THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

**COIMBATORE | MONDAY 19 | APRIL 2021** 



ASTROGUIDE

Pilava: Chithirai 6 Tithi: Sapthami Star: Punarpusam Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am Yamagandam: 10.30 am to 3 Noon

**PRAYERS** Fajar: 4.45 am Luhar: 12.14 pm **Asar:** 3.19 pm Maghrib: 6.22 pm Isha: 7.34 pm

**SUNSET TODAY 6.33 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.09 AM MOONRISE TODAY 11.29 AM MOONSET TOMORROW 1.27 AM** 



CASES

DEATHS (+2.58.095) (+1.570) 1,50,54,027 1,78,743

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+10,723)

13,113 TN: 9,91,451

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

£ 14,18,34,251s **DEATHS** 30,29,273

worldometers.info

#### No lockdown on May 2, says chief electoral officer

The Tamil Nadu chief electoral officer has clarified that there will be no lockdown on Sunday, May 2, the day on which votes polled in the elections to five state assemblies, including in Tamil Nadu, will be

#### **UK Oppn asks Johnson to** cancel India visit

London: Britain's Opposition Labour Party on Sunday joined calls for Prime Minister Boris Johnson to cancel his visit to India, starting next Sunday, amid growing concerns of a new variant of COVID-19 detected in the country.

Public Health England has said that 77 cases of the socalled double mutant Indian variant have been detected in the UK since last month and that it has now been classed as a Variant Under Investigation.

Downing Street had earlier confirmed a much shorter schedule for the UK prime minister's visit, with the bulk of the programme including talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi set for a day-long agenda on Monday,



You used to hoard pulses and onions? I am hoarding Covid vaccines and medicines!



**NATION I 4** Yediyurappa in hospital, stable



WORLD | 5

**Nasa Mars copter** flight 'today'

SPORT | 8 Muttiah Muralitharan admitted to hospital in Chennai



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# **Night curfew from tomorrow**

■ TN declares lockdown on Sundays ■ Puts off plus 2 exam **RAILWAYS TO** 

R. MOHAN & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, APRIL 18

It's back to basics again in the fight against Covid-19 in Tamil Nadu. Curfew at night (10 pm to 4 am) and a total Sunday lockdown have been ordered to kick in from Tuesday, April 20. The decision to try and clamp down was taken after a lengthy meeting at the chief minister's residence on Sunday.

In a statement released late evening, the government spelt out the measures it will be putting in place to try and stem the tide of the coronavirus that has been infecting close to 8,000 people a day in its second wave before exploding past the 10,000mark on Sunday when 10,723 new cases pushed the caseload to 9.91 lakh and total fatalities to

The night curfew will be total with autos and taxis also banned. In normal times, autos and taxis are expected to ply only for medical emergencies and to serve train and air travel passengers. There will be strict SoPs on public transport on working

State Board exams for Class 12 have also been postponed and classes can be held only online and

## **RUN 'OXYGEN EXPRESS' TRAINS**

New Delhi, April 18: The Railways will run 'Oxygen Express' trains over the next few days to transport liquid medical oxygen and oxygen cylinders across the country as the demand for medical oxygen in the country has gone through the

Empty tankers will begin their journey from Kalamboli and Boisar railway stations in and near Mumbai on Monday to load liquid medical oxygen from Vizag, Jamshedpur, Rourkela and Bokaro, railway offi-cials said. — *PTI* 

banned. Inter-district and inter-State transport will not be allowed either and only persons driving in an emergency will be allowed on the road. Of course, essential services like the carrying of milk and making newspaper deliveries and hospital emergency service vehi-cles will be allowed to ply. Transportation of petrol, diesel and LPG will also be exempted.

# Singh roots for compulsory licensing to produce vaccine

Former prime minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Covid-19 crisis, stressing that ramping up vaccination was the key to battling the pandemic, and mooted steps to boost supply including invoking compulsory licensing provisions as in case of HIV/AIDS drugs.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, the veteran Congress leader said one must not look at absolute numbers but the total percentage of the population that has been vaccinated.

"The key to our fight against Covid-19 must be ramping up the vaccination effort. We must resist the temptation to look at the absolute numbers being vaccinated, and focus instead on the per-centage of the population vaccinated," he said in his

Noting that India currently has vaccinated only a small fraction of its population, Dr Singh said he is certain that with the



can do much better and

very quickly".
"There are many things we must do to fight the epidemic but a big part of this effort must be ramping up the vaccination programme," he said while making several sugges-

The former prime minister suggested that states should be given some flexibility to define categories of frontline workers who can be vaccinated even if they are below 45 years. Currently, people above

45 years of age are eligible for vaccination. He said some states may want to designate school

teachers, bus, three-wheel-

### RAHUL GANDHI **SUSPENDS ALL PUBLIC RALLIES**

New Delhi, April 18: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday cancelled all his public rallies in poll-bound West Bengal following a rapid rise in Covid-19 cases in the coun-"I would advise all political leaders to think deeply about the conse-quences of holding large public rallies under the current circumstances," he said on Twitter. — *PTI* 

er and taxi drivers, municipal and panchayat staff, and possibly lawyers who have to attend courts as frontline workers, and they can then be vaccinated even if they are below 45 years. The suggestions come a

day after the Congress Working Committee met and discussed the efforts required to fight the Covid

## Central lens on medicine prices

**DC CORRESPONDENT** NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

The Union home ministry is closely monitoring the movement and pricing of essential medicines like Remdisivir, vaccines and oxygen cylinders in all states and Union Territories.

Source said a team of senior officials has been set up in the ministry which is in constant with all state police forces and taking feedback on action taken. The ministry has also assured states that para-military forces can also be provided for their assistance to check misuse of Corona medicines and vaccines.

"We are monitoring the situation round the clock across the country. All state police units have been directed to take stringent actions against hoarders or those selling essential medicines, oxygen or other Corona-related important health items at much higher price than what is prescribed by the government. In addition, raids are being conducted by respective state police at various police during which Remdisivir and Corona vaccine have recovered," remarked a senior min-

istry official. The home ministry has also assured all states

#### **INDIA REPORTS** 2.61 LAKH MORE **CASES; 1,501 DIE**

New Delhi, April 18: A record single-day rise of 2,61,500 coronavirus infections has taken India's total tally of Covid-19 cases to 1,47,88,109, while active cases have surpassed the 18-lakh mark, according to Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday.
The death toll increased

to 1,77,150 with a record 1,501 new fatalities. The active cases stand at 18,01,316, comprising 12.18 per cent of the total infections.

that there would be no shortage of central paramilitary forces to assist the local police in giving protection to frontline health workers like doctors, nurses and other staff at hospitals.

Home ministry officials admitted that maintaining laws and order at hos pitals or other Covid facilities is a huge challenge since people are likely to get agitated in view of the high casualty rate or not getting proper facilities like bed or oxygen at hos-

## Acute shortage of vaccines, send more doses, Stalin writes to Modi

Chennai, April 18: DMK<br/>president<br/>SundayApril 18: DMK<br/>Stalin on<br/>PrimePrime Minister and appea-<br/>led to him to "take a policy<br/>decision swiftly" over it. Minister Narendra Modi to direct officials to send 20 lakh COVID-19 vaccine doses "requisitioned" by the Tamil Nadu government immediately and ensure supplies commensurate with the state's pop-

In view of rapid increase in the number of people getting infected by Covid-19, 'universal vaccination' is the need of the hour to protect lives, the DMK chief said in a letter to the

**ABD-Maxwell masterclass** 

Glenn Maxwell (78 off 49 balls) and AB de Villiers (76

not out off 34 balls) powered Royal Challengers

Bangalore to an emphatic 38-run win over Kolkata

Knight Riders at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in

Navalny could die at any moment: Doc

Chennai on Sunday. It was RCB's third win in as many

Tamil Nadu would need

more vaccine doses than allotted now to accomplish effective vaccinations, cycle of infec tion and flatten the curve. he said. Now, there was a huge shortage of vaccines" across the state and there are news reports to suggest that the people who visit government hospitals for vaccination were returning for want of availability, claimed. The vaccine Stalin,

Centre should allow states to independently procure drugs, vaccines and medical equipment as the pandemic affected states could not wait every time for Centre's nod for "each and everything

Tamil Nadu had on Saturday reported 9,344 new COVID-19 cases pushing the caseload to 9,80,728. Till date, "only 46.70 lakh people" have been vaccinated out of which, 40.64 lakh were administered the first dose and 6.05 lakh the second dose, he said. -PTI

Sexagenarian,

two grandsons

death in blaze

DC CORRESPONDENT VELLORE, APRIL 18

A sexagenarian and his

two minor grandsons

were charred to death in a fire accident that dam-

aged their cracker shop

in Latheri in Vellore district on Sunday, plunging the entire area into

deep sorrow.
Police identified the deceased as Mohan Reddy (60), and grand-

sons Tejas (6) and Tanuj (8). Reddy lighted some new types of crackers outside the shop for a demo after asking his

grandchildren to remain

inside. A spark flew from

the exploding crackers

and fell into the shop.

charred to

# amazon

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create jobs, accelerate financial inclusion, empower women and tribal communities

local shops 1 million offline retailers

Enabling

and neighbourhood stores to be digitally enabled by 2025 through Local Shops programme







the verge of death. Physician Yaroslav Ashikhmin said test results he received from Mr Navalny's family show him with sharply elevated levels

Moscow, April 18 A doctor

for imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei

Navalny, who is in the third

week of a hunger strike, says

his health is deteriorating

rapidly and the 44-year-old

Kremlin critic could be on



**NAVALNY'S** potassium levels are high: report

of potassium, which can bring on cardiac arrest, and heightened creatinine levels that indicate impaired kidneys. "Our patient could die at any moment," he said in a Facebook post. Anastasia Vasilyeva, head of the Navalny-backed Alliance of Doctorš union, said on Twitter that "action must be taken immediately.

Mr Navalny is Russian President Vladimir Putin's most visible and adamant His personal physicians

have not been allowed to see him in prison. He went on hunger strike to protest the refusal to let them visit

when he began experiencing severe back pain and a loss of feeling in his legs. Russia's state penitentiary service has said he is receiving all the medical help he needs. He was arrested on January 17 when he returned to Russia from Germany, where had spent five months recovering from Soviet nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the

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#### OTHER STORIES

#### **Fire service** week observed

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUCHY, APRIL 18

The fire and rescue department personnel led by District Fire Officer, G. Anusuya, and her deputy, Karunakaran, and Station Fire officer, Melghio Raja, gave a rousing reception to a team comprising 45 fire and rescue personnel, who culminated their cycle rally at the fire station here, on Sunday.

The team including Robin Castro, Mano Prakasam, Loganathan and Vadivelu, station fire officers of Villupuram, Thanjavur, Cuddalore and Tiruvarur respectively, commenced the rally at Villupuram on Saturday, as part of the 'fire service week' celebrations from April 14 to 20, culminated their cycle rally at Tiruchy on Sunday.

The team paid homage to all firemen who had lost their lives during their service in all fire stations across the state, besides creating awareness among the people on the services rendered by the department, and maintenance of fire-fight-

#### **Erumbeeswarar** temple closed

**Tiruchy**: In view of the second wave, Archeological Survey of India (ASI) has ordered closure of Sri (ASI) has ordered closure of Sri Erumbeeswarar temple popu-larly known as 'Malai Kovil' at suburb Tiruverumbur near here, on Saturday. The place 'Tiruverumbur' derives its name from this tem-place dedicated to Shri

dedicated Erumbeeswarar.

ASI sources said, as per instructions from the Centre and state government, they ordered closure of all temples under their control till May 15. The temple was closed after completion of daily rituals on Saturday.

#### **Leyland delivers** light bullet proof vehicles to IAF

Chennai: Ashok Leyland, the largest supplier of logistics vehicles to the Indian Army, has strengthened its Armoured vehicle platform by delivering first of its kind "Light Bullet proof\_Vehicles" (LBPV) to the ĪAF. The first lot of these modern vehicles was delivered on April 13. The vehicle offers Superior protection and combat capability. The crew is well protected from both ballistic and blast threats and can launch

LBPV is an adopted version of Lockheed Martin's (LM) CVNG (Common venicle Next Gen) and has been developed under TOT from LM to Ashok Leyland. It is completely indigenised and developed in India. Mr. Vipin Sondhi, MD & CEO, Ashok Leyland, said,

"This LBPV is another example of our team's capability combined with a strong sense of understanding of what is required in arduous condi-



Fire and rescue service personnel take out corona awareness cycle rally at Ashok

## Sunday lockdowns to be severe with essential shops too closed

Journalists, petrol bunks, continuous process industries and industries producing essentials will be allowed to work during the curfew, besides persons on night duty who must produce their ID cards to be out during the curfew hours.

The Sunday lockdowns are going to be severe with vegetable, meat and fish shops, besides commercial establishments and cinema theatres to be closed. Entry to public parks is also banned on all days, which means people may have to confine themselves to their homes if they are not out at work during daytime. Beaches, parks and archaelogoical sites will also remain closed to the public. Hill stations like Ooty and Kodaikanal and a few monuments have been closed to tourism

Restaurants and plat-forms like Swiggy, Zomatoi, etc., will restrict their working hours to between 6 am and 10 am, 12 pm and 3 pm and 6 pm and 9 pm on Sundays and lockdown days. Delivery services will be allowed on Sundays when service providers can function but other e-commerce platforms are not permitted to function during Sundays.

The attendance cannot exceed 100 guests at weddings and 50 at funerals. rnere wiii be a ilmit of 50% customers at a time in malls and shops while 50% of IT staffers working for an office are expected to work from home. In short, it is back to the worst of Covid times like it was under the first wave of the coronavirus. Only the numbers of people affected may get far worse

## **GCC reopens Covid-19** tele-counselling centre

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, APRIL 18

Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) on Sunday brought back the 24x7 Tele-Counselling Centre that can provide Covid19related services for at least 100 persons at a time. G. Prakash, Commissioner, GCC inaugurated the centre. According to officials, the general public can contact 044-4612 2300, 044-25384520 to get medical counselling.

Queries relating to

Covid19 including vacci-

teer services, screening and testing will be addressed by the counsellors at the centre. Apart from Covid-19, other epidemic related queries will also be answered.

The Corporation has decided to bring back the service of the centre after it played a crucial role in disseminating information and helping the general public during the first wave in the city. "As many as 4 lakh phone queries have been addressed by the centre so far since its inception in nation, medication, hospital bed situation, volunofficials.

#### Karur all set to tackle Covid-19

DC CORRESPONDENT KARUR, APRIL 18

The district administration here is taking all possible preventive measures on a war-footing, against the second Covid-19 wave, which is spreading fast.

A collectorate release said here on Sunday that from March last year till date, they conducted 14,457 fever camps across the district, in which 12,35,455 persons were subjected to medical tests, and swab tests done on

From March this year till date, the district administration has organised 1,411 medical camps across the district and 48,000 swab tests were taken. As on date. there are 47 persons including 20 women are undergoing Covid-19 treatment at the government medical college nospital (GMCH) and from April 15 last year till today, there were 3,393 covid-19 positive cases treated at the GMCH. They were discharged after they fully

recovered, the release added.

