DECCAN nicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | WEDNESDAY | 28 APRIL 2021





Max: 35.0°C Min: 25.0°C Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Clear. Max/Min temp. 35/25 ºC

ASTROGUIDE

Plava; Uttarayana Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Pournami till 9 am; Chaitra Bahula Dwitiya till 1.35 am (Thursday) Star: Visakha till 5.14 pm Varjyam: 8.47 pm to 10.12 pm Durmuhurtam: 11.48 am to

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR** Ramzan 15,1442 AH **PRAYERS** Fajar: 5.35 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm **Asar:** 5.15 pm Maghrib: 6.25 pm Isha: 8.15 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.44 AM SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM **MOONRISE TODAY 7.53 PM MOONSET** TOMORROW 7.30 AM





Don't worry! They are busy with account holders of Twitter, Facebook...!

SHORT TAKES

Australia ends fights to India

Melbourne: Australia on Tuesday suspended all direct passenger flights from India with immediate effect until May 15 due to the "very significant" spike in Covid-19 cases, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced. Morrison also launched an immediate support package for the country in its fight against the coronavirus crisis.

Kumbh Mela finally ends

Dehradun/Rishikesh: The last 'shahi snan' at the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar on Tuesday was a subdued affair with seers keeping the ritual symbolic in view of a surge in Covid-19 cases. Till 10.45 am, 670 seers took the royal bath and some more are expected to take it in the day at Har ki Pairi on the banks of the Ganga, officials said.

Justice Bindal is Calcutta CJ

New Delhi: Justice Rajesh Bindal was on Tuesday appointed as the acting chief justice of the Calcutta High Court, a law ministry notification said. Justice Bindal is the senior-most judge of the Calcutta HC. He has been appointed as

acting chief justice with effect from April 29.

He asked officials to

tals in their spheres.
"Set up adequate Covid care centres," the CM told officials, adding the collectors should ensure all the facilities in these centers and there should be no scarcity of beds.

are functional in the state with a total bed strength of 33,327

SPORTS 6

Brett Lee donates bitcoin for Covid relief

TABLOID

IPL - To play on, or draw stumps?



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AP slaps more curbs on gyms, social events

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

WORLD 4

China holds South

Asian FMs meet

50% capacity in buses and movie theatres

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

Tightening restrictions on congregation of people to slow down the spread Coronavirus, the Andhra Pradesh govern-ment on Tuesday ordered the closure of all gyms, spas and sport complexes with immediate effect.

It has also imposed curbs on all gatherings and congregations, including marriages by allowing only up to 50 participants and all participants should comply with Covid-appropriate behaviour by wearing masks, sanitising hands

STATE RECORDS

64 DEATHS IN

JUST ONE DAY

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

Andhra Pradesh regis-

tered 11,434 fresh Coron-

avirus infections and 64

deaths in the last 24

State health authori-

ties reported here on

Tuesday that 11,434 out

of 74,435 samples tested

were found infected with

WAITING FOR

BED, BABY DIES

IN AMBULANCE

DC CORRESPONDENT

VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 27

Waiting for a bed, a one

and-half-a-year old child

died of Covid-19 in an ambulance near CSR Block of King George

Hospital in Visakhapa-

Full report on Page 3

tnam on Tuesday.

Full report on Page 3

ENROLL FOR COVID JAB



vaccine for those aged 18 and above opens today at cowin.gov.in

and maintaining social

distance. The government in its order said that only up to 20 participants are permitted to attend funerals

and related activities.

Public transport, however, is permitted with 50 per cent occupancy leaving alternate seats vacant and no standing of passengers to be allowed. Both the staff and passengers are supposed to wear masks and have to

sanitise hands frequent-

ly. Boarding and disem-

barking should be done

with proper physical dis-

tance. movie theatres A11 should leave alternate seats vacant to maintain social distance and a distance of five-feet must be maintained amongst the staff in all government and private offices.

SC: Why different prices for vaccine

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, APRIL 27

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the Central government to clarify the basis and rationale on which Covid-19 vaccines are being priced in the country.

A three-judge bench noted that different vac-cine manufacturers were quoting different prices for their vaccines at a time when the country is passing through a national crisis. It urged the government to examine the necessity of invoking provisions under the Patent Act to regulate prices of Covid vaccines if neces-

sary.
"Regarding pricing on vaccination. different manufacturers are quotdifferent prices. There are powers under the Patents Act. This is a pandemic and a national crisis," of the bench of Justices D.R. Chandrachud and Justices L. Nageswara Rao and Ravindra Bhat remarked

The Supreme Court urged the government to examine the necessity of invoking provisions under the Patent Act to regulate prices of Covid vaccines if necessary.

and ordered that the "Union shall clarify the projected requirements vaccine due to enhancement of coverage. Modality to be put in place to ensure that shortage and deficit would be looked into. Centre to clarify basis and rationale for pricing of vaccine.

While asking the Centre to inform it about the requirement of oxygen, its availability, steps to augment its production and distribution, the Supreme Court reiterated that it did not intend to stop different high courts from taking up Covidrelated matters and that it will only concentrate on eliminating systemic problems which require nationwide coordination.

FOREIGN NATIONS COME FORWARD TO BAIL OUT INDIA

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, APRIL 27

The United States is expected to soon approve the supply of filters as part of the vaccine raw materials required for the manufacture of Covishield vaccines in India and may also release 10 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to foreign nations, including India, as soon as the Food and Drug Administration gives its approval in the coming weeks, government sources said Tuesday.

Media reports from Washington quoted a US official as saying the United States would despatch a "Strike Team' comprising of public health experts to India.

As India faces a ferocious second Covid storm, several nations, including the US, Britain, France, Germany, Gulf nations, Southeast Asian nations and Australia are sending crucial medical supplies and equipment to help India fight Covid-19. Russia is expected to send help soon.

A high-level inter-minis-terial group under the Centre has "established a procedure" for the immediate clearance of materials being received from foreign nations, which will ensure the "material would be dispatched promptly to hospitals.

muthootfinance.com

EC bans victory rallies on May 2

Says only 2 persons must accompany winner

SANJAY BASAK | DC **NEW DELHI, APRIL 27**

It is perhaps too little, too late. After being severely castigated by the Madras and Calcutta High Courts over the second wave of Covid-19, the Election Commission on Tuesday banned all victory rallies by political parties and candidates after the Assembly election results are declared on or after May 2.

After being reprimanded by the courts, the EC, which had ordered an unprecedented eight-phase election in West Bengal, said: "No victory procession after the counting on 2.5.2021 shall be permissible. Not more than two persons shall be allowed to accompany the winning candidate or his/her authorised representative receive the certificate of election from the return-

ing officer concerned." The eighth and last phase of the West Bengal election will be held on Thursday, April 29. Voting is already over in Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and the Union territory of Puducherry

On Monday, the Madras High Court in a stinging

A survey conducted by an English-language television news channel on Tuesday showed the steep spike in Covid-19 cases in the poll-bound states.

In Kerala, the Covid cases had gone up by 130 per cent, while in Tamil Nadu it was by 56 per cent. The channel claimed the cases had shot up by 215 per cent in Assam, while it was 86 per cent in West Bengal.

remark had said the EC 'should be put up on murder charges... for being the most irresponsible institution"

The Madras High Court also said that it would "stop the counting if we do not find before May 2 a blueprint on how proper maintenance of Covid protocols will be maintained so that this state does not succumb to your idiosyncracies any further..

The EC has been directed to submit a detailed report to the high court on April 30.

A survey conducted by

an English-language television news channel on Tuesday showed the steep spike in Covid-19 cases in the poll-bound states.

In Kerala, the Covid cases had gone up by 130 per cent, while in Tamil Nadu it was by 56 per cent. The channel claimed the cases had shot up by 215 per cent in Assam, while it was 86 per cent in West Bengal. In Uttar Pradesh, following the recent Kumbh Mela, the Covid-19 cases had seen a staggering rise of 47 per cent.

At this point, India is reporting well over three lakh Covid cases and over 2,000 deaths a day.

While Covid-19 cases were on the rise, politicians continued to address mammoth rallies in the poll-going states. Top leaders ranging from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Trinamul Cong-ress chief Mamata Baner-jee and the Left leaders addressed several rallies in West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Despite repeated appeals, the EC refused to club the election dates in West Bengal.

Jagan asks officials to fill vacant medical positions

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday ordered immediate filling up of all vacancies in the health department so as to cope with the Corona spread. He has also advised officials to provide beds to Covid-19 patients within three hours.

hold walk-in interviews to fill the vacancies in health department and complete the recruitment in 48 hours. Jagan held a Spandana

review meeting with district collectors and SPs on the Covid-19 situation on Tuesday. He said there must be effective working of 104 call centers to offer medical services to Corona patients and that the district joint collec-tors should personally monitor all Covid hospi-

The officials informed him that 59 such centers

The CM asked officials to take strict action against anyone spreading rumours. An official bul-letin will be released every day and everyone should depend on the same data vis-₹-vis Covid

situation in the state. Jagan asked district collectors and SPs to be on high alert in coming months in view of the rapid spread of the second

Page 2: Lockdown wiped out ₹1 lakh cr, says CM



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DOUBLE I CHECK Court seeks details on hospital beds, test data

HC quizzes AP over Covid plan

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADADA APRIL 27

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

A division bench of Chief Justice A.K. Goswami and Justice C. Praveen Kumar heard a petition filed by APCLA joint secretary Mohan Rao seeking details

The court sought details as to whether the state government is following Covid control guidelines

as to whether the state government is following Covid control guidelines and the number of tests being done, among other aspects.

