

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | 27 APRIL 2021

WEATHER

Max: 38.9°C
Min: 26.5°C
RH: 26%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Rain likely. Max/Min temp. 39/27 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Pournami till 9 am; Chaitra Bahula Padyami till 5.14 am (Wednesday)
Star: Swati till 8.07 pm
Varjyam: 1.03 am to 2.27 am (Wednesday)
Durmuhratam: 8.27 am to 9.17 am; 11.05 pm to 11.50 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Ramzan 14,142 AH

PRAYERS

Fajr: 4.50 am

Zohar: 12.24 pm

Asar: 4.39 pm

Magrib: 6.41 pm

Isha: 7.51 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.51 AM**SUNSET TODAY 6.35 PM****MOONSET 5.56 AM****MOONRISE 6.57 PM****RAMZAN TIMINGS****IFTAR: 6.41 PM (TODAY)****SEHRI: 4.26 AM (TOMORROW)****COUNTER POINT**

Shh! Don't say no oxygen.
You might be booked
under the Gangster Act!

SHORT TAKES**IMD predicts wet spell till April 30**

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted a wet spell over several parts of India, including central, south and northeast India, from April 26 to 30. Thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds (speed reaching 30-40 km per hour) are very likely at over Telangana, Kerala and Mahe.

SC advances summer vacation

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday decided to advance its summer vacation, which will now commence from May 8 in view of sudden surge in Covid cases. Chief Justice N.V. Ramana on his first working day held an "emergency meeting" with bar bodies to take stock of rising pandemic situation.

Wear masks at home too: Centre

New Delhi: The government said it is time people start wearing masks at homes as well, and refrain from inviting guests. Addressing a press meet here, NITI Aayog member (health) Dr V.K. Paul said if there is a Covid-positive person at home, he or she must wear a mask to prevent others from getting infected.

Nomadland wins Oscar glory

Los Angeles: Meditative road drama *Nomadland* got the Oscar for best picture as well as best director for Chloe Zhao, the first woman of colour to get the coveted trophy, at the 93rd Academy Awards, a socially distanced event. It won Frances McDormand her third best actress award, Anthony Hopkins won best actor award for film *The Father*.

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■ Report on tabloid

**WORLD | 5**

Boris in soup for saying 'let bodies pile'

**SPORTS | 8**

Ashwin withdraws, Covid scare in IPL

TABLOID

No more Maldives vacation



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No escape from Covid-19 heat

A man runs between pyres at a mass cremation of Covid-19 victims and others at Gazipur crematorium in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

CM to review Covid crisis in Telangana on April 29**Daytime curbs likely as night curfew ineffective**

L. VENKAT RAM
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao is likely to take stock of Covid situation in the state at a high level meeting in Pragathi Bhavan on Thursday, April 29. Official sources said the state government is seriously considering imposition of curbs during daytime as well from May 3, as night curfew has failed in bringing down the number of Corona positive cases in Telangana.

The state government had imposed night curfew across the state from April 20. It is to continue till May 1.

The CM is expected to visit Yashoda Hospital, Somajiguda, again on Tuesday to undergo Covid-19 tests. He is likely to return to Pragathi

COVID CASES IN TS CROSS 4 LAKH

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Telangana on Monday added 6,551 new cases, pushing the Covid tally to over 4.01 lakh, while the toll rose to 1,734 with five more fatalities.

■ Report on Page 2

Bhavan on Wednesday.

Incidentally, the Chief Minister had on April 24 announced free corona vaccination for the entire population in the state.

Sources said the CM will finalise modalities and guidelines for free vaccination of all people 18 years of age and above at the high-level meeting. While the municipal

elections will be over on April 30, their votes will be counted on May 3. Votes polled in for Nagarjunasagar assembly by-poll will be counted a day earlier on May 2.

Sources disclose that Rao is seriously mulling over imposition of daytime curbs anytime after May 3 to check the spread of Coronavirus. He feels that will be a better option as the state is witnessing a sharp rise in Covid cases, which crossed the 8,000 mark on Sunday, besides recording 38 deaths on the day.

The Chief Minister has already ordered cancellation of all exams until Intermediate first year. Summer vacations for schools and colleges have also been declared from April 27 to May 31 as part of Coronavirus-containment measures.

Madras HC: EC must be charged with murder

Slams poll panel for allowing rallies, spreading Covid-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, APRIL 26

The Madras High Court came down heavily on the Election Commission (EC) on Monday with scathing comments on how it was the "only institution" responsible for the second wave of the deadly coronavirus that is sweeping the country as it did not stop political parties from holding election rallies.

A bench of Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy, hearing a petition on whether there were adequate Covid safety procedures in place during vote counting at the Karur constituency, went so far as to say, "Election Commission officers should be booked on murder charges probably."

"Despite repeated orders of this court going on like a broken record at the foot of at least every election petition entertained that Covid protocol ought to be maintained during the campaign time the significance of adhering to such protocol may have been lost on the Election Commission going by the puerile silence on the part of the Commission as cam-

paigns and rallies were conducted without distancing norms being maintained and in wanton disregard of the other items of the protocol," the Bench said.

"Were you on another planet when political rallies were being held?"

the chief justice asked

EC's standing counsel when he told the court that measures had been put in place to ensure Covid protocol during vote counting. The court has asked for a suitable blueprint from EC on how Covid safety norms will be followed on counting day

whole state," Yediyurappa said.

Speaking to reporters

after a three-hour long Cabinet meeting here, he said shops selling essential commodities will be allowed to remain open only from 6 am to 10 am.

"The agriculture sector, manufacturing sector, construction sector and medical and essential sectors will continue to operate," he said.

Night curfew, which is in

place now between 9 pm to 6 am, will continue, the Chief Minister said.

Transport services would not ply during the close

down period.

— PTI

'Close down' for 14 days in K'taka

Bengaluru, April 26:

The Karnataka government on Monday announced more restrictions in what it termed as a 'close down' across the state for 14 days from Tuesday night in a bid to control the huge spike in Covid-19 cases in the state.

The state cabinet led by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa also decided to provide Covid vaccinations free of cost at government hospitals for those between 18-44 years of age.

"Strict measures to control Covid will be taken. From tomorrow night till the next 14 days, there will be a close down for the

measures must not be limited to Karur, the court insisted and said. "Similar appropriate measures have to be adopted at every counting centre and it is upon regular sanitisation, proper hygienic conditions, the mandatory wearing of masks and adherence to distancing norms should any counting begin or be continued. The case listed the next hearing for April 30 when the EC's blueprint must be placed on record before that, the court said.

TN lets Sterlite to open unit to make oxygen

G BABU JAYAKUMAR
and D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, APRIL 26

The Tamil Nadu government decided to allow Sterlite Industries to produce Oxygen at its Copper Smelter plant in Thoothukudi on Monday even as Advocate General Vijay Narayan told the Madras High Court that most of the oxygen manufactured on Monday asked Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech to the lower prices of their Covid-19 vaccines – Covishield and Covaxin, respectively.

It is learnt that the issue of vaccine pricing was discussed at a meeting chaired by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba on Monday after the two companies announced their vaccine prices. It is expected the two companies will now come up with revised, reduced pricing for their vaccines.

Among the conditions laid out for Sterlite were that none of the other units in the Thoothukudi plant can be opened or operated and the that the oxygen produced in the next four months, which may be extended in view of the continuing pandemic, should be primarily supplied to hospitals in Tamil Nadu.

The price for Covaxin was fixed at ₹600 per dose for state governments and at ₹1,200 per dose for private hospitals, while Covishield was priced at ₹400 per dose for state governments and ₹600 per dose for private hospitals. Both vaccines are available to the Central government at a rate of ₹150 per dose. Several states including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Delhi, Maharashtra and Rajasthan have announced that they will administer these vaccines free of cost to their 18-plus population from May 1.

A huge rush for vaccines is expected as India continues to report a very high number of daily Covid-19 cases. On Monday, the country registered nearly 3.19 lakh fresh cases and 2,812 deaths, putting a huge load on an already fragile healthcare system.

Serum, Bharat Biotech told to cut vaccine prices**Biden assures Modi of steadfast support**

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached out to the US President Joe Biden who assured him of America's "shoulder-to-shoulder support and solidarity" by deploying resources such as oxygen-related supplies, therapeutics, ventilators.

In a phone conversation late Monday evening, Modi highlighted the importance of smooth and efficient supply chains of vaccine raw materials

and medicines and Mr Biden assured him that the US would identify sources of raw materials to be made available for the manufacture of Covishield vaccines.

Prime Minister Modi also conveyed to the American President India's commitment to contain the Covid pandemic globally through vaccine "Maitri" (India's vaccine exports), and its participation in Covax and the Quad Vaccine Initiatives.

■ Page 7: PM, Suga firm on India-Japan bilateral ties

Class I to IX students in TS promoted, no exams

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD APRIL 26

The Telangana government on Monday issued orders promoting all students from Classes I to IX in government, aided and private unaided schools this academic year to the next higher class without examinations. As many as 53,79,388 students have been promoted thus.

The order came a day after the state government declared summer vacation for schools from April 27 to May 31.

The government already cancelled SSC public exams and Intermediate first-year exams this year and postponed Intermediate second-year exams.

Inter first-year students were promoted to second-year without exams. As many as 5,21,392 students were declared passed in SSC without exams this year.

In the current academic year, all schools and colleges remained closed from March 2020 till February 2021 following the Coronavirus-linked lockdown. The schools were reopened in February for students of Class VI to X as advised by the state government.

Students were confined to their homes, attending online classes for most part of the academic year. The government allowed schools to conduct offline classes for Class IX and X students from February 1

and for Class VI, VII and VIII students from February 24.

However, with a fresh rise in Coronavirus cases in schools, residential schools and hostels, the government ordered closure of all schools and colleges in Telangana from March 24.

Education minister P. Sabitha Indra Reddy said a decision on reopening of schools and colleges will be taken on June 1 after a review of the Covid situation. The previous academic year, all students till Class XII (Intermediate) were promoted to higher classes without exams as the final exams could not be held due to the Corona lockdown.

The order came a day after the state government declared summer vacation for schools from April 27 to May 31.

They fixed the gutter issue after four days of complaining," he said.

"The canteen food is so bad that families are opting to get food and other edibles from home. Once delivered at the entrance

to patients the home-cooked food.

Sharing the plight, a man whose wife aged 50 is undergoing treatment at the hospital since Wednesday said, "Once you enter the place, the stench of overflowing gutter is too nauseating to bear with. From there on, you need to start paying the security guard and the staffers to get things done."

"They fixed the gutter issue after four days of complaining," he said.

"The canteen food is so bad that families are opting to get food and other edibles from home. Once delivered at the entrance

counter, these take as long as two hours to reach the patient. The receptionist toute the excuse, "We are understaffed, you have to wait."

"Often times, the food we send never reaches the patient. When questioned about it, they dismiss

with a shrug. People here have also lost their mobile phones," he said.

A *Deccan Chronicle* correspondent found the ambulance service from TIMS, supposedly free, having charged ₹15,000 to take a patient from Narepally to Gachibowli. The driver also demanded an extra ₹4,000 for the 2-hour waiting at the hospital

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE
PROPERTY

COMMERCIAL

INDEPENDENT BUILDING Sale/ Lease @ Gachibowli Mainland, Opposite Central Mall, Beautiful glass & Marble Elevation, Total 12700sqft syp area, 9500carpet area, G+3plus 2bhk/ office space, Ready to use, 2side roads & Entrance, Lift, 430Sqyds land, 9Car&10 2wheel parking. Suitable Restaurants, Software, Furniture, lights, jewellery concept, Hospitals, Clear title. Ph: 9502032226. (HYMM/2122/C00915)

LAND FOR SALE Isnapur X Road 6600 sqyds Prime Land at Isnapur, Mumbai Road for Sale. Interested parties Contact: 9700047474. (HYMM/2122/C00933)

COMMERCIAL RENTED property for Sale- Main Road, Fully furnished 418.5 Sq.Ft, Running Store, Monthly rent, Beside Swiss Castle, Narayanguda, Clear title. Contact: 7416272921, 9346154542. (S/2122/C00213)

FLATS

SINGLE BEDROOM

HMDA / RERA Approved Fully Furnished Studio Flats At Neknampur/ Manikonda Get Assured Rent Of Rs.1200/- Per month. Contact: 8179170862, 9889920659 (HYMM/2122/C00936)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

THREE & MORE

INDEPENDENT HOUSE for sale 300sq.yd. G+3 (3prositions) full water facility. price. 1cr (negotiable) @choutuppal near govt. hospital bangarapet. Ph:9848908973/ 6281714411 (HYMM/2122/C00929)

PREMIUM VILLAS in Gated community for Sale at Mokula @ 1.80 crs (Special Offer available). For further details, Contact: 7353585358 (HYMM/2122/C00930)

RENTALS

COMMERCIAL

PLUG AND play facility 11,000sqft independent building Banjara Hills road no.2, 140- 160 seating for long lease Contact: 9000092222 (HYMM/2122/C00757)

FLATS

THREE & MORE

3BHK 1700SFT Semifurnished Flat for Rent at Himayathnagar Street No.18 at Laxminarayana Apts B2 Block First Floor. Flatno.107 & 106, Ph: 9676542422, 9885162272. (HYMM/2122/C00931)

MASATANK, 1ST Lancer Road, Deluxe flat 1678Sft. No common walls. 3Bedrooms 2Halls 3Balconies 3Bathrooms. All Amenities. Cupboards, wardrobes, modular kitchen Call: 9030065456. (HYMM/2122/C00932)

FULLY FURNISHED 3BHK Flat with all amenities Lift, Car Parking, Power Backup @ Medipatnam, Pillar No.3. For rent. Contact: 9963210403. (HYMM/2122/C00808)

FURNITURE

WE PURCHASE old furniture all scrap, Aluminium partitions, A.C., U.P.S., battery generator, computer, iron scrap, All vessels, wiring, etc. Ph: 9908847204, 9700702255. (B/2122/C00009)

LEASE

COMMERCIAL

PLUG AND play facility 11,000sqft independent building very good interiors 140-160 seating Banjara Hills, Sagar Society Contact: 9000092222. (HYMM/2122/C00934)

COMMERCIAL SPACE: Near Sangeet Junction and St John's Road Ground Floor 1000sqft to 6500sqft, Prime commercial space for lease suitable for Retail, Showroom, Store, Office. Contact: 8886137916 (HYMM/2122/C00908)

WAREHOUSE SPACE available at Medchal & Kalakal main road 25,000 to 2,00,000sqft Ph: 9393834321 (HYMM/2122/C00750)

NOTICE

SHORT TAKES
HC ISSUES STAY OVER TRIDENT CHEATING CASE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Justice K. Lakshman of Telangana High Court on Monday asked the CBI counsel to get instructions on a petition by Arjun Singh Oberoi of Trident 5-star hotel. The court wanted to know the role of Oberoi in alleged swindling of ₹1,285 crore taken as loans from a consortium of banks. The judge asked the CBI counsel to file his counter within two days and posted the case to Wednesday for further hearing. However, the petition filed by Lakshmi Narayana Sharma, another director of the hotel, has been adjourned to June 2.

FIRE BREAKS OUT IN FOOTWEAR SHOP IN SEC'BAD

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

A fire broke out in a footwear shop at Bansilalpet in Secunderabad on Monday morning, damaging ₹5 lakh worth property.

According to fire officials, they received a call around 8:15 a.m. on Monday morning that a closed footwear shop on ground floor of Jabbar complex in Bansilalpet area had caught fire. Two fire engines and 10 firefighters fought the fire and brought it under control.

"The fire had spread from the kitchen of an adjacent hotel. There have been no casualties in the incident, though property worthy ₹5 lakh has been lost," said an official.

BHONGIR COPS SEIZE ₹20 LAKH WORTH GUTKA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Police arrested three persons Kumawat Suresh, Kumawat Rahul and Prakash Manaram from Ramnagar area of Bhongir town. They seized 66 bags of banned gutka and tobacco products, all worth ₹20 lakh, from the three.

Investigation by town police revealed that the accused supplied gutka and other tobacco products from Bhongir to shops within Hyderabad, Cyberabad, Rachakonda Commissionerate limits. The accused procured the banned products from Bidar in Karnataka.

The three accused have been remanded into judicial custody and further investigation is underway.

CA ENDS LIFE BY SUICIDE AT HUSSAINSAGAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

A chartered accountant living in Bagh Amberpet reportedly killed himself by jumping in Hussainsagar Lake owing to financial issues.

According to police, 44-year-old Abhay Kumar Jain, a resident of DD colony, left his house on Friday morning saying he was going out on some work. As he did not return home till late evening, his family members tried to contact him over his mobile but they found it switched off.

