THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI TUESDAY 20 APRIL 2021



NATION 4

Coordinated action needed across borders to combat terrorism, says Jaishankar



SPORT | 7

European Super League: 12 European football teams to form breakaway competition

Shraddha Das has turned



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Maren Morris reacts as she accepts the award for song of the year for *The Bones* at the 56th annual Academy of Country Music Awards at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville,

Navy seizes drugs worth ₹3,000cr off Kerala coast

New Delhi: The Indian Navy today seized over 300 kg of narcotic substances from a fishing boat in the Arabian Sea off the coast of Kerala. The approximate value of the seized narcotics is estimated to be ₹3,000 crore in the international market, the Navv said in an official release. Indian Naval Ship Suvarna, on surveillance patrol in the Arabia Sea, intercepted a fishing vessel with suspicious movements and conducted an operation.

More on Page 4

Travel bubble opens between Australia, NZ

Auckland: Tearful reunions filled Auckland airport on Monday as residents from Australia were able to travel freely to New Zealand for the first time in more than a year. The long-awaited Australia-NZ travel bubble means visitors no longer need to quarantine on arrival. ■ More on Page 6

IPL: Chennai trounce Rajasthan by 45 runs

Mumbai: Chasing a target of 189, Rajasthan Royals' batting collapsed spectacularly to end up at 143/9, and the Chennai Super Kings walked away with a 45-run victory at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Monday. After Jos Buttler (49) fell in the 12th over. Raiasthan were never in the fight. ■ More on Page 8

COUNTERPOINT

It is running late by 12 hours, doctor!



Max: 36°C Min: 21°C **RH:** 24%

Rain: 20% Forecast: Cloudy

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Ashtami till 12.39 am (Wednesday)

Star: Purnarvasu till 6.51 am Varjyam: 3.12 pm to 4.52 pm Durmuhurtam: 8.30 am to 9.20 am; 11.05 pm to 11.51

Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm **SUNSET TODAY 6.49 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.49 AM MOONRISE TOMORROW 12.55 PM**

MOONSET TODAY 12.43 AM



TABLOID 12

to Buddhism to cope with lockdown woes in Mumbai

Vaccine for all above 18 yrs of age to begin from May 1

Vaccine manufacturers can release 50% supply to states and open market

VINEETA PANDEY NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Under pressure to open up vaccines for all age groups as Covid-19 cases surge in India, the Centre on Monday announced that vaccinations will be available to all above the age of 18 from May 1. In another major shift in vaccine policy, the Centre also allowed states to directly procure vaccine doses from manufacturers. Vaccine manufacturers have been asked to supply 50 per cent of their stock to the Centre, and split the rest 50 per cent between state governments and the open mar-

ket.
The decision for "liberalised and accelerated" Phase 3 Covid-19 vaccination drive from May 1 was

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday

cancelled his visit to

India scheduled for April

26 and the UK added India

to its Covid-19 travel "red

list", effectively banning all travel from the coun-

try and making a 10-day

hotel quarantine compul-

sory for UK residents

arriving in the country. A BBC report quoted Mr Johnson as saying it was

"only sensible" to cancel

the visit in view of the

raging pandemic in India

which is battling a fero-

Sensex slides

surge worries

grip investors

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, APRIL 19

It was panic selling over

rising Covid infections

in the country as the market opened on Monday. In just half an hour, the Sensex was down 1469.32 points, or 3

per cent, as the bench-

mark index touched the

day's low of 47,362.71. The Nifty-50 touched a low of 14,191.40, down

But a partial recovery

later helped the Sensex

to close with a loss of

882.61 points, or 1.81 per cent, at 47,949.42 while Nifty-50 closed

at 14,359.45, down 1.77

Vaccine and oxygen

shortages in several states were making the

fight against the second

Covid wave difficult for

the Centre and states.

More on Page 7

426 points.

3% as Covid

with agency inputs

NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Manmohan Singh tests positive for Covid-19, admitted to AIIMS

New Delhi: Former a dedicated Covid faciliprime minister Manmohan Singh tested positive for Covid-19 and was admitted to All India Institute of Sciences (AIIMS) here with a mild fever on Monday. Mr Singh, 88, has been admitted to the AIIMS trauma centre, which is

Minister Narendra Modi held a series of meetings over India's response to record daily surges in Covid cases.
With Covid-19 cases ris-

UK puts India on 'red list', Boris

cancels visit, says 'only sensible'

Anyone who is not

zen... cannot enter

the UK if they have

been in India in the

— Matt

Hancock,

UK health

cious second wave of the

UK health secretary Matt Hancock confirmed

the move to put India on

its "red list" in the House

of Commons as he revealed that 103 cases of

RAJIB CHOWDHURI and YOJNA GUSAI

KOLKATA/NEW DELHI,

Rattled by the explosion of Covid-19 cases amid Assembly elections in

West Bengal, chief minis-

ter Mamata Banerjee on Monday cancelled all her

poll campaign in Kolkata and also curtailed the length of her district ral-

lies to 30 minutes. The

BJP too, singed by criti-

cism over the rising cases and non-adherence to

Covid protocols at election

rallies, announced that it

will reduce the crowd

strength at each rally of

its star campaigners, including Prime Minister

Narendra, to a maximum of 500 for the remaining

The move by the

Trinamul Congress supre-

mo and the BJP came two days after Congress MP

Rahul Gandhi cancelled

his campaign in the state.

Ms Banerjee, however, clearly ruled out immedi-

three poll phases.

Nasa copter takes flight on Mars

This Nasa photo obtained on April 19, 2021, shows

Nasa's Ingenuity Mars Helicopter captured in this shot

as it hovered over the Martian surface on Monday dur-

ing the first instance of powered, controlled flight on

Covid pandemic.

secretary •

previous 10 days.

a UK or Irish citi-

mild fever in the morning and later tested positive for Covid-19. The doctors are monitoring his condition. Mr Singh had taken the two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine on March 4 and April 3. More on Page 3

ty, sources said, adding

They said Singh had a

his condition is stable.

ing at an alarming speed and hospital beds, oxygen supply and medicines in short supply, the government was under tremen-

the so-called "Indian vari-

ant" had been identified

in the UK, of which the

'vast majority have links

that variant have been

analysed to see if the new

variant has any "concern-

ing characteristics", such

as greater transmissibili-

ty or resistance to treat-

"After studying the data

and on a precautionary

basis, we've made the dif-

ficult but vital decision to

add India to the red list.'

"This means anyone who is not a UK or Irish

Turn to Page 4

■ BJP rallies in Bengal not to have more than 500 people

Didi cancels all her rallies in Kolkata

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee addresses

an election rally at Hemtabad of Uttar Dinajpur district

the minister told MPs.

ments and vaccines.

to international travel". He said that samples of vaccination and allow states access to medical essentials.

India on Monday reported 2.74 lakh cases and 1, 619 deaths.

As per the decisions, taken after Mr Modi held a series of meetings with doctors and leaders of the pharmaceutical industry, pricing, procurement, eligibility and administration of vaccines have been made flexible in Phase 3 and all stakeholders have been given flexibility to customise to local needs. However, vaccines in the government sector will continue to be administered free of cost. States too have been given the freedom to procure additional vaccine doses directly from the manufacturers while the Centre will also **More on Page 4**

Army opens hospital for civilians in MP

Bhopal: Army on Monday stepped in to tackle the coronavirus pandemic by throwing open its hospi-tals in Madhya Pradesh for the civilian Covid-19 patients. In another development, MP high court on pulled up the Shivraj government for its failure to solve the crisis of oxygen and life saving drug Remdesivir in the state. Two senior Army officers met the chief minister here in the afternoon to discuss allocation of beds in different army hospitals in the state for treatment of such patients.

■ More on Page 3

■ Delhi schools on vacation from today till June 9

6-day lockdown begins in Delhi, situation 'critical'

SUNIL THAPLIYAL and BHASKAR HARI SHARMA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 19 Chief minister Arvind

Kejriwal said on Monday that the Covid situation in Delhi is "critical" and announced a six-day lockdown in the national capital from 10 pm Monday to 5 am next Monday. Mr Kejriwal said the move was necessary as rising Covid cases have severely strained the city's resources and its health system is at a tipping point. He said that the government will use this time to ramp up medical facilities in the city and appealed to migrants not to leave, saying, to leave, saying, "Government will take care of you".

care of you".

All essential services
will be allowed during
the lockdown, but private
offices and other establishments like shops, malls, weekly markets, manufacturing units, educational and coaching institutes, cinema halls, restaurants, bars, assembly halls, auditoriums, public parks, sport complexes, gyms, spas, barber shops, saloons and beauty parlours will remain closed.

All e-passes obtained for movement connected to essential goods and services during night curfew and weekend curfew will be valid for the six-day restrictions. During the lockdown,

pregnant women and patients going for medical services along with an attendant will be allowed on production of valid I-card or doctor's prescription or medical papers. People who are

Bengal repoll

on 2 seats may

collide with Eid

Berhampore/Kolkata:

The Election Commission on Monday rescheduled the Assembly Election at

Jangipur constituencies

in Murshidabad of West

Bengal from April 26 to

May 13 in wake of the deaths of two candidates due to Covid-19 in those

two seats. The assembly

polls at both the seats

The new date, which is after the announcement

of the Assembly polls in the state on May 2, how-

ever is likely to coincide

with Eid-ul-Fitr at the end

of Ramzan which has irked chief minister Mamata Banerjee and the Left Front also. "We will

countermanded.

Shamshergunj



government announced complete lockdown for 6

appeal to you (migrant labourers) with folded hands. It's a small lockdown, only for six days. Don't leave Delhi and go... Govt will take care of you.

> — Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi CM

People in essential services are permitted to move. This includes healthcare personnel, sanitation services, policemen, media personnel, among others. People with a valid bus,

train, airline ticket will be

permitted to reach their

Metro and public buses will run at 50% capacity. tion, earlier scheduled

destinations.

going for Covid-19 testing or vaccination are also exempted on the production of a valid I-card.

Those going to airports, railway stations, ISBT have been allowed movement, but they will have to show a valid ticket. Electronic and print mediapersons have been exempted from restrictions.

The Delhi government on Monday also issued a circular advancing the summer vacation in all schools as national capital fights a massive battle against coronavirus. The vacafrom May 11 to June 3, will now begin from Tuesday (tomorrow) and schools will remain shut till June 9, the order said. "Delhi's health system

is at a breaking point. I will not say it has collapsed but the Covid situation is pretty critical," Mr Kejriwal said while addressing an online press conference.

"I have always been against a lockdown. I believe the lockdown will not finish the virus, but it will reduce the transmission rate. It will give us

Turn to Page 4

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, APRIL 19

Maharashtra.
State chief secretary
Sitaram Kunte, under the
"Break the Chain" cam-

paign, has issued an order which named Kerala, Goa, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi and the National Capital (NCR) Region Uttarakhand as places of sensitive origin"

"Passengers travelling to Maharashtra from these states will need to carry a negative RT-PCR report of the test conducted within 48 hours of their train travel. If the passengers are not carrying an RT-PCR report, they will undergo a rapid antigen test at the station," the order said.

The Maharashtra government also issued standard operating procedures
Turn to Page 4</ti>

Court orders lockdown in 5 UP cities

Lucknow: The Allahabad High Court on Monday ordered a complete lockdown in five cities in Uttar Pradesh till April 26.

The five cities are Lucknow, Prayagraj, Kanpur, Varanasi and Gorakhpur. All these cities have been report-

ing a high virus load. Responding to a PIL, the bench, comprising Justice Siddhartha Verma and Justice Ajit

Kumar, directed the state government to strictly enforce the curbs. The court has further directed the state government to continue implementing the current vaccination programme.

— Agencies

■ More on Page 3

send a letter to the EC later in this regard," the size. I, myself, will also not Turn to Page 4 tive and 38 dying in the Kremlin critic Navalny moved to prison hospital amid health alert

On Monday afternoon

Malda, "At present 2,000

patients are in serious

condition in the state. In Greater Kolkata, we will

not conduct any big cam-

paigns. All will be small in

ASIAN AGE

Moscow, April 19: After his allies warned that he is "days" away from dying, jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been moved to a prison hospital, Russia's federal penitentiary service said on Monday. Mr Navalny is 21 days into a hunger strike, demanding access to proper medical care at his

of West Bengal on Monday.

ate enforcement of either

a lockdown or night cur-

few by her government in

the state. The state wit-

nessed a new record in

daily spike in Covid-19

cases on Monday with

8,426 people testing posi-

posts, doctors affili-Navalny said said his health has

Alexei Navalny rapidly deteriorated because of

the hunger strike and possible lingering effects from the nerve-agent poisoning that nearly killed him in August.

Yaroslav Ashikhmin, Navalny's personal physi-

revealing high potassium were indicative of kidney failure and that severe heart-rhythm disturbances threatened car-

"Our patient could die at any moment," Ashikhmin said on Facebook.

said on Facebook.

The federal penitentiary service said Monday: "At the present time, Navalny's health is assessed as satisfactory, and he is being examined daily by a physician."

Agencies

Only Covid -ve people from Guj, Goa, Delhi can enter Maharashtra

Alarmed by the rapid surge in Covid-19 cases, the Maharashtra government has declared six states, including Delhi and Gujarat, as places of "Sensitive Origin" to stop the influx of coronavirus variants into the state. As per the government's order, it is now mandatory for all passengers coming from these six states to procure a Covid-negative cer-

Tourists' entry banned, other **curbs in N-E**

MANOJ ANAND **GUWAHATI, APRIL 19**

In view of the growing number of Covid-19 cases across the country, the north-eastern states have started taking steps restricting movement of people from outside the region Meghalaya Monday imposed a ban on entry of tourists into the state while Manipur has imposed night curfew in the state.

Assam, which is also the gateway of north-east, has already announced that Covidnegative certificates from other states will not be valid to enter the state and people will have to undergo tests upon arrival at airports

and railway stations.

More on Page 3

expense. His attorneys said Navalny, 44, has two

herniated discs that have

caused extreme back pain

and numbness in his leg

SHORT TAKES

Summer vacation in Delhi schools to begin from Apr. 20

New Delhi: The Delhi government on Monday advanced summer vacation in all schools of the national capital in view of the spiralling Covid-19 cases. The vacation, which was to start from May 11 and continue till June 30, has now been rescheduled from April 20 to June 9. "In view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic situation, the summer vacation has now been rescheduled and will be observed from April 20 to June 9," the **Directorate of Education** (DoE) said in an order. Earlier in the day, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a six-day lockdown from 10 pm on Monday till 5 am on April 26 which, he said, was necessary to deal with the rising number of Covid-19 cases as the city's health system was stretched to its limit. Delhi has been reporting around 25,000 Covid-19 cases daily in the past few days. "All the heads of schools are hereby directed to disseminate this information among the teaching, non-teaching staff, students and parents through SMC members, mass SMS facility, phone calls and other means. "During the vacation period, heads of schools are authorized to call vacation staff according to requirement for any school-related work (academic, admission, examination) maintaining Covid-

appropriate behaviour and following the standard operating procedure issued by competent authorities from time to time," it said. The Delhi government had earlier this month ordered closure of schools and suspension of physical exams for all classes in view of rise in Covid-19 cases. "All centrally conducted online and semi-online teaching and learning activities will remain suspended during the period for classes KG to nine," the Department of Education said in a sepa-

Delhi court denies Deep Sidhu's custody to police

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Monday rejected Delh Police"s plea for custodial interrogation of actoractivist Deep Sidhu in connection with a case filed by the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) pertaining to the violence at Red Fort, during which parts of the heritage structure were reportedly damaged. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Gajendra Singh Nagar turned down the police demand for Sidhu's 4day remand and sent him to 14-day judicial custody, saying there was no sufficient ground to allow the custodial interrogation. Sidhu was arrested by Delhi Police on Saturday in relation to the Republic Day violence during the farmers" tractor march against the central government's new farm laws. moments after being

released in another case related to violence, in which he got bail on Friday. He was earlier arrested on February 9 in connection with the Red Fort violence on the

Republic Day. Sidhu's advocate Abhishek Gupta argued that both the FIRs rested on similar allegations, and since Sidhu had already been

interrogated by the police in the matter, there was no need for fresh police remand now. Gupta said the investigating officers were "acting like emperors". - PTI

■City has reported 823 fatalities due to the deadly virus in the last 5 days ■ Overall toll stands at 12,361

Record 240 Covid deaths in Delhi; 23,686 cases

New Delhi, April 19: Delhi on Monday recorded 240 deaths due to Covid-19, the highest since the pandemic began over a year ago, and 23,686 cases with a positivity rate of 26.12 per cent, according to data shared by the Health Department.