The court sought details

on the availability of beds

in hospitals for the infected,

the number of Covid tests every day and the timing of release of the test reports, the status of medical oxyavailability and whether oxygen manufac-turing plants were set up as per directions issued earli-

er by the Centre. Government pleader C. Sumon submitted the details to the court. Later, the court directed the state to submit details to petitionand posted the case for next hearing to Wednesday. In a separate development, the court heard a

'quash petition' filed by ex-MLA Dhulipalla Narendra on the ACB filing a case against him in relation to alleged irregularities in the Sangam Dairy. A single judge bench headed by R Raghunandan Rao heard counsels from the petitioner and the state government er's counsel and to the court and reserved the verdict.

IN BRIEF **JAGAN EXPRESSES GRIEF OVER DEATH OF SATYANARAYANA**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has expressed grief over the death of senior Congress leader and former Andhra Pradesh minister M Satyanarayana expressed profound sympathy to the family.

Satyanarayana Rao was recently admitted to the Nims for treatment of Coronavirus infection. He died on Tuesday morning while receiving treat-

His hometown is Vedira in Ramadugu mandal Karimnagar

He was the general-secretary of the AICC, a three-time MP and a minister in the YSR Cabinet in 2004. He also served as the Joint Andhra Pradesh RTC chairman and PCC president. He was very close to for-mer CM late Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy.

YSRC MLA Malladi Vishnu expressed shock over the death Satyanarayana. He said that the late leader has stood by Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy during his Padavatra.

Telangana State Chief minister KCR expressed his condo-

"MSR had a unique style of politics as a staunch Telangana supporter, as an MP and as a state minister. He was known for his straightforward nature," read the tweet from the CM's office.

The Telangana CM has advised TS chief secretary Somesh Kumar to ensure the final rites of MSR are held

LOCKDOWN WIPED OUT ₹1 LAKH CR, **SAYS CM JAGAN**

From Page 1

"If the government loses one rupee due to the lockdown, the common man will lose ₹4. The lockdown had cost the government 20,000 crore in 2020, which means a loss of about ₹80,000 crore to the people.

On oxygen supply, the chief minister said 320 to 340 metric tonnes of oxygen is being sup-plied every day to state hospi-tals, and this is adequate at

"Those with SPO2 level less than 94 should be provided with oxygen," the CM noted. Jagan said permission will be

granted to only 50 people for marriages and officials must ensure people do not gather at gyms, parks and swimming pools. All the financial and commercial activities should continue but by adhering to Covid protocols, he said.

The chief minister said seven crore vaccine doses are being manufactured in the country per month, of which one crore was of Covaxin and the remaining the Covishield. Vaccination of two doses is completed for 11.30 lakh people and single dose for 45.48 lakh people in the state, all of age above 45. Vaccination will also be given to people above 18-45

Jagan said district collectors should oversee the functioning of the 104 call center and ensure effective functioning. The 104 number should be registered in the minds of the people as a one-stop solution for all issues related to Covid.

He said beds should be arranged to Covid patients within three hours of calling the 104 center and an adequate number of doctors should be available for each of these call

On beds in hospitals, the Chief Minister said collectors have identified a total of 355 hospitals across districts for treatment of Covid with a bed capacity of 28,377 in which 17,901 beds are occupied.

Treatment in these hospitals is completely free and medicines and health care will be extended to patients free of

The Chief Minister said Joint Collector (Village/Ward Secretariat development) should completely focus on tackling the Covid situation in the districts. "The joint collector should ensure good sanitation facilities, quality food supply, availability of doctors and paramedical staff, setting up of help desks etc. They should monitor the performance of Aarogya Mitras through CCTV cameras. They should also coordinate with call centres and ensure all works are done

on time. The chief minister said Covid hospitals at district level should be divided into clusters and in-charges should be appointed for them. Districtlevel Flying Squads should be set up by also including the medicine regulatory department officials in it.

For Covid treatment



A critically ill Covid-19 patient is shifted to VIMS Hospital in an ambulance for better treatment in Visakhapatnam

Coronavirus spreads to agency area in EG

Movement of people to other places should be restricted: Experts

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, APRIL 27

Covid-19 has spread to the agency area of Rampachodavaram and Chinturu mandals vigorously in East Godavari district, with more than 225 active cases and the infected patients being treated.

Three villages -Mothugudem, Kalleru Kammuru -Chinturu mandal were declared as containment zones due to severity of the Covid-19 pandemic. 21 children, studying at Kalleru Ashram School, are infected with Covid-19 while 15 villagers are also suffering from the virus. Two or three employees of the area, working in other

Bhadrachalam, Jagdalpur and Visakhapatnam have visited the village during weekend holidays and got the virus to the area.

The officials opine that the virus spread into the area because of those

Noticing the situation, Rampachodavaram ITDA project director Venkata Ramana has imposed sev-

ENTIRE SRIKAKULAM

CONTAINMENT ZONE

DC CORRESPONDENT SRIKAKULAM, APRIL 27

The Srikakulam town

has been declared as the Covid-19 containment

zone from Tuesday. The

town has been reporting

the highest number of

Covid-19 infections in the

state during the second wave for the past one

week. The district admi-

nistration on Monday

night decided to impose

half-day lockdown to contain the spread of the virus. Srikakulam dis-

trict has been witnessing

a steep rise in Covid-19

infections with positive

cases registering betw-een 900 and 1,200 for the

Srikakulam district co-

llector J. Nivas said that

over 30 per cent of the

Covid-19 positive cases have been reported from

Srikakulam town only.

Srikakulam district has

reported 63,701 cases so

far and majority of the

cases were reported from Srikakulam Town.

At present, 1,381 Covid-

19 patients were availing

treatment at hospitals

while 1,001 patients were

availing treatment in Covid-19 care centres and as many as 10,499

people were under home

"Considering the inc-

reasing Covid-19 cases in

Srikakulam district, we have asked traders and

businessmen to operate

the commercial estab-

lishments till 2 pm for

two weeks from Tuesday

to contain the spread of the virus," Nivas told the

mediapersons.

isolations, he added.

past few days.

TOWN DECLARED



A health worker gives vaccination to a woman outside the Giripuram health centre in Vijayawada on Tuesday. - C. NARAYANA RAO

eral restrictions like reducing the business hours to 7 pm and closing shandy markets and preventing crowds in public places and others.

Venkata Ramana said that all necessary steps good medical treatment to the patients and at the same time organising awareness programmes to curb the virus. He said the Covid-19 testing centre in

DC CORRESPONDENT

Government whip and Chandragiri MLA

Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy on Tuesday sprang

a surprise by announcing

lockdown in his con-

At a time when Prime

Minister Narendra Modi

and Chief Minister Y.S.

Jagan Mohan Reddy were

considering lockdown as a

last resort, the ruling YSR Congress MLA took the

initiative and announced

that the shops would be

allowed to open between 6 am and 10 am. "We will

not allow any public move-

ment after 10 am," he

announced at a media con-

ference in Tirupati. The

lockdown will come into

force in next three days, he

Bhaskar Reddy's unilater-

al decision on lockdown

earned him a pat from the

Opposition parties who

TIRUPATI, APRIL 27

Chandragiri

stituency.

RT-PCR tests are being conducted at Primary Health Centres and the medical and health department personnel are giving medicines to home quarantine patients from time to time. However, he are being taken to render said that more than 110 cases reported and unfortunately two patients died in the division.

It is said that there is no

MLA announces lockdown

in Chandragiri constituency

DC CORRESPONDENT

VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 27

state BJP unit and former

MLA P. Vishnu Kumar

Raju demanded that the

government impose a hea-

Ith emergency in the state

due to the Covid-19 sprea-

ding like wildfire all over.

were in panic for not find-

ing beds in the hospitals,

Covid-19 related medi-

wanted the Chief Minister

to learn a lesson on or two from his whip. The Chief

Minister was targeted by

the Opposition for going

ahead with conducting SSC and other public

The MLA also announced

that he would donate Rs 25

lakh to set up 100 oxygen

beds in Chandragiri gov-

examinations.

He said the patients

vice-president of

BJP DEMANDS HEALTH EMERGENCY

the Chinturu Division. There was a proposal of setting up a covid-19 centre in the area, but it has not been materialised yet.

Rampachodavaram agency area division, nearly 105 active cases prevail. Many people in Rampachodavaram agency division are moving to other places like Rajamahendravaram and nearby places of Rampachodavaram and Visakhapatnam border areas, villages on way to Bhadrachalam and other places, which may increase the chances of

spreading the virus.

The experts say that the movement of people to other places should be restricted for some time to curb the virus.

Assistant Project Officer of ITDÅ of Rampachodavaram Naidu said that a health care centre has been set up at Rampachodavaram, linking all PHCs. He said that the centre is coordinating 18 PHCs and action is being taken from time to time. He said that already

cines in the medical

shops, standing long for hours for testing and vac-

cination."There is lack of

proper planning in han-

dling the situation," the

He strongly condemned

the government for deploying employees for

demolition of alleged ille-

gal buildings and shops

when their services were

required for Covid-19

ernment hospital and 50

beds in Naravaripalli Primary Health Centre.

Incidentally, former chief

minister N. Chandrababu

Naidu hails from Naravaripalli. "Measures are being taken to set up bulk cylinders at these

hospitals for an uninter-

rupted supply of oxygen," said the MLA.

BJP leader said.

management.