After several attempts to reach him via friends, the family lodged a complaint with Nallakunta police station. Ramgopalpet police said the body of Abhay Kumar was fished out from Hussainsagar Lake on Saturday.

Inquiries revealed that Abhay had entered into an agreement with an acquaintance and sold a land. However, the acquaintance wanted him to return the money as he was no more interested in the land. Due to harassment, Abhay might have taken the extreme step, police said. A case has been registered and investigation is underway.

ACCORDING TO police, 44-year-old Abhay Kumar Jain, a resident of DD colony, left his house on Friday morning saying he was going out on some work. He did not return home till late evening. His family lodged a complaint with Nallakunta PS. Ramgopalpet police said the body of Abhay Kumar was fished out from Hussainsagar Lake on Saturday.

Disinfection time



Disinfectants being sprayed at the Malakpet Mahbub Mansion as Covid cases rise in Hyderabad.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

State may enforce lockdown

Union home ministry mandated restrictions likely if Covid cases fail to fall

MADDY DEEKSHIT | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

THE CENTRE has advised states to impose lockdown if there would be a 10 per cent positivity rate for a period of seven days or 60 per cent occupancy in ICUs.

AS ON Monday the overall positivity rate was 9.4 per cent

state government, the overall positivity rate was 9.4 per cent. The Covid19 tally in Telangana breached the four-lakh mark with 6,551 fresh infections Sunday. The toll crossed 2,000 with 43 more casualties.

The total number of cases now stands at over 4.01 lakh while the toll rose to 2,042. GHMC areas accounted for the most number of cases, 1,418, followed by Medchal Malkajgiri with 554 and Rangareddy with 482, the daily bulletin said.

The Centre suggested that districts fulfilling any one of the above two criteria are to be considered for intensive action and local containment measures.

Local containment primarily focused on restricting the intermingling of people. This was to be undertaken for a period of 14 days, so as to break the chain of transmission by duly following epidemiological principles.

On account of a very high number of daily new

positivity as on Sunday was 9.4 per cent (6551 cases divided by 69,099 tests X 100 = 9.4) — which was on the cusp of the 10 per cent recommended by the Centre.

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Covid19 cases being reported for the past few days, the Centre has expressed the urgent need for states to consider strict Covid-19 management and control measures in surge areas to bring the situation under control and to contain the spread of infection in areas reporting higher cases and surge.

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On account of a very high number of daily new

Bhagwat: 1,339 cops tested positive in Rachakonda

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

ASSISTANT GOVT PLEADER DIES DUE TO COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

A total of 1,339 police personnel tested positive for Covid-19 in Rachakonda commissionerate so far. In the second wave, 300 cops were infected with the deadly virus.

Police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat said these cops will be given medical kit, dry fruits and ₹5,000 as cash support to enable them recover. Doctors are monitoring their conditions via zoom video calls.

Bhagwat urged youths to donate blood before they got vaccinated from May 1. Indian Red Cross would organise a blood donation camp at Rachakonda Commissionerate.

No emergency patients, senior citizens and pregnant women who are living under

Moinuddin, 42, Assistant Government Pleader at Hyderabad High Court on Monday died due to Covid-19.

One week ago he tested positive and took medicines after quarantining himself. On Monday, he suddenly came critical and was hospitalised but he could not be saved.

Rachakonda Commissionerate were advised to use the free cab service provided by the police in coordination with

NON-EMERGENCY patients, senior citizens and pregnant women were advised to use the free cab service provided by the police

Srinivasa Travels. He also sought plasma donations.

Four cabs have been enlisted for the free service in LB Nagar zone and Chottuppal division of Bhongir zone of Rachakonda Commissionerate that was launched at Rachakonda LB Nagar Camp from 9pm to 5pm in view of the existing medical emergency. These can be used during night curfew in LB Nagar, Vanasthalipuram, Choutuppal and Ibrahimpatnam areas.

The service is available via calls to the Rachakonda control number 9490617234.

into hospitals at the slightest sign of Covid-19. They have to check the symptoms, see the severity of the problem and then only seek hospitalization.

Avoidable admissions to hospitals are creating a shortage of beds for the really needy patients. Many are diagnosing and treating themselves with a wide variety of drugs. This meant misuse of drugs.

"Some patients are demanding that they be treated with Remdesivir. This is not a silver bullet that can cure Covid19 infection. There are three methods of treatment, isolation, monitoring and drugs," he said.

"People must begin using a pulse oximeter and find out the respective oxygen levels. Even if it wavers a bit, doesn't matter. With this, we can also understand if there has been any progression in the infection."

Bhaskar Rao suggested that, in future, the government must bring law and make sure all flats, hotels and high-rise structures have oxygen pipeline.

Oxygen therapy is for patients with breathing difficulties. "The oxygen requirement is proportionate to the disease's progression. Doctors must be taken into confidence," he said.

Bhaskar Rao suggested that, in future, the government must bring law and make sure all flats, hotels and high-rise structures have oxygen pipeline.

Commenting on complications involved, Dr. Ashutosh Kumar, who led the interventional proce-

Gudur Narayana Reddy

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26



Gudur Narayana Reddy

cometh the hour, rises a leader. The ever-increasing Covid-19 cases, particularly those requiring hospitalisation with severe symptoms, has driven up the demand and scale of requests for plasma donors.

Gudur Narayana Reddy, himself a Corona patient who fought the disease and recovered successfully, has been leading an effort for about a year now to help provide plasma from Covid-19 recovered patients to those undergoing treatment and need it.

He set up the www.telanganaaplasmadonors.com to encourage donors and connect them with Covid-19 patients. He has been seeing a lot of requests during the second Covid wave too.

January and February were months when there was not much of a demand but it has now picked up as the disease began spinning out of control, he said. "This may even erupt into a bigger crisis," Narayana Reddy said.

He said his group of volunteers are also getting requests from Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Guntur and Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh but in that state, there are no organised efforts.

"We are guiding individual volunteers coming forward to donate plasma and encouraging them to get in touch with the district collectors who could connect with hospitals," he added. Narayana Reddy said that any Covid-19 recovered person willing to donate plasma should do so within 90 days from the day he or she tested positive but only after full recovery.

Those without symptoms typically do not have enough antibodies but those with moderate or severe symptoms have more antibodies. He also said that the state government which promised a centralized plasma collection and distribution system, has not kept its word. Back in Telangana, he said "we have been able to stand for each other."

He is doing just that and people are grateful. "I am doing my little bit," he says modestly. "What I have done is little more than nothing compared to the frontline warriors, doctors, nurses, para-medics, and volunteers. And the scientists who have made the vaccines."

Gudur smiles and moves to the next call, saying, "there is a long way before we emerge out of the Covid pandemic as a country. Till then, we have to stand for each other."

CARDIOLOGISTS PERFORM COMPLEX HEART SURGERY ON I.T. CONSULTANT

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

DR. ASHUTOSH Kumar, who led the interventional procedure, said the patient was a unique case and the location of ectopic beat was extremely challenging.

dure, said. "The patient is a unique case in two aspects. One, it is very uncommon and second, the location of ectopic beat is very close to a critical left coronary artery ostium."

The doctor said location of ectopic beat was extremely challenging. However, with availability of advanced NavX guided three-dimensional mapping of heart along with radiofrequency ablation.

The patient had come to hospital with a history of hypertension and complained of chest pain with severe palpitations. On cardiac evaluation, he was diagnosed with unusually rare foci extremely close to root of left coronary artery. On April 8, a team of experts performed a complex procedure lasting over four hours and saved the patient's life.

Commenting on complications involved, Dr. Ashutosh Kumar, who led the interventional proce-

Major coffins supplier selling 20-25 boxes, smaller ones selling 8 to 10 boxes every day

Coffin-makers fail to keep pace with rising deaths

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

PEOPLE FROM all communities, not just Christians, are opting for coffins as it is safer to carry those who are dying from Covid-19 in the boxes. It is much easier to carry the body packed in a coffin before performing the final rites.

Interior designer Anusha Stanley Namburi, who lost her brother in a private hospital at Nampally on Monday, began calling her friends and others to get a coffin. "With much difficulty, we managed to get one from Trimulgherry. It took a few hours. We wanted a jumbo-sized box, but the one available was a normal one," she said.

Ivor Fernandez of Heaven-Bond is a firm of coffin-makers and hearse services at Khajaguda that is popular in the Christian community for the past 25 years said, "For the past 15 days, there has been a sudden spurt in demand for coffins and caskets. We are selling 20 to 25 boxes a day, against the normal four to five."

"There used to be around 10 workers and we have hired eight more to meet the demand," adding, there is also no break for the hearse. "The three hearses we have are now working extra shifts."

Md Arif, who runs a coffin outlet at Narayanguda Cemetery, said, "Because of the shortage, we are sending back six to eight customers for the past 15 days. Our shelves are getting emptied as soon as the day starts. The carpenters who were working for us have fallen sick. Some of

the workers, who were migrants, fearing a lockdown, left for their native places."

He added: "We suspended the hearse services as many of the dead are Covid-19 cases."

Mohammed Amreenuddin of Paradise Coffin Box Makers, Bhoiguda, located just a few yards from the Gandhi Hospital's gate, said, "People from all communities, not just Christians, are opting for coffins as it is safer to carry those who are dying from Covid-19 in the boxes. It is much easier to carry the body packed in a coffin before performing the final rites."

His shop too is working overtime and selling at least 10 coffins a day, up from around the normal one, or at the most four on an odd day earlier.



With surge in Covid deaths over the past few days, coffin boxes are falling short. Coffin and casket makers have engaged extra hands to meet the demand.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

SHORT TAKES

HC LETS ONLY 21 PEOPLE IN VHP, BAJRANG DAL YATRA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Telangana High Court on Monday permitted Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal to take out "Veer Hanuman Vijaya Yatra" on occasion of Hanuman Jayanti on Tuesday, April 27. It, however, restricted the number of participants in the yatra to only 21.

Justice K. Lakshman of the High Court was dealing with a petition filed by VHP and Subhash Chander, convener of Bajrang Dal, against Hyderabad police rejecting their application seeking permission for the yatra on occasion of Hanuman Jayanti.

In their plea, petitioners sought directions from the court approving the holding of yatra from Gowliguda Ram Mandir to Tadbun Hanuman Temple via RTC Crossroads, Bible House, Mahankali Street, and Paradise with 50-60 devotees taking part in it.

While according conditional permission, Justice Lakshman directed VHP and Bajrang Dal to restrict the number of participants to 21. Only one person per bike will be allowed and all participants will have to strictly adhere to Covid-19 guidelines issued by the union of India and state government. The Vijay Yatra should commence at Gowliguda Ram Mandir at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at Hanuman Mandir, Tadbun, by 1:30 p.m.

CONG. SETS UP COVID CONTROL ROOM AT GANDHI BHAVAN

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

AICC in-charge of Telangana Manickam Tagore on Monday said Coronavirus situation in the country and Telangana is dire and people are in panic, as both centre and state governments have completely failed in curbing the spread of virus.

Addressing a virtual core committee meeting attended by CLP leader Bhatti Vikramarka, PCC working president Ponnam Prabhakar and others; Tagore asked state Congress leaders to stand by Covid-19 victims, as per directives of AICC. He pointed out that Telangana Congress has set up a control room at Gandhi Bhavan. Those affected by the virus could dial 040 - 24601254 for any assistance.

The AICC Telangana in-charge said Congress party should provide details of plasma centers, availability of oxygen cylinders in hospitals and ensure that comprehensive information is given to patients when they call the control room number. He asked youth Congress and student unions to work hard and help Coronavirus victims by providing free masks, medicines and sanitizers to the needy.

Tagore said both the centre and state have completely failed in standing by the people in this dire situation. In this regard, he asked district Congress leaders to set up control rooms in their areas too. He said there should be no policies while helping people.

Speaking on the occasion, CLP leader Bhatti Vikramarka said the state government has failed in providing even minimum requirements like oxygen to Covid-19 patients.

MoS: TRS blocks Warangal's rise

Kishan says state stalling Centre sops

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, APRIL 26

Development of Warangal remained stalled, he said.

The Union minister said the smart city mission halted midway because the state did not provide its share of the funds while the Central government gave its share.

"Even a dialysis centre and an oxygen plant were sanctioned here by the BJP government, the minister said.

Kishan Reddy pointed out that a railway rakes overhauling unit was allotted for Kazipet, but the state was taking things easy and is yet to hand over the full lot of land. The same with the airport project at Mamnoor. The BJP wanted to relaunch flight from the airport but the negligence of the state meant a loss for the people.

The super-specialty hospital constructed

on the Kakatiya Medical College campus under the PMSSY scheme is not being useful to the poor yet because the state failed to release its share of the funds, he said.

"All these projects will be completed only when the BJP is elected to power in the GWMC. We will then push the state government to act fast. Even if the TRS is once again given the power here, its leaders will be afraid to question KCR and his son KTR," the Union minister stated.

Centre, state liable for Covid crisis: Revanth

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Telangana Congress working president Anumula Revanth Reddy on Monday accused both central and state governments of failing miserably in containing spread of Covid-19 or anticipating the second wave.

Campaigning in Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation elections, the Malajigir MP said both Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been busy campaigning in contests elections, while people are dying because of Coronavirus, short-

age of oxygen, ventilators, vaccination and medicines.

Revanth Reddy said both Modi and KCR had the great opportunity of checking spread of Covid-19 by postponing elections. But they preferred to go ahead with polls, risking lives of lakhs

of voters and their families. However, he advised voters to use their discretion to teach both BJP and TRS a lesson. The Congress leader reminded people that it was Congress, which made their dream of separate Telangana a reality by sacrificing power in two Telugu-speaking states. He asked voters to ensure victory for Congress in Warangal for a better Telangana.

The MP held TRS government in Telangana and BJP at the centre responsible for Warangal district being deprived of rail coach factory promised in the State Reorganisation Act.

Owaisi blames Modi for 'man-made' disaster

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

'FOLLOW RULES DURING RAMZAN'

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

AIMIM leader and MP, Asaduddin Owaisi, on Monday said what India is facing is a "man-made disaster" and blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government for the worsening Covid-19 situation.

"In the minimum, waive GST on medicines and medical equipment used for Covid-19 patients at least for six months," Owaisi said after attending the launch of a Helpline and Oxygen Bank, organised by a trust run by AIMIM.

The Hyderabad MP stressed that the right to life is a fundamental right as Constitution has guaranteed the citizens. "The Modi government neither understands this nor is it ready to act in a sincere manner. It has become invisible." Owaisi said, "If we had the MP Funds as was the case earlier, we could have

given money for purchase of oxygen and medicines to those who cannot afford them. The Modi government should withdraw money from the PM Care Fund and give it to the state governments to speed up the Corona vaccination, he proposed.

The AIMIM leader launched a 'Covid Helpline and Oxygen Bank' here on Monday. This facility is an initiative of the Majlis Charity Educational and Relief Trust in collaboration with Access Foundation.

The department aims to achieve crop sown area of 80 lakh acres for cotton against 60.63 lakh acres last kharif.

To discourage paddy cultivation due to abundant rice stocks available in the state, the target for paddy crop sown area was cut down to 48.67 lakh acres against 53.33 lakh acres last kharif. The target for red gram crops was increased from 10.84 lakh acres last kharif to 13 lakh acres now.

The department has procured 75,000 quintals of cotton seeds, 14.50 lakh quintals of paddy seeds, one lakh quintals of redgram seeds to meet kharif demand.

The department estimated that 15.12 lakh quintals of seeds are required to achieve crop sown area target of 1.62 crore acres for the upcoming kharif season. This is 27 lakh acres higher when compared with kharif last year.

The agriculture department has released 'kharif plan' for June to September. The state government has decided to give priority to cotton, red gram crops over paddy in line with its policy to encourage market-driven agriculture to ensure remunerative price for farmers in the open market.

The department estimated that 15.12 lakh quintals of seeds are required to achieve crop sown area target of 1.62 crore acres. But we have kept 18.54 lakh quintals of seeds ready as a precautionary measure to avoid shortage in kharif on the expectations of bountiful rains this year besides increasing irri-

gation facilities due to Kaleshwaram and tanks brimming with water even during summer," said B. Janardhan Reddy, commissioner of agriculture.

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Accordingly, the department has kept ready required seeds to meet the increasing demand.

State sets 1.62 cr acres target for kharif crop

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

The state government has set itself an ambitious target to achieve crop sown area of 1.62 crore acres for the upcoming kharif season. This is 27 lakh acres higher when compared with kharif last year.

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HOME MIN. LAUNCHES RAMZAN GIFT PACKS

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Home minister Mohammed Mahmood Ali flagged off the trucks of Ramzan gift packets at Haj House on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, he

said, "Our government is implementing a scheme of distribution of clothes on different festivals to ensure that the poor section of the society also celebrates their festivals with joy." Nearly 4.5 lakh gift packets will be distributed.

