

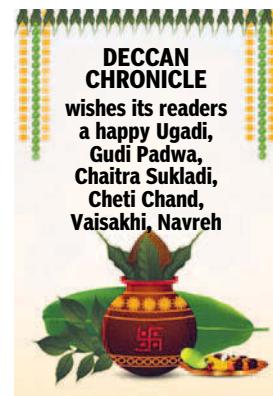
# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

ANANTAPUR | TUESDAY | 13 APRIL 2021

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CRESCENT IS NOT SIGHTED, RAMZAN FROM TOMORROW

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 12

The moon crescent, which marks the commencement of the holy month of Ramzan, was not spotted in the state and other parts of the country on Monday. Ramzan will begin from Wednesday. Taraweeh, the special Ramzan prayers, will begin on Tuesday, and end with the sighting of the next moon.

Markazi Ruyat-e-Hilaa Committee of Sadar Majlis Ulema-e-Deccan made the announcement following a meeting for moon sighting. Its general secretary Moulana Qubool Badsha Shuttari said the moon could not be sighted due to clouds.

President, Jamiat Ulema of Krishna district, Moulana Mohammed Hussain Ahmed, said the crescent was not sighted in Andhra Pradesh.

RAMZAN TIMINGS

SEHRI:  
4.55 am  
(TOMORROW)

## Volunteers get Jagan's pat

CM launches Seva Award programme for volunteers in state

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 12

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday saluted 2.6 lakh-strong contingent of ward and village volunteers for their selfless service in delivering welfare schemes at doorsteps of beneficiaries in a transparent manner "seeking only blessings from elderly persons".

Launching the Vasishta Parashar Seva Award presentation programme here, he said cash incentives worth ₹228.74 crore, apart from citations, are in recognition of the hard work put

in by local volunteers in serving the general public within their jurisdictions.

The Chief Minister appreciated volunteers for redefining governance and showing the world how effective inclusive welfare could be delivered, especially during the pandemic.

He praised volunteers for developing affinity and rapport with members of families living within their respective areas.

He pointed out that volunteers delivered 32 types of services to targeted beneficiaries in wards and villages in a corruption-free manner.

The CM announced Seva Mitra awards for 2,18,115 volunteers, including cash prize of ₹10,000, a citation, a shawl and a badge. Seva Ratna awards were given to 4,000 volunteers comprising cash prize of ₹20,000, a citation, a shawl and a badge. 875 volunteers were presented Seva Vajra award carrying cash prize of ₹30,000, a medal, a citation and a shawl.

He felicitated nine volunteers while transferring ₹18.93 crore into bank accounts of 18,576 volunteers on the first day. He called upon volunteers to work with more commitment and dedication.

Giving details of bond developed by volunteers with beneficiaries, the CM said a volunteer from Srikakulam went to Visakhapatnam for delivering pension amount to an old woman who had been hospitalised there in an accident.

Similarly, another volunteer from Prakasam went to Hyderabad to deliver pension amount to a woman who underwent heart surgery. Yet another volunteer from Chittoor went to Bengaluru to deliver pension to a beneficiary who was hospitalised.

CM's reward



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy felicitates volunteers with 'Seva Vajra Puraskaram' at Poranki near Vijayawada on Monday. Minister Perni Venkatramaiyah (Nani) is also seen. — DC

## Demand for remdesivir picks up as Covid surges

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 12

### AP RE-ENTERS LIST OF TOP 16 WORST COVID-HIT STATES

New Delhi, April 12: The Union Health Ministry said on Monday said 16 state, including Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, are displaying an upward trajectory in daily new Covid cases. Maharashtra, however, still accounts for 47 per cent of the caseload.

According to state health authorities, the state had 23,115 active coronavirus cases. Eleven out of the 13 districts are having more than 1,000 active cases.

Two districts — Vizianagaram and West Godavari — were having 647 and 258 active cases respectively.

The number of daily

Covid positive cases in AP has crossed the 3,000-mark and the daily number of

deaths is in the range of 10 now. On Monday, 1,091 virus-infected patients

were discharged from hospitals after recovery.

The demand for the life-saving drug is on the rise. Hetero and Cipla are major suppliers of remdesivir under brand names like Covifor and Cipremi. For an infected patient, a pack of six vials are being given as a course at the rate of two shots a day with a gap of several hours while one shot each for the remaining days. Each vial of Covifor costs ₹5,400 and Cipremi ₹4,000.

Pharma giants are ramping up the production of remdesivir vials as the demand is increasing.

■ Page 2: Pharma cos asked to boost drug production

### SPUTNIK VACCINE GETS NOD FROM CENTRE'S PANEL

VINEETA PANDEY | DC

NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

Even as India surpassed Brazil to become the second most infected country in the world, the Drugs Controller General of India on Monday approved Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd's application to grant emergency-use authorisation to Russia's Sputnik V vaccine.

The Sputnik V vaccine has been developed by the Gamaleya National Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology of Russia. This is the third vaccine approved by the Indian government for use on its population.

DRL will produce around 750 million doses of the Sputnik V vaccine.

od when Model Code of Conduct is in force," the order said.

It said that the "commission also imposes a ban of 24 hours on Ms Mamata Banerjee from campaigning for 24 hours for her remarks against central forces and a statement which had alleged religious overtones."

The "commission hereby condemns such statements potent with serious law and order problems across the state(s) and sternly warns Mamata Banerjee and advises her to desist from using such statements while making public utterances during the period of April 12 till 8 pm of April 13".

Assembly elections in West Bengal began on March 27 and four of the eight phases of the polls have been completed.

The poll panel's order cited two separate notices to Banerjee on April 7 and April 8, and her subsequent replies.

On her speech which had

alleged religious overtones, the Election Commission (EC) said that "selectively chosen" parts of her speech in her reply dated April 9 and "did not mention anything on the context of key parts of her speech".

In her reply to the notice, the Trinamool Congress leader had said that "I did not seek to influence the voters to cast their vote for her on religious segments lines; rather I categorically spoke in favour of religious harmony in line with the spirit of Model Code of Conduct and the Constitution". — PTI

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## WEATHER

Max: 41.5°C  
Min: 20°C  
RH: 21%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.  
Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 41/20 °C

## ASTROGUIDE

Plava; Uttarayana  
Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Padyami till 10.17 am

Star: Ashwini till 2.19 pm  
Varjyam: 9.51 am to 11.38 am

Durmuhratam: 8.34 am to 9.23 am; 11.06 pm to 11.53 pm

Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

## HIJRI CALENDAR

Sha'b'an 30, 1442 AH

## PRAYERS

Fajr: 5.08 am

Zohar: 12.05 pm

Asar: 4.11 pm

Maghrab: 5.47 pm

Isha: 7.02 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.08 AM

SUNSET TODAY 6.33 PM

MOONSET 7.38 AM

MOONRISE 7.48 AM

## COUNTER POINT



Not gold and diamonds... let's smuggle Covid vaccine and medicine!

## IN BRIEF

## CM, GOV. GREET PEOPLE ON THE EVE OF UGADI FEST

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 12

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy greeted the Telugu people living in the state and worldwide on the eve of the Ugadi festival.

In a statement issued here on Monday, the CM wished that the state would witness adequate rainfall to help farmers yield good harvest and help all three regions in the state to flourish, with every house in the urban and rural areas to be happy. He wanted the Telugu culture and traditions to flourish all the time and wanted the Telugu people and the world to get rid of the Coronavirus pandemic forever. He called upon the people to celebrate the Sri Plava Nama Samvatsara Ugadi, relishing the Shadruchulu.

Similarly, Governor Biswabhusan Harichandran greeted the people of Andhra Pradesh and Telugu people in the world on the occasion of Sri Plava Nama Samvatsara Ugadi festival to be celebrated on Tuesday.

In a statement issued on Monday, the Governor has extended the heartiest felicitations and greetings to the people in the state and said that Ugadi is a festival of joy and happiness as the New Year brings in a new hope of a bright future for the people. He appealed to the people to celebrate the festival with the family members while staying at home. Following appropriate Covid-19 behaviour, he called upon all the eligible persons to come forward and take the Covid-19 vaccine.

## CBI RESUMES PROBE INTO VIVEKA'S MURDER

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, APRIL 12

Officials from Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) resumed investigation into the murder of former minister Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy. They are camping at the Pulivendula R&B guesthouse.

It is learnt that some people close to Vivekananda Reddy were interrogated on Sunday evening and key documents were seized from them. Reportedly, Yerra Gangireddy, a close aide of the former minister and his personal secretary Inayatullah, were summoned to the R&B guesthouse on Monday for questioning. Some other suspects were also questioned by the officials. Later, the officials went to Vivekananda Reddy house and inspected the surroundings.

Vivekananda Reddy was murdered on March 15, 2019. The CBI had last year launched an investigation into the case as per the directions of the state high court.

## WEATHER

Max: 41.5°C  
Min: 20°C  
RH: 21%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.  
Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 41/20 °C

# YSRC men toil for huge majority in bypoll

Ministers, legislators have been hitting the road on a daily basis to ensure the victory of Gurumoorthy

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, APRIL 12

Notwithstanding the winning spree of the YSRC in gram panchayat, civic bodies, and parishad elections across the state, the ministers and legislators of the party have been hitting the road on a daily basis to ensure the victory of Dr M. Gurumoorthy, the YSRC nominee for Tirupati Lok Sabha seat, with thumping majority.

"They are working as if it is their election for the success of Dr M. Gurumoorthy braving scorching heat as well as Covid-19 threat probably to prove their grip on the electorate to our boss Jagan Mohan Reddy," a party leader said.

Interestingly, even the senior-most politician in the district, Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, is seen going to every nook and corner of his Venkatagiri constituency seeking votes for the party nominee.

In incidentally, Ramanarayana Reddy's strategies during municipal election in Venkatagiri town paid rich dividends to the YSRC.

The party bagged all the ward member posts unlike never before despite TD's all-out efforts to secure the wards where the party had a strong base.

Unmindful of these victories, the former finance minister is campaigning round the clock. He said it is his duty to make sure about the huge majority for party nominee and he is not after any posts.

Like Ramanarayana Reddy, Sarvelpalli legislator Kakani Govardhan Reddy is also knocking on his constituents' doors daily.

He said that all the MLAs of the party have been working hard to ensure a good majority, not less than last time.

Referring to speculations that they are working overtime to bag the highest majority to impress the CM with an eye on the ministerial berth, he said it is a notion of Opposition leaders.

Govardhan Reddy said they are banking on the welfare schemes launched by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy besides development works they have implemented in every constituency.

He said the government has spent ₹30,000 crore worth of development works in Sarvelpalli constituency alone.

