

DECCAN CHRONICLE

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | 1 MAY 2021

WEATHER

Max: 38.8°C
Min: 25.0°C
RH: 36%
Rain: Trace

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Rain likely in some parts.
Max/Min temp. 39/26°C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Chaitra Bahula Panchami till 4.46 pm

Star: Mula till 10.18 am
Varjyan: 8.59 am to 10.18 am;
7.23 pm to 8.54 pm

Durmuhuram: 5.53 am to
7.34 am

Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am

HIJRI CALENDAR

Ramzan 18,1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.46 am

Zohar: 12.23 pm

Asar: 4.39 pm

Maghrib: 6.42 pm

Isha: 7.53 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.36 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.59 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 11.19 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 9.35 AM

RAMZAN TIMINGS

IFTAR: 6.42 PM (TODAY)

SEHRI: 4.24 AM (TOMORROW)

COUNTER POINT



We are better prepared to form governments!

NATION | 7

SC: Don't stop internet posts for Covid help

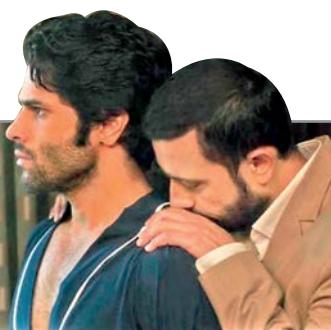


SPORTS | 10

Olympics could be held without fans

TABLOID

The rise of intimacy coaches



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PROBE ETALA'S 'LAND-GRAB': KCR

Health minister dares CM for a probe into alleged encroachment of assigned lands by him for his poultry firm

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC
HYDERABAD APRIL 30



Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Friday ordered a probe into the allegations of a poultry farm owned by health minister Etala Rajendar encroaching assigned lands in Achampet village in the Chief Minister's native Medak district.

The Chief Minister directed Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar to obtain a comprehensive report from the District Collector and also asked the Vigilance and Enforcement department to find out the truth in the allegations (made against the minister's company). The Chief Minister's decision comes in the wake of a vernacular TV channel, owned by his own family, airing reports claiming to have exposed the encroachment of assigned lands by the health minister.

However, later in the evening, Rajendar held a press conference and dared the Chief Minister to get a probe done by a sitting judge or any investigating agency empowered by the law of the land and prove that he encroached land belonging to the assignees. Describing the media reports as a pre-planned attack to malign his image, the Minister

said truth would ultimately prevail.

Sources close to the Chief Minister told *Deccan Chronicle* that Rao in all likelihood would remove Rajendar from the Cabinet. The swift political developments will have far-reaching consequences and huge impact on state politics. All eyes are on the next move of Etala, a strong and wealthy politician hailing from Mudiraj community and a close associate of finance minister T. Harish Rao.

The CM's camp waited for the minister's press conference to see if he would quit on his own but the defiant minister not only declined to step down but also made several comments that would have a direct bearing on the Chief Minister or on his government's decisions.

The CMO official media release also said, "The CM issued orders that the preliminary inquiry into the matter should be done immediately," giving strength to the rumours that Rao was in a hurry to get rid of the health minister.

"The situation reached a flashpoint now," said sources in the CM camp.

According to T News, owned by Rao family, the health minister's Jamuna Hatcheries was in possession of large extent of assignment land and was

PAGE 3

Oppn seeks probe on all ministers, MPs

Opposition parties on Friday demanded that the Chief Minister order an inquiry into the deals of all ministers and TRS MLAs, MLCs, MPs facing charges of land encroachments

Bigwigs 'plotted' Etala's ouster

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD APRIL 30

The controversy over Jamuna Hatcheries encroaching into assigned lands given to the poor in Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao's native Medak district seems to have been brought to fore by the powers that be with the purpose of "getting rid of" health minister Etala Rajendar.

Immediately after the polling in two corporations and five municipalities concluded on Friday evening, two vernacular TV channels including the one owned by the Chief Minister's family started airing stories on the alleged encroachment of assigned lands by the health minister.

Within no time, the Chief Minister ordered an inquiry into the allegations and directed chief secretary Somesh Kumar to submit a report by Saturday after obtaining inputs from the district collector.

The ruling dispensation had built its case on the depositions of former collector Dharmendra Reddy and serving additional collector Nagesh who went on record that the minister tried to get the assignment lands regularised but he was told, in return, that the rules did not permit it.

News owned by the Chief Minister's family even gave a caption, 'Health Minister's land encroachment disease', dropping enough hints on the future course of action including likely dismissal as was hinted at by sources in the CM's camp.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER the polling in two corporations and five municipalities concluded on Friday evening, two vernacular TV channels including the one owned by the Chief Minister's family started airing stories on the alleged encroachment of assigned lands by the health minister.

Notably, while Rao took oath as CM for the second term shortly after the TRS won the Assembly polls with a landslide majority, he took only Mohd. Mahmood Ali into his Cabinet. Rao carried on the show in this form for two months until February 12, 2019.

A two-man show for such a duration was a record of sorts in the Indian governance system. Rao expanded his Cabinet on February 12, 2019 by inducting 10 ministers. Speculations were rife then that Etala's name was missing in the list of 10 names finalised by the CM on February 11, 2019 — a day prior to the Cabinet expansion.

WIDENING GULF BETWEEN KCR, ETALA SINCE 2018

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

An uneasy calm prevails between Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao and health minister Etala Rajendar ever since the TRS government assumed office for the second term in December 2018.

Notably, while Rao took oath as CM for the second term shortly after the TRS won the Assembly polls with a landslide majority, he took only Mohd. Mahmood Ali into his Cabinet. Rao carried on the show in this form for two months until February 12, 2019.

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Page 3: Etala hits back at 'tainted' officials

Page 3: Etala's 'owners vs tenant' jibe went viral

Night curfew till May 8

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD APRIL 30

chief secretary Somesh Kumar after the High Court stated a day ago that the state government vacillated on a decision on extending night curfew that was to end by April 30. The government had on April 20 issued orders imposing night curfew from 9 am to 5 am till this Friday.

There will be no restriction on inter-state and intra-state movement or transport of essential and non-essential goods.

Page 3: Public transport allowed in stipulated time

The Telangana state government on Friday issued orders extending the night curfew across the state till 5 am on May 8, next Saturday. The order was issued by

70% VOTERS CAST VOTE IN STATE'S MUNICIPAL POLLS

MADDY DEEKSHIT | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

Polling for Warangal and Khammam Municipal Corporations and five other local bodies of Telangana State ended on a relatively peaceful note amid a few stray incidents.

Overall, an average 70 percent polling percentage has been reported in all urban local bodies (ULBs).

On the directions of Telangana High Court, State Election Commission (SEC) had taken various measures to ensure strict adherence to Covid-19 guidelines during polling.

Fighting scorching temperatures in the summer heat, voters turned up at polling booths right since the morning to cast their votes in Greater Warangal and Khammam municipal corporations and five municipalities — Siddipet, Jedcherla, Achampet, Kothur and Nakrekal.

Page 3: SEC monitors poll from Hyderabad

NO VACCINATION IN TELANGANA ON MAY 1 AND 2

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

There will be no Covid-19 vaccination on May 1 and 2 at any government run vaccination centre, the state health department announced on Friday.

The department said the vaccination drive was being suspended on account of the state not receiving vaccine doses from the Centre.

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Report on Page 2

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Parle G Biscuits
Buy 2 Get 1 Free
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SPAR
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CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE AUTOMOTIVE

COMMERCIAL

EICHER JUMBO closed body 2005 model, Sparingly used, 10838kms driven, good condition, single owner. Genuine buyers Contact: 9949177777. (HYMM/2122/C00975)

FOUR WHEELERS

HONDA CITY SV Diesel 2015 model, Golden Brown colour, 147800 driven in excellent condition, showroom ready to use, single owner for sale. All accessories intact. Contact: 9849972401. Buyers excuse. (HYMM/2122/C00974)

FOR SALE PROPERTY

AGRICULTURE

1 ACRE highway facing land for sale at Khampanur, Shankerlal Road, 5 Acres at Maneguda to Vikarabad highway facing. Ajit 9849045554. (A/2122/C00089)

COMMERCIAL

INDEPENDENT BUILDING For Sale/ Lease @Gachibowli Mainroad, Opposite Gachibowli Central Mall, beautiful glass & Marble elevation, total 12700sqft s/b area, 9500carpet area, G+3plus 2BHK/ Office space, ready to move in, road front entrance, lift, 430sqyds land, 9car+10 2wheeler parking, suitable restaurants, Software, Furniture, lights, jewellery showroom/mall concept, hospitals, clear title, Ph:9502032222. (HYMM/2122/C00971)

COMMERCIAL FLAT for sale 3BHK Habisguda main road next to Bajaj Electronics. Ph:9848956756. (HYMM/2122/C00964)

HITECH CITY Madhapur 650, And 680, Surya Commercial Plots For Sale, Residential 250SqYds, Ayyappa Society 41Yards For Sale, genuine buyers Please Call: 9985648693 (HYMM/2122/C00974)

COMMERCIAL RETAIL cum Office space for Sale in East Marredpally, 1000 Sq.Ft. 2nd floor, First floor, Price 7cr, Undivided land share 320sq.yds, Suitable for GYM, Restaurants, Diagnostic centers, Hyper markets, Designated corporate offices, etc., Call for details 0331108869 / 628163541. (HYMM/2122/C00972)

FLATS

SINGLE BEDROOM

HMDA RERA Approved Fully Furnished Studio Flats At Nehru Nagar/ Manikonda Get Assured Rent Of Rs.12000/- Per month. Contact: 8179170862, 7989920659 (HYMM/2122/C00936)

DOUBLE BEDROOM

ADIBATLA "S.V. Regalia" 2BHK Flats Ready to move Rs.31 Lakhs onwards opp: police station Ph:8374189206/ 9848982952. (HYCL/2122/C00248)

AMEERPET 2BHK N/F Flat 747Sft immediate Sale near Metro station Genuine buyers only Contact: 9849199255 / 9346821416. (HYMM/2122/C00969)

NEAR APPA Junction, Gachibowli Jeedimetla 2BHK Dlf Flats For Sale E/N/W Face position in 12months @Gated Community. Ph:9666998119/ 812844748. (HYMM/2122/C00833)

ECIL- M.J.COLONY, 2bhk Flat for Sale, 10th flr, Available, East & West Facing as per Vastu, RERA Approved, Loan Available. Ph:8866321798 (HYMM/2122/C00870)

TWO BEDROOM Flat for sale, flat no.503, 1120 sqft, flat no.505, 1030 sqft in Pinnaman's Maanas Height, Laxmipuram colony, Bhavani Nagar, Kuchipudi, Kapra, Contact: Vinod Goud: 8790842354, Suresh: 9885189821. (B/2122/C00997)

THREE & MORE

3BHK FLAT For sale, Fully Furnished, 1600 Sqft, BN Reddy Towers, Avanthi Nagar, Old Skyline Terrace Cont: 9391162015. (HYMM/2122/C00959)

BANJARHALAS, 3BHK Cellar flat in HUDA Heights, near MLA Colony, Road, 2nd floor, 1200 sqft, 300ft, East facing, Vastu View with false ceiling and woodwork, 2car parkings. Ph:88865885862.

DELUXE FLATS Available 2BHK, 1100sqft, 2BHK 1368sqft, Vashnavi Endcure, D-Mall, ECIL, 2nd floor in advanced status, call: 9865600277/ 9000859467 (HYMM/2122/C00786)

2BHK BHK Luxury flats @ 3700/- sft in gated community with Club houses & amenities, @ Marredpally, 24hrs Water/ Party hall/ Gym/ Generator Backup/ Play area. Details: call:9963819487/ 04-2780348. (HYMM/2122/C00560)

KHAIRATABD, 6000/- from Metro station, 1850Sft. Premium flats with car parking, Community Hall and Generator. Under Construction, Ready by Oct'21. East/West facing. Ph:8866588662. (B/2122/C00916)

MADHUPUR, KAVURI Hills, 3 BHK Flat For Sale, North Facing, 5th Floor, Sufficient Water. Contact: 9550560771/ 8374448896/ 9866043366 (HYMM/2122/C00814)

3 BHK Luxury flats @ 3700/- sft in gated community with clubhouse & amenities at Mallampet, near Bachupally, 3 BHK starts from 29.71 Lacs onwards. Modi Builders- 7677120120. (B/2122/C00085)

3BHK NEW flats perfect Vastu, East/ West facing @Marredpally, 24hrs Water/ Party hall/ Gym/ Generator Backup/ Play area. Details: call:9963819487/ 04-2780348. (HYMM/2122/C00560)

NAGARMAR NEAR Indian oil Station S'V Shantinikanan' flats Ready to move 2 & 3 BHK Rs.34 Lakhs onwards. Ph:8374189206 / 984892582 (HYCL/2122/C00247)

LUXURY VILLAS in gated community @ 4450/- sft with Club house & Other Amenities, starting from Rs.1.06 Crore onwards @ Rampraly near New Infosys Campus on Warangal Highway, Modi Builders- 7677120120. (B/2122/C00101)

READY TO OCCUPY luxurious 3bhk flats for sale in Relcom town, 2 bhk flats, 1000sqft, 2bhk 1300sqft, 3bhk 1500sqft, 3bhk 1700sqft, 3bhk 1900sqft, 3bhk 2100sqft, 3bhk 2300sqft, 3bhk 2500sqft, 3bhk 2700sqft, 3bhk 2900sqft, 3bhk 3100sqft, 3bhk 3300sqft, 3bhk 3500sqft, 3bhk 3700sqft, 3bhk 3900sqft, 3bhk 4100sqft, 3bhk 4300sqft, 3bhk 4500sqft, 3bhk 4700sqft, 3bhk 4900sqft, 3bhk 5100sqft, 3bhk 5300sqft, 3bhk 5500sqft, 3bhk 5700sqft, 3bhk 5900sqft, 3bhk 6100sqft, 3bhk 6300sqft, 3bhk 6500sqft, 3bhk 6700sqft, 3bhk 6900sqft, 3bhk 7100sqft, 3bhk 7300sqft, 3bhk 7500sqft, 3bhk 7700sqft, 3bhk 7900sqft, 3bhk 8100sqft, 3bhk 8300sqft, 3bhk 8500sqft, 3bhk 8700sqft, 3bhk 8900sqft, 3bhk 9100sqft, 3bhk 9300sqft, 3bhk 9500sqft, 3bhk 9700sqft, 3bhk 9900sqft, 3bhk 10100sqft, 3bhk 10300sqft, 3bhk 10500sqft, 3bhk 10700sqft, 3bhk 10900sqft, 3bhk 11100sqft, 3bhk 11300sqft, 3bhk 11500sqft, 3bhk 11700sqft, 3bhk 11900sqft, 3bhk 12100sqft, 3bhk 12300sqft, 3bhk 12500sqft, 3bhk 12700sqft, 3bhk 12900sqft, 3bhk 13100sqft, 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TWEETS

New political drama begins in Telangana. And for the few coming days, media and people gets busy in discussing and debating the issue, thereby forgetting the prevailing Covid crisis. What a political day! @TelanganaCMO @Eatala_Rajender @trspartyonline

— SAI TEJA VOJALA @saijeta_vojala

Wow@TNewsTelugu Atleast you're telecasting the news related to @Eatala_Rajender lands scam issue. But why can't you do the same on #ChMallaReddy and other notable leaders and their scams. #EatalaRajender

— UNOFFICIAL @UnOfficial

I think he was seen as a threat to KTR. Anduke tokkesinru. With the present crisis he is the only one from the whole cabinet who is doing atleast something and gaining ppl credit. @Eatala_Rajender don't resign, we are with you!

