

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 22 APRIL 2021



WEATHER

Max: 37.9°C
Min: 24°C
RH: 30%
Rainfall: 5 mm

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Rain likely in some parts.
Max/Min temp. 38/25°C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava; Uttarakaya

Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Dasami till 11.30 pm
Star: Ashlesha till 8.11 am
Variyam: 7.55 pm to 9.29 pm
Durmuhratam: 10.09 am to 10.59 am; 3.10 pm to 4 pm
Rahuakalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Ramzan 9,1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajr: 4.53 am
Zohar: 12.25 pm
Asar: 4.39 pm
Magrib: 6.39 pm
Isha: 7.50 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.33 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.55 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 1.00 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 1.32 AM

RAMZAN TIMINGS

IFTAR: 6.40 PM (TODAY)
SEHRI: 4.30 AM (TOMORROW)



Not guest workers, they
are voters being taken
to an election rally!

SHORT TAKES

Modi to speak at climate meet

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will speak on the opening day of a two-day virtual summit to be hosted by United States President Joe Biden on the climate crisis on April 22-23. The American President has invited 40 world leaders, including Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, to the global climate summit.

ZojiLa Pass reopened

New Delhi: The roads to Ladakh have opened after winter amidst the continued stand-off with China. The ZojiLa Pass, which connects Kashmir to Ladakh, was opened on Wednesday and the Manali-Leh highway was opened some three weeks ago. The opening of the highways is crucial for the Indian troops.

Report on Page 7

Centre pulled up on Oxygen

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed the Centre to forthwith provide oxygen by whatever means to the hospitals in Delhi which are treating serious Covid-19 patients and are facing scarcity of oxygen. A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said responsibility to ensure oxygen supply is squarely on Centre shoulders.

US cop guilty of Floyd's murder

Washington: A federal grand jury has found Derek Chauvin, a former Minneapolis police officer, guilty on all three counts of murder of African American George Floyd last year. Floyd (46), was killed in a brutal abuse of police during an arrest after a store clerk alleged he had passed a counterfeit \$20 bill.

Report on Page 10

WORLD | 10

Russia's foes will be sorry, says Putin

SPORTS | 12

Bairstow stars in Sunrisers' first win

TABLOID

Making heads turn with his hairstyle

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BJP asks state to postpone civic elections

Party leaders want KCR to declare medical emergency

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

BJP Morcha national president Dr K. Laxman and BJP national vice-president D.K. Aruna on Wednesday demanded that the State Election Commission postpone municipal elections in the state because of the surge in Covid-19 cases. Dr Laxman has also petitioned Governor, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, to invoke her special powers to postpone the elections to save the lives of people.

Addressing a press conference at the party state office, Dr Laxman alleged that the TRS has an interest in elections but not in people's lives.

He accused the government of not taking the Covid-19 second wave seriously even though thousands of people are losing their lives in the country and demanded Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao to announce a medical emergency in the state.

While Aruna urged the Chief Minister to take care of the health of the people, Dr Laxman criticised health minister Etala Rajendar for a non-serious approach to the Covid surge and demanded the government to call an all-party meeting to adopt consensus on controlling the Covid situation.

The former state BJP leader slammed the government over failed tracking, testing and treatment of Covid protocol and

TS POLL PANEL UNLIKELY TO PUT OFF CIVIC POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD APRIL 21

The Telangana State Election Commission (TSEC) is going ahead with arrangements for holding municipal polls on April 30 as scheduled. There is no response from the government on its letter whether to hold the elections as per schedule or postpone them in the wake of the rise in coronavirus cases.

TSEC officials said the commission wrote to the state government on April 19 seeking its opinion on holding the municipal polls following the high court directives in this respect, but there was no response till as yet.

demanded the government should allow the covid treatment in AarogyaSri Scheme.

Dr Laxman also emailed a letter to the Governor requesting her to postpone the municipal elections to save people's lives.

In the mail, he pointed out to the Governor that urban local body elections are not more important than the lives of people.

■ Page 4: Aruna says Covid cases will rise after polls

State runs out of beds, testing kits

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD APRIL 21

Covid-19 patients in Hyderabad and elsewhere in Telangana continued to face chaotic conditions at several hospitals and testing centres, where thousands of people waited anxiously for their RT-PCR test results. This, among other issues, is threatening to further complicate the already strained Covid-19 situation in the state.

While the state continues to reel under an ever-increasing Covid-19 case-load, the battle on the ground level is appearing to get tougher.

Hospitals, including the government's big facilities with 1,000-plus beds —

■ Page 2: Hospitals send SOS to govt on oxygen

shall not sit from 22.04.2021 onwards till further orders..."

The court said that only urgent matters which brook no delay will be taken up for hearing.

The circular uploaded on the top court's website late on Wednesday evening says the application for the mentioning of the fresh matters for urgent listing by the advocate-on-record or the petitioner-in-person shall be made on five days — Monday to Friday — by 1 pm, and by 11.30 am on Saturday.

The application for an

24 die in Nashik after tanker leak disrupts oxygen supply

Leakage from valve disrupts oxygen supply to Covid-dedicated hospital



Medical oxygen gas leaks from a storage unit at the Zakir Hussain Municipal Hospital in Nashik which led to interruption in supply of oxygen resulting in the death of 24 Covid-19 patients who were on ventilator, on Wednesday.

— PTI

SERUM HIKES VACCINE PRICE TO ₹600 PER DOSE

New Delhi, April 21: Serum Institute of India's Covishield vaccine will cost private hospitals ₹600 per dose and state governments ₹400, a rate which will also apply to central government procurement once the existing contract for ₹150 a dose ends, its CEO said on Wednesday.

The world's largest vaccine maker announced pricing of AstraZeneca shots, following the government decision to open up inoculation to all citizens above 18 years of age.

The pricing, however, came in for criticism from opposition parties who saw no logic in charging states higher rates when the Centre was getting the vaccine at ₹150 per dose.

■ Page 2: Centre to pay ₹400 per dose after 10 cr order

CM undergoes tests; doc says he is 'absolutely fine'

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD APRIL 21

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao has undergone a CT scan and other medical tests at Yashoda Hospital in Somajiguda. He left for his farmhouse in Erravelli on the city outskirts soon after the tests.

The Chief Minister had tested positive for Covid-19 on April 19 and since then he has quarantined himself at his farmhouse on the advice from doctors. A team of doctors, monitoring his health condition at the farmhouse, suggested a CT scan and some other medical tests.

The Chief Minister arrived at the hospital from the farmhouse at around 8 pm on Wednesday and remained there for 45 minutes. He was wearing a mask. He looked healthy.

Medical tests were conducted under the supervision of the CM's personal doctor Dr MV Rao. "It was



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao comes out of Yashoda Hospitals in Hyderabad after undergoing tests on Wednesday.

— DC

just a routine check-up. Nothing to worry. The CM's health condition is absolutely fine. The CT scan report is normal. No lung infection was detected. There was no need to admit him in the hospital. He has been advised home quarantine," Dr Rao said.

The hospital has conducted six types of medical tests by collecting blood samples of the CM and the results will be known on Thursday.

"The CM's health condition is stable. He will recover soon," Dr Rao said.

■ Report on Page 8

JAPAN PM'S VISIT TO INDIA PUT OFF AMID COVID SCARE

Tokyo, April 21: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has cancelled plans to visit India and the Philippines during his country's extended holiday starting in late April amid a sharp rise in Covid-19 cases, a senior government spokesman said on Wednesday.

Japan is considering a state of emergency for Tokyo and several other prefectures amid a third wave of cases.

— Reuters

Daily death toll in TS hits 20

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

Covid-19 claiming almost one life every hour in the state, at least according to officially released data.

Meanwhile, one out of every 19 people tested on Tuesday, April 20, ended being Covid-19 positive in the state. One week ago, on April 13, one out of every 33 people tested was turning up as a Covid-19 positive case in the state.

The total deaths from Covid-19 in Telangana

have reached 1,876, while the total cases stood at 3,67,901 as on Tuesday evening, with 46,488 active cases.

The data released by the state health department in the daily Covid-19 bulletin also showed that the Coronavirus has now spread in the entire population of all 33 districts of Telangana.

■ Page 2: GHMC caseload nears 1,000 a day

No pay hike for TS staff in April

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD APRIL 21

Chances of the state government employees getting enhanced salaries under new PRC this month look remote owing to procedural delays.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao had announced a 30 per cent hike in basic pay in March last week with effect from April 1. Employees were expecting new salaries for this month, on May 1.

However, officials said

the modalities for implementing the new pay scales are yet to be finalised and approved at various levels. Hence, various departments have started submitting salary bills with old pay-scales to the treasury from Tuesday.

It is likely that the state government employees have to wait till June 1 to get the new pay scales along with the April arrears.

■ Page 2: Draft PRC file stuck on CM's table

Applications for fresh, urgent cases must be made before 1 pm on weekdays

SC to hear only urgent cases from today

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

With a surge in Covid cases assuming an alarming proportion in the national capital, the Supreme Court has decided to hear only urgent matters from Thursday, i.e. April 22, onwards while adjourning all other matters till further orders.

In a circular issued on Wednesday, the Supreme Court said: "Only urgent matters will be listed for hearing w.e.f. 22.04.2022" and "the regular courts and the registrar courts

shall not sit from 22.04.2021 onwards till further orders..."

The court said that only urgent matters which brook no delay will be taken up for hearing.

The circular uploaded on the top court's website late on Wednesday evening says the application for the mentioning of the fresh matters for urgent listing by the advocate-on-record or the petitioner-in-person shall be made on five days — Monday to Friday — by 1 pm, and by 11.30 am on Saturday.

The application for an

urgent listing of fresh matters will be accompanied with a one-page synopsis giving the grounds of urgency. It will be processed for the listing on the next to next working day, subject to availability of concerned bench and approval of the competent authority.

The application for the urgent listing should be sent to email id mention.sc@sc.nic.in.

The same is the procedure for the listing of the applications in already pending matters for an urgent hearing. The appli-

cation in the pending matters or in disposed of matters will be sent on email id mention.an.sc@sc.nic.in.

The circular says the matters for urgent mention shall be as per the guidelines laid down in the circular dated January 23, 2019.

It also annexed the list of 15 types of matters in the circular that will be entertained for urgent hearing, including those related to death penalty, imminent demolition of property or eviction, anticipatory bail, admissions in educational institutions, elections

where the last date for nomination, withdrawal, election is to expire, auction or sealing of premises in case of bank default and medical termination of pregnancy.

The 2019 circular also lists 16 matters that shall not be entertained for the urgent hearing.

Four top court benches will hear on Thursday urgent matters listed before the benches headed by Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, Justice Uday Umesh Lalit, Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, Justice Surya Kant.

However, officials said

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TS puts outdated bed status online

Health wing site was expected to give consolidated numbers of beds in govt, private hospitals

**DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21**

The Telangana state health department on Wednesday announced what it called 'real time Covid Hospital bed status' that can be accessed by anyone by going to the following website: <https://health.telangana.gov.in/>, a webpage that provides a link to check the bed availability status.

But there is just one small hitch. The information provided on the website of the Telangana state government's health department is absolutely useless to anyone searching for a hospital where a bed may be available — whether a general bed or an ICU bed.

All the site provides is consolidated numbers of beds available in government and private hospitals, data that is updated regularly, under three heads — Regular, Oxygen, ICU (Ventilator/CPAP) — and one section with total beds, number occupied and number available.

With the opening up of the so-called 'real time COVID Hospital bed status' by the health department removed from its daily Covid-19 bulletin a detailed, hospital by hospital bed count with the same divisions as above.

The provision of 'real time COVID Hospital bed status' by the Telangana state health department comes even as hundreds of Covid-19 patients are being carted around the city, and in other parts of the state by their frantic families searching for beds in hospitals so their loved ones can be admitted and treated.

In view of the growing requirement for Remdesivir, the main drug used for treatment of seriously-affected Covid patients, four lakh injections will be made available in all government hospitals within a week.

Covid patients suffering from breathing problems are being given oxygen along with Remdesivir injections, which helped in recovery.

IT and industries minister K.T. Rama Rao said on Wednesday that he has advised pharmaceutical firms in the state to increase production and ensure that four lakh

Remdesivir injections are supplied to the government hospitals in a week's time.

Earlier, the minister held a meeting with the pharmaceutical companies producing Remdesivir injections, on advice from chief minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao, who himself battling the Covid-19 virus.

Night curfew makes Sehri tough for those in hospitals

**ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21**

Patients and their attendants are facing difficulties in having their Sehri — pre-dawn meal — in hospitals due to the night curfew.

Earlier, many NGOs used to distribute fresh food packets to them early in the morning, so that they could have their meal before starting their fast.

There are other matters too. The finance department has to issue a GO on pay revision, detailing the quantum of hike based on the existing pay scales. Suggestions and objections will be invited from employees about discrepancies if any.

A committee on anomalies will be set up, which will study the GOs and address the grievances of employees.

Based on this, the committee would recommend corrections, if any, in the GOs.

The finance department will later release the revised GOs, based on which new salaries will be paid.

The respective departments have to submit the salary bills based on the new pay scales.

According to official sources, all these procedural issues would take at least two weeks to be sorted out and it would not be possible to pay the new salaries on May 1.

that ceases to exist, after we supply about 100 million doses to them, which was ordered in bulk a long time ago, we will also charge ₹400 to any government," he said.

"Let me clarify, it is not a different price. All government prices will be ₹400 henceforth for new contracts," he said.

"Please understand the ₹150 price which is being thrown around has been for the central government for prior commitments and contracts. After

work and it was a "risk sharing price" that was agreed for a limited amount of quantities.

"Now that the vaccine is licensed and is showing good efficacy, we have now announced, based on the new policy of the govern-

ment, these prices," he said.

He also said SII will be able to raise its monthly output of the AstraZeneca-Oxford University Covid-19 vaccine to 100 million doses by July from 60-70 million now, later than a previous timeline of end-May.

The American vaccines in the private market cost more than ₹1,500 per dose, while Russian and Chinese jabs cost more than ₹750 per dose, the company said.

SHORT TAKES
IMD WARNS OF RAINFALL IN TS TILL APRIL 25

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) here on Wednesday extended the rainfall warning it had issued for the entire state to April 25.

"Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning is very likely to occur at isolated places over Telangana. The cause of the rainfall is the weakening of a system circulating over Vidarbha and Madhya Pradesh," it added.

FIRE BREAKS OUT NEAR DHOOLPET HANUMAN TEMPLE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

Fire broke out near a Hanuman temple in Dhoopet here on Wednesday evening.

According to fire officials, the fire started where some old idols and garbage were lying in an open plot.

Confirming this as a casual fire, Gowliguda station fire officers said, "The fire started at around 8pm. We reached the spot soon and doused the fire. One fire engine and five fire-fighters were pressed into action."

No casualty was reported. The devotees who came to the temple to offer prayers panicked as the temple was suddenly enveloped by smoke.

YOUTUBE CHANNEL BOOKED FOR FAKE VIDEO ON COPS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

A criminal case has been registered against a private YouTube channel by the Hyderabad City Police for falsely reporting by posting an old video on cops manhandling the public.

City Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar said the YouTube channel had posted fake videos implying that the police used lathis on Tuesday to enforce the night curfew in the city. The Telangana state had imposed night curfew on Tuesday from 9 pm to 5 am which will continue till month end.

"The reporter of YouTube digital news channel will be arrested for creating panic and confusion in the minds of the community," Anjani Kumar said.

MAN DUPED OF ₹1 LAKH BY FRAUDSTERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

A person who searched for a customer care number of payment app PhonePe on Internet and called to resolve an issue has lost ₹1 lakh.

Ravi (name changed) had to receive ₹11,000 from a friend. However he didn't receive it. Subsequently, he searched for the PhonePe Customer Care number in Google and dialled 18004126667.

The receiver impersonated PhonePe Customer Care agent and assured to refund the amount and asked him to download the Any Desk app in his mobile," police said. The complainant entered all the debit card details following which in several fraudulent transactions the fraudster transferred ₹1 lakh from the complainant's account.

After realising that he was duped the complainant approached Rachakonda Cybercrime police who booked a case and have started investigations.

THE COMPLAINANT entered all the debit card details following which several fraudulent transactions the fraudster transferred ₹1 lakh from the complainant's account.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

Six minor children from Bihar have been rescued here by the anti-human-trafficking unit of the Rachakonda police. Investigations confirmed that the children were brought from Bihar to work in a bangle manufacturing unit, police said.