As the coronavirus crisis deepened further, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a sixday lockdown in the national capital from 10 pm on Monday till 5 am on April 26. He said it was necessary to deal with the rising number of Covid-19 cases as the city's health system was stretched to its limit.

announcement, which came at the end of a weekend curfew, bought back the memories of last year's lockdown and trig-gered usual responses from people — migrant workers rushing to railway stations and bus terminals in a bid to return home, residents flocking to markets to stock up on essentials, and tipplers joining in long, serpentine queues outside liquor

The city has reported 823 deaths due to the deadly virus in the last five days. On Sunday, the city had witnessed the biggest jump in its daily Covid-19 tally with 25,462 fresh cases, while the positivity

New Delhi, April 19: Thousands of migrant

workers gathered at Anand Vihar ISBT here to

catch a bus home, hours

announced a week-long

lockdown and appealed to them with folded hands

not to leave Delhi while

sounding a word of assurance — Main hoon na (I

The police officials said

that over 5,000 people gathered at Anand Vihar,

including ISBT as well as

the railway station, and

the numbers are rising.

Earlier in the day, Mr Kejriwal appealed to the

migrant workers to not

leave Delhi, saying the

short period of lockdown

"I assure you, the gov-

ernment will take full care of you. Main hoon

na, mujh par bharosa rakho (I am here for you, have faith in me)," Mr

Kejriwal said, announc-

ing the lockdown.
A senior police officer

need not be extended.

minister

Kejriwal

after chief Arvind

am here for you).



President of the Indian Youth Congress (IYC) Srinivas B.V. with his team members at IYC social media center in New Delhi on Monday. Srinivas is helping Covid patients receive essential medical help using social media.

rate had shot up to 29.74 per cent. Authorities had reported 161 deaths due to

the disease a day ago. On Saturday, 24,375 Covid-19 cases and 167 deaths were reported in the city. The city witnessed 141 deaths on Friday and 112 on

Migrants arrive at Kaushambi bus terminal after the Delhi government announced

Migrant workers head home

despite Kejriwal's assurance

deployed in the area were

trying to counsel the

for a few days only.

tion is deteriorating.

migrant

ISBT area.

officer said.

migrant workers to stay

back as the lockdown is

However, migrants feared

that the lockdown could

be extended as the situa-

said that after the sudden

announcement of the

lockdown, thousands of

thronged the Anand Vihar

'We have deployed maxi-

mum force here. There must be over 5,000 people

here at present. Buses are

limited as of now, we are guiding people as per their destination," he

The police was also in talks with civil adminis-

tration officials to either

arrange transport for

them or shelter homes for

their temporary stay, the

The policemen deployed

in the area were also try-

PARMOD KUMAR

NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

The Supreme Court on

Monday formed a commit-

tee to ascertain the quality

and quantity of water being released by Haryana

at Wazirabad water treat-

ment plant in the national

The six-member commit-

tee, headed by secretary Water Resources Ministry,

will examine the quality and quantity of water coming to Delhi from

Haryana. The committee

has been asked to submit

water

workers

With the fresh cases, the national capital's cumulative tally has risen to

8,77,146. The death toll stands at 12,361, according to the latest bulletin. A total of 90,696 tests,

including 68,778 RT-PCR tests and 21918 rapid anti-

ing to counsel the migrant

workers to stay back as

the lockdown is for a few

However, migrants feared that the lockdown

could be extended as the

situation of Covid-19 is

Mukesh Pratap, who

works at a cloth factory in Dilshad Garden and is a

native of UP's Bareilly,

said he wanted to go to his

home as there was a possi-

bility of lockdown exten-

"Lockdown will definite-

ly affect our livelihood so

it is better for us to

remain in our homes. It

may be extended also and

I would not like to take a

In an online briefing, the

chief minister said, "I

would like to appeal to

them (migrants), with folded hands, that this is a

short lockdown of six

days. Please do not leave

Delhi. You would lose a lot

of time, money, and ener-

gy in travelling. Stay in Delhi." — PTI

chance," he said.

deteriorating day by day.

days only, he added.

gen tests, were conducted the previous day, the bulletin said.

So far, over 7.87 lakh patients have recovered in Delhi, it added. The number of active cases in the city increased to 76,887 from 74,941 the day before, the bulletin stated. -PTI

Pharmacy shop owner arrested for Remdesivir blackmarketing

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Delhi Police has arrested a 41-year-old pharmacy shop owner and his employee was arrested on Monday in connection with alleged blackmarketing of "Remdesivir" medicine in Delhi. The accused, Basant

Goel, a resident of Delhi's Vivek Vihar and his 27-year-old employee Ramoutar Sharma, a resident of North Chhajupur in Delhi has been working with Goel for the last seven years at their pharmacy in Durgapuri

Extension Loni Road. The police said an investigation was initiated by Delhi Police's Crime Delhi Branch after a case was registered by them on Monday

in connection with black marketing of corona medicine "Remdesivir" in Delhi. "The owner of 'Goyal Medicos', Basant Goel has been arrested in the case along with his employee Ramoutar Sharma in connection with blackmarketing of Remdesivir" in Delhi," police said.

Disclose number of beds available in hospitals: HC

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

The Delhi High Court Monday directed the Centre and AAP government to file affidavits by Tuesday disclosing hospital-wise availability of beds for Covid-19 patients

Taking stock of the current pandemic situation, the high court asked the Central government to look into the aspect of shortage of oxygen supply in Delhi hospitals on

an urgent basis.

A bench of Justices
Vipin Sanghi and Rekha
Palli_said the Centre and the Delhi government in their affidavits shall also give details as to how many hospital beds are with or without ventilators and oxygen support.

It also directed the firm. which used to supply oxygen to Delhi hospitals and has suddenly stopped, to restore the oxygen supply

The bench also said that the Delhi government's direction on action against labs for not delivering Covid-19 test reports within 24 hours, shall not be implemented. On migrant workers crisis, it observed that both the Central and Delhi gov-

to be learnt from it. The Delhi High Court on Monday ordered district courts to take up only urgent matters and that too through video confer-

ernments have failed in

the last year's lockdown

and lessons are required

encing.
"In view of the alarming rise in Covid-19 cases in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, in continuation of this court's office order dated April 8 2021, it is ordered that all the judicial officers of district courts in Delhi shall take up only urgent cases of their respective courts, through video-conferencing mode," the high court said.

People flock markets to stock groceries, other essential items

kets to stock groceries and other essentials, and ran other errands soon after Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a week-long lockdown amid rising Covid-19 cases.

Long queues were seen outside stores at many places in Delhi soon after the announcement. While a few anticipated that the lockdown may be extended further, others did not want to step out during the restricted period and hence wanted to be better prepared.

Shiv Takkar, a 30-yearold law student residing in Lajpat Nagar, said although he was anyway coming to buy some essentials and medicines, the moment he got a message from a friend about the lockdown, he thought of fetching whatever is needed immediately.

"The situation has not improved a bit a year after. We did not have beds in hospitals then, we do not have beds now. So, it becomes difficult to trust the government, especially when it is an emergency," he said.

Rajbir Singh, a 58-yearold employee at a mineral water distribution company, said, "Shopkeepers tend to increase the prices of items when such a situation arises. Last year, the prices of hand sanitiser and floor

New Delhi, April 19: the roof. Items like elaichi People flocked the marand liquorice, (which are used to prepare a concoction to boost immunity) weren't even available in

many shops."
Another man, who did not wish to be named he remembered standing in a long queue at a pharmacy for two hours in April last year to buy a pair of gloves and medicines. some 'Lockdown is harsh on

everybody," he said.
Deepti Nainwal, a resident of Dwarka, said the moment she and her husband heard about the lockdown on Monday morning, they reached the grocery shop immediately where people were already standing in queue.

There was among people. We just bought the minimal required grocery for us. The cases have been increasing due which we do not want to go out of the house," she

Amit Sharma, a resident of Shahdara, said, 'We have read that the new strain is more dangerous as compared to the revious one. Me and family have not been exposed to this virus yet. We are storing the necessary items for one week and will avoid to step out of the house. My mother is a senior citizen and we are more worried about

Saket family court judge dies of Covid

New Delhi, April 19: A 47year-old district court succumbed to Covid-19 at a government hospital here on Monday.

Kovai Venugopal, who was a judge at the Saket Family Court, died at 11 am at the Lok Nayak Jai

According to the court sources, he was admitted to the hospital on Sunday and was being treated in the Intensive Care Unit

Saket Bar Association Secretary Dhir Singh Kasana alleged that the Venugopal was battling the virus for over a week.

incident was a result of "negligence on the part of the government".

"We have been continuously asking the government to make vaccination for all judges and lawyers mandatory as we have to work among thousands of people on a daily basis to keep the justice delivery

system working," he said 'Had the government agreed to our demand, this inclaent would not have happened," Kasana

Venugopal was battling

Thousands queue up outside liquor vends after lockdown announcement

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Long, serpentine queues were seen outside liquor shops in Delhi soon after the announcement of a sixday lockdown on Monday. with tipplers braving the sun for hours and occasionally breaking into heated arguments. Many lost patience as the mercury climbed and some even tried to jump queues, leading to minor disagreements and altercations at some places.

An association of liquor companies,

SC panel to ascertain quality, quantity



Monday.

came out with a statement urging the Delhi government to start home delivmeanwhile, ery of alcoholic beverages

in the city, on the lines of Maharashtra, to ease the rush. Waiting for his turn in one such queue in south

Delhi, Ravinder Saxena said he wanted to stock up as he believed there are chances that the lockdown will be extended further.

"Liquor helps keep negative thinking out of your mind," he said, while waiting for his turn. "There are many people at the shop, and I will try to buy at least six to eight bottles for myself," Saxena added.

Bharat Sharma, a resident of Dilshad Garden, said the moment he came to know about the lockdown, he reached the local liquor shop along with a

Delhi sees over 500% jump in containment zones since Apr. 1

New Delhi, April 19: The number of containment zones in the national capital has jumped to 13,259 from 2,183 on April 1, according to official data released by the Delhi government as the city grapples to rein in the drastic surge in Covid cases. It was a 507 percent increase in such zones between April 1 and April 18.

The number of containment zones has risen correspondingly to the increase in coronavirus cases. On April 1, the city had reported a total of 2,790 new cases with 10,498

total active cases. The number increased multifold with 25,462 new COVID-19 cases and 74,941 total active

cases on April 18. While the number of containment zones has consistently risen since April 12, the biggest jump was observed on April 18, when the national daily rise of coronavirus

containment zones, which increased to 13,250 on April 18, adding more than 2000 zones

in the number of containment While on April 4, the city had

2,917 restricted areas, it added 173 more such zones on April 5 resulting in 3,090 containment The following days, the Delhi

It was after April 14 that the city started adding more than

capital recorded the highest

On April 17, Delhi had 11,235

actions the city.

The week from April 4 to April 11 saw a gradual increase

government declared 3,291 containment zones on April 6; 3,708 on April 7; 4,226 on April 8; 4,768 on April 9; 5,236 on April 10 and 5,705 on April 11.

its report in three days. The supply of water from Haryana at Wazirabad water treatment plan is essential for 1000 containment zones to the list every day. the

of water released by Haryana to Delhi requirement in the national capital particularly during summer months.

The six-member committee has representatives of the Jal Shakti Ministry, Delhi Pollution Control Board, Delhi Jal Board, Haryana State Pollution Control Board the Haryana Agricultural Board as its

members. A bench comprising Justice L. Naageswara Rao, Justice A.S. Bopanna Justice

Ramasubramanian sought a report from the committee in the wake of Haryana and Delhi contested each others claim on the quality and the quantity of water being given by Haryana to Delhi.

The top court formed the six-member committee in the course of the hearing of a plea by Delhi Jal Board contending that Haryana was releasing less amount of water than expected and as a consequence there was an increase in ammonia

level in Yamuna river

water. However, this was disputed by Haryana which contended that Delhi was diverting water before it actually reached Wazirabad water treatment plant. The court directed the further hearing of the matter after the submission of the report

by committee. Delhi Jal Board had approached the top court in January 2021 seeking directions to the Haryana government not to discharge untreated wastewater in the river Yamuna passing through the State, resulting in a rise of ammonia levels in the river water.

The top court had issued notice to Haryana on January 19 seeking its response to the plea by Delhi Jal Board. However the top court enlarged the scope of the hearing asking the National Green Tribunal (NGT)-appointed committee for river monitoring to submit its recommendations to improve the quality of the river water and the extent to which they have been implemented

SC to hear plea to clear roads for traffic

Farmers' protest:

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

The Supreme Court on Monday posted for May 7 a plea filed by a Noida resident seeking direction to authorities to ensure that the road between Noida to Delhi is kept clear of the farmers agitating against three controversial farms laws so that the passage is not affected.

A Bench comprising Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul Kaul and Hemant Gupta told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta not to obstruct the life of other people. However, the court

matter for further hearing on May 7 after the Solicitor General sought two weeks adjournment. On the last date of hearing, the court had said that public roads should not be blocked during protests and there should

be free flow of traffic on

adjourned the hearing by

two week and posted the

roads. The court is hearing a PIL filed by Monicca Agarwaal, a marketing

executive, that commuting has become a nightmare since the roads were blocked by the protesting November.

IAF chief leaves for

5-day France visit

New Delhi: Even as India is expecting next batch of Rafale aircraft later this month, Air Force Chief RKS Bhadauria on Monday left for France on a five day official visit. The visit of Indian Air Force Chief will be a significant step in further enhancing mutual cooperation. Air Chief will hold meetings and discussions with senior military leadership of France and visit operational facilities and airbases. The visit comes after Gen Philippe Lavigne, Chief of Staff, French Air and Space Force (FASF) visited India in February 2020. He will also take stock of delivery of the rest of the Rafale aircraft to the Indian Air Force. Dassault Aviation has till now delivered 14 jets to the Indian Air Force. India had signed an inter-governmental agreement with France in September 2016 for procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets at a cost of around ₹58,000 crore.