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said, "Our government is imple-

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SHORT TAKES

AIMES WANTS TS TO COME CLEAR ON SCHOOL FEES

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

The All India Muslim Educational Society (AIMES) demanded that the state government clear its stand over the collection of fees by the non-aided private schools.

AIMES general secretary said that the state government had announced there would be no detention system for classes I to IX in the state and there is no need to conduct examinations and all the students have been promoted to higher classes, while it maintains silence over the collection of fees.

"A large number of students did not pay their fees. We have to pay the salaries of the teaching and non-teaching staff and bear expenses of rents and electrical charges and other cesses. Without the fees, how can we survive," he questioned.

He said the government should come up with a clear policy to ensure the survival of educational institutions. If the government policy says that all students should be promoted to higher classes without conducting the examination, then who will bear the fee dues? Either the government should announce financial aid to private schools or bind the parents to pay the fees in a prescribed period, else many schools will shut.

CONGRESS SEEKS CLARIFICATION ON LOCKDOWN

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Former Congress minister and ex-Leader of Opposition in State Legislative Council Mohammed Ali Shabbir on Monday demanded that the state government clarify on reports doing rounds that total lockdown will be imposed in Telangana from first week of May.

He said this could be because the state government has miserably failed in preventing the spread of Coronavirus in Telangana. "Record numbers of new cases and deaths are being reported every day. The situation is going out of control with every passing hour. Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao has failed in anticipating the outbreak of second wave, though the first one completely shattered the state's economy. When almost all countries had witnessed second, third and even fourth wave of Covid-19, why did only Prime Minister Narendra Modi and CM KCR fail in foreseeing a similar situation in the country and Telangana," he asked.

Shabbir maintained that nothing was done after the intensity of first wave came down for several months. "Today we are losing thousands of citizens to Covid-19," he underlined.

The Congress leader also referred to reports that the BJP government at the centre is planning to impose a total lockdown from May 2 or 3. "Although the PM has clearly started that lockdown should be the last resort, people cannot trust his words. CM K. Chandrashekhar Rao, health minister Etala Rajender and officials had been making claims that there would be no night curfew in Telangana. But night curfew has been imposed. Likewise, if there is any intention to introduce lockdown, the same should be informed in advance, so that people, especially poor and middle class, could prepare themselves in dealing with the situation," he stated.

He pointed out that migrant labourer have already started leaving for their native places, which will impact agriculture and industries.

NETA'S NATTER

Money rules even 'gully politics'

As a famous Bollywood movie scene expounds, money and power are key factors, or MP. Money helps to increase power and power helps to increase money. Right now, it is the season to use money to get some power.

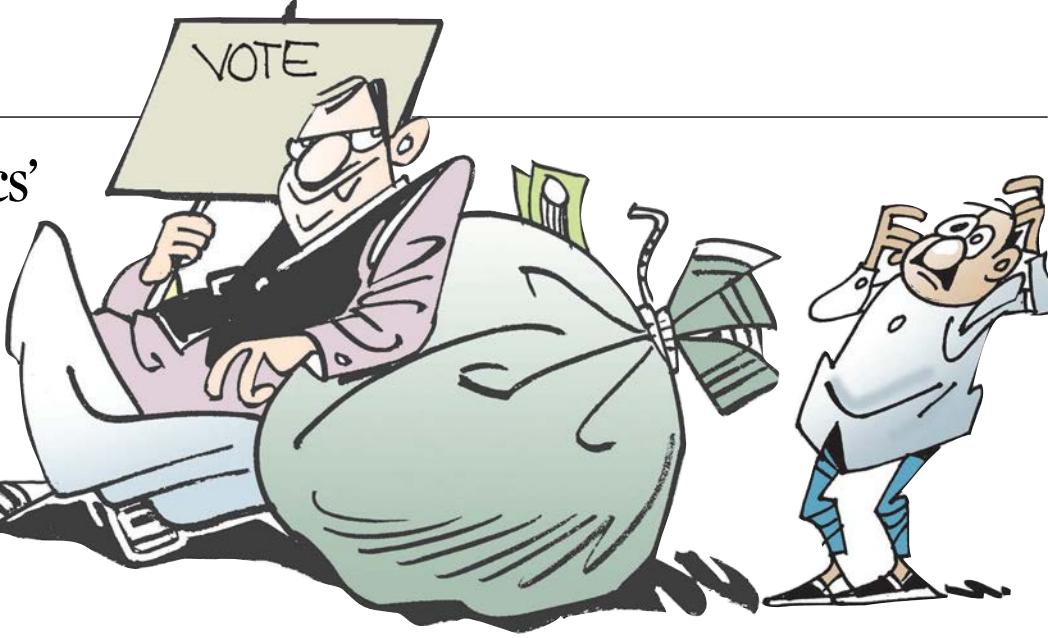
The money power of aspiring candidates forms a major parameter for all parties while allocating tickets to "winnable" candidates. While there are many factors that contribute to defining what winnability is, money is top most. Candidates with money dominated national and state-level politics for years but local level elections were about the goodness and accessibility of a candidate. No longer. Now, money culture has reached and consumed even 'gully-level politics'.

The upcoming elections for two municipal corporations and five municipalities in Telangana show how realtors and liquor dealers have grabbed tickets in all major parties by exercising money power. Parties ignored seasoned politicians, some even sitting councillors and corporators, in favour of rich can-

candidates as they reportedly offered to 'donate' ₹500 lakh to party for ticket and spend another ₹1 crore for campaigning, a euphemism for "buying votes".

The ruling TRS and the Opposition Congress and BJP have denied tickets to several of their sitting corporators, councillors citing 'internal survey reports' but those who were denied tickets are crying foul. They allege that their tickets were sold to realtors and liquor dealers. Rich candidates who failed to secure party tickets even after spending lavishly have filed nominations as independents and are giving sleepless nights to the official candidates of parties, who cannot match their money bags. All major parties are now waiting to take rich independent candidates into their fold after the results are out.

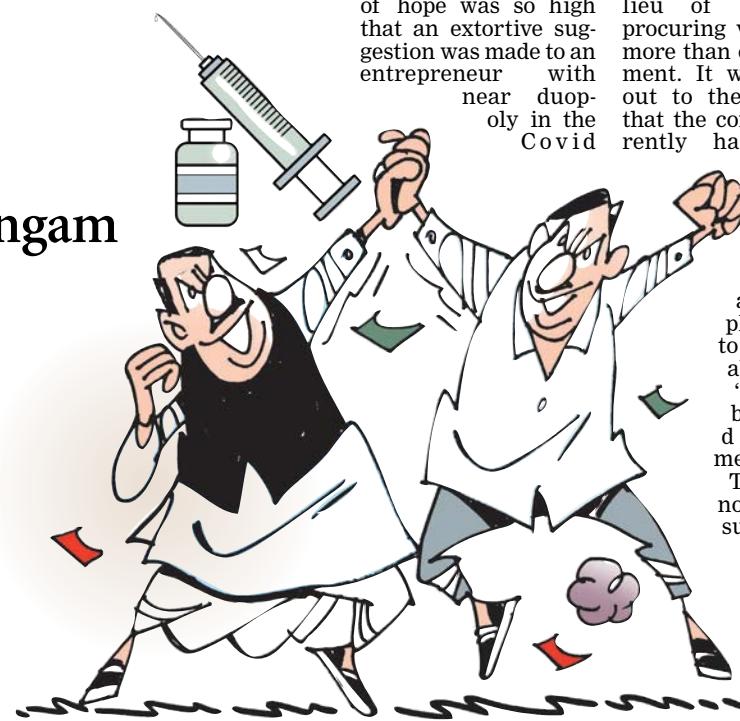
A rich Parliamentarian has been working overnight to make some quick gains out of the explosion of elephantine demand for Covid-19 vaccines. The factor of the audacity of hope was so high that an extortive suggestion was made to an entrepreneur with near duopoly in the Covid



The power of the vaccine

vaccine supply business currently. The shocked but self-assured businessman made a polite but firm refusal to the offer of giving "some shares" in their business in lieu of "help" in procuring vaccines by more than one government. It was pointed out to the politician that the company currently has demand from several countries and is hardly able to supply enough to bother about any "help" in business development".

The leader, not to give up, subsequently



When Goutham was 'at sea' on 3D tech

Andhra Pradesh Infrastructure special chief secretary Karikal Vallavan may not have succeeded in launching the construction of a single port even a year after Jagan made plans to move capital to Visakhapatnam. Karikal liberally spent crores on the interiors of the building, raising hope among the people of the region that Amaravati will remain as the capital. The tail piece of the episode is that commerce minister Goutham Reddy had no clue about it till some visitors shared with him the photos of the 3D images of the sea.

● TO BE fair to Naidu, he too provided them with enough of ammunition by displaying this trait in him time and again.

control over Sangam Dairy. Narendra himself kept saying how he had missed a Cabinet berth during the 2014-2019 term of the TD.

"Naidu was cautioned by my rivals within the party that a mix of the Sangam and a Cabinet post would make me too powerful for him to control." It is noted that the services of Narendra were deftly taken by Naidu to take on Jagan post-2019 while those who enjoyed power during the TD rule ducked for cover.

money for this and should be happy and content with this visual treat. Karikal is also keeping the pro-Amaravati capital forces in good form. At a time when Jagan made plans to move capital to Visakhapatnam, Karikal liberally spent crores on the interiors of the building, raising hope among the people of the region that Amaravati will remain as the capital. The tail piece of the episode is that commerce minister Goutham Reddy had no clue about it till some visitors shared with him the photos of the 3D images of the sea.

Ameerpet health centre still pending, says Marri

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Rajendar, he pointed out that in 2015, then commercial taxes minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav had inspected the hospital and had assured that its construction would be completed at the earliest. "Surprisingly, in a span of seven years, the TRS government has only laid an additional floor to make it a 50-bed hospital, and the entire building is yet to be inaugurated. Even after the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, the TRS government has not put any efforts to complete the construction since a year."

The Congress leader added that a lot of people have tested positive

after the second wave, and there were hundreds of Covid-19 positive people in the surrounding Ameerpet, SR Nagar, Balkampet, and Sanathnagar areas, adding that all of them had been advised to isolate at home.

"Belonging to the weaker sections of society, most of them face difficulties to isolate themselves as per protocol. As a result of this, there is a danger of the virus spreading to others. I request you to make this (hospital) operational without any fanfare, to cater to the needs of the locals during these very trying times," he said.

In his letter to

the government

ED fiat on Musaddil suspended

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Justice Abhinand Kumar Shavili of Telangana High Court on Monday suspended Enforcement Directorate's provisional attachment of two properties belonging to undivided family of Kailash Chand Gupta, managing director of Musaddil Jewellers Pvt. Ltd.

ED officials had on February 1, 2021, attached Musaddil Jewellers' showroom No. 105 and 106 spread over 8,000 square feet in Panjagutta and 339.30 square yards of undivided share of land in Musaddil House, King

Kothi, valued approximately ₹4.37 crore. The attachment was under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, in relation to cases filed by Central Crime Station (CCS) of Hyderabad.

The Hyderabadi CCS had filed the cases following a complaint by Income Tax Department against Musaddil Jewellers and other concerns — Musaddil Gems and Jewels Private Limited (MJPL) and Vaishnavi Bullion Private Limited.

The IT Department had alleged that MJPL, along with others, indulged in illegal practices of exch-

anging demonetised banknotes of ₹500 and ₹1,000 to the extent of ₹100 crore after the Government of India announced demonetisation on November 8, 2016.

Chandrasen Reddy furnished all documents regarding acquisition and possession of these properties, which had clearly indicated that they had been purchased prior to committing the offense.

Considering the facts, Justice Shavili issued interim orders suspending attachment of these two properties. However, there are several other properties of these companies too, which are under attachment.

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED 6-1-50, Corporate Office, Mint Compound, Hyderabad-500063 Extension of Short Tender Notice

Tender Notice No.01/2021-22 of SEC/Civil/Corporate Office/HYD, Dt. 24.04.2021. Tender is invited for the following work: 1. Tender Specification No.53/2021-22 - Providing of Fire Fighting and Fire Detection System C-Block, Corporate Office, TSSPC, Mint Compound, Hyderabad. For the detailed specifications, eligibility criteria and other terms and conditions may be downloaded from the website www.tsspc.com. For further details, Please contact SEC/Civil/Corporate office/TSSPC/Hyderabad. Last date for sale of tender is 06.05.2021 and tender opening date on 07.05.2021. Phone No.9440813854, Fax No.24341066. Sd/-Superintendent Engineer/ Civil R.O. No. : 1751-PPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22

RailMadad Helpline 139

भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY नामिकेश ईन्यूर्जी फॉर्म / NUCLEAR FUEL COMPLEX ईन्यूर्जीएस्ट लाइ. हैदराबाद - 500062 ECIL POST, HYDERABAD- 500 062

निविदा आवश्यक डेटा से जुड़ा तथा वाले पात्र देखेंदरों से निन्दितव्य कार्य हेतु एकल रखणा प्राप्ती में नद दर निविदाएँ आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। On behalf of President of India, on line (e-tender) Single Part item rate tenders are invited from competent and well experienced eligible contractors for the following work:

कार्य का नाम Name of the Work : Cutting and removal of wild vegetative growth at NFC, Hyderabad

अनुमति लागत Estimated Cost : Rs. 37.00 Lakhs

बयान जमा राशि Earnest Money Deposit : BSD Shall be submitted

ठेके की अवधि Duration of contract : 12 Months

निश्चिक देखा और ई-निविदा को डाउनलोड करने की अवधि Period for free view and downloading of e-tender : 27/04/2021 to 04/05/2021

दोली की प्रस्तुत करने की देव तिथि Due date for online submission of bids : 11/05/2021

हाई प्रतियोगि प्रस्तुत करने की देव तिथि Due date for submission of hard copies : 18/05/2021

बोली खाली की तिथि Date of opening of Technical bid(Par-1) : 18/05/2021

विस्तृत निविदा नोटिस और पात्रा को नार्सें की वेबसाइट पर देखा जा सकता है। The detailed tender notice and eligibility criteria can be seen in NFC Website www.nfc.gov.in. निविदा दरावारों को केवल की वेबसाइट से जारीलोड किया जा सकता है। रखने वाले पात्र देखेंदरों से निन्दितव्य कार्य हेतु एकल रखणा प्राप्ती में नद दर निविदाएँ आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। On behalf of President of India, on line (e-tender) Single Part item rate tenders are invited from competent and well experienced eligible contractors for the following work:

कार्य का नाम Name of the Work : Design, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of PSI Work

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. M/490-2021, Date: 19.04.2021

E-Open Tender is invited. Description of work: Design, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of PSI Work - 1) Shifting of Metpanjari, Kalambha and Nagpur SSP and Wardha FP due to infringement of Third line in ET-NGP-WR section, 2) Modification of 9 No. SP/SPSS i.e. Darimiri SSP, Narkher SSP, Sonkham SSP, Kohli SSP, Bharatwada SSP, Khapri SSP, Butibori SSP, Sindhi SSP and Seloo Road SSP due to third line in ET-NGP and 3rd and 4th line in NGP-WR Section AND 3) Provision of earthing system (Buried rail) at 29 No switching posts in connection with 3rd and 4th line (In CCD-NGP, NGP-WR and WR-BPQ section) of Central Railway NGP Division. Estimated Cost of the work: ₹ 12,28,39,577.56. Cost of Tender Form: NIL. Address of Office: Office of the Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction), 3rd Floor, DRMs Building, Kingsway, Central Railway, Nagpur - 440 001. Earnest Money Deposit: NIL. Completion Period: 24 Months. Date & time for Submission of Tender: On 19.05.2021 up to 15.30 Hrs. Date & time of Opening of Tender: On 19.05.2021 at 15.30 Hrs. Web Address: For details of Tender Notice, visit www.reps.gov.in.

By: Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction), C.Rly., Nagpur.

