

## Over 18-yr-olds can get Covid shot from May 1

VINEETA PANDEY | DC  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

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

The decision for "liberalised and accelerated" Phase 3 Covid-19 vaccination drive from May 1 was announced after Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a series of meetings over India's response to record daily surges in Covid cases.

With Covid-19 cases rising at an alarming speed and hospital beds, oxygen supply and medicines in short supply, the government was under tremendous pressure to open up vaccination and allow states access to medical essentials.

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

As per the new vaccination policy, pricing, procurement, eligibility and administration of vaccines have been made flexible in Phase 3 and all stakeholders have been

given flexibility to customise to local needs. However, vaccines in the government sector will continue to be administered free of cost.

■ Page 3: Private players free to set job price

## UK PM cancels India tour again

London: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has cancelled his planned visit to India next week due to the coronavirus situation in the country, Downing Street said on Monday. Johnson, who admitted it was "frustrating" but "only sensible" to call off the visit, will instead speak to Prime Minister Narendra Modi later this month to launch their plans for the future UK-India partnership.

■ Full report on Page 4

## India is red list country for UK

London: Britain on Monday added India to its Covid-19 travel "red list", which bans all travel from the country and makes a 10-day hotel quarantine compulsory for UK residents arriving back to the country. Health secretary Matt Hancock confirmed the move in the House of Commons as he revealed that 103 cases of the so-called Indian variant had been identified in the UK, of which the "vast majority" have links to international travel.

## HISTORY | CREATED

# Nasa's helicopter become first object to take flight outside earth

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

The triumph was hailed as a Wright Brothers moment. The mini 1.8-kilogram copter even carried a bit of wing fabric from the Wright Flyer that made similar history at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in 1903.

"Altimeter data confirms that Ingenuity has performed its first flight, the first flight of a powered aircraft on another planet," said the helicopter's chief pilot back on Earth, Havard

● To accomplish all this, the helicopter's twin, counter-rotating rotor blades needed to spin at 2,500 revolutions per minute — five times faster than on Earth.

Grip, his voice breaking as his teammates erupted in applause. It was a brief hop — just 39 seconds — but accomplished all the major milestones.

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

"We've been talking so long about our Wright

Brothers mom-ent, and here it is," she said.

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## IN BRIEF

PORTAL DEVELOPED  
TO CHECK ONLINE  
FRAUD IN AP, TSDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 19

To restrict the number of mobile phone connections to nine for an individual as per the norm and also to keep a check on online fraud, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has developed a portal and launched it on Monday.

DoT director-general Tushar Kanti Paul launched the portal [www.tafcop.dgtelecom.gov.in](http://www.tafcop.dgtelecom.gov.in) online from New Delhi. It has been named 'The Telecom Analytics for Fraud Management and Consumer Protection'.

Vijayawada telecommunication authorities said that the main objective in developing the portal was to impose restrictions as they had found out that some individuals were having more than nine mobile connections in their names. The portal will help to locate such numbers. The individuals would be advised to get rid of them as a safety precaution. For instance, as some people use the IDs of others to get mobile connections and in case any criminal activity crops up, the innocent people face trouble as their IDs without their authorisation were used.

The portal developed by the department of Telecommunications in Vijayawada will facilitate consumers of AP Licensed Service Area consisting of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states.

STATE MOVE ON  
NEW LIFT SYSTEM  
RAISES QUESTIONS

From page 1

The GO said that the construction of new lift system was subject to correctness of provisions, quantities and rates proposed in the estimate and also the designs/drawings are to get approval from the Central Designs Organisation.

The state's move to permit construction of a new lift system at a time when the whole project is supposed to be completed by end of 2021, raises several questions.

Meanwhile, the state government has issued another GO according revised administrative approval for taking up various works of Polavaram irrigation project for ₹7,192 crore against the earlier approved amount of ₹5,534.41 crore.

The state government issued an order on Monday according revised administrative approval for the estimate for the work of investigation, survey or preparation of designs, drawing and L.P. Schedules. Accordingly, they will include construction of earth dam gaps I and III, earth-cum-rock fill dam for gap II, spill channel, approach channel and pilot channel; construction of spillway with crest level +25.72 and its ancillary works; excavation of foundation of 960 MW hydro-electric power house, approach channel, intake structure, tail race pool and tail race channel.

The revised approval was subject to the condition that the entire cost is within the revised estimate approved by the Central Water Commission and also ensure that reimbursement is obtained from the Centre.

Analysts feel that while a general disinterest in voting was palpable, the spread of the second wave of Covid-19 too might have prompted many to sit back in their homes.

JNTU AND SKU  
CONVOCATIONS  
ON APRIL 24DC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, APRIL 19

Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University and Sri Krishnadevaraya universities are planning to conduct the convocation ceremony by taking all necessary preventive measures.

The convocation was scheduled to be held on April 24 at both universities. However, as the Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan cancelled his visit and now will address the meeting through virtual mode.

In fact, both universities had fixed dates to conduct on the same day following which the Governor agreed to take part in the celebrations. In the wake an increase in coronavirus positive cases, his programme was cancelled and it will now be a virtual address.

The Sri Krishnadevaraya University administration has asked students to produce Covid-19 negative reports before entry into the Bhuvana Vijaya auditorium. JNTUA authorities have also made arrangements for the 11th annual convocation of the university at auditorium. "We will also follow similar preventive steps", sources said.

Tirupati voters bring down  
poll percentage once again

Only half the voters in Tirupati Assembly segment cast their vote

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, APRIL 19

The electorate in this temple town has continued with their trend of bringing down the voting percentage, as was evident from the byelection for the Tirupati (SC) Lok Sabha seat on Saturday.

Only half the voters in the Tirupati assembly segment cast their vote, triggering a debate on the urban people's disenchantment with the present political styles and systems.