— AKSRED @Aksred1

What about Malla Reddy ji? All Telangana people clearly saw the video which got so popular on social media. Why no enquiry n it so far? Any bias based on person to person?

— ANVESH REDDY MALLA

SHORT TAKES

TMREIS CANCELS ENTRANCE TEST FOR ADMISSIONS

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

The Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society (TMREIS) has cancelled the entrance test for admission in TMR schools and junior colleges for the academic year 2021-22.

Secretary TMREIS B.Shafullah said that on the backdrop of Covid-19 Pandemic, the selection of candidates for admission in TMR Schools and Jr. Colleges for the academic year 2021-22 through the entrance test has been cancelled.

Now candidates will be selected by draw of lucky dip for admission in schools, while admission into Intermediate first year will be done for only TMR School students through drawl of lucky dip at the college level in the presence of selection committee duly following the rule of reservation of TMREIS.

After the process of admission of TMREIS students, the leftover seats if any will be filled by inviting fresh applications at the college level from the eligible candidates of other institutions.

Interested candidates can submit their application through TMREIS official website www.tmreis.telangana.gov.in till May 20.

THE LEFTOVER seats if any will be filled by inviting fresh applications at the college level from the eligible candidates of other institutions.

LAND SCAMS

TRS MLAs facing land encroachment charges

Probe all mantris: Oppn

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

Opposition parties on Friday demanded that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao order an inquiry into the deals of all the ministers as also TRS MLAs, MLCs, MPs facing charges of land encroachments and not confine the inquiry to just Etala Rajendar.

They questioned why the CM remained silent when minister Malla Reddy as also MLAs like Muthireddy Yadagiri Reddy faced allegations of land encroachments.

Congress senior leader V. Hanumantha Rao said the 'secret ties' between the CM and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were exposed yet again with the Etala episode, adding that the CM targeted Etala after he started criticising the Centre for its failures in ensuring adequate vaccine and oxygen supplies to states.

"KCR fears that Modi will be annoyed with Etala's sharp criticism against the Centre. For that reason, he

TIES SOURED AFTER BID TO INSTALL KTR AS CHIEF MINISTER

From page 1

Sources said the relationship deteriorated particularly after a section of the ruling party made serious attempts to install KCR's son and Minister K.T. Rama Rao as Chief Minister. The flashpoint, the insiders say, was candid remarks made by the health minister in the past few days with

has decided to remove Etala from his cabinet and ordered an inquiry against Etala. This episode shows KCR and Modi are hand-in-glove," Rao said.

AICC national spokesperson Dr Sravan Dasoju slammed the CM for making Etala a scapegoat to make up for his failures in curtailing the Covid-19.

He alleged that the CM had hatched a political conspiracy against the BC leader who was also a great

regard to the failure of the health care system to handle the Covid pandemic. At a time when Chief Minister and son and minister K.T. Rama Rao were in isolation after getting infected, the health minister shot into the limelight. Though he primarily attacked the Centre, he had to inadvertently admit the flaws in the state also.

Telangana fighter devotedly serving the people ever since the Coronavirus outbreak. He asked the CM why he was ignoring the other "land-grabbing ministers" including KT Rama Rao and "rowdy" TRS MLAs, and only targeting leaders representing the weaker sections to prevent them from becoming popular.

BJP leader DK Aruna said, "Etala is worried that he will be dropped by the

CM from the cabinet anytime. For that reason, he is attacking the BJP government at the Centre and leveling baseless allegations that the Centre is not helping states to contain Corona. He is trying to please the CM by attacking the BJP and saving his minister post. We demand that the CM drop him from the cabinet first to enable a free and fair probe into his land encroachments. We also demand an inquiry into such deals of all other ministers and other TRS leaders facing several charges."

BJP Telangana unit president Bandi Sanjay

demanded an inquiry by a sitting judge into the land encroachment charges against minister Etala Rajendar.

"We demand that the CM immediately constitute an inquiry committee with a sitting judge at its head to probe land encroachment charges against Etala Rajendar. The committee should also be asked to probe land encroachment charges against all other ministers and TRS MLAs," Sanjay said.

Etala says he did no wrong

Claims he discussed proposal in detail with CM and principal secretary

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

Health minister Etala Rajendar on Friday defended his company's moves to own assigned lands and use them to expand the state of the art poultry industry in Achampet village of Medak district through a legal channel.

In a strong response to a few TV channels airing stories describing him as an encroacher of lands assigned for the poor, the minister categorically said he discussed in detail with Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao and principal secretary S. Narsing Rao about his requirement of land for his poultry industry and allotment



Etala Rajendar

THE HEALTH minister said he never misused his position to protect his assets.

of the neighbouring assigned lands for this purpose.

"We even made an official request to the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation to acquire assigned lands which are

unfit for agriculture and sell the same to us," he said.

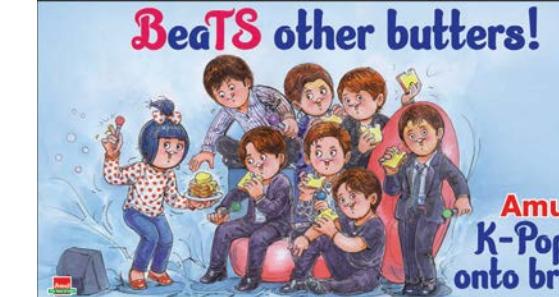
The minister revealed that TSIC chairman Narasimha Reddy was also aware of the developments. The officials suggested that the assignees may surrender their land to the government which in turn could allocate the same to the industry. Following this, several farmers wrote to the tehsildar surrendering their lands, he pointed out.

The health minister said several infrastructure projects like ring roads and pharma city came up on assigned lands which were acquired by the government. The government

gave incentives equal to the investment of the industries in several cases, he said adding that he did not seek any incentive but only land that was never put to use by the assignees ever since it was allotted to them in 1994.

Rajendar said he would not degrade the minister post but would not hesitate to leave it to safeguard his self-respect, apparently taking a dig at the chief minister who equated the CM post with a chappal, inviting widespread criticism.

Rajendar also said he made wealth with sheer hard work and investments in poultry industry unlike some others who made fortunes out of nowhere. "There are people,



SEC monitors poll from Hyderabad

From page 1

POLLING BEGAN at 7 am across all ULBs where officials made arrangements to ensure strict adherence to Covid-19 protocol.

one mask, sanitiser and face shield to every polling official were among the other guidelines.

A total of 11,59,112 voters including 5,84,963 women had been eligible to cast their votes in these elections. As many as 1,307 candidates, 480 of them independents, had been in fray in two corporations and five municipalities. Poll authorities set up 1,539 polling stations and deployed 9,809 polling personnel for smooth conduct of elections.

Stray incidents of clashes between ruling TRS and opposition parties had been reported in Greater Warangal and Khamman municipal corporations. However, police intervened and brought the situation under control.

State Election Commissioner C. Parthasarathi monitored the polling process from Hyderabad.

Public transport at stipulated time

From page 1

No separate permission/pass will be required for such movement. Public transport services including autos and taxis will be allowed to function within a stipulated time.

The night curfew is imposed in accordance with a Union home ministry order on March 23 laying down guidelines for effective control of Covid-19, allowing states to impose suitable area-specific restrictions to prevent the virus spread.

As per the guidelines, all offices, firms, shops, establishments, restaurants have to close at 8 pm.

essential services.

The essential services are telecommunications, internet services, print and electronic media, broadcasting, cable services, IT and IT-enabled services, delivery of goods through e-commerce; petrol pumps, LPG, CNG, petroleum and gas outlets, power generation, transmission and distribution; water supply and sanitation; cold storage and warehousing services; private security services and production units or services that require continuous process.

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LAND SCAMS

TRS MLAs facing land encroachment charges

Probe all mantris: Oppn

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

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Cops launch Covid portal

Initiative provides verified data of all Covid services for citizens of Hyd

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

The Cyberabad Police and Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC) launched an online resource which will act as a one-stop-shop portal of relevant verified information of all Covid services for citizens of Hyderabad.

Launching the portal, covid.scsc.in, Cyberabad police commissioner V.C. Sajjanar said there is information across social media platforms with different sources which is not validated and is overloaded with information, creating fatigue among the public.

SCSC talking about this initiative said that any citizen who is looking for services or information like for plasma, blood, Bed availability, oxygen suppliers, psychologists and counselors, diagnostic centers, food services etc can find verified and relevant information. This is indeed a great and timely service, added VC Sajjanar.

The portal, which has latest information, Covid-19 bulletins, key contacts and information network groups, has four categories: 1. Virtual Care Services (ambulance services, oxygen suppliers, hospitals and beds, plasma support, blood banks, cremation services); 2. Self-care services (isolation centres and home quarantine support); 3.

Doctors on call (diagnostic centres, pharmacies, food services) and; 4. Preventive Care Services (Psychologists/Counsellors Support, vaccination centres, PPE suppliers, sanitisation services).

TWO ARRESTED FOR STEALING SPORTS BIKE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

The South Zone Task Force team of Hyderabad, along with Meerpeta police, arrested two men for stealing sports bikes and seized 10 two-wheelers worth ₹15 lakhs from them on Friday. Task Force officials said the arrested Uttam Kumar, 20, a student and Sandeep Kumar, 20, a food delivery executive, are residents of Saroor Nagar.

"Both were friends and were fascinated by sports and luxury bike races since childhood. However, since their meager income was not enough for them to afford such bikes, they decided to steal them and started targeting vehicles parked in crowded places and in residential areas," said the police, adding that they were involved in cases in Meerpeta, LB Nagar, Medipally and Saroor Nagar.

Following a tip-off, the police began tracking their movements and nabbed them on Friday.

Tension prevails during polling in 4 KMC divisions

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, APRIL 30

Tension prevailed in four divisions during polling in the Khammam Municipal Corporation on Friday.

Heated arguments took place between Congress workers and police in 57th Division after police took Mustafa, spouse of Congress candidate Rasheed Begum, into custody. Mustafa was taken away to a police station on allegations of campaigning near a polling station. Congress leaders led by DCC president Puvvada Durga Prasad alleged that Mustafa was arrested as he was not allowing bogus voters to be polled by the ruling party at a booth.

Four Congress workers poured kerosene on their bodies and threatened to immolate themselves if Mustafa was not released immediately. CLP leader Bhatti Vikramarka, who got the information, phoned election observer Nadeem Ahmad and registered his protest.

Similar protests were witnessed in 55th Division after police took Sudhakar, husband of Congress candidate Srivani into custody. There were also heated arguments between Congress and TRS workers in 50th Division when Mikkilineni Narendra, Congress leader, raised objection to campaigning by TRS leaders near the polling booth with pink umbrellas; pink being the TRS party's colour. Narendra's wife is contesting from this ward.

Former MLC and BJP leader P. Sudhakar Reddy alleged police have crossed their limits by extending their open support to TRS candidates. This has helped TRS cast bogus votes by impersonating and threatening agents of other parties in various booths.

FOUR CONGRESS workers poured kerosene on their bodies and threatened to immolate themselves if Mustafa was not released immediately. CLP leader Bhatti Vikramarka, who got the information, phoned election observer Nadeem Ahmad and registered his protest.



OBITUARY
Mrs. RAMANI SUBRAMANIAN
DOB: 1939
DOD: 29.04.2021
W/o, Late Shri RH Subramanian
"For ever in our Hearts"
Inserted by:
Dr. S. Vijayalakshmi
Dr. Revathy Ramaswamy
Prof N. Ramaswamy,
Annapurna
and Family Members

7th ANNIVERSARY
... and the day of death better than the day of birth.
Ecc1 7:1



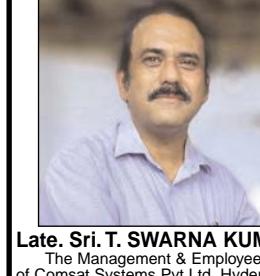
GANDHAM VINAYA KUMAR
S/o Gandham Alexander John
DOB: 28-8-1948 DOD: 1-5-2014
"No matter how many years go by, your values remain in our lives."
With Grief:- Wife: Premila Gandham
Daughters: Viola & Neethi Susan
Son-in-law: Sharon
Grandchildren: Sherlyne & Solomon
and all Gandham Families.

