hands of Chennai Super Kings in their last game and start afresh, Delhi's confidence would be boosted by their thrilling 'Super Over' win Sunrisers against Hyderabad on Sunday

night. Up Capitals, RCB will need to address their middle-order woes, to return to winning ways, in what could be touted as a battle of equals.

For the RCB, it will be important that the openers — the in-form Devdutt Padikkal (171 runs) and Kohli (151 runs) — continue to provide a solid start at the Narendra Modi sta-

dium. But the opening duo would need the much-needed support from the middle-order, which crumbled

against ĆSK. The likes of Glenn Maxwell (198 runs), Ab de Villiers (129 runs), and the misfiring all-rounder Washington Sundar (25 runs), will have to perform in unison against a strong Delhi attack.

Delhi Capitals vs Royal Challengers Bangalore from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD1

Live on TV

**HEAD to HEAD** 

14 DC **RCB** 

Matches

**FOR THE RECORD** 

Rishabh Pant who has hit 199 fours in 73 innings needs just one four to become only the second batsman after Virender Sehwag (266 fours in 79 innings) to complete a double century of fours for Delhi

• AB de Villiers with 4,978 runs at an average of 40.47 in 160 innings needs 22 runs to become the sixth batsman to complete 5,000 runs ir

**LAST YEAR'S MATCHES** 

 Delhi Capitals defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by 59 runs at

 Delhi Capitals beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by 6 wickets **STATS:** S. PERVEZ QAISER

Australian Maxwell did justify his high price tag in the first few matches and would be raring to go once

again. The RCB bowlers will have to forget the hammer-

ing received at the hands of the CSK batters.

#### mentor David Hussey has said that some of the fellow Australians in the IPL are a "bit nervous" about getting back home in the wake of a COVID-"Everyone is sort of a nervous about whether they can get back into Australia. I dare say there will be a

Everyone is a bit nervous: Hussey

KKR batting coach David Hussey (left) talks to bowling coach Kyle Mills.

"We're stuck in bubbles. Pat Cummins is also part It's probably not too dissimilar to what all Hussey praised the strict bio-bubble in place Victorians experienced last year in lockdown really. You get tested for the IPL but said it is natural for the players to every second day. So it's quite full-on but I think precaution has

pening here. We are prob-

ably the safest people in

because of the bubbles we are in," Ponting told the DC *YouTube* channel.

"Continually, I am ask-

ing the boys at the break-

fast as to what's happen-

ing on the outside and if

their families are safe amd happy. That's really an important thing.

"I think IPL in a situa-

tion that the country is in,

cricket can bring a lot of

joy to people," he added. However, there is no denying that state of

affair is pretty gloomy at

country

"It is on the radar. It's on

been taken for everyone's

**Ricky Ponting** 

nament, citing the COVID-

19 "fight" his family is

ing about being one big family and it's important

"Here in DC, we are talk-

enduring.

the news every minute of the day. You see people in hospital beds. It puts a lot of things in perspective. We actually discussed after the game last night,

"From a Kolkata point

of view, we're desperate

extended family not

be away from their

iust us here. Yes. it's

hard for the players to

#### for the tournament to keep going, purely because everyone's in lockdown, there's not much else to do," added

#### We're safe, but it's grim outside: Ponting the kind of mental state It's important that we he was in before he left are thinking about

they are actually at home families and I can't now but can't see their families. It's incredibly even imagine putting myself in the situation. difficult. The more we can share these experiences, the better off we are," - RICKY PONTING Ponting had said after the

Delhi Capitals coach

grim. Yes, it's hard for the players to be away from their families and I can't even imagine putting myself in the situation," Ponting known for his the moment as Ravichandran Ashwin has pulled out of the tour- that we are thinking about extended family not just us here because it's quite straight talk said.

He, in fact, didn't name Ashwin but spoke about

of their families on the

inside," he said.

outside and we can do

whatever we can on the