As per the official statistics of the Election Commission of India (ECI), nearly 10.99 lakh people have cast their votes in the bypoll out of 17.10 lakh voters in the parliamentary constituency. The polling percentage was 64.29.

The data released by the ECI showed that the voter turnout in the Tirupati assembly segment, per se, was still lower as compared to those of the other six assembly segments.

Going by reports, out of 2.82 lakh voters in the Tirupati assembly segment, only 1.42 lakh have cast their vote. This forms about 50 per cent. The other six assembly segments — including Sarvepalli, Gudur, Venkatagiri, Sullurpetta, Srikalahasti and Satyavedu — recorded an average voting of 67.14 per cent.

The pilgrim city had witnessed low voting percentage in the previous elections too. In the 2004 general elections, the percentage was 50.94, whereas in 2009 it was slightly better at 51.64 per cent.

The situation remained the same in the 2014 elections, which saw a voting percentage of 59.51. The 2019 elections saw a decent turnout with 65.94 per cent of the voters casting their vote.

Even in the bypoll held for the Tirupati assembly seat, which followed the death of the Telugu Desam sitting MLA in 2015, the poll percentage was 50.78 per cent.

In the Saturday's byelection, the first two hours of the polling saw 6.50 per cent voting, and it went up to 32.12 per cent by 1 pm, 45.85 per cent by 5 pm and finally halted at 50.58 per cent by 7 pm.

Political analysts feel that while a general disinterest in voting was palpable, the spread of the second wave of Covid-19 too might have prompted many to sit back in their homes.

Though the Tirupati assembly segment has been recording an average of around 50-55 per cent polling in every election, it had seen a hike in the 2019 election with a voting of 65.94 per cent.

Analysts feel that while a general disinterest in voting was palpable, the spread of the second wave of Covid-19 too might have prompted many to sit back in their homes.



A specially challenged man comes to a polling station in Satyanarayanaapuram in Tirupati to cast his vote in the Lok Sabha seat byelection held on Saturday in this file picture.

Bypoll: Audio clip on  
bogus votes goes viralDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, APRIL 19

Amid the Oppositions' hue and cry over the alleged bogus voting in Tirupati Lok Sabha byelection, an audio clip of phone conversations allegedly between the Chandragiri MLA Chevreddy Bhaskar Reddy and an unknown person has surfaced on social media on Monday.

The phone conversation, which was posted by the Telugu Desam on its official Twitter wall and also telecasted by some of the Telugu news channels, carried a talk between two persons about certain difficulties in arranging logistics to bring people from elsewhere to Tirupati to cast bogus votes in the Saturday's polling, allegedly in favour of the ruling party candidate.

According to the audio clip, the unknown person on the phone was proposing to arrange nine buses with 50 people in each, to reach Tirupati by Saturday to cast the votes. But the person with the alleged voice of MLA says it is not possible to make arrangements as it is going to be around a 9 hours journey and the time is very less to make it at the last minute. He then told the unknown person that they would somehow cast those 400 votes locally and asked him to drop the plan.

BJP asks SP to reveal  
status of bypoll complaintsDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, APRIL 19

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) functionaries in Tirupati led by its state official spokesperson Samanchi Srinivas handed over a representation to Tirupati SP Ch. Venkata Appala Naidu, requesting him to reveal the status of the complaints made by the BJP on the irregularities committed in the Tirupati Lok Sabha byelection.

Alleging that no action has been taken so far on the complaints lodged by the BJP leaders against the irregularities committed during the polling on April 17, the BJP functionaries demanded immediate registering of cases and prosecute those who cast bogus votes and those who mobilised the outsiders to polling stations in Tirupati.

Speaking to the media on Monday, Samanchi Srinivas said they have lodged a complaint with the Tirupati Urban SP seeking action against the violators.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Kola Anand alleged that Pavitra Reddy, the daughter of Srikalahasti MLA B. Madhusudhan Reddy, who came with her followers, has threatened the polling official and agents at Thottambedu in Srikalahasti on the election day.

"BJP leaders were injured due to the highhanded behaviour of YSRC leaders, who forcibly removed the gates and pulled out those who were sitting as election agents on behalf of the BJP. The YSRC men are now going to our agents' houses at night and threatening them", he alleged.

Like Pancha Pandav, the DGP, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, chief whip Chevreddy Bhaskar Reddy, minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy and Nellore returning officer supervised rigging of the elections, the Telugu Desam AP president alleged.

Atchannaidu said Tirupati is a sacred place and let them swear in the name of God that they did not resort to irregularities. Exhibiting audio clips of Chevreddy's conversations with voters with fake voter ID cards, he said these evidences were submitted to the Central Election Commission but there has been no response.

Expressing his concern over the spike in Covid cases in the state, Atchannaidu said there was shortage of beds, oxygen and doctors all over the state but the Chief Minister has been claiming that everything is under control.

DEMOCRACY WAS  
DUMPED IN GUTTERS  
AT TIRUPATI: VASUDC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, APRIL 19

TD politburo member Reddeppagari Srinivasa Reddy (Vasu) said that democracy was dumped in the gutters during the byelection to the Tirupati Lok Sabha seat.

He said that people had seen on electronic media how the Jagan government was taking the constitutional system into its own hands.

Minister Peddireddy Ramachandradev had set up a camp for everyone in his own function hall. He said it would not be possible to check such misconduct in the future unless Aadhaar is linked to the voter ID card.

Meanwhile, the education authorities advised the beneficiaries of the scheme to call on toll-free number 1902 in case they find any problem in the implementation of the Jagananna Vidya Deevena. Under the scheme, fee-reimbursement is done in four phases.

The first instalment of Jagananna Vidya Deevena was released on Monday, the second to be released in July, third in December and fourth in February.