OBITUARY
Jesus replied, "I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise" - Luke 23:43



Mr. JOHN BOSCO PETERS
S/o Late Joseph Peters
DOB: 25.02.1942 DOD: 30.04.2021
Funeral is held on 1st May 2021 at Bhoiguda cemetery.
Inserted by: Loving Wife, Sisters, Brother-in-laws, Son-in-laws, Daughters, Grand children.
(CA-3596)

WE MISS YOU



Late Sri. T. SWARNA KUMAR
The Management & Employees of Comsat Systems Pvt Ltd, Hyderabad Profoundly remembers on the sad demise of Late, Sri. T. Swarna Kumar, who served the ORGANISATION for 35 years.
DOB: 10-4-1975 DOD: 29-4-2021
Who was an employee for 4 years.
His Services are Remembered
MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE.

(S/2122/D00119)



It is with our deepest sorrow that we inform you of the passing of **Kamaladevi Kalavalli**, wife of Satyanarayana Kalavalli On 29th of April, 2021 at Age of 87 years. She will live on forever in our hearts.

(S/2122/D00120)

10th DAY CEREMONY



Sri. JONNALA DAYANAND
S/o Late Sri Jonnalai Hanumaiyah Passed away peacefully on 22nd April 2021 and believe that he reached heavenly abode. Dasha Dina Karma will be held on 1st May 2021 at his residence at Plot No. 355, B.R. Reddy Nagar, Vanasthalipalem, Hyderabad - 500070.

Remembrance by:

Jonnala's Family, Kakkineni's Family, Bandi's Family, Belde's Family, Near and Dear



Late Smt. Marri Prameela Garu
DOB: 22-04-2021
You will always be in our memories

*** Inserted By ***

Marri Amarender Reddy - Akshita Nagila Anitha - Dayakar Reddy Kolla Anuradha - Dharnender Reddy and Grand Children

(S/2122/D00121)

Shradhanjali



CHAMAKURA PRADEEP KUMAR
State secretary TRMKMS A Guy of a person disciplined & Hard working. Always stand for Poor & Needy people. Supports friends & needy persons.

Your memories are forgettable.

We miss you.
Inserted by: Adi. Nagesh Kumar Manikanta Venkateswar Rao Kondoor Vinod Kumar Angula Manik Prabhakar

(S/2122/D00122)

11th DAY CEREMONY IN LOVING MEMORY



M.G. RAMALINGAM
(Rtd. Rly Employee)

DOB: 06-03-1958 DOD: 22-04-2021

11th Day Ceremony on 02-05-2021 (SUNDAY) at our residence H.No. 1-14-117, Balarama, Secunderabad - 500003

Inserted By:

Wife, Children and Family members

Phone: 9849624778

(S/2122/D00110)

Shradhanjali



Late Sri. Marri Krishna Reddy Garu

DOB: 19-04-2021

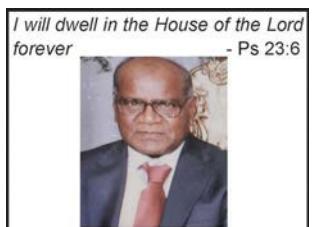
You will always be in our memories

*** Inserted By ***

Marri Amarender Reddy - Akshita Nagila Anitha - Dayakar Reddy Kolla Anuradha - Dharnender Reddy and Grand Children

(S/2122/D00123)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



IRIS ROSE MARY STRACEY

DOB: 22-Sep-1943 DOD: 2021-04-2021

Online Mass at St.Anthony's church, Mudfor on 01.05.2021 at 6 pm

Inserted by: M.M.Raj - Husband (USA)

Celeste Mary - Daughter (USA)

Arockia Suren - Son-in-law (USA)

Nithilan Ian - Grandson (USA)

Nithya Grace - Grand Daughter (USA)

Relatives and Friends

Ph: 916237076, 9985563839

E-mail: straceycrichard65@gmail.com

(S/2122/D00122)

2nd Death Anniversary

The righteous shall be in everlasting memory - Ps.112.6

3rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY

"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Ps. 23:6

3rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY

"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Ps. 23:6

3rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints Psalms 116:15

3rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Inserted by: Murki Venkateshwar Rao (Husband)

Murki Sugunamathi (Wife)

Son: Murki Harish Kumar

Daughter-in-Law: Murki Swathi

Sons-in-Law: G. Santosh Kumar, M. Hari Shanker

Daughters: G. Bhavani, M. Bharani

Grand Children: M. Santhiv, M. Sriman G. Kai Kiran, M. Shruhika

(S/2121/D00124)

40th Day Remembrance

Those we love never truly leave us.

There are things death cannot touch.

You will be forever in our hearts.

(S/2121/D00125)

Selznick Richard Philips

12 Feb 1953 - 23 Mar 2021

Inserted by: wife May Phillips

Daughters Edita & Estallia

Sons-in-law Conred Earl & Anand Nair

Granddaughters Courtney Earl & Alexia Earl

(S/2121/D00125)

12th DAY CEREMONY

D.O.B 02-3-1963 D.D.O 20-4-2021

MURKI NAGALAKSHMI

"You will always be in our memories"

Inserted by: Murki Venkateshwar Rao (Husband)

Murki Sugunamathi (Wife)

Son: Murki Harish Kumar

Daughter-in-Law: Murki Swathi

Sons-in-Law: G. Santosh Kumar, M. Hari Shanker

Daughters: G. Bhavani, M. Bharani

Grand Children: M. Santhiv, M. Sriman G. Kai Kiran, M. Shruhika

(S/2121/D00125)

12th DAY CEREMONY

D.O.B 02-3-1963 D.D.O 20-4-2021

GANDHAM VIOLA JOHNSON

25-12-1936 - 01-05-2021

W/o G. B. JOHNSON

Retd Stn. Master : Shahzabadi

Inserted by: G. B. Johnson,

Son: G. B. Johnson,

Daughters-in-Law, Sons-in-Law

</

SHORT TAKES

AP TO CLOSE
NATIONAL PARKS,
SANCTUARIES

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 30

All national parks and wildlife sanctuaries will remain closed across Andhra Pradesh in order to avoid the spread of Coronavirus from humans to animals.

Announcing the decision here on Friday, principal chief conservator of forests N. Prateep Kumar said that based on directions from the Centre, they were taking steps to close all national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in the state. He said that instructions were issued to forest personnel to keep a tab on the health of animals and sanitise places where they frequent. He said that directions were issued to the forest officials to keep a watch on animals 24x7 and rope in vets to attend to animals that develop health issues.

The head of forests said that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and minister for forests Balineni Srinivas Reddy had issued orders to take all necessary measures to protect animals and avoid any trouble to them in the wake of the second wave of Coronavirus.

AP RECORDS
17,354 COVID-19
CASES, 64 DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 30

Andhra Pradesh witnessed a surge of 17,354 fresh cases in the last 24 hours as against 14,792 cases reported on Thursday.

State health authorities reported here on Friday that, out of 86,494 samples tested, 17,354 persons were found infected with the virus. Out of a total number of 1,63,90,360 samples tested so far in the state, 11,01,690 persons were found infected with the virus, and of them, 9,70,718 were recovered while 1,22,980 are still active with the virus.

Chittoor district recorded the highest number of a daily surge of Coronavirus infections at 2,764 followed by 2,129 in Guntur, 1,882 in Anantapur, 1,842 in East Godavari, 1,581 in Srikakulam, 1,358 in Visakhapatnam, 1,133 in Nellore, 967 in Kurnool, 842 in West Godavari, 757 in Kadapa, 740 in Vizianagaram, 698 in Krishna and 661 in Prakasam.

Chittoor district found to be the worst affected with regard to Coronavirus cumulative active cases as it recorded 16,853 followed by 14,389 in Srikakulam, 13,057 in Nellore, 12,679 in Guntur, 12,234 in East Godavari, 9,732 in Visakhapatnam, 9,165 in Anantapur, 8,181 in Krishna, 7,798 in Kurnool, 6,631 in Prakasam, 5,087 in Vizianagaram, 3,622 in West Godavari and 3,552 in Kadapa.

AP VACCINATION
UNLIKELY FOR
PEOPLE ABOVE 18

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 30

With no availability of fresh stocks of Covid-19 vaccine, the Andhra Pradesh government may not administer jab to the people aged between 18 and 45 years from May 1 onwards except continuing the ongoing programme to the already targeted beneficiaries with the existing doses.

Unlike the earlier practice of launching a vaccination programme for healthcare workers, frontline workers, people aged between 45 and 60 years by setting up Covid Vaccination Centres and fixing time schedule between 9 am to 5 pm, there are no such arrangements for Saturday. However, registration for the jab by the people aged between 18 and 45 years on the CoWIN portal, is going on.

The state received three lakh doses of Covishield and one lakh doses of Covaxin in the last three days and they were administered to the targeted beneficiaries mainly those aged above 45 years as the second dose. The state government is very particular to complete the administration of both the first and second doses of Covid-19 vaccine to all the targeted beneficiaries before taking up the vaccination drive for the new batch of beneficiaries. So, it intends to complete the exercise with the available stocks of vaccines.

Though the top brass of health authorities reviewed the vaccination programme virtually on Friday evening, there was no word of vaccination for the people aged between 18 and 45 years from Saturday onwards.

HC miffed at delayed night curfew decision

Court says govt must avoid forcing it to interfere in executive role

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

Telangana High Court expressed deep dissatisfaction over Telangana government's unduly delaying its announcement of continuing or otherwise of night curfew in the state in the wake of increasing cases of Coronavirus.

The court asked state's Advocate General B. S. Prasad several times over the government's decision on night curfew. The AG, however, maintained that the government was yet to take a decision, then the court will issue the order.

The government was to inform the High Court whether or not night curfew would be extended on Thursday itself. But the advocate general requested the court for another day's time, as the Chief Secretary had to know conditions at the ground level.

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SECRETARY had to know conditions at the ground level.

Secretary had to know conditions at the ground level.

On Friday, the Division Bench comprising CJ Hima Kohli and Justice B. Vijay Sen Reddy commenced proceedings at 10.30 am and inquired from AG about the night curfew, which expired on Friday. Prasad said no decision had yet been taken and asked for some more time. According to the request of AG, the court allowed him to get instructions from the government at the earliest.

At 1.15 p.m., after the Division Bench completed hearing all its cases, it again asked AG whether any decision has been taken.

Prasad informed the court that Chief Secretary, Telangana, had informed him that the Telangana government is monitoring the

Covid-19 situation and all efforts will be made to contain and curtail the situation.

After this, Chief Justice Hima Kohli gave the AG another 45 minutes for the Telangana government to take a decision. Subsequently, Prasad placed G.O. 91 before the court stating that G.O. dated 20th April 2021 had been extended for a period of seven days, that is, till 5 am on 8th May, 2021.

The court took G.O. 91 on record and adjourned the batch of PILs to May 5, 2021.

The CJ said, "Perhaps, this will be the last time, Telangana government takes such a long time in arriving at a decision. If this is repeated again, the government will be testing waters that are too hot," she observed.

A painful wait



People sit on the open ground and wait for healthcare staff to carry out Covid-19 tests at Fever Hospital on Friday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Bhatti slams CM, demands complete lockdown in TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Friday demanded the State government to impose lockdown for a few more weeks in Telangana to contain the Covid-19 crisis. He asked the government to take comprehensive measures to check the second wave, which was taking a heavy toll.

The Congress leader criticised Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao for not acting at the right moment even though Congress leaders had warned about the deadly virus spread a year ago.

Bhatti said the public were forced to suffer the grave situation due to the untimely measures taken up by Rao. He slammed Rao for not even arranging oxygen cylinders even when there was ample time.

He said hundreds of people were dying due lack of oxygen cylinders, hospital beds and treatment.

"Had the state government reacted a year ago, the situation would have been so alarming. There should have been arrangements for sufficient numbers of doctors with beds, ventilators and medication. It's a complete failure of the government", he lambasted.

The CLP leader asked the government to only focus on the Covid crisis by investing everything into the health sector.

Condemning the arrests of Congress legislator from Mulugu, D Anasuya alias Seethaka and state president of National Students' Union of India (NSUI), B Venkat, Bhatti said the official figures by way of health bulletins released every day by the government were far from the real picture.

He said that the government has reported only 10 per cent cases and deaths.

He demanded the government to provide basic facilities when lockdown is imposed.

HC TO OPERATE
VIRTUALLY TILL
JUNE 30DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

Telangana High Court Full Bench Comprising Chief Justice Hima Kohli, Justice MS Ramchandrarao and Justice A. Rajashekhar Reddy on Friday issued ordered continuation of virtual proceedings in all courts in the State till June 30.

The full bench gave this order keeping in view the Covid-19 spread and situation in the State. The full bench gave its order in a suo motu writ petition based on the letter by Telangana Bar Council President. The full bench also issued directions for the extension of interim orders existing today in all the court cases in State till June 30.

COVID | SURGE

Court worried over protecting students from virus

AP told to reconsider exams

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 30

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday asked the state government to reconsider its decision to go ahead with the conduct of final exams for Class 10 and intermediate in the wake of the spread of Coronavirus.

A division bench headed by Chief Justice A.K. Goswami and Justice C. Praveen Kumar heard a batch of petitions filed by students seeking either postponement or cancellation of the exams in the wake of the prevalence of the second wave of the pandemic.