The district administration has readied three special treatment centres at the old government hospital premises with 300 beds, another 300 bedded special treatment centre located in the government arts college premises here, and a 200 bedded special treatment centre also located at a private engineering college at suburb Puliyur, the release said, adding that efforts were on to establish another special treatment centre with 200 beds near Karur in a couple of days.

# **State hits new peak past 10k** mark in daily Covid-19 cases

**Puducherry, April 18:** Puducherry registered 663

new coronavirus cases in

24 hours taking the overall

tally to 47,771, a senior official of the Department of Health and Family

Welfare Services said on

Sunday. Three more peo-

ple succumbed to the

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, APRIL 18

Hitting a new peak on Sunday in Covid-19 cases in a single day, the State crossed 10,000-mark in the state with 42 deaths. The data provided by the State Health department shows the state adding 10,724 cases, which is a sharp jump from 9,344 on Saturday. This takes the total Covid-19 infections in the state to 9,91,451 with death toll 13113 including 4,400 in Chennai.

rirus, pushing the death Chennai registered 3,304 cases and 16 deaths. New toll to 708, Director of the Health and Family Welfare Department S cases surged from 2,884 on Saturday, with which the Mohan Kumar said in a district records a total of 2,83,436 cases so far. Chengalpattu district, which has a total of 66,440 positive cases, reported 954 cases and 6 deaths, also a spike from Saturday's figures of 807

new cases and 3 deaths.

The number of daily cases in Coimbatore jumped from around the 600-mark to 700, adding 727 new cases on Sunday. While Chennai, Coimbatore,

Chengalpettu continue to add over 500 cases every day, Thiruvallur district joined the 500-plus club on Sunday contributing 503

K a n c h e e p u r a m , Tirunelveli, Thirupur, and Trichy recorded 300-plus cases on Sunday. Erode, Krishnagiri, Madurai, Krishnagiri, Nagapattinam, Thoothukudi, and Vellore districts crossed 200mark. Apart from this, at least 12 other districts in the state registered 100 plus cases. Active cases in the state

and Mahe (51).

ery rates were 1.48 per cent and 89.16 per cent

respectively. The Health

department Director said

that 7.28 lakh samples

have been tested so far and it was found that 6.62 lakh out of them to be neg-

Kumar said 30,171 health

reached a new peak on Sunday with 70,391, a jump from 65,635 of Saturday. The total active cases in the Chennai district crossed 25,000mark on Sunday surging from 23,625 on Saturday. Kancheepuram reached

cases, overall tally goes up to 47,771 The fatality and recovery rates were 1.48 per cent and 89.16 per cent

> **Director said that** 7.28 lakh samples have been tested so far and it was found that 6.62 lakh out of them to be negative

respectively. The

**Health department** 

Puducherry adds 663 fresh virus

workers and 17,931 front-The number of active cases in the union territory stood at 4,468 while the line workers have been vaccinated so far. As many recoveries was 42,595 so as 1,05,642 people coming far, he added. The 663 new either under the category cases were identified at of senior citizens (those the end of the examinaabove 60 years) or those above 45 years with comorbidities have been tion of 5,070 samples and were spread over Puducherry (497), Karaikal (80), Yanam (35) vaccinated under the second phase of vaccination launched on March 1, he The fatality and recov-

Lt Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan visited the Edouard Goubert Big Market in the city on Sunday to see for herself the progress of vaccination at a special camp in the market to cover the shopping public. She told reporters later that the

third position in the death toll with 4 cases while Cuddalore, Kanyakumari, Madurai, Nagapattinam, and Thiruvannamalai reported two cases each. In addition, Dindigul, Tenkasi. Thaniavur. Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Tri-

vaccination festival which began on April 11 ended overwhelming response from the people above 45 years for inoculation. She said that there would be no side-effects following

The Lt Governor said Covid care centres were being opened to help peo-ple in home quarantine. Areas that reported large number of new cases of infection would become containment zones, she added. A close watch would be kept on people in such zones and their requirements would be

taken care of, she said. Tamilisai Soundararajan said the Mahatma Government Gandhi Dental College, the Rajiv Gandhi Women and Child hospital and the ESI hospital were being used to admit patients with com-plaints of infection.

She appealed to the people to make use of the facilities as the government was running testing centres and also centres for vaccination of people above 45 years.

chy also recorded death. A total of 1,08,155 persons were subjected to RTPCR tests on Sunday, 99,050 on Saturday. More than 2.08 crore individuals have been tested so far in

# Hyundai becomes India's top car exporter again

A. ARUL PALANI | DC

Hyundai exported 1.04.342 cars between April 2020 and March 2021, continuing its journey as the No.1 automobile brand exported from India. Hyundai has also become the leading exporter of SUVs with over 2 lakh Creta and Veune cars exported to overseas markets including Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Nepal and

Further, the all-new i20 that has been well accepted in India and in global markets and is being exported to all key markets across Africa and Latin America region. the Commenting

**Africa and Latin** America region chievemen MD and CEO, Hyundai Motor India Ltd. said, "Despite numerous challenges emerging out of the global pandemic, uncer-

The all-new i20 that

has been well

accepted in India

and in global mar-

kets and is being

markets across

exported to all key

tainty in various markets, restriction on imports and disruption in supply chain, HMIL has continued to drive operational excellence to ensure customer satisfaction. And,

in 2020-2021 stands testament to our spirit. It is a moment of great pride for Hyundai as we step forward in the journey of making world class quality cars from India.

Manufacturing Processes have led us to maintain our leadership position in passenger venicie exports and strengthened our commitment to 'Make in India' for the World," he added. Hyundai also com-

menced exports of cars to Nepal through rail from the Walajabad railway hub near Irungattukkottai, Chennai, As country's largest exporter of automobiles,

the 3 million vehicle export milestone earlier in 2020, exporting to 88 countries. Hyundai has recorded

Hyundai also surpassed

multiple export milestones over the years.

During the successful export journey, Hyundai Motor India has won prestigious awards including -National and 5 South Region Awards as Top Exporter of Year for Large Enterprise category. The automobile major is presently exporting 10 models to 88 countries across five continents,

About 32 countries in

South America, North

America (Mexico) and 28

countries in Africa and

## Gold worth ₹65.87 lakh seized by Air Customs

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, APRIL 18

Based on intelligence that gold was likely to be smuggled from Dubai by concealing in aircraft, an Indigo Flight from Dubai was searched when an unusually heavy white circular disk was found concealed below a wash basin in the aircraft toilet.

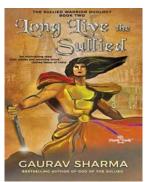
On removing the white paint, gold weighing 1 kg valued at ₹48.77 lakhs was recovered and On removing the white paint, gold weighing 1 kg valued at ₹48.77 lakhs was recovered and was seized

During surveillance in the airport transit area two heavy packets wrapped with white adhesive tape were found in one of the toilets. Gold paste weighing 503 grams was recovered which on extraction yielded 356 grams of gold valued at ₹17.1 lakhs and same was and seized as unclaimed under Customs Act.

### Earthly feelings collide with spiritual knowledge PRIYANKA MINJ | DC

The book is the second part of the sullied warrior duology, written by Gaurav Sharma. In this, the point of view, changes and the story are seen from different perspectives by different charac-

"I was there when nothing was, I am here when nothing is, and I will be present in all years to come." The narrator of this mythological series is time, which tells the story



of Eklavya. By the end of

Long Live the Sullied: The Sullied Warrior Duology (Book 2) By Gaurav Sharma

Rudraputra. He rules with fairness and justice. There is peace, justice and harmony in his kingdom and Kaliyuga, it seems, is defeated by a benevolent and just king.

Chaos descends on Rudraputra when Eklavya everything, abdicates becomes a yogi and leaves the kingdom in search of truth and wisdom. A sinis-

ter silence grips Rudraputra. In the opening scene, Acnarya Virbhadra arrives at the Acharva gate of the palace to meet Eklavya. The stage is set for the characters to play

out their parts.

The main protagonist in the second part is Pundir, Eklavya's classmate in the mountain gurukul and his best friend. The conflict is internal and the story is a reflection of the mental, spiritual and physical turmoil of the characters. This is especially true for Pundir. He was regarded

as an excellent student of theology in gurukul, but, unlike Eklavya, he finds it difficult to imbibe the teachings and philosophies in his life. He knows 'Moksha is the ultimate liberation from Maya.' But his earthly feelings, which made him

The mystery unravels is enthralling though it becomes predictable in the later part of

with his spiritual knowl-

edge. It is this tussle which

forms the backdrop of the

the story as the story never really develops; it is just the continuation of the first part with minor character development of the major characters and cameos are mundane. Despite this, the story is not repetitive; it is engaging and flows smoothly.

The language is simple and easy to understand. The plot is engaging with lots of philosophical questions and answers. In the end it's all about the choices we make and from those

# When Pandora's Box opened out came B.1.617



R. Mohan

#### **Namma Chennai Diary**

he vaccines protect you, so go get vaccinated that's the message," says Dr. Fauci, the most visible face in America's battle against the virus. "If you're around other vaccinated people, you shouldn't worry about

The Pandora's Box is open

and the double mutant B.1.617 carrying two specific mutations of concern -E484Q and L452R - is wreaking havoc across the coun-

All of us are to blame. The politicians are primarily to blame because they still crave for votes while India is crippled by another and

The politicians are again to blame for not asking the religious leaders straight-away to clamp down on the Kumbh Mela in the time of the pandemic. A majority of 1.4 billion-plus Indians are also to blame for letting their guard down and behaving as if the coron-avirus had spared somehow the country and gone away after just one wave.

Official India is to blame for letting the country descend into chaos in the wake of the second wave. Current government behaviour betrays the fact that it has left everyone to his own

more deadly wave than that devices allowing the virus take the hindmost in the foolish hope that the much touted herd immunity will kick in soon. But science is still showing the way, its analysis of the post-vaccination phase after just the first jabs revealing that infections and deaths among the most vulnerable sections of the population who were inoculated first had come down considerably. This disproves many politicians' assertion that the lockdown had more to do with declining cases than the vaccines. In UK, studies have shown

that the rate of Covid-related hospital admissions fell

80 to 83-year-olds within 35 to 41 days of their first dose of the jab. The rate of people getting Covid dropped by 70 per cent, with the number of positive tests falling from 15.3 per one lakh people to 4.6. The figures suggest the link between infections and admissions has been broken by the vaccine programme. The lockdown of 2020 may have helped the initial fight but it seems to make little sense against the second wave. Lockdowns are decisively pro-rich and extremely anti-poor. We see distressing proof of this in the exodus that has begun again of

the railway stations of Mumbai Science points to the vac-

cine being the passport out of the pandemic. Vaccinations began in mid January in India but many years have to elapse before a sizeable section of the popula-tion is covered. They have been proven to do a good job of protecting us from the virus. The problem is the variants are triggering fear by sending out confusing signals. Medical advice has it that the vaccines on hand are providing a cushion and even if any one vaccine is less effective against a variant it still appears to be pro-

illness. At least it seems to affect people only in a milder way

It may have taken a bit of courage on my part to go to the Omandurar Medical College to take a jab at the very place where the irrepressibly witty comedian environmentalist Vivkeh took his shot just two days before and then died tragically from a cardiac arrest. It did seem his death was not caused by the vaccine and there is no need to fear the minuscule statistical chance of death by vaccine. The odds of allowing the vaccine to protect you are far better than those

the fear of flying.

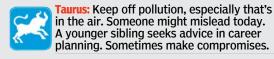
All we are getting from the government now is more obfuscation in terms of hiding the true extent of the deaths even as hospitals are overflowing and crematoriums and burial grounds are bursting at the seams. The data being put out are obviously buttressing very weak arguments over the second wave. As someone said -"There are lies, damned lies, and statistics"

(R. Mohan is the Resident Editor of Chennai and Coimbatore editions of Deccan Chronicle)

## **COFFEE-BREAK**

**Your day today** By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam

Aries: Pay special attention to personal life. At work, expect an opportunity to assess yourself through self-appraisal forms. Pay heed to parental advice for future success.



in the air. Someone might mislead today. A younger sibling seeks advice in career planning. Sometimes make compromises. **Gemini:** Do what makes you happy, but avoid interference in family affairs. Stop monetary



losses. Visualise beautiful sceneries when with a romantic partner. Cancer: At work, maximise efforts to finish

pending jobs. Lending a helping hand to family would help the timely completion of pending



eo: You'll arouse passionate romantic feelings, acquainting yourself with a very precious emotion of falling in love. Needless worry makes you vulnerable to ailments.

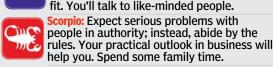


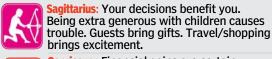
firgo: A massage does your body wonders. Interacting with strangers benefits you. Avoid a shady financial deal. Dreams may start to realise. You have to change and get mature.

#### You share your b'day with Mukesh Dhirubhai Ambani, the richest person in Asia, is an Indian billionaire businessman, and the chairman, managing director, and largest shareholder of Reliance Industries Ltd., India's most

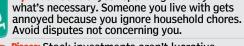
household work.

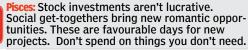














**ACROSS THE POND** THEY PLAY **T00** 

Being English by birth, I had to buy a copy of "English -- The Story of "Queuing and Marmite, Queuing and Weather" by Ben Fogle (William Collins). (William Collins).

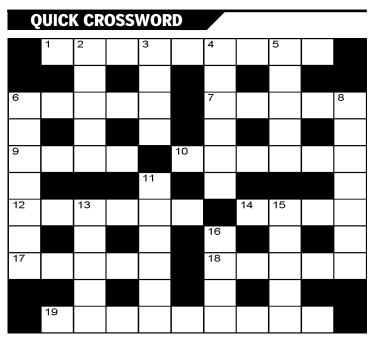
I learned much about
England that I did not know.
For example, every year in
front of thousands of specta-

tors, some 20 young men chase a nine-pound Double Gloucester cheese 200 yards down Cooper's Hill. The win-ner gets the cheese, but sever-al end with broken bones!

Many would say that Terence Reese was England's Both tables played in six

Both tables played in six clubs with the diamond-nine opening lead. (West was hoping East could win and deliver a heart ruff.) How should

South have played? The American declarer won



Across 1.Imply obliquely (9)

- 6. Fear attack (5) 7. Morsel (5) 9. Streaked agate (4) 10. Fragmented puzzle (6)
- 12. Boosted (6) 14. Open to debate (4) 17. Paws roughly (5) 18. Consider (5)

nine letter word. Plurals, foreign

words and proper names are not allowed.