A young woman from Pernamitta in Ongole City of Prakasam district, identified as Nandini, profoundly thanked Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for his Vidya Deevena Scheme which she said has enabled her to pursue a degree course in Ongole.

During a virtual interaction with the CM on the occasion of the release of financial aid to beneficiaries under Jagananna Vidya Deevena scheme in Ongole on Monday, she said every members of her family were benefited because of CM's welfare schemes.

"I am studying first year B.Sc (Agriculture) at Harshini Degree College. I have a sister and my family had no dependable resources either to study or survive if not for the welfare schemes of CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy," Nandini said in an emotional tone.

She said that her sister

ATCHANNAIDU  
DEMANDS RE-POLL  
TO TIRUPATI LS SEATDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 19

Telugu Desam AP president K. Atchannaidu has demanded the Central Election Commission to re-conduct the Tirupati byelection keeping in view the irregularities committed by the YSRC activists.

Addressing a press conference in Visakhapatnam on Monday, Atchannaidu said he had observed many byelections in the country but none like Tirupati.

"Out of 100 voters, only 60 were genuine and rest were imposters brought from outside. The ruling party did this after realising that the TD would win the elections," Atchannaidu said.

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AP Assembly Speaker Tammineni Sitaram speaks on Jagananna Vidya Deevena with the media in Srikakulam on Monday.

Speaker says education is  
gaining importance in APDC CORRESPONDENT  
SRIKAKULAM, APRIL 19

Education is getting top priority in the state after Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had taken over as Chief Minister, said AP Assembly Speaker Tammineni Sitaram after participating in the video conference with the Chief Minister on the launch of Jagananna Vidya Deevena on Monday.

Minister for animal husbandry Seedari Appala Raju was present along with him.

Talking to the media after the video conference,

CALL 1902 IN CASE  
OF ANY PROBLEM,  
SAY OFFICIALS

from page 1

Referring to the earlier practice where the fee-reimbursement amount used to be paid into the bank accounts of the owners of educational institutions, the new facility provides for cash assistance to the mothers of students directly.

Meanwhile, the education authorities advised the beneficiaries of the scheme to call on toll-free number 1902 in case they find any problem in the implementation of the Jagananna Vidya Deevena. Under the scheme, fee-reimbursement is done in four phases.

The first instalment of Jagananna Vidya Deevena was released on Monday, the second to be released in July, third in December and fourth in February.

Apart from releasing ₹4,207.85 crore towards reimbursement for 2019-20, the state government also cleared dues of ₹1,880 crore of the previous government for 2018-19.

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Sitaram said education was needed to drive away the poverty conditions.

He said that the CM strongly believed that anything could be achieved with the help of education and realised poverty need not be a cause to deprive poor children from getting education.

Taking this as a mission, Jagan Mohan Reddy launched Amma Vodi and Nadu Nedu to strengthen government schools to the level of corporate schools, launched CBSE syllabus and introduced English medium at the primary level.

With the Jagananna Vasati Deevena and Sampoorana Poshana Jagan Mohan Reddy wanted to provide nutrition from the pre-natal stage to the children.

Under the new scheme, Jagananna Vidya Deevena, 67,567 students belonging to SC, BC, ST and minorities were benefited.

An amount of ₹31.86 crore was deposited in the accounts of 60,971 mothers in the district, the Speaker said.

Appala Raju said the amount under Jagananna Vidya Deevena would be deposited in four phases.

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## SHORT TAKES

COLLECTOR  
ORDERS  
SHIFTING

FROM PAGE 1

In all, 4,831 positive cases have registered from April 6 to April 18. District collector has ordered shifting of vegetable and grocery vendors from Potti Sriramulu Market to the 80 feet road, so that social distance could be maintained and Coronavirus avoided.

RAINS LASH  
MANY PARTS OF  
NORTH ANDHRADC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 19

Thundershowers lashed many parts of north coastal Andhra on Monday evening bringing down the temperature. However, the rains did not uproot trees or snap power lines.

An IMD report said thundershowers accompanied by lightning is likely over north coastal AP from Tuesday till Friday. However, the normal temperature was above 2 to 3°C in the Rayalaseema area.

AGENCY TRADERS  
TO OBSERVE  
LOCKDOWNDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 19

All the traders and business establishments have decided to observe half a day lockdown in Araku Valley in Visakhapatnam Agency from Tuesday onwards.

The shops will open at 6 and close at 2 pm, barring essential services like medical shops and milk booths. Bakeries and sweet shops were allowed to open till 4 pm and the motor and vehicle mechanics could open any time with the permission of the traders association in case of emergency.

The Araku Valley Traders Welfare Association and Civil Welfare Society held a meeting on Sunday and took the decision.

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, Sape Vidya Sagar, S/o. Sape Sreerama Murthy Residing at 11-70, Linepetta, Pallamkurru, E.G. Dist-533212, Changed my Daughter name Sape Vidya Sagar Sape Manjushree to **SAPE MANJUSHREE**. Hereafter my Daughter Name is known as **SAPE MANJUSHREE**.

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, (Army No: Ex-JC 269869X, Rank:Sub.) **PUREDDY P V PRASAD REDDY**, S/o. P. Paidi Raju, Residing at # 58-26-30/1, Reddy Street, Butchirajupalem, Visakhapatnam District, AP. Hereby declare that my Son's name was wrongly entered in my Service Records as **PP PRANEETH REDDY** instead of **PUREDDY PAIDI PRANEETH REDDY**. vide affidavit dated 12-04-2021 sworn before Notary, Visakhapatnam.