Three persons — Sahib

TS micro containment zones in every district to control Covid

Each zone a cluster of homes or apartment, 67 such zones in Hyderabad

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

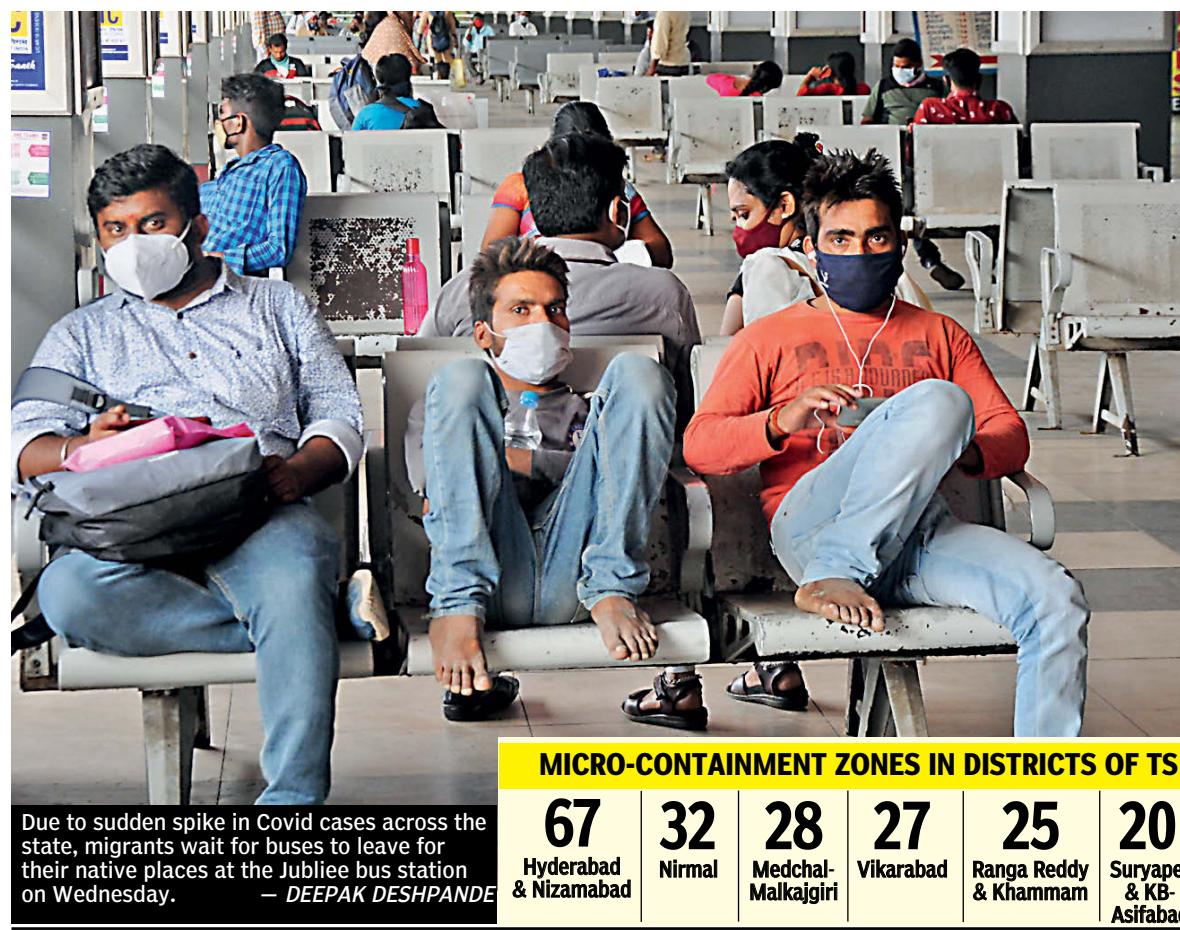
The relentless surge of Covid-19 cases across Telangana state has resulted in the state health department announcing that micro-containment zones have been set up in every district.

Introducing containment related data for the first time during the Covid-19 second wave, the health department in its bulletin said there were 67 such zones in Hyderabad district. Each micro-containment zone could be a cluster of homes or an apartment complex, indicating that there were at least 67 such locations in Hyderabad, from where the disease could spread, that are a cause of concern for the department.

However, the list of the containment areas themselves was not released as part of the bulletin.

Keeping pace with Hyderabad in terms of such zones was Nizamabad with 67 micro-containment zones of its own.

It may be recalled that when Covid-19 first entered the state in March 2020 and began spreading, elaborate containment zones comprising entire neighbourhoods were set up and barricaded, but the government at the Centre has since changed its policy to allow states to set up micro-containment zones.



Due to sudden spike in Covid cases across the state, migrants wait for buses to leave for their native places at the Jubilee bus station on Wednesday.
— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

MICRO-CONTAINMENT ZONES IN DISTRICTS OF TS

67	32	28	27	25	20
Hyderabad & Nizamabad	Nirmal	Medchal-Malkajgiri	Vikarabad	Ranga Reddy & Khammam	Suryapet & KB-Arifabad

'No shortage of oxygen at Gandhi hosp'

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

Gandhi Hospital, the nodal centre for Covid-19 care in Telangana state is being buffeted by continuous influx of severely ill Covid-19 hit patients from all districts of the state.

Many of them "are in a critically ill state", hospital superintendent Dr M. Raju Rao has said.

Calling on everyone to be careful and follow safety protocols, Dr Raju Rao said: "The second wave is really severe."

Calling for prayers that

Telangana state will not face oxygen shortages, he denied reports that there was a shortfall in oxygen supply at the hospital.

Dr Raju Rao said the staff was working round the clock to serve the patients. "We have stretched ourselves beyond our capacities to serve and save the patients for the past one year."

SCB launches drive to contain Covid spread

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

Secunderabad Cantonment Board (SCB) officials are vigorously prosecuting violators of Covid-19 safety norms to contain the spread of the virus.

Nearly 200 cases of Coronavirus have been reported from within SCB limits. However, the actual cases will be much higher, as these cases have been reported from only government hospitals.

penalty of ₹1,000 on each shop under Section 289 of the Cantonment Act, 2006. "We are identifying shops and commercial establishments that are flouting Coronavirus norms. We are penalising those that are overcrowded and not ensuring social distancing. We are discouraging stores from entertaining any people who

walk in without a mask. We are also spraying sodium hypochloride and bleaching powder in various areas," SCB CEO B. Ajith Reddy told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Significantly, he said they have identified a few houses, where Covid patients are in home quarantine. "Waste from these houses is being collected separately for safe disposal," he stated.

As per board's records, there are over 350 residential areas in the cantonment precincts. SCB officials are keeping tabs on all of them in case any new cases are reported from among them.

Covid-19 info counter set up at Sec'bad rly station

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

South Central Railways has opened a special counter to disseminate information about Coronavirus threat to life. The counter operates from Platform 1 at the Secunderabad railway station.



The Covid-19 information counter set up by the SCR on Platform No. 1 at Secunderabad.

— BY ARRANGEMENT

helpline numbers, online doctor's consultancy, hotels with quarantine facility, caretaker service, ambulance numbers, info

about lifesaving medicines, vaccination centres, government quarantine and Isolation centres, as also Covid testing centres.

With a tip off, the anti-human trafficking unit (AHTU) of Rachakonda police held the raid at the bangle manufacturing unit in Wadi-e-Saleheen of Balapur Mandal in Ranga Reddy district on Tuesday night.

"The accused, by taking advantage of the children's poor financial status, were exploiting them for work as slave labourers by confining them to a house," said the police.

Balapur police have booked a case under section 370(5)IPC (trafficking of persons), section 374 IPC (unlawful compulsory labour), the Juvenile Justice Act-2015 and the Child Labour Act1986. All the accused were sent to judicial custody and further investigation was on.

Children were found working at bangle factory

6 minors from Bihar rescued

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

Akhtar, Ahmed Hussain and Mohd Musawir Alam — have been arrested in this connection.

State coordinator for the Bachpan Bachao Andolan, A. Venkateshwari, said, "Such children are brought here on the pretext charity and forced to work some 15 hours a day without rest. They are made to live in congested rooms and treated as slaves".

With a tip off, the anti-human trafficking unit (AHTU) of Rachakonda police held the raid at the bangle manufacturing unit in Wadi-e-Saleheen of Balapur Mandal in Ranga Reddy district on Tuesday night.

"The accused, by taking

advantage of the children's poor financial status, were exploiting them for work as slave labourers by confin-

600 SBI staff ill, customers told to avoid branches

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

The recent surge in Covid-19 cases has affected working of banks in Telangana, including in State Bank of India (SBI), Hyderabad circle. There are around 1,200 branches of SBI in the state. As many as 600 personnel of these banks have tested positive for Coronavirus during the past few weeks. This has impacted working of at least 100 branches in Telangana. This, in turn, has created problems for bank customers too, as their transactions are getting delayed.

Following this, SBI Hyderabad circle chief general manager Om Prakash Mishra has requested customers to perform their banking transactions through a host of safe and secure modes available, including digital and internet banking, apart from YONO. He appealed to customers that they visit

STAGGERED TIMINGS IN SCR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

The South Central Railway has given its employees flexibility in work, so that only 50 per cent of staff is available on an office premises to ensure social distancing. SCR CPRO Ch. Rakesh said different departments of railways have been given staggered working hours to prevent crowding at offices and workshops.

branches only in extreme necessity, as they could otherwise face the risk of infection. Hyderabad circle has set up a helpline number 040-23466233 for customers to enquire about any alternate branch arrangements, if available nearer to their residences.

No state Iftars due to spike in Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

through masjids in various areas.

Every year, government provides funds for arranging Iftar parties in every assembly constituency of Telangana. Officials of Wakf Board said they have not received any instructions about identifying masjids for Iftar parties or issuing cheques to masjids for hosting them.

Career Chronicle



Central Recruitment & Promotion Department Corporate Centre, Mumbai.

Phone: 022-22820427; Fax: 022-22820411

Recruitment of Officers/Clerks on Regular/Contract Basis

Applications are invited from Indian citizens for the following posts:

Sr. no.	Post	Grade	Vacancy	Advertisement No.
1.	Chief Ethics Officer	Contractual	1	CRPD/SCO/2021-22/8
2.	Advisor (Fraud Risk Management)	Contractual	4	
3.	Manager (Risk Management)	MMGS-III	1	
4.	Manager (Credit analyst)	MMGS-III	2	
5.	Senior Special Executive (Compliance)	Contractual	1	
6.	Senior Special Executive (Strategy-TMG)	Contractual	1	
7.	Senior Special Executive - (Global Trade)	Contractual	1	
8.	Senior Executive (Retail & Subsidiaries)	Contractual	1	
9.	Senior Executive (Finance)	Contractual	1	
10.	Senior Executive (Marketing)	Contractual	1	
11.	Deputy Chief Technology Officer	Contractual	1	CRPD/SCO/2021-22/2
12.	Manager (History)	MMGS-III	1	CRPD/SCO/2021-22/3
13.	Executive (Document Preservation-Archives)	Contractual	1	
14.	Pharmacist	Clerk	67	CRPD/SCO/2021-22/4
15.	Data Analyst	MMGS-II	8	CRPD/SCO/2021-22/5
16.	Manager (Credit Analyst)	MMGS-III	45	
17.	Manager (Job Family & Succession Planning)	MMGS-III	1	
18.	Manager (Remittances)	MMGS-III	1	
19.	Dy. Manager (Marketing - Financial Institution)	MMGS-II	1	
20.	Dy. Manager (Chartered Accountant)	MMGS-II	6	
21.	Dy. Manager (Anytime Channel)	MMGS-II	2	
22.	Dy. Manager (Strategic Training)	MMGS-II	1	CRPD/SCO/2021-22/7

Eligibility criteria (age, qualification, experience, etc.), requisite fees and other details are available, under the respective detailed advertisements mentioned above, on Bank's website <https://bank.sbi/web/careers> OR <https://www.sbi.co.in/web/careers> along with a link for online submission of application as well as online payment of application fee. Candidates are advised to go through the detailed advertisement so as to ensure their eligibility and other details before applying and remitting fees.

Date For Filing Online Application & Payment Of Fees: 13.04.2021 To 03.05.2021

For any query, please write to us through link "CONTACT US" → "Post Your Query" which is available on Bank's website ([URL- https://bank.sbi/careers/pqr.htm?action=pquery](https://bank.sbi/careers/pqr.htm?action=pquery) OR <https://sbi.co.in/careers/pqr.htm?action=pquery>)

Place: Mumbai
Date: 13-04-2021

General Manager (CRPD)

SHORT TAKES

MAYOR SEEKS CORPORATORS AID IN SANITATION

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

City Mayor Gadwal R. Vijayalakshmi on Wednesday urged corporators to participate in the Swachh Hyderabad programme which was initiated by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao. She asked the city corporators to participate in the programme for a week between 6 am to 8 am in their respective wards beginning Friday. Vijayalakshmi also asked corporators to participate in the ongoing intensive sanitation drive in the city. Later inspected the special sanitation drive in several areas of the twin cities.

CENTRE FAILED TO DEAL WITH COVID, SAYS GADDAM

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

Former Congress minister Gaddam Vinod on Friday said centre has completely failed in understanding the magnitude of Coronavirus, leading to disastrous consequences. He said that central government should seriously think about why Covid-19 is spreading rampantly only in India, while other countries have been successful in curbing its spread.

"One important issue with Narendra Modi government is its failure to understand and recognise its failures. It further does not make genuine efforts to rectify its failures. During the first Covid wave, when Rahul Gandhi described Covid as the biggest issue facing mankind, central leaders including union health minister responded with personal attacks against the Congress chief," Gaddam pointed out.

Further, he said, they ridiculed Rahul's recent demand of fast-tracking approval of foreign vaccines. But within a week the government approved use of foreign-made corona vaccines in India. Recently, central ministers resorted to petty criticism of former prime minister Manmohan Singh's suggestions to tackle the second wave of Coronavirus.

The Congress leader said the problem with BJP government at the centre is its arrogance and attitude of discrediting persons who make any good suggestions.

ARUNA SAYS COVID CASES WILL RISE AFTER POLLS

FROM PAGE 1

BJP national vice-president D.K. Aruna meanwhile, referred to the higher Covid cases in Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly constituency after the completion of the polling process.

Similarly, she said, the ongoing electoral process in Warangal and Khammam Municipal Corporations and other municipalities would lead to an explosion of Covid cases in those cities and towns.

She asked the Chief Minister to take care of the health of the people. "He should protect the lives of the people and political leaders by postponing the elections," she said.

HISTORIC STEP Kaleshwaram water to flow 22km

Dam water in Nizamsagar

NARENDER PULLOR | DC
KAMAREDDY, APRIL 21

In a historic step, the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation water will reach the Nizamsagar project in four days' time. Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao released water from Konda Pochammagagar on April 6 to have it course through and reach the Nizamsagar project in less than three weeks' time.

KCR IS planning to visit Nizamsagar when the water reaches there

Nizamsagar project is unable to get water regularly.

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's decision to divert Godavari water from the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project to Nizamsagar won praise. This would happen soon. Official sources said the

Kaleshwaram water will flow for 22km through River Manjeera to reach Nizamsagar.

KCR was planning to visit the Nizamsagar project when the Kaleshwaram water reaches here. Due to Covid-19 infection, his visit may be postponed. At an estimated cost of ₹476 crore, the Nallamadugu lift irrigation project was planned for Jukkal Assembly constituency to irrigate agriculture lands. Jukkal MLA Hanmanth Shinde supervised the arrangements for KCR's programme.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Kamareddy district collector Dr A Sharath said the Kaleshwaram water will reach Nizamsagar project within four days. "We are monitoring the water flow from Medak district," he said and added that the Nizamsagar project will regain its previous glory with the arrival of Kaleshwaram water.

BJP leader clarifies to party on KTR meeting

Tells 3-member panel it was 'incidental, not intentional'

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

BJP senior leader and former MLC N. Ramchander Rao has offered an explanation to the three-member committee about meeting TRS working president and minister K. T. Rama Rao on GHMC Lingojiguda division by-poll.

The committee visited Ramchander Rao at the latter's in Tarnaka and inquired about his meeting with KTR. They asked who fixed the meeting and what issues were discussed in the meeting.