Referring to ₹15,000 majority in Sarvelpalli segment for YSRC nominee during Parliament election in 2019, he intends to double the figure this time.



Venkatagiri legislator Anam Ramanarayana Reddy and other leaders take part in a road show as part of campaign for YSRC nominee for Tirupati Lok Sabha bypoll Dr M. Gurumoorthy at Venkatagiri constituency on Monday. — DC

## Anil rebukes TD for not taking challenge on resignation of MPs

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, APRIL 12

### YSRC MLA defends govt on attacks against Dalits

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, APRIL 12

mentioning the action taken by the government.

On Tirupati bypoll, asserting that Dr M. Gurumoorthy is a Dalit, the MLA slammed BJP leader Sunil Deodhar for targeting the YSRC candidate in the name of his caste and religion.

He questioned the silence of BJP leaders on the vandalism of idols by TD leaders. He said YSRC has been fighting for Special Category Status to the state and reminded them that Naidu took many turns on the issue.

He said the Opposition parties are running out of issues as the Chief Minister has been implementing all the welfare schemes promised during the 2019 elections. He urged the people of Tirupati to vote for the YSRC candidate and give him a thumping majority.

2019 polls by giving a thumping majority to the YSRC, and they repeated their stance even during the recent Panchayat and municipal polls too.

He lamented that the Opposition could not

Minister Dr Anilkumar Yadav said Jana Sena has always been facing a dilemma over which party to support. He said that the electorate of AP disowned TD in 2019 polls by giving a thumping majority to the YSRC, and they repeated their stance even during the Panchayat and municipal polls too.

understand the people's pulse while forecasting similar humiliation to them in Tirupati bypoll.

He took a dig on Jana Sena for teaming up with BJP even after opposing them in 2014, compromising the values.

Anilkumar maintained that people of the state are happy with the welfare programmes of the YSRC and the development in the state itself is a clear indicator for the quality of governance.

Pointing to the government's decision against the enhanced prizes of Vakeel Saab movie tickets, he expressed surprise over concern expressed by the Opposition on the issue during his public meetings.

Taking strong objection to the comments that the Chief Minister is in fear because of Vakeel Saab movie's impact, the minister said their leader never feared for any Saab.

## Miscreants pelt stones at TD rally, Naidu protests

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, APRIL 12

Tense situation prevailed near Krishnapuram Tana in Tirupati when some miscreants pelted stones on the people attending the road-show of TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday evening.

A TD worker reportedly suffered a bleeding injury to his leg in the incident.

He said that TD MPs will meet the Election Commission of India in Delhi on Tuesday and lodge a complaint on the issue.

He said they will also request the ECI to conduct bypoll with central forces. TD state president K. Atchannaidu said that the attack is against democracy and not against Chandrababu Naidu while stressing that the Chief Minister should be held responsible for this. The Central Electoral Commission should take action on this immediately, demanded the TD leader.

Meanwhile, minister for panchayat raj and rural development Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy said that the Opposition leader has been playing 'drama' with fear of defeat in the bypoll.

"It was a pre-planned drama scripted by the Telugu Desam before the end of the speech of Naidu. If anyone involved in the attack would be punished and the YSRC would also demand action against them. The TD chief has been trying to get sympathy from the public without any injury in the bypoll," said Ramachandra Reddy. He said Naidu is having a culture of pelting chappals on his own uncle NTR and also stones on BJP leader Amit Shah apart from Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.



Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu squats on the road after some miscreants pelted stones on the people attending his road-show near Krishnapuram Tana in Tirupati on Monday.

## AP rulers ignored Seema, says Nadda

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, APRIL 12

BJP national president J.P. Nadda dwelt at length on the failure of all those who ruled Andhra Pradesh in developing the Rayalaseema region while assuring special attention to the neglected region if their party nominee is elected for Lok Sabha from the Tirupati parliament segment.

Addressing a large gathering at Naidupeta in SPSR Nellore district on Monday, he said that all the Chief Ministers, includ-

ing NTR, K. Vijayabaskar Reddy, N. Chandrababu Naidu, N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, and even Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy failed to address the issues affecting the development of the Rayalaseema region.

To justify his allegation, he reminded that irrigation projects such as Telugu Ganga, Handri-Neeva, Galeru-Nagari, and many others remained incomplete though they were launched decades back.

Nadda claimed credit to the Centre for the sanction funds under PM Awas Yojana for constructing

around 20 lakh houses in AP, besides allocating amount for the development of the state apart from funding promised under the smart cities scheme to 4 cities.

Referring to the central assistance for the Polavaram project, he expressed surprise over the ruling party's failure to complete irrigation projects in the Rayalaseema region on the fast track.

He alleged that the ruling YSRC is deep into corrupt practices, resulting in bad governance.

Pointing to the 150 insta-

## AP to present 610 awards to police officers on Ugadi eve

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 12

The Andhra Pradesh government to present 610 awards to the police officials in different categories on the eve of Ugadi festival on Tuesday.

The highest award of 'AP Mukhyamantri Shourya Pathakam' will

be given jointly to two persons.

Dharmadi Satyam, Kakinada, for retrieving the capsized boat in Godavari river without fearing for his life. Arjun Rao (Reserve Inspector), Vijayawada City, for rescuing a girl who was drowning in the Bandar Canal.

Deputy chief minister Dharmendra Krishnadas, who was the chief guest at the felicitating function, said the system fulfilled the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi, who conceived the grama swarajya system. "It was the splendid decision of the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to launch this village secretariat and volunteer system free from politics, caste and religion," he said.

He said ₹228.74 crore was spent to honour 22,290 volunteers across AP. The cash awards include ₹10,000 for Seva Mitra, ₹20,000 for Seva Ratna, ₹30,000 for Seva Vajra,

## Pharma cos asked to boost drug production

From Page 1

The drugs control administration is sending a communication to these firms to boost their production so as to avert short supply.

Pharma industry sources say that Hetero is the major supplier remdesivir to AP and it has plans to extend the shelf-life of the vial to 12 months from the earlier period of six months. Notably, since the number of coronavirus infections had come down drastically before the start of the second wave, several unused Remdesivir vials were either returned to the firm or discarded after the expiry of the six months period.

After the expiry of the six months period, in view of this, the firm is coming up with a new policy to handle both issues.

A doctor attached to a government hospital in Vijayawada, Dr B. Nirmal Kumar, said, "We are administering six Remdesivir vials as a

course to Covid-19 patients with comorbidities and also in cases where the oxygen saturation levels fall below 94 per cent. The drug is helping them recover. However, the infected patients having other chronic diseases are not able to survive."

An official from the drugs control administration said, "The demand and supply for remdesivir drug are 3:1 in the state at present. We are expecting fresh stocks very soon. Moreover, new players are also stepping in to manufacture and supply the drug to help us overcome the shortage."

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ice points due to lack of communication.

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## IN BRIEF

**'Not to panic on gas leak news'**

**Kakinada:** Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) officials said that there was no gas leak in Kesavadasupalemof Konaseema in East Godavari district on Monday. They said that a news became viral in a private TV channel that a gas leakage incident at the area, but, it was an old gas leakage incident and no such leakage happened at any of the pipelines of ONGC. The ONGC released a note that the people need not get panic.

**MEDICAL STAFF TO BE RECALLED AS CASES SURGE**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NELLORE, APRIL 12

Alarmed over the sudden spurt in the Covid-19 positive cases in Chittoor district, authorities decided to recall the paramedical and medical staff hired temporarily during the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus last year.

Chittoor district collector M. Harinarayanan directed the medical officials who served the Covid-19 patients last year to report on April 14 to offer their services.

During a review with medical and health officials on preparedness on the availability of hospitals, the need for proper isolation and quarantine facilities as well as critical care units was underscored.

The collector has advised the medical authorities to prioritise Covid-19 services in SVIMS, S.V. Ruia GGH in Tirupati, and district headquarter hospital in Chittoor. Mr Harinarayanan hinted about a possible increase in the number of positive cases of Covid-19 in the next three months in Chittoor district.

He said that there are 876 beds available in Ruia, 450 beds in state Covid-19 hospital attached to SVIMS in Tirupati, around 1,000 beds in private hospitals and also another 1,000 beds in Padmavati Covid-19 care centre.

# KGH is getting filled with Covid patients

Visakhapatnam has 2,846 active cases; 500 in hospitals

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 12

King George Hospital is getting filled with second wave Covid-19 patients. The CSR block, the most sophisticated ward in the government sector with 500 beds, has already taken in 361 patients. The load increased during the last two to three days, said the superintendent of KGH Dr P. Mythili.

After the CSR block is filled, the patients would be shifted to Government Hospital for Chest Diseases and Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences.

- After the CSR block is filled, the patients would be shifted to Government Hospital for Chest Diseases and Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences.

sources said. The district has 2,846 active cases, and of them, around 500 patients are in hospitals, and others are in private hospitals and home isolation.

"The second wave has hit the younger persons, unlike the last year phase. Most of them are asymptomatic," Andhra Medical College principal Dr P.V. Sudhakar. He said this could be the reason why more patients prefer to get treatment at home.

The government hospitals in Vizianagaram are also reaching capacity. The government Super Specialty hospital will have 300 beds for Covid patients while 165 beds have been allotted in a

1003 beds provided for Covid patients

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
ANANTAPUR, APRIL 12

About 1,003 beds were accommodated in eight government and private hospitals exclusively for Covid-19 patients in the district. This follows the rise in positive cases from all parts of the district.

Presently, Savera Hospital was allotted 10 beds and RDT Bathalapalli Hospital will accommodate 82 beds in separate wards for Covid patients.

Collector Gandham Chandrudu told Deccan Chronicle that the beds will be increased if cases continue to rise.

separate ward in the Government General Hospital at Anantapur, 266 beds in Government Cancer Hospital, Anantapur, 70 beds in Hindupur District Area Hospital, 60 beds at Guntakal Area Hospital and 50 beds in Kadiri Area Hospital.

Collector Gandham Chandrudu told Deccan Chronicle that the beds will be increased if cases continue to rise.

## TTD TO DECLARE ANJANADRI AS BIRTHPLACE OF HANUMAN

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NELLORE, APRIL 12

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams is all set to declare Anjanadri hills of Tirumala as the birthplace of Anjaneya Swamy by presenting mythological, epigraphically and astrological evidences on the

auspicious day of Sri Ramanavami on April 21. TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy has constituted a committee in December last to study in detail about the pieces of evidence confirming Anjanadri Hills as birthplace of Hanuman with eminent scholars.

They include Vice-Chancellors of Vedic Varsity and National Sanskrit Varsity, two professors from National Sanskrit Varsity and Project Officer of Higher Vedic studies as Convener under the supervision of additional executive officer AV Dharma Reddy.