Atchannaidu

Jagananna Vasati Devena set for launch today

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy conducted reviews of various welfare schemes and government departments during a meeting with district collectors on Tuesday. He said the Jagananna Vasati Devena would launched on April 28, followed by Rythu Bharosa and Matsyakara Bharosa on May 13 and May 18 respectively. Payment of insurance premium for kharif 2020 will start on

While explaining the progress of house site pattas, the officials said that a total of 30,28,346 are to be distributed, of which 94 per cent or 28,54,983 have been distributed so far. Of 17,053 Jagananna colonies, pattas have been distributed to 16,450. Dis-tribution of pattas is pending in Nellore, Guntur, Vizianagaram, Kada-East Godavari, and

West Godavari districts.
The CM directed officials to complete the dis-tribution within the next 15 days. He also held discussions regarding the status of fresh applica-

been completed for 311 of the required 353 buildings. Further, the officials also stated that of the 55,607 anganwadi centres in the state, 27,438 were functioning in rented spaces.

tions for house sites and construction of new hous-

While the target for April is 2.50 crore work days, only 1.89 work days had been completed as of April 26, the CM said and directed the officials to ensure one crore work days are completed in every district in the next two months. Wage component needs to be improved in Nellore, Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari and Kurnool districts, he

He said that while 10,929 village secretariat buildings had been approved construction had started, only 6,057 buildings were near-completion. Stating that construction had been delayed in Kadapa, Chittoor, Visakhapatnam, Nellore, Krishna, and Anantapur districts, he directed authorities to

ensure the construction of all buildings by the end of

Under Rythu Bharosa Kendras, 10,408 buildings had been approved, of which 2,649 were near-completion, the officials said. Construction of all

buildings is expected to be completed by July. While 8,585 buildings were approved for Dr Health Clinics (rural), only 1,755 have been constructed. Officials stated that work was delayed in Anantapur, Visakhapatnam, Kurnool, Kadapa, East Godavari, and Guntur districts, adding that construction was expected to be completed by the end of August. There was also a need for 560 urban health centres in the state. Tender process had been completed for 311 of the required 353 buildings.

Further, the officials also stated that of the 55,607 anganwadi centres in the state, 27,438 were functioning in rented spaces. Under the Nadu Nedu scheme, work on construction of 4,706 new Anganwadi centres and

CM EXPRESSES Govt hands over CONDOLENCES ON KANAKA'S DEMISE

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed condolences over the demise of Vemuri Kanaka Durga, wife of *ABN Andhra Jyothi* MD Vemuri RadhaKrishna, who passed away on Tuesday morning.

In a statement, the Chief Minister prayed that God should give courage to V. RadhaKri-shna and his family members during these difficult times. V. Kanaka Durga, 63,

who was director of Andhra Jyothi passed away on Tuesday morn-ing due to illness. As per the reports, she was unwell and was being treated at a hospital for the past few days.
Telugu Desam chief N.

Chandrababu Naidu expressed shock over the death of Vemuri Kanaka Durga. He conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members and recalled how Kanaka Durga used to look after the welfare of the employees of their organisation.

TD state president K. also expressed his grief over the passing away of Kanaka Durga.

Sangam dairy to APDDCL

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

After former Telugu Desam MLA Dhulipalla Narendra was arrested by the Anti-Corruption Bureau, and a preliminary report was submitted, the Andhra Pradesh government handed over Sangam dairy to the gov-ernment-run AP Dairy Development Corporation Limited, and issued orders on Tuesday.

Narendra, who was the former chairman of Sangam dairy, was arrested on charges of illegalities. Meanwhile, the subcollector of Tenali has been appointed to look after the dairy's opera-tions with immediate effect.

department special chief secretary Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah issued the Additionally, order, which stated that the milk commissioners and registrar of milk cooperatives had submitted that certain irregularities, including misuse of government assets. had been committed by then chairman Narendra and Accordingly, the govern-

ment had requested the ACB to inquire into the allegations. ACB's inquiry report

declared that there was

prima facie evidence concerning the involvement of the then chairman, then managing director, and other officials of Sangam dairy, along with then district cooperative office, Guntur, in transferring 10 acres of government land to a trust, which was set up in memory of Narendra's late father. Narendra allegedly used title deeds of properties belonging to government and raised huge sums of

In order to protect the interests of milk producers, employees and consumers, the unit's day-today activities shall continue unobstructed. Tenali's sub-collector shall be present in the unit's premises to ensure that all operations continue

money through loans.

Narendra had earlier filed a quash petition in the AP High Court, challenging the cases filed by the ACB. The HC had reserved its verdict.

smoothly.

TD alleges YSRC conspired to hand over AP dairies to Gujarat

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

TD leaders objected to the transfer of the dairy when the matter was still pending. Former minister and TD politburo member Nakka Anand Babu criticised the Jagan Mohan Reddy government of 'hatching a conspiracy' to destroy the dairy and hand it over the Cuirott hand it over to Gujaratbased Amul industries out of political vendetta.

Anand Babu said that lakhs of farmers, who depended on the Sangam dairy, would now be shattered because of the government's thoughtless activities. He further alleged that

the current regime was adopting backdoor meth- deals to the farmers.

FURTHER alleged that the current regime was adopting backdoor methods, in order to crush the dairy, even as the case

was still pending.

ods, in order to crush the dairy, even as the case was still pending. Babu also deplored that while the Chief Minister and his ministers do not care about farmers whatsoever, they were also destroying other organisations that were helping the dairy farmers.

decades. "For Sangam dairy has been taking up many novel activities to give better

It is a well-reputed dairy in the entire state but the current government just wants to crush all good organisations" he alleged, adding that local dairies in the state were being encroached, only to transfer their business to Amul illegally.

Anand Babu claimed that there was a conspiracy to transfer AP companies and their properties to Gujarat-based companies. He said the Chief Minister was doing this solely to secure the blessings of the Prime Minister so as to escape from his CBI and ED cases, under which the management of several ports in the state have been handed over to a

ANIMALI CARE Joint action plan soon to handle stray elephant menace, submit it to Centre for its nod

Plan to set up elephant corridor in Koundinya

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

Forest officials in an interstate virtual meet have proposed to set up an elephant corridor in Koundinya forest to prevent elephants entering the human habitations and also to protect them. Forest officials from Tamil Nadu and

Karnataka attended a virtual meet held under the aegis of AP forest department on Tuesday. AP principal chief conservator of forests N. Prateep Kumar said that though the AP government had taken steps to prevent elephants to stray into human habitations from the forests. some of them from the

neighbouring states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka were entering the AP forest and added that due to lack of food and water, elephants from Koundinya elephant sanctuary were straying into villages while some of them were getting electrocuted as some farmers set up electric fencing to protect their crops.

The officials said that the elephants from Tamil Nadu were reaching Koundinary forests in AP as the TN forest teams were opening fire on herds of elephants to disperse them while elephants from Karnataka too reaching the AP forests via Kup-

The senior officials from the three states in the meet-

ing have come up with a series of suggestions and have resolved to meet at regular intervals and to solve the issue with coordination. They have opted to set up an elephant corridor Koundinary forest is located in parts of three states and to appoint a nodal officer from each state. They have

efitting all the three states to handle the stray elephant menace and submit it to the Centre for its consent. Karnataka chief conser-

vator of forests (wildlife) Vijay Kumar Gopi, Tamil Nadu chief conservator of forests (wildlife) Munjamil Abbas and other senior offialso planned to come up cials were present.

IN BRIEF

WOMAN'S BODY SHIFTED ON BIKE IN PALASA

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 27

After futile attempts to get an ambulance or a vehicle, a man and his brother-in-law were forced to carry their mother's body on a motorcycle for a distance of 18 km. The incident took place in Palasa mandal of

Srikakulam on Tuesday. Reports said 50-year-old woman G. Chenchu of Killoyi tribal hamlet under Mandasa mandal in Srikakulam district fell ill. Her son Narendra and son-in-law Ramesh took her to Neelamani Durga Hospital in Palasa Town of the district for treatment, where she was referred to a diagnostic centre for a CT scan.

The woman underwent the CT scan but died before the report arrived. Later, the doctor going by the scan report that the woman had Covid-19 symptoms. Hoping to arrange an ambulance or any other vehicle, the family kept waiting with the body before ferrying it to the cremation ground on a bike.

The revenue officials said that the last rites of the woman were performed as per the Covid-19 protocol.

AKKA MAHADEVI JAYANTI AT SRISAILAM

DC CORRESPONDENT **KURNOOL APRIL 27**

Akka Mahadevi Jayanti, the 12th century Sivasarani, who Mallikkarjuna, was performed in Srisailam on Tuesday.

A proficient scholar in Kannada and Sanskrit, she was credited with composing several hymns on the Lord

She had spent 12 years in penance and was in medita-tion at caves now known as Akka Mahadevi caves, known for Siddha powers. It is believed whoever sits in meditation in the Akka Mahadevi caves would see a total transformation.