K Q J 10 9 7 5

♦ Λ J 9 3 ♥ K J 8 7 4 3 ♦ A 3

South Q 5 4 2

Dealer: East Vulnerable: Both West North

♦ . . • Λ K J 10 9 7 6

East ★ K ♥ Q 9 6 5 ◆ 8 6 4 2 ♠ Q 5 3

19. Issue (9)

6. Difficulty (7) 8. Enchant (7) 11. Against (6) 13. Lint (5) 15. Vegetable (5)

16. Pitcher (4)

4. Waif (6)

5. Tie up (5)

2. Child's nurse (5)

3. Early Peruvian (4)

Down

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Down: 1. Shoal, 2. Seeing, 3. Easy, 4. Spoil, 5. Partition, 6. Advantage, 11. Hudson, 13. Ouija, 15. Llama, 16. Feud.

#### **Word Mine** jumble SHOEW REC RTLIF LOOCRINAML GOOD; 16 OUTSTANDING How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one **BGTELO**

Reese found a superior line, not needing the club finesse. He ruffed in hand at trick one, cashed his top trumps and the heart ace, then played the heart 10 to the king. The heart seven from the board was covered by Teaths size and wife. ered by East's nine and ruffed by declarer. South exited with a trump. East played a dia-mond to the ace, on which one of South's spades disap-peared. Then came the heart

n't dropped, would have dis-carded his remaining spades on the high hearts.

The Brits won the match by 5,420 points.

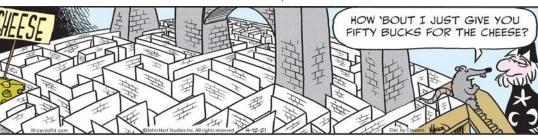
I did have one regret with Fogle's book -- that the author had not spelled it "queueing, the only word in the English language with five consecutive

Copyright United

#### CALVIN AND HOBBES | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID|Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



**BLONDIE** Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN|Edgar Rice Burroughs







YES! MURRAY ISALOT MORE BORING THAN

#### OTHER STORIES

#### **Evewitnesses: First explosion occurred** at 11.30 am

Eyewitnesses said that the first explosion occurred by 11:30 am, resulting in quick multiple explosions and fire engulfing the entire shop.

Reddy ran in to rescue Tejas

and Tanuj who were trapped inside, but the three were surrounded by flames and could not be rescued, police sources said. Since there is no fire station in Latheri, fire tenders from Katpadi and Gudiyatham, each roughly 10 kms away, were alerted. Onlookers and neighbouring residents tried extinguishing the fire by bringing water in a tractor and throwing soil.

Police and fire and rescue services personnel arrived at the spot and managed to control the blaze after a struggle of over one hour. The rescue team retrieved the charred bodies and shifted them to the government medical college hospital, Adukkambarai.

Reddy's daughter Divya is said to be the license holder of the shop. Investigations are on.

# Fresh move by activist 'Elephant Rajendran'

# Notice to collector against regularising illegal resorts

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC

The Chennai-based environment activist 'Elephant G. Rajendran' who was instru-mental in sealing of 65 ille-gal resorts and homestay tourist cottages in Masinagudi limits along the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR), after a wild elephant was torched to death by the owners of a private illegal resort in Masinagudi area in January, has now issued a legal notice to Nilgiris Collector to take immediate steps to demolish those illegal structures across the hills.

In a fresh notice, Rajendran stated that he came to know that about 65 resorts and a few residential houses that functioned as homestay

In a fresh notice, Rajendran stated that he came to know that about 65 resorts and a few residential houses that functioned as homestay tourist homes, have applied for regularisation

tourist homes, have applied for regularisation. These resorts and homestays constructed without any permission are functioning without proper permission, and hence, they should not be regularised.
"In order to regularize

their illegal dealings by any orders and directions of the means, it is learnt that some resort owners have started collecting money in lakhs to bribe the officials and politicians. I presume there is a deep-seated unwritten agreement between the local officials, resort and homestay owners. For this, some resort owners have conducted a meeting in Masinagudi. Hence, an enquiry by a DSP (vigilance), may be ordered to find out the truth," he said, adding that the Block Development Officer (BDO) and president, Masinagudi panchayat, had allowed a resort in Singara road in Masinagudi to function. Necessary legal action is needed to be taken to close it down. Taking into consideration various judgments,

High Court and Supreme Court, all these 'illegal resorts' and 'homestays' resorts' and 'homestays' shall be demolished. Any regularization move would amount to 'contempt of court', noted Rajendran. VAOs and police inspectors

need to be asked to file a report about the existence of resorts and homestays in their respective jurisdiction, and take suitable action. Since only in Masinagudi area, sealing of illegal resorts and homestays have been initiated, the Nilgiris district administration shall now issue suitable orders to concerned officials to lock and seal all such illegal resorts and homestays func-tioning across Nilgiris district, he noted.

#### A 'Hub in the Sky' at IIT-M research park all the IITs.

'Hub in the Sky', an ultra-modern facility to provide a meeting ground for Corporate R&D, industry professionals, faculty and students for networking and increased collaborative work in a relaxed yet professional ambience, was opened recently at the IIT Madras Research Park, in Taramani.

Spread across 30,000 square feet of space, which includes a 10,000 square feet open terrace overlooking the luscious greens of South Chennai and the Bay of Bengal, "Hub in the Sky" is the new abode of the 10-year-old IIT Alumni Industry Interaction Center (AIIC). Situated on the 10th

floor of Phase 2 of the

tre, designed by world famous Contractor, will help in catalysing industryacademia engagement

through its industry round table, a key strategic initiative of the IIT-AIIC. The huge facility will

also help in organising international meets requiring state of the art facilities to make the conferences/meetings very meaningful and worthwhile for all participants.
The IIT Alumni

Industry Interaction Center has over 650 members from different IITs in India. They comprise of alumni and faculty from the IITs, selected alumni from IIM, ISB, XLRI and IISc, designated senior employees from select corporates and ex-officio members

At the inauguration, Prof Bhaskar Ramamurthi, Director IITM said, he was delighted that such a magnifiup in the IITMRP cam-

cent facility has come pus, which will be a catalyst for growth of the Indian industry in the years to come. organisation interested in R&D and using the expertise and experience of IITians can log in and

take advantage of this facility, which has a members' lounge, fine dining and a banquet hall, a café, meeting and conference rooms. a library, business centre, AV Room, execational including a children's room, a multi-purpose hall and fitness

# It's time to bust myths on liver donations

T. SUDHEESH | DC CHENNAI, APRIL 18

World Liver Day is being observed on Monday but awareness among people on liver donation remains poor despite the country being one of the top liver- demanding nations across the world. Liver donation is quite prevalent in society but there is a lot of myths around liver donation in general. Busting these myths is necessary in order to increase the number of dona-

On the occasion of Liver day, experts talking to DC say that there should be absolutely no fear for a healthy person to donate his liver. Sunil Shroff, president-elect, Indian Society of Organ Transplantation and

On the occasion of Liver day, experts talking to DC say that there should be absolutely no fear for a healthy person to donate his liver. Sunil Shroff, presidentelect, Indian Society of Organ Transplantation and founder of Multi Organ Harvesting Aid Network (MOHAN) Foundation, said taboos and myths are prevalent in the society on liver donation

founder of Multi Organ Harvesting Aid Network (MOHAN) Foundation, said taboos and myths are prevalent in the society on liver donation.

"Since the liver has the ability to re-grow, there is no need

to worry too much about the to refrain from depending on risk of the health of the donor. Currently liver donation predominantly takes place among kin donors. But this situation needs to be changed through dissemination of right information and awareness. If you want to donate your liver, first of all you have to consult with an expert doctor and get necessary things done as per his instructions. It is the easiest way to donate liver and save

the lives of many," he said. He also pointed out that patients were finding it difficult to consult their medical professionals due to the ongoing Covid19 pandemic. "Individual suffering from liver disease should not stop medications as prescribed by their doctor. They are advised

painkillers and traditional medications, especially if they have cirrhosis," he explained. Dr. Neelamekam Thoppa

Kapali, general surgeon, Fortis Malar Hospital, said that a healthy person required just 30 percent of his liver to survive. There is no complication for donating liver in modern times as technology and expertise have developed. But people should be absolutely careful of keeping the liver healthy. Alcoholism is the major villain in liver complications as it leads to cirrhosis. In these tough pandemic times, staying home, wearing a mask, practicing strict social distancing is strongly recommended as Covid-19 can be dangerous to people who have heart disease, liver disease, diabetes, blood pressure, and respiratory disease," he

Dr. Joy Varghese, Director Hepatology and Transplant Hepatology, Gleneagles Global Health City (GGHC), who has conducted 38 liver transplants since the pandemic broke out, said that it was very difficult to conduct liver transplants as the pandemic delayed all processes. "The liver trans-plant is always being conducted only after making sure the donor is able to grow the removed portion of liver in a six-month period. Often 60-70 percent of the liver is removed from the donor. However, the donor doesn't have to worry as the body has capacity to regrow it liver," he said.

## DMK men block police van with tools near counting centre

R. VALAYAPATHY |

PUDUKKOTTAI, APRIL 18

Tension prevailed for a while at the counting centre in the govern-ment college for women here during the very late hours of Saturday, as some DMK agents who were watching the counting centre on a round-theclock basis, blocked a police vehicle carrying some tools including screw drivers in a box, as it attempted to

enter the centre. After a long duel with the police personnel, the vehicle was handed over to the returning officer, for

According to the

According to the DMK agents, the police vehicle came close to the spot where the EVMs strong room was located

Under suspicion, they had blocked the vehicle

close to the spot where the EVMs strong room was located.

Under suspicion, they had blocked the vehicle.

Meanwhile, party's Pudukkottai north disin-charge, Chellapandiyan, and party's Viralimalai assembly candidate, Palaniappan, met the Collector-cum-district election officer B.

DMK agents, the Umamaheswari, and police vehicle came presented a memoranpresented a memorandum in this regard, and asked her to take suitable action against the policemen.

Chell-Later. apandiyan spoke to the media that similar suspicious incidents are taking place continuously in the counting centres, and urged the authorities concerned to take immediate suitable action in this regard.

SHORT TAKES

#### **RAIPUR HOSPITAL FIRE: PROBE** ORDERED

Raipur, April 18: Authorities have ordered an investigation after five Coronavirus patients died in a fire at the Covid-19 ward of a private hospital in

Chhattisgarh's capital city Raipur, police said on Sunday. Raipur collector Dr S. Bharathi Dasan has ordered an investigation into the incident. Officials have been directed to conduct safety check at Coronavirus hospi-

tals in the city. The fire broke out at Raipur's Rajdhani hospital on Saturday, police said. "Five Coronavirus patients died in the incident One was charred to death and the others died due to suffoca-tion," a police official said, adding a case of negligence will be registered against the owners of the hospital.

A supervisor saw smoke coming out of the ward and informed the hospital authorities, who alerted the police. ties, who alerted the police. The fire brigade and hospital staff rescued the other patients. "The fire broke out in the Covid-19 ward of Rajdhani Super Speciality Hospital located at Pachpedi Naka under Tikrapara police station at 4.30 pm and was brought under control by the firefight-ers in 20 minutes," tikrapara station house officer Sanjeev Mishra said.

When the fire broke out, there were around 30 patients in the ward, Mishra said. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel expressed grief over the incident and announced a compensation of ₹4 lakh each to the families of

#### **CENTRE NOD TO BOOST MEDICAL OXYGEN SUPPLY**

New Delhi, April 18: The Centre has sanctioned installation of 162 pressure swing adsorption (PSA) plants in public health facilities in all states, the health ministry said on Sunday, as demand of medical crystage goes through medical oxygen goes through

the roof amid spiralling Coronavirus cases in the country.

The PSA plants manufacture oxygen and help hospitals become self-sufficient in their requirement for medical oxygen, while also reducing the burden on the national grid for its supply of medical oxy-

A total of 162 PSA oxygen plants have been sanctioned by the government for installation in public health facilities in all states, the ministry tweeted. "These will augment medical oxygen capacity by

Thirty-three of the 162 PSA plants have been installed five in Madhya Pradesh, four in Himachal Pradesh, three each in Chandigarh, Gujarat and Uttarakhand; two each in Bihar, Karnataka and Telangana; and one each in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Kerala, Mahara-shtra, Puducherry, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, it said.

Fifty-nine more PSA plants will be installed by April-end, while 80 more will be installed by May-end.

#### **BSY IN HOSP FOR COVID, STABLE** AND RECOVERING

Bengaluru, April 18: Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa who is undergoing treatment for Coronavirus at a private hospital is now stable and recovering, his office

said on Sunday. "The Chief Minister who was admitted in a hospital on Friday for Covid treatment is being monitored by a team of expert doctors. The health of the Chief Minister is stable and he is recovering," the office of the Chief Minister tweeted on Sunday.

Yediyurappa is spending his time in the hospital reading his favourite books and is in touch with officials to give them necessary directions, the tweet further said.

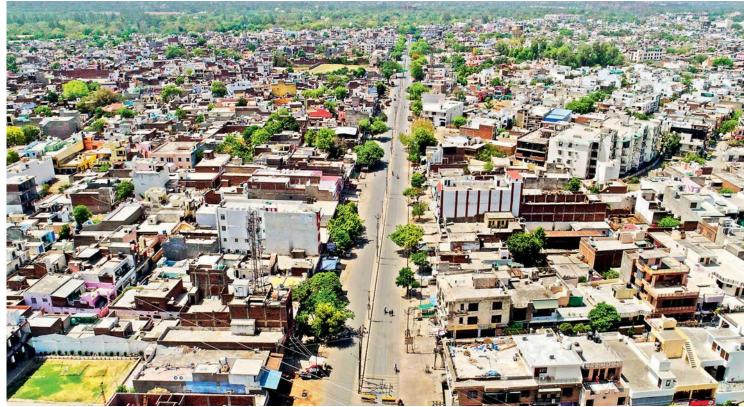
The Chief Minister had fever on Friday and when he got himself tested, the report came positive for Coronavirus. Accordingly, he got admitted

to the hospital.
This is the second time Yediyurappa contracted Coronavirus.

This was despite the fact that the Chief Minister took the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine.

He was supposed to chair an all-party meeting on Sunday to take a stringent measure in view of rising Coronavirus cases in Bengaluru.

However, the meeting has been postponed to Monday and revenue minister R. Ashoka will now preside over the



City streets wear a deserted look during weekend lockdown to curb Covid-19 cases in Agra on Sunday.

# With 2.71 lakh new cases, India sees highest ever rise

States running out of beds, oxygen, drugs; govts scrambling to save lives

VINEETA PANDEY | DC with agency inputs NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

With 2,71,204 new cases, India saw the highest ever daily spike of Covid-19 on Sunday. The daily positivi-ty rate in the last 12 days has doubled from 8 per cent to 16.69 per cent and the death in the last 24 hours due to the virus was 1,570. As states are running out of hospital beds, medical oxygen, and several life saving drugs, the union and state govern-ments are scrambling to save lives.