## CHANGE OF NAME &amp; DATE OF BIRTH

I, (Army No: Ex-JC 269869X, Rank:Sub.) **PUREDDY P V PRASAD REDDY**, S/o. P. Paidi Raju, Residing at # 58-26-30/1, Reddy Street, Butchirajupalem, Visakhapatnam District, AP. Hereby declare that my Wife's name and Date of Birth was wrongly entered in my Service Records as **PADIWATHI / DOB: 30-11-1983** instead of **PUREDDY PADMAWATHI / DOB: 08-03-1984**. vide affidavit dated 12-04-2021 sworn before Notary, Visakhapatnam.

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## Beds to be hiked to 45,000

Present availability of 17,000 beds in 126 hospitals to be increased

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 19

As Coronavirus cases are rising by the day, the state government is working towards readying 5,000 beds spread over 265 government and private hospitals in a week's time.

Based on directions from Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to overhaul infrastructure in all hospitals, the state health authorities are making arrangements to take qualitative care of the patients.

Authorities maintained that when the spread of the Coronavirus reached its peak last September, they had arranged over 37,000 beds in 261 hospitals. As the virus has started spreading again, the authorities intend to

● Presently 35,465 patients are in home isolation and 7,535 patients are taking treatment in hospitals

enhance the bed-strength to 45,000 from the present availability of 17,000 beds in 126 hospitals.

Officials are trying to trace people showing corona symptoms within three hours of receiving a call on 104 toll free number. In case the patient shows mild symptoms, the individual will be placed in home isolation under the supervision of an ANM. If the patient shows moderate symptoms, he or she will be shifted to the nearby Covid care centre and if the symptoms are severe, the patient will be shifted to Covid hospital.

Presently, 35,465 patients are in home isolation and 7,535 patients are taking treatment in hospitals.

Jagan Mohan Reddy has laid stress on the role of community participation to curb the spread of coronavirus. Health authorities are taking up an aggressive awareness programme on social media by sending messages on appropriate behaviour and protocols.

AP state Covid-19 nodal officer Dr Arja Srikanth said, "We are ramping up the number of beds and other requisite medical infrastructure in both government and private hospitals to ensure health care to all infected patients. We have taken up a campaign on social media to educate people on how to curb the spread of the virus."



Medical staff administers Covid vaccine to a woman during a vaccination drive at Swarnabharathi Indoor Stadium in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

— P. NARASIMHA MURTHY

2,569 PATIENTS  
DISCHARGED

FROM PAGE 1

The state health authorities discharged 2,569 patients after recovery.

Among daily cases of infection, Chittoor was the worst hit at 1,182 followed by 938 in Guntur, 893 in Srikakulam, 626 in East Godavari, 565 in Visakhapatnam, 491 in Nellore, 434 in Kurnool, 280 in Prakasam, 189 in Kadapa, 171 in Krishna, 156 in Anantapur and 19 each in Vizianagaram and West Godavari.

SHOPS TO BE  
CLOSED BY 2 PM

Nellore: In view of an alarming rise in Covid positive cases in Gudur region, Municipal authorities decided to down shutters by 2 pm to contain Covid.

Private players free to  
set jab price, says Centre

FROM PAGE 1

States too have been given the freedom to procure additional vaccine doses directly from the manufacturers while the Centre will also continue to supply them.

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

The government will allow the imported ready-to-use vaccines to be utilised in the private sector and state facilities. Centre, from its share, will allocate vaccines to states/UTs

● Facing severe criticism for its poor handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, and for preferring elections and Kumbh Mela to public health, the Union government on Monday went into a huddle.

● The second wave has exposed the country's weak and uncaring health care system more than the first wave.

based on the criteria of extent of infection (number of active Covid cases) and performance (speed of administration).

Incidentally, this move comes a day after former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh wrote a letter to Prime Minister Modi urging him to ramp up vaccination efforts and let states

decide priorities for age groups.

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

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

No shortage of  
beds: MinisterDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM,  
APRIL 19

The Visakhapatnam district is fully geared up to handle the second wave of Covid-19, which has been rapidly spreading since the last 10 days, said minister for tourism and culture Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao (Avanti) while talking to the media persons here on Monday evening.

Earlier, he held a review meeting with the local MLAs in the presence of collector V. Vinay Chand and health officials. He said that there was no shortage of hospital beds or specialist doctors. Even there is sufficient stock of oxygen.

"We have appointed specialists, general duty doctors and specialist doctors to meet the demand," the minister said.

The district has 6,568 Covid beds, 1,022 ICU beds and 2,650 non-ICU beds.

There is a stock of 50 tons of oxygen and 462 ventilators. Ward wise, 72 PHCs have doctors and testing facilities for 5,000 persons every day throughout the district, he said.

After having detailed discussions with the health officials, the hospitals have been categorised into A and B. The A category hospitals have been completely dedicated to Covid treatment and the B category hospitals allotted some sections of beds for Covid.

Among the private hospitals, six have been categorised as A category and 33 as B category.

On the testing facility, the minister said not many people were coming forward for the test.

4 Secretariat, 2 HC  
staff die of Covid-19DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 19

Four employees of the AP Secretariat died after getting infected with Coronavirus and nearly 40 employees got infected with the virus in the last few days.

The deceased were identified as V. Padma Rao, assistant secretary, finance department; G. Ravi Kanth, section officer, general administration department; Santhi Kumari, section officer, panchayat raj department and A.S.N. Murthy, record assistant. They

breathed their last in the last three days.

Andhra Pradesh Secretariat Association submitted a representation to the Chief Secretary on Monday with a request to issue necessary orders to permit all employees of the Secretariat to work from home as they were having the tool of e-office system for processing of files or to allow at least 50 per cent of the employees to work from home on rotation basis.

In a related development, two employees working at AP High court also died of Covid-19.