A true ascetic, Mahadevi is said to have refused to wear any clothing—a common practice among male ascetics, but shocking for a woman. Legend has it that due to her true love and devotion with God her whole body was protected by



S/02/2021-22 Dt. 26.04.202

ndia, the undersigned invites e-Tender for the following works up to 15-00 hours and the date mentioned

I. B/E.29/I/EGS/05/2021-22, Name of vork: Vijayawada: Gudur- Duvvada section-Improving reliability of powe supply of level crossing gates by mir ntegrated power supply-Electrica arrangements. Period of completion 120 days, **Tender value ₹:** 8689500/ E.M.D. ₹: Nil, Cost of Tende document ₹: Nil, Date of closing

2. B/E.29/I/EGS/06/2021-22, Name o work: Vijayawada: Division- Annua Maintenance contract for package type air conditioners and Air onditioners of various types (capacities at various locations /iiavawada Division for a period o Two (02) years, Period o completion: 24 months, Tender value ₹: 2557548/-, E.M.D. ₹: Nil, Date of closing: 19.05.2021

The prospective tenderers are advised to visit website "www.ireps.gov.in" before hanges/corrigenda for any tender Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical

2021 DATED. 26.04.2021

For and on behalf of the President of Telecommunication Enginee (Maintenance) South Central Railway Guntakal invites e-tenders **(Open)** for the following work up to 12.00 hrs. of

Tender No. 01-SNT-03-2021 Description of the work (Signal and Telecom work): Guntakal Division: Alteration to Electronic Interlocking of Make Hitachi at 04 stations (RJP, MUM, MOO & VRN stations) in connection with the construction of RUB in lieu of manned & Interlocked ..C.Gate (6 Nos) in GTL division & 165), Estimated cost of the work (₹): 98,46,344.00, Completion Period: 18 Months, Cost of tender form (₹): 5000.00

Validity of the offer should be 45 days from the date of opening. Corrigendun will be issued for the above tende notice if necessary through online only. For further tender conditions details and for downloading of tende document, please visit website

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunicatio Engineer (Maintenance) Guntaka

details and for downloading the

tender documents, Please visit website at http://www.ireps.gov.in or ww.scr.indianrailways.gov.in



Elderly people wait for their turn to get administered with the second dose of Covid vaccine at Urban Primary

State faces uphill task to transport liquid oxygen

Shortage of tankers to bring oxygen from other states

Daily demand for medical oxygen to treat the

Coronavirus patients in the state ranges from 340

tonnes to 360 tonnes. At times, this goes up to 390

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |

VIJAYAWADA APRIL 27

Andhra Pradesh faces an uphill task to transport liquid medical oxygen to filling stations and hospitals here from other states due to shortage of cryogenic

Daily demand for medical oxygen to treat the Coronavirus patients in the state ranges from 340 tonnes to 360 tonnes. At times, this goes up to 390 tonnes. AP is maintain-ing the stocks of nearly 480 tonnes of medical oxygen a day. This means quantum that is available is sufficient for

the time being.

However, as the number of Coronavirus patients is rising rapidly, with many of them requiring medical oxygen, the available stocks may get exhausted.

WAITING FOR

BED, BABY DIES

IN AMBULANCE

DC CORRESPONDENT

Waiting for a bed, a one-

and-half-a-year old child

died of Covid-19 in an

ambulance near CSR

Block of King George

The child, suffering

from congenital heart

disease, was shifted to

King George Hospital

from a private hospital

in Gajuwaka. The baby

also contacted Covid-19.

As her condition wors-

ened, she was rushed to

KGH in an ambulance

and her parents made

frantic efforts to get her

admitted in the CSR

block. As the waiting

was too long, the baby succumbed to the virus

in the ambulance by

afternoon. All along the

baby was on oxygen sup-

The parents were seen

squatted on the ground

ing for their dead child

in their arms. Passersby

tried to console them but

in vain. The young couple wailing with the

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR |

A medical professional

has advises the state gov-

ernment to buy portable

oxygen concentrators on

a war footing to save the

lives of the people. The

oxygen concentrators are

designed to convert air

into oxygen and they can

be fixed to the hospital

Senior physician at

People's Poly Clinic popu-

NELLORE APRIL 27

baby in arms.

near the hospital wail-

port in the ambulance.

VISAKHAPATNAM,

Visakhapatnam

Hospital

Tuesday.

AP is maintaining the stocks of nearly 480 tonnes of medical oxygen a day. Only about 60 oxygen tankers are available for

transport of medical oxygen, be it from other states to here or for internal distribution to hospitals Transportation of LMO from states like Odisha to

The Centre has allotted liquid medical oxygen to AP, some 150 tonnes, from Angul in Odisha, 68 tonnes from Bellary in Karnataka, 10 tonnes Tamil Nadu, for want of from Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu, 100 tonnes from RINL, Visakhapatnam, 60 tonnes from Liquinox in Srikakulam and 40 tonnes from Ellen

AP has become a major problem

gen thus allotted comes to 428 tonnes, the state is facing a tough task to transport this from Odisha, Karnataka and

AP health authorities say it takes three to four days for the tankers to reach the supply from Odisha to this state for its local supply. Only Visakhapatnam. about 60 oxygen tankers
Though the total daily
quantum of medical oxygen,
port of medical oxygen,

within AP. Unless AP manages to

be it from other states to here or for internal dis-

tribution to hospitals

get more cryogenic oxygen tankers and receive additional quantum of medical oxygen, the state may not be able to meet the increasing demand for the oxygen in hospitals treating Coronavirus patients.

AP state nodal officer for medical oxygen S Shan Mohan said, "Transportation of LMO from states like Odisha to AP has become a major problem for us due to want of adequate number of cryogenic oxygen tankers. If the number of patients rises, we cannot ensure supply of adequate quantum. government has allocation of additional quantum of medical oxy

KGGH is fast filling up with Covid-19 patients

DC CORRESPONDENT

With rising Covid cases the Kurnool General Hospital would be converted into Covid Hospital, said hospital superintendent Dr G. Narendranath Reddy. Out of 1,200 beds, 750 are occupied by patients.

A cause of concern is patients are suddenly turning critical as their lungs are turning bad, he said.

Narendranath Reddy said that the hoshas total bed strength of 1,050 but 1,200 beds can be adjusted. Already 609 people were undergoing medical treatment for Covid-19 as in-house patients against the total 688 beds availability as per Monday records of the availability as hospital.

If the hospital has to make 1,000 beds for patients alone then it has to shift patients from various wards even Gynic, Paediatric and Neurosurgery. Already,

Ramanaiah, suggested that the government buy

100 oxygen concentrators

for oxygen beds at the

GGH, which is full to its

brim with patients in

Speaking to Deccan

Chronicle, he said each

unit will cost ₹40,000 to

₹60,000 depending on the

brand. This is small pie

Dr Ramanaiah said

medical experts in the

government were well

aware of the second wave

for the government.

Nellore.

but 1,200 beds can be adjusted. Already 609 people were undergoing medical treatment for Covid as in-house patients against the total 688 beds the hospital authorities

were using several wards to provide medical treatment to the Covid-19 patients, particularly at general medical wards, plastic surgery, ENT and others. However in view of strengthening services to the patients, the hospital is now running only emergency services and no admissions were taken for general medicine, plastic surgeries, ENT, chest diseases and surgical services. But they were still continuing Paediatric, Gynic, Cardiology, Urology and Nephrology in the hospital based on emergencies, the hospital superintendent said.

The hospital doesn't have any oxygen supply issues since it has 750

SAVING LIVES Each unit will cost ₹40,000 to₹60,000 depending on brand

Call for buying oxygen concentrators

ance package announced

by the Centre last year is

not adequate considering

the high risk being taken

by the medical and para-

have been effectively han-

dled if the lull between

waves was utilised for

developing the infra-

second

medical personnel, Dr

Ramanaiah felt.

the first and

The ₹50 lakh insur-

• The hospital has total beds with oxygen supply units in the hospital and the transporter filling it regularly. There are two tankers with a total capacity of 21.5 kilo litres (one unit has 10,000 litres capacity and second unit has 11,500 litres) on the hospital premises.

In addition, a new oxvgen generating unit is ready to function with capacity of 3,000 litres per minute.

District collector G. Pandian on Veera Tuesday evening visited the Kurnool GGH and and told them to provide all facilities for Covid-19 patients without returning them. Make a special focus on quality of medications and food provisions. He then observed functioning of Oxygen plants and supply to the patients in the hospital. He also directed the hospital officials to recruit needed staff and doctors based on increasing admissions. He visited few private hospitals in

An important func-

tionary of Jana Vignan

Vedika, Dr Ramanaiah

lamented the sacking of

the medical personnel

hired last year for hospi-

tal duty and the delay in

recruiting such staff

again as the virus is play-

"Lockdown can only

slow down the pandemic.

This is not a solution to

contain the virus," the

physician asserted while

advising the government

to declare a health emer-

ing havoc with lives.

Demand to start Corona Care Centres in every municipality

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

Andhra Pradesh Urban Citizens Forum demanded starting of Covid-19 care centres in every municipality to offer treatment to Covid-19 infected people free of cost.

APUCF leaders lamented that Coronavirus patients were facing severe difficulties due to the shortage of oxygen, medicines and beds but the government failing to improve the needed facilities in the government hospitals.

APUCF convener Ch. Babu Rao alleged that Covid-19 cases in the state are 10 times higher than the data shown by the officials. He said they have discussed various issues pertaining to the present Covid-19 situation during a meeting here on Tuesday. He alleged that on Tuesday. He alleged that the required number of Covid tests is not being car-ried by the government and the delay in giving the test report was paving way for further spread of the Coronavirus. He said that there is no truth in the state government's claim that there is no shortage in oxythere is no shortage in oxygen supply, beds, medicines and injections.

Babu Rao said the Prime Minister has totally failed to support the state and left everything to the state's fate. He alleged that the BJP and the PM are interested in conducting elections and to be in power but not showing interest to save the lives of the people during the

He demanded to conduct

Experts: Patients should opt for Covid Care centres

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 27

Health experts are suggesting people to opt for Covid Care Centres rather than rushing to the hospitals out of panic. After reports of people waiting in the queue at Covid-19 notified hospitals, health officials in Visakhapatnam said the patients having mild symptoms seem to be rushing to the hospitals due to panic.

"They can as well get admitted to the two Covid Centres which were opened in Visakhapatnam last year. The patients will get medical supervision, medicines and food. In case of emergency, an ambulance will shift them to hospital," said medical officer in-charge for Covid Care Centres Dr Malladi S. Sharma. Visakhapatnam has two

centres - one at Mudasarlova and another at Bakkannapalem - which can accommodate over 1,600 patients. Mudasarlova

council meetings in all Municipalities and Corporations to draw and implement Covid-19 prevention measures.