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## AP records 3,263 Covid-19 cases, 11 deaths in 24 hours

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 12

Andhra Pradesh received 4.40 lakh doses of Covishield on Monday and to receive two lakh doses of Covaxin on Tuesday.

Deputy chief minister and minister for health Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas said on Monday that in response to the letter written by the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to send 25 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccine, the Centre responded by sending both the vaccines.

23,115 persons are still active with the virus.

Among daily cases of Coronavirus infections, Chittoor found to be the worst hit with highest number of 654 followed by 454 in Visakhapatnam, 418 in Guntur, 318 in Krishna, 280 in Srikrishna, 259 in Kadapa, 245 in Nellore, 176 in Kurnool, 134 in East Godavari, 116 in Anantapur, 107 in Prakasam, 83 in Vizianagaram and 19 in West Godavari.

Chittoor registered the highest number of Coronavirus cumulative active cases at 4,326 fol-

lowed by 3,072 in Guntur, 2,838 in Visakhapatnam, 2,664 in Krishna, 1,848 in Nellore, 1,523 in Srikrishna, 1,447 in Kurnool, 1,305 in Prakasam, 1,073 in East Godavari, 1,063 in Kadapa, 1,051 in Anantapur, 647 in Vizianagaram and 258 in West Godavari.

Among daily cases of death of Coronavirus infected patients, five were reported in Chittoor followed by two in Nellore and one each in Anantapur, Kadapa, Kurnool and Visakhapatnam and the death toll scaled up to 7,311.

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New stores now open at Jubilee Hills, Eluru, Vizianagaram, Rajahmundry-Pushkar Ghat

## SHORT TAKES

## MP DEFERS 10, 12 EXAMS AMID SURGE IN CASES

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, APRIL 12

Madhya Pradesh government on Monday announced fresh curbs to tackle Covid-19 pandemic amid surge in Coronavirus cases in the state. Accordingly, the 10th and 12th board exams in the state have been deferred to June while total lockdown has been enforced in Bhopal for six days till April 19.

"The 10th and 12th board examinations, scheduled to commence from April 30 and May 1 respectively, have been deferred to June. The date for these board examinations will be announced later", state education minister Inder Singh Parmar said.

He said the school hostels barring that of Jawhar Navodaya Vidyalaya would be closed down till further order.

Meanwhile, the state government on Monday decided to enforce six-day shutdown in Bhopal in the wake of sudden spurt in Coronavirus cases in the capital.

Bhopal on Monday reported 823 fresh positive cases and three deaths.

Total lockdown for nine have been enforced in 11 cities in the state since six in the evening on Friday.

## RAINFALL LIKELY IN SEVERAL PARTS OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: Several parts of the country are likely to receive rainfall in the next five days due to different cyclonic circulations, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday.

According to the National Weather Forecasting Centre of the IMD, under the influence of trough and cyclonic circulations over the south peninsula, scattered to fairly widespread rainfall with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kilometres per hour are very likely over southwest peninsular India in the next five days.

The IMD said isolated heavy rainfall is also likely over south and ghat areas of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Mahe, coastal and south interior Karnataka during April 14-16.

Another cyclonic circulation lies over southwest Madhya Pradesh and neighbouring areas. Under its influence, isolated rainfall with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) is very likely over Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Gangetic West Bengal and Odisha during next 4-5 days and over Jharkhand during next 24 hours.

## ON-BOARD MEALS BANNED IN FLIGHTS LESS THAN 2 HOURS

New Delhi, April 12: Airlines are not permitted to serve meals in flights that have a duration of less than two hours, the civil aviation ministry said on Monday, as Coronavirus cases continue to soar in the country.

The ban will come into effect from Thursday, the ministry said in its order.

When scheduled domestic flights were resumed on May 25 after Coronavirus lockdown last year, the ministry had allowed the airlines to serve in-flight meals under certain conditions.

Modifying the previous order, the ministry's fresh directive said: "The airlines, operating flights on domestic sectors, may provide meals services on board, where the in-flight duration is two hours or more." The ministry stated it has decided to review the on-board meal services in domestic flights.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a rally for West Bengal Assembly polls at Barasat in North 24 Parganas district on Monday. — PTI

## Don't scare BJP, you will serve under our feet: Ghosh to cops

Warns of sending Bengal cops to Bihar if they disagree with views of BJP

PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI | DC BEHRAMPORE (WEST BENGAL), APRIL 12

A day after warning of more Shitalkuchi-style killings in the remaining phases of the Assembly election in West Bengal, state BJP chief Dilip Ghosh threatened to send state police personnel to neighbouring Bihar if they disagreed with the views of the saffron party.

On Monday the Midnapore BJP MP, undeterred by complaints of intimidation and the TMC's demand for a ban on him for his threat of repeating the Shitalkuchi killings, told the police at a party rally at Suti in Murshidabad: "Don't try to threaten the BJP. Remember, we are coming to power, and you will have to serve under our feet. If you do not agree with us, go to Bihar, buy land and live there. I will arrange it for you."

He also claimed: "We will bring back your lost pride and glory like the Ashoka symbol and independence, like the Uttar Pradesh police, so that no more Central paramilitary forces will be needed to combat law and order situations during elections."

In the evening Ghosh, however, swung into damage control mode on his threat to repeat the Shitalkuchi-style killings. He said: "We do not want a repetition of the Shitalkuchi incident, where TMC miscreants tried to loot EVMs and the

## 'Undeclared' President's rule in Bengal: Mamata

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, APRIL 12

Accusing the Election Commission of imposing an "undeclared" Article 356 for the President's Rule during the Assembly election in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday dared to quit politics if the BJP could show her even a single instance of its welfare work in comparison to her achievements of governance in the state.

"My request to the Election Commission with folded hands is: Please do not listen to the BJP only. Listen to all. If you are an impartial body, you will have to be impartial also... An undeclared Article 356, which is the President's Rule, has been



imposed here for the polls. Though it is not publicly spoken about anywhere, it has been put in place. I can challenge them every moment and at every

Constitutionally you are wrong. My point is constitutionally, factually and legally is correct," the Trinamul Congress supremo told the EC at a party rally in Dum Dum of North Kolkata.

She claimed, "We have undertaken a lot of development work. We will complete ten years in power in the next two months. The tenure includes four elections out of which two were about parliament while the other two others were about Assembly. Meanwhile Covid-19 pandemic has been underway. So we actually got a time of only five-six years for work. If BJP can show me a single instance of its work against our volume of work in these years, I will then quit politics."

Shah asserted on Monday that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) will have no impact on the Gorkhas.

Shah, during an address after a roadshow in Kalimpong, said as long as the Narendra Modi-led BJP government is there at the Centre, no Gorkha will be harmed.

"NRC has not yet been implemented, but whenever it is done, not a single Gorkha will be asked to leave," the senior BJP leader said.

The Trinamul Congress is lying about the possible fallout of NRC on the Gorkhas in order to create fear among them," he said.

Noting that Darjeeling and Kalimpong have suffered atrocities for long, Shah claimed in 1986, over 1,200 Gorkhas lost their lives, but they did not get justice.

The home minister also alleged that the Mamata Banerjee-government has also been responsible for the death of many Gorkhas in recent times.

"We will form an SIT and send those responsible for the wrongdoings behind bars," Shah said. — PTI

## Declared dead, Covid patient alive

NAYYAR AZAD | DC PATNA, APRIL 12

In a shocking incident reported from Patna, a man, who had been admitted to Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH) with Covid-19 complications was mistakenly declared dead by the hospital authorities.

The dead body in sealed condition was handed to the family members along with a death certificate on Sunday. The issue snowballed into a controversy when the wife of the man wanted to have his last glimpse before the cremation. When the cloth covering was

removed from the face, the body turned out to be a person other than her husband.

The dead body was taken back to the hospital and after much hue and cry, the wife found her husband alive. The PMCH authorities later dismissed the health manager Anjali Kumari on charges of "negligence".

Sources said that the hospital authority is also trying to find out whether other doctors or officials were involved in the incident. The health manager was dismissed by the hospital authorities immediately after the matter surfaced, sources said.

## KARNATAKA CM: LOCKDOWN COULD BE IMPOSED IF THE NEED ARISES

Bengaluru, April 12: Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Monday said the state government could impose lockdown if the necessity arises.

"People need to respond for their own good. If they don't heed then we may have to take stringent measures. If required and if necessity arises, we will impose lockdown," Yediyurappa told reporters in Bidar.

Reacting to queries on the growing

Coronavirus cases in the state, which saw the numbers breaching 10,000 on Sunday, he said the Prime Minister had also spoken to him about the measures taken by his government.

"(I told him) we have imposed night curfew in the districts where the Coronavirus cases are rising," Yediyurappa said.

He insisted that people should wear face masks, use hand sanitizers and maintain social distancing. — PTI



Large number of people at flower market near Dadar station ahead of Gudi Padwa festival in Mumbai on Monday, amid surge in Covid-19 cases across country. — PTI

## HOLY BATH

## Devotees defy Covid norms during 2nd royal bath of Kumbh Mela

## Kumbh: Thousands take a dip in Ganga

Dehradun, April 12: Amid rising Coronavirus cases in the country, thousands of saffron-clad seers and ash-smeared Nagas flouted Covid-19 norms and converged at Har Ki Pari in Haridwar for a holy dip in the Ganga during the second royal bath of the Kumbh Mela on Monday.

The seers of different akhadas, led by their Mahamandaleshwars, by

turns took out grand Shobha Yatras through the main thoroughfare of the pilgrimage city to gather at Brahma Kund, Hari ki Pari for the holy bath on the occasion of Somvati Amavasya.

Marching barefoot to their destination with many of them not wearing masks or observing social distancing, the seers took a dip in the river as they were showered with flow-

er petals from helicopters flying above on behalf of Uttarakhand government.

While Har ki Pari, considered the holiest of the Ghats was reserved exclusively for the akhadas from 7 am onwards, common people also took the holy dip on the other ghats of the Ganga, revered by millions as a goddess.

The mela administration claimed that approximately 17.31 lakh devotees had

taken the holy dip in the Ganga till 10 am.

Uttarakhand DGP Ashok Kumar said the Shahi Snan was being conducted smoothly throughout the Mela Kshetra from Haridwar to Devprayag. So far, seers of three out of a total of 13 akhadas have bathed in the river at Har ki Pari while bathing at the other ghats, the DGP said.

Seers of Niranjani Akha-

da led by their Mahamandaleshwars.

Acharya Kailashanand Giri were the first to take a dip in the river on the occasion. Seers of Ananda Akhada also took bath along with them.

