

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | TUESDAY | 20 APRIL 2021

WEATHER

Max: 37.1°C
Min: 23.8°C
RH: 34%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Rain likely in evening.
Max/Min temp. 38/25°C

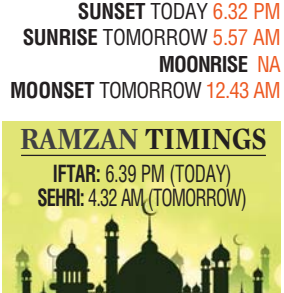
ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Ashtami till 12.39 am (Wednesday)
Star: Punarvasu till 6.51 am
Varjyam: 3.12 pm to 4.52 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.30 am to 9.20 am; 11.05 pm to 11.51 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Ramzan 7,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.54 am
Zohar: 12.25 pm
Asar: 4.39 pm
Maghrib: 6.39 pm
Isha: 7.48 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.32 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.57 AM
MOONRISE NA
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.43 AM

RAMZAN TIMINGS

IFTAR: 6.39 PM (TODAY)
SEHRI: 4.32 AM (TOMORROW)

COUNTER POINT



It is running late by 12 hours, doctor!

SHORT TAKES

UK PM cancels India tour again

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

India is red list country for UK

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

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HISTORY | CREATED

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

Giant leap: Copter flies on Mars

Cape Canaveral, Florida, April 19: Nasa's experimental helicopter Ingenuity rose into the thin air above the red surface of Mars on Monday, achieving the first powered flight by an aircraft on another planet. The triumph was hailed as a Wright Brothers moment. The mini 1.8-kilogram copter even carried a bit of wing fabric from the Wright Flyer that made similar history at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in 1903. “Altimeter data confirms that Ingenuity has performed its first flight, the first flight of a powered aircraft on another planet,” said the helicopter's chief pilot back on Earth, Havard

● To accomplish all this, the helicopter's twin, counter-rotating rotor blades needed to spin at 2,500 revolutions per minute — five times faster than on Earth. Grip, his voice breaking as his teammates erupted in applause. It was a brief hop — just 39 seconds — but accomplished all the major milestones. Project manager MiMi Aung was jubilant as she ripped up the papers holding the plan in case the flight had failed. “We've been talking so long about our Wright

Brothers mom-ent, and here it is,” she said. Flight controllers at Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California declared a success after receiving the data and images via the Perseverance rover. Ingenuity hitched a ride to Mars on Perseverance, clinging to the rover's belly upon their arrival in an ancient river delta in February. The \$85 million helicopter demo was considered a high risk, yet high reward. “Each world gets only one first flight,” Aung observed earlier this month. ■ Page 5: Tech takes a giant stride with 19-inch chopper

Nasa's experimental Mars helicopter Ingenuity (circled) lands on the surface of Mars on Monday. The little four-pound helicopter rose from the dusty red surface into the thin Martian air on Monday, achieving the first powered, controlled flight on another planet. — Nasa via AP

After inaugurating newly constructed Rythu Vedita, Rama Rao came down heavily on BJP state chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar. “Did Bandi Sanjay bring even a single rupee for the development of

Khammam are intelligent and they will vote for the TRS. “Development of Khammam is fast-paced and spread over to all four sides. The people know about this and the projects that were executed in the town had become a topic of discussion among the citizens.” Lawyer Vasantha Laxmi filed her nominations for the 20th ward two days ago. She did so without any fanfare. There was no rally and no procession. As such, the statement of the

minister on his wife's contest surprised TRS leaders in Khammam. It is recalled that Khammam Mayor post was reserved for general women and the TRS leadership had promised to give the post to a Kamma. Meanwhile, the programmes for the minister's birthday celebrations organised by Khammam Poura Seva Samithi led by TRS leader P Prasad were cancelled after a word from Ajay on Monday. Ajay Kumar may have felt embarrassed.

WORLD | 5

Russia forced to take Navalny to hospital

SPORTS | 8

Murali discharged after angioplasty

TABLOID

Non sexual affair is cheating too

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

CM KCR tests Covid+, has mild symptoms

Being treated at farmhouse; advised home isolation for 9 days

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has been tested positive for Covid-19. Chief secretary Somesh Kumar said the CM has been advised isolation and he would remain at his farmhouse for a few days. Chandrashekar Rao had mild symptoms, following which he had undergone Covid-19 tests. A team of doctors is monitoring the CM's health. His health condition is normal and there was no fever on Monday.

Dr M.V. Rao, the CM's personal doctor, said, “We have conducted antigen test as well as RT-PCR test. The results were positive. He has only mild symptoms. Home isolation will suffice. We have advised KCR to remain in home isolation for nine days.”

Dr M.V. Rao said the tests conducted on the personal staff of the CM have come negative. The CM

Manmohan Singh tests Covid positive

New Delhi, April 19: Former prime minister Manmohan Singh tested positive for Covid-19 and was admitted to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here with a mild fever on Monday afternoon.

Singh, 88, has been admitted to the AIIMS trauma centre, which is a dedicated Covid facility, sources said, adding his condition is stable. They said Singh had a mild fever in the morning and later tested positive for Covid-19. The doctors are monitoring his condition. Singh had taken both the doses of Covid vaccine.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, and several other leaders wished the former prime minister a speedy recovery. — PTI

TS ignores HC, omits key figures

COVID TAKES DEEP ROOTS IN HYD

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

On Monday, the Telangana health department, and the state government, yet again received an earful from the Telangana High Court over Covid-19 management. Earlier in the day, however, the health department tweaked its daily Covid-19 bulletin yet again, this time removing the information on the number of Covid-19 patients advised

to be in isolation. This is not the first time that the health department has made changes to the bulletin, or the information provided in it, or the

made his last public appearance on April 14, at a public meeting in Halia to campaign for the TRS candidate in the Nagarjunasagar Assembly bypoll. After the public meeting, the Chief Minister pro-

ceeded to Pragathi Bhavan. He stayed there till April 16 and went to his farmhouse on April 17. The Chief Minister complained of uneasiness on Monday, after which the tests were done.

Two more CMs tested positive for Covid so far — B.S. Yediyurappa (Karnataka), Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh).

■ Page 2: Private players free to fix jab price

■ Page 2: Isolated Covid patients roaming freely

■ Page 2: Covid curbs in GHMC area likely soon

■ Page 2: Freeze on tariff hike costs ₹30,000 cr

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OTHER STORIES

PATIENTS CAN NOW BUY REMDESIVIR DIRECTLY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

The announcement that, beginning Monday, patients requiring remdesivir injections as part of their Covid-19 treatment can purchase the drug directly from the office of the Drug Controller, resulted in long queues with people lining up right from midnight of Sunday, soon after the health minister's announcement, made the rounds.

Hundreds of people lined up at the Drug Controller's office in Kukatpally in the hope of getting the prescribed doses of the injection but had to wait for hours in the hot sun as the staff at the outlet said they were expecting fresh stocks to arrive.

It may be recalled that health minister Etala Rajendar had on Sunday announced that in a bid to make remdesivir easily available for patients admitted in private hospitals, direct sales would begin on Monday.

BANDI SANJAY GEARS UP FOR MUNICIPAL POLLS

IREDDY SRINIVAS
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

BJP leaders, including state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar, are gearing up for the forthcoming municipal elections to show that the party does matter in Telangana.

Party leaders of Mahbubnagar, Nalgonda, Warangal, Khammam and Siddipet have drawn up a strategic plan to win majority seats in corporations and municipalities in their districts.

Sanjay is mainly focusing on Warangal, the second major city in the state. He has been touring various divisions and making aggressive speeches against the TRS. He claims that Warangal has developed with funds from the Centre and not the state. He has been pointing out that Kakatiya Medical College developed after the Centre released ₹120 crore, whereas the state government has not yet allocated its share. He is specifically targeting minister K.T. Rama Rao on development issues and past promises.

BJP vice-president and D.K. Aruna is concentrating on the Jadcherla municipality, in the erstwhile Mahbubnagar district. She has been touring the town regularly. An aspirant for the chairperson's post, Kalpana, quit the ruling party and joined the BJP in Aruna's presence.

In Khammam Municipal Corporation, senior district leaders Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy, in-charge of election Chinthala Ramachandra Reddy and others are working to win the maximum seats. The Jana Sena and BJP have entered into an alliance to fight and win the corporation together. At Nakrekal in Nalgonda district, party senior leaders Premender Reddy, S. Venkateswar Rao and other leaders are working to get a majority of seats. Siddipet is turning out to be a hot contest between the TRS and the BJP. Last November, BJP leader Raghunandan Rao won a surprise victory in the Dubbak bypoll and created history in state politics. The trouble-shooter for the TRS here is finance minister T. Harish Rao, who has taken charge of municipal elections in Siddipet, which falls in its constituency. Local leaders of Siddipet say the fight here is not between BJP and TRS but Harish Rao and Raghunandan Rao.

BJP TO PROBE LEADERS' MEET WITH KTR

Hyderabad: The BJP state leadership has constituted a committee under the leadership of former MLA Yendala Lakshminarayana to inquire into some party leaders meeting with TRS working president and minister K.T. Rama Rao without prior permission from the party high command, and take disciplinary action against the leaders. Last Friday, former MLC N. Ramchander Rao, senior leader Perala Shekar Rao along with the family members of Ramesh Goud, the deceased corporator-elect of the BJP, met Rama Rao at Pragathi Bhavan. They requested that the TRS pull out of the bypoll at the Lingojiguda GHMC ward, from where the BJP is fielding a family member of Ramesh Goud.

HC: IS PUBLIC HEALTH NOT IMPORTANT TO GOVT?

HC issues directions to state govt regarding strict implementation of Covid norms

From Page 1

But, at the same time, we don't want the situation in Telangana state to be like in many states like Delhi, Maharashtra and etc, where curfews and lockdowns were imposed. If the state government is not going to take a call to reduce footfalls at public places, then the court will take a call."

The bench was dealing with PILs seeking directions to the government for steps to contain the spread of Covid-19 and treatment of infected patients.

On April 10, the court had specifically directed the government to furnish circulars issued to enforce the provisions of the Disaster Management Act and Epidemics Act.

The government only furnished a circular it had issued for imposing a fine against those who were not wearing masks, and submitted that all other standard operating procedures issued by the Centre in November 2020 during Unlock-6 were being followed.

Advocate-General B.S. Prasad said the government was monitoring the situation by the minute.

Irked by a lack of crucial information about the availability of oxygen beds and ICU beds for Covid patients, in the report submitted by the public health department, Chief Justice Hima Kohli had asked for the presence of the health secretary and the director of public health in the court. They appeared in the virtual mode in the post-lunch session.

The bench grilled them for not furnishing the data and details it had asked for, and sought to know the minute details of the steps that were taken to contain the second wave.

Reacting to the submissions that the government was following the SOPs issued by the Centre, the court asked whether the situation now was like November last year. When the positive cases were escalating, does the state not have the power to take adequate steps, it asked.

The court also checked the website of the health department and the hyperlink of the beds status details in each notified Covid hospital, to cross-check the contentions of the officers.

The officers said the government was closely monitoring the situation. The court pointed out many flaws in the daily media bulletin which showed fewer cases as compared to the district-level reports.

"What is the state going to make of the public of the Telangana state? Sitting

THE COURT ISSUED THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT

● Occupancy rate in cinema halls should be 50 per cent or even 1/3rd of the hall capacity depending upon the situation.

● Tabulated statement showing number of tests conducted for the last one week through RT-PCR, RAT etc.

● Steps be taken to monitor cases at airports, railway stations, inter-state bus terminals.

● A decision on putting a curb on the passengers coming from neighbouring states.

● A decision to be taken by the government to impose night curfew or partial lockdown during the week-ends in the state and the districts where the cases are more.

● Directions to be issued to the Kumbh Mela returnees to get themselves tested, quarantined etc.

● The next status report should be filed within two days and PILs have been adjourned to April 23.

ducks!," the court said.

"Sorry for being tough with the government, as this is a question of life and death of the citizens. Your monitoring is not good enough. The state government perhaps expects of the High Court to do the R&D work for the state. The state has left it to us to collate and tabulate the entire data sought for, and we take strong exception to the report filed by it. The report is beautifully silent on the number of issues and details sought by the court," observed Chief Justice Hima Kohli.

Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy asked whether the revenues and finances are more important to the government than public health. "Why delay in imposing restrictions when the cases are largely increasing? How are the hospitals asking for positive reports from the patients who deserve to be in hospitals? Your report only says that 84 per cent of the cases are asymptomatic. Then how they are compelled for a positive report?"



Amid steep rise in Covid cases, people stand in queue at Fever Hospital to get tested without maintaining social distance on Sunday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Covid patients roaming freely, not in isolation

From Page 1

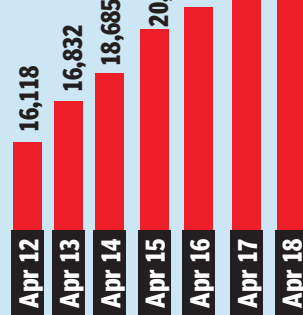
With each passing day, with the Covid-19 cases increasing by leaps and bounds, the number of people, who are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic and need to be in quarantine is rising.

However, there are increasing reports from all districts that such Covid-19 patients are not following the official 'advise' to stay put at home unless they require hospitalisation.

The government on its part had already declared that it will not set up containment zones and will only have 'micro-containment' — a house or a housing complex with cases — with advice to the residents to stay put inside.

It is to avoid questions on what is being done to keep such persons in strict isolation that the data on the number of people in isolation was removed from the bulletin, it was learnt.

ISOLATION CASES ON THE RISE



Curbs likely in GHMC area

From Page 1

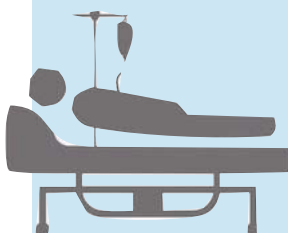
Following the PM's advice, 15 states have imposed restrictions such as night curfew, weekend lockdown, partial lockdown etc. However, the TS government did not impose any restrictions on the ground that the Covid situation was not as alarming as in other states.

Health minister Etala Rajendar, who visited MGM Hospital in Warangal on Monday, also stated that, "There are no plans to impose any restrictions or lockdown in Telangana. The situation is not that serious in Telangana that warrants lockdown."

However, official sources said the state government may consider imposing

restrictions on hotels, bars, pubs, cinema theatres, shopping malls under the GHMC limits and major cities following the serious observations made by HC on Monday directing state government to take a call within 48 hours whether it plans to impose night curfew or weekend lockdown to curb Covid-19. But the government has no plans to impose restrictions or lockdown unlike other states until the municipal polls are completed on April 30. In the recently concluded Budget session of the Legislature in March, the CM had categorically stated in the Legislative Assembly that the state government will not impose lockdown in the state as it will hit all the sections of society financially.

DATE	IN HOSPITAL
April 9	6,926
April 10	6,818
April 1	7,433
April 1	8,013
April 13	8,567
April 14	9,176
April 15	10,279
April 16	13,396
April 17	12,881
April 18	14,061



PATIENTS ADMITTED IN HOSPS ZOOMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

The Hyderabad district, which forms a major portion of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area, for the second day running reported more than 700 new Covid-19 cases.

The GHMC area, according to the department, had 705 cases on Sunday, down from 743 on Saturday.

The state health department said Telangana state had 4,009 fresh Corona-virus infection cases on Sunday, down from 5,093 on Saturday.

The fall in numbers has little to do with the reduction in infections but more to do with the fewer tests the state conducted, in what has now become a standard feature over week-ends.

The total tests on Sunday fell steeply to 83,089 from 1,29,637 the previous day.

This did not have any impact on the number of people who died from Covid-19 with the department reporting yet another day of double-digit deaths.

Fourteen persons died from the disease in the state on Sunday, the bulletin said.

The overall Covid-19 toll in the state is 1,838, and the case-load stands at 3,55,433.

Following the GHMC in the number of cases were Medchal-Malkajgiri with 363, Nizamabad with 360, Ranga Reddy with 336, Sangareddy with 264 cases.

Six other districts — Kamareddy, Karimnagar, Khammam, Mahbubnagar, Mancherial, Siddipet, Warangal Urban, and Jagtial — reported more than 100 cases each.

The department said 1,878 people were declared recovered on Sunday, even as it listed 39,154 people as 'active cases', that is suffering from Covid-19 disease in the state as on Sunday evening.

Leaders wish CM speedy recovery

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Leaders cutting across party lines besides prominent personalities from various fields prayed for Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's speedy recovery after he was tested positive for

Covid-19 on Monday. Reactions poured in from various quarters wishing CM a speedy recovery.

Several leaders took to Twitter to share their 'get-well soon' messages. Governor Tamilisai Soondararajan led the state in expressing concern.



Concerned to hear that Hon'ble CM Shri KCR garu tested Covid-19 positive. I wish him a very speedy recovery and my prayers for him to Get Well Soon.

— Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan Governor

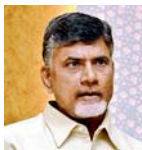
Saddened by the news of Telangana CM KCR testing positive for Covid-19. I pray for the swift recovery of CM KCR.

— Bandi Sanjay, BJP TS president



Wishing speedy recovery to KCR garu from Covid-19.

— Dr K Laxman, BJP OBC Morcha president



Wishing KCR Garu a speedy recovery from Covid-19. My prayers are with him. Get well soon.

— N. Chandrababu Naidu, TD chief

Though our beloved leader, CM Sir KCR garu tested positive for Covid, he is being well taken care of. We all are with him and a team of doctors are monitoring the situation. Most importantly, he has all your prayers with him. We know he's such a warrior and can come out of this.

— J. Santosh Kumar, Rajya Sabha member



Wish CM KCR speedy recovery. The 2nd wave this summer is even more dangerous, we need to be very very careful and even more responsible. Those who tested positive please self isolate for minimum 15 days.

— Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, Former MP

Hoping for the speedy recovery of Telangana CM. I pray to Allah that he grant shifa to him and the millions across our country who are suffering due to the pandemic. May Allah also give courage and patience to their families and caregivers

— Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM chief



"Hon'ble CM KCR garu has tested positive for Covid with mild symptoms. He is currently isolated & being monitored by doctors. Been receiving a lot of messages with concern for his well-being. He is a gritty man & a fighter. Am sure he will recover soon with all of your prayers.(sic)"

— K.T. Rama Rao, CM's son, IT minister

CM KCR garu was tested Covid positive with mild symptoms. As per doctors advice, he is undergoing treatment under home isolation. I pray for his speedy recovery with the blessings of God and people.

— K. Kavitha, CM's daughter, MLC



I wish CM KCR a speedy recovery. This shows the gravity of corona situation in Telangana yet again. AICC chief Sonia Gandhi ji recently advised Centre to lower vaccine age eligibility to 25 years. The Centre and state governments should immediately implement this suggestion to curb Covid.

— V. Hanumantha Rao, Senior Congress leader

Wishing Telangana CM KCR garu speedy recovery and good health.

— A. Revanth Reddy, TS Congress working president



"Get well soon KCR Saheb. Wishing you a speedy recovery from Covid-19."

— Mohd Mahmood Ali, Home minister

Tariff hike freeze costs ₹30k-cr

From Page 1

Though discoms are seeking a tariff revision for the last three years, the government kept the proposals on hold in view of the series of elections in the state since 2018.

With no tariff revision for the last six years, the discoms' losses have mounted to nearly ₹35,000 crore and this is likely to touch ₹50,000 crore by the end of the fiscal 2021-22. All the elections in Telangana will be over by April 30 and there will be no voting in normal course until the 2023 December assembly polls.

Neighbouring Andhra Pradesh had hiked power charges in April 2020.

The TS discoms filed the last ARRs for

2018-19 without proposing any tariff revision.

Generally, the discoms are mandated to file ARRs by November-end every fiscal to fix power tariffs for subsequent fiscal. But the state government did not give its nod for a power tariff hike.

Official sources in the energy department said, "We have readied ARRs and sought the state government's approval. We expect to get the government's approval in a week. We plan to file ARRs on April 30."

When asked about the quantum of hike proposed for power charges, the sources refused to divulge details but said a power tariff hike is imminent for all categories.

POLICE RESCUE 2 DEER FROM POACHERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, APRIL 19

Professional poachers and traditional hunters have become active with the rise in temperatures and the water bodies being on the verge of drying up in the old Adilabad district.

Two days ago, police rescued two deer and a peacock in captivity from the poachers on the outskirts of the Old Savli village in the Kubheer mandal in Nirmal district.

The poachers had set up traps at water bodies to catch animals coming in from the forests to quench their thirst. The police handed over the rescued deer and peacock to the forest officials. The poachers were arrested and remanded to judicial custody.

According to sources, poachers are active in the forests including the Kawal Tiger Reserve area and many of these are traditional hunters who kill forest animals and sell their meat to make a living for themselves and their families.

The traditional hunters kill wild boars and sell their meat in the villages but they never kill the wild animals. These traditional hunters kill wild boars and trap birds.

Professional hunters kill tigers and leopards for their skin and nails since there is good demand for these in the international market.

On the other hand, a migrated tiger killed two cows in the Agharguda forest area in Penchikaplet mandal in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district on April 18.

PRIVATE PLAYERS FREE TO SET JOB PRICE

From Page 1

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

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

The government will allow the imported ready-to-use vaccines to be utilised in the private sector and state facilities. Centre, from its share, will allocate vaccines to states/UTs based on the criteria of extent of infection (number of active Covid cases) and performance (speed of administration).

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

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

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

OTHER STORIES

WATER SUPPLIED FROM MMD IS POLLUTED: CONG

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 19

Senior Congress leader and MLC T. Jeevan Reddy has accused the TRS government of supplying polluted water to people of Sircilla, Vemulawada, Choppadandi and Karimnagar constituencies since the past one month without taking any corrective measures.

Speaking to media at the Press Bhavan in Karimnagar on Monday, Jeevan Reddy said the colour of water being supplied to these constituencies from Mid Manair Dam (MMD) under Mission Bhagiratha has changed. This has happened because MMD water had been supplied to Ranganayaka Sagar in Siddipet until the dam reached its dead storage level.

Water now being supplied to 500 villages in Sircilla, Vemulawada and Choppadandi constituencies, in addition to Karimnagar Municipal Corporation, is being pumped from MMD's dead storage containing decomposed organic materials. This is the reason why colour of the water has changed, the MLC pointed out.

He wondered why minister K.T. Rama Rao, who has been elected from Sircilla, has not reacted, though polluted water is being supplied to his own constituency. "It is very unfortunate that people have elected such kind of politicians," he remarked.

Jeevan Reddy demanded that the government take immediate steps to supply water from Yellampalli reservoir to MMD. The water thus supplied must be filtered en route, he added.

55 NOMINATIONS REJECTED FOR WARANGAL POLL

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, APRIL 19

A total of 1,710 nominations were accepted and 55 were rejected in all the 66 divisions of the GWMC, which goes to polls on April 30, after scrutiny on Monday.

The number of candidates in the fray is 1,066. It may be noted here that in all, the election authorities had received 1,765 nominations. Of the 1,710 valid nominations, 688 candidates belong to the ruling TRS; followed by 410 independents, BJP's 286, Congress' 240, Telugu Desam's 19, CPM's 12, YSRCP's two and CPI's one.

The candidates can withdraw their nominations until 3 pm on April 22. The final list of contesting candidates will be announced on the same day.

Election observer Christina Z. Chongthu inspected the scrutiny process on Monday at the Arts and Science College and LB College.

TS villages on Maha border see surge in Covid-19 cases

Due to business, family relations, people regularly visit Maharashtra

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD/KAMAREDDY, APRIL 19.

Telangana - Maharashtra border sees the highest number of Covid-19 cases in the last few days. Villages on the interstate border and Bodhan town, which is 10 km away from Maharashtra, is struggling hard with the spread of Covid-19. People in large numbers infected with the virus and few of them had lost their lives too.

There is a surge in Covid-19 cases in the neighbouring Nanded district of Maharashtra state during the second wave of the pandemic. Due to business and family relations, people at border villages regularly visit Maharashtra and Telangana. The infrastructure is not sufficient to trace and treat the Covid-19 patients at interstate borders.