Babu Rao stated that the APUCF meeting passed a resolution demanding the government to set up at least one Covid-19 care centre in each municipality, to initiate special sanitation

At present, there are two Covid Care centres in

opened on Sunday with all the facilities and as on date

35 patients are being treated for mild symptoms.

He said the Centres would give them confidence that they are under medical supervision and will be shifted to a hospital in case of emergency.

'Under the present conditions, Covid Care Centre can find a bed for the patient which he cannot get on his own," said another medical official.

Citing an instance, the official said a 33-year-old patient from neighbouring state and living all alone in Vizag got admitted to a Covid Care Centre with symptoms. Hours mild later, his oxygen levels started falling. He was immediately shifted to VIMS in an ambulance and got admitted without much

um hypochlorite, setting up of containment zones, deploy additional staff and the officials in municipali-

should allocate additional funds to all municipalities and additional staff. Special measures must be taken to complete the electrical cemetery works on a war

GANG HELD FOR ILLEGAL SALE OF REMDESIVIR

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

A gang of seven members was arrested in Vijayawada on Tuesday for allegedly selling the remdesivir injections at exorbitant prices illegally. The gang was selling the injections at higher prices against the orders issued by the state gov-ernment and making

The remdesivir injection is used by Covid-19 patients in the critical conditions and has very high demand in the state. Taking advantage of the situation, the gang resorted to selling the injection at a very high price. On a complaint received from a victim, the Patamata police in Vijayawada registered a case by arresting seven persons

Patamata circle inspector Ravi Suresh Reddy and his team arrested the seven-member gang and seized cash of Rs 2,32,200 and two injections of expiry date. The circle Inspector said the gang was making money by diverting the injections from the hospitals.

The arrested gang members are Mandepudi Mohana Krishna of Penamaluru, Maturi Srinivas Kumar of Maturi Kothapeta, Y. Ananta Reddy of Bhavanip-uram, Arigela Raja of Ramavarappadu, Gummadi Naresh, Gollapudi Tarun Kumar and Myneni Veerendra Sivanath of Kanuru.

The gang collected money from one Hitesh Kumar, a resident of Moghalrajpuram, Vijayawada, for sale of injections. Hitesh needs remdesivir injection for his business partner.

He stressed the need to

build confidence among

involved in the treatment

of Coronavirus patients

by providing them an

package to also take full

care of their families in

case any of them suc-

cumb to the deadly virus-

package announced by

the Centre last year is not

adequate considering the

high risk being taken by

The ₹50 lakh insurance

insurance

attractive

11,434 new Covid cases, 64 deaths

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 27

Andhra Pradesh registered 11,434 fresh Coronavirus infections and 64 deaths in the last 24 hours.

State health authorities reported here on Tuesday that 11,434 out of 74,435 sam-ples tested were found infected with Coronavirus. Out of a total number of

1,61,43,083 samples tested in the state so far, 10,54,875 persons were found infected; of them, 9,47,629 have recovered while 99,446 are still Among daily cases of

Coronavirus infections, all 13 districts registered more than 250 infections each, with Guntur recording the This was followed by 1,982

infections in Chittoor, 1,322 in Srikakulam, 1,237 Nellore, 1,067 Visakhapatnam, 702 in Anantapur, 633 in Anantapur, Vizianagaram, 544 Krishna, 497 in Prakasam, 474 in Kurnool, 424 in West Godavari, 271 in Kadapa

Tomato prices crash this season

SUBRAMANYAM DC TIRUPATI, APRIL 27

Owing to higher produccompression demand and market disruption amid Covid-19 second wave crisis, the prices of tomato have plummeted to their lowest in the current

Earlier this week, the price of tomato was ₹2-₹3 per kg in the wholesale markets of Palamaner and Madanapalle in Chittoor district, which is the largest supplier of this perishable additive to markets in the neighbouring states and few other north Indian states. Due to high moisture-led

short shelf life, coupled with high arrivals and impact of lack of demand from bulk users, the farmers and traders at the "wholesale mandis" were selling their tomato crop in a hurry to avoid its spoilage. The deteriorating quality of

the stored tomato also led to a dramatic price fall. Consequently, local vari-

ety of tomato prices in the wholesale mandis have declined by nearly 40-50 per cent so far this week and trading currently at ₹30-₹40 a box (15 kg) from ₹60-80 a box earlier this month. The price of tomato in the retail market, however, remains firm and quoted at ₹8-12 a kg. Such a low price of tomatoes is hitting farmers, who borrowed funds from local money-lenders at a higher rate of interest, hard.

Usually, the total arrivals of tomato at the Palamaner wholesale market by this time would be 2.20 lakh tonnes (last season) and the commanding price for the local variety comes at a minimum price of Rs 10 to Rs 15 a kg. However, this time the production was higher than usual and the market till date saw the arrival of nearly 2.58 lakh tonnes of tomatoes.

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known of Coronavirus looming structure and recruiting gency and make better the medical and paramed Ramachandra Reddy hospital, Dr M.V. large over the country. The present crisis could more of medical and use of the services of docical personnel. paramedical staff. tors in the private sector. Ramanaiah felt.

NIECE KARUNA DIES OF COVID-19

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC RAIPUR, APRIL 27

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

Late Shukla had begun her political career in BJP and was elected to the Madhya Pradesh Assembly 1993 and to the Lok Sabha from Janjgir in Chhattisgarh in 2004 as BJP

GUJARAT: NIGHT CURFEW IN NINE MORE CITIES

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

The state government also announced new restrictions in these 29 cities, including closure of restaurants, swimming pools, cinema halls, shopping complexes and water parks, till May 5. It also announced curbs on APMCs, public transport, religious gatherings, funerals and marriage functions across the state. The night curfew from 8 pm to 6 am was already in place since April 7 in 20 cities, including Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot and Vadodara.

Bodies of 22 victims stuffed in one ambulance

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

victims were stuffed in one ambulance while being taken to a crematorium at Beed in Maharashtra, with the district administration citing lack of medical transport vehicles as the reason for it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Suresh Dhas alleged that the hospital and the local civic body were passing the blame on each other.
Talking to a TV channel,

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

it is given from Mumbai." Ambajogai Municipal Council's chief officer Ashok Sabale said it was the responsibility of the medical college to transport the bodies to the crematorium on Mandwa road (designated for the last rites of Covid-19 victims). "Our teams are there at

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

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

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

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

dignified farewell to victims Pune, April 27: A social increased during the curwelfare group is working round-the-clock with the Pune civic body to give a conduct the last rites of farewell victims, irrespective of Covid-19 victims, irrespectheir religion, for the last tive of their religion, and 14 to 15 months. So far, we

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

claimed to have performed the last rites of over 1,200

victims since the pandem-

A senior group member said their workload has

tradition," Khan said. He said the number of rent second wave of Covid-19. "We have been helping

deaths has increased in the second wave, and their group members are now working 24x7.

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

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

RELIGIOUS | AFFAIR | Nearly 2,000 seers of 13 'akhadas' had taken a dip in Ganga

Kumbh: Seers keep last Shahi Snan symbolic

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

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 17 had appealed to sadhus to observe the remaining duration of the Kumbh only in a "symbolic" manner. Following this different 'akhadas' had agreed to keep their participation

Washington, April 27: President Joe Biden hailed

the "stunning" progress

that the United States has

made in the fight against

the Coronavirus pandemic, as he addressed the nation from the White

and June to get us to July

down — down dramatical-

spoke out as the country's

premier health agency, the

Control and Prevention,

issued new guidance noti-

fying Americans vaccinat-

ed against the coronavirus

that they no longer need to

Fully vaccinated people

can eat, walk or attend

small gatherings outside

without a mask — as long

as they are not at crowded

"If you are fully vacci-

nated, you can start doing

many things that you had

stopped doing because of the pandemic," the gov-

ernment body said in a

Masks are still consid-

ered necessary for vaccinated people if they are at

concerts, parades or large

wear masks outdoors.

Disease

House on Tuesday.

against the virus.

Centers for

events.

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

Many spots wore deserted look on Tuesday at the Kumbh which will formally close only on

With 3,23,144 people testpositive Coronavirus infection in a day, India's total tally of Covid-19 cases has cases climbed to 1,76,36,307, while the national recovery rate has further Uttarakhand reported Around 2,000 seers of the dropped to 82.54 per cent, 5,058 Covid-19 cases on Joona, Agni, Avahan,



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

according to the Union Monday with Dehradun health ministry data registering 2,034 cases and updated on Tuesday.

Haridwar 1,002 cases. Around 2,000 seers of the

Kinnar, Udasin, Bada and Naya Udasin, Nirmal and Niranjani akhadas and three Bairagi akhadas kept the 'snan' symbolic Chaitra Purnima, Zonal Officer of LIU, Haridwar, Sunita Verma

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

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

ensure that the last rites are conducted with all respect and as per their rituals," he said. **Assam imposes**

night curfew

MANOJ ANAND | DC **GUWAHATI, APRIL 27**

Pune: Social group ensures

have buried or cremated over 1,200 victims in Pune

city and adjoining villages

in Maharashtra district,"

said Ummat Foundation

member Javed Khan. "Many a times, family members or relatives are

unable to come, but we

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

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

tion drive further. The state disaster man-

agement authority which also reviewed the Covid scenario in its order said, "It has been observed that there has been a rapid increase in the number of active cases of Covid-19 across the state and therefore, it is felt that night curfew needs to be imposed in all districts of the state, except for essential or emergency services as an emergency meas ure for well-being and safety of the people."

This has come close on the heels of the state government's earlier order closing down all shops and business establishments to contain the spread of the disease. Assam on Monday recorded 3,137 new cases and 15 deaths.

SHORT TAKES

TANKER SPILLS OIL OFF CHINESE PORT AFTER COLLISION

Beijing, April 27: A tanker spilled oil into the sea off one of China's busiest ports of China's busiest ports Tuesday after a collision with another vessel, the government and a ship tracking company reported.