They were followed by Joona Akhada, saints led by Acharya Kailashanand. Former King of Nepal Gyandeva Bir Bikram Shah was also among those who took a dip in the Ganga on the occasion. — PTI

## PARMOD KUMAR | DC WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

With 44 Supreme Court staffers out of over 3,000 testing positive for the Coronavirus infection in the past one week, the Judges on Monday decided to hold the court through video-conferencing from their residences — a setback for hybrid hearings that the top court had started in March after a gap

of nearly one year.

While some judges had been coming to the apex court premises to hold court, few others have been presiding over proceedings from their residences till now.

As a consequence the hearing today was rescheduled with courts that were to assemble at 10.30 am assembled at 11.30 am and the courts that were to assemble at 11.00 am assembled at 12.00 noon.

The other notification sus-

pended physical mentioning of cases for urgent hearing by advocates from Monday till further orders. However, the mentioning of the matters for urgent hearing or listing through video-conferencing will continue.

The entire court premises including the court rooms were sanitised. While everything appeared to be in retreat, the top court officials said that the situation was not alarming.

## Assam polls: 12 BPF candidates moved to C'garh

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC RAIPUR, APRIL 12

candidates after they arrived here.

When contacted by this newspaper, media cell chief of Congress in Chhattisgarh Sailesh Nitin Trivedi, however, said he was not aware of the development. "Let me verify it", he said.

The three-phase Assembly polls in Assam which ended on April 6 promises to throw up a nail-biting verdict with ruling BJP locked in a keen contest with 10-party Opposition grand alliance led by Congress.

On Sunday, Pramila Rani Verma, the only BPF candidate who stayed put in Assam, told the local media in Guwahati that other party candidates left Assam on Saturday.

Assam's minority-based All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), another constituent of Congress-led grand alliance, sent all its candidates to Congress-ruled Rajasthan in a chartered plane to thwart any bid by BJP to poach them.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has sponsored their stay in Rajasthan.

## IN BRIEF

**34 migrants die as boat capsizes**

**Djibouti:** Thirty-four migrants drowned on Monday after their boat capsized off the coast of Djibouti, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said, the second such accident in just over a month. Survivors reported that the boat capsized in rough seas at around 4.00 am (0100 GMT) after leaving Yemen with around 60 passengers on board, an IOM official in Djibouti said, asking not to be named.

**Huthis claim attack on Saudi**

**Dubai:** Yemen's Huthis claimed on Monday to have launched drone strikes against Saudi energy giant Aramco's facilities, amid an uprising in fighting between the insurgents and the Riyadh-backed government in northern Yemen. Neither Aramco or Saudi authorities immediately reported any attack. Huthi spokesman Yahya Saree said in a statement that the strikes took place overnight, in retaliation for the six-year military campaign led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen.

**Five new species found in Tibet**

**Beijing:** Five new animal species have been discovered in Tibet, including three kinds of frogs, one old-world monkey and a bushmaster snake, challenging the long-held view that the Himalayan mountains are a desolate and lifeless region. The discovery of the five new species was the result of an eight-year investigation of the terrestrial wildlife in the Tibet Autonomous region carried out by the regional forestry bureau, state-run Global Times reported on Monday. The discovered species are: a type of macaque (a genus of gregarious Old World monkeys), bushmaster snake (venomous), and three kinds of frogs.

**Activist on trial for pornography**

**Moscow:** A Russian court on Monday opened the trial of a feminist activist and artist charged with disseminating pornography after she shared artwork depicting female anatomy online — a case in line with the Kremlin's conservative stance promoting "traditional family values" that has been widely seen as controversial and elicited international outrage. Yulia Tsvetkova, 27, from the far-eastern city of Komsomolsk-on-Amur, faces up to six years in prison on charges reportedly related to her group on the popular social network VKontakte where colourful, stylised drawings of vaginas were posted. Tsvetkova is not allowed to give details of accusations against her.

**HUAWEI, HSBC AGREE ON PAPERS FOR EXTRADITION**

**Hong Kong,** April 12: Chinese telecommunications equipment firm Huawei said on Monday that it has reached an agreement with HSBC in Hong Kong to obtain documents that its chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou hopes will help prevent her extradition to the US.

Meng, who was detained in Canada in 2018 at the behest of US authorities, has been fighting a legal battle over the last two years as the US seeks to extradite her over allegations of bank fraud and violations of sanctions against Iran.

The US accuses Huawei of using a Hong Kong shell company called Skycom to sell equipment to Iran in violation of US sanctions. It says Meng committed fraud by misleading HSBC about the company's business dealings in Iran.

An earlier request by Meng's legal team for documents from HSBC was rejected by a court in Britain. In a court hearing on Monday, Hong Kong High Court judge Linda Chan approved the document-sharing agreement between Huawei and HSBC.

"An agreement has been reached with HSBC in relation to the Hong Kong legal proceedings for document production and an order has been approved by the court," Huawei said in a statement on Monday. It is not clear which documents Huawei has obtained or what the scope of the agreement covers.

# Report: Syria used chemical weapons

**2018 Saraqib attack involved chlorine: OPCW**

**The Hague,** April 12: The Syrian regime's air force used the chemical weapon chlorine in an attack on the town of Saraqib in 2018, the global toxic arms watchdog said on Monday after an investigation.

● **THE TEAM** issued its first report a year ago, in which it said Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's air force used the nerve agent sarin and chlorine in two attacks.

Arab Air Force under the control of the Tiger Forces hit eastern Saraqib by dropping at least one cylinder, the OPCW report said.

"The cylinder ruptured and released chlorine over a large area, affecting 12 named individuals," OPCW investigators interviewed 30 witnesses, analysed samples collected at the scene, reviewed symptoms reported by victims and medical staff and examined satellite imagery to reach their conclusions, the Hague-based organisation said.

"Symptoms... included shortness of breath, skin irritation, chest pain, and coughing," the report said. However, it said it "regrets" that the Syrian regime refused to grant access to the site, some 30 miles (50 kilometres) south of Aleppo, despite repeated requests.

The team issued its first report a year ago, in which it said Syrian President Bashar al-

Assad's air force used the nerve agent sarin and chlorine in two attacks on the village of Lataminah in March 2017.

Despite strong objections by Damascus and its ally Moscow, OPCW member states voted in 2018 to set up the team to attribute blame for attacks.

Previously the watchdog could only say if chemical attacks had happened or not.

— AFP

## Russia threatens to force-feed Navalny

**Moscow,** April 12: Russian prison officials are threatening to start force-feeding jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, his team said on Monday, after he lost eight kilograms (18 pounds) since starting a hunger strike.

"Seeing the seriousness of the hunger strike, the administration is threatening every day to start force-feeding," Navalny's team said in a post on his Twitter account.

It said Navalny, who last week said he had a cough and fever, had been transferred back to the prison barracks from its infirmary. "They are still not allowing a doctor to see him," it said. The 44-year-old opposition politician now weighed 77 kilograms.

— AFP

(169 pounds), it said, down from 85 kilograms (187 pounds) when he started the hunger strike on March 31. Navalny, who barely survived a poisoning with nerve agent Novichok last August, began refusing food in protest at what he said was a lack of proper medical treatment in prison for severe back pain and numbness in his legs.

Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's best-known opponent, was arrested in mid-January when he returned to Russia from Germany, where he had been treated for the poisoning, and was sentenced to two and a half years in prison on old embezzlement charges in February.

— AFP

**London,** April 12: British pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca on Monday said that following a trial, its diabetes drug Farxiga was not successful in treating Covid patients at risk of severe complications.

AstraZeneca, whose separate Covid vaccine rollout has been hampered by health concerns, said its trial "assessing the potential of Farxiga to treat patients hospitalised with Covid-19 who are at risk of developing serious complications... did not achieve statistical significance".

The trial was carried out alongside Saint Luke's Mid America Heart Institute and looked at potential complications including diabetes and heart failure.

"While the trial did not achieve statistical significance, the findings are very interesting and valuable, and will inform future clinical science," Saint Luke's cardiologist Mikhail Kosiborod said in a joint statement.

Public confidence in AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine has meanwhile been badly shaken by reports linking it to rare, but potentially fatal, blood clots, and by conflicting recommendations over its use.

— AFP

The Hague, April 12: The Coronavirus pandemic could fuel organised crime for years to come in Europe, a continent already at "breaking point" from an unprecedented flood of cocaine, the EU's policing agency warned Monday.

In its flagship four-yearly report, Europol said increasingly violent criminal gangs are likely to muscle in on legitimate businesses left vulnerable by the economic damage caused by Covid-19.

Criminals are also offering fake Coronavirus vaccines and home-testing kits as they seek to capitalise on global

efforts to recover from the virus, the Hague-based agency said.

"We are at the breaking point," Europol's director Catherine De Bolle said.

"The impact on the lives of citizens, on the economy, on the rule of law is too big. That's what we see from this... report." The "Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment" is an in-depth report issued every four years which will be used by EU member states to set crime-fighting priorities until 2025.

— AFP

## TOKYO ADOPTS STRICT RULES TO FIGHT COVID

**Tokyo,** April 12: Tokyo adopted tougher measures against the Coronavirus on Monday as it struggles to curb the rapid spread of a more contagious variant ahead of the Olympics in a country where less than 1 per cent of people have been vaccinated.

The measures remain through May 11.

Japan started its vaccination drive with medical workers and expanded on Monday to older residents, with the first shots being given in about 120 selected places around the country.

The measures remain through May 11.

— AP

## Yuri Gagarin almost died on first space odyssey 60 years ago

**Moscow,** April 12: Crushed into the pilot's seat by heavy G-forces, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin saw flames outside his spacecraft and prepared to die. His voice broke the tense silence at ground control: "I'm burning. Goodbye, comrades." Gagarin didn't know that the blazing inferno he observed through a porthole was a cloud of plasma engulfing Vostok 1 during its re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere, and he was still on track to return safely.

It was his quiet composure under pressure that helped make him the first human in space 60 years ago. Gagarin's steely self-control was a key factor behind the success of his pioneering 108-minute flight. The April 12, 1961, mission encountered glitches and emergencies — from a capsule hatch failing to shut properly just before blastoff to parachute problems in the final moments before touchdown. From the time 20 Soviet air force pilots were selected to train for the first

spaceflight, Gagarin's calm demeanor, quick learning skills and beaming smile made him an early favorite.

Two days before blastoff, the 27-year-old Gagarin wrote a farewell letter to his wife, Valentina, sharing his pride in being chosen to ride in Vostok 1 but also trying to console her in the event of his death. "I fully trust the equipment, it mustn't let me down. But if something happens, I ask you Valyusha not to become broken by grief," he wrote, using a nickname for her. Authorities held onto the letter and eventually gave it to Gagarin's widow seven years later after he died in an airplane crash.