As a result, vehicular traffic and people's movement is as usual at the interstate borders at Madnour, Salura, Khandgoan, Pothangal in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts. Skeleton staff of the medical and health department are randomly checking the Covid-19 suspects at interstate borders. They have been conducting thermal checking and, in a few cases, carrying rapid antigen tests.

However, Bodhan town has witnessed a large number of Covid-19 cases. Beds in Government area hospital are full for the last few days and Covid-19 patients are forced to stay at the Amdapur isolation centre or in homes. The district administration accorded permission for 5

Covid vax is 100% safe, ignore myths: Gangula

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 19

Do not believe any myths about Covid-19 vaccination as it is 100 percent safe and protects people from being infected with coronavirus, said the Minister of BC welfare, Gangula Kamalakar.

The minister inspected a vaccination centre at RTC workshop hospital and enquired from the doctors about the vaccination process before administering the first dose here on Monday.

Kamalakar urged health officials to keep the vaccination ready and also ensure that all facilities are in place at the vaccination centre.

In view of the rapid spread of the Covid-19, people who are eligible must take vaccines without fail, he said.

The minister appealed to the people not to be

careless even after taking the vaccine. They have to continue following the Covid guidelines, the minister said.

As scientists have said that the virus is spreading through air, people should be alert when they come out of their homes.

private hospitals in Bodhan to treat the Covid-19 patients, but it is also not catering the needs. District collector C. Narayana Reddy visited Bodhan area hospital on Monday and inquired about Covid-19 services. In view of the alarming situation at Telangana-Maharashtra border, the collector said that the number of beds in Bodhan hospital will be increased. He also said that the Covid-19 centres will be set up in Varni and Renjal mandal headquarters.



BC welfare minister, Gangula Kamalakar takes the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine here at the RTC workshop hospital in Karimnagar on Monday.

—DC

division level control rooms. District level control room contact number is 0862 220183.

Nizamabad division control room 8309219718, Bodhan division 08467222001 and Armoor division 08463295050.

District collector C. Narayana Reddy visited Covid-19 control room and inquired about calls and arrangements.

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Political leaders ire over poor Covid treatment at RIMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, APRIL 19

BJP, Congress, and TRS leaders expressed displeasure over the poor treatment and atrocious facilities provided to Covid patients at the Covid ward in Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), here.

Adilabad in-charge DCC Sajid Khan alleged that there was a shortage of oxygen supply and many patients were not provided oxygen, which is essential for Covid patients with respiratory problems.

He demanded the state government to supply oxygen cylinders or he would get empty cylinders filled up with his money. He said many empty oxygen cylinders were lying in the premises of RIMS.

Adilabad MP Soyam Bapurao held a meeting with RIMS director Bhanoth Balamra Naik and DMHO Dr Narender Rathod and other staff on Monday and reviewed the treatment being provided to Covid patients.

Bapurao expressed displeasure over the poor treatment and said patients are suffering though the Union Government is spending thousands of crores to control the epidemic. He alleged that remdesivir injection is being diverted from RIMS and being used for influential people and VIPs, which was denying proper treatment to the patients



Minister, Soyam Bapurao, takes second dose of Covid vaccine at RIMS, Adilabad on Monday.

● **BAPURAO ALLEGED** that remdesivir injection is being diverted from RIMS and being used for influential people and VIPs, which was denying proper treatment to the patients undergoing treatment at RIMS. He said officials should take responsibility for maintaining stocks of emergency medicines and details of their usage.

undergoing treatment at RIMS. He said officials should take responsibility for maintaining stocks of emergency medicines and details of their usage. Two days ago, Adilabad MLA Joga Ramanna also inspected the Covid ward at RIMS and expressed his displeasure over the poor maintenance of the ward and raised doubts about the treatment being given to Covid patients.



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F.No. NHIDCL/2(8)/Rectt Fin & HR/2021/HR

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dy. General Manager (HR)

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Rebel trouble brews in TRS

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, APRIL 19

While the ruling TRS party seems to be confident of winning the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC) for the second term, dealing with rebel candidates seems to be the actual challenge ahead. The fact that 706 nominations filed for the 66 divisions by the TRS aspirants alone indicates how much fierce the competition for the party ticket is, within.

Two or more aspirants from each division intend to run for the election on the party ticket. Choosing the right candidates from

the lot seems a herculean task. The biggest worry comes in the form of leaders who sense that they would not receive the party ticket and are making arrangements to contest independently.

The election strategy is being implemented by ministers Errabelli Dayakar Rao, Satyavathi Rathod, Planning Commission vice-president Boinapalli Vinod Kumar, TRS erstwhile district in-charge Gyadhari Balamallu and election in-charge Bontu Rammohan.

The selection process of the candidates is being carried out on the basis of the aspirants

winning chances. MLAs Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar, Nannapuneni Narender, Aruri Ramesh, Challa Dharma Reddy and T. Rajaiah are conducting the selection of candidates. Surveys were conducted from time to time to give a chance to those who are popular among the people.

Barring a couple, none of the sitting corporators is going to be chosen for a consecutive term. It is evident from the fact that half of them did not even file their nominations. The party is looking to avoid those who are involved in controversies, especially land-related.

Farmers flay officials over NGH project

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, APRIL 19

Monday's public hearing of environment issues on the National Greenfield Highway Project from Khammam to Devarapalli witnessed heated arguments between farmers and officials. The farmers complained to environment members that officials were executing the project by violating all rules with regard to acquiring lands that had horticulture and other crops.

The public hearing was held amidst tight security in Government Junior College at Kallur and the farmers and revenue staff came from ten mandals, including Penuballi, Tallada, Kallur, Sattupalli, Bonakal, Wyra, Chintakani, Khammam Urban and Rural and Konigerla.

Central environment department officer P.V. Ravi Sankar heard the arguments of both sides.

A female farmer Sridevi said that land acquisition was wrong from the beginning because of project director Durga Prasada Rao.

"The official submitted

haphazard reports pertaining to land acquisition for the National Greenfield Highway", she said.

Many farmers urged the environment officer to lay a road on the existing one. Farmer advocate Rajasekhar said that land acquisition will be very less if the road was laid on the existing route.

"Thousands of trees, horticulture crops in 300 acres and various structures will be out of sight. Environment will be hit badly", he said.

The farmers submitted hundreds of written complaints against the project that was creating hazards for farmers.

SHORT TAKES

EX-MINISTER SUCCUMBS TO COVID IN BIHAR

NAYYAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, APRIL 19

Former Bihar education minister and JD(U) MLA Mewalal Chaudhary passed away on Monday due to Covid-19 complications. Party sources said Chaudhary had tested positive for Covid-19 a week earlier and was being treated at a private hospital in Patna where he succumbed to the viral infection.

Mewalal Chaudhary was the sitting JD(U) MLA from Tarapur constituency. He was among the 14 ministers who were sworn in on November 16, 2020, as part of Nitish Kumar cabinet. He was allocated education portfolio.

However, he had to resign from the post three days after his oath following allegations from the RJD-led opposition over corruption charges against him. Describing the deceased legislator as a “distinguished educationist, politician and social worker” Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in a statement said “his death was an irreparable loss for the education sector and politics. His last rites will be performed with full state honours”.

Leader of the opposition Tejashwi Yadav, HAM Chief Jitan Ram Manjhi and several other NDA leaders were among those who also condoled Chaudhary’s demise on Monday.

Concerned over the unprecedented rise in Covid cases in the last few days, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday had announced night curfew and other restrictions in the state to control the surge in infection.

MANTRI FEARS COMMUNITY SPREAD IN C’GARH

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, APRIL 19

Chhattisgarh health minister T.S. Singhdeo on Monday indicated that the state may have entered the phase of community spread of the virus.

Singhdeo told reporters here that in many Coronavirus positive cases, sources of infections could not be found; indicating that community spread of the virus may have begun in the state.

Source of infection is tapped through contact tracing. He said the threat of community spread of the virus usually increased when the rate of infection grew by five per cent. “But, in some districts the rate of infection has been found to be more than 30 per cent, while in some other districts it was even more than 50 per cent. Hence, the chances of community spreading appeared real in these districts”, he added.

Singhdeo predicted that the active cases in the state may increase to 1.5 lakh to two lakhs from the current 1,28,019 by the end of this month.

“We need to be more careful”, he added.

WEARING TWO TIGHT-FIT MASKS IS SAFER: STUDY

New Delhi, April 19: Wearing two tightly-fitted face masks can nearly double the effectiveness of filtering out SARS-CoV-2-sized particles, preventing them from reaching the wearer’s nose and mouth and causing Covid-19, according to a study.

The research, published in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine, shows that the reason for the enhanced filtration is not so much adding layers of cloth, but eliminating any gaps or poor-fitting areas of a mask.

“The medical procedure masks are designed to have very good filtration potential based on their material, but the way they fit our faces isn’t perfect,” said Emily Sickbert-Bennett, an associate professor at the University of North Carolina (UNC) in the US, and lead author of the study.

To test the fitted filtration efficiency (FFE) of a range of masks, the team filled a 10-foot by 10-foot stainless-steel exposure chamber with small salt particle aerosols.

The researchers wore a combination of masks to test how effective they were at keeping particles out of their breathing space.

Each individual mask or layered mask combination was fitted with a metal sample port attached to tubing in the exposure chamber that measured the concentration of particles entering the breathing space underneath the researcher’s mask.



Family members mourn the death of Covid-19 victim at a mortuary, amid rise in Covid cases across the country, in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

Delhi locks down for 6 days as cases continue to surge

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

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

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

Thousands of guest workers gathered at the city’s inter-state bus terminals and railway stations to return home even though Kejriwal appealed to them with folded hands not to leave Delhi and gave a word of assurance — “*main hoon na*” (I am here for you). Addressing an online press conference, Kejriwal sought to assure the guest workers by saying that this short period of lockdown would not be extended. “I have full faith that this short period of lockdown would not be extended. We might not

Meghalaya bans entry of tourists to curb spread

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, APRIL 19

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

Assam, which is also the gateway of northeast, has already announced that Covid-negative certificates from other states will not be valid to enter the state and people will have to undergo tests upon arrival at airports and

railway stations.

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

Meanwhile Assam’s Covid-19 tally mounted to 2,24,455 as 639 more people tested positive for the infection, while six fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,135.

have to extend it. Trust me that if we fight this together, we would be able to overcome this. I assure you, the government will take full care of you. I am here, have faith in me,” he said. The Chief Minister said that the national capital’s health system is tremendously stretched although it has not col-

lapsed yet, and added that despite around 25,500 cases coming up every day, it is still functioning.

But any system has its limit, he said, assuring that the lockdown is needed to prevent the health system of Delhi from collapsing under the increasing number of patients as there is an acute shortage

of medicines, beds, ICUs and oxygen. “If we do not impose a lockdown now, we might face a tragedy. We do not want Delhi to face such a situation wherein patients are lying on the corridors or losing their life on the streets at any cost,” he said.

Noting that the decision of imposing new restric-

tions was not an easy one, Kejriwal said that he has been strictly against a lockdown even as it becomes crucial only after the health system of the city reaches its limit. This ensures that the number of patients reduces and the health system revives, the Chief Minister said.

Essential services will be allowed during the lockdown. In its order, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority said during the curfew, up to 50 people will be permitted to attend a wedding, but they will have to show soft or hard copy of the marriage card. For funerals, 20 people will be allowed to attend.

Private offices and other establishments such as shops, malls, weekly markets, manufacturing units, educational and coaching institutes, cinema halls, restaurants, bars, assembly halls, auditoriums, public parks, sport complexes, gyms, spas, barber shops, saloons and beauty parlours will remain closed.

In the order, the DDMA said that swimming pools (except those being used for training of sportspersons for participation in national and international events), construction activities (except where labourers are residing onsite) will also remain shut. — PTI

Odisha announces weekend shutdowns

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 19

Odisha government on Monday announced weekend shutdowns on Saturdays and Sundays in all the urban areas in the state in view of the unprecedented rise in Covid-19 cases.