RailMadad Helpline 139

विस्तृत निविदा नोटिस और पात्रा को नार्सें की वेबसाइट पर देखा जा सकता है। The detailed tender notice and eligibility criteria can be seen in NFC Website www.nfc.gov.in. निविदा दरावारों को केवल की वेबसाइट से जारीलोड किया जा सकता है। रखने वाले पात्र देखेंदरों से निन्दितव्य कार्य हेतु एकल रखणा प्राप्ती में नद दर निविदाएँ आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। On behalf of President of India, on line (e-tender) Single Part item rate tenders are invited from competent and well experienced eligible contractors for the following work:

कार्य का नाम Name of the Work : Design, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of PSI Work

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. M/488/2021

E-Open Tender is invited. Description of work: Design, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of PSI Work - 1) Shifting of Metpanjari, Kalambha and Nagpur SSP and Wardha FP due to infringement of Third line in ET-NGP-WR section, 2) Modification of 9 No. SP/SPSS i.e. Darimiri SSP, Narkher SSP, Sonkham SSP, Kohli SSP, Bharatwada SSP, Khapri SSP, Butibori SSP, Sindhi SSP and Seloo Road SSP due to third line in ET-NGP and 3rd and 4th line in NGP-WR Section AND 3) Provision of earthing system (Buried rail) at 29 No switching posts in connection with 3rd and 4th line (In CCD-NGP, NGP-WR and WR-BPQ section) of Central Railway NGP Division. Estimated Cost of the work: ₹ 12,28,39,577.56. Cost of Tender Form: NIL. Address of Office: Office of the Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction), 3rd Floor, DRMs Building, Kingsway, Central Railway, Nagpur - 440 001. Earnest Money Deposit: NIL. Completion Period: 24 Months. Date & time for Submission of Tender: On 19.05.2021 up to 15.30 Hrs. Date & time of Opening of Tender: On 19.05.2021 at 15.30 Hrs. Web Address: For details of Tender Notice, visit www.reps.gov.in.

By: Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction), C.Rly., Nagpur.

RailMadad Helpline 139

विस्तृत निविदा नोटिस और पात्रा को नार्सें की वेबसाइट पर देखा जा सकता है। The detailed tender notice and eligibility criteria can be seen in NFC Website www.nfc.gov.in. निविदा दरावारों को केवल की वेबसाइट से जारीलोड किया जा सकता है। रखने वाले पात्र देखेंदरों से निन्दितव्य कार्य हेतु एकल रखणा प्राप्ती में नद दर निविदाएँ आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। On behalf of President of India, on line (e-tender) Single Part item rate tenders are invited from competent and well experienced eligible contractors for the following work:

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DECCAN Chronicle

27 APRIL 2021

Govt must wake up to reality, do a course correction swiftly

The world is waking up to the tragedy that India has found itself in, with scores of people dying for want of oxygen and critical drug shortages in several parts of the country. The United States, which had only last week insisted that its job was to vaccinate Americans first and held back critical raw materials for vaccine production in India, has now promised to speed up the delivery of such goods; and it is now "pursuing options to generate oxygen on an urgent basis" in India. Going by reports, these will include oxygen aggregators and concentrators. The European Union, France, Russia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have also started sending vital medical supplies. Even Pakistan has offered to send help to India.

The world media is awash with the details on how the NDA government's lackadaisical approach during the interregnum between the first and second waves of the pandemic have landed India in the mess. And they cannot be faulted. Reports of the parliamentary committee on health in February warning about "an unprecedented increase in the demand for non-invasive oxygen cylinders and instances of lack of oxygen cylinders" have already appeared. It had also recommended that the government "encourage adequate production of oxygen for ensuring its supply as per demand in the hospitals". It's not that the government had done nothing; it had initiated steps but not with the urgency with which a nation prepares for a second wave which experts had warned was coming. The Prime Minister's Office had on January 5 announced the PM-Cares Fund had allocated ₹201.58 crore for installing 162 dedicated pressure swing adsorption (PSA) oxygen generation plants in public health facilities. However, only 33 had been built by April 18. The procurement of the plant was to be done by the Central Medical Supply Store, an autonomous body under the Union health ministry. It may be hoped that the 551 new PSAs the PM Cares Fund has newly

sanctioned will not meet with a similar fate. From the responses, one cannot be faulted if one thought that the Government of India was the last to get a grip of the crisis.

Augmenting healthcare infrastructure is a long-term programme even in the face of a pandemic. The immediate, effective and assured tool to fight it is universal vaccinations, but the government has been displaying a lack of urgency about that too. The mandarins deciding vaccine policy are yet to wake up from their slumber and see the unfolding events. Parliament has passed a budget with a sum that will be sufficient to inoculate every eligible Indian free of cost if it bought the doses at the price the manufacturers decided in the first phase. The government has several legal and administrative options, including the compulsory licensing route, to enhance production. However, it seems to be in no hurry and, worse, it has passed the responsibility for inoculation first to the state governments and then to citizens. The government may, at least now, make a course correction in order to obviate a similar global initiative to vaccinate Indians.

Oscars in pandemic times

A sanitised Oscars ceremony was befitting in the dark times the world is going through. Even then, it didn't have to end the way it did with the oldest actor to win the coveted prize, Anthony Hopkins, not tuning in even by video from his home in Wales. Hollywood, well-known for its love of a cinematic climax to all stories big and small, also didn't quite fit it right. An empty stage with a golden Oscar statuette and then just the titles was a strange but, perhaps, symbolic climax to a ceremony which, clubbed with a narcissistic red carpet and extravagant parties, used to represent the glitz and glamour of the movies.

"It has been quite a year, and we are still smack dab in the middle of it," Regina King said in reference to the pandemic as well as the verdict on the George Floyd killing. "Our love of movies helped to get us through," she added. That is significant because in many people's reckoning some parts of life must go on despite the pandemic. And what can be better than entertainment brought to people's homes on a screen? We would do well to remember that 97 per cent of people have proved immune to the infernal pathogen. Perhaps much the same argument drives the IPL, which is India's biggest entertainment extravaganza.

This year's awards were a "woke" Hollywood's ode to diversity, with Chloe Zhao, of Chinese origin, becoming the first woman of colour to win the best director statuette. This year's awards were a "woke" Hollywood's ode to diversity, with Chloe Zhao, of Chinese origin, becoming the first woman of colour to win the best director statuette. Predictably too, China rubbed her out because she is not in sync with its nationalistic ideals. Empathy was at the very heart of the prize that went to Frances McDormand who starred in *Nomadland*, with real-life actor-nomads from marginalised, itinerant communities in a post-recession United States reflecting an American dream gone awry. The greatest disappointment may have been in black actor Chadwick Boseman not winning best actor posthumously while Hopkins won it for portraying an older man with dementia in *The Father*. It was, however, a historic day for women and people of colour, and no one can complain about that.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Kaushik Mitter
Editor
K. Sudhakar
Printer & Publisher

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Cochin: 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammagari, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255
Gum: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/S/348/2006-08

Aakar Patel

India's health calamity has exposed flaws in Guj Model

Just before the 2014 election, two of India's most famous economists had a public quarrel. Because they were academics the language was mostly polite, but the disagreement was not minor. It was about the so-called "Gujarat Model". Jagdish Bhagwati took the side of Narendra Modi, and Amartya Sen took the opposite side. In brief, the Bhagwati-Modi view was to prioritise economic growth over social spending. Sen's view was that economic growth was not possible without social spending.

Sen did not oppose a liberalised business environment: his concern was primarily what the government did. Bhagwati did not oppose social spending: his concern was what the government should not do.

Both sides had rational arguments, but Sen had one unanswerable question: Could anyone name a nation that had become developed without a healthy and well-educated population? The answer to that was no. There is no nation on the world that has ignored investing in the health and education of its population and become developed. It is social spend-

ing that leads to growth and not the other way around. You cannot have a population that is not very literate and not very healthy and expect that industrialists will do all the work necessary to make a nation develop. The state and the government have the primary responsibility and function in this area.

The "Gujarat Model" believes that if the government supports industrialists by offering them subsidies, ease of doing business, freedom from workers' unions and holding vibrant Gujarat melas — if it does this for a sufficiently long period, then the benefits will accrue to the general population because it is business that makes the economy strong.

The Sen model believes that a healthy and educated population is both an end in itself and a means to achieving economic prosperity. It was in fact possible for the government to create a healthy and educated population even when it had no real economic strength, and Cuba is an example of this. There is no example of a developed nation that had a Third World education and health care system. For this reason, the

State must focus on building a strong education system and a strong healthcare system and prioritise its spending in these areas. Sen supports schemes like MNREGA and the right to food. Narendra Modi opposed MNREGA and called it a monument to failure. The Congress Party said this week that in 25 years under the BJP, including 12 years under Mr Modi, Gujarat did not build a single new government hospital. The BJP has not denied the claim, meaning that it is correct. Of course, many Vibrant Gujarat summits were held. What did they produce ultimately?

The answer is not development, whatever definition we can use for it. Yes, it is true that some Gujaratis have become very wealthy, a few even managing to triple their wealth in 2020 a year, when many of us lost work. But for the majority there was no benefit. The large industries that came up in Gujarat did not employ a lot of people. This is why the most dominant political community of the state, the Patidars, took to the streets demanding reservations in jobs.

The sacrifice that was made by the population for the Gujarat Model was

very great. Gujarat was low on the Human Development Index and in 2012 Mr Modi told the *Wall Street Journal* that malnutrition in his state was high because its girls were "fashion conscious" and didn't want to drink milk.

This sort of contempt and ignorance of fundamental issues has come at a cost to India. The Sen model is not only about expenditure, it is also about the focus of the State. A government which believes that it is the well-being of its citizenry as measured through their health and education will be geared and organised in a particular way. It will not be caught scrambling one year after a global pandemic because it does not have enough oxygen or medicines or beds. The Gujarat Model expected that the private sector would take care of the health because it was a business and there would be consumers. That is not how the rest of the world has achieved it.

It is not necessary to say today that Bhagwati was totally wrong because he was, and we can see that all around us. As India suffers and the ruling party is on the defensive, the

truth is that the only way that this wave will pass is if exponential growth of the virus stops on its own. The intervention of the government is so poor and so weak that it cannot by itself do anything significant to save us. In the short term we have to suffer the consequences and there is no option.

This is the reason why Prime Minister Modi has been missing from the public eye after stopping his rallies in West Bengal abruptly. The reason why Mr Modi was furious that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal showed their interaction to the rest of us was not because it was a breach of protocol but because the truth was exposed and it was embarrassing. At a moment of crisis, we are choosing to run away from the fact that core beliefs about what the government should do have been proven wrong. We should have an honest discussion once again about the Bhagwati and Sen debate and what we should do in the medium and long term.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

Subhani



Covid mess to cost govt dear at home & abroad

K.C. Singh

On March 12, US President Joe Biden convened the inaugural summit of the "Quad" countries, comprising Australia, India, Japan and the United States, held in a virtual format. Their joint statement headlined "The Spirit of the Quad" emphasised the combating of Covid-19. In the last paragraph, they committed to combining medical, financing, manufacturing and delivery as well as development capabilities to address the "historic crisis". India was seen as the hub of vaccine manufacture and the vanguard in this battle.

Covid-19's second wave hit India soon afterwards, with India's leadership preoccupied with crucial state elections, the Kumbh Mela and cricket. The mutant virus had begun wreaking havoc in Britain. Unmindful of this, India was exporting AstraZeneca (Covishield) vaccines to friendly developing countries and fulfilling its Covax commitments. The cases began spiking, first in Maharashtra and Punjab, and finally in the nation's capital, Delhi. Two virus variants, the British B.1.1.7 and a local double mutant B.1.617, may have accelerated the spread. The Quad spirit of cooperation ran into vaccine nationalism when India's pleas to the US for assistance were rudely rejected. The public discourse started getting toxic, especially in the social media, with escalating criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his deputy, home minister Amit Shah, for campaigning without masks and amidst mammoth crowds. The Election Commission too irresponsibly conceded the BJP's desire for the eight-phase, month-long polls in West Bengal.

Alongside, the lackadaisical vaccination programme started, with frontline workers and

then the older, more vulnerable population. But as the vaccination was stepped up, the demand began outpacing the supply. Instead of being the "Vishwa Guru" and global factory for vaccines, India now blocked exports. The Serum Institute of India, producing the AstraZeneca vaccine Covishield, and Bharat Biotech, producing Covaxin, fell behind their production targets. The European Union sued SII for breach of commitments. In turn, it complained its production was being hampered by US restrictions on raw material exports.

India-US relations came under strain as public opinion in India soured. Both sides failed to communicate their respective concerns properly. In America, newly elected President Joe Biden assumed office, promising to undo the harm done by the unscientific and populist approach of his predecessor Donald Trump. He invoked the old Defence Production Act (DPA), within two weeks of assuming office, to marshal all resources. His target of 200 million shots in the first 100 days was achieved before time. The US also started building up a strategic reserve of vaccines, now amounting to over 300 million surplus shots. But the DPA constrains the export of vaccines. Consequently, the four million doses given to Mexico and Canada were called a loan.

The US had other considerations for not sharing its vaccines. Both Pfizer and Moderna have obtained liability protection from the US government for civil or criminal liability for any untoward health episode post-vaccination. If exported, they would seek similar protection from the importing nations. Only about one-third of the US population has been fully vaccinated so far and thus a fresh surge of cases was troubling. The new spike is driven by mutated ver-

LETTERS

VACCINATION

The initiative to give vaccine free to all is appreciated. However, safety protocols must be adhered to. Also blood sugar, BP reports must be normal, and RT-PCR should be negative at the time of vaccination and certified by qualified doctors. This will prevent adverse reactions in the future.

Dr Rebecca Priyadarshini
Hyderabad

The Aadhaar number of all PDS card holders are linked to ration card. The government should modify CoWIN portal in such a way that for the age group 18 to 45, they can add BPL/priority card number and Aadhaar number. After a verification, they must be allowed to schedule their vaccination at government centres.

K. Radhakrishnan
Hyderabad

The time has come to vaccinate all the people for free. The Centre and state governments should join hands for this endeavour and finish this task like the polio campaign. There is no other important work for governments right now other than fighting the pandemic.

M. Mohan Rao
Hyderabad

All politicians must join hands during this national crisis and appoint volunteers as marshals in their constituency to enforce face mask and social distancing.

B. Ramamurti
Hyderabad

SOCIAL DISCIPLINE
All politicians must join hands during this national crisis and appoint volunteers as marshals in their constituency to enforce face mask and social distancing.

NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

Relations between India and Pakistan headed for a diplomatic show-down today with India ordering retaliatory measures on the movement of Pakistani diplomatic and other personnel in India. The current electoral cycle ends on April 29 in West Bengal, but immediately another begins as the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election is due in February 2022. Has the government learnt the lesson that public health and safety must remain above politics? Also, US help will come laced with unsaid conditions. For one, majoritarianism and the democracy deficit may invite more forceful US intervention. India's Kashmir, Pakistan and Afghanistan policies will also see closer US monitoring. The mismanaged pandemic at home will diminish the government's political space both at home and abroad.

Under the new measures, effective from 1800 hours today, all diplomatic officers of Pakistani missions in India, their wives, children and domestic servants of Pakistan nationality will be required to obtain prior permission of the Government of India for their exit from India.

In a note handed over today to Mr. Sajjad Haider, Pakistan's High Commissioner here, India outlined the measures it has imposed following those already enforced by Pakistan.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Curbs imposed on diplomats, others

NEW DELHI, APRIL 26
Relations between India and Pakistan headed for a diplomatic show-down today with India ordering retaliatory measures on the movement of Pakistani diplomatic and other personnel in India.

The intervention of the government is so poor and so weak that it cannot by itself do anything significant to save us. In the short term we have to suffer the consequences and there is no option.

This is the reason why Prime Minister Modi has been missing from the public eye after stopping his rallies in West Bengal abruptly. The reason why Mr Modi was furious that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal showed their interaction to the rest of us was not because it was a breach of protocol but because the truth was exposed and it was embarrassing. At a moment of crisis, we are choosing to run away from the fact that core beliefs about what the government should do have been proven wrong. We should have an honest discussion once again about the Bhagwati and Sen debate and what we should do in the medium and long term.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

SHORT TAKES

PM, SUGA FIRM ON INDIA-JAPAN BILATERAL TIES

SRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

In a "summit telephone talk" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday that lasted 25 minutes, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga "expressed serious concerns about China's continued and strengthened unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas, including the Coast Guard Law".

The reference to China was made in a statement on the telephone talk released by Japan but there was no reference to it in a separate statement on the conversation that was released by New Delhi. The Japanese statement reflects increasing alarm in Japan over Chinese strategic intent, with a reiteration of the concerns first raised by PM Suga when he earlier spoke to PM Modi last month.

"The two leaders confirmed the importance of Japan-India bilateral cooperation and multilateral cooperation, including Japan-Australia-India-U.S. quadrilateral cooperation, towards realising a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. They also shared the view to continue their effort on building a rules-based free and open international order," Japan said.

Japanese Foreign Ministry further said, "PM Suga stated that he hopes to further develop the cooperation."

PM, CDS REVIEW COVID OPERATIONS BY ARMED FORCES

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday reviewed with Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat the preparations and operations undertaken by the Armed forces to assist in Covid-19 situation in the country.