She never remarried. Gagarin's pioneering, single-orbit flight made him a hero in the Soviet Union and an international celebrity. After putting the world's first satellite into orbit with the successful launch of Sputnik in October 1957, the Soviet space program, rushed to secure its dominance over the US by putting a man into space. "The task was set, and people were sleeping in their offices and factory shops, like at wartime," Fyodor Yurchikhin, a Russian cosmonaut, recalled.

— AP

# EU tries to save Iran N-talks

## Iran blames Israel for sabotage at Natanz site

**Brussels,** April 12: The European Union on Monday warned against attempts to derail talks aimed at returning the United States to the Iran nuclear deal, after Tehran accused Israel of an attack on its main Natanz site.

EU spokesman Peter Stano said the reported incident "could have been an act of sabotage" but insisted that there had been no official attribution over who was responsible.

"We still need to clarify the facts in detail as quickly as possible," he said, adding: "We reject any attempts to undermine or weaken diplomatic efforts on the nuclear agreement."

The Natanz site near Tehran was hit by a power outage on Sunday that Iran labelled "terrorism", a day after officials announced the country had started up advanced uranium enrichment centrifuges.

Negotiators in Vienna are trying to find a way to return the United States to the 2015 pact with world powers aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions, after former president Donald Trump withdrew.

The EU's mediator on Friday described the talks

**Dubai,** April 12: Iran blamed Israel on Monday for a sabotage attack on its underground Natanz nuclear facility that damaged its centrifuges, an assault that imperils ongoing talks over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal and brings a shadow of war between the two countries into the light.

Israel has not claimed responsibility for the attack. It rarely does for operations carried out by its secret military units or its Mossad intelligence agency.

However, Israeli media widely reported that the

● **THE ATTACK** also further strains relations between the US, which under President Joe Biden is now negotiating in Vienna to re-enter the nuclear accord.

country had orchestrated a devastating cyberattack that caused a blackout at the nuclear facility.

While the nature of the attack and the extent of the damage at Natanz remains unclear, a former Iranian official said the assault set off a fire while a spokesman mentioned a "possible minor

explosion."

The attack also further strains relations between the US, which under President Joe Biden is now negotiating in Vienna to re-enter the nuclear accord, and Israel, whose Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to stop the deal at all costs. Netanyahu met on Monday with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, whose arrival in Israel coincided with the first word of the attack. The two spoke briefly to journalists but took no questions.

— AP

Biden has said he wants to revive the agreement, which places limits on the Islamic republic's nuclear programme in return for relief from biting economic sanctions.

— AFP

## Joe Biden walks tightrope \$2T infrastructure bill

**Washington,** April 12: President Joe Biden holds a rare meeting on Monday with opposition Republican lawmakers, as well as Democratic allies, to push his more than \$2 trillion infrastructure bill — a daring bid to rebuild the United States and cement his place in history.

The White House meeting between Biden and eight members of Congress is being staged to show that the new president has made good on his promise to end the divisiveness that turned Washington into a permanent dog fight

under Donald Trump. Four senators and four members of the House of Representatives were invited — half of them from each party. Biden so far has zero support from Republican lawmakers for his giant spending plan, which would pour money into everything from reconstructing the ragged highway system to bringing broadband internet to farming communities.

To pay for this, Biden is proposing a jump in the corporate tax rate from 21 to 28 percent.

— AFP

## Second Ramzan amid Covid



Ahead of the holy month of Ramzan, an Iraqi man sells food at the Shorja market in central Baghdad on Monday after the curfew imposed by authorities was eased amid Covid pandemic.

## Suu Kyi hit with a new criminal charge

**Yangon,** April 12: Myanmar's ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi was hit with a fresh criminal charge on Monday as the junta's tough crackdown on dissent rolls on.

The 75-year-old Nobel laureate has not been seen in public since being detained in the early hours of February 1 as the military deposed her government and seized power.

The generals have used increasingly brutal methods to try to quell a growing protest movement against their rule, while Suu Kyi faces a raft of criminal charges that could see her barred for life from office.

"She has been charged in six cases altogether — five charges in Naypyidaw and one in Yangon." The most serious charge Suu Kyi faces falls under Myanmar's official secrets laws.

Min Min Soe said Suu Kyi, who is under house arrest in Naypyidaw, appeared in good health but it is not clear if she has any idea of the turmoil that has unfolded in Myanmar over the past two months.

— AFP

S. No.	Course Details	Eligibility for Admission	Age Limit	Duration of Study
1	Diploma in Tool, Die & Mould Making (DTDM)	10+ Pass with 50% for General & 45% for SC / ST	Minimum 15 years, Maximum 19 years	4 Years
2	Diploma in Electronics & Communication Engineering (DECE)			3 Years
3	Diploma in Automation & Robotics Engineering (DARE)	10th Pass	Maximum 19 years	3 Years
4	Diploma in Production Engineering (DPE)			3 Years

Application form can be downloaded from our website [www.citdindia.org](http://www.citdindia.org) under the link "Diploma Admission Notification-2021" or can be collected from CITD Admissions Desk on any working day from 10:00 a.m. to 05:00 p.m.

**How to Apply:**

By Speed Post or Courier: Filled in application forms can be sent to The Principal Director, CITD, Balanagar, Hyderabad-500037 along with necessary documents, photograph & application fee.

**By Hand at CITD:**

Filled in application forms can be deposited at CITD Admissions Desk along with necessary documents, photograph & application fee on any working day from 10:00 a.m. to 05:00 p.m.

**Mode of Payment of Application Fee:**

"Application cost Rs. 700/- for General Category and Rs. 350/- for SC/ST Category"

✓ By Demand Draft drawn in favor of Principal Director, CITD, Hyderabad

# DECCAN Chronicle

13 APRIL 2021

## US Navy foray: Will Delhi stand up to Washington?

**W**hen the US Seventh Fleet entered the Bay of Bengal in December 1971 to boost Pakistan's morale and threaten India's security as the birth of Bangladesh was being midwifed, New Delhi used the counterweight offered by the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed in August that year to call out Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. The Americans withdrew, cursing. Not so now.

This time the around Americans are hectoring and Indians are praying they will emerge from this with their prestige unscathed. It does really boil down to the vision of the leadership which sees the United States as the reliable heavyweight partner. The US is of course quite clear about one thing: with no country does it have a relationship that is "taller than the mountains and deeper than the seas" – China's description of its ties with Pakistan. As part of its "freedom of navigation operations" (FONOP), a warship of the US Navy's Seventh Fleet, *USS John Paul Jones*, passed through India's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) some 240 nautical km off Lakshadweep. An official Seventh Fleet communication said two things: that its action was to repudiate India's "excessive maritime claims"; and two, its action was consistent with international law and therefore the US wilfully disregarded the Indian condition of prior permission.

About the first, it's evident the US doesn't doubt the legitimacy of the extent of India's EEZ in that area. What it's saying is that it has no regard for India's domestic law which does not permit the passage of a warship of any country without permission. As for international law, the US has not endorsed the UN Conference on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS). Furthermore, the US privileges its domestic laws over any international law but may not give the same consideration to other countries.

When New Delhi pointed out through diplomatic channels that the terse, even brazen, communication of the Seventh Fleet was unwarranted in respect of a friendly country that had participated in a summit of the Quad, hosted by the US President, only three weeks earlier, Washington sought to convey that its FONOP aren't country-specific. The government here seems to have fed the media the speculation that President Joe Biden is trying to signal China that its naval movements in the South China Sea should not be misunderstood by Beijing since India is getting the same treatment.

This is the overlord's show of neutrality which India is entitled to call out. But will it, or will it make excuses for the US? Surrounded by a peppy China and a hostile Pakistan, with Russia now adopting a somewhat cool stance in view of evolving zonal and international alignments, New Delhi gives the impression of standing before Washington, cap in hand.

The latter is seeking to exploit the situation to the hilt. The US and India both know the Americans had carried out FONOP in the same area in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019. India was happy to lump it so long as no one made a song and dance about it, but this time the Americans are announcing the story aloud for all to hear. This is Mr Biden's America seeking to re-assert the doctrine of US superiority. If India doesn't make its disapprobation plain, who knows, we may have the Chinese or the Pakistani Navy follow in America's footsteps in India's EEZs.

## Fresh Israeli adventurism?

**I**ran's Natanz nuclear enrichment facility was struck by a suspected cyberattack on Sunday, just a day after Tehran had unveiled new centrifuges on the site that can enrich uranium for use as reactor fuel in generating power or make deadly nuclear weapons. The world knows that Israel is the only power in the region with the capability to carry out such a brazen attack through cyber means that may have been launched in combination with a physical intrusion into a heavily fortified site to knock out the power source with an explosion. Far from denying the intrusion, the Israeli intelligence agency has fed the news to the world's media that its operation may have set the Iranian nuclear programme back by more than a few months.

The reason for this dangerous hit on a nuclear facility is not far to seek. Only last week Iran and the EU started negotiations to revive the Iran nuclear deal struck in 2015 under the leadership of US President Barack Obama, which his successor Donald Trump revoked in 2018 as one that gave away far too much to Iran. The negotiations in Vienna, with all parties to the nuclear deal except United States, were also to do with having about 6,000 US sanctions lifted but Iran's leverage in the talks may have been hit hard by what is typically Israeli adventurism, aimed particularly at Iran's nuclear programme, based purely on its own strategic interests.

Far from rebuking Israel, its action will probably be applauded by its friends in the United States as well as in the Middle East, where Israel has new friends like the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Joe Biden's eagerness to roll the clock back on many of Mr Trump's brash actions may have received a rude jolt from the Israeli strike, but he can do little against a powerful Jewish lobby in his own country. Ironically, US defence secretary Lloyd J. Austin was in Israel over the weekend stressing the strong ties binding the two countries. Iran stresses its nuclear ambitions are peaceful but, with its enriched uranium, can't convince the world, and there is no reigning in Israel either.