COMMITTEE VISITED Ramchander Rao at the latter's in Tarnaka and inquired about his meeting with KTR. They asked who fixed the meeting and what issues were discussed in the meeting.

PARTY SOURCES say the former MLC told the committee that the meeting with KTR was not planned. He said Rangareddy district president had called him for a meeting with MLA Sudheer Reddy.

cussed in the meeting. Party sources say the former MLC told the committee that the meeting with KTR was not planned.

He said Rangareddy district president and other corporators had called him for a meeting with LB Nagar MLA Sudheer Reddy to request the legislator for his support in

getting BJP candidate elected unanimously in the Lingojiguda by-poll. It so happened that at the time, Sudheer Reddy scheduled a meeting with KTR.

"Meeting KTR is incidental and not intentional," Ramchander Rao reportedly maintained.

Committee members

asked the former MLC why he did not inform party leaders including the state president and other key leaders, who were available in Hyderabad, about the meeting. Ramchander Rao replied that Rangareddy district party president had stated that he had informed the leadership.

The three-member inquiry committee is expected to submit its report to party president Bandi Sanjay on Thursday or Friday. The report will then be discussed by the party Core Committee before taking a final decision on the matter.

Curfew hits secret election meetings

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, APRIL 21

The night curfew from 9 pm to 5 am being implemented to check the Covid-19 virus became a problem in evolving the strategies for the candidates contesting in the elections in Khammam Municipal Corporation.

In general, the candidates used to meet the leaders of various communities, influential persons, intellectuals, rebels in Opposition parties and representatives of trade unions in their respective divisions to garner their support to win.

V. Narasimha Rao, a Congress leader said, "The parleys with the influential persons will help to know the mind of

ALL CLANDESTINE meetings including money distribution to the voters, getting the support of leaders in opposition camp are done in night only.

contesting candidates. If a teacher is convinced with the appeal of a contesting candidate, it will help him more. A word of a good person to the others will have a bearing to get more votes. The candidate will have time to meet these persons after completing the campaign."

Further, all clandestine meetings including money distribution to the voters, getting the support of leaders in opposition camp are done in night only.

11th day Ceremony



Smt. BODA SHYAMA LA
DOB: 26.09.1951
DOD: 12.04.2021
Pedda Kama (11th day) ceremony will be held on 24th April, 2021 at 12.30 pm at Sri Ananda Nilayam, H.No. 2-18540/20/E/1/A, R. K. Nagar, Hyderabad. Contact: 9846251289 / 9491829083
Lunch Follows
Husband : BODA VENKATA SWAMY
Daughters & Sons in law
K. Archana - K. Praveen Kumar
M. Siva - M. Praveen Kumar
V. Satish - V. Ganesan
Grand Sons & Grand Daughters
K. Aditya Sai, K. Anil Sai
M. Aishwarya & V. Ambika
(S/2122/D00076)

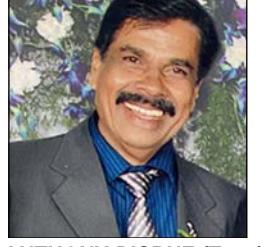
UTHAVANA



Sri Prabhat Kumar Malpani
(S/o, Late Sri Radhehal ji Malpani)
DOB : 16-10-1946 DOD : 20-04-2021
Due to Covid-19 there is no Uthavana & Daily Baithak
Please be safe & pray for his soul to rest in peace.

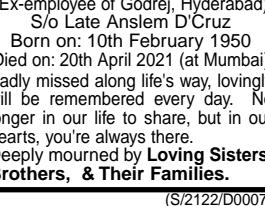
Inserted by:
Alka Malpani (Wife)
Dr. Ravi Kumar Malpani (Brother)
Sameet, Manoj (Son)
Ajay, Abhay, Vikram (Nephew)
Manishi (Nephew)
Pooja - Satish (Daughter & Son-in-Law)
Flat No. 101, Vaibhav Apartments, Ramkote, Hyd.
2475 0722, 98487 66330

With heavy hearts and profound grief, we inform the sad demise of our beloved



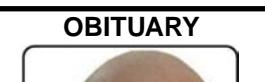
ANTHONY D'CRUZ (Tony)
(Ex-employee of Godrej, Hyderabad)
S/o Late Anslem D'Cruz
Born on: 10th February 1950
Died on: 20th April 2021 (at Mumbai)
Sadly missed along life's way, lovingly will be remembered every day. No longer in our life to share, but in our hearts, you're always there.
Deeply mourned by Loving Sisters, Brothers, & Their Families.
(S/2122/D00079)

OBITUARY



Mirza Mohammed Raza Khan
Eldest Son of Late Major Nasir Ali Khan, R/o Major Nasir Ali Khan, A.C. Guard, Hyderabad, T.S.
Aged 82 yrs, died on: 20-4-2021.
Namaz-e-Janaza, and Buried in Meer Momin Sabah, Qibla, Sultan Shahi, Hyd.
Inserted by: Mr. & Mrs. Ali Hassan, Mr. & Mrs. Jawad Ali Khan, Son - Daughter-in-law Rakesh Kumar Adi - Jamuna Adi Grandchildren: Hari Priya, Srivani and Rushank Contact: 9642149275.

OBITUARY



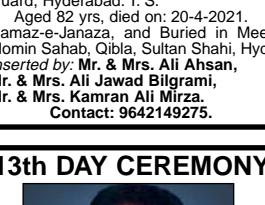
Sri. Late L. EASHWAR LAL YADAV
(Congress Leader, Advocate, Gen Secretary @ Aheer Nand Vanshi Yadav Community)
D.O.B: 10-04-2021
Ceremony will be held today at 12 noon at Flat No. 401, Gajendra Residency, Dayanand Nagar, Mysuru.
Inserted by: E. Lakshmi Ranji Yadav (Wife), Siddarth Lal Yadav (Son), Brothers and Family Members. You will live in our hearts and thoughts forever. Ph: 9848004934
(S/2122/D00082)

OBITUARY



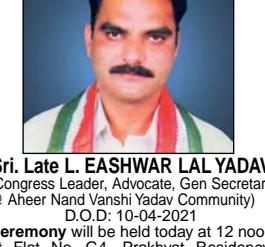
Mrs. Thiparala Elizabeth
Retd. Deputy Director (Local Fund Audit)
W/o Mirza S. Thiparala Samuel Christopher
DOB: 22.04.1943 DOD: 06.03.2006
We miss you every moment in our life.
Inserted by: Sons, Daughters-in-law & Grand Children
Ph.: 98869 85109, 80084 91969
(S/2122/D00082)

OBITUARY



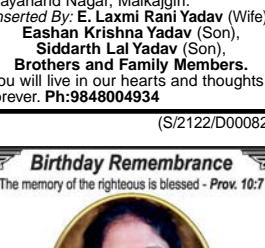
Late MOLUGU RENUKA
W/o Molugu V. Sreenivasulu
We all with an accord pray "May Your Soul Rest in Peace" Fondly remembered by Molugu Renuka Sreenivasulu Charitable Trust: Founder Trustees: Padmabhusan S. Anandaram IPS Retd. Smt. Vimla Anandaram (Poet)
Mr. K. Janardhan Reddy, DRO Dist. Hyd. Dist.
Mr. A. Yadagiri Yadav, JT Labour Commissioner A Ptd.
Mr. B. Kishan, Genl. Secretary, AP Cinegoers Assn.
Mr. Molugu V. Sreenivasulu (Spouse)
Mr. Vuppala Shashank (Nephew)
(S/2122/D00072)

OBITUARY



Mrs. SUMAN LATA YADAV
(Retd. K.V. Teacher)
DOB: 26-12-1954 D.O.B: 22-04-2016
Time flies fast. Life goes on at its own pace. But some memories can never be forgotten or erased from the mind of the closest ones.
She will always remain in our thoughts.
Inserted by: All Family Members / Shweta & Sivaram (Daughter & Son-in-law), Shriram (Grandson) & Kiranmai, S.S. Pharmaceuticals & Shriram Agencies (Staff)
(S/2122/D00081)

OBITUARY



Smt. GADALAY NIRMALA
W/o Gadaly Nursing Rao
Though you left us Seven years ago Your sweet memories are still Fresh in our hearts.
From: Gadaly Rajesh (Son)
Gadaly Nursing Rao & Family
Ph: 9701698885
(S/2122/D00061)

OBITUARY



JOHN DASS
(Ex-Serviceman)
Captain of State and EME Centre, Hockey Teams.
Today Mass at St. Mary's Basilica at 6 am
Inserted by: Wife, Children & Grand Children
(S/2122/D00061)

OBITUARY



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DOB: 26.09.1951
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M. Aishwarya & V. Ambika
(S/2122/D00076)

OBITUARY



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(S/2122/D00082)

SHORT TAKES

TTD: ANJANADRI IS BIRTHPLACE OF LORD HANUMAN

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, APRIL 21

Anjanadri Hilllock' is the birthplace of Lord Anjaneya (Hanuman), the Tirumala Devasthanams (TTD) has officially announced. It presented concrete evidence to that effect on the auspicious occasion of Sri Rama Navami at the hill town of Tirumala on Wednesday.

Prof. Muralidhara Sharma, vice-chancellor of National Sanskrit University, presented mythological, epigraphical, scientific, literary and geological evidences before the media and said this is mentioned in as many as 12 puranas.

**IMD FORECASTS
RAIN OVER 5
DAYS IN AP**

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 21

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast light to moderate rain and thundershowers and warned of thunderstorms with lightning at isolated places over north/south coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema regions over five days from April 22 to 26.

The Meteorological Centre at Amaravati in a release issued here on Wednesday, forecast light to moderate rain or thundershowers at isolated places over north/south coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema regions and Yanam over the next five days.

It also warned thunderstorms with lightning at isolated places over north/south coastal AP for the same period.

However, thunderstorms with lightning are very likely to occur at isolated places over Rayalaseema region only on Thursday.

**VONTIMITTA
BRAHMOTSAVAMS
BEGIN IN KADAPA**

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPPA, APRIL 21

The Sri Rama Navami Brahmotsavams of the famous Sri Kodandarama-swami temple in Vontimitta, YSR Kadapa district, commenced on Wednesday morning with Dwajarohanam fete in *Mithuna lagnam* between 9.15 am and 10.15 am. In view of Covid guidelines, the nine-day fete will be observed till April 29 in Ekantham and darshan for devotees was already cancelled.

The holy *Dwajarohanam* (hoisting the flag) was observed as per Agama traditions with Nava Kalasha Panchamrutha Abhishekam (ritual with five foods), followed by Rama Navami and Pothana Jayanti also being performed. The Kankana bhat (head priest) Rakesh Kumar supervised the ritual. Temple DyEO Ramesh Babu, AEO Muralidhar, superintendents Venkatachalam, Venkateshaiah, temple inspector Dhananjeyulu and others were present.

As part of tradition on the first day of Brahmotsavam, the TTD board member and Rajampet MLA Meda Mallikarjun Reddy presented Patti Vastrams (silk clothes) to the deity along with his spouse.

In the evening, the archakas performed Unjal Seva to the deities of the temple. This fete was held at 6 pm.

Rebel trouble annoys parties in civic polls

Keep suspense on issuing B-forms to official candidates

L. VENKAT RAM
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

All three major parties – TRS, Congress and BJP – are facing big rebel trouble in municipal polls scheduled to be held on April 30.

Candidates have filed a huge number of nominations on behalf of these parties from every division in Warangal and Khammam municipal corporations, apart from Siddipet, Achampet, Nakrekal, Jadcherla and Kothur municipalities.

Parties are maintaining suspense over issuance of B-forms to candidates, although the last date for filing nominations ended on April 18. Leaderships of the three parties are making last-ditch efforts to convince rebels into withdrawing their nominations before the deadline of 3 p.m. on Thursday.

It is stated TRS, Congress and BJP have decided to submit B-forms directly to returning officers in the last minute on Monday, so that those who fail to get B-forms do not join other

● **BASED ON** internal surveys, Telangana Rashtra Samithi has decided to deny tickets to at least 40 per cent of sitting corporators or councillors, who too are planning to defect to other parties in case they are denied tickets.

Parties and contest elections as rival party can-

Interestingly, most rebels of all these parties have filed two sets of nominations, one on behalf of their party and the other as independent. Their intention is to secure B-forms from other parties if they fail to get own party's ticket, or contest as independent if they fail to secure B-form of any party.

Significantly, the rebel trouble is more in ruling TRS when compared to opposition parties. Based on internal surveys, Telangana Rashtra Samithi has decided to deny tickets to at least 40 per cent of sitting corporators or councillors, who too are planning to defect

to other parties in case they are denied tickets.

Sensing this, opposition Congress and BJP have kept distribution of their B-forms pending. They are looking for strong TRS rebels with the hope that they would join them in the last minute and win as their candidates.

For 66 divisions in Warangal Municipal Corporation, as many as 688 candidates have filed nominations from TRS, indicating the gravity of rebel trouble in the ruling party.

In Nakrekal municipal corporation, 81 nominations have been received from TRS for the total 20 wards. The ruling party is facing trouble here due to a tussle between Nakrekal MLA Chirumarthi Lingiah, who won from Congress in 2018 but defected to TRS, and former TRS MLA Vemula Veeresham. Veeresham's supporters have filed nominations from all wards.

From Congress, 44 have filed their nominations, while 36 are from BJP, 13 from CPM, 3 from TDP, 33 from recognised parties of other states, and 95 independents.

Rituals amid pandemic



Devotees celebrate Rama Navami at the Sithaphalmandi temple in Secunderabad on Wednesday. The festivities were held at all temples on a subdued note. — S. SURENDER REDDY

AP records 9,716 new Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 21

Andhra Pradesh has neared the daily 10,000 mark on Wednesday by registering 9,716 fresh Coronavirus infections as also 38 deaths.

The state health authorities reported that 9,716 persons out of the 39,619 samples tested were found infected with the virus. Out of a total number of 1,57,93,298 samples tested so far in the state, 9,86,703 persons were found infected. Of

them, 9,18,985 have recovered while 60,208 are under treatment.

For the first time, all 13 districts recorded over 100 infections on the daily count Wednesday.

Srikakulam registered the highest 1,444 followed by Guntur with 1,236 cases. Chittoor with 1,180 cases, Kurnool 958 cases, Nellore 934 hits, Anantapur 849 infections, East Godavari 830, Visakhapatnam 810 cases, Vizianagaram 565 infections, Krishna and Prakasam 294 each,

Kadapa 216 and West Godavari 106 cases.

Chittoor district continues to top the districts' tally with cumulative active cases at 9,481.

The other districts reported active cases like 7,420 in Srikakulam, 6,354 in Guntur, 6,246 in East Godavari, 5,025 in Visakhapatnam, 5,024 in Kurnool, 4,909 in Nellore, 4,783 in Krishna, 3,708 in Prakasam, 2,948 in Anantapur, 2,105 in Vizianagaram, 1,444 in Kadapa and 761 in West Godavari.

AP registered a record

number of deaths at 38 on Wednesday, with Krishna registering the highest of 10.

There were seven deaths in Nellore, four each in East Godavari and Srikakulam, three each in Chittoor and Prakasam, two each in Kurnool and Visakhapatnam and one in Anantapur.

The health authorities said they discharged 3,359 Coronavirus-infected patients after recovery from hospitals in the state in the last 24 hours.

PANDEMIC BLUES

Shortage of vaccine, oxygen supply in state hospitals reported

Adilabad towns see daytime curfew

PILLALAMARI
SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, APRIL 21

A curfew-like situation was evident in some towns during day time itself with enforcement of a full lockdown by the local authorities aided by civil society groups on Wednesday. This, over and above the night curfew announced by the state government.

The Khanapur municipal authority has announced a three-day lockdown from Wednesday following the sharp rise in Covid cases in Nirmal district. Both the Covid graph and temperatures are rising, keeping people mostly indoors.

Surprisingly, many people are still moving around without face masks and not maintaining physical dis-

tance in public places like roads and markets.

The Khanapur municipal authorities say essential services like milk supply are exempted from the lockdown restrictions.

On the positive side, many civil society groups are realising the importance of self-imposed lockdown and controlling the movement of people in their villages and towns. More numbers of people are also coming forward to take Covid vaccine.

There are reports of a shortage of Covid vaccine doses in some places as also of oxygen supply to the government hospitals where Covid patients are undergoing treatment in the old Adilabad district.