CDS briefed the PM that all medical personnel from armed forces who have retired or taken pre-mature retirement in the last 2 years are being recalled to work in Covid facilities within proximity of their present place of residence. Other medical officers who retired earlier have also been requested to make their services available for consultation through medical emergency help lines.

Prime Minister was also informed that all medical officers on staff appointments at Command Headquarters (HQ), Corps HQ, Division HQ and similar HQ of Navy and Air Force will be employed at hospitals.

The CDS informed the Prime Minister that nursing personnel are being employed in large numbers to complement the doctors at the hospitals. CDS said that oxygen cylinders available with armed forces in various establishments will be released for hospitals.

The CDS also said that they are creating medical facilities in large numbers and where possible military medical infrastructure will be made available to civilians.

COVID REPORT NOT REQUIRED: HC TO HOSPITALS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

The Delhi High Court on Monday directed hospitals in the national capital to "scrupulously follow" the AAP government's circular on not to insist on Covid positive test reports before admitting patients showing symptoms of Coronavirus.

A bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jasmeet Singh also directed the Delhi government to "widely publicise" its April 23 circular on the matter.

The order came while disposing of a PIL seeking directions to the Delhi government to order hospitals not to insist on Covid positive reports to hospitalise patients who show symptoms of Coronavirus.

The petitioner, Jaideep Ahuja, told the bench that the Uttar Pradesh government has passed such a direction on not insisting on RT-PCR positive test reports for admitting patients.

The Delhi government told the court that its Health department has issued a circular on April 23 directing hospitals in the city not to insist on Covid positive test reports to admit patients who are showing symptoms of Coronavirus infection.

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, APRIL 26

Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma here on Monday said that there will be no shortage of oxygen, ICU and isolation beds in the state for next 10 days and in between state has started augmenting its resources to build up its capacity to face any eventuality due to pandemic.

Pointing out that the state government has made arrangements to import oxygen from neighbouring Bhutan, Sarma told reporters that the oxygen production capacity of the state has reached to 61 MT per day while storage capacity has already been expanded to 468 MT.

Informing that they are going to operationalise three more oxygen plants soon, he said that there will be no shortage of Remdesivir too as he requested drug manufacturer Sun Pharma to expedite the production at its Palasbari plant to 80,000 vials per week.

Sarma said that he visited Sun Pharma's Palasbari plant near Guwahati on Sunday and requested them to scale up production to ensure that there is no shortage in the state. "The Sun Pharma's production unit in Guwahati can produce 80,000 Remdesivirs every week," he added.

He said, "There is a new oxygen plant being set up in Bhutan. We have made arrangements to procure oxygen from there if required."

Sarma said that the Assam government was not aware of an oxygen plant in Dimapur in Nagaland, and now it will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the neighbouring state for procurement.

"The oxygen level that we are able to manage, I think there will not be any problem until several thousand patients arrive at the hospitals," he added.

"ICU beds have also been ramped up. I believe we will be able to manage the Covid-19 crisis very fast like last year," Sarma who also expressed surprise over the Congress memorandum to the Election Commission accusing him of violating election code of conduct for his initiative to face the Covid situation, said.

About the possibility of lockdown in Assam, he said that there is no necessity for any such drastic step at this moment.

"When do we announce a lockdown? It is done when there is no oxygen, injection, medicine, kit in hospitals, then we get temporary relief by implementing lockdown," said the minister adding that Assam is fully geared up to face the Covid crisis.

"We have already placed the order for the vaccine also. In a day or two we will come to know the delivery process and accordingly the state will plan out its vaccination drive for 18 plus citizens," said the minister.

SAFETY FIRST Government urges people to avoid stepping out unnecessarily

Mask up even indoors: Centre

New Delhi, April 26: As a second wave of the Coronavirus pandemic rips through the country, the government on Monday said it is time people start wearing masks inside their homes as well, and refrain from inviting guests.

Addressing a press conference here, NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr V.K. Paul said if there is a Covid-positive person inside the house, he or she must wear the mask so as to prevent other family members from getting infected.

"Rather, I'll say that the time has come that we start wearing masks even otherwise inside our homes. We used to talk



1) Mass cremation of Covid-19 victims and others takes place at Gazipur Crematorium, in New Delhi on Monday.



2) Relatives of Covid-19 patients wait to refill cylinders with medical oxygen, during the second wave of Coronavirus pandemic, in Gurugram on Monday.

3) People wait in a queue to receive a dose of the Covid-19 vaccine at NESCO Jumbo Covid-19 Vaccination Centre at Goregaon in Mumbai on Monday.

— PTI

Covid-19 crisis to worsen in Punjab, lockdown not an option: Amarinder

Chandigarh, April 26: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh here on Monday said he is against the imposition of a Coronavirus lockdown even as he predicted that the pandemic situation is expected to get worse in the state.

The Chief Minister made the comment at a meeting, a day after the daily infection count in the state crossed the 7,000-mark, the highest single-day rise since the outbreak of the pandemic last year.

The Chief Minister said the situation is expected to worsen, especially in south Punjab. He said Ludhiana district alone reported 1,300-plus cases on Sunday.

According to a statement, the Chief Minister said while stringent measures are being taken to tackle the surge in cases, he is not "proposing" a lockdown in the state as it

leads to economic woes and the exodus of migrant workers.

The Chief Minister said such actions will be met with dismissal "as we cannot tolerate this kind of nonsense in a war-like situation".

Meanwhile, the Army Western Command assured to revive the state's defunct oxygen plants.

Lt Gen R.P. Singh, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Command, at a virtual meeting with the Chief Minister offered to provide staff to run a 100-bed Covid facility proposed to be set up at the building loaned to the state government by the Council of Scientific and

Reacting to reports of threats of a strike by health workers, the Chief Minister said such actions will be met with dismissal "as we cannot tolerate this kind of nonsense in a war-like situation".

Meanwhile, the Army Western Command assured to revive the state's defunct oxygen plants.

Lt Gen R.P. Singh, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Command, at a virtual meeting with the Chief Minister offered to provide staff to run a 100-bed Covid facility proposed to be set up at the building loaned to the state government by the Council of Scientific and

Industrial Research for the purpose.

15 trained nurses have already been sent to Patiala to support the civic staff, he said.

Army officials said though their resources were stressed on account of requirements from other states, they will extend all possible help to Punjab to tackle the situation.

The Chief Minister later said the government will also approach the Union home ministry to provide manpower and ICU beds through the Border Security Force (BSF).

Health secretary Hussan Lal told the Chief Minister at a meeting that 2,000 beds will be added at government and private hospitals. While 900 beds will be added at government medical colleges in Patiala, Amritsar and Faridkot, 542 will be added at private colleges, he said.

— PTI

SC pays homage to Shantanagoudar, suspends work

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

HAILING FROM
Karnataka, as a lawyer Shantanagouda practised mainly in civil, criminal and constitutional matters.

Justice Ramana.

The top court has suspended regular work in view of the Covid-19 spread and is hearing only urgent matters.

Elevated to the Supreme Court in February 2017, Justice Shantanagoudar would have remained in office till May 5, 2023.

Hailing from Karnataka, as a lawyer he practised mainly in civil, criminal and constitutional matters. He became an additional judge of the Karnataka High Court on May 12, 2003 and its permanent judge on September 24, 2004. He was an acting Chief Justice of Kerala High Court from August 1, 2016 and became its Chief Justice on September 22, 2016.

With his death, the top court is short of seven judges. As against its sanctioned strength of 34 judges, at present there are 27 judges in the top court.

Before Justice Shantanagoudar, Justice Sabysachi Mukherjee had died in office while he was Chief Justice of India on September 25, 1990. He was the second Chief Justice of India who had died in office, the first being the Chief Justice H.J. Kania.

Chief Justice Kania was the first Chief Justice of India who had died in office on November 6, 1951 at the age of 61 years.

Chief Justice Sabysachi Mukherjee was 63 years when he died in London where he had come after a lecture tour of the United States. He had died of heart failure.

intent the government of India brought a revised (vaccination) policy. We believe and are confident that will bring in more acceleration," he said.

AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria, who also addressed the press conference, sought greater community participation to ensure optimal utilisation of hospital facilities.

"We see now there is unnecessary panic among people which is causing more harm than good. Those who test positive even if their oxygen saturation levels are normal and have mild symptoms, they also want to get admitted."

Highlighting the importance of vaccination, Paul said, "We cannot let the pace of Covid-19 vaccination decline or slacken in the face of the emerging situation. In fact, it should be escalated and with that

suffering to genuine patients as they do not get proper treatment. Also, hoarding of drugs at homes is causing unnecessary shortage of essential drugs in markets and also leads to misuse of drugs," he said.

Underlining the importance of oxygen in the treatment strategy for Covid-19 patients, Dr Guleria said its misuse must be avoided.

There should be judicious use of oxygen therapy, he said, adding, hospital authorities should make sure there is no leakage of oxygen at their facilities, and also advised proning to increase oxygen levels in the body.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

HOSPITAL FIRE: CUSTODY OF DOCS EXTENDEDSHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, APRIL 26

A local court on Monday extended police custody of the two doctors of the Vijay Vallabh Hospital in Virar in suburban Mumbai, where 15 Covid patients lost their lives in a fire three days ago, till Wednesday.

Chief executive officer (CEO) Dr Dilip Shah (56) and the chief administrative officer Dr Shailesh Pathak (47) were arrested on Sunday and remanded to police custody till Monday by a holiday court.

The crime branch unit 3 of the Mira Bhayander Vasai Virar commissionerate told the court that the custody of the doctors was required as various documents pertaining to the fire safety of the hospital was to be received from them. The hospital has been accused of not carrying out the mandatory fire audits.

A police official said that the nurses, ward boys and doctor on night duty when the incident took place are being questioned. They too are named in the FIR, as the police have come to know that before informing the fire brigade, the hospital staff tried to control fire for 10-15 minutes on their own.

A nurse has told the police that Dr Shah and Dr Pathak were immediately informed after sparks from the AC unit of the ICU were noticed. It was Dr Shah and Dr Pathak who then called the fire brigade.

The police have booked Dr Shah and Dr Pathak for culpable homicide not amounting to murder and other relevant sections of IPC.

A huge fire erupted on Friday in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) located on the second floor of the four-storey hospital.

At the time of the incident, there were 83 patients in the hospital and 17 of them in the ICU. The ICU of the 90-bed hospital was gutted and 15 Covid patients were charred to death on April 23.

CONG. MIFFED WITH NCP ON VACCINES' ISSUEBHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, APRIL 26

Differences within the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government in Maharashtra over the free vaccination drive came to the fore as the Congress has expressed displeasure over the NCP announcing the decision unilaterally. The decision should be announced by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, said Maharashtra Congress chief Balasaheb Thorat.

"The decision to provide vaccine against Covid-19 for free to people of the state should have been announced by the chief minister. An attempt by others to take credit for it was not good," said Mr Thorat on Monday.

His comments came a day after Maharashtra Minority Affairs Minister and NCP leader Nawab Malik said the State Government will float global tenders for providing Covid-19 vaccines for free to people above 18 years of age in the state.

EMINENT WRITER MANZOOR PASSES AWAYRABINDRA NATH CHOURHURY | DC
BHOJAL, APRIL 26

Manzoor Ahamed, whose works depicting the lives of Indian Muslims in independent India have received wide acclaim, died of Covid-19 early on Monday morning.

He was 73 and is survived by his two daughters.

The title of the writer's maiden work *Ramazan Mein Ek Maut*, a short story anthology published in 1973, has proved apocalyptic as he passed away in the holy month of Ramzan.

Born on April 3, 1948 in Bhopal, Ahamed was a product of Aligarh Muslim University. His family wanted him to be an engineer. But, he chose to be a writer.

He has written many short stories, novels and dramas enriching Hindi and Urdu literature. His short story compilations titled *Tashbih*, and *Tamasha Tatha Anya Kahanian*, have been widely acclaimed in the Hindi literature world. His novels, *Dastan E Laapata*, *Kuch Din Aur*, *Sukha Bargad*, *Basharat Manzil* and *Pahar Dhalte* have earned him a glorious place in the Hindi literature world.

Vaccination drive

People gather in large numbers to receive Corona vaccination outside a government hospital in Nadia, West Bengal on Monday. Total vaccination across the country has crossed over 14.5 crore with more than 31 lakh doses of vaccine administered till 8 pm on Monday. — PTI

7th phase by and large peaceful, over 75% vote**Raninagar BJP candidate Mashwara Khatun's car attacked**

RAJIB CHOWDHURI & PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI | DC with agency inputs KOLKATA/BERHAMPUR, APRIL 26

The seventh phase of the Assembly elections in 34 seats spread over five districts in West Bengal recorded 75.06 per cent polling that went off peacefully except some stray incidents of violence in Murshidabad on Monday.

While nine seats in Murshidabad saw voter turnout of 80.30 per cent, six constituencies in South Dinajpur of North Bengal saw 80.21 per cent polling with 78.76 per cent and 70.34 per cent voting in six seats of Malda and nine in Burdwan West respectively from 7 am to 5 pm.

However four hot seats - Bhowanipore, Rasbehari, Ballygunge and Kolkata Port - in South Kolkata clocked only 59.91 per cent polling during which chief minister Mamata Banerjee and her MP nephew cast their votes. A revised figure of polling is expected from the Election Commission on Tuesday.

Unlike other districts, Murshidabad remained tense since morning. At Senapati, Raninagar BJP candidate Mashwara Khatun's car was attacked and her polling agent was beaten up by armed Trinamul Congress workers. The police had to rescue her.

Allegations again surfaced against the Central paramilitary forces of ransacking Raninagar block TMC president Mizanur Rahman's residence and destroying food. When district TMC president and MP Abu Taher Khan went there, angry



Violating social distancing, voters stand in a queue to cast their votes at a polling station in Kolkata during the 7th phase of state Assembly polls on Monday. — Pritam Bandyopadhyay

workers of his party shouted "Go Back" slogans at him. He was soon seen leaving in his car in face of the protest.

At Guraspala High School in Nabagram, the Central forces allegedly beat an elderly TMC worker so much that he had to be admitted at Nabagram Hospital.

Later the CM, while lashing out at the Central forces over its excessive use of force, said, "We will lodge an FIR against the CRPF in these incidents."

In Farakka, an aged TMC worker, Jammejoy Mondal, was injured in an attack by the BJP workers armed with sharp-cutting weapons. He was admitted at the Farakka Hospital.

Murshidabad Congress candidate Niyazuddin Sheikh was caught by the

TMC workers distributing money hidden in masks at a booth in Gudhia High School. But Mr Ahmed claimed that he distributed only masks to the voters for their protection from Covid-19.

The Election Commission has sought a report of the incident.

Also, Jalangi Sanjukta Morcha candidate Saiful Islam Mollah from the CPI(M) and his three associates were attacked by the TMC workers with bamboo poles and sticks at Choaonpara.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission transferred a few police officers as West Bengal voted in the seventh phase of assembly polls on Monday, officials said.

Shantanu Sinha Biswas,

an inspector at the Directorate of Economic Offences, was transferred to the office of the DIG Jalpaiguri Range as a crime inspector, they said.

Sinha was accused by the BJP of manipulating postal ballots. Srimanta Kumar Bandopadhyay, the Assistant Commissioner of Asansol-Durgapur Police, was named the new Sub-divisional Police Officer of Bolpur, as per an order issued on Sunday night.

Shubhendra Kumar, the present SDPO of Bolpur, was diagnosed with Covid-19.

Nihar Ranjan Roy, the circle inspector of Krishnanagar was made the new inspector in charge of the Murshidabad police station, replacing Atish Das, the order said.

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COVID | BLUES**Govt expects cases to decline soon; Plus-II students demand cancellation of annual exams****For Covid, Odisha passing through 'plateau' stage**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 26

As Odisha consistently logs over 6,000 cases daily, the case graph seems to have hit a plateau in the last few days. This is what the state director of medical education and training (DMET) Dr CBK Mohanty told reporters on Monday.

"Since the daily cases in Odisha are found to be stable at a particular level - above 6,000 and below 6,500 - for a few days now, it could be interpreted as a plateau phase. The num-

ber or such period is expected to decline in the upcoming days," he said. However, the top health official said that nothing can be assumed specifically now.

On April 22, the state recorded 6,164 cases while 6,215 persons were found infected with coronavirus the next day. On April 24, 25 and 26, the state recorded 6,647, 6,116 and 6,599 new cases, respectively.

Dismissing the report of shortage of beds in intensive care units (ICUs), the DMET said that there were many ICU beds in designated Covid hospitals. The DMET admitted that local contact

"If the number of Covid patients rises further, the more number of ventilators will be set up accordingly," he assured.

The statement of the DMET has come as a great piece of consolation to people in panic due to the steep rise in Covid-19 cases since the beginning of the current month.