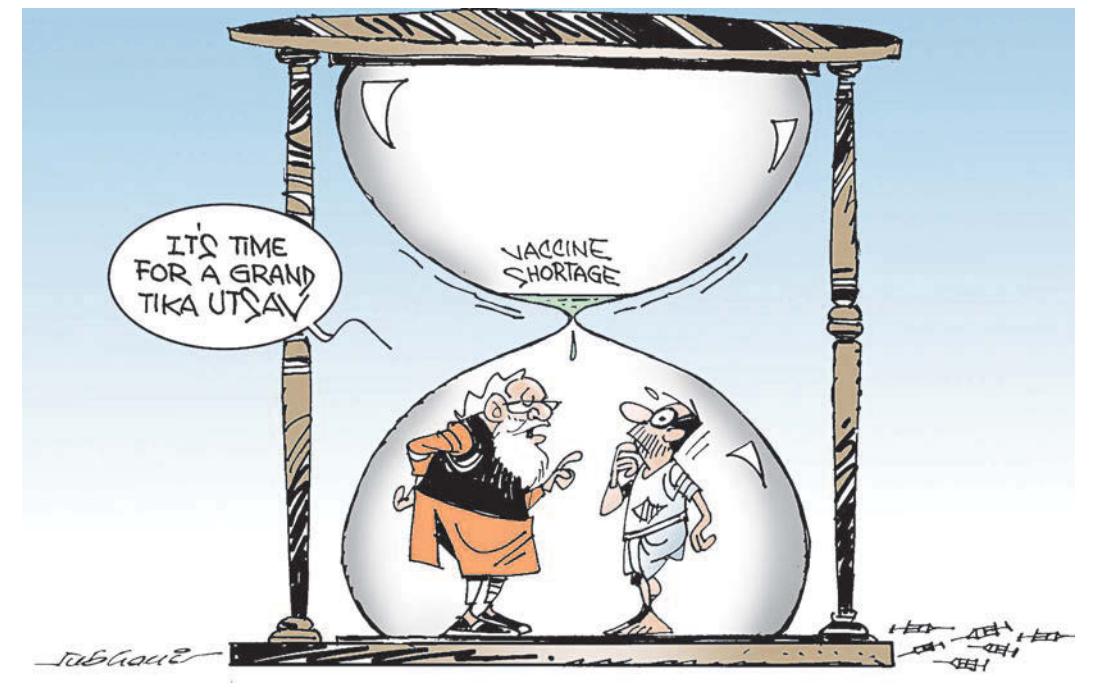
DECCAN CHRONICLE

K. SUDHAKAR  
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Subhani



## Why world can't afford to take a chance with China

Sunanda K.  
Datta-Ray

Reflections

**T**he white paper titled "Poverty Alleviation: China's Experience and Contribution" that Beijing issued earlier this month to mark the Communist Party of China's 100th anniversary hardly helps to explain the contradictions of a China that is as much "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma" as the old Soviet Union was in Winston Churchill's famous words.

Is China rich or poor? The evidence suggests both. Travellers in China certainly see none of South Asia's grinding poverty. But then, it's a vast land, and movement is strictly regulated. Bursting with billionaires, China holds \$3,399.90 billion in the US Treasury's foreign exchange reserves. Yet, intermediaries and snakeheads (secret society gangs) exploit illegal Chinese workers from Angola to England and Malaysia to Saipan in the Pacific.

In a year of many records, China led the pack of billionaires who bounced back according to *Forbes'* 35th annual World's Billionaires List. The one-time Middle Kingdom is now home to 626 billionaires — against 388 last year — and this is second only to the United States, which has 724. China's roaring stock market and quick recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic (for which Americans blame China) led to 205 new billionaires and the return of another 53 who had dropped out of the list. That excludes the ones based in Hong Kong and Macao, which are listed separately by *Forbes* magazine.

These crazy rich Asian Chinese seem to be getting even richer in the aftermath of the pandemic. A Chinese billionaire's \$4 billion average net worth represents a 33 per cent jump from last year. Collectively, the 626 billionaires own \$2.5 trillion, which is more than double last year's total. The top ten's \$47 billion is also nearly double last year's figure.

At the other end of the scale, India leads the world in expatriate remittances because millions of desperately poor Indians fan out across the world, and particularly so all across the Middle East, to toil in ports and plantations, on building sites and in private homes. They can't find jobs in India's sluggish economy. But why does apparently buoyant China come second in the remittance stakes?

Chinese expatriate workers send back an impressive \$68 billion annually, against the spectacular \$83 billion that Indians repatriate.

That can mean two things. One, even China's economy cannot absorb the skills of all its able-bodied men (and some women).

Two, China might be flowing with milk and honey, but this is only for the privileged like the *taizidang*, or princelings, as the sons of party veterans are called.

Like the former Soviet Union, China, too, might qualify for a British journalist's dismissal as "Upper Volta with rockets".

Is China a land of peace content with its status? Or is it arrogantly determined to be the next superpower? The UK's recent 100-page "Integrated Review of Security,

Development and Foreign Policy" suggested both. It called China a "systemic challenge to our security, prosperity and values". It also promised to "adapt to China's growing impact on many aspects of our lives as it becomes more powerful in the world".

Besides preface and conclusion, the document had five sections — "The Solemn Commitment of the CPC", "Final Victory in the Fight against Extreme Poverty", "The Strategy of Targeted Poverty Alleviation", "Exploring a New Path of Poverty Alleviation" and "A Global Community of Shared Future Free from Poverty" — that predictably applauded the Chinese people's fight in eliminating extreme poverty. They also indicated that China's novel approach would benefit the world.

However, three reported tragedies hardly bear out these lofty maxims. First, 58 illegal immigrants suffocated to death in a container in Dover. Second, 39 were similarly killed in a tractor trailer in Essex. In the third and most poignant instance, 23 labourers were drowned while picking cockles off the Lancashire coast when the tide swept in. One of them managed to dial 999, but it was too late. He could only repeat in his broken English: "Sinking water, many many, sinking water... Sinking water, sinking water."

Perhaps the Chinese enjoy taking the world for a ride. There was the well recorded case of an unknown Chinese man turning up at the coronation of Queen Victoria — or was it her jubilee? — in mandarin robes and a pillbox hat perched above his pigtail, without being able to say a word of English. Unsure of whether he was an envoy from the Son of Heaven, the British seated him between a marquis and an archbishop at the ceremony at Westminster Abbey. Only next day did the police discover that he was the owner of a small junk moored to the Thames.

The moral: The world can't afford to take chances with China.

nine-hour day. But as a Chinese immigrant told the *Financial Times*: "By working abroad for a few months, you can live a year in China."

These economic refugees are the Han Chinese, not Uighurs or Tibetans. They are victims of what Britain's former Labour prime minister Tony Blair called a harrowing "evil trade in people". The snakeheads that can extort as much as \$70,000 to smuggle them out move people from country to country until they reach the wealthier nations of Europe, North America, Australia, or perhaps Taiwan and Japan.

A veteran Chinese Singaporean journalist bemoans in an impassioned defence of China in *The Straits Times* that "anyone without scales over his eyes and who has not succumbed to cerebral shampooing by the West will have realised by now that large parts of its media are biased, if not outright antagonistic, in their reporting of China". Bias probably, but China does not make it easier for foreigners to understand itself by presenting so many contrary faces.

Perhaps the Chinese enjoy taking the world for a ride. There was the well recorded case of an unknown Chinese man turning up at the coronation of Queen Victoria — or was it her jubilee? — in mandarin robes and a pillbox hat perched above his pigtail, without being able to say a word of English. Unsure of whether he was an envoy from the Son of Heaven, the British seated him between a marquis and an archbishop at the ceremony at Westminster Abbey. Only next day did the police discover that he was the owner of a small junk moored to the Thames.

The moral: The world can't afford to take chances with China.

**An old saying claims that the Chinese will go wherever there is land and water. Nowadays, they will go wherever there are jobs**

*The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author*

## LETTERS

### YSRC CHALLENGE

The YSRC is confident that it is going to win the by-poll in Tirupati-SC parliamentary constituency. So the party thinks it could make any kind of challenge. In the unlikely event of the YSRC candidate losing the by-poll in Tirupati, that party's remaining 21 MPs of the Lok Sabha should resign. Then who will bear the cost of by-elections to these 21 parliamentary constituencies?

**Govardhana Myneedu  
Vijayawada**

### WEST BENGAL FIRING

The death of four persons in firing by the paramilitary forces in Sitalkuchi booth, West Bengal, is highly disgraceful and it is egregious to democracy (*Disquieting signals in forces firing on voters*, DC, April 12). The forces should have resorted to lathi-charge first and contained the violence. The very purpose of conducting the Assembly polls in eight phases is getting defeated. Both the ruling dispensation and the TMC are responsible for the severity.

**Dr C. Ghanshyam  
Visakhapatnam**

### CURRENCY NOTES

After the demonetisation there is a confusion in identifying the currency notes as the colour and design of notes are identical making it difficult for the senior citizens. The Finance department must maintain a difference between denomination notes.

**Someshwar Sharma  
Visakhapatnam**

### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

#### Work in Govt. offices paralysed

**H**YDERABAD, APRIL 12. The State Government employees commenced their indefinite strike today in pursuance of their demands bringing the work in Government offices to a standstill.

However, essential services like power, water works, transport and hospitals were not affected.

While the Joint Council of Employees' Unions and Associations claimed that the strike was a "total success", official sources put the percentage of attendance at 67.

Aakar Patel

## It's wrong to say Indians have right to choose faith



**L**ast weekend the newspapers carried the headline: "People are free to choose their religion: Supreme Court".

The report was about a public interest litigation petition which sought to stop Indians from converting out of the faith they were born into.

The judges were angry. They said: "What kind of writ petition is this? Why should a person above 18 not choose his religion?"

The petitioner was the BJP's Ashwini Upadhyaya.

The Indian judiciary has had a long history with the freedom of religion. It might be appropriate to revisit it. First, let readers understand this. You have no freedom of religion. You have no right to convert out of the faith you were born into. I do not know if our judges know this or have actually read the law. But it is a fact.

Article 25 of our Constitution reads: "All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion".

This is apparently a fundamental right, meaning one which enjoys a high degree of protection from State encroachment. The fundamental right was drafted after a debate in which

India's Christians had specifically asked for the right to propagate (to convert other people) because it was an article of their faith. In India, Muslims do not do mass propagation; even the Tablighi Jamaat only seeks to make Muslims better Muslims. It is the Christians who believe their religion requires them to spread the good word of Jesus Christ and to invite people into their faith. They asked for this right and were given it specifically by our Constitution's makers, including arch Hindu fundamentalists like K.M. Munshi, who agreed with the Christians.

Only one Hindu in the Constituent Assembly opposed the right to propagate and that was a 26-year-old Brahmin man from Odisha, Loknath Misra, whose brother Ranganath Misra and nephew Dipak Misra would both become Chief Justices of India.

Loknath Misra said that by making India secular, Hindus had done a favour to other communities and that propagation should be allowed but not be made a fundamental right. He need not have worried because this right was taken away by subterfuge as has been the case for many rights in India under the approving eye of the Supreme Court. Let us see how by

looking at one just state, my own.