“In view of the rapid increase in the Covid-19 cases in the state, the government announced weekend shutdowns on Saturdays and Sundays. Besides, the government appeals to people to main-

tain social distance, wear masks and use sanitiser,” Special Relief Commissioner P.K. Jena said on Monday evening.

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

Meanwhile, as reports of shortage and black marketing of important Covid-19 medicines and medical supplies, includ-

ing Remdesivir, began to pour in from various parts of the state, the Odisha government constituted a state-level Committee to ensure that such issues do not crop up here. The Committee is headed by Crime Branch ADG Yashwant Jethwa. The committee, formed on Sunday evening, on Monday discussed several issues with Controller of Drugs.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, Jethwa said that teams of flying squads, surveillance teams and surprise

checking teams from the enforcement wing of Drug Controller, Police, Special Task Force of Crime Branch will be part of Joint Enforcement squad which will carry out special drives across the state.

“We have constituted 7 flying squads for Cuttack and Bhubaneswar and 15 squads for remaining parts of Odisha. Our focus will be on the Twin City which is the entry point for all drugs and medicines and its distribution,” said Jethwa.

According to Jethwa, the 15 other squads will con-

duct intensive drives in Berhampur, Rourkela, Sambalpur, Balasore, Bargarh and other important urban centres in the state.

Jethwa stated that the entire supply chain, from manufacturers to agents and even clients, will be verified. The movement of medicines and other essential supplies in the chain will be tracked and monitored.

The state on Monday reported its highest ever single-day tally of 4,445 cases even as four persons succumbed to the disease.

HC orders lockdown in five UP cities

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

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

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

“We are of the considered view that in given scenario of present time if people are restrained from going outside their homes for a week in the first instance, the current chain of spread of Covid infection can be broken and this will also give some respite to the frontline medical and health workers,” the bench observed.

Accordingly, we are passing the directions in respect of cities of Prayagraj (Allahabad), Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur Nagar and

Gorakhpur and we direct the government to strictly enforce them forthwith,” it said.

“All establishments be it government or private, except financial institutions and financial departments, medical and health services, industrial and scientific establishments, essential services including municipal functions, and public transport, shall remain closed till 26th April, 2021. The judiciary will, however, function on its own discretion,” the bench said. The state has witnessed a spurt in Coronavirus cases over the past few weeks.

Responding to the order, Uttar Pradesh Additional Chief Secretary, Information, Navneet Sehgal said strict curbs are necessary to control the spread of the virus and that the government has taken several steps in that direction.

However, he said, alongside saving lives, protecting livelihoods is also important. “Therefore, there will be no complete lockdown in the cities for now. People are automatically closing many places,” he said. He did not say whether the government intends to move the Supreme Court against the HC order. — PTI

Kerala imposes night curfew

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
APRIL 19

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

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

All shops and business establishments barring essential services will have to shut shop by 9 pm daily.

The meeting decided to intensify checking by police at main junctions, market places, commercial centres, city centres and major roads to enforce the restriction strictly and take action against the violators.

The cinema theatres will wind up shows by 7 pm, strict restrictions have been imposed on shopping malls and the entry of people would be restricted, all private tuition centres have been directed to close down their establishments and conduct online tuition classes. The government offices and private establishments have been directed to put in place “work from home arrangement” till the situation comes under control.

Though the public and private transportation have not been taken off the roads, they will have to strictly comply with the Covid safety norms while operating services.

● **CINEMA THEATRES** will wind up shows by 7 pm, strict restrictions have been imposed on shopping malls and the entry of people would be restricted, all private tuition centres have been directed to close down.

The government decided to allow the cultural extravaganza Thrissur pooram without the usual pomp and show.

It will be a low key affair this time with the main pooram venue being kept out of bounds for the masses that normally throng the Swaraj round and Vadakkumathan temple premises to take part in the cultural festivities.

There will be a sample fire display and exhibition. Only the organisers will be allowed to enter the main venue of the festival.

Meanwhile Kerala recorded 13,644 new cases of Covid-19 on Monday taking the total number of active cases to 1,03,004. During the last 24,87,275 samples were tested and the test positivity rate was recorded at 15.63. The state also reported 21 deaths on Monday taking the death toll to 4,950.

Of the new cases 12,550 contracted the infection through contact, 38 are health workers and 230 came from abroad. The highest number of cases were reported from Kozhikode — 2,022 followed by Ernakulam 1,781, Malappuram 1,661.

At present 2.48 lakh people are under observation across the state including 2.47 lakh under home/institutional quarantine.

CORONAVIRUS | SCARE

Prevalence of shortness of breath is slightly higher in the second wave of Covid-19

Over 70 pc of Covid patients above 40 yrs in both waves

New Delhi, April 19: More than 70 per cent of Covid-19 patients over 40 years of age in both the waves and older population continues to be more vulnerable to the infection, the Centre said on Monday.

Addressing media, ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said there is no difference in deaths between first and second wave among hospitalised patients, while the oxygen requirement is higher in second wave and ventilator requirement is not higher in the second wave.

Prevalence of shortness

● **ICMR DIRECTOR** General said there is no difference in deaths between first and second wave among hospitalised patients, while the oxygen requirement is higher in second wave and ventilator requirement is not higher in the second wave.

● **NITI AAYOG** Member (Health) said in the first wave 31 per cent patients were aged less than 30 years, this time it is up to 32 per cent.

of breath is slightly higher in the second wave of Covid-19 but sore throat and dry cough and other symptoms were higher in the first wave, the Centre said on Monday.

“No difference in deaths between first and second wave among hospitalised patients. About 54.5 per cent patients require oxy-

gen in second wave against 41.5 per cent in the first wave,” he said.

“More than 70 per cent patients in both waves are more than 40 years old, only marginally higher proportion of younger patients. Higher proportion of asymptomatic patients in the second wave,” he said, based on

the study of 1,885 patients in second wave and 7,600 patients in the first wave.

NITI Aayog Member (Health) V.K. Paul said in the first wave 31 per cent patients were aged less than 30 years, this time it is up to 32 per cent. “Essentially there is no difference,” Paul said.

Bhargava appealed that wastage of oxygen must not happen and it should be rationalised.

Paul added that remdesivir must be used on hospitalised patients in moderate stages of illness on oxygen and it is not to be used in home settings. — PTI



A man wearing PPE performs last rites of his mother who died of Coronavirus at the Ghaziabad Cremation Ground in Ghaziabad district on Monday. — PTI

IN BRIEF

NZ distances from 'Five Eyes'

Wellington, April 19: New Zealand said Monday it would not let the 'Five Eyes' intelligence alliance dictate its dealings with its largest trading partner China, in the latest distancing from the US-led group's approach to tensions with Beijing.

Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta told the New Zealand China Council that the Five Eyes — the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand — should not stray from its scope of intelligence-sharing between member nations.

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

Baerbock may succeed Merkel

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

PIO brothers buy UK food chain

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

The Issa brothers, whose parents moved to the UK from Gujarat in the 1970s, own the Euro Garages chain of petrol stations as part of their EG Group business. Last year, they acquired leading UK supermarket chain Asda from US owners Walmart as part of the strategy to expand their non-fuel business. The acquisition is said to be worth an estimated £100 million.

Dulux dog breed faces extinction

London, April 19: The Old English Sheepdog, one of Britain's most recognisable dog breeds, has been listed for the first time as vulnerable to extinction after a drop in popularity. The Kennel Club said Monday.

The move by the club, Britain's biggest organisation devoted to dog health, welfare and training, follows declining numbers since the breed's heyday in the late 1970s.

The Kennel Club recorded just 227 puppy registrations in 2020 for the dog — instantly recognisable for its shaggy coat and long used in adverts for paint manufacturer Dulux.

It is the lowest number in 60 years, it said, marking a "steep decline" in the breed's popularity, the club said.

The dog has since 2009 been on the club's 'At Watch' list, which monitors breeds.

FLOYD SOUGHT HELP WITH 'VERY LAST BREATH'

Minneapolis, April 19: George Floyd pleaded for help with his "very last breath" but was not shown any compassion by Derek Chauvin, prosecutor Steve Schleicher said Monday in closing arguments at the murder trial of the former police officer.

"George Floyd begged until he could speak no more," Schleicher told the jury in a Minneapolis courtroom. "All that was required was a little compassion and none was shown on that day." "He asked for help with his very last breath but the officer did not help," Schleicher said.

"He didn't follow training, he did not follow the department's use of force rules, he did not perform CPR," he said. "George Floyd was not a threat to anyone, he was not trying to hurt anyone," Schleicher said.

Chauvin, who is white, was seen on video kneeling on the neck of Floyd as the 46-year-old Black man lay facedown handcuffed on the ground for more than nine minutes.

Chauvin, 45, is charged with murder and manslaughter for Floyd's May 25, 2020 death, which sparked protests across the United States and around the world against racial injustice and police brutality.

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

Passengers can fly across Tasman Sea without undergoing quarantine

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

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

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

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

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

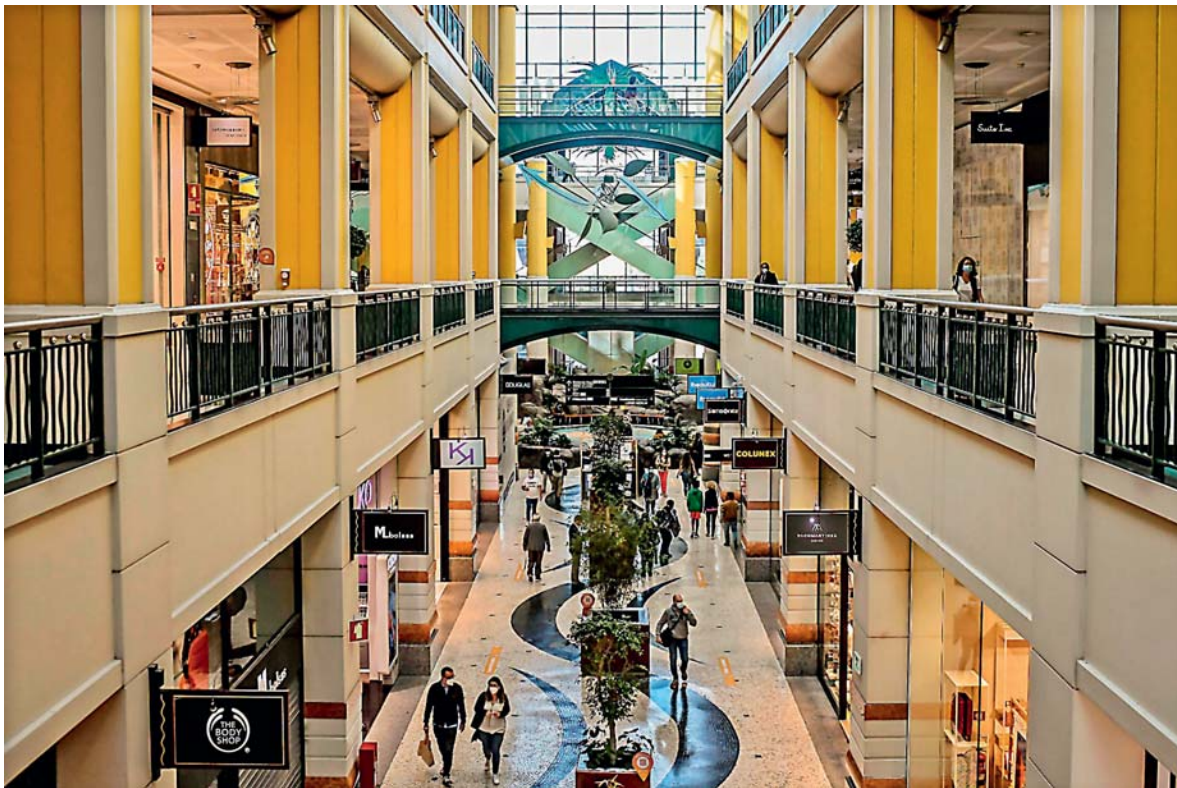
The bubble's opening received saturation coverage from media in both countries, with live television reporting from airports providing regular updates on the progress of flights.

On a grass embankment at the foot of Wellington Airport's runway, the words 'WELCOME WHANAU' (family) were spelled out in giant letters.