The court observed that nearly 30 lakh stu-

THE COURT said that several states either deferred or cancelled the exams while CBSE and ICSE also followed suit and asked the state government to reconsider its decision on the conduct of final exams and asked the government to file a memo and posted the next hearing on May 3.

dents and teachers were to take part in the exercise, how they could be protected from getting infected with the virus. It asked how exams would be held for students infected with the virus as they were supposed to be either in home isolation or in the hospital taking

treatment as per the norms of the Centre. The court said that several states either deferred or cancelled the exams while CBSE and ICSE also followed suit and asked the state government to reconsider its decision on the conduct of final exams and asked the government to file a memo and posted the next hearing on May 3.

However, advocate general S. Sriram informed the court that the state government was taking necessary measures to conduct the exams without causing any trouble to the students.

It may be mentioned that the state government, despite facing

severe criticism from the opposition parties on its decision to go ahead with the conduct of annual exams for Class 10 and intermediate, has been maintaining that it was for the good academic future of the students.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy also clarified on the issue by saying that it would take no time either to defer or to cancel the exams but as their government was committed to safeguarding the academic interests of the students, they had taken a decision that involved a lot of preparations for the conduct of exams to ensure no student or teacher to be infected with the virus.

Severe shortage of staff plagues Tims Hospital

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

Tims: Doctors, staff available 24 hours

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 30

It was not just long delays in providing food for Covid-19 patients that plagued the Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (Tims). According to sources, even the hygiene inside the wards, including the ICUs, had left much to be desired.

At the root of most of the problems plaguing Tims is severe staff shortage, right from sanitation workers, patient attendants, nurses, to duty doctors.

To the horrific conditions that patients in Tims get left in from time to time, including the dead lying next to the living for hours in the ICUs, can now be added at least one case of a patient in the ICU, who was left to wallow in urine and stools the patient passed while in bed.

"It was a horrible scene," according to a source. This, however, was an incident that occurred a few days ago.

There are just not enough sanitation staff at the hospital. A contractor who won the outsourced job contract, did bring some women from Ghatkesar but several of them left not wanting to work in a Covid-19 hospital. The few left, are just not enough to serve on the eight plus floors – in which patients are now housed – of the 13-floored hospital building.

For a hospital that currently is treating around 600 high-dependency Covid-19 patients, there are just some 30 odd nurses, working in two shifts. The ground floor ICU, with about

16 patients has two nurses at a time, while the ICUs on the other floors, just have one each.

These patients require constant attention.

"There is no way two nurses can manage the needs of so many ICU patients, who require so many different services, many of them at the same time," a source told Deccan Chronicle.

"On an average, there is just one nurse for 40 ICU patients at Tims as patients. And if the current, feebly numbered staff – cutting across functions – are all tested, at least half of them will end up as being Covid-19 positive, such are the conditions at Tims, a doctor told Deccan Chronicle.

release, shared by the Health Minister's office, said.

As many as 980 beds at the hospital are equipped with oxygen lines, while the ICUs have 137 mechanical ventilators, the release added.

"The specialty of the hospital is that doctors and other medical staff are available 24 hours a day and visit patients three to four times every day. Patients are fed at regular intervals according to the standards prescribed by the dieticians. The hospital sanitation staff work hard to keep the hospital clean," the release said.

joined have left saying the ₹40,000 pay was just not worth the risk and the effort, while others are learnt to have made excuses of joining at a later date.

Doctors and nurses who are Covid-19 positive are being asked to come to work, it was learnt, while some of the doctors have said they pray that they do not catch Covid-19 and end up at Tims as patients. And if the current, feebly numbered staff – cutting across functions – are all tested, at least half of them will end up as being Covid-19 positive, such are the conditions at Tims, a doctor told Deccan Chronicle.

"On an average, there is just one nurse for 40 ICU patients at Tims as patients. And if the current, feebly numbered staff – cutting across functions – are all tested, at least half of them will end up as being Covid-19 positive, such are the conditions at Tims, a doctor told Deccan Chronicle.

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN AP TO DISPLAY NADU-NEDU PHOTOS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 30

Government schools in Andhra Pradesh will display 'before-after' photos of the institutions after completion of the Nadu-Nedu works, highlighting the need for better maintenance of the buildings and

their premises.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy stated this at a review meeting on Manabadi-Nadu Nedu works held at the CM camp office at Tadepalli on Friday. He also said AP will be conducting the Tenth and Intermediate exams for the benefit of students.

PARADIP PORT TRUST

e-TENDER CALL NOTICE Name of the work "Revamping of 11 KV HT electrical distribution systems at different locations of Paradip Port" Estimated cost : Rs. 4,03,08,400/- Last date & time of submission of bid : dt. 01.06.2021 up to 18:00 Hrs. Refer our website for details. https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app. Executive Engineer (PED-II) PPT/PR/25/2021-22, Dt.30.04.2021

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

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for you

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER Chief Engineer, Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., invites Open Tender in Single Bid system through E-Tendering on IREPS portal from eligible contractors for the following work. Name of Work: Permanent Way Zonal Contract for maintenance of Track under the jurisdiction of Senior Sectional Engineer, Kankavali of Konkan Railway in Maharashtra State. Tender Notice No.: KR-W-01-58-2021-01. Estimated Cost : Rs. 4,45,89,287/-, Excluding GST. Closing Date & Time: 21.05.2021 up to 15:00 hrs for submission of online Offers/Bids. Completion Period : Two Years including monsoon. Manual offers shall not be accepted. Please visit www.reps.gov.in website for details / participation. Corrigendum / addendum will be hosted in this website only.

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DECCAN Chronicle

1 MAY 2021

How govt's spin is losing us the war against Covid

A French queen had said, "If the people can't have bread, let them eat cakes!" This characteristically heartless remark had made Marie Antoinette, the last queen of France, who was sent to the guillotine, an object of hate as the revolution advanced. However, she was just being a lousy member of the decaying order that was dispatched to the dustbin of history. There was no self-serving propaganda about the remark attributed to her.

As the queen assessed the spreading chaos and stood in surly denial, she was just being a member of her vanishing class. But this cannot be said of the ruling establishment in India elected on a popular vote.

They appear to think that only by mounting a massive propaganda counter-offensive against the people can they save themselves since there is a widening gulf between the reality of people's misery on account of the pandemic and the words of self-praise and retribution against opponents they hear from the government's representatives.

The government appears to be engaged in the subversive exercise of bending people's perception of their own painful reality being experienced on a daily basis — no oxygen, no cremation or burial space as dead bodies pile up, no hospital beds, and no one to turn to.

The government appears to be engaged in the subversive exercise of bending people's perception of their own painful reality being experienced on a daily basis

In a matter it took up *suo motu*, the Madras high court pointedly asked this week what the Centre was doing for the past 14 months. The government should have acted in a "planned and informed" manner with the help of "expert advice". The additional solicitor-general weakly responded that Covid's second wave was "unexpected".

And why exactly was that? Empowered committees that recommended enhancing oxygen production in April last year were ignored. A committee of Parliament was similarly ignored through inaction on its proposals. Indeed, newly created facilities to fight Covid last year were wound up. Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed at the World Economic Forum this January

that India had "defeated" Covid. On February 21 this year, the BJP passed a resolution, which noted "with pride" that India had "defeated" Covid "under the able, sensitive, committed and visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi". In March this year, Union health minister Harsh Vardhan claimed before the Delhi Medical Association that "we are in the end-game of the Covid-19 pandemic in India".

Within weeks of that remark, India has officially acknowledged crossing four lakh new cases a day and three thousand daily deaths, though the data could be many times higher. And yet, the health minister could summon the fool's courage earlier this week to say that the country was "better prepared" now than a year ago to fight Covid.

Meanwhile, the Indian High Commission in Canberra sent a stinker to the *Australian* which had carried a critical report highlighting the crippling drawbacks, including political hubris and religious promiscuity allowed to the majority community, of India's anti-Covid programme. Threateningly, it complained about the "completely baseless, malicious slanderous" report.

This trajectory of self-defence through sheer propaganda was confirmed when, last Thursday, external affairs minister S. Jaishankar, in a virtual meeting with our ambassadors and high commissioners around the world, instructed them that the "one-sided" message in the international media showing the "incompetent" handling of Covid must be "countered".

There is some irony here. The winning of the war through propaganda — instead of action on the ground — has coincided with the reversing of a 16-year old policy of not accepting foreign aid in coping with calamities.

Biden's century

Like the curate's egg, US President Joe Biden's maiden address to Congress was good in parts. His first 100 days in office, which he completed this week, had more to offer than his speech or the high symbolism of two women, who are next in line should anything befall him, standing masked on either side of his podium. Considering the damage caused to the US by four toxic years of Donald Trump and four grave challenges — the pandemic, a flailing economy, racial injustice and climate change — Mr Biden was destined to be a transformational President who was prepared to act to make change possible.

In many of his actions he has performed like one, particularly in bringing in "big government", at a time of crisis, with US \$4 trillion plans encompassing an US \$1.8 trillion American Family Plan guaranteeing income for families with children and a US \$2.3 trillion for a super ambitious American Jobs Plan. Mr Biden's moves to push on with an aggressive legislative agenda only signify that bipartisanship may be vastly overrated in American politics. Coming as they do in a deeply polarised US, they may add to the divisions though. His proposals, to be backed by the printing of notes, may cast more of a burden to a debt-laden economy but, as he explained, the trickle-down economics of the Reagan and Trump kind will not work, nor in post-Covid scenarios.

Mr Biden may have riled opponents some more with his clarity on where China and Russia stand and how the US will treat the Indo-Pacific, besides his resolve to pull troops out of the "forgotten war" in Afghanistan. Torn to shreds is the "America First" approach of the peculiar Trump brand of politics as Biden's USA states its ambition to be the world's arsenal of vaccines in the fight against waves of the coronavirus. He may not have been generous enough to acknowledge the Trump government's early work in the hunt for vaccines and advance payments against supplies but his push for vaccination has already seen the inoculation of 200 million Americans, heralding signs that a kind of "normal" is near. Not too many may complain except, of course, the Republicans.

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"Superstition they said provided cures
 And now we know it's a deadly disease
 Yet belief in miracles endures
 We sing their hymns and litanies
 We want the lame to walk again
 And the blind be made to see
 Martyrs court their deaths and then
 Find that they have ceased to be."

— From Jagnu's Paradoxes by Bachchoo

Should we write English as it's spoken? Or just leave it as it is...

The Inturnashunul Inglish Speling Kongress has this week voted to propagayt sumthing kold Trudishunul Spelling Rivlzd. They wont a noo set of roots bekun dhu noo norm... I suppose, gentle reader, you've got the drift and are, like me, a stick-in-the-mud antideluvian dinosaur; then perhaps I ought to spell it out for you: An outfit called the International English Spelling Congress (IESC) wants to perpetrate a new simplified English spelling. They want to make it as phonic as possible. So, for instance, they want to get rid of the w from wrong. And this in order to make it simpler for the dim to learn.

Patronising or what? Several names from my beloved city of London will no doubt engage their attentions: names like Knightsbridge, Cheapside, Marylebone and Holborn?

All the common words with redundant unsounded letters such as know, knock and knife or pseudo and psychiatry will be easy to modify. But what will they do with P.G. Wodehouse's characters like Featherstonehaugh, pronounced as "Fanshaw" — and what about our own Willy Dalrymple who told me at the beginning of our friendship that it may be spelt that way but should be pronounced "Drimble"?

Very many English names are notorious for not sounding the way they look. St. John is "sinjin"; in Oxford and Cambridge Magdalene and Magdalen are both "maudlin"; Menzies is, incredibly, pronounced "ming".

Some of these absurdities, *meyrey yaaron* (phonetic pronunciation), make one side with the IESC, who ever these bodes be — but no! This revision is a foolish idea for two very good reasons. The first, pretty obvious one, (witch emny ful can c) is that

one can't legislate for a change in language, neither in vocabulary nor in spelling. Language evolves through necessity breeding invention, through absorbing words, meanings and nuances from other languages, and through sheer misuse becoming common practice and therefore part of the accepted and official, dictionaryised thing. See? I just invented a verb, meaning to appear in dictionaries. I don't know if any dictionary yet recognises that cool means hot or wicked means desirable or hot means compellingly attractive. When I speak to the young and ask them if they want more spinach, they say "I am good!" — by which they mean "I don't want any" and perhaps even "thank you". If you ask them how they are, they profess their moral rectitude, instead of telling you that they are well.

And then, all and sundry, including the late Princess Diana in a televised interview, use the word hopefully, which used to strictly be an adverb — to mean "I hope that". A sort of "Inshallah".

One accepts it, language changes and evolves through usage and not through committees and self-

appointed sages legislating for it.

One may, in evidence for this argument, cite the cases of Esperanto and Volapuk. These were languages invented to take the place of all others so that humanity could be one huge communicating family. No doubt this would bring a uniformity to our troubled planet, but wouldn't it be the most boring place on earth? (Earth is the planet you fool — *Ed.*)

I must confess that when I and some of my friends were sixteen, we embraced this ideal and thought we'd make a start by teaching ourselves Esperanto. I still remember how to ask someone if they spoke it. It's "Chu vi parolas Esperanto?" and I still remember that boys were called knabo, with the k pronounced and girls were called sitabo — I always imagined after our Hindu goddess/princess of the *Ramayan*.

The second reason to reject the attempt to turn English phonic is a bit more subtle, but as readers and writers, gentle reader, of phonetic Indian Devnagari scripted languages, you won't find it hard to follow. When I read Hindi in the Devnagari script, or even when it is written in Roman script, I have to

read every letter and absorb its meaning through the sound. I find it impossible to just look at the shape of the word and understand what it is a hundred per cent of the time.