In 2003, under Narendra Modi, Gujarat passed a law that essentially removed all freedom of religion for Gujaratis. It requires individuals changing their faith to take the permission of the government. They had to fill out a form explaining to the district magistrate the reasons they were choosing to convert; their occupation and monthly income; how long they had been in the religion they were converting out of; to reveal whether they were Dalit or Adivasi; the date and time of their conversion; the names, addresses and ages of themselves and all in their family; the names and addresses of all guests attending the ceremony. If they did not do so within 10 days of their conversion, they faced one year in jail.

The person who is converting them has to fill out another form with all of the details referred to above and must submit, one month before the conversion, an application to the district magistrate seeking permission. The bureaucrat has one month in which to approve or deny permission. This denial of propagation obviously also affects the right of the person who wants to change their faith. One had to remain in the faith they were born

into unless the government approved.

The district magistrate must also maintain a register that has the number of applications received, approved, denied or pending which he must report every quarter. The coercion can be imagined.

Gujarat's Assembly was told in January 2020 that in the previous five years a total of 1,895 "applications" for conversion had been filed in the state. Gujarat had denied permission to convert to 889 individuals.

The government "gave permission" to 1,006 applicants, almost all of whom were Dalits in Surat converting to Buddhism. The number of Dalit applicants to convert to Buddhism had swelled because in 2014, they had been denied permission to convert in a mass ceremony. The Narendra Modi government attempted to modify the law to exclude conversions from Buddhism and Jainism to Hinduism and vice versa from the state's regulation.

Meaning that Jains and Buddhists would be seen legally as Hindus and therefore would not really be "converting". But this was objected to by Gujarat's Jains, who resisted being clubbed with Hindus, and the modification was withdrawn.

I have used the example of Gujarat,

but almost all of India's states have these laws criminalising what is supposed to be a fundamental right.

The Gujarat law's punishment for

## quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	47883.38 -3.44
Nifty 50	14310.80 -3.53
S&P 500*	4,129.44 0.002
Dollar (₹)	75.06 -0.40
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.11 -0.69
Euro (₹)	89.33 -0.50
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,070.57 0.12
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	63.19 0.38
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.011 0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.676 0.010

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

### Over five lakh download 'Mera Ration' app

The government's 'Mera Ration' mobile app has been downloaded by more than 5 lakh people within a month of its launch, a senior government official said. The app, launched on March 12, is helpful to ration card holders, particularly migrants, for identifying the nearest fair price shop and checking details of their entitlement and recent transactions. The Android-based app is currently available in Hindi and English.



## Market falls 3.5%, investors lose ₹8.77 L cr Panic wave in mkt

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, APRIL 12

Sensex and Nifty-50 fell close to 3.5 per cent on prolonged lockdown fears, as the second Covid wave became more severe with 1.69 lakh people affected in a single day.

Investors suffered a notional loss of over Rs 8.77 lakh crore, as BSE's market capitalisation dipped to Rs 200,85,806 crore from Rs 209,63,241 crore last Friday.

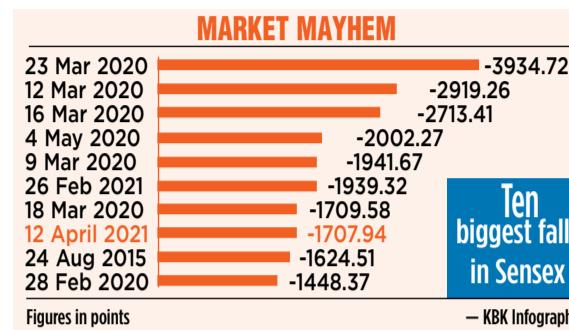
The Sensex fell 189 points intra-day to 47693.44 with the weekend spike in cases making investors jittery, who resorted to profit taking in stocks and sectors that had run up sharply in recent weeks.

The Sensex closed below the 48000-mark, down by 1707.94 points at 47883.38 while the Nifty-50 closed 524.03 points down at 14310.80, after touching an intra-day low of 14248.70.

Foreign portfolio investors net sold stocks worth Rs 1,746.43 crore and there was little support coming from the domestic institutions as they were net buyers by just Rs 232.76 crore.

"The rising cases of Covid-19 and a fear of probable lockdown in some parts of the country led to a sell-off in our markets which resulted in a huge under performance compared to the global peers," said Ruchit Jain, analyst-technical and derivatives, Angel Broking.

NSE's India VIX index, an indicator of market volatility in coming days, climbed up 16.22 per cent to 23. Among the sectoral indices the top losers were Nifty Metal (-6.07 per cent), Realty (-7.50 per cent), Bank (-5.10 per cent).



Ten biggest falls in Sensex

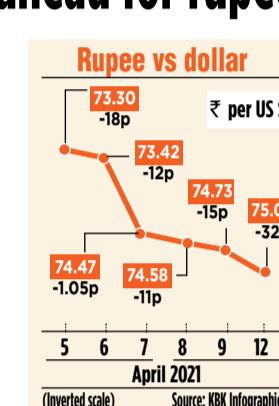
FALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, APRIL 12

The rupee plunged below 75 against the dollar for the first time in eight months on Monday as investors worried over the likely economic fallout of several states considering lockdown restrictions and a strong dollar globally.

Analysts believe volatility is ahead for the rupee, with more states joining localised lockdown to contain the Covid-19 second wave. This was the sixth straight session of loss for the rupee, during which it has depreciated by 193 paise.

At the interbank forex market, the rupee closed at 75.05 against the dollar after trading in the 74.78-75.14 range, down 32 paise.

Adding to the panic was the Reserve Bank's policy of providing more and more liquidity to the system through the government securities acquisition programme, under which it will purchase Rs 1 lakh crore worth bonds from the market. GSAP, though positive for the bond market (where yields have softened by 5-8 basis points) is not so for the cur-



rency. There is now excess liquidity of Rs 7 lakh crore in the reverse repo basket and there will be an infusion of Rs 25,000 crore on the 15th of this month. Such high liquidity means interest rates will remain low. The problem is, the US 10-year yield is now at 1.66 per cent, while Indian bonds are being driven down. This makes India less attractive for investors.

"Choppy times are ahead for the rupee, which was definitely not expected as the liquidity dimension added by the RBI and the commentary provided have spooked the market," said Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at Care Ratings.

### TCS Q4 NET RISES 15% TO ₹9,246 CRORE

FC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, APRIL 12

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Monday ushered in the March quarter earnings season, reporting a 14.9 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 9,246 crore.

The country's largest software services firm had posted a net profit of Rs 8,049 crore in the year-ago period.

In a regulatory filing, TCS said its revenue grew 9.4 per cent in the March 2021 quarter to Rs 43,705 crore from Rs 39,946 crore a year ago.

"Our investments over the last decade in building newer capabilities, and in research and innovation, position us well for the multi-year technology services opportunity ahead. While we continue to dominate in our traditional areas of strength, we are making good progress in gaining share in the growth and transformation opportunity," Rajesh Gopinathan, chief executive officer and managing director, TCS, said.

The company's net profit for the financial year ended March 2021 was up at Rs 33,388 crore (excluding legal claim provisions) against Rs 32,340 crore in the previous financial year. Its net profit on a reported basis stood at Rs 32,430 crore for FY21.

The board has proposed a final dividend of Rs 15 per equity share.

## SMEs to get ₹250 cr of ₹10,900-cr PLI

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, APRIL 12

kitty of SMEs, that too, to those who produce organic and innovative products.

"This includes Rs 250 crore or approximately 2 per cent of the outlay, which has been earmarked for innovative/organic products in the SME sector...," said the draft. The remaining will be allocated to select large manufacturers of food products.

"The allocation for SMEs is less and is only for those who produce organic and innovative products. We will reach out to the government on this," said Piruz Khambatta, CMD of Rasna.

He says some 30,000 to 40,000 FSSAI-registered SMEs are there in the food processing industry.

## INFLATION RISES, IIP CONTRACTS

FC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

With a sharp spike in food inflation, retail inflation jumped to 5.52 per cent in March, the highest in three months, while the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) contracted by 3.6 per cent in February, data from the statistics ministry showed.

Food inflation saw a steep rise of 4.94 per cent in March from 3.87 per cent in February, but vegetable prices fell to 4.83 per cent last month from 6.27 per cent in February.

The IIP also showed a worrisome trend by contracting 3.6 per cent against an expansion of 4.5 per cent in February 2020. The IIP had contracted 1.6 per cent in January 2021 as well.

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### PASSENGER VEHICLE SALES DROP 2.24% IN FY21: SIAM



Mumbai, April 12: Pramerica Life Insurance on Monday announced the appointment of Kalpana Sampat its MD & CEO, from April 9. Prior to this, she was the chief operating officer at the firm. Before joining Pramerica Life, Sampat was the CEO for Swiss Reinsurance Co, India branch, and was instrumental in its launch in 2015.— PTI

### FLIPKART PARTNERS ADANI GROUP

Chennai, April 12: Flipkart has entered a strategic and commercial partnership with the Adani group. In this two-pronged partnership, Flipkart will work with Adani Logistics to strengthen its supply chain infrastructure. Flipkart will also set up its third data centre at Adaniconnex's Chennai-based facility. Adani Logistics, on its part, will construct and lease a 534,000 sq. ft. fulfilment centre in Mumbai to Flipkart. At the AdaniConneX unit, Flipkart will be able to design its data centre. — FC Bureau

## GAMES

### SHORT TAKES

#### Man Utd hit back to sink Tottenham

London: Manchester United staged a superb fightback to shatter Tottenham's top-four bid with a 3-1 win, while West Ham climbed to fourth place in the Premier League as the revitalised Jesse Lingard inspired a 3-2 victory against Leicester on Sunday.

Ole Gunnar Solskjær's side trailed to Son Heung-min's first half strike, but United scored three times after the break through Fred, Edinson Cavani and Mason Greenwood. Second-placed United's fourth successive league win avenged their embarrassing 6-1 home defeat against Tottenham in October. — AFP

#### Son racially abused on social media

London: Tottenham Hotspur are to take action after Korean star Son Heung-min was subjected to "abhorrent racist abuse" on social media following Sunday's 3-1 defeat by Manchester United. Son is the second Spurs player in as many matches to suffer such abuse following Davinson Sanchez after the 2-2 draw with Newcastle United on April 4. Son scored Spurs's goal but was involved in a controversial incident when he went down clutching his face after contact with Scott McTominay.