The A Symphony collided early Tuesday with a cargo vessel, the Sea Justice, while approaching Qingdao, according to MarineTraffic.com. It anchored Qingdao, southeast of Beijing. Maritime Safety Administration said. Other ships were told to stay at least 10 nautical miles (18.5 kilometers) away, but the agency gave no details of damage or how much oil leaked.

PAK LAWMAKER ARRESTED IN TREASON CASE

Lahore, April 27: A Pakistani lawmaker was arrested here on Tuesday on charges of treason. Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's close aide Javed Latif was arrested by the Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) of Lahore Police after a sessions

court rejected his pre-bail peti-

tion in the treason case According to the FIR, Latif defamed state institutions and passed hateful remarks against them. He is also accused of talking about dismemberment of Pakistan in case anything happens to Sharif's daughter

Marvam Nawaz. "If anything happens to PML N Vice President Maryam Nawaz, the PML-N will not say Pakistan Khappay (stay united). PPP had made this slogan of Pakistan Khappay after assassination of Benazir Bhutto but the PMLN will not say this if anything happens to Maryam Nawaz," Latif had said in a TV talk show. He was talking in the backdrop of alleged "life threats" being given to Maryam for taking on the military establishment.

On March 20, Latif was booked on charges of treason and a case was registered against the the Member of National Assembly (MNA) on the complaint of a private citizen, Jameel Saleem.

Biden hails stunning progress in virus battle

A lot of work needs to do in May and June to get us to July 4 celebrations, says US President

China: South Asian FMs meet on Covid-19 'open' for India

"While we still have a Beijing, April 27: China, long way to go in this fight, which is hosting a meeting a lot of work to do in May of Foreign Ministers of some South Asian coun-4. we've made stunning tries to deal with the progress because of all of Covid-19 situation, said on you, the American people," Biden said, referenc-Tuesday that the virtual conference is open to all ing Independence Day as a countries in the region, milestone goal in the fight including India. Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri 'Cases and deaths are Lanka and Bangladesh are invited to the virtual ly from where they were Foreign Ministerial level when I took office." Biden meeting being hosted on

by

Chinese

Tuesday

More than half of all US adults have now received at least one of two vaccine doses. The surging rate of people seeking out vaccines has begun to taper, but new Covid-19 cases are also falling.

The government announced on Monday it would be sending up to 60 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine abroad, after critics had accused Washington of "hoarding" the British-developed vaccine, which is not authorized in the country and will likely not be required to vaccinate Americans.

THE MEETING is part of China's cooperation with South Asian countries to fight the Covid pandemic.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi. India, Maldives and Bhutan are conspicuously absent from the meeting. Asked why India has not been invited to the meeting, Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing that "China follows the spirit of openness and inclusive-

"This meeting is open to South Asian countries, including India. We welcome the participation

of all countries," he said. This meeting is part of China's cooperation with South Asian countries and regional and international cooperation to fight the Coronavirus pandemic, he said. "We follow an open attitude and we are open for the participation of other South Asian countries," Wang said. -PTI

sporting events, even when outdoors, the CDC RUSSIA CLAIMS BRAZIL REFUSAL TO **IMPORT SPUTNIK V JAB 'POLITICAL'**

Moscow, April 27: The developers of Russia's Sputnik V Coronavirus vaccine on Tuesday criticised Brazil's refusal to import the jab as politically motivated.

Brazilian health regulator Anvisa on Monday denied requests from several states to receive batches of Sputnik V, saying it did not have the data needed to verify the jab's safety and efficacy.

"Anvisa's delays in approving Sputnik V are unfortunately of a political

nature and have nothing to do with access to informa-tion or science," the offi-cial Sputnik V Twitter account said.

It pointed to a recent US government report that said Washington had tried to persuade Brazil not to use Sputnik. "The US Department of Health, in its 2020 annual report several months ago, publicly stated that the US health attache 'persuaded Brazil to reject the Russian vaccine against Covid-19," the account added.

Oz suspends direct flights from India

Melbourne, April 27: Australia on Tuesday suspended all direct passenger flights from India with immediate effect until May 15 due to the "very significant" spike rently playing in the Indian Premier League in in Covid-19 cases, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced.

Morrison, announcing the temporary border closure with India, also launched an immediate support package for the country in its fight against the ongoing Coronavirus crisis. Addressing a press briefing after convening a Cabinet's national securitv committee meeting, he said that the ban on arrivals from India would be reviewed before May

"Today we agreed, in addition to the measures that I announced after the National Cabinet meeting, to pause direct passenger flights between India and Australia until the 15th of May," he said. "We recognise that this has been a very significant outbreak in India," Morrison said. The latest move would affect direct flights into

Sydney and repatriation flights scheduled to arrive in Darwin. The move could also affect thousands people, Australian cricketers cur-

India. All indirect flights coming from India via Singapore, Doha, Dubai and Kuala Lumpur have also been paused by their respective governments. Giving details of relief package, Prime Minister Morrison said that Australia will send a range of goods to India to help as it struggles with a critical shortage of medical supplies.

Australia will send 500 ventilators, as well as 1 million surgical masks. 500,000 protective and surgical masks, goggles and face shields. "We're stanwith ding Australians in India and recognising those serious difficulties they face. I stress this is an initial package, there'll be more to follow," Morrison said.

BELGIUM BELGIUM BANS

ARRIVALS FROM INDIA, BRAZIL

Brussels, April 2 7: Belgium on Tuesday became the latest territory to ban travel from India, Brazil and South Africa, major countries hit by fastspreading Coronavirus variants.

"Passenger travel by air, tram, including trans-inffic. from India, air, train, boat, and bus, traffic, from India, Brazil and South Africa to Belgium will be banned," Minister Alexander de Croo announced in a statement. "People with Belgian

nationality and people who have their main residence in Belgium can return from India, Brazil, and South Africa to Belgium. They are strongly advised not to travel to these coun-

There will some exceptions to the ban for essential travel by some transport workers and diplomats, but otherwise ban will be strictly enforced. -AFP

N-deal talks resume in Vienna

Berlin, April 27: World powers were set to resume high level talks in Vienna on Tuesday focused on bringing the United States back into the nuclear deal with Iran, in their first session since comments surfaced from the Iranian foreign minister alleging that Russia once tried to

scupper the pact. The Russian Foreign Ministry has thus far refused to comment on the remarks from Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, made in a seven-hour interview with a think tank associated with the Iranian

presidency that leaked over the weekend. Russia's top representa-

tive at the Vienna talks, Mikhail Ulvanov, who has outwardly been one of the most optimistic about the possibility of getting Tehran and Washington to agree to terms for the US to rejoin the 2015 deal, also made no mention of the allegations before the meetings, saying in a tweet only that "the participants will continue negotiations on restoration of the nuclear deal. Ulyanov is joining representatives from China,

Germany, France, and

Britain — the other parties to the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA - for the talks chaired by the European Union. "Participants will continue their discussions in view of a possible return

of the United States to the JCPOA and on how to ensure the full and effective implementation of gation said before the talks.

The US is not at the table because it unilaterally pulled out of the deal in 2018 under then President Donald Trump.

EU to approve to post-Brexit trade deal Brussels, April Ireland, some EU legislators previously threatened to hold back the ratification vote, but a large majority of lawmakers are

European Union lawmakers are set to formally ratify the post-Brexit deal between the EU and the United Kingdom amid in favor of the deal. Results ongoing tensions between of the vote are set to be London and Brussels over announced on Wednesday, Northern Ireland trade almost five years after UK voters decided to withdraw

The deal, which was finalised on Christmas from the bloc. "This deal is not good Eve, already has been ratibecause Brexit is not good. fied by the UK Parliament The situation is also comand conditionally came plicated because we cannot into force pending the European Parliament's be sure how trustworthy the UK government really approval. Because of disis," said Terry Reintke, the agreement on how to apply vice-president of trade rules in Northern Greens/EFA group in the

European Parliament. "Still, this agreement can be a starting point reconstructing what we lost due to Brexit.' Top European Union officials and their British

counterparts have so far failed to find common ground on implementing the so-called Northern Ireland protocol, which were designed to avoid hard border between Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland, and to guarantee the integrity of the bloc's single market. In March, the UK government unilaterally extend-

period for not conducting checks on goods moving between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, a decision that led the EU to start legal action against its former member nation. In an address to EU lawmakers ahead of Tuesday's ratification vote, Commission European

ed until October a grace

President Ursula von der Leyen said she shared their concerns on "unilateral actions taken by (the) United Kingdom" but noted some progress in the talks with British offi-



INDICATOR	%	
Sensex	48,944.14	1.15
Nifty 50	14,653.00	1.16
S&P 500*	4,188.44	0.02
Dollar (₹)	74.65	0.12
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.67	0.30
Euro (₹)	90.07	0.37
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,906▲69	0.14
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	65.90	0.38
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.055	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.584	0.014
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

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

nearly four-fold increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 319.19 crore for the March quarter, on the back of robust sales in the domestic and international markets. The company had reported a net profit of Rs 81.84 crore a year ago. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 6,131.90 crore from Rs 4,104 71 crore. Total two- and threewheeler sales stood at 9.28 lakh units in Q4, up 47 per cent.