RTC buses were not plying after 5pm as the state

government enforced a night curfew and the main

roads wore a deserted look with no movement of vehi-

cles and people. Police are enforcing the night curfew by introducing bandobast on the roads and main chowrastas at night time.

Medical and health officials are motivating the adivasis to take Covid vaccine in addition to prompting them to offer puja to their traditional gods to protect them from the Covid-hit. Adivasi women are coming forward to take Covid vaccine in larger numbers as compared to their male counterparts in the agency areas.

With no reply from govt, SEC to go ahead with polls

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

● **THE STATE** government might not opt for a postponement at this stage as filing of nominations ended on April 18 and only a week is left for campaigning.

till as yet.

The state government might not opt for a postponement at this stage as filing of nominations ended on April 18 and only a week is left for campaigning.

TSEC officials said the commission wrote to the state government on April 19 seeking its opinion on holding the municipal polls following the high court directives in this respect, but there was no response

There were fresh indications on Wednesday over the ruling party opting for holding the polls as scheduled on April 30.

Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao, who is the ruling party's election in-charge for Warangal corporation and senior TRS leader B Vinod Kumar issued B-forms to 18 party candidates in Warangal. Ministers T Harish Rao and Puvvada Ajay were campaigning extensively in Khammam and Siddipet on Wednesday. This apart, campaign by ministers V Srinivas Goud, Nirjanan Reddy, G Jagadish Reddy covered other four municipalities on Wednesday.

PARENTS WANT SSC, INTER EXAMS IN AP CANCELLED

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 21

age Creations Private Limited J.K. Ramakrishna said, "Except the film *Vakeel Saab* and a few small budget films, there are no films to be screened in the theatres. This is causing the exhibitors to stop screening the films and close the theatres at least to save costs on their operation."

Though actor Naga Chaitanya starring big budget film 'Love Story' and a few small budget films are ready for release, they are not being released fearing lack of patronage from viewers.

Some film production and distribution companies like Suresh Productions have stopped screening of films in theatres owned by him or under their control in parts of the state.

The state government's recent order on fixing ticket rates in film theatres seems to be have affected exhibitors as they claim that 12 per cent GST on entertainment tax and power tariff remain unchanged for a theatre in a rural area and a multiplex in an urban centre.

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On behalf of Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., Regional Electrical Engineer, KRCL, Ratnagiri, is inviting E-Open Tenders for the following work: Name of Work : Outsourcing of Manpower for Maintenance work of 25KV AC Over Head Equipment and Power supply installation of ROHA to RATNAGIRI section on Konkan Railway route under Ratnagiri region in the state of Maharashtra.. Tender Notice No : KR/CO/EL/RE/AMC-OHE/RN/T/4/2021 Dt 22.04.2021. Estimated Cost: Rs. 1,27,43,884/-, Excluding GST. Cost of Tender: Rs. 5900/-, EMD: NIL. Last Date & Time of Depositing of Tender Online: 13.05.2021 upto 15:00 Hrs. For further details, contact office of Regional Electrical Engineer, MIDC area, Mirjole, Ratnagiri or on Railway web site (www.ireps.gov.in)

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DECCAN Chronicle

22 APRIL 2021

Does road to Indo-Pak peace run through UAE?

There has been a flicker of interest in India-Pakistan relations in the region since late February when a military-to-military agreement between the two sides materialised. It spelt out that the ceasefire agreement of 2003 will be seriously adhered to. In the last five years or so, this agreement has been observed mainly in the breach by Pakistan, provoking retaliatory fire by India.

This has been especially the case since the Indian Air Force struck terrorist bases across the LOC in Balakot in response to the February 2019 Pulwama terrorist attack. With New Delhi ending J&K's autonomy and special status in August that year, high-intensity ceasefire violations by Pakistan became a practically daily affair. Throughout this period, India resisted suggestions by former US President Donald Trump to broker talks with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. New Delhi stuck to its view that "terror and talks can't go together".

In recent weeks, however, there is a sudden buzz in India-Pakistan relations, which became the more noticeable after their militaries agreed to stop cross-border firings.

Pakistan Army chief General Javed Qamar Bajwa and Prime Minister Imran Khan made conciliatory noises and dilated on the virtues of peace. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made solicitous enquiries during a recent illness of Mr Khan. The optics looked satisfactory. There was a Pakistan cabinet committee recommendation to import cement and sugar from India, though this was subsequently quashed with the usual suspects thumping their chest over Kashmir.

And yet, something does seem to be cooking. The UAE ambassador to America, Yousef al-Otaiba, disclosed recently that his country had done some groundwork to facilitate India and Pakistan reach a level of "functional" relationship. This appears to be a hint that the defence ministry agreement of February was preceded by security and intelligence dialogues in third-country locations at UAE's behest. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar indeed hosted UAE foreign minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan a day after the February 25 agreement.

And now there is fresh twist to the story. Last Sunday, Mr Jaishankar's bilateral visit to the UAE overlapped with that of his Pakistan counterpart, Shah Mehmood Qureshi. India has made no comment on this. New Delhi's long-standing view is that Kashmir is strictly a "bilateral" issue between India and Pakistan. The two countries denied their foreign ministers met. This does indeed appear to be the case. Still, the episode begs the question: Did Mr Jaishankar and Mr Qureshi have to be in UAE on the same day? Is this a logistical coincidence of a somewhat unusual kind?

At this stage it cannot be ruled out that the UAE has just played host to what's called undecided "proximity talks" at the foreign minister level between India and Pakistan in which the UAE carried messages back and forth. The entire thing will have to be denied if the talks do not go far. More, since the new element in the region is the sensitivity around the Afghanistan issue, the UAE could be acting at the behest of the United States. The US cannot afford even accidental sabre-rattling between India and Pakistan when delicate negotiations are on, and may have sought help from an old ally that has good ties with India and Pakistan.

Justice for George Floyd

In a landmark judgment, the former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was convicted of two counts of murder and one of manslaughter for putting such a brutal knee hold for nine minutes on the neck of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, that he choked to death. As the arraigned cop faces a decades-long prison term even as three fellow officers stand dismissed, there is general rejoicing over what the verdict means towards correcting systemic fault in the treatment of black people in the United States.

US President Joe Biden was optimistic that the "world is going to change". Whether the milestone in rendering justice expands into a genuine reform to correct systemic faults in the treatment of black, minorities and people of colour in a pluralistic society remains to be seen, but there is no doubt this is a seminal moment in the history of US policing.

A Black man as innocent as being on a trip to the grocery store can be in danger of being pulled up in his car and shot or mistreated by policemen as George Floyd was when accused of using a counterfeit note to buy cigarettes. In death, he became a symbol of retributive justice against a discriminatory system loaded against people of colour other than white or Hispanic in the US.

It was fortuitous that teenager Darnella Frazier filmed the whole episode on her phone and shared it with a shocked nation and world which saw a helpless man plead that he was unable to breathe because of the chokehold. The horrendous event, described as "a stain on the soul of our nation" by Biden, spawned the powerful Black Lives Matter movement.

Law enforcement may face numerous challenges but no police force can be above being held to account as is too often the case when it comes to police excesses in dehumanising ordinary people in the guise of controlling or arresting them. The verdict is an inflection point in race relations in the US even as it represents a moment when police forces around the world must stop to think and resolve to behave more humanely.

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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu

Private sector specialists will helm Modi's reforms push

In September last year, the Modi sarkar gave the go-ahead to its most ambitious bid to reform the bureaucracy — a national capacity building programme. Finally, the programme has got underway with the creation of the Capacity Building Commission (CBC) under the National Programme for Civil Service Capacity Building aka "Mission Karmayogi".

And given the government's recent obsession with domain experts from the private sector, the man appointed to head the new CBC is no babu, but Adil Zainulbhui, the chief of the Quality Council of India (QCI), which is an autonomous body under the department of industrial policy and promotion. He is a former chairman of McKinsey India and a known supporter of the Prime Minister. The CBC will have two members — Ramaswami Balasubramaniam and Praveen Pardeshi — with only

the latter being an IAS officer (of the 1985 batch).

For those who look for patterns in these things, consider that Zainulbhui's appointment came on the same day as the announcement that Mallika Srinivasan will be the chairperson of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB), the first time that a private sector specialist has been appointed as the head of the board that is responsible for the appointment of top management posts in the Central Public Sector Enterprises.

Looking back further, there was another clue when in February Prime Minister Narendra Modi attacked the IAS in the Parliament, no less. The message then is clear — the government has firmly announced its intention of bringing in more domain knowledge specialists than continue to depend on the "heaven-born" who are generalists by training. They will no doubt put up some resistance, but Mr Modi is

bent upon breaching this wall and bring in much-needed reforms.

HC STAYS APPOINTMENT OF FORMER TN CHIEF SECY

Former Tamil Nadu chief secretary Girija Vaithyanathan faces uncertain days ahead. Slated to join the National Green Tribunal (NGT) as an expert member, the appointment has been put on hold by the Madras high court.

The court has granted an interim stay on her appointment stating that she did not meet the minimum eligibility criterion of possessing five years of experience in handling environmental issues. The court was acting in response to a petition filed by a group of environmental conservation activists, which argues for cancellation and nullification of the December 12 notification about Vaithyanathan's appointment.

Sources point out that Vaithyanathan was appointed an

expert member of the NGT along with her 1987 batch colleague K. Satyagopal, who retired as additional chief secretary and commissioner of revenue administration. Ms Vaithyanathan's argument that she had held various administrative positions related to the environment clearly did not cut much ice with the court. The court will continue hearing the case.

MAHARASHTRA BABUS SEEK CENTRAL DEPUTATION

The fierce face-off between the ruling Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government and the Opposition BJP has led to many "blue-eyed" officers seen as close to former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis seeking the "cooler climes" of a Central deputation.

Sources say that several IAS and IPS officers who wielded clout in the tenure of Mr Fadnavis are on deputation to the Centre. Sources say that GST Commissioner Sanjeev Kumar, a

Subhani



Lessons not learnt after a year of battling Covid



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

The fear is back. The images on television, the gut-wrenching stories of death, devastation, despair and a gnawing sense of helplessness evoke an eerie feeling of déjà vu — one has been down this road before.

New Delhi's cremation and burial grounds are changing. Nigambodh Ghat, one of the largest cremation grounds in the city, has stepped up its capacity from 36 to 63 pyres to accommodate the swelling numbers of the dead.

More than one year into the coronavirus pandemic, ordinary Indians are once again flooding the social media to save the lives of their loved ones. They are turning to strangers for help as they grapple with acute shortages of medical oxygen, ventilators, and hospital beds that offer intensive care for Covid-19 patients.

Once again, we are locked down. And migrant workers are leaving out of fear of being abandoned.

How did we get here? What does this tell us about our pandemic preparedness and the lessons not learnt?

The oxygen crisis comes as Delhi, and the country, faces a terrifying spike in new coronavirus infections and deaths, signalling a second wave of Covid-19. India now has the world's fastest-growing Covid-19 caseload, adding more than 250,000 new infections every day for the past week or so.

The total tally of Covid-19 cases in the country has crossed 15 million; the death toll is over 1.80,530 and there is worrying news about new mutants of the virus, including B.1.167, an Indian-origin double mutant strain of the coronavirus that some experts say could be behind the dramatic surge in new infections.

Arguably, this year, some of us are a little better prepared. Some of the

recent steps taken by the government are steps forward. We have the vaccine — three, in fact, now, to combat the new coronavirus. The Centre has just given the green signal for vaccinations to be open to all above 18 from May 1. We have a little better health infrastructure in some parts of the country, and we are better equipped in areas like personal protective equipment, compared to the early days of the pandemic last year.

As Gautam Menon, professor in the departments of physics and biology at Ashoka University, who has a long-standing interest in the modelling of infectious diseases, puts it: "Opening up vaccines is a genuine step forward, supporting Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech in ramping up production is a good idea and expanding vaccinations to anyone above 18 is a good step."

But many of us remain ill-prepared. On many fronts, we don't seem to have learnt any lessons. The second wave is hammering us because both the political class and the people lowered their guard. We forgot that mixed messaging never works in public health.

Take the case of medical oxygen, critical for Covid-19 patients whose condition becomes serious. As is amply clear, India is ill-prepared on this front. Faced with a sharp spike in Covid cases and the soaring demand for medical oxygen, the Centre has banned the supply of oxygen for industrial purposes except in nine specified areas.

But what was the extent of preparations for this eventuality over the past year?

In October, the government took a decision to install oxygen-generating plants on-site in 162 government hospitals across India to support Covid-19 treatment.

Funds were sanctioned early this year but according to one recent media report, only 33 such plants have come up so far. Meanwhile, states jostle for depleted medical oxygen reserves.

The oxygen crisis is not just about increasing capacity but also transport. Availability of oxygen is also about enough cryogenic (tank) trucks, cylinders, refilling facilities and so on. But India is ill-equipped on this front too. Saket Tiku, All India Industrial Gas Manufacturers Association president, says that while it is possible to ramp up oxygen output, there is the issue about not having an adequate number of trucks for oxygen transportation.

Take the issue of genomic sequencing and information about the new mutants. There is not enough data on the subject in the public domain and we don't know how many samples in India have shown the so-called double mutation (B.1.167).

Now, the virus has struck back with a vengeance. We never learnt things can get progressively worse in a pandemic, that we can't afford to assume

Recent media reports suggest that the double mutant was first detected last October through genome sequencing of a virus sample. However, the genome sequencing exercise has been running at a slow pace. Not enough resources appear to have been invested in it. The sluggish pace could be due to complacency because of the steadily falling Covid-19 curve at the end of 2020.

As Prof. Menon points out: "Getting adequate genomic sequencing in place was actually crucial and should have been well in place by December."

There are other lessons we have not learnt. Last year, migrant workers walked down highways in a desperate attempt to get back to their villages hundreds of miles away as the nationwide lockdown kicked in.

As Covid cases spike, and several states announce a slew of restrictions including night curfews and weekend lockdowns, migrant workers are, once again, staring at an uncertain future.

In October, the government took a decision to install oxygen-generating plants on-site in 162 government hospitals across India to support Covid-19 treatment. The committee also suggested the launch of a national database on migrant workers as it will help in the identification of migrant workers and in delivering ration and other benefits to them.

Nothing much has moved on the ground till date.

And migrant workers are boarding buses and trains to get back to their villages.

Much of this could have been avoided. There must be mechanisms which enable the government to listen to and incorporate independent voices in its decision making.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com.

LETTERS

VACCINE PRICING

It is disheartening to note the government does not care. The vaccine manufacturers are being allowed to sell 50 per cent of the life-savers to private players. SII hiked the price to ₹600 per dose. Even in a crisis we are forced to pay a high price for vaccine. These high prices will deter many from taking the vaccine. The PM CARES fund must be used provide free vaccine to Indians.

Lal Melwani
Hyderabad

NIGHT CURFEW

I thank the TS government for imposing night and curfew (*Night curfew in TS from 9 pm to 5 am, DC, April 21*). I urge the cinema theatres and multiplexes to cooperate and close for the time being.

Pramod Sampagaonkar
Hyderabad

The night curfew will not be that effective. Ninety per cent of the population is inactive at night. It is better to go for full lockdown at least once a week.

Bhaskar Kantekar
Hyderabad

CLARIFICATION

We deeply regret if a speculative item in these pages referring to "talk" that the AIMIM led by Asaduddin Owaisi may have helped the BJP in the Bihar election, inadvertently or otherwise, and that it may have got covert funding to play spoilsport, has offended Mr Owaisi and his party. That was not our intention.

— Editor

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Liberators keep army at bay

AGARTALA, APRIL 21
 The onward march of the West Pakistani army was halted at many places in Bangla Desh today as freedom fighters aided by monsoon and Guerrilla tactics launched a counter-offensive in all the sectors of War.

Reports from across the border said most of the weather-wearied Pakistani soldiers were confined to their cantonments and those who ventured out were caught in slush. Deprived of all support, suffered heavy casualties from fast-growing guerilla bands. A report from the Eastern sector said the Liberation Army had captured Madhupur forest on the Tanguai-Mymensingh road and beat back Pakistani troops to Begunbari.

Dilli Ka Babu

In September last year, the Modi sarkar gave the go-ahead to its most ambitious bid to reform the bureaucracy — a national capacity building programme. Finally, the programme has got underway with the creation of the Capacity Building Commission (CBC) under the National Programme for Civil Service Capacity Building aka "Mission Karmayogi".