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

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

"We came to Australia on December 11 to spend Chr-



People go shopping at the re-opened Colombo shopping centre in Lisbon on Monday. Portugal rolled back Covid measures, including reopening shopping centres, high schools and universities and allowing indoor dining, after new infections eased off.

— AFP

Canada to send support to virus-hit province

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

The 2021 budget is the first full fiscal plan from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's administration

since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and is expected to outline Canada's recovery as virus infections surge.

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland has promised Ottawa "will continue to do whatever it takes" to fight the spread of the Coronavirus and support the economy as it emerges from a recession.

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

— AFP

INFECTED BODY WASHES ASHORE, ALARMS VANUATU

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

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

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

— AFP

istmas with our children... planning to go back in February, it's been a bit of a nightmare." Australia is

home to hundreds of thousands of expatriate New Zealanders and before Coronavirus many regularly

shuttled back and forth across the Tasman on three-hour flights.

— AFP

Technology takes a massive stride with a 19-inch chopper

From Page 1

Scientists cheered the news from around the world and even from space.

"A whole new way to explore the alien terrain in our solar system is now at our disposal," Nottingham Trent University astronomer Daniel Brown said from England.

This first test flight — with more to come by Ingenuity — holds great promise, Brown noted. Future helicopters could serve as otherworldly scouts for rovers, and eventually astronauts, in difficult, dangerous locales.

Ground controllers had to wait more than three excruciating hours before learning whether the pre-programmed flight had succeeded more than 170 million miles (287 million kilometres) away.

When the news finally came, the operations centre filled with applause, cheers and laughter. More followed when the first black and white photo from Ingenuity appeared, showing the helicopter's

shadow as it hovered above the surface of Mars.

"The shadow of greatness, #MarsHelicopter first flight on another world complete!" Nasa astronaut Victor Glover tweeted from the International Space Station.

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

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

To accomplish all this, the helicopter's twin, counter-rotating rotor blades needed to spin at 2,500 revolutions per minute — five times faster than on Earth. With an atmosphere just 1 per cent the thickness of Earth's, engineers had to build a helicopter light enough — with blades spinning fast enough

— to generate this other-worldly lift.

More than six years in the making, Ingenuity is just 19 inches (49 centimetres) tall, a spindly four-legged chopper. Its fuselage, containing all the batteries, heaters and sensors, is the size of a tissue box. The carbon-fibre, foam-filled rotors are the biggest pieces: Each pair stretches 4 feet (1.2 metres) tip to tip.

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

"While these two iconic moments in aviation history may be separated by time and 173 million miles of space, they now will

forever be linked," NASA's science missions chief Thomas Zurbuchen announced. The little chopper with a giant job attracted attention from the moment it launched with Perseverance last July. Even Arnold Schwarzenegger joined in the fun, rooting for Ingenuity over the weekend via Twitter: "Get to the chopper!" he shouted, re-enacting a line from his 1987 sci-fi film "Predator."

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

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

— AP

Banned party releases 11 Pak police hostages

Lahore, April 19: The banned radical Islamist party Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan on Monday released 11 police hostages after the first round of talks with the Imran Khan government, which buckled under the pressure of the terror outfit over its demand to expel the French ambassador over a blasphemous caricature published in France last year.

After declaring TLP a proscribed outfit under terrorism laws and freezing its leadership's bank accounts last week, the Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government had announced that there would be no talks with the terror outfit as the state would not allow it to challenge its writ. However, after Sunday's clash between the law enforcement agencies and the TLP workers in Lahore in which 11 policemen and Rangers were taken hostage by the radicals, the government held talks with the outfit leadership on Monday.

Pakistan Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed in a video message said: Talks have started with the TLP. The TLP has released 11 policemen who were taken hostage by it and kept at its headquarters in Lahore. The first round of talks with the TLP went well and the second will take place in the evening. The minister hoped that

the rest of the matters would be resolved with the TLP in the second round of talks.

Meanwhile, business centres, markets and public transport in Lahore, Karachi and some other parts of the country remained closed on Monday on the call of senior cleric Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman to condemn the "brutal" police action at the TLP headquarters in Lahore on Sunday that left three Islamists dead and dozens injured.

The TLP has announced a protest march to Islamabad on Tuesday if the government does not expel the French envoy.

In Monday's talks with the government, the TLP leaders presented four demands — expel the French ambassador; release its party chief Saad Rizvi; revoke the ban on TLP; and release all its activists (over 3,000) and withdraw FIRs against them. The party warned that if their demands are not met, they will go ahead with their march to Islamabad. "On the assurance that Prime Minister Khan will review TLP demands and there will be no further police action against those camping in Lahore, the Islamists freed the hostages," a senior police officer told PTI.

Thousands of Islamists are camping on the Multan Road outside the TLP headquarters.

— PTI

Release journo, Myanmar told

Tokyo, April 19: Japan's government said Monday it is asking Myanmar to release a Japanese journalist who was arrested by security forces in its largest city of Yangon the previous day.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato told reporters that his government is asking Myanmar authorities to explain the arrest and release him as soon as possible.

He did not identify the detainee, but Japanese media said he is Yuki Kitazumi, a former Nikkei business newspaper reporter currently based in Yangon as a freelance journalist. "We will continue asking the Myanmar side for his early release, while doing our utmost for the protection of Japanese citizens in that country," Kato said.

Japan's Foreign Ministry later said the journalist was arrested at his home on Sunday night and is being detained at Yangon's Insein Prison, where political prisoners are frequently held. It said Japanese Embassy officials have not been given access to him.

Kyodo News agency reported that he was arrested on suspicion of spreading "fake" news.

Kitazumi has posted reports and views about developments in Myanmar on Facebook. Hours before his arrest, he posted a video showing Myanmar citizens gathering at a Tokyo temple to pay tribute to people killed in the Myanmar military junta's crackdown on protests against its Feb. 1 seizure of power from an elected government.

Kitazumi was detained

EU SANCTIONS 10 MYANMAR JUNTA OFFICIALS

Brussels, April 19: The EU on Monday imposed sanctions on 10 Myanmar junta officials and two conglomerates linked to the military over the coup and bloody crackdown on protesters, European officials said.

The military has ramped up its attempts to crush dissent following mass demonstrations against its ousting of civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, with at least 737 civilians killed and the press increasingly under attack.

International pressure has been steadily building on the junta, with western powers seeking to target their key money-makers.

— AFP

briefly by police in late February while covering pro-democracy protests in Myanmar.

Japan has stepped up its criticism of the military government's deadly crackdown on opposition but has taken a milder approach than the United States and some other countries that imposed sanctions against members of the junta.

On Saturday, the junta released more than 23,000 prisoners to mark the traditional new year's holiday. At least three had been political prisoners, but it wasn't immediately clear if any activists detained during the crackdown were freed.

— AP

WHITE | SUPREMACY

BLM protests urged govt, institutions to face up to the legacy of the British Empire

UK's 'no systematic racism' report slammed by UN

London, April 19: A body of experts that advises the United Nations on human rights concerns has slammed a widely criticised British government-backed report that concluded there was no systemic racism in the country.

The UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent said Monday that it found it "stunning" that the report "re-packages racist tropes and stereotypes into fact" and urged the British government to reject its findings.

"The report cites dubious evidence to make claims

that rationalise white supremacy by using the familiar arguments that have always justified racial hierarchy," the Geneva-based working group said.

"This attempt to normalise white supremacy despite considerable research and evidence of institutional racism is an unfortunate sidestepping of the opportunity to acknowledge the atrocities of the past and the contributions of all in order to move forward," it added.

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, which was set up by Br-

itish Prime Minister Boris Johnson after last year's Black Lives Matter protests, published its report into racism last month. Its conclusions that Britain is not "institutionally racist" or "rigged" against minorities have been widely vilified, with some critics even arguing that the report downplayed the country's historic role in slavery.

Citing strides to close gaps between ethnic groups in educational and economic achievement, the report said race was becoming "less important" as a factor in creating dispar-

Many felt such statues extol racism and are an affront to PoC Britons

ties that are also fuelled by class and family backgrounds. Many academics, lawmakers unions and anti-racism activists were skeptical of the findings in the 258-page report, with some claiming the commission ignored barriers to equality, while others said it downplayed the ongoing legacy of Britain's colonial past as well as its role in slavery. Johnson's spokes-

man, Max Blain, said the UN working group's statement "misrepresents the findings" of the UK racism report.

"This report in no way condones racist behaviour, and in fact it highlights that racism and inequality are still problems for our country," he said. The commission, which was made up of 11 members from a broad cross section of ethnic backgrounds, has also previously defended itself against the charges, arguing that some of the criticism has been "tipped into misrepresentation"

and that it never argued that racism does not exist in society or in institutions. The UN working group also poured scorn on what it described as the report's "mythical representation of enslavement," saying it was "an attempt to sanitize the history of the trade in enslaved Africans."

This, it went on, is "a reprehensible, although not unfamiliar tactic, employed by many whose wealth came directly from the enslavement of others, ever since slavery was outlawed." One of the main clarion calls in last year's Black

Lives Matter protests across the UK was for the government and institutions to face up to the legacy of the British Empire and the country's extensive profits from the slave trade.

The toppling of a statue of 17th-century slave trader Edward Colston in the city of Bristol in June prompted a pointed debate about how to deal with Britain's past. Many felt such statues extol racism and are an affront to PoC Britons. Others, including the PM, argued that removing them was erasing a piece of history.

— AP

DECCAN

Chronicle

20 APRIL 2021

China giving India the runaround

The Chinese were giving the Indians the runaround in the matter of negotiations for disengagement from friction points in eastern Ladakh until the Indian Army, in an audacious late night action in late August last year that caught the Chinese troops unawares, captured key peaks in the Kailash Range south of the Pangong Lake. From the position of advantage thus gained, the Indian forces commanded a strategically panoramic view of the Chinese deployments stretching far, and could deal with them as they wished. However, a military advantage of such significance was surrendered by New Delhi in February this year in negotiations.

The expectation was that a show of reasonableness in this area would persuade the Chinese to be accommodating in the Depsang Plains to the north, and in Gogra and Hot Springs in the broad Galwan area. Currently, Chinese armour has rapidly raced forward more than 15 kilometres inside the Indian demarcation of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and can threaten our military airfield at Daulat Beg Oldi, which is practically within hailing distance from the Karakoram Pass that links China and Pakistan overland. Depsang has critical value for India and the Chinese are not budging from there.

The upshot of this is quite clear — the Chinese are not going back to status quo ante which existed in March, 2020 any time soon, as demanded by India.

The Chinese appear to have lost interest in any further meaningful talks. They have got back what they were really after in the Rezang La area. With this, and along with their staying put in territories inside the Indian side of the LAC, some estimates suggest that China may have got nearly 90 per cent of its dream demarcation that had been proposed to India in 1959-60. Remember, on the north bank of Pangong, Chinese soldiers left the area from Finger 4 to 8, but under the settlement Indian patrols are not permitted beyond Finger 4. This was not the case a year ago.

The upshot of this is quite clear — the Chinese are not going back to status quo ante which existed in March, 2020 any time soon, as demanded by India. If this demand is not met, the restoration of bilateral relations to earlier levels cannot be visualised. This was evident in a plaintive statement of the external affairs ministry earlier this month. "In this context it was highlighted also that completion of disengagement in other areas would pave the way for (the) two sides to consider de-escalation of forces and ensure full restoration of peace and tranquility and enable progress in bilateral relations," the statement read. This was after the eleventh round of military-level talks in which, according to the statement, it was decided to resolve the outstanding issues in an "expeditious manner".

Instead of staring facts in the face, defence minister Rajnath Singh and General Bipin Rawat, the Chief of Defence Staff, appear to be launched on a propaganda spree to distract public opinion. The minister has more than once echoed the Prime Minister in saying that India has not lost one inch of territory to China in eastern Ladakh. The establishment seeks to garner praise from the public for standing up to the might of the Chinese military. But the world knows better. So do our own security professionals. If there won't be "disengagement" by China in Depsang and Gogra-Hot Springs, there can be no "de-escalation" by India in Ladakh. This has the makings of the 38th parallel, the militarised border between north and South Korea.