Navy seizes drugs worth ₹3,000 crore

New Delhi: Indian Navy on Monday said that it has seized narcotics of ₹3,000 crore in Arabian Sea. Indian Naval Ship Suvarna, whilst on surveillance patrol in the Arabian Sea, encountered a fishing vessel with suspicious movements, said Indian Navy in a statement. To investigate the vessel, the ship's team conducted boarding and search operation, which led to the seizure of more than 300 kilograms of narcotics substances. The boat with its crew have been escorted to the nearest Indian Port of Kochi, Kerala for further investigation. "The approximate cost the catch in the international market is estimated to be ₹3,000 crore," said Indian Navy. This is a major catch not only in terms of the quantity and cost but also from the perspective of disruption of the illegal narcotics smuggling routes, which emanate

Parl should discuss Covid situation: Raut

Maldivian and Sri Lankan des-

from the Makran coast and

flow towards the Indian,

Mumbai: Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Monday called for convening a special session of Parliament for at least two days to discuss the Covid situation. Terming the Covid as "unprecedented and almost war-like". Mr Raut said he held discussions with some key leaders from across the country on Sunday over the issue and all of them were of the view that the situation is "serious". "It's an unprecedented & almost a war like situation. Utmost confusion. tension everywhere! No beds, no oxygen & no vaccination as well! It's nothing but TOTAL CHAOS! A Spl session of the Parliament for at least 2 days should be called to discuss the situation!" he

'OXYGEN SUPPLIES FOR MP BLOCKED **IN CERTAIN STATES**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY

BHOPAL, APRIL 19 Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday said oxygen consignments for MP have been blocked in certain states, leading to disruption in supply of oxygen to hospitals here. Mr Chouhan took up the issue with the chief ministers of the concerned states urging them to sort out the matter as soon as possible to ensure that no Covid-19 patients died due to want of oxygen in hospitals in MP. "Oxygen consignments headed for MP were blocked in states of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh by district and lower level officers there under some pretexts. We have taken up the matter with the chief ministers of these states to sort out the matter urgently", a govern-

ment spokesman told this newspaper here. Mr Chouhan held discussions with his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thakre in the afternoon on the matter, he said. Mr Thakre assured him of prompt action to sort out the issue, he added. Madhya Pradesh on Monday received 390 metric tons of oxygen. Ten Covid-19 patients died in government medical college hospital in Shahdol in MP on the intervening night of Saturday-Sunday due to lack

HC orders lockdown in 5 UP cities, govt objects

If people die of pan-

'All establishments, be it government or private, shall remain closed till April 26'

Amid a surge in coronavirus cases, the Allahabad High Court on Monday directed the Uttar Pradesh government to impose a weeklockdown Lucknow, Allahabad, Kanpur Nagar, Varanasi Allahabad, and Gorakhpur.
Reacting to the order,

the Uttar Pradesh government, however, said there will be no "complete lockdown" in the cities for

A two-judge bench comprising justices Siddhartha Varma and Ajit Kumar passed the lockdown order on a **Public Interest Litigation** on the condition of quarantine centres in the state and treatment of coronavirus patients.
"We are of the consid-

ered view that in given scenario of present time if people are restrained from going outside their homes for a week in the first instance, the current chain of spread of coronavirus infection can be broken and this will also give some respite to the frontline medical and health workers." bench observed.

Accordingly, we are passing the directions in respect of cities of services including Prayagraj (Allahabad), municipal functions, and



An ambulance carrying Covid patient wait to be attended by medical workers as coronavirus cases surge in Ahmedabad on Monday.

Lucknow. Varanasi. Nagar Kanpur Gorakhpur and we direct the government to strictly enforce them forthwith," it said.

"All establishments be it government or private, except financial institufinancial departments, medical services and health industrial and scientific establishments, essential

public transport, shall remain closed till 26th will, however, function on its own discretion," the bench said.

The state has witnessed a spurt in coronavirus cases over the past few

Responding to the order, Uttar Pradesh additional chief secretary, informa-tion, Navneet Sehgal said strict curbs are necessary Court again to control the spread of court order.

demic in a large number due to paucity of sufficient medical aid it would be the governments to blame which failed to counter the pandemic even after one long year of experience and learning. One would only laugh at us that we have enough to spend on elections and very little to spend on public health.

- Allahabad high court

the coronavirus and that government has taken several steps in that direction.

However, he said, alongside saving lives, protecting livelihoods is also important.

Therefore, there will be no complete lockdown in the cities for now. People are automatically closing many places," he said.

He did not say whether the government intends to move the Supreme Court against the high

Encourage patients to get Covid vaccine, PM to docs

Minister Narendra Modi on Monday termed vaccine as the biggest weapon in the fight against Covid and urged doctors to encourage more and more patients to get the jab.

In a virtual interaction with the country's leading doctors on the pandemic situation and vaccination progress, he noted that Covid is spreading rapidly in tier-two and tier-three cities this time and asked them to connect with their colleagues working there and provide online consultations to ensure all protocols are followed correctly.

In a separate meeting with leaders of the pharmaceutical industry, he commended the sector for its efforts to increase production of several necessary drugs and also for reducing the price of injections like remdesivir, according to an official statement.

cooperation from the pharma industry, Modi assured them the government is undertaking reforms for new drugs and regulatory processes.

To keep the supply of

IN A separate meeting with leaders of the phar-maceutical industry, PM commended the sector for its efforts to increase production of several necessary drugs and also for reducing the price of injections like remdesivir, according to an official

statement medicines and essential medical equipment going smoothly, the prime minister asked the industry to ensure seamless supply chains and extended the government's support for facilities like logistics and transportation.

He urged the industry to conduct more and more researches on threats that can occur in the future along with Covid as, he said, it would help the country take a lead in combating a virus.

Urging doctors to educate people against "rumours" on Covid treatment and prevention, Modi said it is very important in these difficult times to not become a victim of panic, according to the statement.

selling of patients admitted in hospitals, Modi said and encouraged doctors to use telemedicine for the treatment of other diseases, in case there is no

The Centre has recently taken many important decisions related to the supply of essential medicines, injections and sufficient availability of oxygen. The states have been given necessary guidelines about these, he said.

Amid a massive surge in coronavirus cases across the country, some chief ministers have complained of a shortage of essentials like oxygen supply and medicines like remdesivir, and sought the Centre's intervention. The Prime Minister said, "It is due to the doctors' hard work and the nation's strategy that India was able to control the infectious disease. It is now facing a second wave. All the doctors and our frontline workers are confronting the pandemic with full force and are saving the lives of millions of

Meghalaya

to be out

of bound

MANOJ ANAND

GUWAHATI, APRIL19

for tourists

In view of the growing

number of Covid-19 cases

across the country, the

north-eastern states have

started taking steps

restricting the movement

of people from outside

the region as Meghalaya on Monday

imposed a ban on entry of

tourists into the state while Manipur has

imposed a night curfew

in the state.
Assam, which is also

the gateway of the north-

announced that Covid-

from other states will not

be valid to enter the state

and people will have to

already

certificates

has

Manmohan Singh tests +ve Covid-19

New Delhi, April 19: Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh tested positive for coronavirus and was admitted to AIIMS with a mild fever

on Monday afternoon. Mr Singh, 88, has been admitted to the AIIMS trauma centre here, which is a dedicated Covid facility, sources said, adding his condition is stable.
They said Mr Singh

morning and later tested positive for coron-The doctors are moni-

had a mild fever in the

toring his condition. Mr Singh had taken both the doses of Covid vaccine. On Sunday, the former PM had also written a 3-page letter to

of Covid-19

Chaudhary passed away

on Monday.
Party sources said that Mr. Chaudhary had

tested positive for Covid

a week earlier and was

being treated at a private hospital in Patna

where he succumbed to

Mewalal Chaudhary

was the sitting JD(U) MLA from Tarapur con-

stituency. He was among the 14 ministers

who were sworn in on

November 16, 2020, as

part of Nitish Kumar

cabinet. He was allocat-

ed an education portfo-

However, he had to

resign from the post

three days after his oath

following allegations from the RJD led oppo-

sition over corruption

deceased legislator as a

'distinguished educa-

tionist, politician and

social worker" Bihar chief minister Nitish

Kumar in a statement

said that "his death was

an irreparable loss for

the education sector

rites will be performed

with full state hon-

politics. His last

charges against him.

Describing

the viral infection.

Mewalal

NAYYAR AZAD

PATNA, APRII 19



Narendra M o d i detailing sugges tions from

Congress party on augmenting the vaccination drive and other measures to contain the infection that has been rapidly spreading across the country, inflicting over 2 lakh people daily for the past four days few days.

Earlier on Monday, minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan had responded to Singh through a letter criticising him and Congress party instead.

■ Opens its hospitals in state for civilian corona patients Army steps in to fight Covid in MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, APRIL 19

Army on Monday stepped in to tackle the coronavirus pandemic by openits hospitals Madhya Pradesh for the civilian Covid-19 patients. In another development,

Madhya Pradesh high court on Monday pulled up the Shivraj government for its failure to solve the crisis of oxygen and life-saving drug Remdesivir in the state. Earlier in the day, Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan talked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the defence minister Rajnath Singh seeking their intervention to help the state overcome the crisis facing the state in treatment of Covid-19 patients.



A medic collects swab samples for Covid test from police personnel, who were deployed in Damoh Legislative by-election, as coronavirus cases rise across the country, at government Hospital in Bhopal on

ensure a steady supply of oxygen and Remdesivir drugs to the state. Mr Singh accepted the chief minister's proposal to open the Army hospitals in the state for treatment

While the PM assured to of Covid-19 patients, a government spokesman here

Two senior Army officers met the chief minister here in the afternoon to discuss allocation of beds in different Army hospi-

ment of such patients. "The Army has announced plans to throw

open its hospitals in Bhopal, Jabalpur, Sagar and Gwalior for treatment civilian Covid-19 patients. The Army has decided to earmark a total of 430 beds in these hospitals for these patients.

Besides, the Army has also offered to use its paramedical staff for treatment of civilian Covid-19 patients in these hospitals", a government spokesman here said.

In a significant development, the Madhya Pradesh high court on Monday ticked off the Shivraj government for its inability to overcome the shortage of oxygen and Remdesivir drug in the state to hospitals in the state.

undergo tests upon arrival at airports and railway stations.

east.

Informing that there will be no restriction on l o c a l tourism, Meghalaya chief

minister Conrad Sangma said that restrictions on the entry of tourists from outside Meghalaya will come into force from April 23. The state has also decided to shut down tourist spots, which witnesses high tourists footfall. "We have decided to close down tourist destinations which usually have very high tourist turn out," CM said.

Meanwhile, Assam's Covid tally mounted to 2,24,455 as 639 more people tested positive for the infection, while six fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,135.

The six deaths were reported from Barpeta, Dhemaii. Cachar. Kamrup Metropolitan, Morigaon and Tinsukia districts. Assam currently has 5,268 active cases. Himanta Biswa Sarma told reporters that the cases reported in Assam during the second wave

Assam health minister were mostly among those who were from outside the state.

Audio clip row: BJP demands 'strict action' against Mamata AGE CORRESPONDENT UNION MINISTER NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Citing statements made by West Bengal chief minister and Trinamul Mewalal Chaudhary Former Bihar supremo Mamata Banerjee prior to the Sitalkuchi violence edu minister and the purported audio of the conversation between her and her Mewalal dies party's Sitalkuchi candidate, the BJP on Monday demanded "strict action' against her for promoting enmity among groups and also violation of the oath as prescribed by the tion minister and JD(U)

In a memorandum submitted to the Election also cited some of the demand registration of an FIR to "set the right ments to create divisions

Representation of People

Constitution.

Commission, the BJP has statements made by Ms Banerjee during public rallies, including against opposition leaders to precedent as a deterrent for others who make divisive, communal stateenmity between

Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, who led the BJP delegation, which submitted the memorandum virtually, said TMC leaders have become 'habitual violators' of the Model Code of Conduct and

groups and communities based on unverified allegations with intent to vitiate the environment of free and fair polls." minister

Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, who led the BJP delega-tion, which submitted the memorandum virtually. said TMC leaders have "habitual violators" of the Model Code of Conduct and Representation of People

Referring Banerjee's to statements prior to the Sitalkuchi violence, including the one to "gherao" Central forces and the purported

TMC's Sitalkuchi candidate, the BJP said, "The audio seeks to incite and aggravate the differences between two communities on religious lines. The audio has been intentionally released to polarize votes in the remaining polls." The BJP also noted that the EC's earlier "reprimand, warning, condemnation and ban of 24 hours did not deter her" and the Sitalkuchi violence took place.

The BJP demanded that the views expressed by the EC "needs to be pursued to its logical end" and the commission may consider filing an FIR to "investigate the entire chain of events; their intent, purpose, actors and perpetrators and book all those found guilty for perpetrating the crimes of promoting hate and polarization amongst the communities and inciting people against the public ser-

Signs of community in C'garh: Minister AGE CORRESPONDENT

BHOPAL, APRIL 19

Chhattisgarh health minister T.S. Singhdeo on Monday indicated that the state may have entered the phase of community spread of the virus. Mr Singhdeo told reporters here that in told

many coronavirus positive cases, sources of infections could not be found; indicating that community spread of the virus may have begun in the state. The Source of infection is

tapped through contact

tracing. He said the threat

of community spread of the virus usually increased when the rate of infection grew by five per cent. "But, in some districts, the rate of infection has been found to be more than 30 per cent, while in some

other districts it was even more than 50 per cent. Hence, the chances of community spreading appeared real in these districts", he added.

Mr Singhdeo predicted

CHHATTISGARH **HEALTH** minister said that in many Covid +ve cases, sources of infec-

tions could not be found; indicating that community spread of the virus may have begun in the state. that the active cases in the

state may increase to 1.5 lakh to two lakhs from the current 1,28,019 by the end of this month. "We need to be more care-

ful", he added.

Chhattisgarh has reported 12,345 fresh cases of coronavirus positive and 170 deaths in the last 24 hours. Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel meanwhile has ordered strengthening scrutiny of people entering the state.

He said thorough scrutiny of people entering the state at railway stations, bus stands and airports must be done and people suspected to be infected by the virus be quarantined in the nearby hospitals.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRL



Simran

General public is hereby informed that this girl namely Simran D/o Wazir R/o F-15, Room No. 53, DDA Flats, Narela, Delhi Age: 17 years Height: 5', Face: Round, Complexion: Sallow, Build: Medium, wearing light green colour suit-salwar and white colour hawai slipper in feet, has been missing/ kidnappad since 30.03.2021 from

30.03.2021 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi.

her house. In this regard FIR No. 151/21 dated

Any person having any information or clue about this missing/kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in Website: http://cbi.nic.in P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi Ph.: 011-27787592, Fax: 24368639.

Tel.: 24368638/24368641 27787593

'70% of patients above 40 yrs in both waves' NITI Aayog Member (Health) V.K. Paul said New Delhi, April 19: second wave. ▶ PREVALENCE OF short-

Asserting that the older population continues to remain more vulnerable to coronavirus infection, top medical experts in government on Monday said over 70 per cent of Covid patients in both the waves are above

40 years. Addressing media, ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said there is no difference in deaths between first and second wave among hospitalised patients, while the oxygen requirement is higher in second wave and ventilator requirepatients in both waves

ment is not higher in the

Prevalence of shortness of breath is slightly higher in the second wave of Covid but sore throat and dry cough and other symptoms were higher in the first wave, the Centre said on Monday.

deaths between first and second wave among hospitalised patients. About 54.5 per cent patients require oxygen in sec-ond wave against 41.5 per cent in the first

are more than 40 years

difference in

wave," he said. "More than 70 per cent

ness of breath is slightly higher in the second wave of Covid but sore throat and dry cough and other symptoms were higher in the first wave, the Centre said on Monday.

old, only marginally higher proportion of Higher proportion of asymptomatic patients in the second wave," he said, based on the study of 1,885 patients in second wave and 7,600 patients in the first

in the first wave 31 per cent patients were aged less than 30 years, this time it is up to 32 per "Essentially there is no difference," Mr Paul

Bhargava appealed that wastage of oxygen must not happen and it should be rationalised.