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT  
TENALI MUNICIPALITY, E-procurement Notice

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Online tenders are hereby invited from the contractors/contracting agencies for the No. of works:6 vide ECV **Rs.287.91** in Lakhs. The tender document is available for download from Dt:20-04-2021 (11.00am) and last date for bid submission is Dt: 27-04-2021 & Dt:04.05.2021(4.30pm) through <http://tender.aapeprocurement.gov.in> (AP portal) Further details can be seen at 'e'procurementmarket Place i.e., "[www.aapeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.aapeprocurement.gov.in)"

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Sl. No.	Name of the Posts	No. of Vacancy*	Pay Matrix Level in CDA pattern
1.	General Manager (T/P) [Regional Offices of NHIDCL located in North Eastern States, A&N Islands etc.]	**	Pay Matrix Level-13 of 7th CPC [Pre-revised PB - 4 of Rs. 37,400 - 67,000/- plus Grade Pay Rs.8,700/-]
2.	Deputy General Manager (T/P) [Regional Offices of NHIDCL located in North Eastern States, A&N Islands etc.]	20	Pay Matrix Level-12 of 7th CPC [Pre-revised PB-3 of Rs.15,600 - 39,100/- plus Grade Pay of Rs. 7,600/-]
3.	Deputy General Manager (Fin) [Regional Offices of NHIDCL located in Leh (Ladakh), J&K, North Eastern States, A&N Islands etc.]	05	Pay Matrix Level-12 of 7th CPC [Pre-revised PB-3 of Rs.15,600 - 39,100/-plus Grade Pay of Rs. 7,600/-]
4.	Manager (T/P) [Regional Offices of NHIDCL located in North Eastern States, A&N Islands etc.]	20	Pay Matrix Level-11 of 7th CPC [Pre-revised Pay Band-3 of Rs.15,600- 39,100/- plus Grade Pay of Rs. 6,600/- in CDA Pattern]
5.	Manager (Fin) [Regional Offices of NHIDCL located in Leh (Ladakh), J&K, North Eastern States, A&N Islands etc.]	05	Pay Matrix Level-11 of 7th CPC [Pre-revised Pay Band-3 of Rs.15,600- 39,100/- plus Grade Pay of Rs. 6,600/- in CDA Pattern]
6.	Manager (Legal) [NHIDCL HQrs/ Regional Offices of NHIDCL located in Leh (Ladakh), J&K, North Eastern States, A&N Islands etc.]	01	Pay Matrix Level-11 of 7th CPC [Pre-revised Pay Band-3 of Rs.15,600- 39,100/- plus Grade Pay of Rs. 6,600/- in CDA Pattern]
7.	Assistant Manager (HR) [NHIDCL HQrs/ Regional Offices of NHIDCL located in Leh (Ladakh), J&K, North Eastern States, A&N Islands etc.]	02	Pay Matrix Level-8 of 7th CPC [Pre-revised Pay Band-2 of Rs.9,300-34,800/- plus Grade Pay of Rs. 4,800/- in CDA Pattern]
8.	Junior Manager (HR) [NHIDCL HQrs/ Regional Offices of NHIDCL located in Leh (Ladakh), J&K, North Eastern States, A&N Islands etc.]	06	Pay Matrix Level-6 of 7th CPC [Pre-revised Pay Band-2 of Rs.9,300- 34,800/- plus Grade Pay of Rs. 4,200/- in CDA Pattern]
9.	Junior Manager (Legal) [NHIDCL HQrs/ Regional Offices of NHIDCL located in Leh (Ladakh), J&K, North Eastern States, A&N Islands etc.]	01	Pay Matrix Level-6 of 7th CPC [Pre-revised Pay Band-2 of Rs.9,300-34,800/- plus Grade Pay of Rs. 4,200/- in CDA Pattern]
10.	Junior Manager (Rajbhasha) [HQrs, NHIDCL]	01	Pay Matrix Level-6 of 7th CPC [Pre-revised Pay Band-2 of Rs.9,300-34,800/- plus Grade Pay of Rs. 4,200/- in CDA Pattern]

\* Further, NHIDCL reserves the right to prepare a Panel of selected Candidates for filling up the indicated and future vacancies that may arise in NHIDCL. The number of vacancies in the Posts may vary, depending upon the requirement.

**Last date for submission of Application: 31.05.2021 (Monday) up to-18:00 hrs.**

**For detailed Terms and Conditions please visit- [www.nhidcl.com](http://www.nhidcl.com)**

**NOTE 1:** Officers presently serving in the Central Government Ministries/ Departments, **Army, Navy, Airforce**, Autonomous Bodies, Public Sector Undertakings, State Government Departments and State Government Public Undertakings and satisfying the prescribed eligibility criteria may also apply for the post on Deputation basis in the prescribed proforma along with copy of ACRs/APARs for last five years, No Objection Certificate (NOC) and Vigilance Clearance (VC). **Those applying for appointment on deputation basis can be of any age. Subsequent to their retirement they may be allowed to continue in NHIDCL on contract basis subject to both party agreeing to it. If their parent organisation need them to revert back for retirement formalities, they may be allowed to do so for a period up to one week. Thereafter they can continue on contract basis on the terms and conditions applicable to Contract employees.**

**NOTE 2:** Any change or amendment in this Vacancy Circular will be posted on the NHIDCL Website only.

**NOTE 3:** Incomplete applications or those received after the prescribed date shall be summarily rejected.

Dy. General Manager (HR)

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE, BUILDING THE NATION



SHORT TAKES

ODISHA IMPOSES WEEKEND SHUTDOWNS

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 19

Odisha government on Monday announced weekend shutdowns on Saturdays and Sundays in all the urban areas in the state in view of the unprecedented rise in Covid-19 cases. "In view of the rapid increase in the Covid-19 cases in the state, the government announced weekend shutdowns on Saturdays and Sundays. Besides, the government appeals to people to maintain social distance, wear masks and use sanitiser," Special Relief Commissioner P.K. Jena said on Monday evening.