Castro, a beacon of strength

To a question during his visit to the United States if he would want a Muammar Gaddafi or Yasser Arafat or a Fidel Castro to be the future president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela replied: "One of the mistakes which some political analysts make is to think that their enemies should be our enemies." In one stroke, the anti-Apartheid warrior, newly released from prison after 27 years, decimated the white arrogance that believed it has the power to decide the politics of the world, and also marketed a brand of politics that challenged the US hegemony in the northern hemisphere for decades.

That tiny island nation and its iconic leaders, brothers Fidel and Raul, were a beacon of strength to revolutionaries who fought impossible imperialists around the world.

People have their reasons to find fault with Cuba and the Castros, but that tiny island nation and its iconic leaders, brothers Fidel and Raul, were a beacon of strength to revolutionaries who fought impossible imperialists around the world. Mandela was just reflecting that allegiance. So, the stepping down of Raul as the first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba marks an end of an era that began with the Cuban revolution in 1959. Raul succeeded his elder brother as President of Cuba in 2008 and as party chief in 2011; quit as President in 2018 and handed over the charge to Miguel Diaz-Canel, who is expected to succeed him as the party chief as well. In the last six decades of the Communist rule, Cuba has achieved tremendous progress in two key human development indices: health and education. Cuba's ratio of physicians to 10,000 people is the highest in the world; at 99.9 per cent, the literacy rate of Cuba is one of the highest. But the Cuban dispensation faces the same challenge every Communist country does: the need to change with the times, democratise the systems and institutions and meet the aspirations of their free-minded people. The revolutionaries will have to reinvent themselves if they were to remain a beacon of strength for their comrades outside as well as their own people.

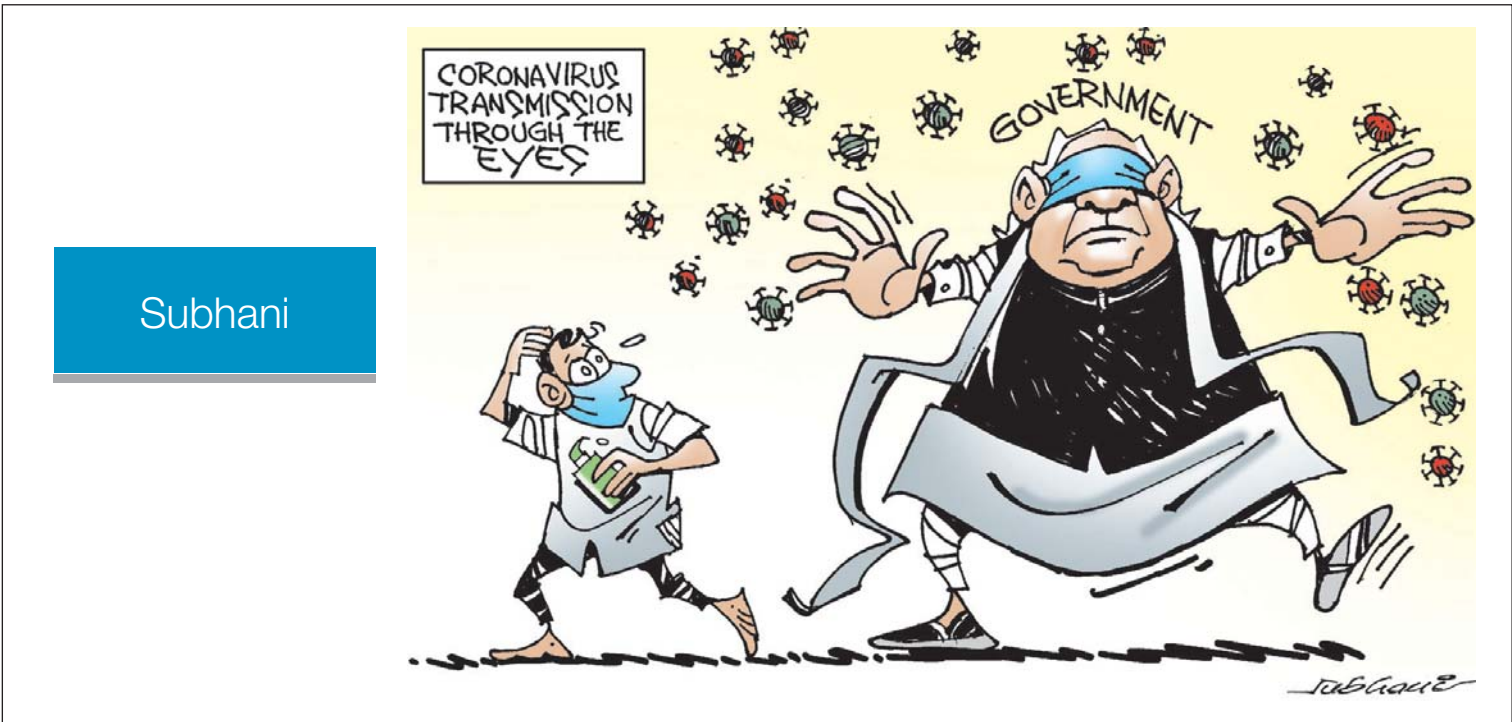
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US Afghan exit a pyrrhic victory for Pak generals?



Indranil Banerjee

Conventional wisdom has it that America's decision to end its military presence in Afghanistan signals total victory for Pakistan's artful generals and disaster for the Afghan government and its allies, particularly India. However, this might not necessarily be the actual long-term denouement.

To begin with, the US withdrawal decision was inevitable and sensible. For, there was no favourable end state in sight for the United States. US President Joe Biden did well to announce the formal end to the 20-year-old "Afghan War". All US combatants are to leave Afghanistan by September 9, 2021, the twentieth anniversary of the attacks on America in 2001.

The generals in Rawalpindi are gloating over what is generally being viewed as America's worst military defeat. The US invaded Afghanistan 20 years ago with the aim of annihilating the terrorist organisation Al Qaeda and driving out its Pakistan-backed ally, the Taliban. Al Qaeda was pretty much decimated, and the Taliban fled to safe havens inside their mentor's backyard while remnants of the Pakistan Army were allowed an honourable exit. For a while, in the initial years, it had appeared that the US military campaign had done wildly well. Smug officials and legislators in Washington drew up ambitious plans to install a Western-style democracy in Afghanistan. A former CIA contact, Hamid Karzai, was pulled out from hiding and installed as President in Kabul. Thereafter things started going downhill.

What the powers in Washington had not reckoned with was the tenacity of the generals in Pakistan's military headquarters at Rawalpindi. The generals were cowed down by their "friends" and mentors in Washington but would not abandon their dream of making Afghanistan a part of their strategic backyard.

The generals publicly cringed and whined before their American masters but secretly worked against them, reviving the Taliban, arming and training them and fielding even more vicious groups like the notorious Haqqani network to target Americans. Rawalpindi rightly calculated that Washington could not win a war of attrition spread over decades. The Americans bled in the Afghan badlands, their convoys came under regular attack within Pakistan, assassins trained by Rawalpindi's dirty tricks department regularly eliminated troublesome Afghans, especially the military types, and remorseless Pathans raised in Pakistan's madrasas routinely blew themselves up in the roads and bazaars of Afghan towns and cities, taking down innumerable civilians with them.

Gradually the Taliban and their murderous allies gained the upper hand while the Americans and their Nato allies retreated. That there could be no satisfactory endgame for the United States had dawned upon American Presidents a long time ago. Former US President Donald Trump vowed to bring back all US troops from Afghanistan but had prevaricated and ultimately thrown up his hands. For all military experts agreed that any US military withdrawal would enable the Taliban backed by the Pakistan Army to quickly bring the present Afghan regime to its knees and undo the sacrifices of thousands of US servicemen.

President Biden though is determined not to go down that route and the September 9 deadline seems to be hard and final. The Stars and Stripes will be lowered over the dusty Afghan landscape for the last time on that day.

Strategic experts in India are worried. And for good reason too. The last time the Taliban had taken over Afghanistan, some 26 years ago, India's historical presence in Afghanistan was forced to abruptly end. Almost overnight, Indian diplomats and others had to flee in specially chartered flights, leaving behind a grand embassy building that was later to be converted to an ammunition dump by the victorious Taliban forces.

This time too there is no guarantee that India's presence and influence in Afghanistan will not end with the anticipated victory of the Taliban. Pakistan's generals, who own and control the Taliban, want more than anything else to forcefully and completely eject all Indian presence from Afghanistan. If the Indians are allowed to remain, it will at best be a token presence.

This is a stated objective and Rawalpindi's generals have even complained about the humanitarian and development work carried out in that country by the Indian government. With Afghanistan out of bounds for Indians, the generals hope they will convert that country into their backyard for military and terrorist activities much of which would be directed against India.

However, such a favourable outcome could well elude the generals this time. For global strategic equations are changing, and the primary focus of the Western powers has moved away from the Middle East which has been their principal obsession since the end of the Second World War.

The importance of oil in global geopolitics and economics compelled the Western powers to evolve a strategy to maintain dominance over the Middle East and deny its enemies influence or unfettered access to this region. With the diminishing importance of oil and the concomitant rise of an assertive China, the focus of the Western powers has shifted.

Pakistan, which was a lynchpin in Western strategic calculation, has lost its previous importance. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan will free Washington from the last of its dependencies on Islamabad. This will presage profound changes. Coupled with this is the gradual and inevitable shrinking of Saudi Arabian influence and cash reserves. Riyadh too can no longer afford to write blank cheques for Islamabad as it did in the past. As a result, Pakistan is bound to face increased economic difficulties as it consumes more and more of its limited resources to keep the fighting going in Afghanistan and on the borders with India. This is one reason why Islamabad today seeks a temporary truce at the Line of Control in Kashmir. Constant fighting is a costly business and Pakistan is gradually but inevitably sliding into bankruptcy.

These developments will very shortly completely push Islamabad into the deep pockets of its "all-weather friend" Beijing, which already views Pakistan as a vassal state. Pakistan's generals might continue to dream of turning Afghanistan into a vassal state but they might not have realised that as a vassal themselves, the real power in Afghanistan will be China. Beijing will decide what kind of regime it wants in Afghanistan and from all indications it is clear they have no desire to witness the free run of the highly radicalised Islamists in that country. Pakistan internally too is not exactly a picture of serenity or economic health. There is a heavy price to pay for sponsoring egregious violence.

Pakistan's generals may raise their glasses to celebrate their victory in Afghanistan, but those glasses might well turn out to be empty. The writer is an independent commentator on political and security issues

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Pakistan's generals may raise their glasses to celebrate their victory in Afghanistan, but those glasses might well turn out to be empty. The writer is an independent commentator on political and security issues

LETTERS

PANDEMIC CONTROLS

We are heading towards a very serious crisis unless we aren't already in one. It is high time the state government showed leadership by putting in place very strict preventive controls. Offices where people are working in closed spaces are turning out to be super spreaders. We will be heading the Maharashtra, Delhi or Kerala way if steps are not taken immediately. I request Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to give strict instructions to all institutions to re-introduce the work from home arrangement except for essential services.

L. Prabhakar
Secunderabad

KUMBH MELA

Religious heads heeded to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's advice, but he interfered too late. It is like closing the stable door after the horses have run away.

Buddhavarapu Gopalakrishna
Hyderabad

RESTRICT RALLIES

The Election Commission should restrict political rallies due to Covid. All political parties are not following guidelines. The EC should penalise parties who violate guidelines. The BJP must help in this regard if they come in power. Political parties must restrict people at rallies. Police must penalise those who violate rules, even if they are leaders.

Mohammed Sarwar Ahmed
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN

Chronicle

Key airfield falls to Bangla forces

SHILLONG, APRIL 19 In significant gains today, Bangla Desh forces captured the strategic Shalutikor airfield near Sylhet and recaptured Meherpur town in Kushtia district as also Quasba.

Reports from across border spoke of heavy, casualties among the Pakistani troops in all the three actions.

With the fall of Shalutikor airfield, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's men were said to be virtually in control of the entire Sylhet district.

Quasba was lost to the Pakistani army in a pre-dawn action by the liberation forces, reports said.



Aakar Patel

How the world sees India is changing... not for the better

Economically, the future is slightly different from what it was when I was coming into the job market. India had liberalised its economy in the year that I turned 21 and in the few years after that the market for jobs vastly improved in the cities. Even people with a generic college degree with no specialisation could get a white-collar job in an airconditioned office if they had just basic knowledge of English.