Mr Paul added that remdesivir must be used on hospitalised patients in moderate stages of illness on oxygen and it is not to be used in home

TAKES **Kerala imposes**

night curfew

Thiruvananthapuram: In the backdrop of rising Covid-19 cases, Kerala government on Monday decided to bring in various restrictions, including imposing night curfew from 9 pm to 5 am from April 20 and malls and cinemas can function only till 7.30 pm. "Restriction on non-essential activities and movementat night between 9 PM and 5 AM shall come intoforce from 9 PM of April 20, 2021", the government order said. Tuition centres can function only online and should not hold any physical classes. All meetings, training events and other programmesunder all government departmentswould be held online as far as possi-ble, it was stated. The decisions to impose the restrictions, which would be in place for two weeks, were taken ata high-level meeting of the core group for Covid-19 management chaired by chief secre-tary Dr V.P. Joy. — *PTI*

Gujarat govt cuts RT-PCR test price

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat government slashed the charges of RT-PCR tests being conducted by private laboratories to ₹900 from ₹1,100, deputy chief minister Nitin Patel said on Monday. If a laboratory assistant is called at home or at the hospital to collect samples through RT-PCR test, the charges will be ₹900 with effect from Tuesday, he said. Mr Patel, who handles the Health portfolio, said a if a person visits a laboratory to give his swab sample, he will now be charged ₹700 instead of ₹800. "Till now, the state government alone conducted 40.99 lakh RT-PCR tests and over 1.19 crore antigen tests free of cost, Mr Patel said. He said 11 state-run hospitals across Gujarat will get the PSA oxygen generator plants soon to

Maha: Covid -ve must from Delhi, 5 states

cope up with the rising

demand for medical oxygen for Covid-19 patients. — PTI

■ Continued from Page 1 (SOPs) for passengers from these six states. For passengers travelling in long-distance trains from these states, the Railways will share data of the trains that are scheduled to be running between these places and Maharashtra with the local disaster management authorities. Data of passengers travelling will also be shared with the local disaster management authority each day four hours before the departure of the trains. No unreserved tickets will be issued from these places to

Maharashtra, the SOPs said. The Railways should ensure trains from the places of sensitive origin come to the outer platforms where it would be easier to conduct thermal screening of the passengers, the order said.

However, Goa chief minister Pramod Sawant has appealed to his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray to withdraw the order.

"#COVID19 is a global pan-demic. Let us put up a combined fight against this pandemic under the leadership of PM @narendramodi ji. I urge @CMOMaharashtra not to single out states as 'Places of Sensitive Origin' and withdraw the said order in the public interest," Mr Sawant tweet-

Maharashtra is the worst coronavirus-affected state in the country, recording 58,924 cases and 351 deaths on Monday. The total number of Covid cases and deaths in the state has reached 38,98,262 and 60,824 respectively so far.

Need concerted action to combat terror: India

'Vision of Indo-Pacific premised upon Asean centrality'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Indian on Monday said that contemporary security challenges are not limited to territorial or politi-cal disputes and there is need for coordinated and concerted action across borders to combat challnges of terrorism, radicalisation, drug trafficking and organised crime.

The world order that we built following the Second World War is under serious stress. The nature of threats faced by member states when the United Nations was founded 75 years ago has also changed," external affairs minister S. Jaishankar

Addressing the UN Security Council open debate on "Enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organi-sations in enhancing confidence-building and dialogue in conflict prevention and resolution", Mr Jaishankar said contemporary security challenges are not limited to territori**Jaishankar speaks** to US envoy Blinken

New Delhi: External minister Jaishankar spoke to US secretary of state Antony J. Blinken, covering recent developments in India's immediate and extended neighbourhood, UNSC agenda and their bilateral health cooperation in view of the Covid pandemic. The Indo-Pacific and Afghan peace process were expected to have been discussed.

transcend physical or political boundaries

Highlighting that India has traditionally maintained close and friendly cooperation with regional organisations, Jaishankar said India's relationship with the Asean is a key pillar of its foreign policy and the foundation of its Act East Policy.

Mr Jaishankar also said that "India's relationship with the (southeast Asian grouping) Asean is a key pillar of its foreign policy and the foundation of its

He also told the UN Security Council that "India's vision of the Indo-Pacific as a free, open and inclusive region, underpinned by international law and a rules based order, is premised on Asean centrality and the common pursuit of

progress and prosperity". India said it "remains committed to further building on the momentum of regional cooperation under the (regional grouping) BIMSTEC framework and make that organisation stronger. vibrant, and more effective and result oriented" but made no mention of south Asian grouping Saarc.

With South Asian grouping Saarc in cold storage due to the previous years' Indo-Pak tensions, India has invested its hopes for regional cooperation in BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) which does not have

Pakistan as a member.
BIMSTEC comprises
India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

BJP president J.P. Nadda during a roadshow in favour of party candidate Priya Saha from Sainthia constituency at BJP seeks action against Didi for 'spreading hatred, enmity'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Citing statements made by West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee prior to the Sitalkuchi violence and a purported conversation with her party's Sitalkuchi candidate, the BJP on Monday demanded "strict action" against the TMC president for promoting enmity among groups and also violation of the oath as prescribed by the Constitution.

In a memorandum to the Election Commission, the BJP has also cited some of the statements made by Ms Banerjee during public rallies, including against Opposition leaders to demand registra-tion of an FIR to "set the right precedent as a deterrent for others who make divisive, communal statements to create divisions and enmity between



groups and communities based on unverified allegations with intent to vitiate the environment of free and fair polls.

Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, who led the BJP delegation which submitted the memorandum virtually, said TMC leaders have become "habitual violators" of the model of conduct and Representation of People Act.

Referring to Ms Banerjee's statements prior to the Sitalkuchi violence, including the one to "gherao " Central

forces and the purported audio between her and TMC's Sitalkuchi candidate, the BJP said "the audio seeks to incite and aggravate the differences between two communities on religious lines. The audio has been intentionally released to polarise votes in the remaining polls." The BJP also noted that the EC's earlier "reprimand, warning, condemnation and ban of 24 hours did not deter her" and the Sitalkuchi violence took place.

Citing some of the "divisive statements" of Ms Banerjee, including "outsiders" allegation against her Opponents, the BJP said her statements were in stark contravention of the MCC and demanded that Ms Banerjee should be made to apologise and be banned from campaign-

NIA team pays visit to family of Mansukh

SHAHAB ANSARI MUMBAI, APRIL 19

team of the NIA on Monday visited the Thane-based residence of businessman Mansukh Hiran, who was allegedly murdered days after an explosives-laden SUV was found industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in Mumbai. They met Hiran's family mem-

the investigation into his death. The NIA is conducting a probe into the case of the SUV laden with explosives found near Ambani's house and the alleged murder

bers in connection with

This is the second time that senior NIA officials have visited Hiran's residence at Vikas Palms society in Thane city. The team reached his house at around 2.15 pm.

officer, a team of investigators went to Hiran's house on March 11 and spoke to his wife and

explosives-laden Scorpio car was found near Mr Ambani's residence in south Mumbai

on February 25. Hiran, who was in pos session of the vehicle had complained to police that his vehicle was stolen before it was found laden with explosives, however he was found dead in a creek in

Thane on March 5. His wife in her complaint had raised suspi-cion over suspended police officer Sachin Waze's role in Hiren's

To save Great Indian Bustard, SC for underground powerlines

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Supreme Court ordered conversion of overhead high-tension power lines into underground cables, wherever feasible, within a year in Rajasthan and Gujarat to protect Great Indian Bustard from extinction. It also ordered installa-

tion of diverters to protect

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

of the entity which made

crore donation was made

in the party's 2019-20 con-

According to the contri-

bution report of the ruling

party in Jharkhand, the

donation was made by alu-

minium and copper manu-

tribution report, it said.

group Association

Democratic

facturing

Lesser Falcons — from colliding with the high voltage power lines. These two rare birds on the verge of extinction.

It identified 40 such overhead lines endangering the rare birds. A bench of Chief Justice

Sharad A. Bobde, Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian said, "The state and the Central government have a duty cast to preserve the endangered species and as

popular source of income

were donations through

donors by the scheme, elec-

toral bonds have emerged

as the most popular chan-

in the last two years," the

"It is to be noted that the

JMM party has declared

the name of the donor who

donated ₹1 crore through

electoral bonds in its contribution report for FY

(financial year) 2019-20,

such the expenses incurred will have to be provided by them either under the schemes available or by earmarking the same in such manner.'

The order came on a PIL by a Delhi-based wildlife enthusiast Ranjitsinh and others who had sought direction to Rajasthan and Gujarat governments to ensure predator proof fencing, controlled grazing in the

contributions

funding.

Electoral bonds have

been pitched as an alterna-

tive to cash donations

made to political parties

as part of efforts to bring

transparency in political

The report said more

JMM 1st political party to reveal details of electoral bonds has not been declared by **ELECTORAL BONDS** the party in its audit worth ₹3,429.56 crore were report for FY 2019-20," it redeemed by parties in

2019-20, indicating that the This raises the question as to whether political parties are aware of the or about 91% worth of donor's identity who made electoral bonds were through encashed by parties electoral bonds, as can be whose audit reports are seen in this case, the ADR vet to be available

■ Electoral bonds worth ₹3,429.56 crore were redeemed by parties in 2019-20

crore - of 19 political parties, analysed for the 2019-20 fiscal, was received from donations through electoral bonds, which are anonymous, meaning the identity of donors are not disclosed to the public.

Electoral bonds worth ₹3,429.56 crore

Lockdown

redeemed by parties in 2019-20, indicating that the remaining ₹3,117.19 crore or approximately 91 per cent worth of electoral bonds were encashed by whose audit reports are vet to be available on the Election Commission's website, it said. The total income declared by the two national and 17 regional parties for 2019-20 was ₹619.28

The All-India Trinamul Congress reported having the highest income of ₹143.676 crore which forms 23.20 per cent of the total income of all the parties analysed, followed by

income was ₹90.35 crore or 14.59 per cent, the ADR said. The total income of the

the TDP with an income of

three parties ₹325.556 crore, which comprised 52.57 per cent of the total income of political parties analysed collectively in this report, it said. Out of the 19 political parties analysed, nine parties

have shown an increase in their income, from the 2018-19 fiscal to 2019-20, while 10 parties have shown a decline in their income during this period, the report said.

than 50 per cent of the this income however, In a new report, the ADR through electoral bonds total income — ₹312.37 UK puts India on 'red list'

ADR report said.

New Delhi. April 19: The said the most common and

that has declared the name political parties in 2019-20

donations to it through electoral bonds. "Given the anonymity provided to

The declaration of ₹1 nel of donations to parties

ior

Reforms

company

■ Continued from Page 1 citizen... cannot enter the UK if they have been in India in the previous 10 days," he said. The new rules, which Mr Hancock said have not been taken lightly, will come into force from Friday. The "red list" has around 40 badly hit nations.

This is the second time in three months that the British PM has cancelled his visit to India. He was originally scheduled to be the chief guest at India's Republic Day on January 26 this year but cancelled his visit in early January

due to the raging pandem-

ic then in Britain. India, which has been reporting more 2,00,000 cases daily, confirmed the "mutually agreed" cancellation "in view of the prevailing Covid situation" and said a "virtual meeting" would be held "in the coming days to launch plans for a transformed India-UK

relationship". It added that both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the British PM "attach the highest importance to taking the India-UK partnership to its fullest potential"

Bilateral political ties between the two nations have strengthened enormously under Prime Minister Modi and Mr Johnson. In December last year, the foreign ministers of the two nations had held discussions in New Delhi on five broad themes - connecting people, trade, defence and security, climate and health including the cooperation on the Covid vaccines, with both nations also "agreeing on key elements of a 10 year India-UK roadmap".

begins

■ Continued from Page 1 time to boost our infrastructure. We will use this week-long lockdown to improve our health-care... I appeal to people to completely follow the lockdown. together overcome this fourth phase of Covid-19 as we did in the earlier three waves," he added.

Addressing migrant workers, Mr Kejriwal said, "I appeal to you with folded hands. It's a small lockdown, only for six days. Don't leave Delhi and go. I'm very hopeful that we won't need to further extend the lockdown... Govt will take care of you." Delhi is the worst-hit

city in India with 25,500 fresh cases on Sunda. In the last 24 hours, the number of cases remained high despite a

dip — 23,500. The Delhi Disaster or hard copy of the attend funerals.

capacity will be allowed.

Vaccine for all above 18 yrs

■ Continued from Page 1

continue to supply them. Vaccine manufacturers can scale up their production as well as attract new national and international players. Private hospitals would have to procure their supplies of Covid-19 vaccine from the 50 per cent supply earmarked for states or from the open market. Private vaccination providers will have to declare their self-set vaccination price.

Government will allow the imported ready-to-use vaccines to be utilised in the private sector and state facilities. Centre, from its share, will allocate vaccines to states/UTs based on the criteria of extent of infection (number of active Covid cases) and performance (speed of administration).

Incidentally, this move comes a day after former Prime Minister Prime Manmohan Singh wrote a letter to PM Modi urging him to ramp up vaccination efforts and let states decide priorities for age groups. Dr Singh was himself admitted in AIIMS, New Delhi, on Monday after testing positive for Covid-19. However, the letter written by Dr Singh was not received by the government in the same spirit of "constructive cooperation".

In a rather terse reply, health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan replied to the former Prime Minister and gave a political spin to his suggestions, saying the Congress leader should first advise his junior party leaders who have been critical of Centre's vaccine programme. "History shall be kinder to you Dr Manmohan

Singh ji if your offer of 'constructive cooperation' and valuable advice was followed by your @INCIndia leaders as well in such extraordinary times!" Dr Harsh Vardhan said while attaching his reply to the mild-man-nered Dr Singh on Twitter only to face criticism on social media with netizens accusing him of playing politics at this time of pandemic instead of taking suggestions.

The government has been scrambling for a response as the second wave has exposed the country's weak and uncaring health care system more than the first wave. With Covid-19 cases shooting, and the situation getting worse each day, harrowing stories have been emerging of hospitals overflowing with patients, patients suffering and dying due to shortage of medicines, oxygen and hospital beds. Facing severe criticism

for its poor handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, and for preferring elections and Kumbh Mela to public health, the Union government on Monday went into a huddle to find ways to wriggle out of this politically volatile situation.

Miffed with the handling of the situation on ground, Allahabad high court stepped in and ordered lockdown in five prominent cities of Uttar Pradesh — Lucknow, Prayagraj, Kanpur and Gorakhpur — till April 26 to contain the virus spread. "If popular government has its own political compulsions in not checking public movements during a pandemic, we cannot remain mere passive spectators," it said. "In any civilised society

if the public health system is unable to meet the challenges and people die for want of proper medication, it means there has been no proper development. Health and education go side-by-side. Those in the helm of affairs of governance are to be blamed for the present chaotic health problems and more so when there is democracy which means a government of the people by the people and for the people," the Allahabad HC observed while adding: "If people die of pandemic in large number due to paucity of sufficient medical aid it would be the governments to blame which failed to counter the pandemic even after one long year of experience and learning.

Didi stops short rallies, Kolkata campaign dates during his 12 visits to

■ Continued from Page 1 campaign in Kolkata. Besides, I have also curtailed my rallies. On the last day of the poll campaign, i.e. April 26, I will

hold a small rally only.' Asked about lockdown or night curfew, like it's being clamped in other states to break the chain of infection, she explained, "Nothing will happen out of the night curfew. It is not a solution. We are not imposing lockdown now also. If it is done suddenly, won't the people suffer? Will a lockdown solve the problem? Bus, train and flights are operating. Lakhs of people have come here from outside. I feel that the people should not be forced into anything. What cannot

be done under force is possi-ble through love. Solution is we have to avoid political pollution. All we need to do is to be careful."

In the evening the BJP, which has been facing flak from rivals and also on the social media for holding big rallies and road shows of its leaders amid the pandemic, declared that it would not hold big poll campaign rallies in the state.

It said, "In West Bengal, the Assembly polls have been underway. It is also important that this constitutional and democratic process should be completed. Keeping it in mind BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda decided that small public meetings with a

crowd of not more than 500 persons will be organised for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other central leaders in West Bengal. These rallies will be held in open places under Covid guidelines in Bengal."