Railways is gearing up to transport Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) and Oxygen Cylinders through "Oxygen Express" via green corridors to ensure fast movement of these trains. This came after Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra state governments approached the Ministry of Railways to explore whether Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) tankers could be moved

nave decided pull the shutters down till Sunday. Delhi government has filed FIR against four airlines under DDMA Act

**BIHAR IMPOSES** 

**NIGHT CURFEW** 

**ALL OVER STATE** 

# Delhi oxygen quota given to other states: Kejriwal

New Delhi, April 18: Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said Delhi is facing an "acute shortage" of oxygen for Covid-19 patients and alleged that the quota of the city has been diverted to other states

to other states.
The Chief Minister's remarks came hours after he wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his help in enhancing the number of hospital beds and immediate oxygen supply for patients in Delhi. A central government

for not checking RT-PCR negative reports of incoming passengers. It is expected that the Delhi government may extend through it.

In Delhi, the weekend curfew for few more days as huge curfew ends on Monday but traders in Chandni

government may extend the weekend curfew for few more days as huge surges in daily cases continue. The decision in this expected after a meeting between Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal

and Lieutenant Governor

Anil Baijal on Monday.

official has rejected Kejriwal's claims as "blatant lies" and said there was no panic situation in industries minister Piyush Goyal urging him to ensure 'uninterrupted" supply of 700MT of oxygen on daily basis and restore supply of 140MT of oxygen by a supplier INOX. The output of INOX, one

of the major suppliers to Delhi hospitals, has been "diverted" to other states which has already started causing "critical short-ages", he charged in the

Maharashtra minister Aditya Thackeray said the state is preparing for a third wave though it cannot be determined now if it will be as strong or weak. "We have come to under-reporting is not going to neip...Now we are preparing for the third wave. We have five lakh beds, 70 per cent of them oxygenated.

tant lies"

Thackeray.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday held a review meeting to see Covid containment measures in his constituency Varanasi and Congress the genuine belief that leader Rahul Gandhi announced to suspend all his election public railles in view of rising cases.

Commerce Ministry said that the allegations made by the Delhi CM are "bla-

According to official fig-ures, Delhi hospitals received 254 MT of med-

ical oxygen on April 16 and 612 MT on April 17. As of April 17, the daily demand of oxygen from Delhi was 197 MT. The total stock at INOX and

Goyal Gas, Linde, Air Liquide for Delhi is 311 MT and the total stock

position of oxygen in the capital is 700 MT. — *PTI* 

Meanwhile, facing acute shortage of Covid-19 vacon Saturday halted its innoculation drive in over 1,000 session sites includ-ing in the hotspot Nuapada district, a senior health department official said. The states vaccine stocks will be exhausted in two days, family welfare director Bijay Panigrahi said.

Only 56,472 people were given jabs at 465 session sites on Saturday against 91,195 who had been vaccinated in 781 centres on Friday, he said. The state has so far vaccinated 49,58,447 people, the health department official said.

Panigrahi said that the vaccination drive could not be taken up in rural Odisha due to the scarcity of Covishield vaccines. Covaxin is being administered in Bhubaneswar, while it is Covishield in the rest of the state.

More than 6,000 people have been vaccinated against Covid-19 at 'man-dis' in Punjab during the ongoing procurement of crops, according to an official statement on Sunday. In addition to putting in

place adequate protocols at the 154 mandis (wholesale markets), the state government has started special camps to inoculate all stakeholders and has so far vaccinated more than cines, Odisha government 6,000 eligible persons.

## MP: Row over death of 10 in govt hospital

CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, APRIL 18

Ten Covid-19 patients died reportedly due to lack of oxygen in a gov-ernment hospital in Madhya Pradesh, trigger-ing on outerw

ing an outery.

The incident took place in the medical college hospital in Shahdol late on Saturday night.

While six potions died

While six patients died around midnight on Saturday, four others passed away in the early morning.

"Six people admitted in the ICU died last night. The deaths were not due to lack of oxygen. There were 62 patients in the ICU. Overall, there were 255 Covid-19 patients in the Covid hospital last night. Out of them, 155 were on oxygen", Milind Shiralkar, dean of the medical college hospital

said on Sunday.

The hospital has its own oxygen plant.

He, however, said the oxygen pressure was going down in the system since Saturday evening. He has reported the matter to the local administration and sought liquid oxygen pillars to resume however, claimed some patients in the ICU were seen gasping for oxygen when the pressure in the oxygen supply system had gone down.

oxygen supply to the sys-

tem. However, no provision of liquid oxygen pillars was made till two in the

Oxygen was supplied to the patients through oxygen cylinders, he added.

The dean said a probe was ordered into the inci-Kin of the deceased, however, claimed some patients in the ICU were

seen gasping for oxygen

when the pressure in the oxygen supply system had gone down. "I watched my brother dying due to lack of oxygen in the ICU", Ravi Kumar Jaiswal whose

brother was admitted in the ICU told visiting reporters. State medical education

minister Vishwas Sarang denied that lack of oxy gen had caused the death of ten Covid-19 patients in Shahdol medical col-

# 14-day quarantine must for Kumbh mela returnees

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC with agency inputs **BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 18** 

Apparently worried over the sudden surge in Covid-19 cases across Odisha and Delhi, the state governments on Sunday made 14-day quar-antine mandatory for Kumbh Mela returnees.

Several thousands of people, most of them from western Odisha, had visited Kumbh mela at

Uttarakhand. number cases. Spurt in the number of cases in the neigh bouring states specially Chhattisgarh is affecting the border districts of Odisha," said director of public health Niranjan

"As Kumbh mela has many participants will may worsen the situation. A list of the returnees has been prepared and it has been sent to all the district administrations. All the returnees have to stay in compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Even the quarantine period is mandatory for the returnees with Covid-19 negative certificates,'

"If situation gets out of control in these states, the migratory Odias working there will be forced to return to the state. Odisha government is preparing a master plan to deal with any kind of eventualities," added Mishra.

dents who have visited the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar or are planning to do so will have to undergo compulsory 14day home quarantine on their return and upload

Disaster Management Authority said in an order.

The order issued on Saturday said those who visited Kumbh from 4 April onwards or those who plan to do so till end of the religious congrega-tion at Haridwar on April 30 will have to upload their personal details, ID

said Mishra.

Meanwhile, Delhi resi-

proof and dates of departure and arrival back to Delhi at the website www.delhi.gov.in.

"All residents of Delhi who have visited or are "The whole country is witnessing a surge in the number of Covid-19 going to visitKumbh 2021 at Haridwar, shall be required to compulsory home quarantine themarrival to Delhi," said the order issued by Vijay Dev, chief secretary and chairperson on executive committee of DDMA.

If a person returning from Haridwar Kumbh ended, it is expected that fails to upload his partic-many participants will ulars on the Delhi governreturn to the state and it ment portal, he will be sent to institutional quarantine centre for 14 days by district magistrates concerned, the order said.

Violators of the DDMA order will be liable to be proceeded against under the Disaster Management Act 2005 and other legal

provisions, it added.

A total of 1,701 people had tested positive for Covid-19 in the Haridwar Kumbh Mela area from April 10 to 14 confirming fears that one of the world's largest religious gatherings may contribute further to the rapid rise in Coronavirus

A majority of the 48.51 lakh people who took part in the last two royal baths (shahi snan) held on the occasion of Somwati Amavasya on April 12 and Mesh Sankranti on April 14 were seen openly violating norms like wearing of face masks and social

# expand their manufacturbeen cleared for use by

NAYYAR AZAD | DC PATNA, APRIL 18 Bihar Chief Minister

Nitish Kumar on Sunday imposed new restrictions including a statewide night curfew from 9 pm to 5 am to control the surge Coronavirus. According to the state

tions, religious places, malls, cinema houses and parks have been shut till May 15. Offices and shops have also been asked to follow strict Covid-19

government's directives,

all educational institu-

guidelines and close The decision to impose new restrictions was taken after a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Nitish

Briefing reporters after his meetings with the health ministers and administrative officials, Kumar said "the decision has been taken to control the surge in Coronavirus cases. Government and private offices will be open till 5 pm. Market places and mandis have also been asked to close after 5 pm. Bihar government has also decided to provide one month salary as a bonus to all health workers who have been working for the safety of people across the state'

Officials said that the steep rise in cases across the state has prompted the Bihar government to impose new restrictions in the state.

# Singh roots for compulsory licensing to produce vaccine

FROM PG 1

Dr Singh said the Centre should publicise vaccine dose orders placed and accepted for delivery over the next six months. He the government should indicate how vaccine supplies are to be distributed to states.

'If we want to vaccinate a target number in this period, we should place enough orders in advance so that producers can adhere to an agreed sched-ule of supply," he noted.

The former prime minister said the government should indicate how this expected vaccine supply will be distributed across states based on a transpar-

Gujarat deputy chief min-

ment is adding more facili-

ties and beds at regular

intervals to accomodate

Nitin Patel on



central government could retain 10 per cent for distribution based on emergency needs, and states should have a clear signal of likely availability so that they can plan their rollout.

Noting that India has emerged as the largest vaccine producer in the world, he said at this time of a public health emergency, the government must proactively support vaccine producers to

"Over 9,000 new Çoron-

and other healthcare facil-

ities in the present situa-

tion is higher than the

Ahmedabad, April 18: more patients, it fell short

of demand.

ing facilities quickly by providing funds and other concessions.
"I believe this is the time to invoke the compulsory licensing provisions in the

law so that a number of companies are able to produce the vaccines under a licence. This, I recall, had happened earlier in the case of medicines to deal with the HIV/AIDS disease," he said. Citing Israel's example,

which has already invoked the compulsory licensing provision, he said there is an overwhelming case for India to do so as well

quickly.

With domestic supplies being limited, Dr Singh said any vaccine that has

health department and

administration's capacity.

In view of the spike in

ing on domestic bridging trials. "We are facing an unprecedented emergency and, I understand, experts are of the view that this relaxation is justified in an emergency. The relaxation could be

credible authorities such

as the European Medical Agency or the USFDA should be allowed to be

imported without insist-

for a limited period during which the bridging trials could be completed in India, he said. Dr Singh said he is for-

warding his suggestions for consideration in a spirit of constructive cooperation in which he has always believed and acted

SEVERE I SHORTAGE Gujarat reported 10,340 new Covid-19 cases and 110 deaths on Sunday

## Guj Dy CM admits shortage of beds, health infra refuse to admit patients. Such patients then come to

Sunday admitted that the avirus cases are emerging cases, we are adding more in Gujarat everyday. Though we are adding new present requirement of beds to accommodate the beds and other healthcare patients," he said. facilities in the wake of Commenting on the long facilities and beds at reguthe spike in Coronavirus queue of ambulances carlar intervals, it falls short cases is more than the against the demand as the Coronavirus inflow of Coronavirus patients is much higher," administrations' patients outside the civil hospital, Patel said it is the government's obligation capacity. Patel, who handles health portfolio, said though the state govern-Patel told reporters at civil hospital campus here. to save each and every "Requirement for beds patient turned away by

other hospitals. "Long queues happen because other hospitals

us for treatment. Such queues are not a pleasant sight, but it is our obligation to save each and every patient. Till they are admitted in the hospital, till they are in ambulance, we try to keep them alive by giving oxygen," he added. Gujarat reported 10,340 cases and 110 deaths on Sunday, the highest oneday case count and death toll for the state since the pandemic began.



A Covid patient receives primary treatment outside Kanpur LLR Hospital in Uttar Pradesh on Sunday.



IN BRIEF

#### **Afghan mosque** hit kills eight

Jalalabad, Afghanistan, April 18: Eight members of the same family were gunned down in an attack on a mosque in eastern Afghanistan, officials said Sunday. The shooting happened on Saturday night in the city of Jalalabad in Nangarhar province, and was believed to be over a land dispute, the province's governor Zaiulhaq Amarkhil said.

Five brothers and three of their male cousins were killed. The incident is under investigation but initial information shows a land dispute has caused the incident," Amarkhil said. Fareed Khan, a spokesman for Nangarhar police, confirmed the attack.

#### 4 cops sprayed, hospitalised

Sacramento (US), April 18: Four Sacramento police officers were hospitalised with injuries after they were sprayed with a liquid irritant during protests Saturday night, police told *KCRA TV*.

The demonstrators had gathered at the state Capitol down-town to protest the police shooting deaths of Daunte Wright in Brooklyn Center, Minnes ota, and Adam Toledo in Chicago. Protesters met at the Capitol Rose Garden after 8 p.m. and began marching around the downtown area later in the night, KCRA reported.

Demonstrators briefly sat in the streets in the Lavender Heights area before marching back toward the Capitol. The protest ended about 11 p.m.

#### Syria prez poll on May 26

Damascus, April 18: (AP) Syria's parliament speaker announced Sunday that presiravaged country will be held on May 26. dential elections in the war-

Speaker Hammoud Sabbagh said the window for nominations will be open for 10 days starting Monday. Syrians abroad will vote May 20, he said. The election is widely expected to give President Bashar Assad a fourth seven-

It is unclear whether any candidates will run against him but any such runs would

be symbolic. The United States last month warned Assad that the Biden administration will not recognise the result of its presidential election unless the voting is free, fair, supervised by the United Nations and represents

all of Syrian society. Syria has been in the throes of civil war since 2011.

#### **JIHADISTS KILL FIVE NIGERIAN SOLDIERS**

Kano, Nigeria, April 18: Five Nigerian soldiers were killed, four injured and dozens missing when IS-aligned jihadists attacked a military base in northeast Nigeria's Borno state, two military officers told AFP Saturday.

Fighters from the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) on Friday dislodged troops from a base in Kamuya village, 35 kilometres (22 miles) from regional district

Biu after a gunfight. "The terrorists killed five soldiers and injured four others in the attack on the Kamuya base," a military officer told AFP. The insurgents sacked the base, forcing troops to withdraw in disarray, said a second military officer, who gave the same toll.

"So far 41 troops have returned while 58 are still missing and are presumed to have escaped the attack," said the second military officer.

Search and rescue operation was ongoing to "locate the missing soldiers", the officer added. Kamuya is the home village of Nigeria's former army chief Lieutenant-General Ťukur Buratai which has been repeatedly targeted by jihadists, prompting the setting up of a base to end the attacks. ISWAP has focused on targeting military installa-tions and troops since it split from mainstream Boko Haram in 2016 and rose to become a dominant group.

More than 20 people were killed following days of attacks on the town of Damasak this week where the militants burnt offices of international aid agencies and several homes. The attacks have forced 65,000 residents to flee into neighbouring Niger, according to the UN.

The 12-year jihadist conflict has killed 36,000 people and displaced around two million from their homes in Nigeria's northeast. The violence has spread to neighbouring Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

# Masks off as Israel vaunts virus win

Marks key milestone as the country vaccinates its way out of a Coronavirus nightmare

**Jerusalem, April 18:** Israelis stepped into the streets without masks on Sunday for the first time in a year, a key milestone as the country vaccinates its way out of a Coronavirus nightmare.

"It's very strange but it's very nice," said Eliana Gamulka, 26, after getting off a bus near the busy Jerusalem shopping boulevard of Jaffa Street and removing her face cover-'You can't pretend that you don't know anyone any more," she smiled.

With over half the population fully vaccinated in one of the world's fastest anti-Covid 19 inoculation campaigns, the health ministry announced on Thursday that masks would no longer be required in public outdoor spaces.