This greatly benefited the middle class which had always had access to quality schools but not that many op-

What sort of India is the present generation growing up in and what will they live through? I am over 50 and with good health and good luck might see another couple of decades or so but in productivity terms my best years are behind me. The future belongs to those who are today children and young adults. What do they have in store for them? Having looked at the data and the facts of the last seven years in detail for my next book, I can see a little bit into the future and what it has in store.

Economically, the future is slightly different from what it was when I was coming into the job market. India had liberalised its economy in the year that I turned 21 and in the few years after that the market for jobs vastly improved in the cities. Even people with a generic college degree with no specialisation could get a white-collar job in an airconditioned office if they had just basic knowledge of English.

This greatly benefited the middle class which had always had access to quality schools but not that many op-

tions in terms of work (which is why parents kept insisting on specialisation in education and asking children to become doctors and engineers). Now it was possible even for a BA, BSc or BCom woman or man to access an upper class lifestyle. I was one who benefited from this, as did lakhs of others.

The majority of Indians did not benefit from this, of course, because they had access neither to the big cities or to a decent education. But they had hope, and this explains the thousands of private educational institutions that sprang up in India's towns and semi-urban spaces that attempted to replicate what was happening in the cities.

This period is now over. India's urban unemployment is at a historic high and, more important, the participation rate of India's labour force — meaning those who are employed or looking for work — is at a historic low. This means crores of Indians of working age (15 and above) have given up hope of finding a job. This was the case even before the Covid-19 pandemic and the position has been steady for over

three years, meaning that it is not cyclical and will not change on its own. The lack of work will in time result in a lack of hope and this will have consequences. One of them will be an increase in crime and lawlessness.

Long term trends globally are also negative in terms of both trade and employment and so, unlike in the past when some of us benefited, the future does not hold out hope for those who are today young.

Socially also, the India that I grew up in and knew has changed. India has always had a problem of reconciling its theoretical secular status with the reality that communal tensions existed. The 1980s and 1990s give us enough evidence to prove this was the case. This communal impulse was damped by efforts from the government. However poor these efforts may have been, the government did not actively inflame the impulse as has happened since 2014. This has consequences both internally and, less important, externally. Within India our politics has become dark and election campaigns are run by the dominant political party

actively targeting Indian Muslims. Because this is electorally rewarding as we have seen, we will see more of it. The consequence is that it has damaged Indian society and produced violence in neighbourhoods. To give one clear example, there were zero beef lynchings before 2015. We have introduced a new category of violence.

This will have downstream consequences also, such as economic, which will affect the wider population, but there is no point talking about that today. Externally, our love for hate has brought the world's attention on us. Just to give an example from this week, this is what the European Parliament said on April 14: "Members have expressed concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in India, echoing comments by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and several UN Special Rapporteurs. This includes reports that human rights defenders and journalists in the country lack a safe working environment. The report also voices alarm regarding India's Citizenship Amendment Act, which according to the

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is fundamentally discriminatory in nature against Muslims and dangerously divisive."

This text was approved by 61 votes in favour and six votes against. India's attempts to stop it or soften the criticism failed. The Indian government will brush it off as it has several other reports this year, but again, this comes with consequences. You cannot expect to be given a position on the UN Security Council, as India does, when the world sees what you are doing with distaste.

India was viewed from the outside as a place which was chaotic and noisy but likeable. This was so when I first went abroad at the age of 16. This has now changed in the view of those who study and observe India. It will change soon for the rest of the world also. The optimism has gone. It is disappointing as an Indian to record this, but one cannot look away from what one has found.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

quick BITES

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

* As of 8:30 PM IST

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

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



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

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, APRIL 19

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

But a partial recovery later helped the Sensex to close with a loss of 882.61 points, or 1.81 per cent, at 47,949.42 while Nifty-50 closed at 14,359.45, down 1.77 per cent.

Vaccine and oxygen shortages in several states were making the fight against the second Covid wave difficult for the Centre and states.

"It seems like our markets have decoupled from global counterparts due to rising Covid cases in India. Going forward, the Covid-19 situation and the pace of vaccination would be a key monitorable for the markets," said Ajit Mishra, VP-research, Religare Broking. "Market participants reacted negatively to increasing restriction announcements from state governments while ignoring the positive global cues," Mishra said.

Foreign portfolio investors were net sellers of equities worth Rs 1,633.70 crore but domestic institutional investors stepped in with Rs 2,355.56 crore net buying.

₹ SHEDS 53 PAISE ON LOCKDOWN FEARS

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, APRIL 19

Fear of harsher restrictions and more economic pain amid a record surge in Covid-19 cases spooked the rupee that fell 53 paise to close at 74.88 on Monday. The rupee is under pressure despite a weak US dollar globally and has weakened by 3 per cent this month.

India reported its tenth record daily increase in Covid cases in 11 days, with the capital city of New Delhi announcing a

complete curfew till next Monday. Maharashtra had imposed stringent curbs, effective April 15.

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

MACROTECH TANKS ON MKT DEBUT

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, APRIL 19

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

ket stabilised and recovered some losses, which helped Macrotech to close at Rs 457.95 on the NSE and at Rs 463.15 on the BSE, lower by 5.77 per cent and 4.70 per cent, respectively. The firm had raised Rs 2,500 crore from the IPO.

Macrotech Developers is now the third largest listed realty firm in terms of m-cap at Rs 20,717.55 crore, after DLF (Rs 58,615.38 crore) and Godrej Properties (Rs 36,167.34 crore.)

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

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

Oxford study to reinfect recovered C19 patients

TODD GILLESPIE APRIL 19

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

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

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

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

—Bloomberg

SC stays HC proceedings in Future-Amazon case

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 19

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

BUSINESS BRIEFS

GLENMARK LIFE PLANS IPO

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

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

—FC Bureau

WHATSAPP IN PINK IS A VIRUS

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

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

—PTI

M&M SELLS 1,000 E-CARGO AUTO



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

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

—Michel Gonsalves

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Covid cases surge delays India Open

New Delhi: The India Open Super 500 tournament, one of the last three qualifying events for the Tokyo Olympics, was on Monday postponed due to raging Covid-19 pandemic in the country. The \$400,000 India Open was scheduled to be held behind closed doors in the national capital from May 11 to 16.

"Considering the current challenges, BAI is left with no option but to announce the postponement of the tournament for the time being," Badminton Association of India (BAI) general secretary Ajay Singhania said. Delhi has emerged as the worst hit city with 25,462 cases reported on Sunday. —PTI

Vaccinate athletes at earliest: NRAI

New Delhi: The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has requested the government to vaccinate its Olympic-bound shooters at the earliest, taking into account the unprecedented spike in Covid-19 cases. As per the data updated by the union health ministry, India reported 2,73,810 new positive cases in the last 24 hours, the highest single-day surge taking the country's caseload past the 1.5 crore mark.

As many as 1,619 people succumbed to the disease in the last 24 hours.

Considering the grim situation, the NRAI is keen that its athletes are vaccinated soon. —PTI

Foxes pip Saints to reach FA Cup final

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

'Super clubs' in different league European heavyweights face criticism over 'cynical' Super League

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

to play in their domestic leagues. Three more clubs would be announced, the statement said, with the 15 founder members guaranteed to play each year.

Another five places will be available "based on achievements in the prior season".

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

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

UEFA THREAT

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

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

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

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

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

—AFP

Advantage Atletico after Real held

Madrid, April 19: A depleted Real Madrid delivered a major boost to Atletico Madrid's title hopes on Sunday by drawing 0-0 with Getafe in La Liga.

Atletico had thrashed Eibar 5-0 to reignite their own fading challenge and their victory proved even more valuable after Real Madrid were held to a goalless draw at the Coliseum Alfonso Perez.

It means Atletico extend their advantage at the top of the table from one to three points over Real while Barcelona, who now have a game in hand, are five points back.

Sevilla could yet join the race after they defeated Real Sociedad 2-1 but with six points separating them and Atletico, it remains more of an outside chance.

Real have enjoyed an incredible two weeks after beating Barcelona in the Clasico last weekend between knocking out Liverpool over two legs in the quarter-finals of the Champions League. But a crippling list of injuries and absences means the squad is down to its bare bones and this was the game that finally caught up with them. —AFP



Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois dives for the ball during a La Liga match against Getafe in Getafe on Sunday. —AP

JUVENTUS' CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AT RISK

Milan, April 19: Andrea Pirlo conceded Juventus missed Cristiano Ronaldo's "killer instinct" as the Italian champions fell to their first league defeat in two decades to Atalanta on Sunday leaving their participation in next season's Champions League at risk.

Leaders Inter Milan edged towards the Serie A title despite a 1-1 draw at Napoli, to pull 13 points ahead of Juventus who dropped to fourth place.

Christian Eriksen snatched a point for Inter whose 11-match winning streak ended but who hold a nine-point advantage on AC Milan as they target a first league title since 2010.

Milan earlier got back winning in the San Siro after two months 2-1 against Genoa.

Juve's nine-year reign as champions looks set to end with nine games left, and their European hopes are also at risk.

—AFP

Spurs sack 'Special One'

London, April 19: Jose Mourinho was sacked by Tottenham on Monday just six days before they play Manchester City in the League Cup final as the Portuguese boss paid the price for a turbulent campaign. Mourinho, 58, was dismissed after only 17 months in charge, even though he could have led the club to their first silverware since 2008.

Tottenham have been struggling in their bid to qualify for the Champions League via a top-four finish in the Premier League. Spurs are currently seventh, five points behind fourth placed West Ham, and suffered a shock Europa League last-16 exit against Dinamo Zagreb.

"The club can today announce that Jose Mourinho and his coaching staff have been relieved of their duties," a Tottenham statement said.

The bombshell news came less than 24 hours after Tottenham announced they were one of 12 clubs planning to launch a breakaway European Super League.

Tottenham's academy coach Ryan Mason, a former player at the club, will take first-team training this week and is set to pick the team for Wednesday's Premier League clash with Southampton and the League Cup final at Wembley.

Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy said: "Jose and his coaching staff have been with us through some of our most challenging times as a club.

"On a personal level I have enjoyed working with him and regret that things have not worked out as we both had envisaged. "He will always be welcome here."

—AFP

Justice Verma steers clear of controversy

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

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

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

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

"...I have re-assumed charge of Ombudsman after going through the High Court Order and after receiving an Email dated 11.04.2021 from the President of HCA and I

intend to serve as Ombudsman of HCA till the time my tenure ends," Justice Verma clarified.

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

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

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

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

The ban for Lokuhettige, a right-arm fast-medium bowler and lower-order batsman, is backdated to April 3, 2019 when he was provisionally suspended.

"Having represented Sri Lanka in international cricket, Dilhara had attended a number of anti-corruption education sessions and would have known his actions were a breach of the Code," Alex Marshall, ICC General Manager Integrity Unit, said.

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

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

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

—PTI



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

DECCAN CHRONICLE, KARIMNAGAR, TUESDAY, 20 APRIL 2021

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ORANGE	
Shikhar Dhawan, DC	186
Glenn Maxwell, RCB	176
KL Rahul, PBKS	157
PURPLE	
Harshal Patel, RCB	9
Rahul Chahar, MI	7
Avesh Khan, DC	6

Off the field



Pandya brothers having a whale of a time at a shoot.

Blake wants ABD to make SA comeback

A cricket enthusiast, Jamaica's star sprinter Yohan Blake wants AB de Villiers to come out of international retirement and represent the South African national team in their upcoming assignments, including the T20 World Cup. "Wow de Villiers is on a different level. South Africa come on you need this man," Blake tweeted after the versatile South African's breathtaking innings in the IPL in Chennai on Sunday.

Murali discharged from hospital

Sri Lankan cricket legend Muttiah Muralitharan was discharged on Monday after undergoing a coronary angioplasty at a hospital in Chennai. The 49-year-old former spinner, who is part of the Sunrisers Hyderabad support staff in the ongoing IPL, went for the planned procedure on Sunday. "He underwent successful coronary angioplasty with stents yesterday under the care of Dr G Sengottuvelu, senior interventional cardiologist," Apollo Hospitals said in a release on Monday. "He would resume his normal activities."