And given the government's recent obsession with domain experts from the private sector, the man appointed to head the new CBC is no babu, but Adil Zainulbhui, the chief of the Quality Council of India (QCI), which is an autonomous body under the department of industrial policy and promotion. He is a former chairman of McKinsey India and a known supporter of the Prime Minister. The CBC will have two members — Ramaswami Balasubramaniam and Praveen Pardeshi — with only

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SHORT TAKES

CRUCIAL ROADS TO LADAKH OPEN

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

The roads to Ladakh have opened after winter amidst the continued standoff with China. The ZojiLa Pass, which connects Kashmir to Ladakh, was opened on Wednesday and the Manali-Leh highway was opened some three weeks ago.

The opening of the Srinagar-Leh and Manali-Leh highways is crucial for the supply of ammunition, food, fuel and other essentials for the Indian troops who are deployed in Ladakh. The opening of these roads indicates that the Army has successfully managed the winter deployment of the additional troops who were rushed into Ladakh after the tensions soared with China. Last year the Indian Army had rushed supplies to Ladakh for some 50,000 troops which were to be stationed in the area during winter at sub-zero temperatures due to the tensions with China.

The strategic 428 km Manali-Leh highway was opened by the Border Roads Organisation more than one-and-a-half months ahead of schedule. However, due to the snowfall, movement on it has been getting affected. The strategically crucial mighty ZojiLa Pass on the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh road was opened Wednesday by the BRO, establishing road connectivity to Ladakh after four months. The pass closes every year in winter due to the heavy snowfall and opens only by the end of April the next year.

ODISHA: FOUR CRUSHED TO DEATH BY ELEPHANTS

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 21

Four persons were on Wednesday trampled to death by wild tuskers in different parts of Odisha.

According to reports, three persons, including an elderly man, were killed by marauding jumbos while they were at Umarad village in Bargh district in the early hours.

The deceased were identified as Mal Seth (50), Biranchi Kumbhar (60) and Natha Pali (70).

Tension gripped the area following the incident. The police and forest officials rushed to the spot after they were informed about the incident by villagers.

The police registered a case and launched further investigation.

In a similar incident, a farmer was killed by a pachyderm at Darlipali village under Loisingha police station in Bolangir district. The deceased was identified as Biranchi Sahu. According to reports, Biranchi went to the agriculture field in the morning. He was attacked by a group of pachyderms that trampled him to death.

BENGALI POET SHANKHA GHOSH DIES DUE TO COVID

Kolkata, April 21: Noted Bengali poet Shankha Ghosh died on Wednesday morning while he was in isolation at his residence after testing positive for Covid-19, his family said.

Ghosh, 89, was found to be Covid-positive on April 14. He was in home isolation on the advice of doctors, according to health department sources.

Ghosh, who suffered from several comorbidities, was hospitalised a few months ago due to deterioration of his health condition. Considered to be having authority on Rabindranath Tagore, Ghosh is known for 'Adim Lata - Gulmomay' and 'Murkha Baro Samajik Nay', among other books.

Ghosh, known for being vocal on various social and political issues, was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2011 and conferred the prestigious Jnanpith Award in 2016.

He received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1977 for his book 'Barber Parthan'.

His works have been translated into several languages, including English and Hindi.

Ghosh is survived by his daughters Semanti and Srabanti, and wife Pratima.

Litterateur Subodh Sarkar said Covid-19 snatched away Ghosh when he was needed the most as "the state was faced with the threat of fascism". "He was soft-spoken but his pen was razor-sharp, always speaking against intolerance. He used to be a participant in all conventions and movements for free and liberal thinking," Sarkar said.

SHAH SETS UP TEAM TO LOOK INTO OXYGEN SHORTAGE

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

Home Minister Amit Shah has formed a core team of senior officials headed by Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla to ensure there is no shortage of oxygen, vaccines and other medical essentials in states.

The committee is working closely with other key Ministries including Health, Railways, Commerce, etc to handle the ongoing Corona crisis.

The Home Secretary along with a team of senior officials from different Ministries has been working round the clock to ensure that adequate oxygen and other essential are supplied in adequate quantity to all states.

The Home Ministry's team avoided a major tragedy late last night when oxygen was rushed to Delhi's GTB Hospital with police escort following a panic response from Delhi Government that oxygen supply there could run out in a couple of hours.

Earlier, the Home Secretary had also written to all states directing them to ensure that no oxygen is supplied for commercial or industrial use and is only sent to hospital and other Covid facilities.

Officials claimed efforts are also being made by the Centre to expedite import of oxygen and raw material for making essential vaccine for Corona. The situation is being monitored several times during the day by this Empowered Committee of senior officials.

Sources admitted that some of the worst affected states were facing a major shortage of oxygen as they have witnessed a sharp increase in demand. These states include Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and some more. In addition, some states like Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat and others are facing a shortage of vaccine and Remdesivir.

"We are tracking the situation closely in these worst affected states and are in constant touch with them," a senior member of the empowered committee said.

The brother of 42-year-old Pramod Walukar could



A family member reacts after getting the news of medical oxygen gas leakage from a storage unit, which led to interruption in supply of oxygen to Covid-19 patients, in Nashik on Wednesday. — PTI

Anger at Nashik hosp as kin of deceased demand answers

Some of the patients who died in were about to get discharge from hosp

Nashik, April 21: Family members could not contain their tears as well as anger as they mourned the death of their kin following the disruption of oxygen supply at the Zakir Husain municipal hospital here.

Some of the 22 Covid-19 patients who died in the tragedy were recovering and about to get discharge, their relatives told media-persons.

As the news of disruption of oxygen supply due to leakage in storage tank spread, family members rushed to the ward where COVID-19 patients on ventilator were undergoing treatment.

There were heart-wrenching scenes as patients' condition became critical and doctors and nurses could not do anything in the absence of oxygen supply, one witness said.

The brother of 42-year-old Leela Shelar (60) died during the incident, said his mother received good treatment, she would have survived.

Another woman, who also lost her mother, said her condition was improving. "But the oxygen supply got disrupted and she died gasping for breath," she said, sobbing.

"My grandmother died

not stop his tears.

"My brother was about to get discharge in the next two days as his condition was improving. On Wednesday when I brought him tiffin, he said he would eat later."

Immediately after our conversation the hospital ran out of oxygen and within two hours my brother was dead," he said.

The relative of another victim said the hospital management was callous and must be held responsible.

A woman, whose mother Leela Shelar (60) died during the incident, said her mother received good treatment, she would have survived.

Another woman, who also lost her mother, said her condition was improving. "But the oxygen supply got disrupted and she died gasping for breath," she said, sobbing.

"The news of patients'

before my eyes... The hospital management is responsible for this," said a man.

One relative claimed that there was no oxygen supply for almost two hours and had the hospital stocked some oxygen cylinders, lives could have been saved.

A woman said her mother could not get a hospital bed for two days, and when it became available, she lost her life for lack of oxygen.

As angry and weeping relatives demanded answers, hospital authorities had to ask the police to restrict the entry into the Covid-19 ward.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi condoled the death of patients at a Nashik hospital due to interruption in oxygen supply following leakage and urged the Maharashtra government to provide all assistance to the affected.

"The news of patients'

death at Nashik's Zakir Hussain Hospital is extremely tragic. My heartfelt condolences to the aggrieved families.

"I appeal to the state government and party workers to provide all possible assistance," Gandhi tweeted.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray announced financial assistance of Rs five lakh each to the families of the 22 patients.

President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday said he is deeply distressed by the loss of lives due to the bereaved families in this sad hour."

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra government announced a probe by a seven-member committee into the death of 24 Covid patients at a Nashik hospital.

"I am deeply distressed by the unfortunate incident of patients dying due to gas leak in a hospital's oxygen tank in Nashik, Maharashtra. My deepest condolences to the families who lost their loved ones in this accident. I wish all other patients a quick recovery," Kovind

said in a tweet in Hindi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the death of at least 22 COVID-19 patients at a Nashik hospital.

Modi described the tragedy as heart-wrenching.

Modi tweeted, "The tragedy at a hospital in Nashik because of oxygen tank leakage is heart-wrenching. Anguished by the loss of lives due to it. Condolences to the bereaved families in this sad hour."

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra government announced a probe by a seven-member committee into the death of 24 Covid patients at a Nashik hospital.

"I am deeply distressed by the unfortunate incident of patients dying due to gas leak in a hospital's oxygen tank in Nashik, Maharashtra. My deepest condolences to the families who lost their loved ones in this accident. I wish all other patients a quick recovery," Kovind

PRIGA: CAN'T BLAME NEHRU WHEN MODI IS IN CHARGE

New Delhi, April 21: Slamming the government's alleged lack of preparedness to deal with the second wave of Covid-19, and terming its vaccine strategy an "abject failure", Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday said the BJP-led Centre cannot divert blame this time as Jawaharlal Nehru isn't in charge, but Narendra Modi is and he should be protecting Indians.

The Congress general secretary also questioned the government over oxygen exports in the past year and alleged the central leadership has failed to deliver oxygen to its own despairing citizens.

Priyanka Gandhi said constructive suggestions from opposition parties are being dismissed as politicisation rather than being accepted in the spirit that the nation is in crisis, every single life matters and, therefore, "all of us must stand together and do whatever we can to save lives regardless of our politics".

"They (government) are wasting time engaging in pettiness, making a minister respond to a letter addressed by a former prime minister who served this nation selflessly and with dignity to the present Prime Minister, Union Ministers are blaming state governments for increased oxygen consumption and central government press releases are targeting Opposition governments," she said.

Priyanka Gandhi's remarks come two days after Health Minister Harsh Vardhan responded to former prime minister Manmohan Singh's letter with suggestions on Covid-19 management, and alleged that the second wave of the pandemic was fuelled by Congress-ruled states as they were busy raising doubts about vaccines rather than vaccinating people.

Talking about the Congress' long-standing demand of universalisation of Covid-19 vaccination and the government's inoculation strategy, Priyanka Gandhi slammed the government for exporting vaccine doses for a "PR exercise".

Thanks to 70 years of forward-thinking governance, today India is the largest manufacturer of vaccines in the world, she said.

"The Union government enabled the export of six crore vaccines between January and March 2021. A huge PR exercise was conducted with photos of vaccines arriving in countries like Mauritius, Guyana and Nepal being circulated. During this same period, Indian citizens received only three to four crore doses," she said.

● INDIA PRODUCES 7,500 Metric Tonnes of oxygen per day, at the peak of the last wave the cumulative use of oxygen in hospitals across the nation was less than half this quantity per day, Priyanka Gandhi pointed out.

Maha minister denies permitting BJP to purchase remdesivir drug

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, APRIL 20

● SHINGNE ON Tuesday had admitted that the BJP leaders had met him along with manufacturers' representatives and offered to help procure the remdesivir stocks.

A day after admitting that he was aware of BJP's efforts to procure remdesivir drug for Maharashtra, State Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Minister Rajendra Shingne on Wednesday made it clear that he never allowed the saffron party to purchase or distribute the drug in the state.

Accusing the BJP of spreading lies over the remdesivir drug controversy, Mr Shingne said, "It is absolutely wrong that the BJP leaders were to buy and give remdesivir injections to the State Government. No party can individually purchase the injection stock. The drug

and donate," the minister tweeted.

Mr Shingne, who is from the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), on Tuesday had admitted that the BJP leaders had met him along with manufacturers' representatives and offered to help procure the remdesivir stocks to the State Government.

The conflict between the Maharashtra government and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the supply of remdesivir drug had reached a flashpoint after the Mumbai police had detained a director of the Daman-based company Bruck Pharma last week for allegedly storing a huge quantity of the drug. Following this, BJP leaders Devendra

Fadnavis and Pravin Darekar had rushed to the Vile Parle police station and objected to the cop's action. They claimed that the BJP was trying to get remdesivir for Maharashtra by reaching out to pharma companies.

Mr Shingne's clarification has now cast doubts over the claims made by BJP leaders, who had said that the remdesivir drug procured by their party was intended for the Maharashtra Government only.

The NCP leaders have accused the BJP of protecting the hoarders, when the state is facing an acute shortage of remdesivir drug used for the Covid treatment.

The SII had, in a statement, said, "50 per cent of

our capacities will be served to the Central government's vaccination drive and the remaining 50 per cent will be for the state governments and private hospitals."

This statement comes on a day the Serum Institute of India announced a price of ₹400 per dose for its Covid-19 vaccine 'Covishield' for state governments and ₹600 per dose for private hospitals.

"Vaccines will be provided free of cost for everyone in Kerala. We don't have the habit of changing our stance like others. We had announced free vaccines in the state," he said.

The SII had, in a statement, said, "50 per cent of

the

SHORT TAKES

ODISHA CANCELS STATE BOARD CLASS X EXAMSAKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 21

Under mounting pressures from parents and students, the Odisha government on Wednesday cancelled the annual High School Certificate (HSC) examinations.

The announcement with regard to cancellation of HSC examinations was made by school and mass education minister Samir Ranjan Dash in the morning.

The cancellation move came just a day after the state government faced a backlash from Class X students for delay in taking a final decision with regard to holding the examinations.

"After reaching a conclusive decision following detailed discussions with all stakeholders, we are canceling the annual Class X examinations conducted by the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) and the Odisha State Board of Madrasa Education in view of the worsening pandemic situation," the minister informed the media at a presser.

Several students of Class X on Tuesday had turned up at the official residence of Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik seeking clarity on the confusion surrounding the conduct of the Matriculation (High School Certificate) examination.

NIGHT CURFEW IN AGARTALA FROM TODAY

An earthmover is used to remove ashes of Covid-19 victims after their cremation at Bhairav Ghat Hindu Crematory, as Coronavirus cases surge in the country, in Kanpur on Wednesday.

TN to take up oxygen diversion issue with Centre

Chennai, April 21: The Tamil Nadu government on Wednesday said it would take up with the Centre, diversion of about 45 metric tonnes of medical oxygen from a city plant to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, while asserting that the state had adequate stocks of oxygen.

The private manufacturer in the city, who has a pan India presence, contributes to about 50 per cent of the medical oxygen market in India, sources said and added that there is no supply-side bottleneck in the state.

With states like Maharashtra, Delhi and Gujarat, those with high daily Covid cases, reporting an acute shortage of oxygen cylinders, the centre had recently clarified that India had a production capacity of 7,127 MT of oxygen per day.

Further, from April 19, Indian Railways began transporting Liquid Medical Oxygen and Oxygen Cylinders across the country through green corridors.

Meanwhile, the opposition DMK and AMMK slammed the diversion of oxygen by the Centre.

DMK president M.K. Stalin claimed 'shortage' of oxygen and wondered why it was diverted during such a situation and expressed concern.

While those in the neighbouring states are our brothers, the Centre should have checked the situation in Tamil Nadu with the chief secretary or the government and charged it with not taking the states seriously.

— PTI

MP govt's bid to cover up Covid deaths comes to fore

94 bodies cremated in Bhopal crematorium, state Covid bulletin shows 3

RABINDRA NATH CHOWDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, APRIL 21

Agartala, April 21: The Tripura government has decided to impose a seven-hour night curfew from 10 pm to 5 am in Agartala Municipal Corporation area from Thursday onwards for an indefinite period to contain the spread of Covid-19, a notification said.

The decision was taken in a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb. The capital city has been reporting most of the Coronavirus cases in the state.

The order issued by chief secretary Manoj Kumar said that essential services have been exempted from the purview of the curfew.

Various recruitment examinations, including Joint Recruitment Board of Manpower and Employment Department and physical test of the IR battalion, however, stand postponed.

The government has also imposed restrictions on gatherings in closed places, allowing a maximum of 50 per cent hall occupancy with a ceiling of 100 people in marriages and 20 in funerals.

It said that organisers have to deploy an adequate number of volunteers to ensure strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols.

Meanwhile, the state's Coronavirus tally rose to 34,186 as 92 more people tested positive for the infection, a health official said. The death toll remained unchanged at 391 as no fresh fatality was reported, he said.

INDRANI AMONG 38 JAIL INMATES TEST COVID POSITIVESHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, APRIL 21

A day after the Bombay High Court heard a suo moto (on its own) public interest litigation on increasing number of Covid cases in Maharashtra prisons 38 inmates of Byculla jail, including former INX Media chief Indrani Mukerjee, have been tested positive for the virus. Same day 58 people at Panvel's old age home have also been found Covid positive. Byculla prison is situated in the heart of the city where maximum inmates are housed.