For Gamulka, a project manager, the good news came at the perfect time: just two weeks before her wedding. It will be "very nice to celebrate with everyone, now without masks," she said. "The pictures will be great! I'm very relieved. We can start living again."

The vaccination of close to five million people has sent Israel's Coronavirus caseload tumbling from some 10,000 new infections per day as recently as mid-Jan., to around 200 cases a day. That has allowed the re-opening of schools, bars, restaurants and other indoor gatherings although masks are still required in indoor public spaces

And even before Health Minister Yuli Edelstein's announcement came into effect, punters in the popular bars of Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda market were mask-free and smiling on Thursday evening.

Yet on Sunday, office worker Ester Malka said she wasn't quite ready to let down her guard. "We're allowed, but I'm still afraid, I got used to (wear-

ing a mask)," she said. I feel like it's part of my life. We'll see what happens when everyone has taken them off. If it goes well for a couple of months, then I'll remove mine." Israel just months ago

had the world's highest infection rate, a Coronavirus outbreak that left 6,300 people dead among 836,000 cases.

But the Jewish state sent its coronavirus caseload tumbling after striking a deal for a vast stock of Pilzer/Bion Tech jabs.

In exchange, it agreed to pay above market price and share data it gathers on the recipients, using one of the world's most

of an Islamist group was

on Sunday arrested in

Bangladesh on charges of

instigating deadly violence in the Muslim-majority

country. A joint team of

police and detectives raid-

ed an Islamic seminary in

Mohammadpur area of the capital Dhaka on Sunday and arrested Hefazat-e-Islam Joint Sec-

retary General Mamunul

Haque, who has been in the limelight due to some

recent controversies, offi-

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Joint Com-

missioner (Detective Bra-

nch) Mahbub Alam said that 47-year-old Haque

was arrested around 12:30

pm. Teachers and stu-

dents of the seminary ini-

tially staged protest and

tried to obstruct the raid.

However, Haque was detained from a room on

the first floor of the build-

ing, officials said. Dhaka

Metropolitan Police's Deputy Commissioner Harun-ur-Rashid said that

Haque and other Hefazat

leaders had been accused

in several cases, including

attacks on law enforcers

and police stations and vandalism. These cases

He had been watched for

some time now, said the

senior officer. The Hefazat

leader has been sued in several cases filed over

violence in Baitul Muka-

rram National Mosque in

Dhaka and following his

confinement with a wom-

an at the Sonargaon reso-

are being investigated.

cials said.



A woman walks along a closed vaccination centre in the city of Nice, France, on Sunday, amid the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. The centre closed due to a lack of candidates for the proposed vaccination.

sophisticated medical data

Since Dec., some 53 percent of Israel's 9.3 million people have received both doses of the jab, including around four-fifths of the population aged over 20.

As recently as Jan. it was registering 10,000 cases per day. But as the effects of mass vaccination kicked in, by March it was able to implement a gradual re-

opening.
"There's no better advertisement for Pfizer," said Shalom Yatzkan, a computer programmer who had been in quarantine after catching the virus.

"I was sick for three days, I had neck pains and felt weak," he said as he walked through central Jerusalem. "I just hope the new variants don't catch up with us."
Another Sunday land-

mark in Israel's exit from Coronavirus restrictions was the full resumption of the country's educational system, without restrictions on the numbers of pupils in classrooms.

Speaking at a Jerusalem high school, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed the "festivity" of the day for the schools, while warning of complacency. "We're not done with the Coronavirus yet, since it can return." he said, stressing the need to obtain "millions more vaccinations".

or later, we'll need another vaccination (dose)," he said. The situation in Israel is in stark contrast to the occupied West Bank.

B'desh arrests hardline

leader of Islamist group

Islamic seminary in

the capital Dhaka on

Sunday and arrested

Hefazat-e-Islam Joint

Mamunul Haque, who has been in the limelight

due to some recent con-

troversies, officials said.

TEACHERS AND stu-

dents of the seminary

initially staged protest

raid. Haque was

the first floor of the

building, officials said.

HAQUE AND other

been accused in several

cases, including attacks

police stations and van-

rt. DB officials said Haque

is also an accused in a

Earlier, the Hefazat

leader made the headlines

by his controversial rem-

arks regarding sculptur-

es. He is also accused of

threatening the government in the past. In Nov.

last year, he demanded an

immediate halt to the

installation of a sculpture of Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman in the

capital's Dholaipar. The

Islamist group is yet to

issue any statement over

Haque's arrest but one of

number of cases.

on law enforcers and

Hefazat leaders had

and tried to obstruct the

detained from a room on

**Secretary General** 

Mohammadpur area of

Dhaka, April 18: An A joint team of police influential hardline cleric and detectives raided an

## Canada records second case of rare blood clot

Toronto, April 18: Canadian health authorities said Saturday the country has recorded a second case of rare but serious blood linked AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine, but still recommend the shot for use.

The patient, who lives in the western province of Alberta and received a version of the AstraZeneca vaccine supplied by the Serum Institute of India, "has received treatment and is recovering," Canadian health authorities

wrote on Twitter. Canada reported its first case of blood clotting associated with low platelets on Tuesday in a Quebec

 BLOOD CLOT formations linked to the Astra-Zeneca vaccine "remain very rare" and Canada still believes that the vaccine's benefits "outweigh the potential risks".

woman who received the same shot.

Blood clot formations linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine "remain very and Canada still believes that the vaccine's benefits "outweigh the potential risks," Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada said. Canada's health auwould "continue to monitor the use of all #COV-ID19 vaccines closely and examine and assess any new safety concerns. At the end of March

Canada's National Advisorv Committee on Immunisation (NACI) recommended suspending the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine in people under the age of 55 while it evaluated the risks. Health Canada said that limiting the use of the vaccine to certain populations was not necessary

for the moment. After a slow start, Canada's vaccine campaign is gaining momen-

**HIGHEST DAILY** 

**SPIKE OF 6,000** 

Islamabad, April 18:

Pakistan on Sunday reported its highest sin-

gle-day Coronavirus spike

this year with over 6,000

new cases and about 149

deaths, as the country struggled to speed up its

vaccination programme.
The previous highest

surge was recorded last

year on June 20 when the

country reported 6,825

infections and 153 deaths.

The country on Sunday reported 6,127 new cases,

pushing the country's

infection tally to 756,285.

The death toll rose to

16,243 with 149 more fatalities. The government

announced that it will

start vaccinating people

in the 50-59 age group from April 21. — *PTI* 

**SUNDAY BLESSING** 

Vatican City, April 18:

Pope Francis says he is

happy to be back greeting the faithful in St Peter's Square for his traditional

Sunday noon blessing aft-

er weeks of lockdown me-

asures. Italy later this

month will start gradually

lifting some anti-pandem-

ic restrictions, allowing,

for example, outdoor din-

ing at cafes and restau-

rants in areas of the coun-

try where the Covid-19

outbreak has been show-

ing signs of improvement.

A couple of hundred

people, including nuns

and families, standing a

safe distance apart in the vast square, turned out to

see the pope speak from a

window of the Apostolic

POPE BACK TO

**IN-PERSON** 

**CASES IN PAK** 

Alexei Navalny

#### 'ÇONSEQUENCES' IF NAVALNY DIES, WARNS U.S.

Washington, April 18: US National Advisor Jake Sullivan warned Sunday that Russia will face "consequences" if hunger-striking Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny dies.

Jailed opposition leader Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponent, was arrested in Jan. upon returning to Russia after recovering from a near-fatal poisoning attack he says was orchestrated by Moscow.

"In terms of the specific measures we would undertake, we are looking at a variety of different costs that we would impose, and I'm not going to telegraph that publicly at this point," Sullivan told CNN.

"But we have communicated that there will be consequences if Mr. Navalny dies." The 44year-old Russian began a hunger strike on March 31 to demand proper medical treatment for back pain and numbness in his legs and hands.

On Saturday, Navalny's doctors said his health had rapidly deteriorated and demanded prison officials grant them immediate access.

'Our patient can die any minute," cardiologist Yaroslav Ashikhmin said, pointing to Naval-ny's high potassium levels and saying he should be moved to intensive care. Both France and Germany on Sunday joined a growing international chorus of protest at Navalny's treatment.

Sullivan said the White House had told the Kremlin that Moscow would be "held accountable by the international community" for what hap-pens to Navalny while in Russian custody. US President Joe Biden said that Navalny's situation was "totally unfair." but he is facing criticism for not bringing up the ais sident's treatment in a phone call to Putin last week or being more forthright in his public comments.

# 80K Germans remembered

Berlin, April 18: Germany is paying tribute on Sunday to the nearly 80,000 people it has lost to the Coronavirus, even as the country struggles to get a grip on another rise in infections.

Steinmeier will lead memorial event with other top officials at Berlin's Konzerthaus concert hall. His office says it is also dedicated to the

its leaders preferring anonymity said the group

planned to face the cases

constituting a strong

Dozens of Hefazat lead-

ers and activists have

been arrested in recent

weeks after the hardline

Islamist group waged anti-government protests.

Officials said Haque and fellow Hefazat leaders

were likely to be charged

for instigating violence during Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's Banglad-

esh tour last month and

ruthless demonstrations

in 2013 when several other

people were killed as the

group was demanding a

blasphemy law. Seventeen

people were killed and

scores injured in violence in different parts of Ba-

ngladesh during the prote-

Meanwhile, a local court

in Dhaka on Sunday pla-ced Hefazat-e-Islam Dhaka

city President Junayed Al

Habib and its Assistant

Secretary General Jalal Uddin on seven-day remand each in a case

lodged over the group's

2013 violence in the capi-

tal. Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Shahinur Rah-

man passed the order as

police produced them bef-

ore the court and pleaded

to place them on 10-day

remand in the case lodged

with the capital's Paltan

police station. Separate units of police arrested

Junayed from the capital's

Baridhara area and Jalal

from the Mohammadpur

area on Saturday.

sts in late March.

lawyers' panel.

bereaved who could not accompany their relatives when they died and for whom important and comforting rituals of mourning were not possible.

Germany's confirmed death toll from Covid-19 President Frank-Walter stood at 79,914 on Sunday, an increase of 67 over the previous day. That is the fifth-highest total Europe, after the UK, Italy, Russia and France.

Germany had a compar-

atively small number of deaths in the pandemic's first phase, but saw much higher infection levels in the fall and winter. In Jan., more than 1,000 deaths per day were reported at times in the country of 83 million people.

Infections have increased again over the past two months as a more contagious Coronavirus variant first detected in Britain took hold. Germany has facilities.

since the pandemic began. through parliament that would mandate an emergency brake in areas 100 weekly new cases per 100,000 innabitants. nationwide rate stood at

reported 3.14 million cases

Chancellor Angela Merkel is trying to get a bill where there are more than 162 on Sunday. It would require the closure of stores, cultural and sports

## Sikhs seek probe into shooting ONE KILLED IN OMAHA MALL **SHOOTING**

Washington, April 18: Influential American law-makers and Sikh community leaders have sought a thorough investigation into the mass shooting at a FedEx facility in the US state of Indiana as a potential hate crime that killed eight people, including four Sikhs.

Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi on Saturday called for investigation of potential anti-Sikh motivations in the incident that took place late Thursday night.

While the Indianapolis and Sikh communities continue to mourn, and as the rest of our country mourns with them, investigators must also determine if this mass shooting was a hate-motivated attack.

claims three lives **Kenosha, April 18:** A shooting at a tavern in Wisconsin killed three people and seriously injured two others early Sunday, a sheriff's department offi-

cial said. The shooting happened at Somers House Tavern in the Village of Somers, Kenosha County Sgt. David Wright said. The suspected shooter was not immediately captured. Wright said the shooting appeared to be a "targeted and isolated incident," and authorities didn't believe the general public was in danger.

tities of the people who died. The two people who were wounded were taken to area hospitals, Wright said. The road leading up to the tavern remained closed early Sunday as officials investigated the latest in a string of recent shootings. Last month, four people were killed at an office shooting in California, eight people were fatally shot at massage businesses in the Atlanta area, and 10 died in gunfire at a supermarket in Boulder, Colorado. -AP

Officials were still work-

ing to determine the iden-

Omaha (US), April 18: A shooting at a Nebraska mall left one person dead and another wounded as terrified shoppers ran for cover. Authorities believe the shooting at Westroads Mall in Omaha was an isolated incident, and not a random attack. Police determined the suspects had fled the scene after searching the mall, according to Omaha police Lt. Neal Bonacci. Officers first gave the "all clear" around 1 p.m. — about an

hour after multiple shots

were fired.

#### Mission equal to Wright Brothers' 1903 flight

# Nasa Mars copter flight 'today'

Wisconsin shooting

Washington, April 18: Nasa's Ingenuity Mars Helicopter could make its first flight over the Red Planet as soon as Monday, the US space agency reported, following a delay

The mini-helicopter's trip will mark the firstflight on another planet.

A PIECE of fabric from that plane has been tucked inside that feat.

19, for the first flight of its Ingenuity Mars Helicopter," the space agency

Data will return to Earth "a few hours following the flight,"

initially set for last Sunday, but was delayed after a potential issue emerged during a high-speed test of the four-pound (1.8 kilogram) helicopter's rotors.

Nasa calls the unprece-

dented helicopter opera-tion highly risky: The flight is a challenge because the air on Mars is so thin — less than one percent of the pressure of Earth's atmosphere.

underside

touched down on February 18. After the helicopter's flight, Ingen-uity will send Perseverance technical data on what it has done, and that information will be transmitted back to Earth.

The helicopter mission is be the equivalent on Mars of the first powered flight on Earth — by the Wright brothers in 1903 in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. A piece of fabric from that plane has been tucked inside Ingenuity in honour of that feat.

of more than a week due to a possible technical

ever powered, controlled and will help Nasa reap invaluable data about the conditions on Mars. "Nasa is targeting no

earlier than Monday, April

Ingenuity in honour of

eported Saturday.

autonomous which would take off at approximately 3:30 am (0730 GMT), Nasa said. Ingenuity's first trip was

The helicopter arrived on Mars attached to the Perseverance rover, which



# **Chronicle**

## Vital shortages hit India amid Covid's 2nd wave

rime Minister Narendra Modi's call to the people concerned to use the entire national capacity in the production of vaccines against Covid-19 comes at a time when poor anticipation and planning coupled with a lackadaisical approach of the government he heads have started having a telling impact on the pandemic situation in the country. For more than a year, the world has been under the grip of the fear the micro-organism has unleashed, but the nation which the government and the Prime Minister have been tom-tomming as the pharmaceutical hub of the world is now facing a shortage of everything that the healthcare workers need to fight the virus and save lives — hospital beds, antiviral life-saving drugs, vaccine, oxygen, intensive care units and ventilators. This, despite the fact that the government has set up a dedicated fund — PM-Cares to promote initiatives to fight the virus.