According to Dr Mohanty, usually there is an upsurge trend and subsequently plateau and then declining stage which is a natural course during any epidemic or pandemic situation. The DMET admitted that local contact

cases were certainly a worry sign.

"However, we are appealing everybody to follow Covid-19 appropriate behaviour. Everybody needs to follow all the Covid-19 norms so that they do not spread the virus to others," he added. State health director Dr Nirajan Mishra said that 70 per cent of beds are currently available in different hospitals for Covid patients. "We have constituted a cluster comprising 2/3 districts. The patients are shifted to other districts after beds are filled at hospitals in a particular

district," Dr Mishra said.

Talking about the stock of oxygen, he said that Odisha is an "oxygen surplus" state. "To avoid shortage of oxygen, directions have been issued to keep the oxygen stock by filling the cylinders. We have enough beds, oxygen and medicines to tackle the Covid situation," he said. "The micro management plan has been made to administer the Covid vaccines to the beneficiaries in the state," he added. Meanwhile, a group of Plus-II students on Monday staged a demonstration at Lower PMG

square in Bhubaneswar demanding cancellation of annual examinations conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary Education, Odisha.

It was for the second time that the students raised the demand for cancellation of Plus II exam in the state.

The students alleged that the state government was yet to make any announcement regarding the dates for the conduct of the exam due to which there is confusion and at the same time it will create problems in pursuing higher education. The students

threatened to intensify their agitation if no step was taken to cancel the Plus II exam. The Naba Nirman Yuva Chatra Sangathan has also extended support to the demands of the students.

The group threatened to gherao Naveen Niwas, the official residence of Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, if no decision is taken within 10 days. Following the demonstration, police held a discussion with the agitating students. However, as they were reluctant, police took immediate steps to disperse them.

Mamata aide Mondal gets CBI summonsDC CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, APRIL 26

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has summoned a key Trinamul Congress leader and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's blue-eyed boy Anubrata Mondal for questioning over his suspected role in the high-profile cattle smuggling case. At around 12.30 pm on Sunday he was served the summons by the CBI directing him to appear at its anti corruption branch office at Nizam Palace in South Kolkata at 11 am on Tuesday.

Known to be a strongman of Birbhum which is going to the polls in the eighth phase on April 29, Mr Mondal is the TMC president of the district. He is also the third TMC functionary to come under the central agencies' radar in the case.

The CBI summons to Mr Mondal came close on the heels of a notice served by the Income Tax department to know the source of his income and assets following allegations of his disproportionate assets by Bolpur BJP candidate Anirban Ganguly.

Furious over the summons to Mr Mondal, the TMC chief stood by him and accused the BJP of harassing him through the central agencies like previous occasions ahead of the polls.

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IN BRIEF
Russia expels Italian diplomat

Moscow, April 26: Moscow said Monday it was expelling an Italian diplomat in response to the "unfriendly" removal of two Russian officials from Rome in March over an espionage scandal.

The foreign ministry said it had summoned Italy's ambassador and informed him that Russia was declaring "persona non grata" Rome's naval attaché in Moscow, who would have 24 hours to leave the country.

Rome announced late last month it was expelling the two Russian officials after an Italian navy captain was caught by police selling confidential military documents to a Russian embassy official.

Romania to expel Russian diplomat

Bucharest, April 26: Romania said Monday it will expel a Russian diplomat, the latest European country to do so in solidarity with the Czech Republic, which is involved in a spat with Moscow.

The deputy military attaché at the Russian embassy in Bucharest, Alexei Grichayev, would be declared "persona non grata..." in view of his activities and actions contrary to the Convention of Vienna on diplomatic relations," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Romania's foreign minister Bogdan Aurescu summoned Russian ambassador Valery Kuzmin to his offices on Monday, according to the statement.

Jihadists kill 31 Nigerian soldiers

Kano, Nigeria, April 26: At least 31 Nigerian soldiers were killed when IS-aligned jihadists ambushed a military convoy escorting weapons and overran a base in northeast Nigeria's Borno state, military sources said on Monday.

Fighters from the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) attacked the convoy with rocket-propelled grenades on Sunday in the town of Maino outside the regional capital Maiduguri before storming the nearby base.

The attack was the deadliest this year against Nigeria's army which has been battling a decade-long jihadist insurgency in the region that has killed 36,000 people.

'14 protests: 108 on trial in Turkey

Ankara, April 26: Turkey on Monday put 108 Kurdish politicians on trial for their alleged roles in deadly 2014 protests that erupted as jihadists from the Islamic State group overran the Syrian town of Kobane. The case against current and former members of the pro-Kurdish HDP party — including its two former co-leaders — stems from one of the darker episodes of the decade-long Syria war. Thirty-seven people died in violent demonstrations against the Turkish army's action in the face of an IS offensive against the largely Kurdish northern Syrian town.

The jihadists were driven out of Kobane in January 2015 by US-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters that Turkey officially views as terrorists.

AFGHANISTAN ATTACKS KILL 12 POLICEMEN

Kabul, April 26: At least 12 Afghan policemen were killed on Sunday, including seven who were ambushed by the Taliban south of the capital, officials said, as fighting continued in the violence-wrecked country.

The two separate attacks in the provinces of Logar and Kandahar came as the top US military commander in Afghanistan, General Scott Miller, said work had begun to withdraw the remaining American forces as ordered by President Joe Biden this month.

"Seven policemen were killed and three wounded when the Taliban ambushed their vehicles in Mohammad Agha district of Logar province," Dedar Lawang, spokesman for the provincial governor, said.

The policemen were part of a security force guarding copper mines in Logar, south of the capital Kabul.

Police from Logar province confirmed the attack.

Afghanistan, whose economy has been severely impacted by decades of conflict and endemic corruption, has reserves of copper, iron, cobalt and lithium. In a separate attack on Sunday, a suicide bomber ran an explosives-laden car into a police vehicle in the southern Taliban bastion of Kandahar, killing five policemen.

EU mounts legal action on AstraZeneca for vax delay

Charges vaccine maker for failing to respect terms of contract

Brussels, April 26: The European Commission on Monday said it has launched a legal action against vaccine maker AstraZeneca for failing to respect the terms of its contract with the EU.

Spokesman Stefan De Keersmaecker said, "The Commission has started last Friday legal action against the company AstraZeneca on the basis of breaches of the advance purchase agreement." He said that the reason for the legal action was that "some terms of the contract have not been respected" and that "the company has not been in a position to come up with a reliable strategy to ensure a timely delivery of doses". Contract with EU foresaw an initial 300 million doses for distribution among the 27 countries, with option for a further 100 million. But only 30 million doses were delivered. — AP



A lone woman walks past stalls in an almost-empty shopping alley in Bangkok on Monday, amid an expansion of lockdown restrictions to halt a surge in Covid-19 cases. — AFP

Burj Khalifa lit up with Tricolour

Dubai, April 26: Prominent iconic buildings, including the Burj Khalifa, in the UAE were lit up with the Tricolour to show solidarity with India as it responds to a growing Covid-19 crisis.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) headquarters and the world's tallest building, Burj Khalifa, in Dubai were lit up with the colours of the Indian flag in solidarity with India as it responds to a

second Covid-19 wave, the official WAM news agency reported.

"As #India battles the gruesome war against #COVID19, its friend #UAE sends its best wishes," UAE

g r a p p e s

with a grow-

ing Covid-19 crisis.

Glowing star @BurjKhalifa in #Dubai lights up in Flag of India to showcase its support," Indian Embassy in the UAE tweeted on Sunday. The embassy also tweeted a video of the Burj Khalifa displaying the Indian flag and #staystrongIndia.

— PTI

Google, MS Indo-American CEOs pledge aid to India

Houston/Washington, April 26: Google CEO Sundar Pichai and his Microsoft counterpart Satya Nadella have assured help to India. "Devastated to see the worsening Covid-19 crisis in India. Google & Googlers are providing ₹135 crore in funding to @GiveIndia, @UNICEF for medical supplies, orgs supporting high-risk communities, and grants to help spread critical information," Google CEO Pichai said in a tweet.

Nadella said that his

company will continue to use its resources and technology for relief efforts and support for buying oxygen devices. Nadella said he was "heartbroken" by the current Coronavirus situation in India. "I am heartbroken by the current situation in India. I'm grateful the US government is mobilising to help. Microsoft will continue to use its voice, resources, and technology to aid relief efforts, and support the purchase of critical oxygen concentration

devices," he said. US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have assured India and its people of providing all assistance, including urgently sending necessary medical life-saving supplies and equipment, to help the country combat the deadly crisis. "Just as India sent assistance to the United States as our hospitals were strained early in the pandemic, we are determined to help India in its time of need," Biden said. — PTI

Boris in soup for 'dying' talk

London, April 26: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson faced a call to resign on Monday after claims he dismissed the prospect of thousands dying from Covid-19, as a row over government "sleaze" escalated.

In a front-page headline, the Daily Mail newspaper reported Johnson had said he would rather see "bodies pile high in their thousands" than impose a third Coronavirus lockdown.

The prime minister has been utterly focused on delivering, alongside Cabinet colleagues, the response to Covid", he told Sky News. — AFP

damaging war of words with his former top aide Dominic Cummings over his Coronavirus policies last year and financial dealings.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said the Daily Mail report, based on unnamed sources, was "not true" and had been "categorically denied by practically everyone".

"None of this is serious. The prime minister has been utterly focused on delivering, alongside Cabinet colleagues, the response to Covid", he told Sky News. — AFP

Everyone aged 44 and above in Britain will now be able to book their Covid-19 jab starting on Monday as the UK's National Health Service (NHS) vaccine programme expands further to more younger age groups. Around half a million 44-year-olds will receive a text message inviting them to get their jab. — PTI

THAILAND FINE OF UP TO \$640 FOR NOT WEARING MASK

Bangkok, April 26: Authorities in Thailand are imposing fines of up to 20,000 baht (\$640) for people who fail to wear face masks in public in 48 provinces, as the government struggles to cope with a new wave of coronavirus cases that is straining the medical system.

The capital, Bangkok, which has the largest number of cases, is also closing more than 30 types of businesses and services, including cinemas, parks, zoos, bars, pools and massage parlours. Gatherings of more than 20 people are banned. — AP

Australia will send oxygen, ventilators and personal protective equipment to India as part of an immediate support package to the country which is battling with the latest surge of the Covid-19 cases. Health Minister Greg Hunt said on Monday.

The federal government was in the process of considering what it could send to help, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation news channel quoted Hunt as saying.

"India is literally gasping for oxygen," the federal health minister said.

And while we can assist with the national medical stockpile, their particular request is for assistance

with regards to the physical supply of oxygen. That will be one of the things we are looking at, in particular with the states, the minister said.

The federal government also confirmed to send oxygen, ventilators and personal protective equipment to India as part of an immediate support package to be announced on Tuesday, according to the report.

However, Australia would not send vaccines.

Hunt further said: "We are in a strong position on that front because we don't need them at this point in time. We will still keep a reserve, but if they can be of assistance (they will be donated)." — PTI

Hunt further said: "We are in a strong position on that front because we don't need them at this point in time. We will still keep a reserve, but if they can be of assistance (they will be donated)." — PTI

22 given death in Libya 'sham' trials

Tripoli, April 26: Eastern Libyan military courts have sentenced at least 22 people to death and jailed hundreds more since 2018 in "sham, torture-tainted" trials to exert control, Amnesty International said Monday.

"Military courts have convicted hundreds of civilians in eastern Libya in secret and grossly unfair military trials," the London-based rights

group said. The trials were "aimed at punishing real or perceived opponents and critics" of the forces loyal to eastern military强人 Khalifa Haftar, it added.

Oil-rich Libya has been torn by conflict since the toppling and killing of dictator Moamer Kadafi in a Nato-backed uprising a decade ago. — AFP

MISINFORMATION OF VIRUS: FB BLOCKS OZ MP

Sydney, April 26: Facebook removed Australian member of parliament Craig Kelly's page for repeatedly peddling pandemic misinformation, the social media giant said Monday.

Kelly previously had posts blocked on the platform and was forced to quit the governing Liberal Party amid controversial statements on vaccine safety, lockdowns and unproven Covid treatments.

Facebook said it removed his popular page permanently after "repeated violations" of its policies. — PTI

CHINA CARGO FLIGHTS TO INDIA SUSPENDED

Beijing, April 26: China's state-run Sichuan Airlines has suspended all its cargo flights to India for 15 days, causing major disruption to private traders' efforts to procure the much-needed oxygen concentrators and other medical supplies from the country despite Beijing reiterating its readiness to help India. "China has been following the situation in India and expressed readiness to help curb the latest surge," FM spokesman Wang Wenbin said. — PTI

NUCLEAR DISASTER Dozens gather in ghost town of Pripyat, hold candle vigil Ukraine marks 35 years since Chernobyl

Kiev, April 26: President Volodymyr Zelensky was due Monday to visit the Chernobyl exclusion zone and address Ukrainians to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the world's worst nuclear disaster.

The exclusion zone is a 30-kilometre (20-mile) radius around the nuclear power plant that was evacuated in the aftermath of an explosion and was deemed unsafe for humans to

live for thousands of years. Ahead of his arrival, dozens of people gathered in the nearby ghost town of Pripyat and held an overnight vigil with candles in memory of the those who lost their lives in the accident.

The deaths of some 30 people were directly linked to the explosion in the fourth reactor at Chernobyl during a safety test on April 26, 1986.

But thousands more are feared to have died in the years that followed from radiation poisoning across Ukraine as well as its northern neighbour Belarus and Russia to the east. The exact number of victims remains a subject of intense debate because the Soviet authorities kept most of the information about the disaster hidden.

Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated

Zarif's leaked recording offers blunt comments

Dubai, April 26: A recording of Iran's foreign minister offering a blunt appraisal of diplomacy and the limits of power within the Islamic Republic has leaked out publicly, providing a rare look inside the country's theocracy.

The release of the comments by Mohammad Javad Zarif set off a firestorm within Iran, where officials carefully mind their words amid a cut-throat political environment that includes the powerful paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, ultimately overseen by the country's supreme leader. Zarif has been suggested as a possible candidate for Iran's June 18 presidential election as well.

Outside of Iran, Zarif's comments could also affect talks in Vienna aimed at finding a way for Tehran and the US to both come into compliance with I

Germany flays Navalny curbs

Berlin, April 26: Germany condemned an order by Russian prosecutors Monday to suspend all activities by jailed opposition figure Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) and its regional network.

Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said "using the instruments of fighting terror against politically undesirable opinions is in no way compatible with the principles of the rule of law".

A Moscow court had begun a preliminary hearing into designating FBK and its regional offices as "extremist" after prosecutors requested they be added to a list of "terrorist and extremist" organisations run by Russia's Anti-Terrorism Committee.

The Moscow City Court confirmed that the activities of the group's regional network were suspended, but clarified that prosecutors had the power to make the decision and

Suu Kyi court date postponed

Yangon, April 26: Myanmar's junta again postponed court proceedings against deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi on Monday her lawyers said, as they fight for permission to visit her 12 weeks after she was detained.

"When the judge asked (police) which stage they have reached, they replied they couldn't tell specifically," she said, adding that Suu Kyi was frustrated by the slow pace.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military ousted the Nobel laureate in a February 1 coup, shutting the country back into junta rule after a brief experiment with democracy. Large swathes of the population have taken to the streets in protest, with security forces unleashing a brutal campaign to quell the massive uprising.

Meanwhile Suu Kyi has been under house arrest, with the junta charging her under six cases — including for sedition and having unlicensed walkie-talkies. But movement on her case was once again delayed until May 10, her lawyer Min Min Soe said Monday after a hearing.

Twelve weeks since Suu Kyi was detained, Min Min Soe said they still have not received permission to meet their client face-to-face — one of many hurdles the team has faced.

"When the judge asked (police) which stage they have reached, they replied they couldn't tell specifically," she said, adding that Suu Kyi was frustrated by the slow pace.

Besides not being able to meet with Suu Kyi, junta-imposed mobile data shutdowns have also prevented video-conferencing in previous hearings.

The most serious charge Suu Kyi faces falls under Myanmar's official secrets law, with a hearing due in Yangon on May 6.

Nationwide protests continued Monday, with demonstrators holding signs that said "Free our leaders" and waving red flags emblazoned with a golden peacock — the symbol of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy Party.

from the area around the disaster site, and the exclusion zone has now become a ghostly uninhabited region. About 600,000 emergency workers and state employees who became known as "liquidators" were dispatched with little or no protective gear to help clean up the aftermath of the disaster.

In November 2016, a massive metal dome was erected over the remains of the reactor.

— AFP

IN BRIEF

Mali rocket attack: 3 UN staffers hurt

Bamako: Three United Nations peacekeepers were seriously injured in a rocket attack on a military base in the north of the conflict-ridden Sahel state, UN and local officials said.