Last year Indrani had applied for temporary bail for 45 days on the ground that there is a high risk of contracting Coronavirus in Byculla prison where she has been kept.

Special CBI judge J.C. Jagdale on July 15 last year had rejected her bail plea after prosecution opposed it saying the Indrani does not fit in the category of prisoners who could be released on emergency bail during Covid-19 as per guidelines issued by the "High Power Committee".

Indrani is the prime accused in the murder case of her biological daughter Sheena Bora and she is also an accused in corruption case registered by CBI in INX Media case, also involving Karti Chidambaram.

Mystery shrouds 'theft' of Remdesivir vials from hosp.DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, APRIL 21

Mystery shrouds the recent alleged theft of 853 Remdesivir vials from a government hospital here with the bulk of 'stolen' life saving drug 'resurfacing' in its store room.

In Bhadbada Ghat crematorium in Bhopal, around 70-80 bodies were being cremated with Corona protocol every day for the past three weeks, but the official toll due to Coronavirus never reached the double figure in Bhopal during the period.

"Of the 113 bodies cremated in Bhadbada Ghat crematorium on Tuesday, 94 were cremated with corona protocol", Mamtesh Sharma, secretary of Bhadbada crematorium told this newspaper on Wednesday.

Sources said the discrepancies in the records of availability of Remdesivir

branch team that is probing into the incident told this newspaper on Wednesday.

As many as 17 boxes containing 853 vials of Remdesivir were found stolen from the Central store room of government-run Hamidia hospital here on the intervening night of April 16-17.

Around 70 per cent of the 'stolen' Remdesivir vials, however, were found in the Central store room of the hospital late on Tuesday, leaving the probe team puzzled.

"The mismatch of the two records has suggested that there was no theft of the vials, but they were issued by the staff", crime branch additional superintendent of police Gopal Singh Dhakad said.

Similarly, of the 108 bodies cremated in the crematorium on Wednesday till six in the evening, 93 were cremated with corona protocol.

However, the Covid bulletin issued by MP health department on Tuesday stated that three people died of Covid-19 on the day.

However, the official bulletin issued by the state health department on Wednesday confirmed only five deaths due to Covid-19 on the day.

On April 19, of the 95 bodies cremated in the crematorium, 83 were cremated with corona protocol. The official toll was five.

On April 18, total 77 bod-

ies were cremated in the crematorium. Of them, 68 were cremated with corona protocol. But, the official toll was three.

The records of Bhadbada Ghat crematorium showed that a total of 762 bodies were cremated from April 1-17. Of them, 628 were cremated with corona protocol.

However, the official death toll due to Coronavirus in Bhopal during the period has been put at less than 70.

Health department officials, however, said there were many suspected cases of Covid deaths. Such bodies were cremated with corona protocol in the interest of the safety of the kin of the deceased as well as the people involved in cremations.

But the deaths were recorded as Covid deaths after their reports were found positive.

On Wednesday, Madhya Pradesh recorded 13,107 fresh Coronavirus positive cases taking the tally of cases to 4,468,91.

The state recorded 75 deaths on Wednesday taking the death toll to 4,788.

'Oxygen crisis' in Delhi: Kejriwal

New Delhi, April 21: Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday urged the Centre 'with folded hands' to provide medical oxygen to Delhi and his deputy Manish Sisodia said there will be chaos in the city if the stocks are not replenished by Wednesday morning.

According to the note, Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, Burari Hospital, Ambedkar Hospital, Sanjay Gandhi Hospital, B L Kapoor Hospital and Max Hospital in Patparganj were among those having only eight to 12 hours of oxygen left at 6 pm.

Health minister Satyendar Jain sent an SOS to Union minister Piyush Goyal at 10:20 pm, saying oxygen at GTB Hospital may not last beyond 4 hrs. More than 500 corona patients on oxygen. Pl help @PiyushGoyal to restore oxygen supply to avert major crisis.

"Most hospitals in Delhi have only eight to 12 hours of oxygen left. We have been asking the Centre to increase its supply for the last seven days.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar informed this through a tweet message.

Kumar said the state government will bear the cost of administering jabs to all citizens of the state above 18 years of age starting from May 1.

From the beginning the state government has been providing vaccine to its natives of all the categories without any payment, in the government as well as in the listed private hospitals across the state.

— PTI



Covid-19 patients share beds and medical oxygen at LLR Hospital, amid a shortage in supplies due to surge in cases in Kanpur on Wednesday.

— PTI

Panchayat polls process deferred due to Covid cases surge in Bihar

Patna, April 21: The state election commission on Wednesday decided to postpone issuing notification for the panchayat polls for now in view of the raging Coronavirus cases in Bihar.

Preparations were underway to issue order for the panchayat elections by the end of the week.

Considering Covid-19 surge it has been decided to put off announcement of polls for the rural bodies for now, a statement of the state election office said.

"Further decision will be taken upon reviewing the situation after 15 days," the statement said.

Many staff of the state election office have also

tested positive for the disease.

The elections have to be conducted in 45,103 village-based polling booths through the EVMs.

When a question was posed to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar during his press interaction on Sunday last as whether panchayat polls will be held in the state in view of the raging Coronavirus situation, he had said the election office will take appropriate steps in this regard.

Bihar is also witnessing dangerous second surge of Coronavirus.

As per the last health bulletin, total 10,455 new cases were recorded from across the state Tuesday while 51 had succumbed to

the disease.

Meanwhile, the Bihar government on Wednesday announced that it will provide free Covid vaccination to all aged above 18.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar informed this through a tweet message.

Kumar said the state government will bear the cost of administering jabs to all citizens of the state above 18 years of age starting from May 1.

From the beginning the state government has been providing vaccine to its natives of all the categories without any payment, in the government as well as in the listed private hospitals across the state.

— PTI

VIRUS RAGES Triple mutation variant increasing infection rate leading to huge spike in cases**Covid crisis alarming with cases nearing 3L in 24 hrs**VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

With fresh single day cases of Covid-19 touching almost three lakh on Wednesday and deaths over 2,000 in the last 24 hours, India is almost exploding with the virus load with the biggest single day spike so far. Adding to the worry is the 'triple mutation' variant in the country that is increasing infection rate leading to a

huge spike in fresh cases.

With the majority of states and UTs including Delhi running out of Oxygen supplies, the Centre increased Delhi's quota of medical Oxygen from 378 MT daily to 480 MT. However, Delhi has been demanding to raise this quota to 700 MT per day.

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman held discussions with 150 industry leaders on how to meet the "phenomenal

increase" in demand for medical oxygen, a critical treatment tool for Covid-19 and assured "seamless supply" to the states.

Measures that the government is taking include importing medical oxygen, round the clock working of the oxygen filling stations and allowing containers used for nitrogen and argon to be used for oxygen, the minister said.

She also gave details of government initiatives to

help ramp up the capacity of remdesivir from 36 lakh vials per month to 78 lakh vials per month. Some of these measures include rapid clearances for new capacities, stopping exports, and allowing EoS and manufacturers located in SEZs to also sell in the domestic market, she said.

The Centre also announced waving of import duty on Remdesivir. Considering the immediate requirement on the recommendation of the Department of Pharmaceuticals, the Department of Revenue has waived customs duty on remdesivir and its API/KSM. This step will further augment domestic availability of remdesivir injection, union chemicals and fertilisers minister Sadananda Gowda.

Centre has also allocated supply of Remdesivir to 19 states and UTs with high burden of cases. "Remdesivir being an investigational therapy drug given in acute and severe versions of Covid-19 where oxygen support is a must, this allocation pertains to 14 states to which medical oxygen is allocated and five other states where the high volume of supplies are being observed," Union health ministry said.

Big Brother fears: EU unveils AI rules

Brussels, April 21: The EU unveiled a plan Wednesday to regulate the sprawling field of artificial intelligence, aimed at easing public fears of Big Brother-like abuses by imposing checks on technology deemed "high-risk".

"With these landmark rules, the EU is spearheading the development of new global norms to make sure AI can be trusted," EU competition chief Margrethe Vestager said. "By setting the standards, we can pave the way to ethical technology worldwide and ensure that the EU

remains competitive along the way."

The European Commission, the bloc's executive arm, has been preparing the proposal for more than a year and a debate involving the European Parliament and 27 member states is to go on for months more before a definitive text is in force.

Brussels is looking to set the terms with a first ever legislative package on AI and catch up with the US and China in a sector that spans from voice recognition to ins-

urance and law enforcement. It insists that by laying out a clear framework for companies across the bloc's 27 member states it will help promote innovation.

The bloc is trying to learn the lessons after largely missing out on the internet revolution and failing to produce any major competitors to match the giants of Silicon Valley or their Chinese counterparts.

But the draft rules have sparked competing complaints from all sides of the debate, with big tech warn-

ing bureaucracy could suffice development and civil liberties groups complaining the proposals have too many "loopholes".

"Today's proposals aim to strengthen Europe's position as a global hub of excellence in AI from the lab to the market," EU internal market commissioner Thierry Breton said.

The draft regulation lays out a "risk-based approach" that would lead to bans on a limited number of uses that are deemed as presenting an "unacceptable risk" to EU

fundamental rights. This would make "generalised surveillance" of the population off-limits as well as any tech "used to manipulate the behaviour, opinions or decisions" of citizens.

Special exceptions are envisioned for allowing the use of mass facial recognition systems in cases such as searching for a missing child, averting a terror threat, or tracking down someone suspected of a serious crime.

Military applications of artificial intelligence will not be covered by the rules. — AFP

SUDARSHAN 35MM

(ENJOY 4K PROJECTION AND DOLBY ATMOS)
11.00am, 2.00, 5.00pm

VISWANATH 70MM

11.45am, 2.45, 5.00pm

BRAHMARAMBA 70MM

11.30am, 2.30, 5.00pm

RAJADHANI DELUXE

11.00am, 2.00, 5.00pm

INDRA VENKATRAMANA

10.45am, 2.15, 5.00pm

INDRA RAMAKRISHNA 70MM

11.30am, 2.30, 5.00pm

SMC

MAHALAXMI, 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

EESHWAR, 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SANGEETHA, 11.15, 2.15, 5.00

SRI LAXMI, 12.00, 3.00, 5.00

MANJU 70MM 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SRI RAMULU 70 11.30, 2.30, 5.00

SRI SAI RAM 70 11.15, 2.15, 5.00

SHARADA 70MM 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

RANGA 70MM 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SENSATION SUNSHINE 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

GOKUL 70MM 11.15, 2.15, 5.00

SRIDEVI 70MM 11.30, 2.30, 5.00

ASIAN SWAPNA 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SREERAMANA 70 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SRI KRISHNA 70 11.15, 2.15, 5.00

SUPER 70MM 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

NARTAKI 70MM 11.30, 2.30, 5.00

BR HITECH 70 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

VYJAYANTHI 70 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

VLS SRIDEVI 70 11.15, 2.30, 5.00

ALANKAR PRATAP 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

KRISHNA CINEMA 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

ASIAN MUKUND 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

VIJETHA 70MM 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SRI SAI POOJA 70 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SV CINESQUARE 70 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SRI KRISHNA 70 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SHIVARANJANI 70 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SAI RANGA 70 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

VENKATESHWARA 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

GANESH 70MM 11.15, 2.30, 5.00

VIMAL 70MM 11.15, 2.15, 5.00

SUSHMA 70MM 11.15, 2.15, 5.00

SANTOSH 70MM 11.30, 2.30, 5.00

RELEASING TOMORROW



SHIVAPARVATHI 70MM

11.00, 2.00, 5.45PM

KUMAR 70-KACHIGUDA

11.00, 2.30, 5.30PM

SRINIVASA 70MM

11.15, 2.15, 5.45PM

SAPNAABIDS

11.00, 2.00, 5.45PM

JYOTHI IDABLIM

11.00, 2.00, 5.45PM

KRISHNA AALIYABAD

11.00, 2.00, 5.45PM

MAHESWARI 70

11.00, 2.00, 5.45PM

VENKATESWARA 70-GUMMADIDHALA

11.00, 2.00, 5.45PM

PVR CINEMAS

FORUM MALL-4.50PM

L&T-4.50PM

INOX

GVK-1.50PM | MP-4.00PM

GSM-1.00PM

Cinépolis

DSL UPPAL-11.30AM

CCPL-5.40PM

Padma lenka thru Ganesh Bhari 9296509333

RELEASING TOMORROW



SANDHYA 35-RTC X ROADS

(Enjoy 4k laser projection & dolby atmos)

11.00, 2.00, 5.45PM

SRISAIRAJA

11.30AM

ANJALI 70MM

11.15, 2.15, 5.45PM

SVCINESQUARE

11.00, 2.00, 5.45PM

SENSATION INSO

11.15, 2.15, 5.45PM

VENKATASAI 70

11.00, 2.00, 5.45PM

SRILAXMIKALAMANDIR-ALWAL

11.30, 2.30, 5.30PM

PVR CINEMAS

FORUM-2.10PM | INORBIT-5.00PM

GALLERIA-2.10PM | ICON-2.05PM

MUSARAMBAGH-5.20PM | RK-1.50PM

IRRUMMANZIL-5.20PM | PRESTON-1.35PM

INOX

GVK-5.00PM | MP-1.00PM

GSM-5.00PM

Cinépolis

MANTRA-5.30PM | OAMB 2.15 PM

CCPL-12.10PM

NOMA TALKIES-4.20PM

Contact 7013388396

SCHEDULE FOR TOMORROW

MORTAL KOMBAT

ENGLISH 2D (U/A) 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM,

1:40 PM, 2:15 PM, 4:30 PM, 5:15 PM

SHUKRA

TELUGU 2D (U/A) 11:45 AM, 1:15 PM, 4:15 PM, 4:45 PM

VAKEEL SAAB

TELUGU 2D (U/A) 11:45 AM, 1:15 PM, 4:15 PM, 4:45 PM

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Syria stripped of rights at chemical arms watchdog

The Hague, April 21: The global chemical weapons watchdog stripped Syria of its voting rights on Wednesday in an unprecedented punishment for poison gas attacks on civilians.

A majority of member states of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) backed the rebuke after a probe found Damascus carried out three attacks in 2017.

While the move is largely symbolic, it is the first time the Hague-based agency has meted out its maximum punishment to one of its members in the OPCW's quarter-century history. Syria denies using chemical weapons, and warned the "very serious and dangerous" move would affect its work with the OPCW on eliminating its arsenal. Its ally Russia said it was a "black day" for the watchdog.

France introduced a motion on behalf of 46 countries including Britain and the United States to deprive Syria of its "rights and privileges" at the organisation, which Damascus joined in 2013.

The move came after an OPCW report last year found the Syrian air force used sarin and chlorine on the village of Lataminah in March 2017. Syria then failed to meet a 90-day deadline to declare the weapons used in the attack.

With a two-thirds majority required for the decision to pass, 87 countries voted in favour of the motion on Wednesday, 15 including Syria, Russia, China and Iran voted against, and 34 abstained.

Western powers hailed the decision, saying Syria had escaped punishment for the repeated use of chemical weapons during its decade-long civil war.

IN BRIEF

Varsity staffer killed in Nigeria

Kaduna, Nigeria, April 21: Gunmen have attacked a private university in Nigeria's northern Kaduna state, killing one staff member and kidnapping some students, police and officials said Wednesday.

It was not immediately clear how many students had been abducted from Greenfield University during the Tuesday night attack and one official said they were still conducting a headcount.

Two officials at the university told AFP at least 20 students were still missing though it was unclear how many had been taken by gunmen or may have fled the attack.

Queen's 95th b'day low-key

London, April 21: Queen Elizabeth II is marking her 95th birthday in a low-key fashion at Windsor Castle, just days after the funeral of her husband, Prince Philip.

Some members of the royal family are expected to be with the queen on Wednesday. Her birthday falls within the two-week royal mourning period for Philip that is being observed until Friday. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was one of many people who sent best wishes to the monarch.

"I have always had the highest admiration for Her Majesty and her service to this country and the Commonwealth," Johnson said.

Erdogan fires trade minister

Ankara, April 21: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan fired the country's trade minister Wednesday following allegations that her husband's company received a tender to sell disinfectants to the ministry.