Is that perhaps because the reading brain doesn't just recognise meaning through the sound of a word, but rather through a combination of sound and the shape of the word in sight? I would argue that it does. I may be wrong and only a linguistic psychologist will be able to judge, but I find I can skim a sentence when reading English, but have to sound the words internally and swiftly, even subconsciously, when reading Hindi.

Despite its anti-phonetic spelling, English has become the language of many nations — albeit through colonisation and conquest, but it has also become the language of global communications even in a continent like America. I don't just mean that people with the intelligence of Donald Trump can sort of read and even write and say "bigly" and other words like that. I mean that there were contending languages such as Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, German and French. And English won.

Subhani



Can blatant lies save India from Covid-19?



Shobhaa's Take

Dr Zarir Udwadia, one of India's most respected physicians, spoke for 1.4 billion Indians in a no-holds-barred BBC interview recently. He talked calmly, but the anguish was palpable. He didn't mince words. Short of calling the government names for letting us down, he spoke his mind in perfectly articulated, easy-to-understand lingo. He mentioned the "dreadful deficiencies" (understatement, doc!), "complacency" (I call it cruelty), "vaccine desperation" and much more. He also warned it's likely to take 600 days before India can hope to achieve "herd immunity". Gird your loins: we have a long, painful, scary way ahead of us. Who knows how many people reading this column will be alive to greet that wonderful day? Death is a mere six degrees of separation away. India is in mourning for itself, and all those who couldn't even get a dignified funeral, forget help! Living with death is now the "new normal".

Narendra Taneja (BJP spokesperson) talking to Christians on CNN started the world with the admission that "the responsibility is first and foremost ours", while gleefully blaming the EC for allowing elections in five states. Will he retain his job as spokesperson after this trillion-dollar global gaffe? Nine million thronged the Kumbh Mela despite the Covid surge. Whose "responsibility" is that? Maharashtra's CM has warned the third and fourth wave may hit by July-August.

The "numbing of India" was brilliantly and boldly articulated by a quiet hero who is garnering countless fans for obvious reasons. Dr Parakala Prabhakar is the low-key husband of India's finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Frankly, I'd never heard of

him. He was simply not on my radar! But I sat up and paid close attention when I heard his podcast (*Midweek Matters*) last week. He spared nobody, not even the person his wife reports to: the Prime Minister! His address didn't sound phony: *matlab*, he wasn't playing good cop/bad cop. He was speaking for all of us who are in a semi-coma ("numb"), struggling to make sense of the government's criminal negligence for letting the country slide into this Covid abyss.

Arundhati Roy, writing in the *Guardian*, described the government's failures as a "crime against humanity" — which it is! I had used the exact same phrase in my column last night. But who'll catch the criminals? Imagine the irony: it's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image on the face of that all-important Covid-19 certificate citizens receive after taking the second shot. Why his image? Well, at least one brave dissenter in Bhatinda (74-year-old Prof. Chaman Lal) demanded its removal and vowed not to take the vaccine until then. Seriously: why is the PM's face on the certificate? Did he invent the vaccine? No! His administration "donated" the precious vaccine to 80 countries so he could look better! Faced with an acute vaccine shortage in India, what did he do? He delivered a monologue ("Mann ki Baat") where he passed the buck: to us! It became our problem! As we gasped and choked and people DIED in droves, the government looked the other way and didn't have the basic decency to apologise to its people, forget about providing a contingency plan to save lives. Meanwhile, BJP CMs were issuing the most shocking statements, fudging numbers, downplaying deaths, and the health minister (Dr Harsh Vardhan) had the

temerity to say we are better off this year than we were last year! On what basis, and in what way, Sirji? *Bataao, na?*

Tushar Mehta, India's additional solicitor-general, admonished panic-stricken citizens: "Let's not be crybabies..." Boo Hoo! Dry those tears, darlings. We're going to be just fine, okay? Give or take a few million who won't make it through the pandemic (predictions of fatalities run into crore or more). That awful robed man in Uttar Pradesh (CM Yogi Adityanath) threatened to arrest anyone who dared to criticise his state's Covid management. The same state where a 17-year-old boy had a precious oxygen cylinder meant for his mother snatched out of his hands by cops and given to a VIP. His mother died two hours later. Then there was the chief minister (oops... minister) of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar, who callously declared: "The dead won't come back..." No Sirji, they won't. But their curses will!

Meanwhile, the bodies are piling up. Fed up with official apathy, countless citizens' groups started to take over the government's duties by setting up helplines and mobilising resources. But even these Good Samaritans were stymied by roadblocks placed by the administration: the harder they tried to reach out and help, the worse it got. They were told they were "causing confusion". Despite that, people like Harteer Singh of Hemkunt Foundation performed Herculean service bypassing officialdom and getting oxygen to the needy. "Help India Breathe", pleads Harteer, who had Covid-19 twice. Citizens like him are piling up.

The people of India are the country's real strength, while its biggest tragedy is its politicians. We are stuck with the current lot: heartless, cold and entirely lacking in compassion. There is a brazenness to the BJP that baffles the world. Our Prime Minister should be eating his words uttered last year: all those boasts, all that chest thumping! We've made utter fools of ourselves internationally, and yet we have *neta* after *neta* cold-bloodedly lying to us. Open your eyes, remove the blindfolds: this period will go down in history as the worst and most shameful indictment of a government that didn't care whether its helpless citizens lived or died gasping for oxygen, while the Great Leader looked the other way. Comfort yourselves. Ignore the corpses. There's hope! Remember: PM Cares! All we can fall back on now are prayers...

The 'numbing of India' was brilliantly articulated by a quiet hero who is garnering countless fans for obvious reasons. Dr Parakala Prabhakar is the low-key husband of India's finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

work selflessly night and day, while the government still lives in denial and focuses on exit polls.

The bodies continue to pile up.

We watched in horror and sorrow as parking lots were converted into makeshift cremation grounds. Images of bodies burnt on footpaths by relatives unable to find a slot in shockwaves. Graveyards ran out of gravediggers. And Delhi resembles a macabre burning ghat. But the IPL bubble stays!

The government, however, still did nothing. Worse, we were subjected to the PM's platitudes. And silence. Home minister Amit Shah may have taken *maun vrat*: we haven't heard his voice recently.

State after state going under a punishing lockdown is now the norm. This time migrant workers acted swiftly, packing trains and buses before they got stuck thousands of miles from home. But Delhi's multi-crore Central Labour project faced no labour shortage: it was declared an "essential service" and will be completed on schedule.

The people of India are the country's real strength, while its biggest tragedy is its politicians. We are stuck with the current lot: heartless, cold and entirely lacking in compassion. There is a brazenness to the BJP that baffles the world. Our Prime Minister should be eating his words uttered last year: all those boasts, all that chest thumping! We've made utter fools of ourselves internationally, and yet we have *neta* after *neta* cold-bloodedly lying to us. Open your eyes, remove the blindfolds: this period will go down in history as the worst and most shameful indictment of a government that didn't care whether its helpless citizens lived or died gasping for oxygen, while the Great Leader looked the other way? Earth is the planet you fool — *Ed.*

Official circles interpret this as an attempt by Pakistan de-escalate the tension which it unnecessarily built up at diplomatic level at the beginning of the week. An external Affairs Ministry spokesman confirmed that there were no restrictions as alleged by Pakistan on its Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta.

LETTERS

POWER CUTS

One wonders why there are frequent unscheduled power cuts since the start of summer. Hope the TSSPDCL will look into this persistent problem. The people are already troubled by pandemic and the unscheduled power outages are adding to the problems faced by people.

Sayed Nooruddin
Hyderabad

POOR LEADERS

Several reports have surfaced about the lack of planning by the state and Central governments for the second wave of Covid-19. We are in this mess due to the kind of leadership we have at state and Centre. These leaders are not amenable to honest feedback. Anybody who carries bad news is punished instead of being appreciated for warning them in advance. India can be proactive only when dissent is encouraged and the leader is receptive. This is the reason why our governments do not act or react unless there's a crisis.

N. Sridhar
Secunderabad

GOOD ARTICLES

I would like to congratulate you on your excellent editorials and articles. In these days of the horrible pandemic, they are shedding a lot of light on various issues of public concern. Keep up the good work.

Dr P. Prathibha
Mahabubnagar

SHORT TAKES**VETERAN JURIST SOLI SORABJEE DIES OF COVID-19**PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

Veteran jurist and two-time attorney-general Soli Sorabjee passed away on Friday at the age of 91, after contracting Covid-19. He was admitted to a private hospital in South Delhi.

A doyen among legal luminaries, Sorabjee is survived by his wife Zena, a daughter and two sons. He and his wife had tested Covid positive some days ago. While his wife is on the recovery path, Sorabjee succumbed as he had many comorbidities.

In his condolences, Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana hailed Sorabjee as a legend who added strength to the pillars of democracy and whose humane and compassionate approach defined his legal work. CJI Ramana said in his condolence message: "I personally gained immensely from reading his works, listening to his lectures and arguments and his sagacious guidance and advice, since the time I started practising as an advocate."

Messages of condolence and tributes poured in from across the country, including from the President and Prime Ministers, top political leaders and other prominent figures from all walks of life.

The CJI said in his nearly 86-year long association with the judicial world, Sorabjee "made immeasurable contribution in enriching the global jurisprudence of human rights and fundamental rights".

BIHAR CHIEF SECY ARUN SINGH DIES DUE TO COVID-19NAYYAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, APRIL 30

Bihar Chief Secretary Arun Kumar Singh passed away on Friday while undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at a private hospital in Patna.

He was admitted to the hospital for treatment last week after he developed severe health complications. The 1985 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer was scheduled to retire in August this year.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar along with others expressed condolences over the death of the Chief Secretary.

Describing the deceased IAS officer as an "efficient administrator", Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in a statement said that "his untimely death is an irreparable loss to the administration. His last rites will be performed with full state honours".

Bihar has been witnessing a steep rise in Covid-19 cases. According to reports, there are 1,00,822 active cases in the state and 2,480 people have died due to the deadly disease so far.

According to ruling NDA leaders in Patna, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has been holding marathon meetings with his cabinet ministers and officials to review the situation in the state.

TAMIL FILMMAKER K.V. ANAND DIES OF CARDIAC ARREST

Chennai, April 30: K.V. Anand, noted Tamil film director and cinematographer died here on Friday due to cardiac arrest, sources close to his family said. "He passed away in a hospital at 3 am due to a cardiac arrest, he was 54-year-old," Riaz K. Ahmed, a film industry publicist and movie buff said.

Anand began his career as a cinematographer in Malayalam movie 'Thenmavin Kombath' in 1994 and following a decade of work as a cinematographer he made his directorial debut in Tamil flick 'Kana Kander' (2005). 'Thenmavin Kombath' bagged the national award (Best Cinematography) for Anand.

Veteran actor and Makkal Needhi Maiam chief Kamal Haasan said Anand began his life as a photo journalist and established himself as a distinguished cinematographer-film director due to his relentless efforts and initiatives.

"His passing away is a big loss to the film industry. My condolences," Haasan said.

Anand's colour sense is unique and his camera worked magic on screen. In Sivaji, he made a new attempt to portray Rajinikanth in a different light (in 'Oru Koodai Sunlight' song) which was a huge hit among Rajini fans," film industry tracker, M. Bharat Kumar said.

SC to Centre: Battle Covid in Delhi, stop blame game

Exhorts Kejriwal to adopt a cooperative approach in dealing with pandemic

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

The Supreme Court on Friday told the Centre that it has special responsibility towards the national capital and exhorted Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to adopt a cooperative approach in dealing with the unprecedented crisis due to the second surge of Covid pandemic.

Justice D.Y. Chandrachud heading a bench also comprising Justice L. Nageswara Rao and Justice S. Ravindra Bhat reminded the Centre of its "special responsibility" towards Delhi in making the Oxygen available as Centre sought to shift the onus on the Kejriwal government for not deploying adequate number of tankers to lift the Oxygen allocated to Delhi by the Centre.

Asserting that there was adequate availability of Oxygen, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appearing for the Centre told the court that Delhi was unable to lift allocated Oxygen as it has deployed insufficient number of Oxygen tankers and whatever was available in Delhi was due to the Centre arranging tankers for the national capital. However, Mehta told the court that Delhi is in the process of acquiring more Oxygen tankers.

At this court said that could it tell the patients and their relatives that there was scarcity of Oxygen in the national capital due to non-lift of allocated quota because of the shortage of tankers.

Reminding the Centre of its special responsibility towards the national capital, the court said, "Centre has to push through as it has special responsibility for Delhi."

Besides Centre, the court also exhorted the Kejriwal government to adopt a cooperative attitude with the Centre in getting essential medicines and oxygen in the face of human crisis and shun politics.

"Please adopt a cooperative attitude at the time of a human crisis. Politics is during elections and not at the present situation," the court said.



Beneficiaries stand in a queue to receive Covid-19 vaccine during the second wave of Coronavirus pandemic, in Bhubaneswar on Friday. — PTI

SC warns against coercive action on people sharing plight online

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

The Supreme Court on Friday warned that any coercive action by the police against people in distress sharing their plight or information on the shortage of oxygen, hospital beds, doctors and essential medicines on social media and seeking help will be contempt of court.

Pointing out that free flow of information on the deficiencies and needs during a humanitarian crisis helps in dealing with it effectively, Justice Dhananjay Y. Chandrachud said, "Let a message go out loud and clear to DGPs not to take action against citizens for social media posts about shortage of beds, oxygen shortage, condition of Covid care centres and hospitals etc during pandemic."

Having warned the police against any action against the people for writing social media posts critical of the government's handling of the second wave of Covid pandemic, Justice Chandrachud speaking for the bench said, "I flag this issue at the outset. We don't want any clampdown on information... If citizens communicate their grievances on social media and the Internet, it

can't be said it's wrong information."