The saffron party's statement came after its national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya tweeted, "In view of the Corona infection, instructions have been received from the Prime Minister's Office to change the form of the meetings of Hon'ble Prime Minister. Special attention should be taken for social distancing." According to BJP sources,

Mr Modi addressed 18 cam-

paign rallies for BJP candi-

the state so far. In his next visit, the PM is expected to address four rallies: one each in Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum and Bhowanipore in South Kolkata on April 23, party insiders revealed. He was earlier supposed to

address two rallies in Malda and Murshidabad on April 22 when the state will go to the sixth phase of polls, and in Bhowanipore and Birbhum on April 24, sources said. The BJP's IT wing head

Amit Malviya, who is also the party's co-incharge for the state, said the BJP would leverage its "massive digital footprint" and take the message of Mr Modi and other leaders to lakhs of people.

Management Authority said that movement of people will be allowed for marriage related gatherings and up to 50 people will be permitted to attend a wedding, but they will have to show a wedding card. Twenty people will be allowed to

Public transport such as Metros and buses with their 50 per cent



THE ASIAN AGE

20 APRIL 2021

China giving India the runaround

he Chinese were giving the Indians the runaround in the matter of negotiations for disengagement from friction points in eastern Ladakh until the Indian Army, in an audacious late night action in late August last year that caught the Chinese troops unawares, captured key peaks in the Kailash Range south of the Pangong Lake. From the position of advantage thus gained, the Indian forces commanded a strategically panoramic view of the Chinese deployments stretching far, and could deal with them as they wished. However, a military advantage of such significance was surrendered

by New Delhi in February this year in negotiations.

The expectation was that a show of reasonableness in this area would persuade the Chinese to be accommodating in the Depsang Plains to the north, and in Gogra and Hot Springs in the broad Galwan area. Currently, Chinese armour has rapidly raced forward more than 15 kilometres inside the Indian demarcation of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and can threaten our military airfield at Daulat Beg Oldi, which is practically within hailing distance from the Karakoram Pass that links China and Pakistan overland. Depsang has crit-

ical value for India and the Chinese are not The upshot of this is budging from there.

quite clear — the Chinese are not going back to status quo ante which existed in March, 2020 any time soon, as demanded by India.

The Chinese appear to have lost interest in any further meaningful talks. They have got back what they were really after in the Rezang La area. With this, and along with their staying put in territories inside the Indian side of the LAC, some estimates suggest that China may have got nearly 90 per cent of its dream demarcation that had been proposed to India in 1959-60. Remember, on the north bank of Pangong, Chinese soldiers left the area from Finger 4 to

8, but under the settlement Indian patrols are not permitted beyond Finger 4. This was not the case a year ago.

The upshot of this is quite clear — the Chinese are not going back to status quo ante which existed in March, 2020 any time soon, as demanded by India. If this demand is not met, the restoration of bilateral relations to earlier levels cannot be visualised. This was evident in a plaintive statement of the external affairs ministry earlier this month. "In this context it was highlighted also that completion of disengagement in other areas would pave the way for (the) two sides to consider de-escalation of forces and ensure full restoration of peace and tranquility and enable progress in bilateral relations," the statement read. This was after the eleventh round of military-level talks in which, according to the statement, it was decided to resolve the outstanding issues in an "expeditious manner".

Instead of staring facts in the face, defence minister Rajnath Singh and General Bipin Rawat, the Chief of Defence Staff, appear to be launched on a propaganda spree to distract public opinion. The minister has more than once echoed the Prime Minister in saying that India has not lost one inch of territory to China in eastern Ladakh. The establishment seeks to garner praise from the public for standing up to the might of the Chinese military. But the world knows better. So do our own security professionals. If there won't be "disengagement" by China in Depsang and Gogra-Hot Springs, there can be no "de-escalation" by India in Ladakh. This has the makings of the 38th parallel, the militarised border between north and South Korea.

Castro, a beacon of strength

o a question during his visit to the United States if he would want a Muammar Gaddafi or Yasser Arafat or a Fidel Castro to be the future president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela replied: "One of the mistakes which some political analysts make is to think that their enemies should be our enemies." In one stroke, the anti-Apartheid warrior, newly released from prison after 27 years, decimated the white arrogance that believed it has the power to decide the politics of the world, and also marketed a brand of politics that challenged the US hegemony in the northern hemisphere for decades.

nation and its iconic who fought impossi- the Cuban revolution in 198 ble imperialists

People have their reasons to find fault with That tiny island Cuba and the Castros, but that tiny island nation and its iconic leaders, brothers Fidel leaders, brothers and Raul, were a beacon of strength to revolutionaries who fought impossible imperialists Fidel and Raul, were around the world. Mandela was just reflecting a beacon of strength that allegiance. So, the stepping down of Raul to revolutionaries

as the first secretary of the Communist Party of
Cuba marks an end of an era that began with Raul succeeded his elder brother as President

around the world. of Cuba in 2008 and as party chief in 2011; quit as President in 2018 and handed over the charge to Miguel Díaz-Canel, who is expected to

succeed him as the party chief as well. In the last six decades of the Communist rule, Cuba has achieved tremendous progress in two key human development indices; health and education. Cuba's ratio of physicians to 10,000 people is the highest in the world; at 99.9 per cent, the literacy rate of Cuba is one of the highest. But the Cuban dispensation faces the same challenge every Communist country does: the need to change with the times, democratise the systems and institutions and meet the aspirations of their free-minded people. The revolutionaries will have to reinvent themselves if they were to remain a beacon of strength for their comrades outside as well as their own people.

THE ASIAN AGE

T. VENKATRAM REDDY

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Aakar Patel

How the world sees India is changing... not

hat sort of India is the present generation growing up in and what will they live through? I am over 50 and with good health and good luck might see another couple of decades or so but in productivity terms my best years are behind me. The future belongs to those who are today children and young adults. What do they have in store for them? Having looked at the data and the facts of the last seven years in detail for my next book, I can see a little bit into the future and what it has in store.

Economically, the future is slightly different from what it was when I was coming into the job market. India had liberalised its economy in the year that I turned 21 and in the few years after that the market for jobs vastly improved in the cities. Even people with a generic college degree with no specialisation could get a white-collar job in an airconditioned office if they had just basic knowledge of English.

This greatly benefited the middle class which had always had access to quality schools but not that many options in terms of work (which is why parents kept insisting on specialisation in education and asking children to become doctors and engineers). Now it was possible even for a BA, BSc or BCom woman or man to access an upper class lifestyle. I was one who benefited from this, as did lakhs of oth-

The majority of Indians did not benefit from this, of course, because they had access neither to the big cities or to a decent education. But they had hope, and this explains the thousands of private educational institutions that sprang up in India's towns and semiurban spaces that attempted to repli-

cate what was happening in the cities. This period is now over. India's urban unemployment is at a historic high and, more important, the participation rate of India's labour force meaning those who are employed or looking for work — is at a historic low. This means crores of Indians of working age (15 and above) have given up hope of finding a job. This was the case even before the Covid-19 pandemic and the position has been steady for over

The lack of work will in time result in quences. One of them will be an

increase in crime and lawlessness. Long term trends globally are also when some of us benefited, the future

are today young. Socially also, the India that I grew up in and knew has changed. India has always had a problem of reconciling its theoretical secular status with the reality that communal tensions existed. The 1980s and 1990s give us enough evidence to prove this was the case. This communal impulse was dampened by efforts from the government. However poor these efforts may have been, the government did not actively inflame the impulse as has happened since 2014. This has consequences both internally and, less important, externally. Within India our politics has become dark and election campaigns are run by the dominant political party

duced a new category of violence.

This will have downstream consequences also, such as economic, which vill affect the wider population, but there is no point talking about that today. Externally, our love for hate has brought the world's attention on us. Just to give an example from this week, this is what the European Parliament said on April 14: "Members have expressed concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in India, echoing comments by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and several UN Special Rapporteurs. This includes reports that human rights defenders and journalists in the country lack a safe working environment. The report also voices alarm regarding India's Citizenship AmendOffice of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is fundamentally discriminatory in nature against

This text was approved by 61 votes in favour and six votes against. India's attempts to stop it or soften the criticism failed. The Indian government will brush it off as it has several other reports this year, but again, this comes with consequences. You cannot expect to be given a position on the UN Security Council, as India does, when the world sees what you are doing with distaste.

not look away from what one has

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist



US Afghan exit a pyrrhic victory for Pak generals?



Indranil Banerjie

Subhani

onventional wisdom has it that America's decision to end its military presence in Afghanistan signals total victory for Pakistan's artful generals and disaster for the Afghan government and its allies, particularly India. However, this might not necessarily be the actual longterm denouement.

To begin with, the US withdrawal decision was inevitable and sensible. For, there was no favourable end state in sight for the United States. US President Joe Biden did well to announce the formal end to the 20-year-old "Afghan War". All US combatants are to leave Afghanistan by September 9, 2021, the twentieth anniversary of the attacks on America in 2001.

The generals in Rawalpindi are gloating over what is generally being viewed as America's worst military defeat. The US years ago with the aim of annihilating the terrorist organisation Al Qaeda and driving out its Pakistanbacked ally, the Taliban.

Al Qaeda was pretty much decimated, and the Taliban fled to safe havens inside their mentor's backyard while remnants of the Pakistan Army were allowed an honourable exit. For a while, in the initial years, it had appeared that the US military cam-paign had done wildly well. Smug officials and legislators in Washington drew up ambitious plans to install a Western-style democracy in Afghanistan. A former CIA contact, Hamid Karzai, was pulled out from hiding and installed as President in Kabul. Thereafter things started going downhill.

What the powers in Washington had not reckoned with was the tenacity of the generals in Pakistan's military headquarters at Rawalpindi. The generals were cowed down by their "friends" and mentors in Washington but would not abandon their dream of making Afghanistan a part of their strategic backvard.

The generals publicly cringed and whined before their American masters but secretly worked against them, reviving the Taliban, arming and training them and fielding even more vicious groups like the notorious Haqqani network to target Americans. Rawalpindi rightly calculated that Washington

could not win a war of attrition spread over decades. The Americans bled in the Afghan badlands, their convovs came under regular attack within Pakistan, assassins trained by Rawalpindi's dirty tricks department regularly eliminated troublesome Afghans, especially the military types, and remorseless Pathans raised in Pakistan's madrasas routinely blew themselves up in the roads and bazaars of Afghan towns and cities, taking down innumerable

civilians with them. Gradually the Taliban and their murderous allies gained the upper hand while the Americans and their Nato allies retreated.

That there could be no satisfactory endgame for the United States had dawned upon American Presidents a long time ago. Former US President Donald Trump vowed to bring back all US troops from Afghanistan but had prevaricated and ultimately thrown up his hands. For all military experts agreed that any US military withdrawal would enable the Taliban backed by the Pakistan Army to quickly bring the present Afghan regime to its knees and undo the sacrifices of thousands of US servicemen.

President Biden though is determined not to go down that route and the September 9 deadline seems to be hard and final. The Stars and Stripes will be lowered over the dusty Afghan landscape for the last time on that day.

are worried. And for good reason too. The last time the Taliban had taken over Afghanistan, some 26 years ago, India's historical presence in Afghanistan was forced to abruptly end. Almost overnight, Indian diplomats and others had to flee in specially charflights, leaving behind a grand embassy building that was later to be converted to an ammu-nition dump by the victorious Taliban forces.

This time too there is no guarantee that India's presence and influence in Afghanistan will not end with the anticipated victory of the Taliban. Pakistan's generals, who own and control the Taliban, want more than anything else to forcefully and com-pletely eject all Indian presence from Afghanistan. If the Indians are allowed to

remain, it will at best be a token presence.
This is a stated objective and Rawalpindi's generals have even complained about the humanitarian and development work carried out in that country by the Indian government. With Afghanistan out of bounds for Indians, the generals hope they will convert that country into their backyard for military and terrorist activities much of which would be directed against India.

However, favourable outcome could well elude the generals this time. For global strategic equations are changing, and the primary focus of the Western powers has moved away from the Middle East which has been their principal obsession since the end of the Second World War.

The importance of oil in global geopolitics and economics compelled the Western powers to evolve a strategy to maintain dominance over the Middle East

Pakistan is bound to face increased economic difficulties as it consumes more and more of its limited resources to keep the fighting going in Afghanistan and on the borders with India.

and deny its enemies influence or unfettered access to this region. With the diminishing importance of oil and the concomitant rise of an assertive China, the focus of the Western powers has shifted. Pakistan, which was a lynchpin in Western strategic calculation, has lost its

previous importance. The

US withdrawal from Afghanistan will free Washington from the last of its dependencies on Islamabad. This will presage profound changes. Coupled with this is the gradual and inevitable shrinking of Saudi Arabian influence and cash reserves. Riyadh too can no longer afford to write blank cheques for Islamabakd as

it did in the past.
As a result, Pakistan is bound to face increased economic difficulties as it consumes more and more of its limited resources to keep the fighting going in Afghanistan and on the borders with India. This is one reason why Islamabad today seeks a temporary truce at the Line of Control in Kashmir. Constant fighting is a costly business and Pakistan is gradually but inevitably sliding into

bankruptcy.
These developments will very shortly completely push Islamabad into the eep pockets of weather friend" Beijing, already which Pakistan as a vassal state Pakistan's generals might continue to dream of turning Afghanistan into a vassal state but they might not have realised that as a vas sal themselves, the real power in Afghanistan will be China. Beijing will decide what kind of regime it wants in Afghanistan and from all indications it is clear they have no desire to witness the free run of the highly radicalised

Islamists in that country. Pakistan internally too is not exactly a picture of serenity or economic health. There is a heavy price to pay for sponsoring

egregious violence. Pakistan's generals may raise their glasses to celebrate their victory in Afghanistan, but those glasses might well turn out to be empty.

The writer is an independent commentator on political and security

LETTERS

TUBGOUE

A TOTALLY BAD IDEA

The reported proposal to appoint Sunil Arora as governor of Goa just days after his retirement as India's chief election commissioner is in utter bad taste and absolutely inappropriate. Yet another extremely bad precedent indeed. Is this the BJP's way of rewarding the former CEC for favours done by way of compromising the muchneeded independence of the Election Commission? The way in which the government kept Goa without a full-time governor for eight months indicates foul play. Remember how P. Sathasivam became governor of Kerala four months after his retirement as CJI?

> Jayprakash Naveen Patna

LEGAL 'DREAM'

WATCHING THE IPL, the abiding images of Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Ranveer Singh are somewhat irritating. The current India captain lags way behind these two. Suddenly, there seems to be a lot more products and services and a consumer can't wait to splurge. Good for commerce and the economy, but not for developing the standard of the game. One the impression gambling was banned in the country. So what are Dream11, Howzzat and countless other Dream11 clones doing? Is just a rushed disclosure of financial risk enough to caution viewers? It helps that Dream11 valuations are in excess of one billion dollars.

C.K. Ramani

VOTE WISELY

IT WAS guite heartening to see West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee sit in silent protest by herself against the 24-hour campaigning ban imposed on her by the Election Commission. While her comments that prompted the ban may have been out of line, it must also be noted that she has been targeted in the vilest of language. Her resolve to prevent the saffronisation of West Bengal in the face of misogynistic bullying by the ruling party at the Centre is commendable. The next couple of weeks will be crucial for preserving West Bengal's free and inclusive fabric. One can only hope that the state will vote wisely

Bhagwan Thadani Mumbai

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

for the better

three years, meaning that it is not cyclical and will not change on its own. a lack of hope and this will have conse-

negative in terms of both trade and employment and so, unlike in the past does not hold out hope for those who actively targeting Indian Muslims. Because this is electorally rewarding as we have seen, we will see more of it. The consequence is that it has damaged Indian society and produced violence in neighbourhoods. To give one clear example, there were zero beef lynchings before 2015. We have intro-

Muslims and dangerously divisive."