In a mini Cabinet reshuffle, Erdogan also split the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services into two and appointed new ministers to lead them, according to a decree published in the Official Gazette. The president named Mehmet Mus, a prominent ruling party lawmaker, as trade minister to replace Ruhsar Pekcan, according to the decree.

Indonesian sub with 53 missing

Jakarta, April 21: Indonesia's navy is searching for a submarine that went missing north of the resort island of Bali with 53 people on board, the military said Wednesday.

Military chief Hadi Tjahjanto said the KRI Nanggala 402 was participating in a training exercise when it missed a scheduled reporting call. The submarine is believed to have disappeared in waters about 60 miles (95 kilometres) north of Bali, he said.

Tjahjanto said the navy has deployed scores of ships to search the area, including a hydrographic survey ship, and has asked for help from Singapore and Australia, which have submarine rescue vessels. Local media reports said the navy believes the submarine sank into a trough at a depth of 700 metres.

LANKA OBSERVES 2ND ANNIV OF EASTER ATTACKS

Colombo, April 21: Sri Lanka on Wednesday commemorated the second anniversary of the Easter Sunday terror attacks by observing a two-minute silence to remember the victims of the coordinated suicide blasts in 2019 — one of the deadliest attacks in the country's history.

Nine suicide bombers belonging to local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) linked to ISIS carried out a series of devastating blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels on April 21, 2019, killing 258 people, including 11 Indians. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa observed the two minutes silence at his official residence in Colombo in honour of the victims of the blasts. "Held two minutes of silence in remembrance of all those who were victims of the #EasterSundayAttack two years ago," Prime Minister Rajapaksa tweeted.

Sri Lankan lawmakers who were all dressed in black also observed silence in the parliament complex. Addressing the main memorial service held at the St Anthony's Church, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo, said that the authorities had failed so far to identify the real perpetrators of the crime.



People celebrate as the verdict is announced in the trial of former police officer Derek Chauvin outside the Hennepin County Government Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota on Tuesday.

— AFP

US cop Chauvin guilty of killing George Floyd

Jury: Former Minneapolis officer guilty of all 3 charges

Police shoot, kill teen girl in Columbus

Columbus (Ohio), April 21: Police shot and killed a teenage girl Tuesday afternoon in Columbus just as the verdict was being announced in the trial for the killing of George Floyd.

The Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation was at the scene Tuesday night on the city's southeast side, *The Columbus*

Dispatch reported. Officers had responded to an attempted stabbing call when police shot the girl at about 4:45 p.m., the newspaper reported. The 911 caller reported a female was trying to stab them before hanging up, according to the Dispatch.

The girl was taken to a hospital, where she was pronounced dead. — AP

Joe Biden said it was a murder in the full light of day and it ripped the blinds off for the whole world to see the systemic racism in the country.

"The systemic racism is a stain on our nation's soul. The knee on the neck of justice for PoC Americans. Profound fear and

trauma. The pain, the exhaustion that PoC Americans experience every single day," Biden said.

The verdict giving justice, he said is not enough. "We can't stop here. In order to deliver real change and reform, we can and we must do more to reduce the likelihood

that a tragedy like this will ever happen to occur again, to ensure the black and brown people or anyone so they don't fear the interactions with law enforcement, that they don't have to wake up knowing that they can lose their very life in the course of just living their life," he said.

In an address to the nation soon after the verdict, Vice President Kamala Harris said PoC Americans and PoC men in particular have been treated throughout the course of history as less than human.

"Today we feel a sigh of relief. Still, it cannot take away the pain. A measure of justice isn't the same as equal justice. This verdict brings us a step closer and the fact is we still have work to do," she aid.

Observing that America has a long history of systemic racism, Harris said:

— PTI

250,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN MYANMAR: UN

Yangon, April 21: The Myanmar military's crackdown on anti-coup protesters has displaced close to a quarter of a million people, a United Nations rights envoy said Wednesday.

The junta has stepped up its use of lethal force to quash mass demonstrations against a Feb. 1 coup which ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi. At least 738 people have been killed and 3,300 are languishing in jails as political prisoners, according to a local monitoring group.

"Horrified to learn that... the junta's attacks have already left nearly a quarter (of a) million Myanmar people displaced," UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar Tom Andrews tweeted on Wednesday.

The world must act immediately to address this humanitarian catastrophe." More than 2,000 Karen people have crossed Myanmar's border. — AFP

Don't cross the red line, Putin's warning to rivals**Police detain Navalny aides**

Moscow, April 21: Russian police on Wednesday searched the Saint Petersburg offices of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny and detained his top aide Lyubov Sobol and spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh, his allies said, ahead of nationwide protests in his support.

The morning police raids came ahead of protests planned in more than 100 cities across Russia on Wednesday evening in support of the hunger-striking Navalny, who is protesting his lack of medical treatment in prison.

He hailed Russia's battle against the coronavirus and development of vaccines and, with parliamentary elections due later this year, announced a raft of populist social spending measures. — AFP

come for the office's cameraman, several volunteers and activists." Sobol's lawyer Vladimir Voronin said on Twitter that police had pulled her out of a taxi.

"According to her, she was detained by many uniformed officers," he wrote.

He later said she was taken to a police station but was being kept in a police wagon.

Yarmysh retweeted her lawyer saying that she was "just detained at the entrance of her building".

The independent monitor OVD-Info said Wednesday that police had conducted searches and detained activists in at least 20 cities across the country. — AFP

Former Prez Donald Trump withdrew US from the Paris Climate deal**Xi to attend Biden virtual climate summit today**

Beijing, April 21: Chinese President Xi Jinping will take part in US President Joe Biden's climate summit being organised virtually on Thursday and Friday in which several world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will participate.

At the invitation of Biden, President Xi will attend and deliver an "important speech" at the Leaders' Summit on Climate on Thursday by video link from Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced on Wednesday. Biden has invited 40 world lead-

ers, including Modi, to the two-day conference beginning April 22, which according to a White House statement will underscore the urgency and the economic benefits of stronger climate action.

It will be a key milestone on the road to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) this Nov. in Glasgow, the statement said. Chinese experts consider invitation to Xi for the summit as a positive signal for the China-US relationship, facing growing tensions on a number of issues like Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The Chinese top leader's attendance was confirmed just a day before the summit, and a day after Russian President Vladimir Putin confirmed he will be speaking at the summit, showing that the two countries are willing to take

US-backed Afghan peace meet postponed

Sponsors cite lack of prospects for progress

Kabul, April 21: An upcoming international peace conference that was meant to move Afghanistan's warring sides to a power-sharing deal and ensure an orderly US exit from the country has been postponed, its sponsors announced Wednesday.

They cited a lack of prospects for meaningful progress. As peace efforts stalled, Germany's Defence Ministry suggested Nato military planners were contemplating a possible withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan as early as July 4. That's more than two months ahead of the planned Sep. 11 pullout date.

"The Resolute Support headquarters in Kabul are currently considering whether to shorten the withdrawal period," said German Defence Ministry spokesman David Helmholz. "The 4th of July is now being considered as a pullout date. The ministry informed the (German parliament's) defence committee about this today."

Still, the latest delay in getting Afghanistan's warring sides to hammer out a peace deal underscored the difficulties the Biden administration and Nato are facing in orchestrating an orderly exit from conflict-scarred Afghanistan.

Both have said they would begin withdrawing their remaining troops — a total of close to 13,000 — from the country on May 1 and complete the pullout by Sep. 11, no matter what.

The decision to delay the conference came several days after Taliban insurgents, who are key to peace efforts, dismissed the US-promoted conference in Istanbul as a political spectacle serving American interests.

No new date was given for the conference, which was to have started Saturday under the sponsorship of the United Nations, Turkey and Qatar.

Turkey's foreign minister informed the (German parliament's) defence committee

slim fasting month of Ramadan, which ends in mid-May. Just hours before the announcement of the postponement, a suicide bomber attacked a convoy of Afghan security personnel, wounding seven people in the capital Kabul. The Interior Ministry said civilians and security personnel were among the wounded. The attack was the first in weeks in the capital, even as targeted killings have escalated and Afghanistan's security personnel have come under relentless attacks by Taliban insurgents.

Recent months have also seen an increase in government bombing raids on suspected Taliban positions and increased raids by Afghan special forces. Residents fear the attack could be a harbinger of what's to come as foreign troops prepare to begin their final withdrawal from Afghanistan. No one took immediate responsibility for the attack.

— AP

200 million citizens have been vaccinated: China**FRANCE TO PUT ENTRY CURBS ON INDIANS**

Beijing, April 21: Around 200 million Chinese, or 14.29 per cent of the population, have been vaccinated for Covid-19 so far, with an emphasis on front-line workers, university students and people living in border areas, a health official said Wednesday.

China is ramping up vaccination efforts after a slow start, prompted in part by the virtual elimination of domestic transmission. Just two local cases were reported on Wednesday, both in the city of Ruili, which borders on Myanmar.

Center of Disease Control official Cui Gang told a news conference that key areas and members of the population were being prioritized for vaccines. China has approved five domestically produced vaccines and exported millions of doses, although some scientists believe they provide less protection.

The restrictions come in addition to those previously announced regarding four other countries Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Brazil that will be implemented starting from Saturday.

Government spokesman Gabriel Attal also confirmed that France will lift its ban on domestic travel as planned on May 3, but will maintain its nighttime curfew, now in place from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Radioactive stuff: Lanka asks Chinese ship to leave**Oz scrapping BRI deal: China hits out**

Colombo, April 21: Sri Lanka has asked a Chinese ship to leave the southern port of Hambantota after it was found to be carrying radioactive material, officials said on Wednesday.

Anil Ranjith, the top official of the Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Authority (SLAEA), said that the ship was on its way to China from the port of Rotterdam when it developed technical difficulties and entered the Hambantota Port. The SLAEA said the vessel had failed to disclose its radioactive cargo when it docked in at the port.

The ship was managed by the China Merchants Port Holding Company. The main Opposition leader Sajith Premadasa said in parliament that the Sri Lanka Navy, who is in

charge of the Hambantota port security, was not allowed to carry out inspections on the vessel. "The local agent of the vessel had not informed the presence of dangerous cargo

between China and the Victoria state is conducive to deepening economic and trade relations between the two sides," a statement by the Chinese Embassy in Australia said. "This is another unreasonable and provocative move taken by the Australian side against China." — AFP

on board cargo when they sought permission from the Harbour Master to enter the port." Ranjith said it was a commercial vessel, which carried radioactive material.

— PTI

CARGO VESSEL'S 4 FOUND DEAD IN PHILIPPINES

Manila, April 21: Rescuers in the southern Philippines found the bodies of four crew members Wednesday and rescued seven others who jumped off a cargo vessel, which took in water and listed after its anchor broke in rough seas, officials said.

Nine other crew members of the LCT Cebu Great Ocean remain missing. The coast guard and maritime police were continuing a search off Surigao del Norte province.

— AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS %

Sensex	47,705.80	-0.51
Nifty 50	14,296.40	-0.44
S&P 500*	4,158.17	0.56
Dollar (\$)	74.89	-0.01
Pound Sterling (\$)	104.71	-0.60
Euro (\$)	90.31	-0.18
Gold (10gm)* (\$)	46,756.305	0.65
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	66.35	-1.04
IN 10-Yr bond yield*	6.074	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.585	-0.014

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Instagram curbs on unsolicited messages

Facebook Inc is beefing up tools on its photo sharing app Instagram to combat harassment and hate speech in private messaging and comments. Instagram announced it will let users hide direct message requests that contain offensive words, phrases or emojis. All direct message requests from a predefined list will be filtered into a separate hidden requests folder. People will also be given the option to preemptively block new a/cs.

■ Motor insurance business dips in FY21 Health, property drive non-life biz

FALAKNAAZ SYED

MUMBAI, APRIL 21



Strong uptick in demand for new Covid-related policies (Corona Kavach and Rakshak), penetration among mass segments through the newly launched Arogya Sanjeevani plan and high property insurance rates helped the non-life insurance industry clock a modest 5.20 per cent growth in 2020-21 even as the country largely remained under lockdown during the fiscal first half. Other segments such as motor, travel, crop and marine insurance reported a decline in business.

By the data released by the insurance regulator on Wednesday, the gross premium underwritten by the non-life insurance industry up to March 31, 2021 grew by 5.20 per cent to Rs 67,790 crore.

Similarly, crop insurance declined by 3.37 per cent to Rs 31,183 crore.

RAIL ROUTE PAYS OFF FOR MARUTI SUZUKI

MICHAEL GONSALVES

PUNE, APRIL 21

Maruti Suzuki's increasing use of the rail network to transport its vehicles to far-flung cities and towns is paying off. India's biggest carmaker despatched more than 1,80,000 vehicles in FY2021, its highest shipments through the Indian Railways in a fiscal year. This amounts to nearly 13 per cent of total sales.

Over the last five years, Maruti Suzuki transported

over 7.2 lakh vehicles via the rails. The focus on using railways has helped the company offset over 3,200 tonnes of CO2 emissions, cumulatively.

"The transportation of finished vehicles via railways has many tangible benefits. It is a clean, environment-friendly mode of transportation. It reduces congestion on highways and there is more space available to other vehicles," Kenichi Ayukawa, MD & CEO, said.

AIR POLLUTION COSTS INDIA INC ₹7 L CR

SANGEETHA G

CHENNAI, APRIL 21

Air pollution costs Indian businesses about Rs 7 lakh crore every fiscal in lost revenue and productivity, according to a study. The cost of air pollution for Indian businesses is about \$95 billion, Rs 7 lakh crore, or around 3 per cent of India's total GDP, says the study by Dalberg Advisors, Clean

COVAXIN PREVENTS HOSPITALISATION 100%: BHARAT BIO

FC BUREAU

HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

Bharat Biotech said on Wednesday the phase-3 analysis of Covaxin has demonstrated 100 per cent efficacy against the cases of severe Covid-19 infections.

"The efficacy against severe Covid-19 disease was 100 per cent with an impact on reduction in hospitalisations. The efficacy against asymptomatic Covid-19 infection was 70 per cent, suggesting decreased transmission in Covaxin recipients," the company said.

It said the phase-3 study enrolled 25,800 persons in the 18-98 age group, with analysis conducted 14 days after the second dose.

Prof. Balram Bhargava, secretary, department of health research and DG-ICMR said, "The vaccine has shown the efficacy of 78 per cent in the second interim analysis."

Tata Steel receives UAE payment via blockchain



New Delhi, April 21: Tata Steel on Wednesday said it has received a "blockchain-enabled transaction", a global first for the steel industry, from a UAE-based firm for a steel export order.

The steel maker did not disclose the size of the transaction.

"Tata Steel and HSBC successfully executed a blockchain enabled transaction, a global first for the steel industry. This transaction was executed on Contour's blockchain platform," a company statement said.

The live trade finance

the status quo and reimagining the global trade set-up," said Peeyush Gupta, vice president (steel marketing & sales), Tata Steel.

Explaining the concept of a blockchain transaction, Tata Steel said this technology in trade finance enables comprehensive visibility for all involved parties and enhances security in payment. It helps reduce the document negotiation and banking transaction cycle from week(s) to a few days. It also shortens the transaction time of letter of credit. — PTI

Nomura upbeat on financial stocks

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

MUMBAI, APRIL 21

The recent corrections have made fundamentally strong banks and NBFCs good investment candidates, as financial stocks had delivered strong returns from last year lows, says Japanese investment bank Nomura.

Similar trajectory is expected as the second Covid-19 wave pans out and impacts the same set of economic agencies and sectors. Top financial stocks have corrected sharply by 8 to 33 per cent from recent historical peaks as the second wave has soured sentiments.

Lockdowns are likely to be localised and relatively less stringent this time, which augurs well for financial stocks, it said.

Banks' loan growth has been tepid during the pandemic so far and the out-

FPI HOLDINGS UP BY \$105 BN IN H2

Mumbai, April 21: The value of the FPI holdings in the domestic equities reached a record \$55 billion in 2020-21, a steep \$105 billion growth between September 2020 and March 2021, according to a report.

In comparison, the holdings of the domestic institutional investors, at \$203 billion, were not even half of their foreign counterparts, the report by Bank of America (BofA) Securities said.

In 2020-21, foreign portfolio investors have pumped in a record \$37

billion, or Rs 2.75 lakh crore, into Indian equities, the highest in two decades, according to data from the National Securities Depository.

In FY10, FY11 and FY13, FPI inflows had crossed \$20 billion.