■Bid to avert IL&FS, PNB-like scams

Lenders require RBI nod to hire auditor

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, APRIL 27

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

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

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

financial year 2021-22. However, UCBs and NBFCs shall have the flexibility to adopt these guidelines from H2 of FY22 so that there is no disruption. The guidelines provide

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



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

Makarand Joshi, founding partner, MMJC and Associates—a corporate compliance firm—said, 'Rotation of auditors is heavily relied upon by regulators to ensure that any element of true and fair view cannot be kept under wraps for a fairly long period. The issues in large NBFCs like IL&FS and DHFL witnessed over the past few years has been a wake-up call for the regulator. This is an attempt to improve transparency and reliability. The new norm would mean that management will have to invest time to make a new auditor familiar with working of NBFC or financial institution

more frequently."
Public sector banks have to allot the top 20 branches (to be selected in order of the level of outstanding advances) to SCAs to cover a minimum of 15 per cent of the total gross advances

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

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

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

Lenskart to hire 100+ for tech centre

FC BUREAU HYDERABAD, APRIL 27

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

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

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

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

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

Lenskart has posted a modest rise in sales durbecause of the Covidinduced restrictions and change of customer behavioural pattern. However, it has witnessed a 50 per cent increase in its online

Maruti expects second wave to boost car sales

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, APRIL 27

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

Following a steep fall in car sales last year when the pandemic first hit, Maruti's sales picked up in India over the past two quarters as people opted out of public transport and poured their lock-

down-led savings into big-ticket items such as cars. Still, Maruti's fourthquarter results took a hit due to rising commodity prices and supply chain disruptions. Maruti has passed on some of the



R.C. Bhargava

costs to customers and already bumped up car prices twice this year.
"With this second pan-

demic wave the demand for personal transport will, if anything, strengthen, not weaken. Because more and more people will want to have their personal transport," R.C. Bhargava, chai-rman at Maruti Suzuki told reporters after Maruti posted a near 10 per cent drop in quarterly profit. situation continues, April-June should be "decent," he said.

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

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

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

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

MARKET SENTIMENTS LOOK UP

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, APRIL 27

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

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

The daily Covid cases on Monday was lower at 3.23 lakh compared to around 3.5 lakh on Sunday and Maharashtra also reported lower daily infections at 48,700. The market sentiment also got a boost as help started pouring in from many countries. "Investors' expectations from earnings outcome by heavyweights, the progress of the vaccination drive and a dip in the Covid cases further boosted sentiments," said Ajit Mishra, VP-research, Religare Broking.

On Tuesday, FPIs were net sellers by Rs

RETAIL TRADE COUNTS LOSSES

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 27

Lock-down and restrictions in a few states has caused a business loss of Rs 5 lakh crore to unorganised traders, while

the organised retail too estimates around 40 per cent loss in states affected by the second wave. The Confederation of Indian Traders says curfew and other restrictions has caused a business loss of about Rs 5 lakh crore in the past 25 days nationally. Out of Rs 5 lakh crore, the loss of retail traders is estimated to be about Rs 3.5

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

lakh crore and wholesale business of Rs

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

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Boxer injured in Worlds bout dies

Lausanne, Switzerland: An 18year-old boxer from Jordan has died after being seriously injured in a bout at the World Youth Boxing Association said on

Tuesday. Rashed Al-Swaisat was

treated in the ring and then hospitalised after being knocked out in his preliminary-round lightheavyweight fight against Estonian boxer Anton Vinogradov on April 16 in Kielce, Poland. "It is with deep sadness that we learned of the passing of

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

FC Goa play out vet another draw

Margao: FC Goa conceded an

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

lead in the third minute of the Group 'E' match but Ali Ferydoon equalised with just a minute left in regulation time. The Indian Super League side went out of reckoning for a knockout berth after Al Wahda of UAE beat Persepolis FC 1-0 in another Group 'E' match. — PT

Repsol Honda gear up for Spanish GP

to MotoGP in Portimao, Marc Marquez's rehabilitation continues in Jerez as Pol Espargaro aims to make amends for the previous round. Heading to the iconic Jerez de la Frontera for the Gran Premio Red Bull de España, the MotoGP

World Championship is primed for another exciting weekend. The Repsol Honda Team wil again be operating at full capacity as Marquez and Espargaro line up together aboard the RC213V This weekend there will be a fifth Honda on the grid as Stefan Bradl returns to the World Championship as a wildcard

race to seventh in Portugal.

Spain: After an emotional return

berth next season. It was only the second win for Sociedad in their last seven league matches. It was the fifth consecutive loss for last-placed Marc put in a hero's effort to Eibar, which is winless in

Sociedad defeated Basque Country rivals Eibar 1-0 to strengthen their hold on **Betis and four** fifth place in the Spanish seventh-placed The win left Sociedad Villarreal with five three points ahead of sixth-placed Real Betis rounds remaining. and four points in front of

It stayed seven points from escaping the relegation zone. Isak scored at Eibar's Ipurua Stadium with a

tion-threatened team. 16 straight league games.

Correa keeps Lazio in CL hunt Joaquin scores brace to beat AC Milan, Napoli blank Torino to go third

Rome, April 27: Joaquin Correa ensured Lazio kept their hopes of Champions League qualification alive on Monday with a double in a 3-0 win over AC Milan while Napoli jumped up to third thanks to a 2-0 triumph at Torino.

Correa opened the scoring for Lazio with only a minute on the clock at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome and added the second five minutes after the break. Ciro Immobile struck the

third with three minutes left as Lazio moved five points off the Champions League spots with a game in hand on their rivals. "This was like a final for

us, the last chance to stay in with a shout for the top four... It was a clear and dominant victory," Lazio coach Simone Inzaghi told Sky Sport Italia. Inzaghi's side sit sixth.

behind AC Milan who are level on 66 points with Napoli and Juventus third and fourth respectively — but have dropped down to fifth after their second straight league defeat.

13 points behind leaders Inter Milan, who can win their first league title since 2010



Lazio's Joaquin Correa (left) vies for the ball with Ante Rebic of AC Milan in their Italian league match at Rome's Olympic Stadium on Monday.

on Saturday if they beat Crotone and second-placed Atalanta fail to win at Sassuolo on Sunday.

Stefano Pioli's Milan, who started the weekend in second place, could have been beaten by a larger margin as Manuel Lazzari

was denied a goal just frustrated by Correa's secbefore the break by the tightest of VAR offside calls and Italy forward Immobile struck the post seven minutes before he scored his 18th league goal

of the campaign. Pioli was however left

ond, which was given after a lengthy VAR check following what he felt was a foul from Lucas Leiva on Hakan Calhanoglu.

"I don't understand how it wasn't given as a foul on Calhanoglu, said Pioli.

THE RESULTS

Torino (Bakayoko 11, Osimhen

Lazio (Correa 2, 51, Immobile **AĆ Milan**

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

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

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

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

They failed to add to their rivals.

their tally but ran out winners to put pressure on

Host towns pull out over corona

27: The western town April Hundreds of Japanese towns and cities have been forced to rethink plans to Olympic because the coronavirus prevent public appearances and require costly safety measures.

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

After sinking money into upgrading sports facilities, Okuizomo balked when it became clear it would have to provide bubble-like biosecurity measures with regular virus tests and medical care. "We wanted to have one

of the world's top tier teams visit our town and show their skills to local children," town official Katsumi Nagase said.

"But that seems impossible now. More than 500 munici-

palities signed up to host athletes and officials in a scheme aimed at broadening the Olympics' benefits beyond Tokyo.

Some, like Okuizumo, have already scrapped plans to host overseas athletes, while others are preparing to welcome India's hockey team for a pre-Games training camp, only to scrap the visit because of Covid-19. keep everyone safe. Instead of giving resi

of Okuizumo spent

more than \$5 million

dents the chance to meet elite athletes and try out new sports, towns will have to ditch any physical contact, school visits and public training sessions. Kurihara city in north ern Miyagi prefecture was

planning to host South Africa's hockey team, but decided the expense was no longer worth it given the limitations imposed by virus measures.

"It's a project that will use our tax resources, Hidenori Sasaki, an offi cial with the local board of education, said.

"If it becomes just athletes holding a training camp without any exchanges with local residents, local citizens won't enjoy the boxester." enjoy the benefits.

In some cases, Olympic teams have cancelled, worried about the risk of infection before the

SOCIEDAD EDGE PAST EIBAR TO Iheanacho leads Foxes devising careful programmes they hope will **KEEP HOLD ON EUROPA SPOT** fightback to sink Palace **HOCKEY UMPIRE'S MANAGER** April The win left

Alexander Isak scored a Sociedad three first-half winner as Real points ahead of sixth-placed Real points in front of

seventh-placed Villarreal with five rounds remaining. The teams finishing in fifth and sixth places secure a Europa League

> shot from close range in the 26th minute. Sociedad next visit Huesca, while Eibar host Alav es, another relega-

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

Brendan Rogers' side trailed to Wilfried Zaha's first half goal. But Timothy Castagne equalised soon after the interval with his first goal since September. And Nigeria striker Iheanacho sealed Leicester's second successive victory when he scored with a thunderous finish 10 minutes from full-time.

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

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

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

and scored two very good

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

A late collapse cost the Foxes a place in the Champions League in 2020, but Rodgers' men are firmly on course to make amends thanks to the sparkling form of Iheanacho. "We spoke about it at the start of the season and put it to bed them. Our performance levels this season have shown that is in the past, Rodgers said.

New Delhi, April 27: Indian hockey umpire's manager Virendra Singh has died of Covid-19 related complications and his demise was mourned by the game's governing body. Singh was 47. He died in

Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, on Monday. Virendra had officiated in a number of All India tournaments and National Championships.

Mourning his demise, Hockey India president Gyanendro Ningombam said, "We at Hockey India are deeply saddened to learn about the untimely demise of Virendra Singh.'

'SHOOTER DADI' CORONA POSTIVE, IN HOSPITAL

Octogenarian shooter Chandro Tomar, nicknamed 'Shooter Dadi', has tested positive for Covid-19 and admitted to a hospital due to difficulty in breathing.