The nation has no idea whether the government was, like most people in India, thinking if the pandemic had vanished, given the very little effort it was seen to be taking to face an exigency like the one we are facing now. There was little or no extra investment made to augment healthcare infrastructure in the country in the

The government must invest in health infrastructure, ban gatherings and work with every institution, state or otherwise, to enforce Covid-appropriate behaviour

interregnum or to step up production capacities of the same materials, which we now face a shortage of. That the government has learnt little from the past is reflected from the fact that even the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, the national trade union belonging to the Sangh Parivar to which Mr Modi's BJP belongs, has cautioned about the reverse migration of guest workers from the towns and cities to the villages, in anticipation of another nationwide lockdown. It is stating the obvious that the government did not show as much alacrity as the guest workers did about

planning for the future in the face of a pandemic attack. It must not also go unsaid that the government had been busy plucking the low hanging fruits from the beginning of the corona fight. It started with the premature show of gratitude to the healthcare fraternity even before they started the real fight. Even the Indian Air force was dragged into the farce of showering flower petals on them from the skies when, on earth, they were fighting the virus with their back to the wall, with little availability of infrastructure and consumables. The government missed no chance to advertise the world's largest vaccination programme with little idea about the number of people it will have to vaccinate or the quantity of vaccine it would require or how to produce and distribute the same. Today, the vaccine manufacturers are running pillar to post seeking financial help to augment production capacity but the government does not seem to understand it at all; we heard no firm and immediate commitment from the government till

But it's not all lost as yet — the government must launch massive investment programmes in healthcare infrastructure, put its foot down firmly and ban all social, religious and political gatherings that can turn superspreaders, and work with every institution, state or otherwise, to enforce Covid-appropriate behaviour. Every rupee, every action and every moment count now.

### Don't recoil from scrutiny

he Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, in a majority vote, has expressed concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in India. It has pointed out that "human rights defenders and journalists in the country lack a safe working environment" and commented on "concerns about the difficult situation faced by Indian women and minority groups, caste-based dis-crimination". This could not have come as sweet music to the ears of the rulers who seem convinced that vaccine diplomacy and a presence in Quad as a counterbalance to China in the difficult time of the pandemic proves that India enjoys a pride of place in the international community.

The EU stance on India's recent human rights record only adds to concerns already expressed by US freedom watchdogs and the UN. While an ostrich-like posture is easy enough to adapt on foreign perceptions of what ails Indian democracy now, a moment's reflection might show what the reality is. Dispassionate observers have signalled that India has been guilty of demonising its minorities, subverting institutions, intimidating journalists and social media executives, criminalising dissent and whimsically controlling the Internet. The incarceration of so many who opposed the CAA and the harsh treatment meted out to those supporting the months-long farmers' protest by lending their voices to global social media criticism are symptomatic of contempt for a dissenting opinion, be it from celebrities, academics and media-persons.

It is paradoxical that while we seem to crave international attention and pat ourselves on the back when we come in for praise, we recoil from any kind of scrutiny. Bevond reflection, there is a need to accept criticism, understand the re why and act on it to move away from an undemocratic path. Corrective action can begin even in a small way by looking first at why a few elderly academics and activists are in prison for interminable periods without even getting a trial, which in the Indian system inflicts inordinate delays and is the equivalent of extended imprisonment. It is no democracy which shows no inclination to support the right to dissent and, on the contrary, throttles it.

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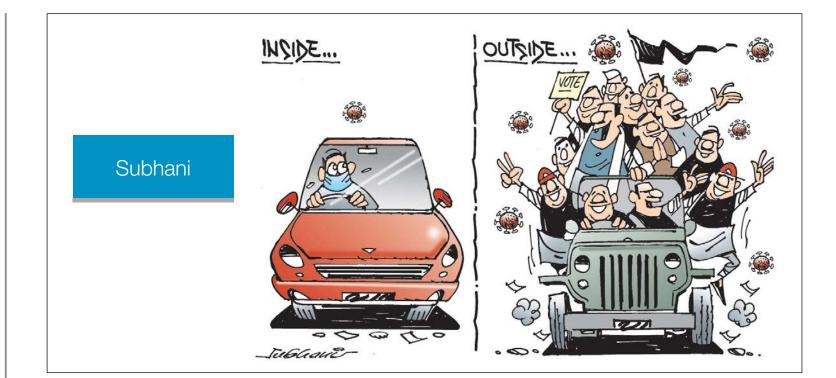
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# Ideology or competence: What do the voters want?



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

Murphy's Law. The most popular one states that if something can go wrong, it will. Among the many versions the oldest one is attributed to a British merchant, engineer and owner of ships, Alfred Holt, who told his fellow engineers in 1877: "It is found that anything that can go wrong at sea generally does go wrong sooner or later." That proposition became popular as Murphy's Law when an American aerospace engineer, Edward declared: "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong." From the sea to space, engineers devised systems that could be as failsafe as possi-

here are many

Murphy's Law. As an analyst of Indian political, economic, social and governance systems I have long held the view that in India Murphy's works with a can go wrong, invariably goes wrong. The unfortunate downside to that reality is that most Indians have come to accept a certain degree of incompetence in most systems. Given the generally high level of citizens' tolerance for incompetence, it rarely becomes an election issue.

forewarned

Politicians are voted in and voted out for a variety of reasons, ranging from their charisma, caste, community, power and so on, but rarely have they been voted out for incompetence. The Indian voter has come to live with power outages, limited access to drinking water, uncollected garbage in the neighbourhood, inade-quate law and order, difficulty in securing access to education and healthcare, and so on. Rarely have any of these become issues that determine the outcome of elections. I cannot recall the last time a politician went to the polls campaigning on a platform of competence, rather than loyalty or grievance based on caste, community or some other

So, why should it surprise anyone that the voter has come to terms with the incompetent management of the Covid-19 pandemic and that this is not a defining issue in the ongoing elections to state legislatures? Caste and communal identity, allegations of corruption and nepotism seem to ignite political passions more during elections than the competence or incompetence of contending candidates in handling a pandemic.

India is no exception. Consider the fact that in the United States, Donald Trump secured more votes in the 2020 election compared to the 2016 election even though every medical professional in the United States will vouch for the tion's response to the Covid-19 pandemic was incompetent".

Trump's incompetence did not defeat him. The unity of non-white voters finally

For all his continued

popularity, at least as shown in the opinion polls, the fact is that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been at the head of an incompetent administrative response to the pandemic. One can argue about the relative responsibility of the Centre and the state governments and which of the states have responded more competently, one can differ on how one would define competence, but what is very clear is that the question of competence or incompetence in governmental response to the pandemic has not yet become a political issue. In part this could be

because, as the old adage

less equal).

sab nangey hain. In short, all political parties in government across different states have been equally guilty of an incompetent response. Many public health experts believe Kerala is an exception, but it is interesting that the Left Front's competence in dealing with the pandemic has not been an overt political issue in the recent elections. As more and more evi-

dence mounts up of administrative and political incompetence in dealing with the pandemic, it remains to be seen if Indian voters will just shrug their shoulders, throw up their hands, point to the gods above and quote Murphy's Law. Or, will they hold their elected representatives and governments accountable? In the last two years more doctors and nurses have died fighting the pandemic than soldiers in fighting the nation's enemies. While politicians become all patriotic when it comes to the death of soldiers and demand votes in the name of nationalism, why don't the deaths caused by incompetence stir voters' emotions?

There have been many examples of competent crisis management in the past and they stand to the present incompetence in dealing with the pandemic. As chief minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi took great pride, and rightly so, in his government's handling of the Kutch earthquake in 2001. Why has the same Gujarat state been so incompetent in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic? Will Gujarat's voters now punish their government for its incompetence?

Covid-19 mismanagement reveals either administrative incompetence or the fear of professionals to speak their mind to politicians in power. Either way, the citizen pays the price.

tive system was built on the assumption that a meritocratic and technocratic bureaucracy would compensate for the lack of experience in governance of an elected political leadership. This assumption worked as long as the civil service was willing to speak its mind and politicians in power were willing to listen to them. When civil servants and professionals in government are either scared to speak their mind or have little to contribute and politicians imagine they know everything on anything, one ends up with

incompetent response to administrative challenges. For all its lack of democracy, the Chinese Communist Party has created an internal merit-based bureaucracy that allows political leaders to rise to the top only after proving their administrative and governance credentials at every step of the power ladder. The Chinese people have sacrificed democracy at the altar of meritocracy and the Communist Party of China has for long functioned like the Indian Administrative Service, creating a "mandarinate", so to speak. This has made China's response to Covid-19 crisis more pro-

fessionally competent. In India the gap bety political power and administrative competence has widened with an increasing number of elected politicians taking charge of day-to-day functioning of the government and an increasing number of civil servants either abdicating their responsibilities or doing the bidding of politicians in office without consideration for the merits of a policy or a decision. All this gets revealed in times of a crisis. Covid-19 mismanagement reveals either administrative incompetence or the fear of professionals to speak their mind to politicians in power. Either way, the citizen pays the price.

The writer is an economist, a best-selling author and former adviser to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, His latest book is India's Power Elite: Class, Caste and a Cultural Revolution.

#### **LETTERS**

#### **BEASTLY HUMANS**

It was shocking to learn that a pet dog was tied to a two-wheeler and dragged along some distance on a road in Malappuram district (Kerala). But for the timely intervention of some kind-hearted people, the canine would have met a horrible end. Last year, too, the same place had hit the headlines for the gruesome plight of a pregnant elephant who died due to an explosion in her mouth after she ate a fruit stuffed with firecrackers. A few months ago, a pet dog was tied to a car and dragged along the road in Kochi. The frequent instances of cruelty to animals indicate that the existing laws do not have the teeth to create a sense of fear. Pity, some humans behave like wild animals!

> P.G. Menon, Chennai

#### **SONIA GANDHI'S CALL**

Apropos the report Vaccinate25-plus, scrap GST on medicines, Sonia tells Sonia Gandhi's call which is applicable to the current Covid conditions is wholly welcome. Did any politician think on those two vital issues that affect and threaten every individual day-in and day-out? In the U.S., vaccines are tested to suit people of 16 and above. Field tests are now being conducted now to include all children aged 12 and above. With the onslaught of the second wave of corona and in the context of threatening and lightning surge, it is logical and necessitous to make all people aged 25 and above eligible for vaccination as suggested by Sonia. There is no justification to deny vaccination to those below 45 as of now It is a timely and invaluable appeal made by Sonia to the PM. The Modi government shall consider this issue and pursue immediate action without allowing any grass to grow under its feet. Further, GST at 18% each is being charged on medicines in the name of CGST and SGST. Totally 36% GST is collected on medicinesone for the Centre and the other for the State- as shown in the bill itself. It is justifiable to scrap GST on all lifesaving medicines.

Manoharan Muthuswamy,

Anand K. Sahay **Far & Near** 



The idea behind capturing power in any kind of way: fair or foul

the BJP may or may not win the Assembly elections in Assam. In West Bengal, its chances may be considered to be less bright than in Assam on account of the structural makeup of the state, notwithstanding the pre-Partition communal politics rampant in undivided Bengal. But winning a poll fair and square is not the metric any longer. We have seen popular verdicts being overturned in state after state to the BJP's benefit.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his principal operative, Union home minister Amit Shah, the saffron party's new *sutra* is to form a government in a state through any means. The capture of power is evidently crucial for erecting a scaffolding — a formal platform — for the systematic spread of ideas in the public realm through unrestrained heavyduty propaganda, the rapid dissemination of communal politics through enabling instruments of State power (the police and the bureaucracy), and the unleashing of policy with a communal slant.

The last indubitably means going out of the way to disadvantage and

"other" those who are not the majority, leading to the making of such patently unjust policies — which defy the idea of equality before the law the new normal in a sharp deviation from the political tradition whose roots were laid over 70 years ago.

The Westminster system of party politics, which is enshrined in our Constitution, has been stood on its head in the post-Atal Behari Vajpayee BJP. When the BJP fails to bag the numbers in an election, it simply sets up a trade mart in which MLAs become the commodity. The gomashtas, or middlemen, and auctioneers

are out in strength.

When elected legislators on party tickets other than BJP fail to take the bait (offered in the form of incentives), the punitive element kicks in and various agencies of the Central government raid and begin so-called investigations against the BJP's opponents. The law courts simply watch helplessly. The Election Commission has little to say. The governors of various states frequently don the garb of apparatchiks. The Speaker is happy to receive instructions remotely.

The RSS is the ideological mentor of

the BJP and several dozen allied organisations that are the repository of the notion of the "Hindu Rashtra (the idea that the land mass of India in its present political geography as well as in its mythological connotation is the natural home of the Hindus of

the world, where all others must

resign themselves to the fate of being

The RSS lays claims to being exalted. Its propagandists and adherents have prided themselves on being seekers of a higher morality and ethical conduct in the family, society, and the "nation", the last being an expression which in its most recent manifestation in India has been so thoroughly weaponised as to cause unease among "citizens" — namely, those Indians who are not swayed by their religious

identity alone in the running of public affairs and policymaking. It was expected that the self-appointed custodians of the "culture" of the Hindus would object to such weaponisation in the interest of political hygiene and harmony in society. They have not done so.

When after an election, newly elected MLAs of non-BJP parties are pursued with serious intent to switch sides so that the BJP may unfairly get to form the government and make a mockery of the people who voted for them and against the BJP, a small hint from the top levels of the RSS leadership may have done wonders. It would have worked as a discouraging factor. But the RSS top brass have little to say. The inference is that they approve of dishonourable conduct in the interest of making an ideological conquest.

Whether it is an election to a panchayat, a district board, a trade union, a social club, a professional association — and not just the state or national legislature — the BJP uses every trick in the book to "capture" the body. Only then can it pass rules, regulations, laws, to influence civil society as well as the government.

More, only then does it gain the formal legitimacy and the authority to direct the making of budgets and play the lead hand in the disbursal of funds to its favourite schemes and outfits. The stamp of approval is thus gained to promote unworthy communal agendas. The general media tomtoms this, rather than interrogate the

Awestruck by the energy brought to bear by the BJP to win all elections, big or small, some commentators have urged other parties to emulate the saffron party's methods. This is misconceived advice. It leaves out of account the fundamental proposition — that the BJP is unlike any other party that we know.

It sanctions the use of majoritarian force (which may be unseen), rather than the commonly understood constitutional methods. Ordinary civil society sometimes transforms into uncivil society under its gaze. This is a phenomenon that is anathema to a democratic order.

In both Assam and West Bengal, the political actors in the fray, as well as the general public, need to remain alert to the "capture" and "takeover" syndrome. A successful takeover bid may be expected to give rise to the unbridled spread of communal fires in (fragile) border states. The Congress and the Left parties have given little evidence of understanding the parallelogram of forces at work, especially in West Bengal. They may live to rue the













# # FINANCIAL

# quick

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	48,832.03	0.06
Nifty 50	14,617.90	0.25
S&P 500*	4,185.47	0.36
Dollar (₹)	74.35	0.76
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.46	0.85
Euro (₹)	89.06	0.77
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,431▼9	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	66.82	0.18
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.088	-0.02
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.578	0.048
* As of Friday/Saturday		

#### Steel prices may take 2 yrs to cool down: JSPL MD

Steel prices might take at least two years to cool down as its demand is consistently increasing. In the current financial year, the demand for steel in India is also expected to exceed the production numbers, Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) managing director V. R. Sharma told PTI. While the demand in FY22 will be in the range of 140-150 million tonnes, the country's production is expected to be somewhere around 125 mt, he said.