India was viewed from the outside as a place which was chaotic and noisy but likeable. This was so when I first went abroad at the age of 16. This has now changed in the view of those who study and observe India. It will change soon for the rest of the world also. The optimism has gone. It is disappointing as an Indian to record this, but one can-

IN BRIEF

NZ distances

from 'Five Eyes'

Wellington, April 19: New Zealand said Monday it would not let the 'Five Eyes' intelligence alliance dictate its dealings with its largest trading partner China, in the latest distancing from the US-led group's approach to tensions with

Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta told the New Zealand China Council that the Five — the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand should not stray from its scope of intelligence-sharing between member nations.

'We are uncomfortable with expanding the remit of the Five Eyes relationship," she said.

Baerbock may succeed Merkel

Berlin, April 19: Germany's Green party on Monday named its co-chair Annalena Baerbock as their candidate to succeed Angela Merkel, throwing down the gauntlet to the chancellor's conservatives who were locked in infighting for her crown. "Both of us want the job, but in the end, only one can do it. So today is the moment to say that the Greens first chancellor candidate will be Annalena Baerbock," said the party's joint co-chairman Robert Habeck. Yet with the party polling in second place behind Merkel's divided conservatives, the Greens now have a genuine chance of becoming the biggest party.

PIO brothers buy UK food chain

London, April 19: Indian-origin billionaire brothers Mohand Zuber Issa have acquired a popular British fast food chain, Leon, as part of what they described as their goal to grow their foodservice operations in Britain.

The Issa brothers, whose parents moved to the UK from Gujarat in the 1970s, own the Euro Garages chain of petrol stations as part of their EG Group business. Last year, they acquired leading UK supermarket chain Asda from US owners Walmart as part of the strategy to expand their non-fuel business. The acquisi-tion is said to be worth an estimated £100 million.

Dulux dog breed faces extinction

London, April 19: The Old English Sheepdog, one of Britain's most recognisable dog breeds, has been listed for the first time as vulnerable to extinction after a drop in popilarity. The Kennel Club said Monday.

The move by the club, Britain's biggest organisation devoted to dog health, welfare and training, follows declining numbers since the breed's heyday in the late 1970s.

The Kennel Club recorded just 227 puppy registrations in 2020 for the dog — instantly recognisable for its shaggy coat and long used in adverts for paint manufacturer Dulux. It is the lowest number in 60

years, it said, marking a "steep decline" in the breed's popularity, the club said.

The dog has since 2009 been on the club's "At Watch" list, which monitors breeds.

FLOYD SOUGHT **HELP WITH 'VERY** LAST BREATH'

Minneapolis, April 19: George Floyd pleaded for help with his "very last breath" but was not shown any compassion by Derek Chauvin, prosecutor Steve Schleicher said Monday in closing arguments at the murder trial of the former

police officer. "George Floyd begged until he could speak no more, Schleicher told the jury in a Minneapolis courtroom. "All that was required was a little compassion and none was shown on that day." "He asked for help with his very last breath but the officer did not help," Schleicher said.

"Ĥe didn't follow training, he did not follow the department's use of force rules, he did not perform CPR." he said

'George Floyd was not a threat to anyone, he was not trying to hurt anyone,'

Schleicher said. Chauvin, who is white, was seen on video kneeling on the neck of Flovd as the 46-vearold Black man lay facedown handcuffed on the ground for

more than nine minutes. Chauvin, 45, is charged with murder and manslaughter for Flovd's May 25, 2020 death. which sparked protests across the United States and around the world against racial injustice and police brutality.

Oz-NZ travel bubble opens, high emotion as kin reunite

Passengers can fly across Tasman Sea without undergoing quarantine

Sydney, April 19: Emotions ran high Monday as on the first flights to take advantage of a quaranti-ne-free travel bubble between Australia and New Zealand, allowing families split by the pandemic to finally reunite.

"(I'll) yell, scream cry, hug, kiss, (feel) happy — all of these emotions at once," Denise O'Donogh-ue, 63, told AFP at Sydney airport as she prepared to board her flight.

The arrangement means that for the first time in almost 400 days passengers can fly across the Tasman Sea without undergoing mandatory Covid-19 quarantine when they arrive.

"It's a very big day and exciting for families and friends," said New Zeala-nd Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who hailed the success of both countries in containing the virus as a key factor in allowing the travel corridor.

Australia was New Zeal-and's largest source of international tourists before the pandemic, accounting for about 1.5 million arrivals or 40 percent of total visitors in 2019.

The bubble's opening received saturation coverage from media in both countries, with live television reporting from airports providing regular updates on the progress of flights.

On a grass embankment at the foot of Wellington Airport's runway, the words 'WELCOME WHANAU' (family) were spelled out in giant letters. Lorraine Wratt, a New Zealander stranded by the

pandemic while visiting family in Australia, told AFP it was "wonderful" to be able to travel again. "We're very excited to be heading back home but

we're gonna miss our family (in Australia) big time," she said. We came to Australia on December 11 to spend Chr-

Pakistan bans

India for 2 weeks

Islamabad, April 19:

on

decided to ban for two

weeks travellers coming

from India due to a

record surge in the num-

ber of Covid-19 cases in

India's total tally of

Covid-19 cases crossed

the 1.50-crore mark with

around 25 lakh cases

being added in just 15

days, while active cases

surpassed the 19-lakh

mark, according to the

Union Health Ministry

data updated on Monday.

Covid-19 cases mounted

to 1,50,61,919 with a

record single-day rise of

2,73,810 coronavirus infections. The death

toll increased to 1.78.769

with a record 1,619 daily

new fatalities, the data

updated this morning

Operation Centre took

the decision to impose a

two-week ban on travel

from India in a meeting

chaired by its chief Asad Umar who is also

Minister

Development, according

National

showed.

Pakistan's

Command

Planning

to a statement.

The nationwide tally of

Monday

travel from

Pakistan

the country.



A woman arriving from New Zealand, right, is hugged by her stepmother at Sydney Airport in Sydney, Australia, on

Canada to send support to virus-hit province

Ottawa, April 19: Canada is expected to channel funds into childcare, wage subsidies and other pandemic recovery measures as the government presents its new budget Monday ahead of possible snap elections.

The 2021 budget is the first full fiscal plan from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's administration

istmas with our children...

planning to go back in February, it's been a bit of

a nightmare."Australia is

London, April 19: A body

of experts that advises the

United Nations on human

rights concerns has slam-

med a widely criticised

British government-back-

ed report that concluded

there was no systemic

The UN Working Group

of Experts on People of

African Descent said Mon-

day that it found it "stun-

ning" that the report "re-

packages racist tropes and stereotypes into fact" and

urged the British govern-

ment to reject its findings.

"The report cites dubious

evidence to make claims

that rationalise white sup-

remacy by using the famil-

iar arguments that have

always justified racial hi-

erarchy," the Geneva-bas-

"This attempt to nor-

malise white supremacy

despite considerable rese-

arch and evidence of insti-

tutional racism is an un-

fortunate sidestepping of

the opportunity to ackno-

wledge the atrocities of

the past and the contribu-

tions of all in order to

move forward," it added.

ed working group said.

racism in the country.

since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and is expected to outline Canada's recovery as virus infections surge.

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland has promised Ottawa "will continue to do whatever it takes" to fight the spread of the Coronavirus and support the economy as it emerges

Zealanders and before Co-

ronavirus many regularly

report slammed by UN

and

Disparities, which was set up by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson

after last year's Black

Lives Matter protests, pub-

lished its report into

racism last month. Its con-

clusions that Britain is

racist" or "rigged" against

minorities have been

widely vilified, with some

critics even arguing that

the report downplayed the

country's historic role in

Citing strides to close

gaps between ethnic grou-

ps in educational and eco-

nomic achievement, the

report said race was beco-

ming "less important" as a

factor in creating dispari-

ties that are also fuelled by

class and family back-

Many academics, law-

activists were

nove forward," it added. the ongoing legacy of The UN working group ving them was The Commission on Britain's colonial past as also poured scorn on what piece of history.

makers unions and anti-

skeptical of the findings

in the 258-page report,

with some claiming the

commission ignored bar-

riers to equality, while

others said it downplayed

"institutionally

Race

slavery.

grounds.

to dole out hundreds of billions of dollars in Covid-19 emergency aid. home to hundreds of thoushuttled back and forth sands of expatriate New across the Tasman on

UK's 'no systematic racism'

"We have a plan for jobs

and robust growth," she

told parliament last mon-

th. Canada entered the

pandemic in a strong fis-cal position relative to

other G7 nations after

decades of belt-tighten-

ing, she said, allowing it

three-hour flights.

MANY FELT such sta-

tues extol racism and

are an affront to PoC

Britons. Others, includ-

ing the PM, argued that

removing them was era-

well as its role in slavery.

Max Blain, said the UN

working group's statement

'misrepresents the find-

ings" of the UK racism

condones racist behav-

iour, and in fact it high-

lights that racism and

inequality are still prob-

lems for our country," he

said. The commission,

which was made up of 11

members from a broad cross section of ethnic

backgrounds, has also pre-

viously defended itself

against the charges, argu-

ing that some of the criti-

cism has "tipped into mis-

representation" and that

it never argued that

racism does not exist in

society or in institutions.

This report in no way

spokesman,

sing a piece of history.

Johnson's

report.

INFECTED BODY WASHES ASHORE, **ALARMS VANUATU**

Port Vila, April 19: Vanuatu slapped travel restrictions Monday after tests confirmed a body that washed ashore on the lar gely Coronavirus-free Pacific nation was infected with Covid-19.

Governmentsaid the deceased was a Filipino sailor whose ves-sel had left Port Vila a day before his body was found washed up near a village.

The man's crewmates and police officers who retrieved the body had all tested negative for the virus, said the sources.

it described as the report's

'mythical representation

of enslavement," saving it

was "an attempt to sani-

tize the history of the

This, it went on, is "a

reprehensible, although

not unfamiliar tactic,

employed by many whose

wealth came directly from

the enslavement of others,

ever since slavery was outlawed."

calls in last year's Black

Lives Matter protests acr-

oss the UK was for the gov-

ernment and institutions

to face up to the legacy of

the British Empire and

the country's extensive

profits from the slave

The toppling of a statue

of 17th-century slave trad-

er Edward Colston in the

city of Bristol in June pro-

mpted a pointed debate

about how to deal with Br-

itain's past. Many felt such

statues extol racism and

are an affront to PoC

Britons. Others, including

the PM, argued that remo-

ving them was erasing a

One of the main clarion

in

enslaved

trade

Africans."

Banned party releases 11 Pak police hostages

party Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan on Monday released 11 police hostages after the first round of talks with the Imran Khan government, which buckled under the pressure of the terror outfit over its demand to expel the French ambassador over a blasp-hemous caricature published in France last year.

After declaring TLP a proscribed outfit under terrorism laws and freezing its leadership's bank accounts last week, the Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government had announced that there would be no talks with the terror out-fit as the state would not allow it to challenge its writ. However, after Sunday's clash between the law enforcement agencies and the TLP workers in Lahore in which 11 policemen and Rangers were taken hostage by the radicals, the government held talks with the outfit lead-ership on Monday. Pakistan Interior Minis-

ter Sheikh Rasheed in a video message said: Talks have started with the TLP. The TLP has released 11 policemen who were taken hostage by it and kept at its headquarters in Lahore. The first round of talks with the TLP went well and the second will take place in the evening.

The minister hoped that headquarters.

would be resolved with the TLP in the second

round of talks. Meanwhile, business centres, markets and public transport in Lahore, Karachi and some other parts of the country remained closed on Monday on the call of senior cleric Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman to condemn the "brutal" police action at the TLP headquarters in Lahore on Sunday that left three Islamists dead and dozens injured.

The TLP has announced a protest march to Islamabad on Tuesday if the government does not expel

the French envoy.
In Monday's talks with the government, the TLP leaders presented four de-— expel the French ambassador; release its party chief Saad Rizvi; revoke the ban on TLP and release all its activists (over 3,000) and withdraw FIRs against them. The party warned that if their demands are not met, they will go ahead with their march to Islamabad. "On the assurance that Prime Minister Khan will review TLP demands and there will be no further police action against those camping in Lahore, the Islamists freed the hostages," a senior police officer told PTI.

Thousands of Islamists are camping on the Mult-an Road outside the TLP

Release journo, Myanmar told

Tokyo, April 19: Japan's government said Monday it is asking Myanmar to release a Japanese jour-nalist who was arrested by security forces in its largest city of Yangon the previous day.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato told reporters that his govern-ment is asking Myanmar authorities to explain the arrest and release him as soon as possible.

He did not identify the detainee, but Japanese media said he is Yuki Kitazumi, a former Nikkei business newspaper rep orter currently based in Yangon as a freelance journalist. "We will continue asking the Myanmar side for his early release, while doing our utmost for the protection of Japanese citizens in

that country," Kato said. Japan's Foreign Ministry later said the journalist was arrested at his home on Sunday night and is being detained at Yangon's Insein Prison, where political prisoners are frequently held. It said Japanese Embassy officials have not been given access to him.

Kyodo News agency reported that he was arrested on suspicion of spreading "fake" news.

Kitazumi has posted reports and views about developments in Myanmar on Facebook, Hours before his arrest, he posted a video showing Myanmar citizens gathering at a Tokyo temple to pay tribute to people killed in the Myanmar military iunta's crackdown on protests against its Feb. 1 seizure of power from an elected government.

EU SANCTIONS 10 MYANMAR JUNTA OFFICIALS

Brussels, April 19: The EU on Monday imposed sanctions on 10 Myanmar junta officials and two conglomerates linked to the military over the coup and bloody crackdown on protesters, European officials said.

The military has ramped up its attempts to crush dissent following mass demonstrations against its ousting of civilian leader Aung San Suu Kvi. with at least 737 civilians killed and the press increasingly under

International pressure has been steadily building on the junta, with western powers seeking to target their key moneymakers.

briefly by police in late February while covering pro-democracy protests in Myanmar.

Japan has stepped up its criticism of the military government's crackdown on opposition but has taken a milder approach than the United States and some other countries that imposed sanctions against members of the junta.

On Saturday, the junta released more than 23,000 prisoners to mark the traditional new year's holiday. At least three had been political prisoners, but it wasn't immediately clear if any activists detained during the crackd-Kitazumi was detained own were freed. -AFP

HISTORY | CREATED

Nasa's experimental helicopter become first object to take flight outside Earth

Tech takes a massive stride with a 19-inch chopper

Cape Canaveral, Florida, April 19: Nasa's experihelicopter mental Ingenuity rose into the thin air above the red surface of Mars on Monday, achieving the first powered flight by an aircraft

on another planet. The triumph was hailed as a Wright Brothers moment. The mini 1.8-kilogram copter even carried a bit of wing fabric from the Wright Flyer that made similar history at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in

firms that Ingenuity has

performed its first flight, the first flight of a powered aircraft on another said the heliplanet.' copter's chief pilot back on Earth, Havard Grip, his voice breaking as his teammates erupted in applause. It was a brief hop — just 39 seconds but accomplished all the

major milestones. Project manager MiMi Aung was jubilant as she ripped up the papers holding the plan in case the flight had failed.

'We've been talking so "Altimeter data con- long about our Wright Brothers mom-ent, and

Flight controllers at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California declared a success after receiving the data and images via the Perseverance rover. Ingenuity hitched a ride to Mars on Perseverance, clinging to the rover's belly upon their arrival in an ancient river delta in February.

The \$85 million helicopter demo was considered a high risk, yet high reward. "Each world gets only one first flight," Aung observed earlier month.