Having sent an unequivocal message that any attempt to gag people from airing their grievances or concerns over the difficulties being encountered by them in the treatment of Covid patients, the court in another dig at the Centre sought to know the "rationale" behind the different pricing of the vaccine for the Centre and the states.

Describing as "very disturbing" the different pricing for the Centre, states and private hospitals, the court asked, "What happens to the marginalised and SC/ST population? Should they be left to the mercy of private hospitals?"

The court asked the Centre why it can't buy vaccines and embark on the lines of the national immunisation programme.

Telling the Centre not to leave vaccine pricing to the manufacturers, the

court said, "Don't leave it to the manufacturers. How will they determine equity? Invoke your powers to see that additional facilities are created for vaccine manufacturing."

The court also observed that AstraZeneca is providing vaccines at far lower price to US citizens than why should we be paying so much.

On the shortage of essential medicines, the court said that under the existing legal regime, India can side-step the patent regime and import Remdesivir from Bangladesh or produce it in India under license from Bangladesh.

The court also expressed concern over overworked doctors, nurses and other medical staff attending to Covid patients. The court said that in government hospitals or private, the doctors and nurses attending Covid patients are reaching a breaking point and must be paid more.

XI TALKS TO MODI, EXTENDS SUPPORT

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

As foreign aid continued to pour in, Chinese President Xi Jinping wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday expressing concern over the Covid-19 crisis in India and conveying China's solidarity and cooperation with India in the fight against the deadly pandemic. This is the first direct written communication between the two leaders in months and could herald some improvement in Sino-Indian ties. Soon after that, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi also called up external affairs minister S. Jaishankar.

Didi confident of returning to power in Bengal

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, APRIL 30

candidates and their agents not to take food and water from anyone other than their families. On the other hand, the BJP, that campaigned for winning over 200 seats, claimed it was confident of achieving its goal to form its first-ever government in the state.

State BJP vice-president Joy Prakash Majumdar told this newspaper: "We feel that the BJP is now in a position to form its government here definitely. Among the exit polls, some showed the TMC ahead and others rated the BJP in the lead. Some also tried to keep a balance. The exit polls were done after talking to different people. At the end, the BJP is going to form the next government with a new life, new change and new future for the people of Bengal."

Sanjukta Morcha, a triangular alliance of the Congress, Left parties and the Indian Secular Front, a new outfit of Muslim cleric Abbas Siddiqui, however, believes it would emerge as a "deciding factor" in forming the next government in the state. Congress Rajya Sabha MP Pradip Bhattacharya said: "The Sanjukta Morcha will get a maximum 45 seats altogether, though it cannot be said right now which party in our alliance will get how many."

MP: Covid claims 334 teachers lives

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
Bhopal, April 30

the death of some school teachers. But, the casualty figure of 655 appears highly inflated. The department has developed a system to compile data on deceased staff of schools deployed in Covid duty", a senior officer of the state school education department said unwilling to be quoted.

The state government has deployed government teachers in Covid duty due to shortage of health department staff when the second wave of pandemic hit the state a couple of months ago.

Teachers, principals and other staff of government schools in the state have been deployed in various Covid duties such as door-to-door survey to detect suspected cases, collection of samples, supervision of containment zones and screening of passengers of buses and other vehicles passing through the check posts in district and state borders two months ago.

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SHORT TAKES

INDIAN-AMERICAN COUPLE JAILED FOR MONEY SCAM

Washington, April 30: A United States court in Atlanta has sentenced an Indian-American couple for laundering over USD500,000 on behalf of India-based phone scammers.

Chaitali Dave (36) was on Thursday sentenced to 20 months, to be followed by three years of supervised release and ordered to pay USD320,550 in restitution.

Mehulkumar Manubhai Patel (36) was sentenced to 30 months, followed by two years of supervised release and ordered to pay USD259,217 in restitution.

TWO INFLUENCERS ORDERED OFF BALI AFTER MASK JOKE

Denpasar (Indonesia), April 30: A US-based YouTuber and a Russian influencer were ordered off Indonesia's resort island of Bali on Friday after recording themselves defying mandatory mask-wearing with some imaginative makeup.

Clips of the video created by Josh Paler Lin and Leila Se and posted two weeks ago show the two duping supermarket guards with a painted surgical mask after they were refused entry because Se was unmasked. "Did you notice like no one's actually looking at you?" Lin exclaimed. "I can't believe it worked!" he said in the video that appears to have been taken down from his social media accounts but has since been reposted elsewhere.

PALESTINIANS DELAY POLLS FOR ISRAELI GUARANTEE

Ramallah, Palestinian Territories, April 30: Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas announced on Friday that elections are being postponed until Israel guarantees voting can take place in annexed east Jerusalem, further delaying polls in a society which last voted in 2006. Addressing a meeting of Palestinian factions, Abbas said he has urged the international community to push Israel to allow campaigning and voting in east Jerusalem, an area annexed by the Jewish state in 1967 which Palestinians claim as their future capital.

Pfizer applies for jabs to kids in EU

Move to offer young access to shot for first time

UK to trial dance party without curbs

London, April 30: Pfizer Inc and BioNTech have submitted a request to the European drug regulator for the approval of their Coronavirus vaccine to be extended to include children 12 to 15 years old, in a move that could offer younger and less at-risk populations in Europe access to the shot for the first time.

In a statement on Friday, the two pharmaceuticals said their submission to the European Medicines Agency is based on an advanced study in more than 2,000 adolescents that showed their vaccine to be safe and effective. The children will continue to be monitored for longer-term protection and safety for another two years.

BioNTech and Pfizer have previously requested their emergency use authorisation with the US Food and Drug Administration also be extended to children 12 to 15 years old. German Health Minister Jens Spahn welcomed the news that the vaccine might soon get the green light for older children.

"This can make a further real difference to our vaccine campaign, if approval is granted," he said on the sidelines of a visit to a vaccine manufacturing plant in the German town of Reinbek. The Covid-19 vaccine made by Pfizer and BioNTech was the first one to be granted a green-light by the EMA last December, when it was licenced for anyone 16 and over across the 27-nation EU bloc. — AP

● GERMAN HEALTH

Minister Jens Spahn welcomed the news that the vaccine might soon get the green light for older children.

the British government's "Events Research Programme" as the country looks to ease remaining Covid-19 rules.

Data collected from the events, which require attendees to take a Coronavirus lateral flow test 24 hours prior, will test the safety of large-scale gatherings ahead of government plans to lift nearly all restrictions on June 21.

Circus co-owner DJ Yousef Zahar told the BBC it hoped to return to "pre-Covid conditions". — AFP

SPAIN STUDIES MIXED USE OF COVID-19 JABS

Madrid, April 30: Spanish health authorities say they have started giving Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine doses to participants in a government-led study involving young people who received a first dose of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine.

Researchers from Spain's Carlos III Institute want to study the effects of mixing vaccines from different manufacturers as they look for a second dose alternative following very rare brain blood clots linked to the vaccine produced by AstraZeneca.

Experts say the risks of the British-Swedish pharmaceutical company's vaccine are less than the clot risk healthy women face while on birth control. — AP

FREE RIDES, BEER: INCENTIVES TO U.S. VAX DRIVE

Washington, Apr 30: Free beer, pot and doughnuts. Savings bonds. A chance to win an all-terrain vehicle. Places around the US are offering incentives to try to energise the nation's slowing vaccination drive and get Americans to roll up their sleeves.

These relatively small, mostly corporate, promotion efforts have been accompanied by more serious and far-reaching attempts by officials in cities such as Chicago, which is sending specially equipped buses into neighbourhoods to deliver vaccines.

Detroit is offering \$50 to people who give others a ride to vaccination sites, and starting Monday will send workers to knock on every door in the city to help residents sign up for shots. — AP

Lawyer of Navalny's foundation detained

Russia places Navalny's org in extremist list

Moscow, April 30: A lawyer representing the anti-corruption foundation of imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was detained in Moscow on Friday morning, his colleague said on social media.

St. Petersburg-based lawyer Ivan Pavlov has been representing Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption after authorities filed a lawsuit to ban the foundation and the politician's network of regional offices as extremist organisations.

Pavlov's colleague, Yevgeny Smirnov, said on Facebook that Pavlov was detained after his hotel room in Moscow was searched. Russia's Federal

disbanded Thursday in anticipation of the move.

Organisations on the list include the Islamic State group and Al-Qaeda. Being listed bans them in Russia, with members and supporters facing lengthy jail terms.

It was not immediately clear whether the move was related to a request by prosecutors earlier this month to designate Navalny's regional network and his Anti-Corruption Foundation as extremist organisations. — AFP

Security Service, the FSB, was involved, Smirnov said. Pavlov is being accused of disclosing information related to a police investigation, a criminal offense punishable by a fine.

community service or arrest of up to three months.

It wasn't immediately clear which case Pavlov's detention was connected to. — PTI

INTELLIGENT CRAFT On its journey, the vessel will study marine pollution, analyse plastic in the water

First autonomous ship set for maiden voyage



Engineers guide the Mayflower 400 autonomous trimaran towards Turnchapel Wharf following a sea trial in Plymouth, south west England. — AFP

Plymouth, United Kingdom, April 30: The "Mayflower 400" — the world's first intelligent ship — bobs gently in a light swell as it stops its engines in Plymouth Sound, off England's southwest coast, before self-activating a hydrophone designed to listen to whales.

The 50-foot (15-metre) trimaran, which weighs nine tonnes and navigates with complete autonomy, is preparing for a transatlantic voyage.

On its journey the vessel, covered in solar panels, will study marine pollution and analyse plastic in the water, as well as track aquatic mammals.

Eighty per cent of the underwater world remains unexplored.

Brett Phaneuf, co-founder of the charity ProMare and the mastermind behind the Mayflower project, said the ocean exerts "the most powerful force" on the global climate.

Rosie Lickorish, a specialist in emerging technologies at IBM, one of the partners on the project, said the unmanned craft provided an advantage in the "unforgiving environment".

"Having a ship without people on board allows scientists to expand the area they can observe," she said.

A variety of technology

and service providers have also contributed to the project, including India, Switzerland and the United States, said

Phaneuf.

The project would have cost 10 times the roughly \$1 million (\$820,000 euros) invested by ProMare without the "global effort," he said.

The non-profit venture will offer the data gathered by the project free of charge. The information could be of particular use to the future of commercial shipping.

The autonomous ship is scheduled to embark on May 15 if weather is favourable and permission is granted by British authorities.

The journey to Plymouth, Massachusetts — the same voyage made by pilgrims on the original "May-

flower" in 1620 as they sought a new life in America — will take three weeks.

While the Mayflower 400 voyage has been delayed because of the pandemic, Phaneuf said at least no one will fall ill on the trip.

"No one will get bored or tired or sick on this one. So it can take as long as it likes to do science," he said from the British port.

Sitting alongside him were three computer technicians checking the equipment remotely.

Meirwen Jenking-Rees, a 21-year-old student engineer, checked the ship's engines before it headed out for a sea trial. — AFP



An Ultra-Orthodox Jewish woman comforts another at a cemetery in Benei Brak, as people attend the funeral of one of the victims of a stampede, when tens of thousands of people were gathered to celebrate the festival of Lag Baomer at a site in Meron in northern Israel early on Friday. — AFP

44 killed in stampede at Jewish religious pilgrimage in Israel

Jerusalem, April 30: In one of the worst peace-time tragedies in Israel, at least 44 people were crushed to death and about 150 others injured in a stampede overnight at an overcrowded Jewish religious gathering in the country's north attended by tens of thousands of people flouting the coronavirus-related restrictions.

The resulting "normalcy", with limitations, saw rejoicing crowds across Israel on Thursday evening with youngsters, especially school children, coming out in large numbers in open spaces putting bonfires that accompanied the Lag BaOmer festivities. Tens of thousands of ultra-orthodox Jews participated in the tragic event Thursday night at the tomb of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, making it the largest event held in Israel since the Coronavirus pandemic broke out last year.

A preliminary police investigation revealed that some of the attendees slipped on the stairs, creating a "human avalanche" that crushed members of the crowd. A Magen David Adom (MDA) rescue service official confirmed that at least 38 people had been killed with the numbers likely to go even higher. "Our paramedics have treated hundreds of people, including several in serious condition. All the wounded were evacuated to hospital", he said.

Some 150 people were injured in the accident. Zaka, an ambulance service, said the death toll had risen to 44. MDA Director-General Eli Bin told the Ynet news site that the wounded were being evacuated to the Ziv hospital in Safed, the Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya, Rambam hospital in Haifa, Poriya hospital in Tiberias, and Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital in Jerusalem.

Firefighters worked to free the trapped, supported by Israeli Air Force helicopters and rescue services. Police were trying to clear the tens of thousands who attended the event from the area. At around midnight on Thursday, organisers had estimated that some 100,000 people were at the site, with an additional 100,000 expected to arrive by Friday morning, local media reported.

A police official told the local media that dozens of participants in a concert had "slipped," falling on those below them while walking along a slippery walkway and causing a crushing domino effect. — PTI

Johnson's mobile number available openly for 15 yrs



● THE OPPOSITION

Labour Party has said the easy availability of the UK Prime Minister's number had implications for security, lobbying and the risk of blackmail.

Covid-19 pandemic last year.

The Daily Telegraph reported earlier in April that Simon Case, the head of the civil service, said the UK prime minister should change phone numbers because his was too widely known.

Last week, 10 Downing Street had denied the prime minister had been advised by senior officials to change his number.

Former National Security Adviser Peter Ricketts warned that if the number was widely available it could be used for eavesdropping by hostile states, "and possibly other non-state actors as well, like sophisticated criminal gangs". — PTI

Boris Johnson

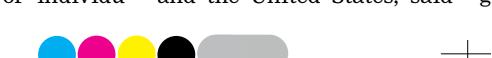
comes as questions have been raised in recent weeks over who has access to ministers' personal phone numbers, amid a wider row about lobbying and influence.