The Twitter page of the 89-year-old legendary shooter, hailing from the Baghpat village in Uttar Pradesh, posted the development.



Shikhar Dhawan, DC

KL Rahul,

Glenn

Maxwell, RCB

PURPLE

Harshal Patel, RCB

Avesh Khan, DC

Rahul Chahar, MI

Off the field



Sunrisers fast bowler T. Natarajan underwent a knee surgery on

Franchises focus on mental health now

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

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

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

Lee donates bitcoin worth ₹40 lakh

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

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

Kuggeleijn signed up as replacement

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

Regd. No. AP/VJA/41/24/2000.

ner Zampa.

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RETURN ASSURANCE

BCCI guarantees safe return to foreign players

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

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

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

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

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

Ahmedabad, April 27: Royal Challengers Bangalore edged Delhi Capitals in a last-ball thriller on Tuesday.

In pursuit of RCB's 171,

contrasting half-cen-turies from Shimron

Hetmyer (53 off 25) and

Rishabh Pant (58 off 48)

finish line. Capitals need-

ed a six off the last ball, but Pant could only man-

Earlier, the ever-reliable AB de Villiers hit an

unbeaten 42-ball 75 to

power Royal Challengers Bangalore to 171 for five.

from the Delhi bowlers -

Ishant Sharma (1/26),

Axar Patel (1/33), Kagiso

Khan (1/24) — who all

picked one wicket apiece.

three fours and five sixes,

was the top scorer for RCB.

African hit 22 runs off

the last over bowled by

Marcus Stoinis (0/23)that

included three sixes. Rajat Patidar (31) and Glenn Maxwell (25 off 20

balls) also provided valu-

Put in to bat, Devdutt

Padikkal (17) and skipper Virat Kohli (12) were off

to a flying start, amassing

30 runs in 3.5 overs. The

youngster opened his

able contributions.

veteran South

De Villiers, who hit

Avesh

Rabada (1/38), Mishra (1/27),

The

It was a collective effort

age a four.

Deini closer to the



RCB's Glenn Maxwell boards a flight to Ahmedabad.

RCB edge Capitals in thriller

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

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

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

AUSSIE PM RULES OUT

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

arrangements for return. "They have travelled there privately. This wasn't part of an Australian own resources and they'll be using those resources too, I'm sure, to see them return to Australia in accordance with their arrangements,"

Morrison was quoted as saying by *The Guardian*.

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

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

"When you all walk out onto the field, you are of people who have tuned in," he said.

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

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

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

LYNN ASKS CA TO ARRANGE A **CHARTER FLIGHT**

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

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

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

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

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

SCORECARD

b Avesh Khan 12, Devdutt Padikkal b Sharma 17, Rajat Patidar c Smith b Patel

31, Glenn Maxwell c

Smith b Mishra 25, AB

de Villiers (not out) 75,

Washington Sundar c &

b Rabada 6. Daniel

Sams (not out) 3.

Extras (w 2) 2. Total

FoW: 1-30, 2-30, 3-60, 4-114, 5-139.

Bowling: Ishant 4-1-26-1,

Kagiso Rabada 4-0-38-

Amit Mishra 3-0-27-1, Axar Patel 4-0-33-1,

Marcus Stoinis 1-0-23-0.

Delhi Capitals: Prithvi

Shaw c de Villiers b

Dhawan c Chahal b

Jamieson 6, Steven Smith c de Villiers b

Mohammed Siraj 4,

Rishabh Pant (not out)

58, Marcus Stoinis c de

Villiers b Patel 22,

Shimron Hetmyer (not

out) 53. Extras (lb 4, w

2) 6. Total (for four

wickets in 20 overs)

FoW: 1-23, 2-28, 3-47,

Bowling: Daniel Sams 2-0-15-0, Mohammed

Siraj 4-0-44-1, Kyle

Jamieson 4-0-32-1,

Washington Sundar 4-

0-28-0, Harshal Patel 4-0-37-2, Yuzvendra

Chahal 2-0-10-0.

Shikhar

21,

Avesh Khan 4-0-24-1,

overs) 171.

Patel

4-92.

Challengers

-PTI

Felt vulnerable in bubble: Zampa

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

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

"We've been in a few (bubbles) now, and I feel like this is probably the most vulnerable. I just feel like because it's India, we're always being told about the hygiene over here and being extra careful... I just felt like it was the most vulnerable.

Dubai six months ago didn't feel that way at all. I felt like that was extremely safe. Personally, I feel like that would have been a better option originally for this IPL, but obviously, there's a lot of political stuff that goes into it.

"Obviously there's the T20 World Cup that's meant to be happening here later this year. That's probably going to be the next discussion in the cricket world. Six months is a long time," said the legspinner.

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

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

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

Sunrisers face an uphill challenge

New Delhi, April 27: Operating like a well-oiled unit, Chennai Super Kings will start as overwhelming favourites when they clash with struggling Sunrisers Hyderabad in an Indian Premier League (IPL)

match, here on Wednesday. The MS Dhoni-led CSK have bounced back in style after losing the opening match. They are on a roll with four straight wins and will hope that the new venue — Feroze Shah Kotla ground — also favours

three-time champions had an underwhelming 2020 season but the team, packed with seasoned players, is now displaying the efficiency it is known for.

All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has been the driving force behind CSK's impressive run so far.

His blistering assault on

Harshal Patel in the final over shut out RCB on Sunday. He has been among the wickets with his accurate left-arm spin apart from effecting stunning run-outs. Openers — Faf du Plessis

and Ruturaj Gaikwad – have found form while Suresh Raina and Ambati Ravudu are due for big knocks. The CSK batters are

aware of the Rashid Khan threat but the rest of the SRH attack doesn't inspire much confidence. Hyderabad rely heavily

on their foreign recruits, led by skipper David Warner, opener Jonny Bairstow, Kiwi great Kane Williamson and Rashid, which is a cause for concern. Their biggest weakness is a fragile batting Live on TV

Chennai Super Kings vs Sunrisers Hyderabad from 7.30 pm on

HEAD to HEAD

10 SRH FOR THE RECORD

Matches

David Warner with 199 sixes in become the eighth batsman to complete a double century of sixes

Suresh Raina with 4,99 fours in 193 innings needs just one more to become the fourth batsman to complete 500 fours in IPL.

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

Sunrisers beat CSK by 7 runs at

CSK beat Sunrisers by 20 runs at

STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISER

order and over-reliance on

the top order.
The inability of the team's Indian middle-order

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

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

all-rounder Jadeja and veteran Imran Tahir form a strong bowling unit. — PTI

Cancelling IPL will not mitigate the colossal tragedy

for three at the hallway

Patidar, who hit 31 off 22

deliveries, and de Villiers

steadied the ship by stitching a 54-run stand

but all-rounder Axar

Patel, who accounted for

the Indian in the 15th

Barring de Villiers all

RCB batsmen were guilty

off not capitalising on



Ayaz Memon

Over The Top

account with a boundary dangerous Padikkal.

nould the current IPL season be completed with the second wave of the pandemic hitting India with a sledgehammer blow, or suspended to a later month when the situation is under control?

R. Ashwin, Kane Richardson, Adam Zampa, Andrew Tye, Liam Livingston pulling out of the tournament in the past

week has exposed the trau-

mas and concerns being experienced in the seemingly hassle-free biosecure bubbles. It is reasonable to believe that the number of such players is not restricted to six. Human sensibilities and

off Ishant in the first

over. The duo hit five

changed as DC bowlers

Pacer Avesh provided

the Capitals with the first

breakthrough, dismiss-

ing the RCB captain for 12

in the fourth over. In the

verv next ball. Ishant.

playing his first match of

the season, got rid of the

effected

blows.

However, that

back-to-back

responses in such extraordinary circumstances can't be simplistically codified. Different players will react differently. For some, ambition, thrill and pride may not matter after a Others, however, who

With two new batsmen

in the middle, the sea-

soned speedster went on

to bowl a wicket maiden

to slow down the proceed-

ings as RCB collected 36

runs for the loss of two

wickets in the Powerplay.

cameo, smashing two maximums and a bound-

ary but was caught at

long on by compatriot Steve Smith of leggie

Maxwell played a short

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

Cummins believed that the tournament provided some relief to the Indian public otherwise besieged by the pandemic. Fellow Aussie, former captain Ricky Ponting holds a similar view. There will be

of playing sport, rewards many in agreement with of fame and money etc this point of view too. This polarisation spills

over outside the bio-secure bubbles, in everyday life. One section of people believes that the IPL's celebratory and brazenly commercial ethos is out of sync with the havoc being caused by the virus and mocks the tragedy that the country is currently expe-

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

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

Cancelling the IPL will not mitigate the colossal tragedy inflicted by the current Covid tsunami. The tournament is not a super spreader, like multiphased elections and religious events to which those in authority turned a blind eye despite all warning signals. The IPL is being played without fans, with all precautions taken on health safety proce-

However, the BCCI can be

faulted for being insensitive to the extenuating circumstances. With a little imagination, the phenomenal reach of the league could have been exploited for more meaningful messages (with connivance of franchises, players, broadregular PR stuff.

A major accusation is that players — especially Indians — have not coughed up money for relief. As high-income earners, they should. Some may have, without making it public who knows. But personal money contribution is not the only thing needed in this dire situation.

In the long build up to matches, 10 minutes dedicated (through players) how to fight the disease would have gone longer than full page ads in newspapers and mucky, ill-informed stuff on news TV. The Strategic Time Out for instance, would have been ideal for appeals for assistance to the most adversely hit cities, towns. And so on.
The surround sound this

season needed sobriety and strong show of altruistic purpose, not the regular brouhaha, which in the prevailing circumstances, thetic, uncaring.