The SRC said night curfew will continue from 6 pm to 6 am on 10 districts bordering Chhattisgarh. In other 20 districts, night curfew will remain in force from 9 pm to 6 am, the SRC said, adding, essential services will be allowed to function.

Meanwhile, as reports of shortage and black marketing of important Covid-19 medicines and medical supplies, including Remdesivir, began to pour in from various parts of the state, the Odisha government constituted a state-level Committee to ensure that such issues do not crop up here. The Committee is headed by Crime Branch ADG Yashwant Jethwa. The committee, formed on Sunday evening, on Monday discussed several issues with Controller of Drugs.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, Jethwa said that teams of flying squads, surveillance teams and surprise checking teams from the enforcement wing of Drug Controller, Police, Special Task Force of Crime Branch will be part of Joint Enforcement squad which will carry out special drives across the state. "We have constituted 7 flying squads for Cuttack and Bhubaneswar and 15 squads for remaining parts of Odisha," said Jethwa.

# Delhi locks down for 6 days as cases continue to surge

Kejriwal said it was necessary as city's health system was stretched to its limit

New Delhi, April 19: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a six-day lockdown in the national capital from 10 pm on Monday till 5 am on April 26 and said it was necessary to deal with the rising number of Covid-19 cases as the city's health system was stretched to its limit.

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

Thousands of guest workers gathered at the city's inter-state bus terminals and railway stations to return home even though Kejriwal appealed to them with folded hands not to leave Delhi and gave a word of assurance — "main hoon na" (I am here for you). Addressing an online press conference, Kejriwal sought to assure the guest workers by saying that this short period of lockdown would not be extended. "I have full faith that this short period of lockdown would not be extended. We might not have to extend it. Trust me that if we fight this together, we would be able to overcome this. I assure you, the government will take full care of you. I am here, have faith in me," he said. The CM said that Delhi's health system is tremendously stretched although it has not collapsed yet, and added that despite around 25,500 cases com-



Family members mourn the death of Covid-19 victim at a mortuary in New Delhi on Monday.

— PTI

ing up every day, it is still functioning.

But any system has its limit, he said, assuring that the lockdown is needed to prevent the health system of Delhi from collapsing under the increasing number of patients as there is an acute shortage of medicines, beds, ICUs and oxygen. "If we do not impose a lockdown now, we might face a tragedy. We do not want Delhi to face such a situation wherein patients are lying on the corridors or losing their life on the streets at any cost," he said.

Noting that the decision of imposing new restrictions was not an easy one, Kejriwal said that he has been strictly against a lockdown even as it becomes crucial only after the health system of the city reaches its limit. — PTI

## Meghalaya bans entry of tourists to curb spread

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, APRIL 19

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

Assam, which is also the gateway of northeast, has already announced that Covid-negative certificates from other states

will not be valid to enter the state and people will have to undergo tests upon arrival at airports and railway stations.

Informing that there will be no restriction on local tourism, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma said that restrictions on entry of tourists from outside Meghalaya will come into force from April 23. The state has also decided to shut down tourist spots, which witnesses high tourists foot fall. "We have decided to close down tourist destinations which usually have very high tourist

turn out," Sangma said.

Meanwhile Assam's Covid-19 tally mounted to 2,24,455 as 639 more people tested positive for the infection, while six fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,135. The six deaths were reported from Barpeta, Cachar, Dhemaji, Kamrup Metropolitan, Morigaon and Tinsukia districts. Assam currently has 5,268 active cases. Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the cases reported in Assam during the second wave were mostly among those who were from outside the state.

## HC orders lockdown in five UP cities

Allahabad, April 19: Amid a surge in Coronavirus cases, the Allahabad High Court on Monday directed the Uttar Pradesh government to impose a week-long lockdown in Lucknow, Allahabad, Kanpur Nagar, Varanasi and Gorakhpur.

Reacting to the order, the UP government, however, said there will be no "complete lockdown" in the cities for now.

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

"We are of the considered view that in given scenario of present time if people are restrained from going outside their homes for a week in the

first instance, the current chain of spread of infection can be broken and this will also give some respite to the frontline medical and health workers," the bench observed.

Accordingly, we are passing the directions in respect of cities of Prayagraj (Allahabad), Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur Nagar and Gorakhpur and we direct the government to strictly enforce them forthwith," it said.

"All establishments be it government or private, except financial institutions and financial departments, medical and health services, industrial and scientific establishments, essential services including municipal functions, and public transport, shall remain closed till 26th April, 2021," the bench said. — PTI

## Kerala imposes night curfew

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 19

With Kerala reporting 31,901 cases in the last two days and the second wave posing serious challenge to the health care system, the state government on Monday decided to enforce stringent measures including night curfew from April 20

A high level meeting of the core committee held in Thiruvananthapuram, decided to impose night curfew from 9 pm to 5 am for next two weeks.

All shops and business establishments barring essential services will have to shut shop by 9 pm daily. The meeting decided to intensify checking by police at main junctions, market places, commercial centres, city centres and major roads to enforce the restriction strictly and take action against the violators.

The cinema theatres will wind up shows by 7 pm, strict restrictions have been imposed on shopping malls and the entry of people would be restricted.

## WORLD

IN BRIEF

NZ distances from 'Five Eyes'

Wellington, April 19: New Zealand said Monday it would not let the 'Five Eyes' intelligence alliance dictate its dealings with its largest trading partner China, in the latest distancing from the US-led group's approach to tensions with Beijing. Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta told the New Zealand China Council that the Five Eyes — the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand — should not stray from its scope of intelligence-sharing between member nations.