The domestic institutional investor inflows remained at a negative Rs 1.38 lakh crore in 2020-21, taking the total value of their holdings to \$203 billion, spread across ETFs (\$38 bn), large-cap fund (\$24 bn), flexi cap funds (\$22 bn) and mid-cap fund (\$16 bn). — PTI

look is also not encouraging for the near future.

It said retail loan growth has hovered in 8-10 per cent range between April

2020 and April 2021. Loan growth is likely to remain tepid until the impact of Covid-19 is fully minimised, it said.

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

UAE cricketer is banned for fixing

Dubai: The ICC on Wednesday banned United Arab Emirates (UAE) player Qadeer Ahmed Khan for five years from all cricket after he admitted breaching the anti-corruption code and also charged Mehardeep Chhayakar on six counts for corruption. Khan was charged in October 2019. The ICC said that Khan admitted to six breaches that relates to failing to disclose approaches or invitations received in relation to the Zimbabwe v UAE series in April 2019. Khan disclosed inside information in August 2019. He failed to disclose to the ACU full details of any approaches or invitations received. — PTI

Goa lose game in Asian League

Margao: FC Goa put up a spirited fight before going down 1-2 to Group E leaders Persepolis FC, bringing to an end the Indian club's unbeaten run in the AFC Champions League here on Tuesday.

Quite remarkably, FC Goa grabbed the lead when Edu Bedia headed in to the bottom right corner from the centre of the box in the 14th minute. Bedia was assisted by Brandon Fernandes following a set piece situation.

But the Indian club's joy was short-lived as Persepolis FC fought back strongly to not just equalise but also go ahead in the high-octane contest. — PTI

India-Britain hockey put off

Lausanne, Switzerland: The FIH Hockey Pro League matches between India and Great Britain, scheduled for May 8-9 in London, were on Wednesday postponed following the UK government's decision to add India to the travel 'red list'. "FIH, Hockey India and Great Britain Hockey are monitoring the evolution of the situation in the hope of rearranging these matches at a later date," a FIH release said. India will still travel to Europe to play the matches against Spain (May 15-16) and Germany (May 22-23) while Britain will host Germany (May 12-13), USA (Women, May 22-23) and Spain (Men, May 22-23).

Super flop! Elite league in red

European Super League dead as top teams withdraw following furious fan response

London, April 21: The two Milan giants and Atletico Madrid followed all six English Premier League clubs in pulling out of the European Super League on Wednesday, dealing a fatal blow to the project in its current form is dead in the water.

AC Milan were one the main drivers behind the plans, having missed out on the Champions League for the past seven seasons.

The withdrawals by Manchester City, Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal, Chelsea and Tottenham came just 48 hours after the league's unveiling late on Sunday following a furious response from fans and officials.

The three Italian clubs involved — Juventus, AC Milan and Inter Milan — admitted defeat and La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid also pulled out.

Real Madrid and

mently opposed across the football spectrum, from fans to players, coaches, politicians and UEFA and FIFA, the European and world football bodies.

The clubs were threatened with a ban from domestic and European football, while their players could even have been barred from representing their countries.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin struck a conciliatory tone on Wednesday, saying he wanted to "rebuild the unity" of European football, and described the English clubs as "back in the fold".

"I said yesterday that it is admirable to admit a mistake and these clubs made a big mistake," Ceferin

said in a statement.

"But they are back in the fold now and I know they have a lot to offer not just to our competitions but to the whole of the European game. The important thing now is that we move on, rebuild the unity that the game enjoyed before this and move forward together," Ceferin added.

Shares in Juventus plunged by more than 13 per cent on Wednesday following a slump in the value of Manchester United stocks.

In response to the English pull-outs, the Super League had said it was looking for ways to "reshape", insisting the "status quo of European football needs to change".

— AFP



Bayern Munich's Cameroonian forward Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting (left) scores the opening goal during their Bundesliga match against Bayer Leverkusen in Munich on Tuesday.

PLANS AND TEST EVENTS CHANGE FOR OLYMPICS

Tokyo, April 21: Each day seems to bring another change to the Tokyo Olympics as surging coronavirus cases in Japan threaten planning for the games, which are to open in just over three months.

A leg of the torch relay on Wednesday was moved off the public streets in Matsuyama City in the Japanese prefecture of Ehime. It was to take place in a city park with no spectators or stage performances," an organising committee said.

This followed the torch being detoured last week in Osaka and run only in a city park.

Some legs of the relay will also be taken off the public streets on May 12 on Japan's southern island of Okinawa.

The torch relay will feature a total of 10,000 runners crisscrossing Japan until it arrives on July 23 at the opening ceremony in Tokyo. The relay began on March 25 in northeastern Japan and, though it has run with few incidents, organisers have cautioned that it may need to be rerouted as conditions change. — AFP

WOMEN RECURVE ARCHERS TOP QUALIFICATION AT WC

Guatemala City, April 21: Indian recurve archers had a blazing start on their return to the World Cup after nearly two years as the women's team topped the qualifications with Ankita Bhakat and Deepika Kumari's super show in the opening stage here.

Anita Das grabbed the second spot behind world number one Brady Ellison to propel the men's team to a third place finish, as India have qualified straight to quarterfinals in the men's and women's team event besides mixed section where Das and Deepika will be in action together for the first time after their marriage last year.

"Mixed team, you know, I like very much. If I get to play with Deepika then it's awesome. We're a couple you know and then we'd be the first couple to play in the Olympics. So it's fun," Das, who last won a mixed pair bronze with Deepika at the Asian Championships, said.

— PTI



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

DECCAN CHRONICLE HYDERABAD, THURSDAY, 22 APRIL 2021

pg 12

ORANGE	
Shikhar Dhawan, DC	231
Glenn Maxwell, RCB	176
Jonny Bairstow, SRH	173

PURPLE	
Harshal Patel, RCB	9
Deepak Chahar, CSK	8
Avesh Khan, DC	8

Off the field



Delhi Capitals pacer Avesh Khan (left) gets his match jersey signed from Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma.

MSD's parents test positive for Covid

BIPIN DANI

CSK captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni's parents, Pan Singh and Devaki Devi, are recovering well after testing positive for Covid-19. According to Abhishek Jha, the managing director and CEO of Pulse Super Speciality hospital in Ranchi, they will be discharged soon. "They were admitted on Wednesday. Our team of critical care doctors, led by Dr. Saurabh Kumar, is treating them," said Jha.

Dhoni's childhood coach Chanchal Bhattacharya said: "They are maintaining the oxygen level and they may be discharged from the hospital in two-three days."

More set to rejoin Mumbai bubble

Former India wicket-keeper and Mumbai Indians' talent scout Kiran More has recovered from COVID-19 and is fit to join team's bio-bubble, the IPL defending champions said on Wednesday. The 58-year-old More, who is also the wicket-keeping consultant for the five-time IPL champions MI, had tested positive for the dreaded virus on April 6.

"Our medical team in consultation with BCCI have determined Kiran More fit to rejoin the MI bio-bubble in adherence with BCCI guidelines," Mumbai Indians said in a tweet.

Mumbai Indians are based in Chennai, where they have played four games so far. They will next take on Punjab Kings on Friday.

Rohit fined for slow over-rate

Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma was fined ₹12 lakh for maintaining a slow over-rate during the IPL game against Delhi Capitals here.

"Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma has been fined after his team maintained a slow over rate during their IPL 2021 match against Delhi Capitals at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai on April 20," the IPL said in a statement.

"As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Mr Sharma was fined ₹12 lakh," the statement added.

— PTI

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FAFULOUS SHOW

Du Plessis slams an unbeaten 95 as Chennai pip KKR by 18 runs

Mumbai, April 21: Faf du Plessis smashed an unbeaten 60-ball 95 as Chennai Super Kings beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 18 runs in a high-scoring IPL game here on Wednesday.

Sent into bat, du Plessis (95 not out) and Ruturaj Gaikwad (64) knocked the daylight out of KKR bowlers, adding 115 for the opening wicket to lay the foundation.

After Gaikwad was back in the hut, du Plessis continued his rampage, while Moeen Ali (25) and MS Dhoni (17) also came up with useful cameos as CSK posted a big total of 220 for three.

Defending the total, pacer Deepak Chahar (4/29) produced a sensational spell, claiming four wickets, while Lungi Ngidi (3/28) captured one to leave KKR tottering at 31 for 5 in 52 overs.

Andrew Russell, however, hit six maximums in a breathtaking 54 off 22 balls and shared 81 runs off 39 balls with Dinesh Karthik (40) to bring KKR back in the hunt.

Once Russell was gone, Pat Cummins (66 not out) kept KKR in the chase but he ran out of partners in the end as they eventually fell short by 18 runs.

First, it was Gaikwad who returned to form after a string of poor outings in his first three matches with a composed 42-ball knock that set it up for CSK after KKR opted to field.

Gaikwad played the role of aggressor, smashing four sixes and four bound-



CSK opener Faf du Plessis plays a shot during his unbeaten knock of 95 against Kolkata Knight Riders in Mumbai on Wednesday.

SCORECARD

Chennai Super Kings:

Ruturaj Gaikwad c Cummins b Varun 64, Faf du Plessis (not out) 95, Moeen Ali st Karthik b Narine 25, MS Dhoni c Morgan b Russell 17, Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 6. Extras (nb 3, w 10) 13. Total (for 3 wickets in 20 overs) 220.

FoW: 1-115, 2-165, 3-201.

Bowling: Varun Chakravarthy 4-0-27-1, Pat Cummins 4-0-58-0, Sunil Narine 4-0-34-1, Prasidh Krishna 4-0-49-0, Andre Russell 2-0-27-1, Kamlesh Nagarkoti 2-0-25-0.

Kolkata Knight Riders:

Shubman Gill c Ngidi b Chahar 0, Nitish Rana c Dhoni b Chahar 9, Rahul Tripathi c Dhoni b Ngidi 8, Eoin Morgan c Dhoni b Chahar 7, Sunil Narine c Jadeja b Chahar 4, Dinesh Karthik lbw b Ngidi 40, Andre Russell b Curran 54, Pat Cummins (not out) 66, Kamlesh Nagarkoti c du Plessis b Ngidi 0, Varun Chakravarthy run out (Chahar/Curran) 0, Prasidh Krishna run out (Chahar/Thakur) 0. Extras (b 4, lb 2, nb 1, w 7) 14. Total (in 19.1 overs) 202.

FoW: 1-1, 2-17, 3-27, 4-31, 5-31, 6-112, 7-146, 8-176, 9-200.

Bowling: Deepak Chahar 4-0-29-4, Sam Curran 4-0-58-1, Lungi Ngidi 4-0-28-3, Ravindra Jadeja 4-0-33-0, Shardul Thakur 3-0-48-0.

— PTI

aries, while his senior South African partner du Plessis gave the youngster the backup as the duo produced CSK's best start of the season with an opening stand of 115.

du Plessis came on his own after Gaikwad's departure in the 13th over as he added 50 runs with Moeen Ali (25 off 12 balls) off just 26 balls.

CSK scored 76 runs in

the final five overs with the South African at his attacking best in the final five overs.

He smashed Andre Russell for three successive boundaries and raced to 90s with a six off Pat Cummins in the final over in his 60-ball knock which was studded with four sixes and nine fours.

CSK finished it off in style with Ravindra

Jadeja hitting Cummins for a six as Nitish Rana palmed it over the mid-wicket boundary that summed up the plight of KKR. MS Dhoni promoted himself to No. 4 and finally broke his jinx against Sunil Narine, hitting his first boundary after 64 balls against the mystery spinner en route to a eight-ball 17.

— PTI



Sunrisers opener Jonny Bairstow en route to his match-winning knock of 63 not out against Punjab Kings.

KALYAN JEWELLERS

OPENING AT DILSHUK NAGAR

ON APRIL 24TH

An unparalleled shopping experience with the finest collection is coming to Dilshuk Nagar. The spacious showroom will stock a wide range of Gold, Diamond, Precious & Uncut jewellery in captivating designs and also offers ample car parking facility.

Come be a part of this world-class jewellery shopping experience.

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ALSO AT: PANJAGUTTA - Begumpet, Main Road. Ph: 040-23408733 | KUKATPALLY - Balaji Nagar. Ph: 040-23157333
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SCORECARD	
Punjab Kings:	KL Rahul c Jadhav b Kumar 4, Mayank Agarwal c Rashid Khan b Ahmed 22, Chris Gayle lbw b Rashid Khan 15, Nicholas Pooran run out (Warner) 0, Deepak Hooda lbw b Abhishek Sharma 13, Moises Henriques st Bairstow b Abhishek Sharma 14, Shahrukh Khan c Abhishek Sharma b Ahmed 22, Fabian Allen c Warner b Ahmed 6, Murugan Ashwin c Bairstow b Kaul 9, Mohammed Shami run out (Shankar/Bairstow) 3, Arshdeep Singh (not out) 1. Extras (b 9, lb 1, w 1) 11. Total (in 19.4 overs) 120.
FoW:	1-15, 2-39, 3-39, 4-47, 5-63, 6-82, 7-101, 8-110, 9-114.
Bowling:	Abhishek Sharma 4-0-24-2, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 3-0-16-1, Khaleel Ahmed 4-0-21-3, Siddarth Kaul 3-4-0-27-1, Vijay Shankar 1-0-6-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-17-1.
Sunrisers Hyderabad:	David Warner c Agarwal b Allen 37, Jonny Bairstow (not out) 63, Kane Williamson (not out) 16. Extras (b 1, w 4) 5. Total (for one wicket in 18.4 overs) 121.
FoW:	1-73.
Bowling:	Mohammed Shami 2-0-16-0, Fabian Allen 4-1-22-1, Arshdeep Singh 3-4-0-31-0, Moises Henriques 1-0-7-0, M. Ashwin 4-0-22-0, Deepak Hooda 4-0-22-0.

(1/16), star Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan (1/17) and Siddarth Kaul (1/27) also picked up a wicket each as Punjab never gained momentum.

Chasing the total, SRH openers Jonny Bairstow (63) and David Warner (37) pummelled Punjab into submission, adding 73 runs off 60 balls to set the foundation.

Bairstow and Kane Williamson (16) then knocked off the remaining runs as SRH romped home with 8 balls to spare.

Bairstow and Warner smashed five boundaries and two sixes during their 50-run stand in the powerplay, while Punjab had managed nine fours and two maximums in their entire innings.

Shahrukh Khan (22) and Mayank Agarwal (22) were the top scorers for Punjab.

— Agencies

POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Points	Net RR
CSK	4	3	1	0	6	+1.142
RCB	3	3	0	0	6	+0.750
DC	4	3	1	0	6	+0.426
MI	4	2	2	0	4	+0.187
SRH	4	1	3	0	2	-0.228
KKR	4	1	3	0	2	-0.700
RR	3	1	2	0	2	-0.719
PBKS	4	1	3	0	2	-0.824

RCB hold all aces in clash of Royals

Mumbai, April 21: Off to the best possible start with three wins on the trot, a confident Royal Challengers Bangalore will hope to keep the juggernaut rolling when they take on Rajasthan Royals in an IPL match here on Thursday.

Both sides have endured contrasting campaigns so far. RCB head in to the game after three morale-boosting victories. The Virat Kohli-led side edged past defending champions Mumbai Indians in the tournament opener before getting the better of Sunrisers Hyderabad and Kolkata Knight Riders to jump to the top of the points table.

On the other hand, the Royals have managed to win only one of their three fixtures. They lost to Chennai Super Kings in their previous match to slip down to the sixth spot. Sanju Samson and his men will be eyeing a second win.

The Royals have struggled to perform as a cohesive batting unit. While Samson led the team to within touching distance of victory with his sensational century against Punjab Kings, it was the

South African duo of David Miller and Chris Morris that pulled off a win against the Delhi Capitals.

Against CSK, opener Jos Buttler looked dangerous but the other batsmen failed to provide any valuable contributions. For the former champions to do well, the side must click as a batting unit with Samson and the Englishman playing key roles.

The Royals' bowling unit has been underwhelming to say the least, apart from the game against Delhi Capitals, the bowlers have leaked runs. Pacer Jaydev Unadkat shone against the Rishabh Pant-led side, registering the impressive figures of 3/15, while young Chetan Sakariya has shown promise.

In the absence of Jofra Archer, more will be expected out of the likes of Chris Morris and Bangladesh speedster Mustafizur Rahman.

— PTI