It escalated further as text messages between Johnson and vacuum cleaner entrepreneur James Dyson were leaked and purported to show a discussion over tax rules.

He has denied any wrongdoing, and said the exchange was to secure ventilators for the National Health Service (NHS) at the peak of the

SEE TODAY
SENSATION INSOMNIA
TEMPT RAJA
11.30am,
2.30pm,
5.30pm

CRINNA PRODUCTIONS
THRILLING HIT
SAPTHAGIRI70MM
11.00, 2.00, 5.30PM
ANJALI70MM-11.00,2.00,5.30PM
RK-2.00,4.50PM||CON-11.00,5.10PM
PRESTON-1.20,4.10PM
MUSARAMBAGH-2.00,4.50PM
IRRUMMANZIL-11.00,5.10PM
INORBIT-11.15,5.10PM
GALLERIA-11.50,5.00PM
FORUM-11.40,2.30,4.40PM
GVK-11.00,4.30PM
MP-11.00,5.00PM|GSM-2.15,5.00PM
PVR CINEMAS
11.00,1.40
4.20PM
NOMA TALKIES
1.20,4.10PM
INOX
LIVE THE MOVIE
11.00,4.55PM
RGC Cinemas
our master
11.00,4.55PM
CONTACT:
9030 16 1717
PLATINUM
WHERE CINEMA MEETS LUXURY
GACHIBOWLI
1.00,4.55PM



quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	48,782.36
Nifty 50	14,631.10
S&P 500*	4,187.15
Dollar (\$)	74.06
Pound Sterling (\$)	103.02
Euro (\$)	89.60
Gold (10gm)* (\$)	46,283 ▼191
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	67.28
IN 10-Yr bond yield*	6.030
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.645
As of 8:30 PM IST	0.005

O2 machines can be imported for personal use

The government said it has included import of oxygen concentrators for personal use, purchased from e-commerce portals through post or courier, in the list of exempted categories, where customs clearance is sought as gifts. The exemption for oxygen concentrators is allowed only for a period till July 31, 2021, for personal use, according to a notification by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.

IndusInd Bank Q4 net jumps 2-fold to ₹876 cr



IndusInd Bank reported an over two-fold jump in standalone net profit at Rs 876 crore for the March quarter compared with Rs 301.84 crore in the year-ago quarter. Total income was at Rs 9,199.48 crore against Rs 9,158.57 crore. On a full year basis, the net profit fell 36 per cent to Rs 2,836.39 crore in FY21 from Rs 4,417.91 crore in FY20. Gross NPAs rose to 2.67 per cent against 2.45 per cent a year ago.

Forex reserves rise by \$1.70 bn to \$584.10 bn

Foreign exchange reserves rose by \$1.70 billion to \$584.107 billion in the week ended April 23, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended April 16, the reserves had risen by \$1.193 billion to \$582.406 billion. The reserves had touched a record \$590.185 billion in the week ended January 29. Foreign currency assets rose by \$1.062 billion to \$541.647 billion. Gold reserves rose by \$615 million to \$35.969 billion.

Sidbi launches new loan lines for MSMEs

The Small Industries Development Bank of India has launched two loan products at concessional rates for ramping up supply of Covid-related products. This will help augment supply of oxygen cylinders, oxygen concentrators, oximeters and essential drugs by MSMEs. It said SHWAS and AROG are its two new quick credit delivery schemes, with 100 per cent funding up to Rs 2 crore at interest rate of 4.5-6 per cent.

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■ Full-year net up 35%, revenue down 18% RIL's Q4 net profit zooms to ₹13.2K cr

New Delhi, April 30: Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Ltd more than doubled its March quarter net profit on sequential recovery in its consumer businesses of retail and telecom as well as in petrochemicals, as improved spreads offset continued weakness in refining business.

Consolidated net profit rose to Rs 13,227 crore in January-March compared with Rs 6,348 crore earned a year back, the company said in a statement on Friday. The fourth quarter net profit included Rs 797 crore exceptional item due to gain on sale of US shale assets.

Revenue was up 13.6 per cent to Rs 1,72,095 crore.

While the oil-to-chemical, or O2C, business improved quarter-on-quarter, it was lower than year-ago earnings primarily due to weakness in the refining business because of pandemic impacting fuel demand.

While announcing its March quarter results earlier this month, Wipro had said it expects to log a sequential growth of 2-4 per cent in its IT services revenues in the June quarter without including revenue



WIPRO UPS IT SERVICES REVENUE GUIDANCE TO 8-10% IN JUNE QTR

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from Capco and Ampion acquisitions.

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Wipro said the acquisition of Capco was completed on April 29.

Wipro had logged USD 2,152.4 million in IT services revenue in the March 2021 quarter, a sequential growth of 3.9 per cent. — PTI

electronics saw pre-tax profit from retail business rise 41 per cent to Rs 3,623 crore as it added over 1.54 crore net subscribers. But its per user earning fell to 138 per month from Rs 151 in the previous quarter. It had 42.62 crore subscribers at the end of March.

A record revenue from grocery business and strong growth in consumer stores to take the number of stores to 12,711.

While there was a sustained recovery in petchem margins, refineries operated at lower capacity due to the pandemic, pulling down O2C Ebitida by 4.6 per cent to Rs 11,407 crore.

For the full 2020-21 year,

revenue was down 18.3 per cent at Rs 539,238 crore and net profit was up nearly 35 per cent at Rs 53,739 crore.

Mukesh Ambani, RIL chairman and managing director, said: "We have registered robust recovery in O2C and retail segment, and resilient growth in Digital Services business (which includes telecom unit Jio)."

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SHORT TAKES
IPL players donate for Covid patients

New Delhi: Rajasthan Royals fast bowler Jaydev Unadkat will donate 10 per cent of his IPL salary to help Covid-19 patients who need essential medical resources as India battles an unprecedented health crisis. "I am contributing 10% of my IPL salary towards providing essential medical resources for those in need. My family will make sure it reaches the right places. Jai Hind!" Unadkat tweeted.

Punjab Kings' West Indian batsman Nicolas Pooran has also decided to donate a part of his IPL salary to India's Covid-19 battle. Meanwhile, veteran India opener Shikhar Dhawan has donated ₹20 lakh to an NGO for buying oxygen cylinders and concentrators, doing his bit to help the Indian hospitals ravaged by a deadly pandemic. — PTI

Shooter Dadi dies of Coronavirus

New Delhi: Octogenarian shooter Chandro Tomar, who became the oldest woman sharp shooter in the world after taking up the sport in her 60s, died on Friday after battling Covid-19.

She was 89 and was being treated at a hospital in Meerut since April 26.

"Mera saath chhoot gaya, Chandro kaha chali gayi (She has left me, Chandro where have you gone?)" her sister-in-law Prakashi Tomar, who is also one of the oldest female sharp shooters, wrote on her Twitter page.

Tomar, who was nicknamed 'Shooter Dadi', was hospitalised after complaining of difficulty in breathing. Tests revealed she had contracted the highly contagious virus that is causing over 3,000 deaths daily in the country. — PTI

Sumo wrestler succumbs to injury

Tokyo: A Japanese sumo wrestler has died a month after falling on his head during a bout in a case that has raised questions about the sport's response to medical emergencies. Hibikiryu, 28, died of acute respiratory failure on Wednesday, the Japan Sumo Association said.

The wrestler, whose real name was Mitsuki Amano, was thrown by his opponent during a bout at a tournament on March 26. Video of the bout showed he fell hard on his head and lay face down for several minutes while sumo officials watched and waited for paramedics to arrive.

The Japan Sumo Association said Friday that it was unknown whether Hibikiryu's death was related to his injury. It said details of the injury could not be released. — AP

Barca loss adds twist to title race

Madrid: Barcelona spurned the chance to go top of the table on Thursday as a shock 2-1 defeat by Granada added another twist to La Liga's most unpredictable title race in years. Barca could have taken control at the top by moving a point ahead of Atletico Madrid but Granada came from behind to snatch a stunning win, in what will be a huge boost to the other title contenders. Lionel Messi scored his 33rd goal of the season to put Barcelona in front but they failed to put the result beyond doubt and Granada hit back, Darwin Machis driving in and Jorge Molina's header completing a remarkable turnaround. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET
IPL: Mumbai Indians vs Chennai Super Kings from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FORMULA ONE
Portuguese Grand Prix: Practice 3 from 4.25 pm, Qualifying from 7.25 pm on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

FOOTBALL
English Premier League: Crystal Palace vs Manchester City from 5 pm; Chelsea vs Fulham from 10 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

Italian League: Crotone vs Inter Milan from 9.30 pm; AC Milan vs Benevento from 12.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2

FIGHT NIGHT: Dominic Reyes vs Jiri Prochazka and others bouts from 7.30 am on Sony Ten 2, 3, HD

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Punjab purr Brrrar!

Newbie Brar gets big three as Kings crush Kohli and Co.



Punjab Kings' Harpreet Brar celebrates the wicket of Glenn Maxwell of Royal Challengers Bangalore in an IPL match in Ahmedabad on Friday. — IPL

meant that RCB were off to a sedate start as they could score only 36 runs from the Powerplay overs. The 24-year-old Australian pacer consistently tested the RCB openers and eventually uprooted the stumps of Devdutt Padikkal (7) after being hit for a six on a mis-timed shot by the left-hander. Kohli, who was hit on his right elbow by compatriot Shami, and Rajat Patidar kept the scoreboard ticking as shot-making was not easy against the disciplined Punjab bowlers.

At half-way mark, RCB were just 62 for 2 and to make matters worse, left-arm spinner Brar clean bowled Kohli and Maxwell off successive deliveries in the 11th over.

The Punjab bowler returned and sent back dangerous De Villiers (3) to leave RCB gasping at 69 for four in 12.1 overs.

From there onwards, it stopped being a contest as the required run-rate kept soaring.

Earlier, the pace duo of Daniel Sams and Mohammed Siraj bowled tight spells initially to keep the Punjab batsmen on a tight leash.

— PTI

SCORECARD

Punjab Kings: K. L. Rahul not out 91, Prabhsimran Singh c Kohli b Jamieson 7, Chris Gayle c de Villiers b Daniel Sams 46, Nicholas Pooran c Shahbaz Ahmed b Jamieson 0, Deepak Hooda c Rajat Patidar b Shahbaz Ahmed 5, Shahrukh Khan b Chahal 0, Harpreet Brar not out 25. Extras (lb-1, w-4) 5. Total (for 5 wkt, in 20 overs) 179.

FoW: 19-1, 99-2, 107-3, 117-4, 118-5.

Bowler: Daniel Sams 4-0-24-1, Mohammed Siraj 3-0-24-0, Kyle Jamieson 3-0-32-2, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-34-1, Harshal Patel 4-0-53-0, Shahbaz Ahmed 2-0-11-1.

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Virat Kohli b Harpreet Brar 35, Devadatta Padikkal b Meredit 7, Rajat Patidar c Pooran b Jordan 31, Glen Maxwell b Harpreet Brar 0, AB de Villiers c KL Rahul b Harpreet Brar 3, Shahbaz Ahmed c Harpreet Brar b Bishnoi 8, Daniel Sams b Bishnoi 3, Kyle Jamieson not out 15, Harshal Patel c Ravi Bishnoi b Shami 31, Mohammad Siraj not out 0. Extras (lb 8, w 3) 11. Total (for 8 wkt, in 20 overs) 145.

FoW: 1-19, 2-62, 3-62, 4-69, 5-91, 6-96, 7-96, 8-144.

Bowling: Riley Meredith 3.2-0-29-1, Mohammad Shami 3.4-0-28-1, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-17-2, Harpreet Brar 4-1-19-3, Chris Jordan 4-0-31-1, Deepak Hooda 1-0-13-0.

Ashwin's wife says ten +ve in family

Days after her husband's pullout from the lucrative league, Prithi, in a series of tweets, shared the ordeal her family has faced after contracting the highly contagious virus.

virus causes need their own Twitter thread."

The 34-year-old Ashwin is contracted with the Delhi Capitals this season and hopes to return to the side if things go in the right direction.

Ashwin became the first Indian to pull out of the league because of Covid-19 situation in the family.

"I would be taking a break from this year's IPL from tomorrow. My family and extended family are putting up a fight against #COVID19 and I want to support them during these tough times," Ashwin had posted on his Twitter page after DC's game against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Sunday night.

His franchise promised full support to him.

India is recording over 3.50 lakh cases everyday for the past few days and the health infrastructure is struggling to handle the rise with shortage of oxygen.

"The headaches this

week a decision on domestic fans was delayed until June, with organisers citing a new wave of infections in Japan.

"There might be a situation where we can't allow any spectators to attend," Hashimoto conceded in an interview.

"The only way that we can call the Games a success is if we completely protect the lives and health of athletes and the people of Japan," Hashimoto said.

Overseas spectators have already been barred from the Games, and this week a decision on domestic fans was delayed until June, with organisers citing a new wave of infections in Japan.

With the medical system already under pressure, Olympic organisers have made it clear that they see no possibility of either further delay or a

outright cancellation, and a recent surge in virus cases has prompted a state of emergency in Tokyo and other parts of the country.

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requesting volunteer medical staff for the Games.

Manchester: April 30: Bruno Fernandes and Edinson Cavani each scored twice as Manchester United thrashed an injury-hit Roma 6-2 at Old Trafford to close in on the Europa League final.

United are aiming to get to a final under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer at the fifth time of asking after four semi-final defeats in the past two seasons.

But only a second leg collapse will prevent them from facing Villarreal or Arsenal in Gdansk on May 26 after a stunning second-half performance.