## ■ Govt holds 93% stake in Pune-based bank, may sell 51% now **BoM seen as first selloff pick**

**MADHUSUDAN SAHOO** NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

With the bank privatisation process gaining speed, state-owned lender Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has emerged out to be the first strong candidate for the government's proposed disinvestment plan. Weighing in all options, both Niti Ayog and the finance ministry officials have already discussed the pros and cons of privatisation, a top finance ministry source

government is actively looking for ways to elicit strong interest from investors for staterun banks that are up for privatisation. Though we have shortlisted four public sector banks, initially we received huge response



investors for Bank of Maharashtra," the source

There is a wide media speculation that the four PSBs shortlisted are Bank

of Maharashtra, Bank of India, Indian Overseas and the Central Bank of India. It is also expected that the government is considering mid-sized or small banks for the first round of privatisation, and may later go with large banks for divestment. Bank

Maharashtra stock moved up nearly 70 per cent from mid-February when an agency report named the lender among the privatisation candidates. Last Tuesday, the BoM stock moved up nearly 20 per cent with high volumes on renewed market buzz about its privatisation.

Attempts made by Financial Chronicle to reach out to the bank's MD & CEO A.S. Rajeev proved futile. He had earlier told the media that BoM would aim at growing at 10 per cent per annum and that only Rs 1,000 crore loan book now against Rs 15,000 crore in 2016 were required to be restruc-

The government currently holds 93 per cent stake in the Pune-based BoM. Additionally, LIC holds 4 per cent. The remaining 3 per cent hold-

ing is with the public. The government is likely to divest 51 per cent in the current round and reap tion in the balance 42 per cent holding in later

As per a report by Denofwealth, Pune-based corporate giant Bajaj Group, which has a significant presence in the financial sector, could be a strong aspirant for the BoM buyout. Besides, two other corporates that are also reportedly throwing their hats into the ring are Tata Capital and Catholic Syrian Bank.

# Future's board approves debt recast plan

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 18

Future Retail's board has approved a resolution plan to restructure the existing secured financial debt from the bankers. This has been permitted under a Resolution Framework for Covid-19 related stress announced by the Reserve Bank of India.

The resolution plan, already approved by the lenders, is subject to the approval of the expert committee under the chairmanship of K. V. Kamath.

The debt raised through the non-convertible debentures also will be restructured. The company has received the written consent of all the holders of the NCDs to amend the terms and conditions of the NCDs as per the resolution plan.

Debt from 28 banks and financial institutions, including working capital demand loans, term loans, cash credit, short term loans, NCDs, purchase bill discounting limits, other working capital loans and unpaid interest which became overdue will be restructured

According to the company, the pandemic has deeply impacted the longterm business viability and led to significant financial stress across the industries. "The debt burden has become disproportionate relative to the cash flow generated by the company owing to the multiple lockdowns since the pandemic surfaced, posing sig-

including a stunning solo

goal, as Barcelona blew away Athletic Bilbao to

win the Copa del Rev on

Saturday, consigning their

final defeat in two weeks.

The cup was won and

lost in a whirlwind 12 min-

utes in Seville, which saw

Barca score four times to

clinch an emphatic 4-0 vic-

tory, with Messi at his dev-

It remains to be seen if

his seventh Copa del Rey

triumph is the last trophy

Messi lifts in Barcelona

colours but if this was to

be a final flourish, the 33-

year-old crafted a fitting farewell. "It's very special

to be captain of this team

where I have spent my

whole life and very special

to be able to lift this cup,'

His first goal, and

Barca's third, started with

the Argentinian in his

own half before a charg-

ing run down the right

and a surge forward into

the penalty area gave him

the chance for a simple

With the club's new pres-

ident Joan Laporta in the crowd, Ronald Koeman's

first title as Barcelona

coach should also signifi-

cantly boost his chances of

remaining in charge

astating best.

Messi said.



nificant financial stability Hence, the restructuring of the debt is crucial and essential," it said in a stock exchange filing.

As per the plan, repayment of short term loans, term loans, NCDs, overdue working capital loans (converted into Working Capital Term Loans) will be extended up to a maximum of two years. Interest during the moratorium period between March 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021 shall be converted into Funded Interest Term Loan, which shall be payable by December 2021. Cash Credit will be continued at a reduced level based on bank assessment. All securities created on

the company's assets shall continue to operate in favour of the lenders in the ranks assigned originally, exception being extension of charge on movable fixed assets being extended to working capital consortium lenders as a part of the restructuring. All charges, default premiums, processing fees unpaid since March 2020 to implementation date will be waived off fully.

# Global jewellery brands fear inventory delay

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 18

After a robust March quarter, international jewellery brands are now worried about "inventory delay" due to the surge in Covid-19 cases in India. They fear the delays could impact their full year

Jewellers, in its quarterly update, said that it has evaluated the impact of inventory delays related to recent Covid-19 surges in India and other parts of

"At this time, the company believes it has mitigat-

impacts; however, if the duration and magnitude of these inventory slow-downs intensify, there could be future negative impacts on the company's full year guidance," Signet cautioned.

Signet had stronger-than-expected conversion and average ticket values in the first quarter and also upped its full-year revenue guid-

Similarly, French luxury goods Louis Vuitton's watches and jewellery division recorded revenue growth of 138 per cent in the March quarter com-



pared to the same quarter of 2020 and 80 per cent compared to that of 2019. Russian diamond miner Alrosa too saw demand from end consumers for diamond jewellery showing robust growth across

key markets like the US and China owing to Valentine's Day and Valentine's Day and Chinese New Year and improved consumer senti-

This robust demand had reflected in the March exports of cut and polished diamonds, which grew 123.55 per cent compared to the same month

However, chances of disruption in exports cannot be dismissed. Bharat Diamond Bourse was closed in the first week of April due to rising Covid cases in Mumbai. "BDB has been closed and if Mumbai port is also

the exports," said Prakash Pincha, chairman, eastern region, Gems and Jewellery Export Council. Promotion frequency of

flights too can hit exports. According to an indus-try insider, the diamond certification process is causing the current delay in shipments and the backlog is swelling owing to fewer staff.

Part of the labour force in Surat's polishing units also have gone to their hometown to leave their family back there, fearing a lock-down, said Dinesh Navdiya of the GJEPC.

SHORT TAKES

#### **Srihari creates** national record

Tashkent: Ace Indian swimmer Srihari Natarai created a national record in 50m backstroke while winning his second gold of the Uzbekistan Open Championship here. The 20-year-old clocked 25.11 seconds to bag the top prize in the FINA-accredited Olympic qualifying event on Saturday night.

Indian swimmers enjoyed a rich haul of 29 medals — 18 gold, seven silver and four bronze - in the meet.

It was Srihari's third national record in two days as the Bengaluru swimmer had rewritten the national marks twice in 100m backstroke, his pet event, earlier this week. — PTI

#### Krishna Poonia

tests covid positive

New Delhi: Delhi Commonwealth Games gold medallist and sitting Rajasthan MLA Krishna Poonia on Sunday tested positive for Covid-19 and is undergoing treatment at a Jaipur hospital. The 43-year-old Krishna, who became the first Indian woman to bag an individual gold in the CWG by winning the discus throw event in 2010, is now admitted at the Rajasthan University of Health Sciences hospital. "She had cough and mild fever and she took a test on Saturday but the virus could not be detected. Today, we went to RHUS and doctors there took a CT scan from which it was diagnosed for Covid-19," her husband Virender Poonia said. - PTI

#### **Quartararo wins,**

Marquez seventh Portimao, Portugal: Fabio

Quartararo won his second consecutive race when he took the Portuguese MotoGP at Portimao on Sunday, with six-time champion Marc Marquez seventh in his first race back after nine months out. Repsol Honda Team rider

Marquez's seventh-placed finish came on his return after three bouts of surgery on the right arm he broke in the 2020 opener

He qualified in the second row and admitted on Saturday that he was "going to suffer" after such long time away from racing.

# Nketiah saves Arsenal blushes

## Eddie scores last-gasp equaliser to earn a 1-1 draw against lowly Fulham

London, April 18: Eddie Nketiah delivered a hammer blow to Fulham's bid for Premier League survival as the Arsenal striker's last-gasp goal rescued a 1-1 draw at the Emirates Stadium on Sunday. Mikel Arteta's side were

seconds away from a first ever home defeat against Fulham as they laboured to find a response to Josh Maja's second half penalty. But Nketiah pushed Fulham closer to relegation deep into stoppagetime when he tapped in after the visitors failed to clear a corner.

It was a major setback for third bottom Fulham, who are six points behind fourth bottom Burnley and fifth bottom Brighton with just five games left. After losing their previ-

ous four matches, Fulham

were on course to mark Scott Parker's 100th match in charge with a memorable scalp.
Instead, they slipped closer to an immediate

return to Championship.

Next up for Fulham is a

west London derby at Chelsea on Saturday before a decisive clash with Burnley on May 8. Ninth placed Arsenal are nine points adrift of the

hope of reaching next season's Champions League is Europa winning the face

top four and their best

men



Arsenal's Eddie Nketiah (right) scores against Fulham in an English Premier League match at the Emirates Stadium in London on Sunday.

Villarreal in the semifinals after cruising to a 4victory at Slavia Prague in the quarter-final second leg on Thursday.

**HEARTBREAK FOR FULHAM** 

The Spaniard made five changes to the side that thrashed Slavia, with Gabriel Martinelli among those to come in as Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang absent with malaria.

Martinelli should have given Arsenal the lead inside 40 seconds when he ran onto Alexandre Lacazette's pass and clipped his shot just wide.

Martinelli threatened again with a low shot on the turn from Emile Smith Rowe's cross, but Alphonse Areola sprawled to his left to make a good save.

Arsenal thought they had taken the lead when Dani

**Tashkent, April 18:** India's Jhilli Dalabehera

clinched the gold medal in

Ceballos looped his header past Areola from Hector Bellerin's cross.

But the Spaniard was denied his first Premier League goal after VAR ruled Bukayo Saka's toes were in an offside position in the build-up. Saka hit the outside of

the near post with a crossbefore Fulham received another helping hand from VAR in the 59th

## **BLUES END CITY'S QUEST TO REACH**

April London, Chelsea ended Manchester City's quest for a historic quadruple of trophies as Hakim Ziyech's goal earned a 1-0 win to take the Blues into the FA Cup final on Saturday.

A damaging day for City also saw them lose Kevin De Bruyne to an ankle injury just over a week away from the League Cup final, where they face Tottenham, and the first leg of their Champions League semi-final against Paris Saint-Germain.

Chelsea were good value for another impressive win under Thomas Tuchel and will be favourites for the German's first silverware in English football when they face Leicester or Southampton May 15.

Tuchel could land an even bigger prize in the Champions League just months after replacing the sacked Frank Lampard in January. His side showed they can

get the better of City in what could be a dress rehearsal for the Champions League final should the English clubs see off PSG and Real Madrid in the last four.

Madrid, April 18: Lionel It remains to be seen if his seventh Copa del Rev triumph is the last trophy Messi lifts in **Barcelona colours** but if this was to be a final flourish, the 33-year-old crafted a fitting farewell.

Messi wins Copa

crown for Barca

beyond the summer. "To win a title is impor-tant for me," Koeman admitted afterwards.

Yet Laporta was notice ably evasive when asked about Koeman's future.
"He is doing well," he said.

Koeman took over a team at rock bottom, humiliated by an historic loss to Bayern Munich and wounded by the attempts of Messi to leave the club for free.

But this 31st Copa del Rey success for the club is a testament to progress made and Koeman will hope it not only helps convince Messi to stay but gives Barca momentum now in a neck-and-neck

title race in La Liga. 'Despite the changes at the club and the young players, at Barca you have to always fight for trophies," Koeman said.

### **FIVE INDIAN BOXERS ENTER QUARTERS OF YOUTH WORLDS**

Delhi, April 18: boxers Indian advanced to the quarterfinals of the youth world championships for men and women after clinching comfortable victories in their last-16 stage bouts

in Kielce, Poland. Among the women, Gitika (48kg) made the last eight on Saturday.

From the men's contingent. Asian silver-medallist Ankit Narwal (64kg), Bishwamitra Chongtham (49kg), Sachin (56kg) and Vishal Gupta (91kg) stood

just one win away from ensuring a medal for the country. However, the campaign

ended for Nisha Gurjar (64kg) after a 1-4 loss to Latvia's Beatrise Rozentale. Earlier, Gitika defeated

Kazakhstan's Arailym Marat 5-0. went Narwal past Oliwier Poland's Zamojski 4-1, while Vishal out-punched Croatia's Borna Loncaric in his prequarterfinal bout.

the 45kg category in a severely depleted twolifter field at the Asian Weightlifting Championship here on Sunday.

Jhilli, a junior world championship bronze medallist, lifted 69kg in the snatch and followed that up by 88kg in clean jerk for a total of 157kg to finish on top of the podium in all three categories of the gold level Olympic qualifier event which was postponed last year due to the pandemic.

Jhilli lifts gold at Asian meet However, 45kg is not a Olympic weight category. The silver medal went to Philippines' Mary Flor Diaz for her effort of

135kg (60kg+75kg). With the win, Jhilli bettered her silver-winning performance in the last edition. However, it was an underwhelming performance as she had lifted 162kg (71kg+91kg) at the same event in 2019.

The other Indian in the fray. Sneha Soren finished third in group B of the women's 55kg event. The 20-year-old from Odisha lifted a total of

164kg (71kg+93kg) in the four-woman field. Her final standing will be determined after the end of the group A proceed-

Jhilli's gold was India's second medal of the tournament as weightlifter Mirabai Chanu had smashed the world record in the clean and jerk category enroute a bronze medal on Saturday. The Olympic-bound Chanu lifted 86kg in snatch and a world record of 119kg in clean and jerk for a total of 205kg.

#### **VERSTAPPEN EMERGES ON TOP IN CHAOTIC IMOLA RACE**

Imola (Italy), April 18: Max Verstappen kept his cool to claim a chaotic rain-hit Emilia Romagna Grand Prix on Sunday as seven-time Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton recovered from a rare mistake to sneak in second. Red Bull driver Verstappen muscled past pole sitter Hamilton on the first corner at Imola to set up his impressive first win of the sea-I surprised myself. We worked really hard to make that better. In these tricky conditions we did a

great job," Verstappen said.

Lando Norris in a McLaren took third for the Briton's second successive podium ahead of Charles Leclerc for Ferrari. The outcome of a compelling second leg of the Formula One season confirmed Verstappen's stature as a formidable obstacle to Hamilton's quest for an unprecedented eighth drivers' crown.