"Another matchday and more abhorrent racial abuse suffered by one of our players," said a Spurs statement. — AFP

#### Darmian wins it for Inter Milan

Milan: Antonio Conte's Inter Milan tightened their grip on the Serie A title on Sunday with Matteo Darmian scoring the only goal in a 1-0 win over Cagliari to stretch their winning streak to 11 games. Champions Juventus consolidated third place with a 3-1 win over Genoa as Atalanta battered a 3-2 victory over Fiorentina to stay fourth ahead of Napoli who won 2-0 at Sampdoria. "We're starting to see the finish line," said Conte after Inter restored their 11-point lead on second-placed AC Milan who won 3-1 at Parma on Saturday. Achraf Hakimi came off the bench and set up Darmian to grab the winner with 13 minutes to go at the San Siro. — AFP

## Hideki goes green at Augusta Matsuyama becomes first Japanese to win Masters



Hideki Matsuyama of Japan celebrates after being awarded the Green Jacket by 2020 Masters champion Dustin Johnson (left) of the United States after he won the Masters at Augusta National Golf Club on Sunday.

Azhar writes to Justice on appointment

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, APRIL 12

Against the backdrop of Sunday's acrimonious Annual General Meeting, Hyderabad Cricket Association president Mohammed Azharuddin has sent a letter to Justice (Retd) Deepak Verma, appointing the former Supreme Court judge as Ombudsman and Ethics Officer of the HCA.

"I am pleased to inform you that the 85th Annual General Meeting of the Hyderabad Cricket Association has appointed your goodself as the Ombudsman and Ethics Officer of HCA for the year 2020-21 thereby ratifying the decision of the Apex Council dated 06.06.2020," the letter signed by Azhar reads.

Justice Verma confirmed his acceptance on Monday in an email addressed to the President and other members of HCA. "I hereby formally accept the appointment as Ombudsman cum Ethics Officer of the HCA," he wrote.

### SNAP SHOTS

#### Harsha and Noorie bag tennis titles

Harsa Karthika Oruganti, Noorie Mattipati, Lemuel Sanheeth Alladi and Nikhikesh Papula claimed titles in the TSTA State Ranking Tennis Tournament held at Ramas Tennis Academy in Sainikpuri, Secunderabad.

In the finals, Harsha beat E. Grithvika Reddy 8-1 while Noorie nailed P. Sri Lakshmi Reddy 8-7 (7-4) in Under-10 and Under-12 girls categories respectively.

In the boys section, Lemuel packed off Satya Parthiv 8-4 while Nikhikesh blanked Anish Nataraj 8-0 in Under-10 and Under-12 summit clashes respectively.

#### RR to meet Gymkhana in hockey final

Ranga Reddy girls set up the final with hosts Gymkhana Hockey Club in the Dhyan Chand Cup 5-a-side Hockey Tournament at the Gymkhana Ground in Secunderabad. In the semifinals, Ranga Reddy punished Royal Hockey Club with a 12-0 scoreline as Meghna Reddy scored five goals, Aparna four and Jyothi garnered three while Gymkhana Hockey Club routed Indur Hockey Club 4-1 as Bhavani scored three and Kusuma contributed one goal.

#### Former kabaddi player Tupaki no more

Former Osmania University kabaddi player Mykala Srinivas Rao passed away in Hyderabad on Monday. An advocate by profession, he was 53 and left behind his wife and daughter.

Better known as 'Tupaki Seenu', the Nizam College student represented OU in the Inter-University Kabaddi Tournament at Thiruchendur in Tamil Nadu in 1987-88. Tupaki came from a sporting family — his father Eswaraiah was a kabaddi official. The family also played a role in the development of the mini stadium for kabaddi in Tallagadda, Karwan.

## Tears, cheers and shares rise as Hideki win thrills Japan

Tokyo, April 12: Thrilled Japanese golf fans welcomed Hideki Matsuyama's historic Masters victory on Monday, with broadcasters close to tears and the prime minister hailing the win as a bright spot during the pandemic.

"Matsuyama Masters" trended on Twitter and golf-related shares rose on the Tokyo stock market after the 29-year-old became the first Japanese man to capture a major golf title.

"Matsuyama opens the door of history," declared the Asahi Shimbun newspaper.

In Japan, the one-stroke victory was sealed just after 8.00 am Monday morning, with some broadcasters carrying live footage of his final-round

ing the victory and several newspapers published special editions online, usually reserved for major stories.

As Tokyo's stock market opened, shares in Value Golf, which provides services linked to the sport, jumped 14 percent, while golf club maker Graphite Design rose 16 percent.

Fans flooded to congratulate the country's new sporting hero as social media lit up.

"I can't see through my tears," one fan tweeted.

Japan's prime minister, Yoshihide Suga, told reporters Matsuyama's performance had been "really wonderful".

"I think it encouraged

and excited people across Japan at a time when the impact from coronavirus is lingering," he said.

Members of Team Swans pose with the trophy after being declared winners of the inaugural Hyderabad Premier Golf League on Sunday. Having reached the semifinal stage after six rounds, the event was suspended due to the spike in Covid infections in Hyderabad and winners announced on the basis of leaderboard scores till then. Team Swans had 1005.25 points, followed by Markenzo Fairways (1002.88), Civet Rangers (995.75) and Villaggio Highlanders (992.62).

## Swansong



ORANGE	
Sanju Samson, RR	119
KL Rahul, PBKS	91
Shikhar Dhawan, DC	85

PURPLE	
Harshal Patel, RCB	5
Chetan Sakariya, RR	3
Arshdeep Singh, PBKS	3

**Off the field**

RCB cricketers play chess during a promotional shoot. — Twitter

**Women's Challenge not to be expanded**

The BCCI is likely to stick to three teams for the Women's T20 Challenge tournament, usually held during the IPL play-offs. The Board had planned to increase the exhibition event to four teams last year but it will continue to be a three-team affair due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the delayed IPL was held in the September-November window last year, the Women's Challenge clashed with the WBBL, making the Australian players unavailable. "There is a good chance that it will be held in Delhi. Talks are on with the leading Australian and England players," a BCCI official said.

**Parag 'underarm' raises eyebrows**

Ryan Parag went as low as legally allowed in cricket to release a ball when bowling to Chris Gayle during the Punjab Kings innings against Rajasthan Royals in the IPL on Monday. The umpire was seen having a word with the bowler after the delivery, as the commentary box exploded in surprise.

"How low is a legal sidearm delivery?" was the question raised by Harsha Bhogle. "Underarm deliveries are not allowed any more, as the Australians know well," he said.

**Avesh cherishes Dhoni's wicket**

Delhi Capitals' pacer Avesh Khan said he fulfilled a long-cherished dream when he got former India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni's prized wicket in their IPL opener against Chennai Super Kings. "Three years ago, I had a chance to take Mahi bhai's wicket, but somebody had dropped the catch. But now my dream of taking Mahi bhai's wicket is fulfilled, so I am very happy about it," Avesh said.

"Since he has not played competitive matches for some time, we had planned to put pressure on him and because of that pressure I could take his wicket," he added.

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# ROYAL FUMBLE!

Samson's hundred in vain as Rajasthan falter at finish line

Mumbai, April 12: Sanju Samson's magnificent 119 went in vain as Punjab Kings beat Rajasthan Royals by four runs in their IPL match here on Monday.

Rajasthan needed 13 off the last over and five off the last ball. Samson who denied a single to partner Chris Morris in the penultimate ball was caught at sweeper cover.

"I don't have words to explain my feelings. Would have loved to finish it off for my team. I don't think I could have done better than that. I thought I timed it well for a six but somehow. Catches go down and good catches were also taken. It's part of the game," said Samson who became the first player to hit a century on captaincy debut.

Earlier, KL Rahul and Deepak Hooda pummelled the Rajasthan Royals bowlers into submission with their sensational stroke play, propelling Punjab Kings to an imposing 221 for six in the IPL on Monday.

While Rahul smashed seven fours and five sixes in his 50-ball 91, Hooda, playing his first game since the last IPL, plundered six maximums and four boundaries as he blazed his way to 64 off just 28 balls.

Put into bat, Punjab lost opener Mayank Agarwal (14) early, who edged it back to Royals captain and wicketkeeper Sanju Samson for IPL debutant Chetan Sakariya's first wicket.

He ended being the pick of the bowlers, conceding only five runs in the 20th over.

Rahul, who got his first four with a glance to the fine-leg fence, and Chris Gayle (40 off 28) gave the team a good start with their 67-run stand.

Rahul got a 'life' after Ben Stokes dropped him at the fence in the seventh over even as Gayle, looked in his elements.

The duo then took on Stokes, as Gayle hit his

**SCORECARD**

**Punjab Kings:** KL Rahul c Tewatia b Sakariya 91, Mayank Agarwal c Samson b Sakariya 14, Chris Gayle c Stokes b Parag 40, Deepak Hooda c Parag b Morris 64, Nicholas Pooran c Sakariya b Morris 0, Shahrukh Khan (not out) 6, Jhye Richardson c Morris b Sakariya 0. Extras (nb 2, w 4) 6. Total (in 20 overs) 221/6.

**FoW:** 1-22, 2-89, 3-194, 4-201, 5-220, 6-221.

**Bowling:** Chetan Sakariya 4-0-31-3, Mustafizur Rahman 4-0-45-0, Chris Morris 4-0-41-2, Shreyas Gopal 3-0-40-0, Ben Stokes 1-0-12-0, Rahul Tewatia 2-0-25-0, Riyan Parag 1-0-7-1, Shivam Dube 1-0-20-0.

**Rajasthan Royals:** Ben Stokes c & b Mohammed Shami 0, Manan Vohra c & b Arshdeep Singh 12, Sanju Samson c Hooda b Arshdeep Singh 119, Jos Buttler b Richardson 25, Shivam Dube c Hooda b Arshdeep Singh 23, Riyan Parag c Rahul b Mohammed Shami 25, Rahul Tewatia c Rahul b Meredith 2, Chris Morris (not out) 2. Extras (lb 2, nb 1, w 6) 9. Total (in 20 overs) 217/7.

**FoW:** 1-0, 2-25, 3-70, 4-123, 5-175, 6-201, 7-217.

**Bowling:** Mohammed Shami 4-0-33-2, Jhye Richardson 4-0-55-1, Arshdeep Singh 4-0-35-3, Riley Meredith 4-0-49-1, Murugan Ashwin 4-0-43-0.

**Umpires:** S. Venkateswaran, R. Natarajan

**Referee:** R. Venkateswaran

**Managers:** R. Venkateswaran, R. Venkateswaran

**Head Coach:** R. Venkateswaran

**Assistant Coach:** R. Venkateswaran

**Physiotherapist:** R. Venkateswaran

**Team Manager:** R. Venkateswaran

**Media Head:** R. Venkateswaran

**Player Support Staff:** R. Venkateswaran