The home side trailed at the break as Lorenzo Pellegrini's penalty and Edin Dzeko's tap-in cancelled out Fernandes's early opener.

But the Italians lost three players to injury before the break and United took full advantage.

Two predatory finishes from Cavani turned the tie around before Fernandes also fired home from the spot.

Paul Pogba and Mason Greenwood rounded off the scoring as United became the first team to score six goals in a European semi-final since Real Madrid in 1964.

With United realistically out of the Premier League title race, but also almost certain to secure a top-four finish, Solskjaer named his strongest

Manu Trigueros and Raul Albiol gave

Villarreal a dream start and the tie looked to be slipping away from Arsenal when Ceballos was shown a second yellow card early in the second half.

But 10-man Arsenal rallied and grabbed an away goal when Nicolas Pepe converted a penalty in the 73rd minute, before Villarreal's Etienne Capoue also saw red with 10 minutes left to play.

— AFP

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Points	Net RR
CSK	6	5	1	0	10	+1.475
DC	7	5	2	0	10	+0.466
RCB	7	5	2	0	10	-0.171
MI	6	3	3	0	6	+0.071
PBKS	7	3	4	0	6	-0.264
KKR	7	2	5	0	4	-0.494
RR	6	2	4	0	4	-0.69
SRH	6	1	5	0	2	-0.264

ORANGE CAP
K. L. Rahul, PBKS 331
Shikhar Dhawan, DC 311
Faf du Plessis, CSK 270

PURPLE CAP
Harshal Patel, RCB 17
Avesh Khan, DC 13
Rahul Chahar, MI 11

MI, CSK keen to extend good run

New Delhi, April 30:

Rohit Sharma's elegance and Suryakumar Yadav's flamboyance will be pitted against the brute power of Faf du Plessis and grace of Ruturaj Gaikwad when heavyweights Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings cross swords in the IPL here on Saturday.

MI and CSK head into the match after identical seven-wicket wins over Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad respectively and both teams would be keen to continue their winning streak.

The biggest positive for Mumbai has been the return to form of opener Quinton de Kock (11 runs), who made a blistering, unbeaten 70 against Rajasthan here.

The faltering Mumbai middle-order also clicked in the previous game.

Suryakumar (170 runs) would need to convert his starts while Krunal Pandya (68 runs) played a useful cameo, which would have bolstered his confidence. Meanwhile, table-

toppers CSK have been a force to reckon with this season, having won five of their six games. Openers du Plessis (270 runs) and Ruturaj (192 runs) have been in top form and would be keen to provide the team with another strong start. — PTI

HAMILTON LEADS VERSTAPPEN IN 2ND PRACTICE

Portimao (Portugal), April 30: Lewis Hamilton posted the fastest time in the second practice for the Portuguese Grand Prix, giving Mercedes a 1.2-second lead over his teammate Valtteri Bottas. Bottas topped the first session on Friday. The seven-time F1 champion was .143 seconds ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen, and .344 clear of Bottas in warm but slightly cloudy conditions in Portugal's Algarve region.

Earlier, Bottas was .025 seconds quicker than Verstappen, and .198 seconds ahead of Verstappen's Red Bull teammate, Sergio Perez.

Charles Leclerc was fourth fastest for Ferrari, followed by Hamilton.

A bizarre incident saw Leclerc's former Ferrari teammate, Sebastian Vettel, parking his Aston Martin in McLaren's space in the pit lane. He mistakenly stopped in the spot allocated to Ferrari during last year's championship.

"Sorry for that, had to happen at some point," the four-time F1 champion joked while laughing over the team radio. "I was wondering why there's nobody there."

There is a third practice on Saturday morning followed by qualifying.

The Portuguese GP is the third Formula One race of the season. — AP

THE RESULTS

Manchester United 6 (Fernandes 9, 71-pen, Cavani 48, 64, Pogba 75, Greenwood 86)

Roma 2 (Pellegrini 15-pen, Dzeko 34)

Villarreal 2 (Trigueros 5, Albiol 29)

Arsenal 1 (Pepe 73-pen)

WBC INDIA CHAMPIONSHIP POSTPONED DUE TO VIRUS

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	48,782.36
Nifty 50	14,631.10
S&P 500*	4,187.15
Dollar (\$)	74.06
Pound Sterling (\$)	103.02
Euro (\$)	89.60
Gold (10gm)* (\$)	46,283 ▼191
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	67.28
IN 10-Yr bond yield*	6.030
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.645
As of 8:30 PM IST	0.005

O2 machines can be imported for personal use

The government said it has included import of oxygen concentrators for personal use, purchased from e-commerce portals through post or courier, in the list of exempted categories, where customs clearance is sought as gifts. The exemption for oxygen concentrators is allowed only for a period till July 31, 2021, for personal use, according to a notification by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.

IndusInd Bank Q4 net jumps 2-fold to ₹876 cr



IndusInd Bank reported an over two-fold jump in standalone net profit at Rs 876 crore for the March quarter compared with Rs 301.84 crore in the year-ago quarter. Total income was at Rs 9,199.48 crore against Rs 9,158.57 crore. On a full year basis, the net profit fell 36 per cent to Rs 2,836.39 crore in FY21 from Rs 4,417.91 crore in FY20. Gross NPAs rose to 2.67 per cent against 2.45 per cent a year ago.

Forex reserves rise by \$1.70 bn to \$584.10 bn

Foreign exchange reserves rose by \$1.701 billion to \$584.107 billion in the week ended April 23, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended April 16, the reserves had risen by \$1.193 billion to \$582.406 billion. The reserves had touched a record \$590.185 billion in the week ended January 29. Foreign currency assets rose by \$1.062 billion to \$541.647 billion. Gold reserves rose by \$615 million to \$35.969 billion.

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— Bloomberg

Scientists seek release of key epidemiological data

BIBHUDATTA PRADHAN & MUNEEZA NAQVI APRIL 30

Indian scientists and medical researchers are asking Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allow them access to data that could help study, predict, and curb the spread of the coronavirus.

While the Indian Council of Medical Research has granular data on all residents who've been tested so far, it restricts access, and this database must be opened to outside experts as well, almost 300 scientists from research and teaching institutions requested in an online appeal.

"The ICMR database is inaccessible to anyone outside of the government and perhaps also to many within the government," they wrote. "While new pandemics can have unpredictable features, our inability to adequately manage the spread of infections has, to a large extent, resulted from epidemiological data not



being systematically collected and released in a timely manner to the scientific community."

The signatories include Gagandeep Kang, professor of microbiology at Christian Medical College in Vellore, who confirmed the letter to Bloomberg, and Gautam Menon, professor of biology at Ashoka University. An email to the ICMR wasn't immediately answered.

The central government has often faced criticism from economists, scientists and other researchers for its opaque or delayed data.

— Bloomberg

The request for wider dissemination of the coronavirus-related data gains urgency because India is gripped by a ferocious second wave that risks creating new mutant strains if allowed to spread unchecked.

The scientists also asked Modi to "adequately fund and widen the network of organisations" to collect large-scale surveillance data. "Without such data-collection and timely release, we will not be able to efficiently manage Covid-19," they said.

"The decline in regional inflation in 2021 will be

mainly driven by slower inflation in the sub-region's economic powerhouses, China and India," says an ADB report.

BAIJU KALESH & P. R. SANJAI APRIL 30

Tata Power Company, controlled by India's largest conglomerate Tata Group, is weighing an initial public offering for its renewable energy business that could raise about Rs 3,500 crore (\$473 million), according to people familiar with the matter.

The power company has abandoned earlier plans to seek a partner to invest in its green assets via an investment trust, the peo-

ple said, asking not to be identified as the information is private. Tata Power will seek approval for the IPO plan from its board, they said. If they approve, the proposed listing in Mumbai could take place this year.

Deliberations are ongoing and details such as the size and timing could change, the people said. A representative for Tata Power couldn't immediately comment.

Tata Power's plan to list its green power business comes as India's renew-

ables sector is forecast to expand rapidly, driven by increasing power demand and decarbonisation efforts. The country is working to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi's target to multiply its renewable power capacity almost five times over the next decade.

The company, including subsidiaries and joint entities, has generating capacity of 12.8 gigawatts, about 30 per cent of which comes from clean energy, according to its website. — Bloomberg

Core sector growth at 6.8% in March



SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 30

The core sector grew by 6.8 per cent in March helped by the low base in the same month last year, but contracted by 7 per cent for the fiscal 2020-21.

The combined index of eight core industries stood at 143.1 in March, rising 6.8 per cent, the highest in 32 months, compared to March 2020 when the index had fallen 3.6 per cent.

"Notwithstanding the base effect led-jump in the core sector growth to a 32-month high 6.8 per cent in March 2021, the pace of expansion was weaker than our forecast of a 10 per cent expansion, with a surprisingly sharp contraction in coal, and milder de-growth in fertilisers, crude oil and petroleum products," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist, Icra.

"We had expected the core sector to expand by around 10 per cent in March 2021, boosted by the low base of the commencement of the nationwide lockdown," she added.

Cement, steel, electricity and natural gas reported robust growth ranging from 12.32 per cent. But coal production declined by 21.9 per cent in March.

The low base of the lockdown will also push up the year-on-year expansion of the index of core industries in April to a sharp 50.70 per cent. In April 2020, the core sector had contracted 37.9 per cent due to the lock-down. Icra expects exceptionally high growth in cement and steel.

"However, there has been a slackening in the sequential momentum in April in electricity demand, vehicle registrations, and generation of GST e-way bills, revealing the impact of the recent surge in Covid infections and localised restrictions," said Nayar.

LIFE-IS-SHORT | DICTUM Going back to the daily grind may prove a tough proposition for many people

Affluent Americans rush to retire in Covid times

ALEXANDRE TANZI & MICHAEL SASSO APRIL 30

After a year of early-morning Zoom calls, the spectre of a deadly virus and soaring stock and real estate values, working American baby boomers plan to get out while the getting's good.

About 2.7 million Americans aged 55 or older are contemplating retirement years earlier than they'd imagined because of the pandemic, government data show. They're more likely to be White, a group that typically has a larger amount of accumulated wealth, and many cite robust retirement accounts and Covid-19 fatigue for their early exit, according to interviews with wealth managers and federal surveys.

Much like the US economy's so-called K-shaped recovery, the

pandemic is treating the affluent differently, empowering them to leave corporate life early. Others who lost jobs had to delay retirement, or grew discouraged and retired before they were ready.

Early retirements, whether desired or forced, will deprive the labour market of some of its most productive workers and have an impact on the economic recovery that is still too early to evaluate. Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell this week cited a "significant number" of people saying they've retired as one reason companies are reporting labour shortages, although it's unclear if they'll eventually rejoin the job market.

In the Minneapolis area, Craig DiLorenzo, 58, is among those who chose to bow out, after a career at industrial



giant 3M Company. Frustrated over 6 a.m. teleconferences, his thoughts turned to spending

more time pursuing his other passions, including volunteering with the Salvation Army. A scare with cancer five years ago made him reconsider his commitment to climbing the corporate ladder, and last year's stuck at home only reinforced those feelings, he said.

"It makes you think, 'Does all this matter as much as you think it does?'" said DiLorenzo, who retired at the end of March.

Financial advisers say they're seeing a new "life-is-short" attitude among clients with enough money socked away to carry them through retirement. The prospect of going back to the daily grind is going to be "a really tough pill for a lot of people to swallow," said Kenneth Van Leeuwen, founder of financial services firm Van Leeuwen & Co. in Princeton, New Jersey.

One client, an executive whose stock portfolio has performed well, is retiring at 48 as the prospect of having to go back to travelling 10 to 12 nights a month isn't appealing anymore, Van Leeuwen said.

A November study from Pew Research Center found a surge in the number of baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, who reported being retired compared to previous years—1.2 million more than the historical annual average.

Other datapoints back up the findings. The number of people expecting to work beyond age 67 fell to a record low of 32.9 per cent last month, according to a New York Federal Reserve survey. And about 2.7 million workers aged 55 and older plan to apply early for Social Security benefits.

— Bloomberg

AstraZeneca to seek US vaccine clearance

SUZI RING APRIL 30

AstraZeneca Plc remains committed to getting US emergency clearance for its coronavirus vaccine whose public acceptance has been undercut by a series of missteps and potentially serious rare side effects.

The UK drugmaker, which has pledged not to profit from its Covid shot during the pandemic, said it's still seeking an emergency use authorisation in the first half of 2021 and working with US officials on the filing. Astra had said earlier that it would apply for the authorisation by mid-April.

The vaccine, developed with the University of Oxford, sold \$275 million in the first quarter. Astra reported on Friday, a fraction of its \$7.3 billion in revenue. Meanwhile, Pfizer Inc has forecast \$15 billion in 2021 sales from the Covid vaccine made with partner BioNTech SE, while Moderna Inc expects to reap about \$18 billion.

A year after Astra and Oxford announced their partnership, the pharmaceutical firm said it has provided more than 300 million doses of the vaccine to 165 countries. But it has yet to gain approval in the US. Backing from the FDA could help with the perception of the vaccine in light of reports of blood clots in some users.

Pharma stocks bucked the trend and Nifty Pharma index gained 1.28 per cent. PSU stocks also fared better as Nifty CPSE index closed 1.48 per cent up.

NSE's India VIX index climbed 1.19 per cent to 23.03 indicating more volatility ahead.

"Global cues were weak following a softer-than-expected survey of

Profit-taking halts market's defiant upward momentum

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, APRIL 30

After four days of gains, the Sensex plunged 983.58 points on profit-taking, limiting the otherwise handsome weekly gains by 1.98 per cent.

Fearing more economic disruptions from lockdowns, mixed results in the May 2 counting of assembly election votes, April auto sales number to be released on May 1 and shortage of vaccine, traders avoided taking risks,