Scientists cheered the news from around the world and even from space.

"A whole new way to explore the alien terrain in our solar system is now at our disposal," Nottingham Trent University astronomer Daniel Brown said from England.

This first test flight with more to come by Ingenuity — holds great promise, Brown noted. Future helicopters could serve as otherworldly scouts for rovers, and eventually astronauts, in difficult, dangerous locales.

Ground controllers had to wait more than three excruciating hours before learning whether the preprogrammed flight had succeeded more than 170 million miles (287 million

kilometres) away. When the news finally came, the operations centre filled with applause, cheers and laughter. More followed when the first black and white photo from Ingenuity appeared, showing the helicopter's shadow as it hovered above the surface of Mars. "The shadow of greatness, #MarsHelicopter first

flight on another world complete!" Nasa astronaut Victor Glover tweeted from the International Space Station.

Next came a stunning colour video of the copter's clean landing, taken by Perseverance, "the best host little Ingenuity could ever hope for," Aung said in thanking everyone.

The helicopter hovered for 30 seconds at its pla-nned altitude of 10 feet (3 meters), and spent 39 seconds airborne, more than three times longer than the first successful flight of the Wright Flyer, which

To accomplish all this, the helicopter's twin, counter-rotating rotor blades needed to spin at 2,500 revolutions per minute — five

on December 17, 1903

times faster than on Earth. With an atmosphere just 1 per cent the thickness of Earth's, engineers had to build a helicopter light enough — with blades spinning fast enough — to generate this otherworldy lift. More than six years in the making, Ingenuity is just 19 inches (49 centimetres) tall, a spindly fourlegged chopper.

FINANCIAL

Chronicle

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	49,746.21	0.17
Nifty 50	14,873.80	0.37
S&P 500*	4,161.45	-0.57
Dollar (₹)	74.59	-0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.51	0.50
Euro (₹)	88.52	0.07
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	45,975▲182	0.39
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	66.73	-0.06
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.081	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.605	0.032
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

ACC net jumps 74% to ₹563 cr in March quarter

Cement maker ACC Ltd reported a 74.17 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 562.59 crore for the first quarter ended March 2021, helped by an increase in sales and cost efficiency. The company, which folthe January-December financial year, had posted a profit of Rs 323.02 crore in the year-ago period. Total revenue from operations was at Rs 4,291.97 crore, up 22.57 per cent from Rs 3,501.71

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■ Market turns volatile; FPIs net sellers

Sentiments sour as C19 cases rise

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, APRIL 19

It was panic selling over rising Covid infections in the country as the market opened on Monday. In just half an hour, the Sensex was down 1469.32 points, or 3 per cent, as the benchmark index touched the day's low of 47,362.71. The Nifty-50 touched a low of 14,191.40, down 426 points.

But a partial recovery later helped the Sensex to close with a loss of 882.61 points, or 1.81 per cent, at 47,949.42 while Nifty-50 closed at 14,359.45, down 1.77 per cent.

Vaccine and oxygen shortages in several states were making the fight against the second Covid wave difficult for the Centre and states.

"It seems like our markets have decoupled from global counterparts due to rising Covid cases in India. Going forward, the Covid-19 situation and the pace of vaccination would be a key monitorable for the markets," said Ajit Mishra, VP--research, Religare Brok-ing. participants "Market reacted negatively to increasing restriction announcements from state governments while ignoring the positive global cues," Mishra said.

Foreign portfolio investors were net sellers of equities worth Rs 1,633.70 crore but domestic institutional investors stepped in with Rs 2,355.56 crore net buving.

₹ SHEDS 53 PAISE ON LOCKDOWN FEARS

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, APRIL 19

Fear of harsher restrictions and more economic pain amid a record surge in Covid-19 cases spooked the rupee that fell 53 paise Monday. The rupee is under pressure despite a weak US dollar globally and has weakened by 3 per cent this month.

India reported its tenth record daily increase in Covid cases in 11 days, with the capital city of New Delhi announcing a

complete curfew till next Monday. Maharashtra had imposed stringent curbs, effective April 15. On Friday, the rupee had settled at 74.35 a dollar. The Dollar Index, which gauges the dollar's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.49 per cent to 91.11. Anindya Banerjee, deputy vice-president-currency derivatives at Kotak Securities, said, "RBI...may intervene volatility. Over the near term, we expect a range of 74.00 and 75.50."

MACROTECH TANKS ON MKT DEBUT

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

Mumbai-based Macrotech Developers, earlier Lodha Developers, made a tepid stock market debut at 10.28 per cent discount to the public issue price, of Rs 486 a share, at Rs 436 on the NSE. As the market faced huge selling pressure, Macrotech further dipped to a low of Rs 422.60. However, the shares gained upward momentum as the mar-

The fall was bigger in the broader market with Nifty Mid-cap 50 and Nifty Midcap 100 indices down by 2.

ered some losses, which helped Macrotech to close at Rs 457.95 on the NSE and at Rs 463.15 on the BSE, lower by 5.77 per cent and 4.70 per cent, respectively. The firm had raised Rs 2,500 crore from the IPO.

Macrotech Developers

is now the third largest listed realty firm in terms of m-cap at Rs 20,717.55 crore, after DLF (Rs 58,615.38 crore) and Godrej Properties (Rs 36,167.34 crore.)

60 per cent and 2.12 per cent respectively and the BSE Mid-cap down by 1.93

Oxford study to reinfect recovered C19 patients

TODD GILLESPIE

People who have fought off the Covid-19 virus will be deliberately reinfected in a first-of-itskind trial at the University of Oxford that may shed light on how to develop more effective vaccines against the pathogen.

Researchers are looking for 64 healthy, previ ously Covid-infected volunteers from 18 to 30 years old to be studied under controlled, quarantined conditions for at least 17 days, the UK university said on Monday. Participants will be infected with the original strain from Wuhan and followed for

Initial data from the Oxford study should be available within several months, helping vaccine developers look at levels and types of immunity needed to prevent reinfection, and how long protection persists. Challenge trials, involving deliberate, supervised infections, are seen as helpful for answering questions like these, because they allow scientists to scrutinise the details of how the body confronts the virus and vice versa.

While vaccines and previous infections provide some immune protection against the coronavirus, concerns and doubts remain about how long it lasts.

—Bloomberg

SC stays HC proceedings in Future-Amazon case

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 19

The Supreme Court has stayed the proceedings in the Amazon-Future Group case before the single and division benches of the Delhi High Court.

"...Further proceedings before the single judge as well as the Division bench of the High Court shall remain stayed," the bench headed by Rohinton Fali Nariman said. The court was hearing

the appeal by Amazon that challenged the division bench's decision in the case involving the Future group. On March 22, the division bench of Chief

Justice D. N. Patel and Justice Jasmeet Singh had stayed a March 18 order of single judge Justice J. R. Midha ordering attachment of the assets of Future Coupons, Future Retail, Kishore Biyani and

10 others promoters. The court has permitted filing of counter affidavit within two weeks from Monday. A rejoinder affidavit can be filed within

matter will come up for final disposal on May 4 along with other matters, the top court said.

Amazon has been seeking enforcement of an order of the emergency arbitrator (EA) at the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) restraining Future Retail from taking any steps to transfer its retail assets to Reliance Group under a proposed Rs 25,000-crore deal.

Amazon's contention is that it had invested Rs 1,431 crore in Future Coupons on the clear understanding that Future Retail would be the sole vehicle for its retail business.

BUSINESS

GLENMARK LIFE PLANS IPO

Mumbai, April 19: Glenmark Life Sciences, a wholly owned subsidiary of Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, has filed draft red herring prospectus with the Sebi for an initial public offering. The public offer comprises a fresh issue of shares worth up to Rs 1,160 crore and an offer for sale of over 73.05 lakh equity shares each of Rs 2 face value.

Glenmark Life Sciences is a developer and manufacturer of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs). The company works with 16 of the 20 largest generic companies globally. With 120 APIs in its portfolio, the firm supplies APIs to more than 540 pharma companies worldwide.

WHATSAPP IN PINK IS A VIRUS

New Delhi, April 19: Cyber experts have warned users from falling into the prey of a virus link, which claims to turn Whatsapp in pink colour and comes claiming to be an official update from Whatsapp will hack users phone and they may lose access to their Whatsapp. "Beware of WhatsApp Pink!! A Virus is being spread in whatsapp groups with an APK download link. Don't click any link with the name of #WhatsappPink. Complete access to your phone will be lost," cyber security expert Rajshekhar Rajaharia posted on social media platforms. Several Whatsapp users were seen sharing the malicious link. — *PTI*

with new features. Clicking on the link

M&M SELLS 1,000 E-CARGO AUTO



Pune, April 19: Mahindra & Mahindra on Monday said its Mahindra Treo Zor electric three-wheeler (cargo) has crossed the sales milestone of 1,000 units within six

months of its launch, indicating growing demand for electric three-wheelers in Asia's third largest economy. With this milestone, the Treo Zor has become India's top selling electric cargo and has acquired a market share of 59 per cent - Michel Gonsalves in its category.

SHORT TAKES

Covid cases surge delays India Open

New Delhi: The India Open Super 500 tournament, one of the last three qualifying events for the Tokyo Olympics, was on Monday postponed due to raging Covid-19 pandemic in the country. The \$400,000 India Open was scheduled to be held behind closed doors in the national capital from May 11 to 16. "Considering the current challenges, BAI is left with no option but to announce the postponement of the tournament for the time being," Badminton Association of India (BAI) general secretary Ajay Singhania said. Delhi has emerged as the worst hit city with 25,462 cases reported on Sunday. — PTI

Vaccinate athletes at earliest: NRAI

New Delhi: The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has requested the government to vaccinate its Olympic-bound shooters at the earliest, taking into account the unprecedented spike in Covid-19 cases. As per the data updated by the union health ministry, India reported 2,73,810 new positive cases in the last 24 hours, the highest single-day surge taking the country's caseload past the 1.5 crore mark. As many as 1,619 people suc-

last 24 hours. Considering the grim situation, the NRAI is keen that its athletes

cumbed to the disease in the

Foxes pip Saints to reach FA Cup final

London: The goal scored by Kelechi Iheanacho didn't just send Leicester into a first FA Cup final since 1969. It was the first to be cheered by spectators at Wembley in more than a year. Not since March 2020 had fans been allowed into English football's national stadium through three national lockdowns. Now as coronavirus restrictions are eased, Wembley was allowed a 4,000-strong, socially distanced crowd on Sunday to witness Leicester's 1-0 victory over Southampton to test the return of spectators. While those per-

mitted were only local residents

'Super clubs' in different league Lokuhettige gets eight-year ban European heavyweights face criticism over 'cynical' Super League

Paris, April 19: Twelve of ly, with predictions that football's most powerful they will share billions of clubs faced accusations of euros. greed and cynicism on Monday tney announced a breakaway European Super League that could have far-reaching implications for the

game.

Premier League Six teams Liverpool, Manchester United, Arsenal. Chelsea. Manchester City and Tottenham — are involved, alongside Real Madrid, Barcelona, Atletico Madrid, Juventus, Inter

Milan and AC Milan.

Madrid, April 19: A depleted Real Madrid

delivered a major boost to

Atletico Madrid's title

hopes on Sunday by draw-

ing 0-0 with Getafe in La

Atletico had thrashed

Eibar 5-0 to reignite their

own fading challenge and

their victory proved even

more valuable after Real

Madrid were held to a

now have a game in hand,

remains more of an out-

are five points back.

said.

The clubs, most of them saddled with debt and large wage bills, and hit by the pandemic, stand to benefit financial-

But the initial reaction

irom iootball authorities fans and pundits was furious, with threats to ban participating clubs from domestic, European and world competitions.

ball supporters across the world have experienced the ultimate betrayal," the Chelsea Supporters' Trust

"Our members and foot-

"This is unforgivable.

Enough is enough," it The ESL said the found-

ing clubs had agreed to create a "new midweek competition" to start "as soon as practicable" but that they would continue

of them saddled with debt and large wage bills, and hit hard by the pandemic, stand to benefit financially, with predictions that they will share billions of euros.

to play in their domestic leagues.

Three more clubs would be announced, the statement said, with the 15 founder members guaranteed to play each year. Another five places will available "based on on achievements in the prior

share 3.5 billion euros for and to offset pandemic costs, and are expected to receive a further 10 billion euros in "solidarity payments" over the life of the initial commitment much more than is available in the Champions League.

"I think there are two things in play here: one is greed and the other is desperation," former England Football Association and Manchester City chairman David Bernstein told the BBC.

UEFA THREAT Under the plan, two groups

of 10 will play each other

The founding clubs will top three qualifying for the hare 3.5 billion euros for quarter-finals. The fourth infrastructure investment and fifth-based teams would play off for the two remaining spots.

Then the competition would adopt the same two leg knockout format used in the Champions League before a single-leg final in May. A women's version is also planned.

But European governing ody UEFA and the body English, Spanish and Italian football authorities warned the clubs face being barred from their national competitions and

the Champions League.
"We... Will remain united in our efforts to stop this cynical project," read a

joint statement.

Dubai, April 19: Former Dilhara Lokuhettige was on Monday banned from all cricket for eight years after being found guilty breaching the ICC Anti-Corruption Code.

The ban for Lokuhettige, a right-arm fast-medium bowler and lower-order batsman, is backdated to April 3, 2019 when he was provisionally suspended. "Having represented Sri

Lanka in international cricket, Dilhara had attended a number of anticorruption education sessions and would have known his actions were a breach of the Code," Alex Marshall, ICC General Manager Integrity Unit, said in a release.

"The severity of the sanction reflects the seriousness of his offences and his continued refusal to cooperate and should serve as a deterrent for anyone considering getting involved in corruption of any kind." The 40-year-old, who had

retired in September 2016 after playing nine ODIs

Internationals for his country, was found guilty of three offences under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code in January this year, following a hearing by an

Former Sri Lanka cricketer was found guilty of three offences under the Code in January this vear, following a hearing by an independent tribunal.

independent tribunal. He was charged under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code in November 2019 for his involvement in match fixing during a T20 tournament in UAE in 2017, where a Sri Lankan team participated. The Tribunal found

Lokuhettige guilty of: Article 2.1.1 for being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive or otherwise influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or other aspect(s) of a match.

Article 2.1.4 — Directly or indirectly soliciting, inducing, instructing, persuading, encouraging or intentionally facilitating any Participant to breach

Code Article 2.1. Article 2.4.4 — Failing to disclose to the ACU full details of any approaches or invitations received to engage in corrupt conduct under the Code.

ware since 2008. Tottenham have been struggling in their **INDIA BOXERS ASSURED OF** bid to qualify for the Champions League via a top-four finish in the Premier **FOUR MEDALS AT WORLDS**

Hoffmann.

New Delhi, April 19: Asian champion Vinka and Alfiya Pathan were among the four Indian boxers who progressed to the semifinals of the youth world championships for men and women in Kielce, Poland. Gitika and Poonam are the other two boxers to enter the last-four stage and have secured at least a

bronze medal for the country.
All the four boxers put up scintillating performanc-

es in their respective quarterfinals bouts. Panipat boxer Vinka blanked her Colombian opponent Camilo Camela 5-0 in the 60kg category, while the 2019 Asian junior champion Alfiya (+81) also won by the same margin against Hungarian boxer Reka

Playing in the 57kg category, Poonam notched up an easy 5-0 win against Nazerke Serik of Kazakhstan to progress to the semifinals.