Olivier Salgado, the spokesman for the UN's MINUSMA mission in Mali, said the attack took place on a base in Tessalit — in the north — which houses Malian soldiers, UN peacekeepers and French troops. Three peacekeepers were "gravely wounded" in the attack, he added.

Ivory Coast base attack: 12 held

Abidjan: A dozen people have been arrested after a military base near Ivory Coast's economic capital of Abidjan was attacked last week, state radio said on Monday. "The 12 suspected attackers were arrested following an inquiry" led by the gendarmerie, a police force under the orders of the defence ministry, Ivorian Radio Television (RTI) said on its website. Armed men attacked the base of N'dorre, north of Abidjan, on the night of April 21.

Biden, Harris laud Mahavir teachings

Washington: US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have greeted Jains on the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti and said his teachings inspire us to seek truth and nonviolence. This is probably for the first time that a US President has issued a message on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Lord Mahavir. "First Lady" Jill (Biden) and I send our best wishes to people of the Jain faith celebrating Mahavir Jayanti. Mahavir Swami guided others to seek truth, turn away from violence, and live in harmony with all.

Papua intel chief killed

Jakarta: An Indonesian regional intelligence chief was killed in an ambush by rebels in restive Papua region, the military confirmed Monday as the country's president vowed to crush the separatists. General I Gusti Putu Danny Karya Nugraha, who headed Papua's intelligence agency, was shot dead during a shootout after rebels opened fire at a patrolling security forces unit in the Papuan highlands on Sunday. "He was in the area as part of the operation to restore security and to boost the morale of locals in the region following a series of attacks by separatist and terrorist groups," National Intelligence Agency spokesman Wawan Purwanto said.

US: Pak's worry is regrouping of Afghan ultras

Islamabad, April 26: The regrouping of terrorists like the Islamic State and Al Qaeda militants would be a biggest concern for Pakistan, a top US general has warned as the Pentagon started pulling out its troops from Afghanistan, according to a media report on Monday.

The US military has begun its complete withdrawal from Afghanistan, General Austin S. Miller, the head of the US-led coalition in Afghanistan, said in Kabul on Sunday. His remarks came almost two weeks after President Joe Biden announced that all US forces would be out of the war-torn country by September 11, the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks that propelled America into its long war in Afghanistan.

At a recent Pentagon briefing in Washington, General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr, Commander US Central Command (Centcom), has warned that after the US withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, the biggest threat would be the regrouping of Al Qaeda and IS militants who will be able to regenerate if pressure is not kept on them, the Dawn Newspaper reported.

General McKenzie said he was now figuring out how the US will be able to conduct counter-terrorism activities in the area without being in Afghanistan. The pullout, he said, did not mean that the US will be at the mercy of groups like IS, Al Qaeda or the Taliban if they want to create problems and threaten our interests.

— PTI

Sunk sub crew's video emerges

Bali, Indonesia, April 26: A poignant video has emerged showing the crew of a sunken Indonesian submarine singing happily together on board their vessel.

The video, filmed a few weeks before the KRI Nanggala 402 went down with all hands lost, shows some of the 53-strong crew singing "Sampai Jumpa", an Indonesian hit whose title means "Goodbye".

Submarine commander Heri Oktaviany is among those gathered around a seaman strumming an acoustic guitar.

"Even though I'm not ready to be missing you, I'm not ready to live with-

out you," the sailors sing. "I wish all the best for you." The video was recorded as a farewell for the outgoing commander of the navy's submarine corps, whose successor took up his role in early March, Indonesian military spokesman Djawara Whimbo said.

The German-built submarine — one of five in Indonesia's fleet — disappeared early Wednesday while it was scheduled to do live torpedo training exercises off Bali.

Indonesia's military

announced Sunday it had

found the vessel in pieces

on the seabed, around

800 metres (2,600 feet)

below the surface. — AFP

CINEMA

3rd WEEK

SUDARSHAN 35MM 11.00am, 2.15, 5.00pm

VISWANATH 70 11.00, 2.00, 5.00

SRI LAXMI 70 12.00, 3.00, 5.00

SENSATION SUNSHINE 11.00, 2.00, 5.45

PVR

FORUM - Kukatpally 10.10, 11.00, 1.20, 2.20, 4.30 I

GALLERIA - Punjagutta 10.00, 11.00, 1.10, 1.45, 4.20

RK - Banjara 11.10, 4.20 I **S2 - 10.00, 1.10, 4.20 I**

INORBIT - Cyberbad 10.55, 1.10, 2.05, 4.20 I

IRRUM MANZIL 10.00, 11.15, 1.10, 4.20 I

MOSARAMBAGH 10.00, 11.15, 1.10, 4.20 I

PRESTON - Gachibowli 11.20, 4.15 I

ICON - Hitech 10.00, 1.10, 4.20 I

MANTRA - Attapur 10.30, 4.30 I

CCPL - Malkajgiri 11.00, 4.45 I

DSL - Uppal 10.20, 1.25, 4.30 I

INOX

GVK - Banjara 10.20, 11.30, 12.45, 1.45, 3.00, 4.15 I

GSM - Miyapur 11.00, 12.00, 1.00, 2.30, 3.30, 4.30 I

MP - Kachiguda 11.30, 12.45, 1.30, 3.00, 4.30 I

PRASADS 12.45, 3.45 I **AMB - 11.00, 1.15, 4.45 I**

TIVOLI CINEMAS 11.00, 2.00, 5.00 I

TALLURI 11.00, 2.00, 5.30

SLN 1.00, 4.00 I

Russia launches UK telecom sats

Moscow, April 26: A Soyuz rocket blasted off from the Vostochny cosmodrome in Russia's Far East on Monday carrying 36 UK telecommunications and internet satellites, the Roscosmos space agency said.

OneWeb, a London-headquartered company, is working to complete the construction of a constellation of low earth orbit satellites providing enhanced broadband and other services to countries around the world.

The company is competing against billionaires Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos in the race to provide fast internet via satellites for the world's remote areas.

Images released by Russia's space agency Roscosmos showed the Soyuz rocket taking off against hazy skies Monday morning at 7:14 am local time (2214 GMT).

"All satellites have been successfully placed in target orbits and have been taken under customer control," Roscosmos said in a statement.

"Mission success!" OneWeb wrote on Twitter.

The UK company plans for its global commercial internet service to be operational by next year, supported by some 650

ONEWEB'S FIRST six satellites were also launched by a Russian-made Soyuz rocket, taking off from the space centre in Kourou in French Guiana in February 2019.

satellites.

Monday's launch was the third batch of its satellites placed into orbit from Russia, with earlier launches from the Vostochny cosmodrome of 36 satellites each taking place last month and in December.

OneWeb's first six

satellites were also launched by a Russian-made Soyuz rocket, taking off from the space centre in Kourou in French Guiana in February 2019.

The company launched 68 more from the Baikonur launch site in Kazakhstan last year.

The Vostochny launch site is one of Russia's most important space projects, designed to reduce reliance on the Baikonur space centre Moscow currently rents from Kazakhstan.

The project has been consistently behind schedule, with its construction marred for years by multiple controversies including corruption.

— AFP

Cops remove east Jerusalem obstacles after violent protest

Israeli move apparently aimed at easing tensions after days of clashes



Protesters burn tyres during a protest in solidarity with Palestinian demonstrators who have been clashing with Israeli police outside Jerusalem's Old City following the closure of a popular Ramadan gathering spot, at the Shati refugee camp in Gaza City. — AP

City, with Palestinians throwing stones and bottles at officers, who responded with stun grenades and water cannons.

Skirmishes broke out again on Friday after Muslim worshippers left Jerusalem's revered Al-Aqsa mosque following night prayers.

Palestinians had also targeted Jewish passers-by

Jihadist video inspired France killer

Rambouillet, France, April 26: A Tunisian man who stabbed to death a police employee outside Paris watched jihadist propaganda videos just before the attack, France's anti-terror prosecutor said on Sunday, adding that a fifth person was detained for questioning.

Based on an analysis of the killer's cellphone as well as his social media postings, "his radicalisation appears little in doubt," Jean-Francois Ricard said at a press conference.

The 36-year-old attacker, identified as Jamel Gorchene, stabbed a woman who worked at the police station in Rambouillet, a suburb southwest of Paris, on Friday as she was returning from a break.

Investigators later discovered that he had watched videos of songs praising jihadist fighters on his phone moments

before the attack.

A Koran and a prayer rug were found in his scooter afterwards, Ricard said.

Video surveillance cameras appear to show that Gorchene visited a temporary prayer hall in Rambouillet a few hours before arriving at the station, he added, though the images do not confirm if he entered the building.

Gorchene's father, who was still being held for questioning Sunday, "revealed that his son had adopted a rigorous practice of Islam," Ricard said.

"On the other hand, he also said that he had noticed behavioural troubles since the beginning of this year," he added.

A couple who housed Gorchene after he arrived illegally in France in 2009 were released from custody without charge, a judicial source said.

Two cousins remained in custody Sunday as investigators try to work out what prompted the attack by a man unknown to any of France's intelligence services and without a criminal record.

France has suffered a wave of Islamist terror attacks that have killed more than 250 people in recent years. Ricard said the Rambouillet attack was the 17th since 2014.

Gorchene, who obtained a French residency permit last year, had returned last month to Tunisia to visit his family, his first trip to the country since he immigrated.

Ricard said investigators were working with Tunisian authorities, while Tunisia's embassy in Paris said it "strongly condemned" a "barbaric act" carried out during the holy month of Ramadan. — AFP

JAPAN'S AIRLINE ANA SETS 2050 DATE FOR CARBON NEUTRALITY

Tokyo, April 26: Japan's biggest airline ANA said on Monday it aims to become carbon neutral by 2050 through new technology, emissions trading and other efforts.

It comes after Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced last week that Japan would target a 46-per cent cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, significantly more than previously pledged.

ANA Holdings said it "plans to reduce carbon emission levels from aircraft operations to net zero by 2050" by using more sustainable fuel, developing more efficient planes and engines, and through carbon trading.

Last year, the company set a target to halve carbon emissions by 2050 compared with 2005 levels.

Such initiatives are not new among airlines, with the industry body for America's leading carriers pledging to work towards net-zero emissions by 2050, and British Airways eyeing green jet fuel.

Japanese car giant Honda also said last week it would aim to have electric and fuel cell vehicles account for all sales by 2040 to promote climate goals. — AFP

LAST YEAR, the company set a target to halve carbon emissions by 2050 compared with 2005 levels.

US cops seek attacker of Asian man

New York, April 26: A 61-year-old Chinese American man was attacked by a man who kicked him repeatedly in the head in East Harlem, police said.

The man was collecting cans when he was attacked from behind, knocked to the ground and kicked in the head shortly after 8 pm on Friday. He was taken to Harlem Hospital in critical but stable condition, police said.

Surveillance video released by the police appears to show the attacker stomping on the victim's head.

The police department's hate crimes task force is investigating the attack, the latest in a troubling rise in anti-Asian hate crimes in New York and around the country. Mayor Bill

de Blasio called the assault "outrageous" on Twitter. "Make no mistake, we will find the perpetrator and they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," de Blasio said on Saturday.

The attack recalled last month's assault near Times Square in which a woman who immigrated from the Philippines was knocked to the ground and stomped on by an attacker who shouted anti-Asian slurs. A parolee convicted of killing his mother nearly two decades ago was arrested in that attack.

The US Senate passed legislation last week aimed at fighting the rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The measure would expedite the review of hate crimes at the Justice Department and provide support for local law enforcement in response to thousands of reported violent incidents in the past year.

Gov Andrew Cuomo said on Sunday he would direct the state hate crimes task force to offer assistance in investigating Friday's attack in East Harlem. "I'm sickened to learn of yet another bigoted act of violence against an Asian American man," the governor said in a statement. "This is not who we are as New Yorkers, and we will not let these cowardly acts of hate against members of our New York family intimidate us."

— AP

task in order to curtail the reach of private companies into the public's daily finances and — analysts believe — to rein in their runaway expansion as well as the status of their super-rich founders.

Two weeks ago the regulator warned 34 technology giants — including Baidu, Tencent and Meituan — to "rectify" any anti-competitive measures, prompting a series of public pledges to abide by anti-monopoly

guidelines. Regulators told internet companies to "heed the warning of Alibaba's case".

Alibaba too had come under fire for forcing the practice of "choosing one of two" on retailers — where merchants are compelled to work only with one platform and not its rivals.

Companies such as e-commerce platform JD.com have since pledged to avoid such behaviour.

Alibaba and JD.com, along with messaging and gaming giant Tencent, have become hugely profitable on the back of growing Chinese digital lifestyles and government restrictions on major US competitors in the domestic market. But as the platforms amassed hundreds of millions of regular users, concern has risen over their influence in China, where they are used for a huge array of daily tasks. — AFP

ANTI-TRUST | ISSUES **Meituan is probed as it allegedly went into forced agreements**

Beijing, April 26: Regulators have launched an anti-trust probe into Meituan, one of China's biggest food delivery firms, they said on Monday, as Beijing claps the wings of its soaring tech companies.

The probe was prompted by reports that Meituan allegedly engaged in forced exclusivity agreements with vendors, the State Administration for Market Regulation said in a statement.

"Mission success!" OneWeb wrote on Twitter.

The project has been consistently behind schedule, with its construction marred for years by multiple controversies including corruption.

Those were among its "suspected monopolistic behaviours", the regulator said.

E-commerce titan Alibaba was hit by a record 18.2 billion yuan (\$2.78 billion) fine this month after facing a similar charge.

The woes of Meituan, which counts gaming giant Tencent as a shareholder, is the latest sign that China's assault on big tech is far from over.

Beijing has taken the country's tech firms to

+ + +

quick BITES

INDICATORS %

Sensex	4836.51	1.06
Nifty 50	14485.00	1.00
S&P 500*	4,189.51	0.22
Dollar (₹)	74.73	0.39
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.99	0.11
Euro (₹)	90.41	0.04
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,976.81	0.17
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	65.57	-0.82
IN 10-Yr T-bill yield*	6.038	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.568	0.001

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Mankind Pharma to give ₹100 cr to families of dead

Mankind Pharma will donate Rs 100 crore to the families of deceased doctors, police officers, pharmacists, and other healthcare workers who have lost their lives fighting the pandemic. The firm plans to start releasing the money with immediate effect and hopes to complete it within three months, Mankind said in a statement. The firm said it is standing alongside the families of the heroes who lost their lives.

■ Age ceiling for top tier set at 70 years Bank chief's tenure capped at 15 years

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, APRIL 26

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday fixed the tenure of managing directors and chief executive officers (MD & CEO) and whole-time directors (WTD) in private sector banks at 15 years and prescribed the maximum age of 70 years for such functionaries.

The central bank also said a CEO, MD or WTD, who is a promoter or major shareholder of a bank as well, will not be eligible to hold these posts for more than 12 years, with an extension of up to 15 years permitted at its sole discretion.

Bank chiefs and WTDs who are not promoters will be eligible for a second-term even after the 15-year period after a three-year break. During this three-year gap, the individual shall not be associated with the bank or its group entities in any capacity.

Similarly, the RBI approved the reappointment of N. Kamakodi, MD & CEO of City Union Bank,

must be an independent director. It also listed other guidelines on the pay of non-executive directors, age limits and setting up of audits, remuneration and risk-management committees.

The RBI has given banks until October 1 to comply with the rules.

Analysts pointed that promoter Uday Kotak, who has been at the helm of Kotak Mahindra Bank for over 12 years, had been re-appointed for a term of three years starting January 2021, may not be immediately impacted.

Similarly, the RBI approved the reappointment of N. Kamakodi, MD & CEO of City Union Bank,

AUTO INDUSTRY VETERAN JAGDISH KHATTAR PASSES AWAY

New Delhi, April 26: Former managing director of Maruti Suzuki India, Jagdish Khattar, passed away Monday morning following a cardiac arrest, according to people close to him.

Khattar (79), a former bureaucrat, was considered as one of the most high profile leaders of the Indian automotive industry.

Jagdish Khattar

try, laying the foundation for Maruti's future growth after the government began its disinvestment in 2002 and gradually exited from its joint venture with Suzuki Motor Corporation (SMC).

MPHASIS OWNERSHIP CHANGE TO SET OFF OPEN OFFER

New Delhi, April 26: Shares of Mphasis Ltd closed with a gain of over 1.6 per cent on Monday after Blackstone said funds managed it will acquire a majority stake in the mid-sized IT firm.

"However, one will have to wait and see as to what view the RBI takes on Bandhan Bank. Does the limit include the MD and CEO's tenure when he was heading Bandhan as an NBFC? Similarly, the MDs of Federal Bank, DCB Bank and RBL Bank have been there for long but the upper limit of 15 years may not have an immediate impact on these banks," said an analyst.