After winning the season-opener in Bahrain and putting in the fastest lap on Sunday Hamilton leads Verstappen by one point ahead of the Portuguese Grand Prix next time out.

• RAJASTHAN ROYALS • ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE • SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

DECCAN CHRONICLE, COIMBATORE, MONDAY, 19 APRIL 2021

## Shikhar Dhawan, DC Glenn Maxwell, RCB

KL Rahul, **PBKS PURPLE** Harshal Patel, RCB Rahul Chahar, MI

Off the field

**Avesh** 

Khan, DC



Robin Uthappa's son Neale Nolan sports a CSK jersey.

#### Rohit bats for 'save corals' campaign

Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma has environmental issues very close to his heart, it seems. The cricketer came out on the field against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Saturday wearing shoes with "Save the Corals art on them. Against the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), Sharma was seen wearing spikes with "Save the Rhinos" art, while in the second tie against the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on April 13, the stylish India player had "Plastic-free Ocean" art

#### Warner lambasts poor SRH batting

Sunrisers Hyderabad captain hit out at his side's poor batting after they lost their third successive match in this year's IPL. Warner and Jonny Bairstow had provided their side a platform with a quick 67-run opening-wicket partnership. But the batsmen that followed disappointed.

Manish Pandey, newcomers Virat Singh and Abhishek Sharma threw their wickets

"I don't know how to take that. Obviously disappointing. Two of us were set but it proves that if you don't bat deep, you can't win. If you get a partnership and if there is one person at the end, you can chase it down," said a disappointed Warner.

"These scores are very chaseable, it's just poor bat-ting. The guys need to play smart cricket in the middle The bowlers have been fantastic," added the left-handed

#### Murali undergoes angioplasty

Sri Lankan cricket legend Muttiah Muralitharan, who is part of the Sunrisers Hyderabad support staff in the ongoing IPL, has undergone an angioplasty at a private hospital in Chennai ESPNcricinfo reported that the champion off-spinner "had a stent fitted to unblock an artery, and will rejoin Sunrisers Hyderabad when

The 49-year-old is the leading wicket-taker in international cricket with 1347 scalps. Muralitharan represented Sri Lanka in 133 Tests.

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# DHAWAN & ONLY

### Shikhar's 49-ball 92 powers Delhi to 6-wicket win over Punjab

Mumbai, April 18: Delhi Capitals beat Punjab Kings by six wickets in the IPL here on Sunday. Mayank Agarwal top-scored for Punjab with 69 off 36 balls while his opening partner and skipper K L Rahul made 61 off 51 balls, taking them to 195

In response, Delhi Capitals chased down the target rather comfortably in 18.2 overs with Shikhar Dhawan scoring 92 off 49

Dhawan said: "It was a conscious effort from my side to increase the strikerate and I started taking more risks. I'm not afraid of changes. I'm always open towards changes and I make sure I give it a good try in the nets and then in the games. I've worked on the leg-side shots, coming in the crease, using the pace of the bowler."

Earlier, Mayank and captain Rahul stitched a century-run opening stand to guide Punjab Kings to a challenging 195 for four. Agarwal made 69 off 36 balls, while Rahul scored 61 off 51 deliveries as Punjab made a flying start to their innings.

Delhi Capitals skipper Rishabh Pant's decision to bowl after winning the toss backfired as the opening duo of Agarwal and Rahul took the attack to the opposition bowlers from the onset, hitting boundaries and sixes at

While Agarwal was the aggressor of the two initially, Rahul upped the ante after a relatively sedate start.

Agarwal and Rahul adopted an aggressive approach against debutant Lukeman Meriwala and Kagiso Rabada, taking their team to 94 for no loss in 10 overs.

RCB's AB de Villiers during his unbeaten 76 against

Kolkata Knight Riders in Chennai on Sunday.

**Chennai, April 18:** Glenn Maxwell was good but AB de Villiers was bet-

ter as Royal Challengers

Bangalore bested Kolkata

Knight Riders by 38 runs

in their IPL match here on

Sunday. Batting first, De

Villiers' master class and

Maxwell's counter-attack-

ing half-century propelled

RCB to an imposing 204

for four. In reply, KKR

were stopped at 166 for eight as RCB regained the

top spot in the pecking

RCB smashed 56 runs in

including 21 in the final

six deliveries, thanks to de Villiers 34-ball 76 not out.

Maxwell blazed away to

78 off 49 deliveries, hitting

nine boundaries and three

maximums before the

genius from South Africa

strode in and struck the

same number of fours and

sixes as his teammate

The Knight Riders were

off to a brilliant start with

leg-break bowler Varun

Chakravarthy leaving RCB in early trouble at 9/2

with the big wickets of

skipper Virat Kohli (5)

and Rajat Patidar (1) in

from Australia.

last three overs,



Delhi Capitals opener Shikhar Dhawan en route to his 49-ball 92 against Punjab Kings in an IPL game on Sunday.

Agarwal was looking dangerous during his 36-ball knock and ended up hitting seven boundaries and four hits over the fence. But DC dismissed both the batsmen in quick succession to make a

comeback into the match. While Agarwal was the first to depart, slicing a Meriwala delivery straight to Shikhar Dhawan at sweeper cover in the 13th over, Rahul handed a simple catch to Marcus Stonis at midwicket off Rabada. Rahul's knock was laced

with seven boundaries and two sixes. Chris Gayle (11) failed to make a mark, perishing soon in search of a maximum.

#### **SCORECARD**

Punjab Kings: KL Rahul c Stoinis b Rabada 61, Mayank Agarwal c Dhawan b Meriwala 69, Chris Gayle c sub (RV Patel) b Woakes 11, Deepak Hooda (not out) 22, Nicholas Pooran c Rabada b Avesh Khan 9, Shahrukh Khan (not out) 15. Extras (lb 6, nb 2) 8. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs) FoW: 1-122, 2-141, 3-

158, 4-179. **Bowling:** Chris Woakes Meriwala 3-0-32-1, R. Ashwin 4-0-28-0, Kagiso Rabada 4-0-43-1, Lalit Yadav 1-0-11-0, Ávesh Khan 4-0-33-1. Delhi Capitals: Prithvi Shaw c Gayle b Arshdeep Singh 32, Shikhar Dhawan b Richardson 92, Steven Smith c Richardson b Meredith 9, Rishabh Pant c Hooda b Richardson 15, Marcus Stoinis (not out) 27, Lalit Yadav (not out)
12. Extras (lb 2, nb 3, w
6) 11. Total (for four wickets in 18.2 overs)

FoW: 1-59, 2-107, 3-152,

Bowling: Arshdeep 3-0-22-1, Mohammed Shami 4-0-53-0, Jalaj Saxena 3-0-27-0, Jhye Richardson 4-0-41-2, Deepak Hooda 2-0-18-O, Riley Meredith 2.2-0-

Nicholas Pooran (9) failed yet again but Deepak Hooda (22 not out 13) and Shahrukh Khan (15 not out off five) provided the much needed big hits towards the end.

INTERNATIONAL

cricketer AB de Villiers

on Sunday said it will be "fantastic" to make an

international comeback

ahead of the upcoming

T20 World Cup. The T20 World Cup is scheduled to

be held in India in October-November.

"If I can slot in, it will be

fantastic," de Villiers said after he played another

match-winning innings

for his franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore in

The prolific batsman added he will be fine with

it even if he is not able to

going to communicate with South Africa head

coach Mark Boucher

towards the end of the

IPL.
"I am absolutely inter-

ested, with regards to my

form, my fitness, we have

to get the best 15 together,

we will plan accordingly. I

am speaking with Boucher towards the end of IPL," he added.

On Friday, Boucher had

hinted at de Villiers' pos-

sible international come-

Boucher, a former South

Africa wicketkeeper-bats-

man, has also revealed

about the conversation he

had with the RCB star

he went to the IPL,

"I did chat to him before

"The conversation is

still very much open. AB

being the person he is, he wanted to perform very well at the IPL, to prove to

himself and everyone else

that he is still a very key

figure in world cricket and could dominate at that level," Boucher had

In May 2018, de Villiers

had announced his retire-

ment from international

cricket. He played 114 Tests, 228 ODIs and 78

ahead of the IPL 2021.

Boucher had said.

back.

said.

make a comeback. De Villiers, 37, said he is

the IPL here.

April Versatile South African

COMERACK

Chennai,

antine and could be drafted into the playing XI to give **ABD GAME FOR** 

#### +0.750 0 4 +0.453 0 4 +0.367 +0.616 0 2 +0.0523 2 0 2 - 0.633 2 0 2 - 0.967

**POINTS TABLE** 

# CSK, Rajasthan in battle royale

Mumbai, April 18: Threetime champion Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals would look to build on their first wins and gain momentum when they clash in the Indian Premier League (IPL), here on Monday. The two sides bounced back after losing their opening fixtures with wins, albeit in contrasting

while the MS Dhoni-led CSK had it easy against Punjab Kings, the Royals scraped through against Delhi Capitals in the final over. Both teams would be eyeing a second win to give their campaign a boost.

CSK hit back superbly

after a chastening defeat to Capitals with Deepak Chahar putting his hand up with a four-wicket haul to break the back of the Punjab batting line-up, setting up a six-wicket victory. Skipper Dhoni would have been happy with the

bowlers' performance after they had been taken to the cleaners by Prithvi Shaw and Shikhar Dhawan in the opener.

Chahar, in particular, came up with a fine spell, which helped CSK restrict its opponent to a below par 106 which the batsmen down much trouble.

The Super Kings will expect Chahar to continue the good work while also hoping that Sam Curran, Shardul Thakur and the others also step up.
Also, South African pacer
Lungi Ngidi is out of quar-

more teeth to the CSK pace England all-rounder Moeen Ali was in the thick Live on TV

Chennai Super Kings vs Rajasthan Royals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD1

**HEAD to HEAD** 

Matches

CSK 14 RR

**FOR THE RECORD** Suresh Raina's 609 runs at an

average of 29.00 in 21 innings is the second most against Rajasthan in after AB de Villiers (648). Deepak Chahar who has claimed 48 wickets at an average of 25.10 in 45 innings needs just two wickets to

become the sixth bowler to complete to wickets for CSK. LAST YEAR'S MATCHES Rajasthan beat CSK by 16 runs at

Rajasthan beat CSK by 7 wickets at Abu Dhabi.

STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISER

of action in the win over Punjab and that should

please the CSK think-tank. He picked up a wicket with his off-spin and batted flu-Faf du Plessis made an

unbeaten 36 despite not being at his fluent best and would hope to build on the knock while the likes of Ruturaj Gaikwad and Ambati Rayudu need runs to get their confidence back. Suresh Raina's presence has certainly boosted the CSK batting unit and his form will be crucial in the long run. He will be keen to get a big score after returning to the IPL with a fifty. Dhoni didn't bat in the

game against Punjab.



Rajasthan Royals allrounder Chris Morris during a

## **ROTATING STRIKE CRUCIAL ON SLOW TRACKS, SAYS LAXMAN**

**Chennai, April 18:** Sunrisers Hyderabad mentor VVS Laxman rued that his batsmen could not rotate the strike when getting boundaries was tough against Mumbai Indians bowlers on a tough Chepuk wicket. Chasing a modest 151-run target, SRH could manage only 137 in 19.4 overs as their batsmen struggled to score runs in the middle overs on Saturday.

"That's (taking singles and twos) a very important skill especially on these kind of wickets because it is not easy to hit through the line. You can't rely on just boundaries and sixes,'

Laxman. "It's very important to keep the dot-ball percent-age low, and the only way you can do it is by manipulating the field by rotating the strike. That is one aspect of the game which is very important on these

"Unfortunately we were not able to do that especially when Rahul Chahar was bowling and even when

kind of wickets.

It's very important to keep the dot-ball percentage low, and the only way you can do it is by manipulating the field by rotating the strike.

— VVS LAXMAN SRH mentor

other fast bowlers were

bowling in the middle overs.

Laxman said as the ball

got old in the second half of the innings, playing aggressive was challenging. He also stressed the importance of using the powerplay. "The ball was just stopping on the wicket and it is two-paced. And also the spinners are extracting turn along with bounce. That is one of the aspects we definitely discussed. If you see the way Jonny Bairstow and David Warner capitalised on the powerplay, that will be very important going forward especially when you are playing on slow tracks.

## RCB make it three in three **SCORECARD**

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Virat Kohli c Tripathi b Varun 5, Devdutt Padikkal c Tripathi b Prasidh Krishna 25, Rajat Patidar b Varun 1, Glenn Maxwell c Harbhajan Singh b Cummins 78, AB de Villiers (not out) 76, Kyle Jamieson (not out) 11. Extras (nb 3, w 5) 8. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs) 204. FoW: 1-6, 2-9, 3-95, 4-148.

Bowling: Harbhajan 4-0-38-0, Varun Chakravarthy 4-0-39-2, Shakib Al Hasan 2-0-24-0, Pat Cummins 4-0-34-1, Prasidh Krishna 4-0-31-1, Andre Russell 2-0-38-

Kolkata Knight Riders: Nitish Rana c Padikkal b Chahal 18, Shubman Gill c sub (DT Christian) b Jamieson 21, Rahul Tripathi c Mohammed Siraj b Washington Sundar 25, Eoin Morgan c Kohli b Patel 29, Dinesh Karthik Ibw b Chahal 2, Shakib Al Hasan b Jamieson 26. Andre Russell b Patel 31. Pat Cummins c de Villiers b Jamieson 6. Harbhaian Singh (not out) 2. Varun Chakravarthy (not out) 2. Extras (w 4) 4. Total (for eight wickets in 20 overs) 166.

FoW: 1-23, 2-57, 3-66, 4-74, 5-114, 6-155, 7-161, 8-162. Bowling: Mohammed Siraj 3-0-17-0, Kyle Jamieson 3-0-41-3, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-34-2, Washington Sundar 4-0-33-1, Glenn Maxwell 2-0-24-0, Harshal Patel 4-0-17-2.

the second over. Opening the bowling for KKR, veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh bowled a tight line and length to sti-fle the RCB batsmen in his

After Chakravarthy lured Kohli to go over

cover with a tossed-up

first two overs.

delivery that drifted away from the right-hander, Rahul Tripathi pulled off a sensational catch running back from extracover. The top batsman was nowhere close to the

Chakravarthy then went through the defence of

Patidar with one that darted back on landing. Mixing aggression with

caution, Maxwell Devdutt Padikkal revived the RCB innings after the early blows. While the young Indian seemed content playing the second fiddle, the

swashbuckling Australian counter-attacked in fine fashion and played the big shots with consummate The in-form Maxwell upped the ante when he cleared his front leg to plonk Shakib Al Hasan

over long-on for his first maximum in the sixth The one bowled by Shakib turned out to be a productive over for RCB

as they got 17 runs off it. Morgan's decision to take out both take Chakravarthy and Harbhajan at a time when they were bowling well was baffling, but RCB didn't mind at all as they capitalised on the surprising

After reaching 45 for two at the end of the six powerplay overs, Maxwell shifted gears. — Agencies

move.

— Agencies