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

Baerbock may succeed Merkel

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

PIO brothers buy UK food chain

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

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

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

Passengers can fly across Tasman Sea without undergoing quarantine

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

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

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

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

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

The bubble's opening re-

## Canada support for province

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

The 2021 budget is the first full fiscal plan from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's administration since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and is expected to outline Canada's recovery as virus infections surge.

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland has promised Ottawa "will continue to

do whatever it takes" to fight the spread of the Coronavirus and support the economy as it emerges from a recession.

"We have a plan for jobs and robust growth," she told parliament last month. Canada entered the pandemic in a strong fiscal position relative to other G7 nations after decades of belt-tightening, she said, allowing it to dole out hundreds of billions of dollars in Covid-19 emergency aid.

Critics have warned against piling on too much debt.

— AFP

## INFECTED BODY WASHES ASHORE, ALARMS VANUATU

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

Government sources said the deceased was a Filipino sailor whose vessel had left Port Vila a day before his body was found washed up near a village.

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

— AFP

is home to hundreds of thousands of expatriate New Zealanders and before Coronavirus many regularly shuttled back and forth across the Tasman on three-hour flights.

O'Donoghue said the travel bubble's opening made her feel the world was returning to some sort of normality.

"I'll be going back, they'll be coming over, we'll just be back to normal," she said.

"What normal's going to be from now on I don't know, but I'm just really, really excited today." Air New Zealand executive Craig Suckling said the atmosphere at Sydney airport before departure was electric.

"It was quite the emotional rollercoaster here in Sydney," he said.

"The check-in area was a hive of activity and at the boarding gate, customers were eager to get on." The airline's chief executive Greg Foran said it was also a "monumental" day for those involved in the hard-hit tourism industry.

"(It's) a real turning point for the airline. It's day one of our revival," he said. — AFP

heading back home but we're gonna miss our family (in Australia) big time," she said.

"We came to Australia on December 11 to spend Christmas with our children... planning to go back in February, it's been a bit of a nightmare." Australia

ceived saturation coverage from media in both countries, with live television reporting from airports providing regular updates on the progress of flights.

On a grass embankment at the foot of Wellington Airport's runway, the wor-

ds 'WELCOME WHANAU' (family) were spelled out in giant letters.

Lorraine Wratt, a New Zealander stranded by the pandemic while visiting family in Australia, told AFP it was "wonderful" to be able to travel again.

"We're very excited to be

complete!" Nasa astronaut Victor Glover tweeted from the International Space Station.

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

The helicopter hovered for 30 seconds at its planned altitude of 10 feet (3 meters), and spent 39 seconds airborne, more than three times longer than the first successful flight of the Wright Flyer, which lasted a mere 12 seconds on December 17, 1903.

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

With an atmosphere just 1 per cent the thickness of Earth's, engineers had to build a helicopter light enough — with blades spinning fast enough — to generate this otherworldly lift.

More than six years in the making, Ingenuity is just 19 inches (49 centimetres) tall, a spindly four-legged chopper. Its fuselage, containing all the batteries, heaters and sensors, is the size of a tissue box.

The carbon-fibre, foam-filled rotors are the biggest pieces: Each pair stretches 4 feet (1.2 metres) tip to tip.

Ingenuity also had to be sturdy enough to withstand the Martian wind and is topped with a solar panel for recharging the batteries, crucial for surviving the minus-130 degree Fahrenheit (minus-90 degree Celsius) Martian nights. Nasa chose a flat, relatively rock-free patch for Ingenuity's airfield, measuring 33 feet by 33 feet (10 metre by 10 metre). Following Monday's success, Nasa named the Martian airfield "Wright Brothers

Field."

"While these two iconic moments in aviation history may be separated by time and 173 million miles of space, they now will forever be linked," NASA's science missions chief Thomas Zurbuchen announced. The little chopper with a giant job attracted attention from the moment it launched with Perseverance last July. Even Arnold Schwarzenegger joined in the fun, rooting for Ingenuity over the weekend via Twitter: "Get to the chopper!" he shouted, re-enacting a line from his 1987 sci-fi film

"Predator." Up to five increasingly ambitious flights are planned, and they could lead the way to a fleet of Martian drones in decades to come, providing aerial views, transporting packages and serving as lookouts for human crews. On Earth, the technology could enable helicopters to reach new heights, doing things like more easily navigating the Himalayas.

"This gives us amazing hope for all of humanity," Zurbuchen tweeted. Indeed, JPL's mantra, "Dare Mighty Things," was printed on a wall of the control room. — AP





quick BITES

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

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

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

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



Market turns volatile; FPIs net sellers Sentiments sour as C19 cases rise

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, APRIL 19

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

But a partial recovery later helped the Sensex to close with a loss of 882.61 points, or 1.81 per cent, at 47,949.42 while Nifty-50 closed at 14,359.45, down 1.77 per cent. Vaccine and oxygen shortages in several states were making the fight against the second Covid wave difficult for the Centre and states. "It seems like our markets have decoupled from global counterparts due to rising Covid cases in India. Going forward, the Covid-19 situation and the pace of vaccination would be a key monitorable for the markets," said Ajit Mishra, VP-research, Religare Broking. "Market participants reacted negatively to increasing restriction announcements from state governments while ignoring the positive global cues," Mishra said. Foreign portfolio investors were net sellers of equities worth Rs 1,633.70 crore but domestic institutional investors stepped in with Rs 2,355.56 crore net buying.

₹ SHEDS 53 PAISE ON LOCKDOWN FEARS

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, APRIL 19

Fear of harsher restrictions and more economic pain amid a record surge in Covid-19 cases spooked the rupee that fell 53 paise to close at 74.88 on Monday. The rupee is under pressure despite a weak US dollar globally and has weakened by 3 per cent this month. India reported its tenth record daily increase in Covid cases in 11 days, with the capital city of New Delhi announcing a

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

MACROTECH TANKS ON MKT DEBUT

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, APRIL 19

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

ket stabilised and recovered some losses, which helped Macrotech to close at Rs 457.95 on the NSE and at Rs 463.15 on the BSE, lower by 5.77 per cent and 4.70 per cent, respectively. The firm had raised Rs 2,500 crore from the IPO. Macrotech Developers is now the third largest listed realty firm in terms of m-cap at Rs 20,717.55 crore, after DLF (Rs 58,615.38 crore) and Godrej Properties (Rs 36,167.34 crore).