Hardik nurses a shoulder niggle

All-rounder Hardik Pandya did not bowl in the last three IPL games due to a shoulder niggle that he picked up during the final ODI against England, said Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene on Monday. "We were looking forward for him to be bowling this season... he was coming back from an injury already, but after those matches against England, the last ODI, I believe he picked up niggle, so that is something that we are nursing at the moment," Jayawardene said. The Sri Lankan hoped that Hardik will be able to return to bowling in the next few weeks.

JAADUJA TRICK

Jadeja's magical performance helps CSK outplay Royals by 45 runs

Mumbai, April 19: The spin duo of Ravindra Jadeja (2/28) and Moeen Ali (3/7) tormented the Rajasthan Royals batting line-up to ensure a second consecutive win for Chennai Super Kings in the IPL here on Monday. Jadeja had an outstanding day as he also took four catches.

Cameos from Faf du Plessis (33 off 17), Dwayne Bravo (20 not out off 8), Ambati Rayudu (27 off 17) and Ali (28 off 20) helped CSK post 188 for nine after being put in to bat.

Royals made a promising start in the run chase courtesy Jos Buttler (49 off 35) before the batsmen succumbed to the spinners on the Wankhede pitch which offered more turn than earlier games. CSK won the game by 45 runs after Royals' innings ended at 143 for nine.

Ali (3/7 in 3 overs) picked up three wickets in quick succession to effectively seal the game for his team after Jadeja (2/28 in 4) provided the crucial breakthrough by casting Buttler with a classical away turning delivery.

It was another emphatic win for CSK after they outplayed Punjab Kings while Royals suffered their second loss in three games.

Earlier, CSK lost wickets towards the end with the batsmen going for big hits and also in the face of some good bowling by Royals.

Bravo smashed a huge six off the last ball of the innings from Mustafizur Rahman (1/37) to ensure the Super Kings got close to 190.

Du Plessis top scored with 33 as the CSK batsmen got starts but couldn't capitalise on them after.

Young Chetan Sakariya (3/36 from 4) was the best bowler for Rajasthan while Chris Morris finished with 2/33 despite conceding 15 runs in his final over.

MS Dhoni, in his 200th match as CSK captain, came in to bat at No.7 but could not get going as



Ravindra Jadeja (centre) of Chennai Super Kings celebrates a Royals wicket in Mumbai on Monday.

— IPL

SCORECARD

Chennai Super Kings: Ruturaj Gaikwad c Dube b Mustafizur Rahman 10, Faf du Plessis c Parag b Morris 33, Moeen Ali c Parag b Tewatia 26, Suresh Raina c Morris b Sakariya 18, Ambati Rayudu c Parag b Sakariya 27, Ravindra Jadeja c Samson b Morris 8, MS Dhoni c Buttler b Sakariya 18, Sam Curran run out (Mustafizur Rahman/Samson) 13, Dwayne Bravo (not out) 20, Shardul Thakur run out (Samson/Mustafizur Rahman) 1, Deepak Chahar (not out) 0. **Extras (b 1, lb 4, nb 1, w 8) 14. Total (for nine wickets) 188.**

FoW: 1-25, 2-45, 3-78, 4-123, 5-125, 6-147, 7-163, 8-174, 9-180.

Bowling: Jaydev Unadkat 4-0-40-0, Chetan Sakariya 4-0-36-3, Mustafizur Rahman 4-0-37-1, Chris Morris 4-0-33-2, Rahul Tewatia 3-

0-21-1, Riyan Parag 1-0-16-0. **Rajasthan Royals:** Jos Buttler b Jadeja 49, Manan Vohra c Jadeja b Curran 14, Sanju Samson c Bravo b Curran 1, Shivam Dube lbw b Jadeja 17, David Miller lbw b Ali 2, Riyan Parag c Jadeja b Ali 3, Rahul Tewatia c Gaikwad b Bravo 20, Chris Morris c Jadeja b Ali 0, Jaydev Unadkat c Jadeja b Thakur 24, Chetan Sakariya (not out) 0, Mustafizur Rahman (not out) 0. **Extras (b 1, lb 3, nb 1, w 8) 13. Total (for nine wickets in 20 overs) 143.**

FoW: 1-30, 2-45, 3-87, 4-90, 5-92, 6-95, 7-95, 8-137, 9-143. **Bowling:** Deepak Chahar 3-0-32-0, Sam Curran 4-0-24-2, Shardul Thakur 3-0-20-1, Ravindra Jadeja 4-0-28-2, Dwayne Bravo 3-0-28-1, Moeen Ali 3-0-7-3.

A clash of heavyweights

Chennai, April 19: Heavyweights Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals cross swords and look to outsmart each other in the ongoing IPL here on Tuesday.

Up against a resurgent side, defending champions MI will need to address their middle-order woes if they are to go for a third consecutive win.

While Delhi come into the match after beating Punjab Kings by six wickets at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai have recorded back-to-back victories by defending low totals, something a formidable opponents like DC may not offer.

Mumbai skipper Rohit Sharma has got starts and he would be keen to convert it into a big one and so would be Quinton de Kock.

MI have the likes of Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan, Kieron Pollard, Hardik Pandya and his brother Krunal, who can pummel any attack into submission on their day, but they are yet to fire on all cylinders.

After the last game, Rohit had conceded that his team "can bat a little better in the middle overs."

The Mumbai bowlers, led by pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, have been splendid in the last two games when they successfully defended low scores of 150 and 152 respectively. Strike bowlers Bumrah (3 wickets) and New Zealander Trent Boult (6 wickets) have been exceptional at the death.

Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, whom bowling



Mumbai Indians allrounder Kieron Pollard during a training session in Chennai.

— MI

coach Shane Bond described as a "wicket-taking bowler", has grabbed seven wickets in last two games.

Another important cog in the wheel is left-arm spinner Krunal, who would be itching to give his team breakthroughs.

Mumbai played Adam Milne in the previous game but considering the nature of the pitch, they could be tempted to bring in off-spinner Jayant Yadav, who played the 2020 final against the same opposition. Meanwhile, for Delhi

Capitals, the biggest positive has been the form of Shikhar Dhawan, who is the leading scorer so far in the tournament with 186 runs.

Dhawan and young Prithvi Shaw form a lethal opening combination, but the Mumbaiers need to convert his starts into big scores.

Delhi opted for Australian Steve Smith on Sunday but, as they are next playing on the slow Chepaik track, they might go back to Ajinkya Rahane, who is looking better suited for such tracks.

Skipper Rishabh Pant has the ability to take any attack to the cleaners. The DC team management would be hoping that the top-order fires in unison against the defending champions, to whom they had lost in the final last year.

DC also possess quality all-rounders in Marcus Stoinis and Lalit Yadav, who would be keen to play their roles well.

Their pace attack is led by South African Kagiso Rabada and Chris Woakes, and the two have been impressive so far. They have an additional option in Anrich Nortje, who has also joined the squad.

Delhi played four pacers in the game against Punjab, but in Chennai, they could play more spinners as the track is conducive for the slower bowlers.

They have options in the experienced Amit Mishra, Pravin Dubey and new recruit Shams Mulani, who can complement Ravichandran Ashwin. — Agencies

Live on TV

Mumbai Indians vs Delhi Capitals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD1

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches

MI 16 DC 12

FOR THE RECORD

● Kieron Pollard with 201 sixes in 150 innings is the only Mumbai Indians batsman to 200+ sixes in IPL.

● Rishabh Pant who has hit 194 fours in 71 innings needs just six more to become only the second batsman after Virinder Sehwag (266) to complete a double century of fours for Delhi.

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

● Mumbai beat Delhi by 57 runs at Dubai.

● Mumbai beat Delhi by 5 wickets at Dubai.

STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISAR

PRITHVI WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIS TECHNIQUE

Mumbai, April 19: The promising Prithvi Shaw says he had started "worrying" about his technique after being dropped in Australia before roaring back to form in domestic cricket, thanks to a few technical changes he made in his game.

"After getting dropped from the Test side after the first Test in Australia, I started worrying about my technique on why I was getting bowled. Even if it was a minor mistake, I wanted to minimize that. I started working on it there itself," said Shaw after Delhi Capitals' win over Punjab Kings on Sunday night. — PTI

POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Points	Net RR
RCB	3	3	0	0	6	+0.750
CSK	3	2	1	0	4	+1.194
DC	3	2	1	0	4	+0.453
MI	3	2	1	0	4	+0.367
KKR	3	1	2	0	2	-0.633
RR	3	1	2	0	2	-0.719
PBKS	3	1	2	0	2	-0.967
SRH	3	0	3	0	0	-0.483

Not afraid to take risks, says Shikhar

Mumbai, April 19: Shikhar Dhawan smashed a match-winning 92 off 49 balls against Punjab Kings on Sunday and the south-paw said he made a conscious effort to improve his strike rate during the knock.

Dhawan, who smashed back-to-back hundreds in the IPL last season, is no more a certainty in India's T20 playing XI and is competing for an opening slot alongside Rohit Sharma in the World Cup later this year.

"It was a conscious effort from my side. I knew I have to improve on that (strike rate). Started taking more risks. Not afraid of changes, always open towards it. Not scared of getting out as well," said Dhawan, who batted at a strike rate of 187.86, after the six-wicket win over Punjab Kings.

The left-hander said he has also been working on his stroke play.

"I have worked on a few shots. My slog shot has improved a lot. It was there earlier as well, but now I play it more freely. I'm more relaxed, having played for so many years. I don't take things for granted."

Delhi Capitals skipper Rishabh Pant said he has started to enjoy captaincy. "Coming from a loss, winning the next match was

important. Have already started enjoying captaincy. But we were under pressure at the start, the wicket was not doing much.

"Bowlers did a good job keeping them to 195. He (Dhawan) has a lot of experience. You can talk to him about anything, how we can set the field, there are many stuff you can talk about. End of the day, what he's giving to the team is commendable," Pant said.

Punjab skipper K L Rahul, who turned 29 on Sunday, said they put up a decent total but defending at Wankhede is always tough.

"Right now it looks 10-15 runs short, but I think 190-odd looked good. Me and Mayank thought 180-190 would have been great on this wicket. Shikhar batted well, so congratulations to them."

"When we come to Wankhede, bowling second is always a challenge. We prepare for such conditions. It does get difficult against these quality batters. I'm not saying that because I'm on the losing side," he said.

"Bowlers try to bowl with the wet ball, but it's always difficult to do that. I asked the umpires to change the ball a couple of times (as it was wet), but the rule book doesn't allow that," Rahul said. — PTI



R. Ashwin (right) takes a selfie with his Delhi Capitals teammate Shikhar Dhawan.

— DC

Chennai pitches are tricky: Mahela

Chennai, April 19: The wickets in Chennai are not unplayable but challenging being on slower side, insisted Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene as teams battling first have dominated the matches played at the Chepaik stadium, so far.

Out of six matches played here, thrice teams managed 150-plus score and five times the team that has batted first won the match.

The match between Royal Challengers Bangalore and Rajasthan Royals was a high-scoring affair on Sunday when Virat Kohli-led side posted 204 for four to win the match by 38 runs.

"They are not unplayable wickets. They are good, competitive wickets. And adapting to challenges is always the key for any batsmen or any team. We have been consistent with that approach, it is challenging, but our bowlers have adapted pretty well."

— MAHELA JAYAWARDENE
MI coach

Chennai pitches are not unplayable wickets. They are good, competitive wickets. And adapting to challenges is always the key for any batsmen or any team. We have been consistent with that approach, it is challenging, but our bowlers have adapted pretty well.

— MAHELA JAYAWARDENE
MI coach

leg-spinner has shown every year.

"When we started playing him (Chahar), I believe it was the 2019 season, where he had a breakthrough season. Even in the UAE in the last season, he bowled well but he had his ups and downs, he wasn't consistent in execution, but every year we see improvement in Rahul."

"He is still a young player and he is also learning, he gets challenged by different oppositions, some top-class players, it is constant learning for Rahul, but very happy the way he has come out and he is one of our leaders in that bowling group," he added. — PTI