Gitika (48kg) produced another strong show as she dominated her opponent, Romania's Elisabeth Ostan, from the word go with precise punches and swift movement that saw the referee stopping the contest after the first round and declaring the Haryana boxer

goalless draw at the Coliseum Alfonso Perez. It means Atletico extend their advantage at the top of the table from one to three points over Real

Sevilla could yet join the race after they defeated Real Sociedad 2-1 but with six points separating them and Atletico, it

Barcelona, who

side chance. Real have enjoyed an incredible two weeks after beating Barcelona in the Clasico last weekend between knocking out Liverpool over two legs in the quarter-finals of the Champions League. But a crippling list of injuries and absentees means the squad is down to its bare bones and this was the game that finally caught



Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois dives for the ball during a La Liga match against Getafe in Getafe on Sunday.

JUVENTUS' CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AT RISK

Milan, April 19: Andrea Pirlo missed conceded Juventas Ronaldo's Cristiano instinct" as the Italian champions fell to their first league defeat in two decades to Atalanta on Sunday leaving their participation in next season's

Champions League at risk. Leaders Inter Milan edged towards the Serie A title despite a 1-1 draw at Napoli, to pull 13 points ahead of Juventus who dropped to fourth place.

Christian Eriksen snatched a point for Inter whose 11-match winning streak ended but who hold a nine-point advantage on AC Milan as they target a first league title since 2010. Milan earlier got back winning

in the San Siro after two months 2-1 against Genoa. Juve's nine-vear reign as champions looks set to end with nine games left, and their

European hopes are also at risk.

Advantage Atletico after Real held Spurs sack 'Special One' London, April 19: Jose Mourinho was

sacked by Tottenham on Monday just six days before they play Manchester City in the League Cup final as the Portuguese boss paid the price for a turbulent campaign. Mourinho, 58, was dismissed after only 17 months in charge, even though he could have led the club to their first silver-

League. Spurs are currently seventh, five points behind fourth placed West Ham, and suffered a shock Europa League last-16 exit against Dinamo Zagreb.

'The club can today announce that Jose Mourinho and his coaching staff have been relieved of their duties," a Tottenham statement said.

The bombshell news came less than 24

hours after Tottenham announced they were one of 12 clubs planning to launch a breakaway European Super League. Tottenham's academy coach Ryan Mason, a former player at the club, will take first-team training this week and is set to pick the team for Wednesday's

Premier League clash with Southampton and the League Cup final at Wembley. Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy said: "Jose and his coaching staff have been with us through some of our most challenging times as a club.

"On a personal level I have enjoyed working with him and regret that things have not worked out as we both had envisaged. "He will always be welcome here."



up with them.

• RAJASTHAN ROYALS • ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE • SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

THE ASIAN AGE, NEW DELHI, TUESDAY, 20 APRIL 2021

ORANGE Shikhar Dhawan, DC Glenn Maxwell, RCB KL Rahul,

PBKS PURPLE Harshal Patel, RCB Rahul

Chahar, MI

Khan, DC

Avesh

Off the field



Pandya brothers having a whale

Blake wants ABD to make SA comeback

Acricket enthusiast, Jamaica's star sprinter Yohan Blake wants AB de Villiers to come out of international retirement and rep resent the South African national team in their upcoming assignments, including the T20 World Cup. "Wow de Villiers is on a different level. South Africa come on you need this man," Blake tweeted after the versatile South breathtaking African's innings in the IPL in Chennai on Sunday.

De Villiers has expressed his desire to make a comeback against KKR on Sunday.

Murali discharged from hospital

Sri Lankan cricket legend Muttiah Muralitharan was discharged on Monday after undergoing a coronary angioplasty at a hospital in Chennai.

The 49-year-old former spinner, who is part of the Sunrisers Hyderabad support staff in the ongoing IPL, went for the planned procedure on Sunday. "He underwent successful coronary angioplasty with stents yesterday under the care of Dr G Sengottuvelu, senior interventional cardiologist," Apollo Hospitals said

in a release on Monday. "He would resume ȟis nor-

Muralitharan would rejoin the Sunrisers Hyderabad squad after undergoing the mandatory seven-day quarantine period, sources said.

Hardik nurses a shoulder niggle

All-rounder Hardik Pandya did not bowl in the last three IPL games due to a shoulder niggle that he picked up during the final ODI against England, said Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene on Monday. "We were looking forward for him to be bowling this season... he was coming back from an injury already, but after those matches against England, the last ODI, I believe he picked up niggle, so that is something that we are nursing at the moment,' Jayawardene said.

The Sri Lankan hoped that Hardik will be able to return to bowling in the next few

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JADDU'S JAADU

Jadeja's magical performance helps CSK outplay Royals by 45 runs

Mumbai, April 19: The spin duo of Ravindra Jadeja (2/28) and Moeen Ali (3/7) tormented the Rajasthan Royals batting line-up to ensure a second consecutive win for Chennai Super Kings in the IPL here on Monday. Jadeja had an outstand

ing day as he also took four catches.

Cameos from Faf du Plessis (33 off 17), Dwayne Bravo (20 not out off 8), Ambati Raydu (27 off 17) and Ali (26 off 20) helped CSK post 188 for nine after being put in to bat.

Royals made a promising start in the run chase courtesy Jos Buttler (49 off 35) before the batsmen succumbed to the spinners on the Wankhede pitch which offered more turn than earlier games CSK won the game by 45 runs after Royals' innings ended at 143 for nine.

Ali (3/7 in 3 overs) picked up three wickets in quick succession to effectively seal the game for his team after Jadeja (2/28 in 4) provided the crucial breakthrough by castling Buttler with a classical away turning delivery.

It was another emphatic win for CSK after they outplayed Punjab Kings while Royals suffered their second loss in three

Earlier, CSK lost wickets towards the end with the batsmen going for big hits and also in the face of some good bowling by Royals.

Bravo smashed a huge six off the last ball of the innings from Mustafizur Rahman (1/37) to ensure the Super Kings got close to 190.

Du Plessis top scored with 33 as the CSK batsmen got starts but couldn't capitalise on them

Young Chetan Sakariya (3/36 from 4) was the best bowler for Rajasthan while Chris Morris finished with 2/33 despite conceding 15 runs in his final over.

MS Dhoni, in his 200th match as CSK captain. came in to bat at No.7 but side off Sakariya.



Ravindra Jadeja (centre) celebrates a Rajasthan Royals wicket during an IPL game in Mumbai on Monday.

quickly as he would have liked. He, however, managed two boundaries in his 17-ball 18 before being beaten by an off-cutter by Sakariya only to give a

catch to Jos Buttler. He survived a run-out chance and a few anxious moments in his brief knock.

Rayudu and Suresh Raina (18, 15 balls, 1 four, 1 six) added 45 runs in quick time for the fourth wicket before the former perished going for an attacking shot on the off-

SCORECARD

Chennai Super Kings: Ruturaj Gaikwad c Dube b Mustafizur Rahman 10, Faf du Plessis c Parag b Morris 33, Moeen Ali c Parag b Tewatia 26, Suresh Raina c Morris b Sakariya 18, Ambati Rayudu c Parag b Sakariya 27, Ravindra Jadeja c Samson b Morris 8, MS Dhoni c Buttler b Sakariya 18, Sam Curran run out (Mustafizur Rahman/Samson) 13, Dwayne Bravo (not out) 20, Shardul Thakur run out (Samson/Mustafizur Rahman) 1, Deepak Chahar (not out) 0. Extras (b 1, lb 4, nb 1, w 8) 14. Total (for nine wickets) 188. FoW: 1-25, 2-45, 3-78, 4-123, 5-125, 6-147, 7-

163, 8-174, 9-180, Bowling: Jaydev Unadkat 4-0-40-0, Chetan 0-21-1, Riyan Parag 1-0-16-0. Rajasthan Royals: Jos Buttler b Jadeja 49, Manan Vohra c Jadeja b Curran 14, Sanju Samson c Bravo b Curran 1, Shivam Dube Ibw b Jadeja 17, David Miller Ibw b Ali 2, Riyan Parag c Jadeja b Ali 3, Rahul Tewatia c Gaikwad b Bravo 20, Chris Morris c Jadeja b Ali O, Jaydev Unadkat c Jadeja b Thakur 24, Chetan Sakariya (not out) 0, Mustafizur Rahman (not out) 0. Extras (b 1, lb 3, nb 1, w 8) 13. Total (for nine wickets in 20 overs)

FoW: 1-30, 2-45, 3-87, 4-90, 5-92, 6-95, 7-95, 8-137, 9-143. Bowling: Deepak Chahar 3-0-32-0, Sam Curran 4-0-24-2, Shardul Thakur 3-0-20-1, 37-1, Chris Morris 4-0-33-2, Rahul Tewatia 3- 0-28-1, Moeen Ali 3-0-7-3.

Delhi Capitals skipper Rishabh Pant said he has started to enjoy captaincy. "Coming from a loss, win-

ning the next match was

important. Have already

started enjoying captaincy. But we were under pressure at the start, the wicket was not doing much.

POINTS TABLE

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2

Not afraid to take

risks, says Shikhar

Mumbai, April 19: Shikhar

Dhawan smashed a match-winning 92 off 49 balls

against Punjab Kings on Sunday and the southpaw

said he made a conscious

effort to improve his strike

the IPL last season, is no

more a certainty in India's

T20 playing XI and is com-

peting for an opening slot alongside Rohit Sharma in

the World Cup later this

"It was a conscious effort

from my side. I knew I have

to improve on that (strike

rate). Started taking more

risks. Not afraid of changes, always open towards it. Not scared of

getting out as well," said

Dhawan, who batted at a strike rate of 187.86, after

the six-wicket win over

The left-hander said he

has also been working on

his stroke play.

"I have worked on a few shots. My slog shot has improved a lot. It was there

earlier as well, but now I

play it more freely. I'm

more relaxed, having played for so many years. I

don't take things for grant-

Punjab Kings.

rate during the knock. Dhawan, who smashed back-to-back hundreds in **Points**

2

2

2

+0.750

+0.453

- 0.719

- 0.967

"Bowlers did a good job keeping them to 195. He (Dhawan) has a lot of experience. You can to talk to him about anything, how we can set the field, there are many stuff you can talk about. End of the day, what he's giving to the team is commendable,

Pant said. skipper Puniab Rahul, who turned 29 on Sunday, said they put up a decent total but defending at Wankhede is always tough

"Right now it looks 10-15 runs short, but I think 190odd looked good. Me and Mayank thought 180-190 would have been great on this wicket. Shikhar batted well, so congratulations to

them. "When we come to Wankhede, bowling second is always a challenge. We prepare for such conditions. It does get difficult against these quality batters. I'm not saying that because I'm on the losing

side," he said. "Bowlers try to bowl with the wet ball, but it's always difficult to do that. I asked the umpires to change the ball a couple of times (as it was wet), but the rule book doesn't allow that," Rahul



R. Ashwin takes a selfie with his Delhi Capitals teammate Shikhar Dhawan.

A clash of heavyweights

Chennai, April 19: Heavyweights Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals cross swords and look to outsmart each other in the ongoing IPL here on Tuesday. Up against a resurgent

side, defending champions MI will need to address their middle-order woes if they are to go for a third consecutive While Delhi come into

the match after beating Punjab Kings by six wickets at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai have recorded back-to-back victories by defending low totals, something a formidable opponents like DC may not offer. Mumbai skipper Rohit

Sharma has got starts and he would be keen to convert it into a big one and so would be Quinton de Kock. MI have the likes of

Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan, Kieron Pollard, Hardik Pandya and his brother Krunal, who can pummel any attack into submission on their day, but they are yet to fire on

After the last game, Rohit had conceded that his team "can bat a little better in the middle overs.

The Mumbai bowlers, led by pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, have been splendid in the last two games when they suc-cessfully defended low scores of 150 and 152 respectively. Strike bowlers Bumrah (3 wickets) and New Zealander Trent Boult (6 wickets) have been exceptional at

Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, whom bowling



training session in Chennai.

coach Shane Bond described as a "wicket-taking bowler", has grabbed seven wickets in

last two games. Another important cog in the wheel is left-arm Krunal, who would be itching to give his team breakthroughs.

Mumbai Indians allrounder Kieron Pollard during a

Mumbai played Adam game but considering the nature of the pitch, they could be tempted to bring in off-spinner Jayant Yadav, who played the

2020 final against the same opposition. Meanwhile, for Delhi

tive has been the form of Shikhar Dhawan, who is the leading scorer so far in the tournament with 186 runs.

Dhawan and young Prithvi Shaw form a lethal opening combination, but the Mumbaikar needs to convert his starts into big scores.

Delhi opted for Australian Steve Smith on Sunday but, as they are next playing on the slow Chepauk track, they might go back to Ajinkya Rahane, who is looking better suited for such

Skipper Rishabh Pant has the ability to take any attack to the cleaners. The DC team management would be hoping that the top-order fires in unison against the defending champions, to whom they had lost in the final last year.

DC also possess quality all-rounders in Marcus Stoinis and Lalit Yaday, who would be keen to play their roles well.

Their pace attack is led by South African Kagiso Rabada and Chris Woakes, and the two have been impressive so far. They have an additional option in Anrich Notrie. who has also joined the

Delhi played four pacers in the game against Punjab, but in Chennai, they could play more spinners as the track is conducive for the slower bowlers.

They have options in the experienced Amit Mishra, Pravin Dubey and new recruit Shams Mulani, who can comple-Ravichandran Ashwin. Agencies

Live on TV

Mumbai Indians vs Delhi Capitals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD1

HEAD to HEAD

28

12

Matches 16 DC

FOR THE RECORD Kieron Pollard with 201 sixes in 150 innings is the only Mumbai Indians batsman to 200+ sixes in

 Rishabh Pant who has hit 194 fours in 71 innings needs just six more to become only the second batsman after Virender Sehwag (266) to complete a double century of fours for Delhi.

Mumbai beat Delhi by 57 runs at

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

Mumbai beat Delhi by 5 wickets STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISER

PRITHVI WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIS TECHNIQUE

Mumbai, April 19: The promising Prithvi Shaw says he had started "wor-rying" about his technique after being dropped in Australia before roaring back to form in domestic cricket, thanks to a few technical changes he made in his game.

"After getting dropped from the Test side after the first Test in Australia, I started worrying about my technique on why I was getting bowled. Even if it was a minor mistake, I wanted to minimize that. I started working on it there itself," said Shaw after Delhi Capitals' win over Punjab Kings on Sunday night.

Chennai pitches are tricky: Mahela **Chennai, April 19:** The wickets in Chennai are not

unplayable but challenging being on slower side, insisted Mumbai Indians Mahela coach Jayawardene as teams batting first have dominated the matches played at the Chepauk stadium, so far. Out of six matches played here, thrice teams man-

aged 150-plus score and five times the team that has batted first won the match. The match between Royal Challengers Bangalore and Rajasthan Royals was a

high-scoring affair on Sunday when Virat Kohliled side posted 204 for four to win the match by 38 "They are not unplayable wickets. They are good, competitive wickets. And

adapting to challenges is always the key for any batsmen or any team. We have been consistent with that approach, it is challenging, but our bowlers have adapted pretty well," Jayawardene said ahead of the team's game against Delhi Capitals.

Rahul Chahar has picked seven wickets in the last two games and the head coach acknowledged the improvement the young Chennai pitches are not unplayable wickets. They are good, competitive wickets. And adapting to challenges is always the key for any batsmen or any team. We have been consistent with that approach, it is challenging, but our bowlers have adapted pretty well

— MAHELA JAYAWARDENE MI coach

leg-spinner has shown

every year. "When we started playing him (Chahar), I believe it was the 2019 season, where he had a breakthrough season. Even in the UAE in the last season, he bowled well but he had his ups and downs, he wasn't consistent in execution, but every year we see improvement

in Rahul. "He is still a young player and he is also learning, he gets challenged by different oppositions, some topclass players, it is constant learning for Rahul, but very happy the way he has come out and he is one of our leaders in that bowling group," he added.