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

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

Oxford study to reinfect recovered C19 patients

TODD GILLESPIE APRIL 19

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

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

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

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

—Bloomberg

SC stays HC proceedings in Future-Amazon case

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 19

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

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

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



Justice D. N. Patel and Justice Jasmeet Singh had stayed a March 18 order of single judge Justice J. R. Midha ordering attachment of the assets of Future Coupons, Future Retail, Kishore Biyani and 10 others promoters.

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

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

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

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

BUSINESS BRIEFS

GLENMARK LIFE PLANS IPO

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

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

—FC Bureau

WHATSAPP IN PINK IS A VIRUS

New Delhi, April 19: Cyber experts have warned users from falling into the prey of a virus link, which claims to turn Whatsapp in pink colour and comes with new features. Clicking on

the link claiming to be an official update from Whatsapp will hack users phone and they may lose access to their Whatsapp. "Beware of WhatsApp Pink!! A Virus is being spread in whatsapp groups with an APK download link. Don't click any link with the name of #WhatsappPink. Complete access to your phone will be lost," cyber security expert Rajshekhar Rajaharia posted on social media platforms. Several Whatsapp users were seen sharing the malicious link.

—PTI

M&M SELLS 1,000 E-CARGO AUTO



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

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

—Michel Gonsalves

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Covid cases surge delays India Open

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

Vaccinate athletes at earliest: NRAI

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

Foxes pip Saints to reach FA Cup final

London: The goal scored by Kelechi Iheanacho didn't just send Leicester into a first FA Cup final since 1969. It was the first to be cheered by spectators at Wembley in more than a year. Not since March 2020 had fans been allowed into English football's national stadium through three national lockdowns. Now as coronavirus restrictions are eased, Wembley was allowed a 4,000-strong, socially distanced crowd on Sunday to witness Leicester's 1-0 victory over Southampton to test the return of spectators. While those permitted were only local residents over the age of 18 who tested negative for Covid-19. —AP

'Super clubs' in different league

European heavyweights face criticism over 'cynical' Super League

Paris, April 19: Twelve of football's most powerful clubs faced accusations of greed and cynicism on Monday as they announced a breakaway European Super League that could have far-reaching implications for the game.

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

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

ly, with predictions that they will share billions of euros.

But the initial reaction from football authorities, fans and pundits was furious, with threats to ban participating clubs from domestic, European and world competitions.

"Our members and football supporters across the world have experienced the ultimate betrayal," the Chelsea Supporters' Trust said.

"This is unforgivable. Enough is enough," it added.

The ESL said the founding clubs had agreed to create a "new midweek competition" to start "as soon as practicable" but that they would continue

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

to play in their domestic leagues.

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

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

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

UEFA THREAT

Under the plan, two groups of 10 will play each other home and away, with the

top three qualifying for the quarter-finals. The fourth and fifth-based teams would play off for the two remaining spots.

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

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

"We... Will remain united in our efforts to stop this cynical project," read a joint statement.

—AFP

Justice Verma steers clear of controversy

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Confusion prevailed in the faction-ridden Hyderabad Cricket Association circles on Monday with regard to the Ombudsman and Ethics Officer of the state cricket body.

In the first half of the day, mails circulated in groups that Justice Deepak Verma has decided against the post of Ombudsman and Ethics Officer after HCA secretary R. Vijayanand wrote to him saying president Mohammed Azharuddin's letter appointing him did not have the approval of the General Body meeting held on April 11.

However, in the evening, another mail written by Justice Verma sought to clear the air: "I would like to clarify that vide Email dated 12.04.2021, I had assumed the charge of Ombudsman of HCA. My previous mail is not to be mis-interpreted as I am still the Ombudsman of HCA," it read.

"...I have re-assumed charge of Ombudsman after going through the High Court Order and after receiving an Email dated 11.04.2021 from the President of HCA and I intend to serve as Ombudsman of HCA till the time my tenure ends," Justice Verma clarified.

He also urged the groups not to involve him in the tussle and to settle their differences and contentions (with regard to appointments) in a court of law. "The purpose of writing the previous mail was to let everyone know that I don't want to get involved in the politics and tussle between the two groups and also not to approach me if there is any conflict between the two groups. I am in no way a party to the dispute or politics between the two factions and I urge everyone not to involve me in all this. Both the factions are free to approach the Court of law and put their grievances before the Court. I have nothing to do with any of this conflict," Justice Verma wrote.

The Delhi-based judge also said he would not be able to travel. "I would further like to clarify that I would not be in a position to travel to Hyderabad looking at the current situation. Therefore, if any hearing is to be taken place, the same can be done through online video conferencing," he wrote.

LANKA'S LOKUHETTIGE GETS 8YR BAN FOR MATCH-FIXING

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

The ban for Lokuhettige, a right-arm fast-medium bowler and lower-order batsman, is backdated to April 3, 2019 when he was provisionally suspended. "Having represented Sri Lanka in international cricket, Dilhara had attended a number of anti-corruption education sessions and would have known his actions were a breach of the Code," Alex Marshall, ICC General Manager Integrity Unit, said.

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

The 40-year-old, who had retired in September 2016 after playing nine ODIs and two T20 Internationals for his country, was found guilty of three offences under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code in January this year, following a hearing by an independent tribunal.

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

—PTI