J.N. Gupta, former executive director of Sebi, said, "I am unable to understand as to why the RBI feels that independent directors and non-executive directors should be paid a fixed sum which is in total contradiction with the provisions of the Companies Act. Secondly, how can a promoter who owns substantial equity in the bank be asked to sit on the fence and watch non-interested parties manage the bank."

A different fund managed by Blackstone had acquired a controlling stake in Mphasis from Hewlett Packard Enterprise in September 2016.

Based on the open offer subscription, the blended purchase price will vary between Rs 1,452 and Rs 1,497 per share and the purchase consideration will vary between Rs 15,200 crore and Rs 21,000 crore (about \$2 bn-2.8 bn), the statement said.

At the end of March 2021 quarter, Marble II Pte Ltd, a fund managed by Blackstone, held 56.03 per cent stake in Mphasis.

Mphasis in a regulatory filing said Marble II will sell up to 55.31 per cent stake as part of a share purchase pact signed on Monday. — PTI

Price gap of ready and under construction houses narrows

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, APRIL 26

Sluggish demand has narrowed down the price difference between ready-to-move-in and under-construction residential units to as low as 3 per cent.

The price gap between ready and or under-construction housing, which has been narrowing since 2017, has come down to 3 to 5 per cent, indicating the sluggishness in demand in the market, finds Anarock Property Consultants.

In 2017, the price gap stood at 9 to 12 per cent and it had narrowed to 5-8 per cent in 2018.

In Mumbai, the price difference shrunk from 12



per cent in 2017 to 3 per cent in Q1 2021. In the case of Bengaluru, it was 12 per cent and 4 per cent and Pune, the gap narrowed from 12 per cent to 5 per cent.

"The shrunken price gap works well for end-users as well as investors," said Anuj Puri, chairman, Anarock Property Consultants.

reduction in production. "The lockdown enforced in various parts of the country is expected to impact vehicle demand temporarily," the auto major said, adding, Hence, the firm has set in motion a comprehensive 'Business Agility Plan' to protect and serve the interests of its customers, dealers and suppliers. — Michael Gonsalves

BUSINESS BRIEFS

TECH MAHINDRA Q4 NET UP 34.6% TO ₹1,080 CR

Mumbai, April 26: Tech Mahindra reported a 34.6 per cent jump in net profit to ₹1,081 crore for the March 2020 quarter and guided towards targeting for a double-digit revenue growth in FY22. Its post-tax net profit grew 9.8 per cent to ₹4,428 crore in 2020-21, on the back of a 2.7 per cent growth in overall revenues to ₹37,855 crore. CEO and MD C. P. Gurnani said 2020-21 was the "repair" year when the company faced the pandemic impact, and promised 2021-22 to be a "growth year". — PTI

TATA MOTORS TO CUT PRODUCTION

Pune, April 26: Tata Motors said it has decided to "calibrate" production of its vehicles with actual demand to prevent oversupply and a pile up of inventory at the company and dealers. It did not give any details about the likely quantum of

Mumbai, April 26: Powergrid InvIT will come out with India's first PSU infrastructure investment trust IPO on Thursday April 29. The IPO seeks to raise Rs 7,734.92 crore from units sold at a price band of Rs 99 to Rs 100 apiece. IRB InvIT and Indi Grid InvIT are already listed on the stock exchanges. An InvIT is a collective investment scheme similar to a mutual fund that invests in infrastructure projects. The Powergrid InvIT IPO comprises fresh issue of units for up to Rs 4,993.48 crore and the selling unit holder is offering units aggregating up to Rs 2,741.50 crore. — Ravi Ranjan Prasad

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Hockey captain Rani, 6 others +ve

New Delhi: Seven members of the Indian women's hockey team, including captain Rani Rampal, and two support staff members on Monday tested positive for Covid-19 ahead of a training camp at the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Centre in Bengaluru. All the players and support staff are asymptomatic and have been placed under observation at the SAI centre.

"They were tested on April 24, post quarantine after their return from their respective home towns to their training base at SAI Bengaluru, as per the laid down protocol," the SAI said in a statement. — PTI

Nadal bags 12th Barcelona crown

Barcelona: Rafael Nadal saved a championship point to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 6-7 (6/8), 7-5 on Sunday and claim a 12th Barcelona Open title in the ATP's longest match of 2021. He secured his first title of the year and 87th of his career, denying Tsitsipas back-to-back triumphs following his maiden Masters 1000 title at Monte Carlo last week. Nadal avenged his Australian Open quarter-final loss to Tsitsipas and will return to second in the ATP rankings on Monday by climbing back above Daniil Medvedev after his marathon 3-hour 38-minute win. — AFP

Cirstea wins WTA title after 13 years

Istanbul: Romania's Sorana Cirstea said she "didn't expect" to win the Istanbul claycourt tournament on Sunday, her second career title coming 13 years after her first. The 31-year-old Romanian defeated top-seeded Elise Mertens of Belgium 6-1, 7-6 (7/3) in the final having not dropped a set all week. Cirstea, ranked at 67 in the world, captured her maiden title at Tashkent in 2008. Sunday was her fifth final, having made her maiden championship match as a 17-year-old qualifier at Budapest 2007. "I'm very, very happy for this trophy," Cirstea said at the winner's ceremony. — AFP

FOUR IN A ROW FOR CITY Guardiola's men outclass Tottenham to retain League Cup in front of fans



Manchester City players celebrate with the trophy after winning the League Cup final against Tottenham Hotspur 1-0 at the Wembley Stadium in London on Sunday. — AP

ed quadruple of trophies this season.

However, they remain on course for a treble with the first leg of their Champions League semi-final against Paris Saint-Germain to come on Wednesday before possibly

sealing the Premier League title next weekend. Victory takes Guardiola's personal tally of major trophies to 25 across his spells in charge of Barcelona, Bayern Munich and City seven of which have come in England.

By contrast, Tottenham's long wait for just one goes on. Spurs could have no complaints, though, at the

"I was in big clubs: Barcelona, Bayern Munich and here, that's why it is easier to do it," added the Catalan modestly.

Hugo Lloris's goal lived a charmed life, particularly during the first half.

— AFP

ATLETICO DEFEAT BY BILBAO HANDS INITIATIVE TO BARCA

Madrid, April 26: Atletico Madrid's title hopes suffered a setback on Sunday as a shock 2-1 defeat at Athletic Bilbao handed Barcelona the upper hand in a thrilling race at the top of La Liga.

Real Madrid's draw with Real Betis on Saturday gave Atletico the chance to pull further clear but instead they ended the weekend with their lead reduced, a loss at San Mames the latest twist in Europe's most unpredictable domestic chase.

Barcelona had earlier beaten Villarreal by the same scoreline, with Antoine Griezmann's quick-fire double becoming all the more valuable

Real Madrid host Sevilla a day later.

— AFP

after another Atletico slip. Sevilla have largely been overlooked as possible champions in Spain but they are right in the mix as well now after a 2-1 win over Granada puts them just three points off the top and one behind Real Madrid.

Yet Barcelona were the biggest winners, with Ronald Koeman's team able to go top of the table if they win their game in hand at home to Granada on Thursday, even if Atletico might have a way back given they are still to play at Camp Nou on May 8.

"(Clubs) who plan to play in competitions outside of FIFA or UEFA will lose their affiliation to our championship," FIGC president Gabriele Gravina said after a meet-

ing on Monday. Inter Milan announced their withdrawal from the proposed Super League last week.

"Three Serie A clubs — Juventus, Inter Milan and AC Milan — were among 12 major European sides who were involved in the plans to launch a European Super League last week."

Inter Milan announced their withdrawal from the proposed Super League last week.

"At the moment, we have no information on who stayed and who left the Super League."

The new rule will be added to the licenses of the clubs and into the regulatory texts of the FIGC.

— AFP

Deepika, Atanu trap triple gold

Guatemala City, April 26: Indian archery's star couple Deepika Kumari and Atanu Das led the show with two individual gold medals as the country capped its best ever performance in a World Cup, claiming three golds and a bronze in the tournament's first stage here.

Former world number one Deepika claimed her career's third individual World Cup gold to add to the team's triumph, while her husband Das grabbed his first ever World Cup individual medal in style winning the men's recurve individual final.

The two are now automatically qualified for this season's most-coveted Archery World Cup Final.

"We travel together, train together, compete together and win together," Das, who got married to Deepika in June last year after a two-year courtship, said after claiming the gold medal on Sunday.

"She knows what I like, and I know what she likes."

This was the best ever World Cup finish by India's recurve archers with two individual and one team gold medals in their return to the top International calendar year event after almost two years.

Jayanta Talukdar triumphed in Croatia way back in 2009.

India started with the women's trio of Deepika, Ankita Bhakat and Komalika Bari winning the first team gold after seven years. They scripted a stunning turnaround to down fancied Mexico 5-4 (27-26) in an intriguing shoot-off.

The performance rubbed off on the mixed pair of Das and Bhakat as they bagged a bronze, upsetting top seeds USA 6-2 with yet another fightback at the Sports Complex Los Arcos here.

But the icing on the cake came in the individual events later in the day when Deepika and Das bagged two individual golds in their respective events.

This was Deepika's third career stage win and first since Salt Lake City 2018.

— PTI

TOKYO TO DECIDE ON FAN LIMIT BY END OF MONTH

Tokyo, April 26: Tokyo 2020 President Seiko Hashimoto said on Monday that she will decide the upper limit of spectators for the Olympics and Paralympics by the end of April.

"As for the upper limit of spectators, we will make a decision on that regard by the end of April. In order to flexibly address the virus situation including the state of emergency, we will work closely with the IOC, IPC, the central government and the Tokyo metropolitan government in order to gain consensus," said Hashimoto during Tokyo 2020 executive board meeting held in the capital.

Hashimoto noted that she was highly aware of concern about the virus resurgence as the state of emergency has been issued in Tokyo and three other prefectures but will have anti-virus measures that address all the possible issues that may be caused by holding the games amid the pandemic.

— AP



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

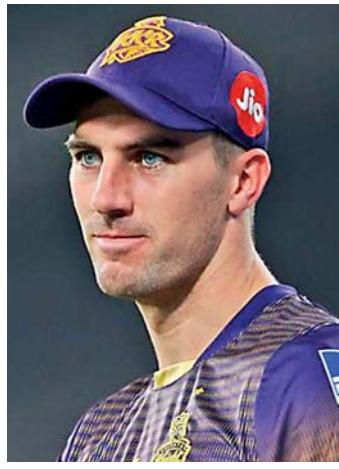
DECCAN CHRONICLE, HYDERABAD, TUESDAY, 27 APRIL 2021

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ORANGE	
Shikhar Dhawan, DC	259
KL Rahul, PBKS	240
Faf du Plessis, CSK	214

PURPLE	
Harshal Patel, RCB	15
Avesh Khan, DC	11
Rahul Chahar, MI	9

Off the field



KKR pacer Pat Cummins.

Cummins donates \$50K to PM fund

Kolkata Knight Riders' Australian pacer Pat Cummins on Monday announced a \$50,000 donation towards PM CARES Fund for oxygen supplies in India's COVID-19 ravaged hospitals and backed the IPL to continue, saying he has been "advised" that the Indian government views it "as few hours of joy" in a difficult time. "As players, we are privileged to have the platform that allows us to reach millions of people that we can use for good. With that in mind, I have made a contribution to the PM CARES Fund, specifically to purchase oxygen supplies for India's hospitals," he stated.

Cricket Australia monitors situation

Cricket Australia have said they are in touch with their player after three of them pulled out of the IPL and returned home. "We will continue to listen to feedback from those on the ground in India and the advice of the Australian Government. Our thoughts are with the people of India," it added.

The Sydney Morning Herald on Monday reported that many Australian players are "nervous about securing safe passage back home after the Scott Morrison government reduced the number of incoming passengers allowed from India."

Coulter-Nile feels safer in bio-bubble

Australian pacer Nathan Coulter-Nile understands why some of his compatriots decided to leave home midway from the IPL but he feels safer being part of the Mumbai Indians' bio-bubble.

"Everyone's got their own opinions on it and different situations for them," Coulter-Nile told *cricket.com.au* where more than 20,000 cases have been reported daily for the past one week.

"I was surprised to see AJ go home, and then Zamps and Richo, but when you speak to them, you definitely understand where they're coming from. I spoke to Zamps a little while ago and he made a very compelling argument for going home. But for me, I feel like it's safer for me to stay in the bubble."

Regd. No. HQ/SD/509/2021-23

Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3, RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Kaushik Mitter

BUBBLE WOBBLES

Pressure mounts as Ashwin and two more Aussies pull out

New Delhi, April 26: Anxiety pierced through IPL's bio-secure bubble on Monday with leading Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin and some Australian players withdrawing from the league amid the escalating COVID-19 crisis in India even as the BCCI insisted that the glitz league will go on.

The 34-year-old Ashwin, competing for Delhi Capitals, decided to take a break saying that his family is currently "putting up a fight against COVID-19" and he wants to support them. He hopes to return to the side "if things go in the right direction".

However, the duo of Kane Richardson and Adam Zampa (both Royal Challengers Bangalore) withdrew as apprehension set in after a couple of weeks went by smoothly for the league being held in front of empty stands across six venues.

FEAR OF GETTING LOCKED OUT

While Zampa and Richardson have not yet spoken about their "personal reasons" for leaving, Andrew Tye (Rajasthan Royals) who pulled out on Sunday said he feared getting locked out of his own country owing to mounting quarantine cases from India in his hometown Perth.

BCCI KEEN ON CONTINUING SHOW

The BCCI, on its part, insisted that the event will continue and it wouldn't come in the way of those wanting to leave.

"As of now, IPL is going ahead. Obviously, if anyone wants to leave, that's perfectly fine," a senior Board official said on conditions of anonymity.

My family and extended family are putting up a fight against #COVID19 and I want to support them during these tough times.

— R. ASHWIN
DC off-spinner

While leg-spinner Zampa was bought for ₹1.5 crore, RCB spent ₹4 crore to buy pacer Richardson at the players' auction.

Richardson featured in one match for RCB, returning figures of 1 for 29 in three overs against Rajasthan Royals in Mumbai, but Zampa couldn't make it to the playing XI this season.

The 34-year-old Tye had also not got a game with the Royals so far and his contract with the franchise was worth ₹1 crore.

Several England and New Zealand players are also competing in the event but haven't yet spoken about their concerns.

ECB TO WORK WITH ITS PLAYERS
"We continue to monitor and work with the players on an individual basis. Our thoughts are with the people of India during these difficult times," a spokesperson of the England and Wales Cricket Board said.

The players from New Zealand, including Kane Williamson and Trent Boult, are expected to leave early in any case as they have a Test series against England starting June 2. They will have to head back in last week of May to be available for it due to injuries while Liam Livingstone had gone back home citing bubble fatigue and COVID-19 fear.

Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer are out of the IPL due to injuries while Liam Livingstone had gone back home citing bubble fatigue. On

Sunday, Andrew Tye left for Australia, citing fear due to surge of COVID-19 cases in India, making Royals the worst affected team from player pull-outs. "The team is looking to loan players and has written to other franchises but nothing is decided at this point," a source close to the team management said.

The IPL loan window started on Monday and will end with the conclu-

sion of the league stage. Tye, who had not played a game this season, flew back home on Sunday fearing being locked out of his own country with India reporting record COVID-19 infections for the past few days.

IPL rules state that a player who has played less than two matches in the season can be loaned and cannot play against his home franchise.

— PTI

Royals down with just four foreigners, seek player loans

New Delhi, April 26: Rajasthan Royals have approached fellow IPL teams to loan players after the departure of their four foreign players due to various reasons that include injuries, bubble fatigue and COVID-19 fear.

Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer are out of the IPL due to injuries while Liam Livingstone had gone back home citing bubble fatigue and COVID-19 fear.

From a Kolkata point of view, we're desperate for the tournament to keep going, purely because everyone's in lockdown, there's not much else to do," added Hussey.

Andrew Tye left for Australia, citing fear due to surge of COVID-19 cases in India, making Royals the worst affected team from player pull-outs. "The team is looking to loan players and has written to other franchises but nothing is decided at this point," a source close to the team management said.

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— PTI

Everyone is a bit nervous: Hussey



KKR batting coach David Hussey (left) talks to bowling coach Kyle Mills.

how lucky we are to play the game and try to entertain people around the world," said Hussey.

However, he said the players are pragmatic and want the tournament to go on.

"Everyone's pretty nervous about what's going on over here, but they're also pragmatic. A couple of players, their fathers have passed away. One person in particular, he's one of the staff members with us and his father passed away last year from COVID, and he was really pragmatic by saying it was his time to go.

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