

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | FRIDAY | 2 APRIL 2021

WEATHER



Max: 38.4°C
Min: 26.8°C
RH: 87%
Rainfall: Nill

Forecast: Mist.
Max/Min temp.
38/26 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana

Tithi: Phalguna Bahula Panchami
till 8.17 am; Phalguna Bahula
Shasti till 5.58 am (Saturday)
Star: Jyeshtha till 3.44 am

(Saturday)
Varjyam: 10.32 am to 12.02 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.40 am to
9.28 am; 12.44 pm to 1.33 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

HJRI CALENDAR

Sha'ban 19, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

(ROYAL MOSQUE)

Fajar: 5.50 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm

Asar: 4.45 pm

Maghrib: 6.15 pm

Isha: 8.15 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.10 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.51 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 11.07 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 9.30 AM

COUNTER POINT



How about conferring
this award on him at a
mega election rally?

SHORT TAKES

Centre withdraws interest rate order

New Delhi: Old small savings deposit rates for fixed income investors will stay as the Centre on Thursday withdrew its decision to cut interest rates saying that the "orders were issued by oversight and shall be withdrawn". The decision to rollback was taken hours after the government announced the steepest cut in the rate on small savings schemes on Wednesday. The government, however, said the rate cuts are in line with overall interest rate movement in the financial system.

Pak gets cold feet over India trade

Islamabad: In a volte-face, Pakistan's Cabinet on Thursday rejected a proposal of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) to import cotton and sugar from India, according to a media report. The decision comes a day after Pakistan's new finance minister Hammad Azhar on Wednesday announced to lift a nearly two year old ban on the import of cotton and sugar from India after a meeting of the ECC chaired by him. However, a Cabinet meeting chaired by PM Imran Khan on Thursday rejected the ECC proposal to import cotton yarn and sugar from India, Geo TV reported, citing sources.

WORLD | 5

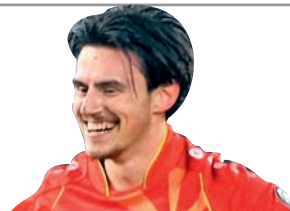
Court lets Rana
file reply

SPORTS | 6

Macedonia stun
Germany

TABLOID

Flamboyant
stars



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

Vol. 36 No. 308 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

TD likely to skip local elections

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

The Telugu Desam is likely to boycott mandal and zilla parishad territorial committee (MPTC/ZPTC) elections, which are slated to be conducted next week.

It has been alleging YSRC illegalities in the unanimous MPTC/ZPTC verdicts and demanding fresh notification for the election.

Top leaders of the principal opposition party are to meet and possibly decide on boycotting those elections.

State Election Commissioner Nilam Sawhney issued the notification Thursday night with regard to conduct of MPTC and ZPTC elections on April 8 from 7 am to 5 pm. Re-poll, if necessary, would be held on April 9 from 7 am to 5 pm, counting of votes would be taken up on April 10.

The elections were first scheduled in March last year but the then SEC Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar postponed elections citing the spread of Coronavirus. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy severely objected to the decision of indefinite

AP TO CONDUCT MPTC/ZPTC POLLS ON APRIL 8

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

Andhra Pradesh would go for elections to Mandal Parishad and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituencies on April 8. The state election commission issued a notification here on Thursday to resume the election process for these entities and released the schedule for the polls.

■ Page 2: Model code comes into force

postponement when there was only one corona case. Later, YSRC alleged that Ramesh Kumar was only safeguarding TD from poll humiliation. TD alleged forceful unanimous elections and demanded fresh notification when the gram panchayat and urban local bodies election process was restored last month.

■ Page 2: SEC to meet political parties today

BJP will win 200+ in WB: PM

Calls TMC shool (thorn) for Bengal, asks if Didi will contest from another seat

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, APRIL 1

Even as polling was under way in Nandigram on Thursday, the BJP's star campaigner, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Thursday said at a poll rally in West Bengal that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had made a "big mistake" by contesting from Nandigram and asked whether she is contemplating fighting from another constituency.

"Didi, is there any truth in the rumour that you are going to file nomination from another constituency? First, you went there (Nandigram), and the people gave you an answer. If you go somewhere else, the people of Bengal are ready," PM Modi said while addressing a rally in Uluberia, which will vote in the third phase on April 6.

Reacting to his potshots, the TMC tweeted, "Didi is winning Nandigram. The question of her fighting from another seat doesn't arise. @narendramodiJi, retract from your efforts to mislead people before they see your lies with the end of nomination in WB. Look for a safer seat in 2024, as you will be challenged in Varanasi."

Referring to the ongoing polls in the state, Mr Modi

claimed the huge turnout of voters would help the BJP surpass its target of 200 seats out of 294 to come to power for the first time in the state.

Addressing a BJP rally at Joynagar in South 24 Parganas, Mr Modi attacked Ms Banerjee's latest Bengali poll slogan: "Thanda thanda, Cool cool, Ebar Trinamul".

Calling the ruling Trinamul Congress a "shool" (thorn) and causing pain to the people of West Bengal, Mr Modi said, "I now find Didi, who often threatens and abuses, saying 'Cool, Cool' even after TMC unleashed atrocities on women," and added, "Trinamul cool nahi, Bangal ke logon ke liye shool hai, shool. Bangal ko asahaniya pira denevala shool hai Trinamul. Bangal ko raktaranjit karnevala shool hai Trinamul. Bangal ke saath anyay karnevala shool hai Trinamul (Trinamul is not cool. It is nothing but a thorn for the people of Bengal. It is a thorn which inflicts unbearable pain to Bengal, leaves Bengal bleeding and metes out injustice to Bengal). You have to give accounts of killings of brothers and sisters of Bengal. Bloodbath will not happen further."



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee arrives at a polling station during the second phase of West Bengal Assembly Polls, at Boyal in Nandigram on Thursday. — PTI

Nandigram turns violent

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
with agency inputs
KOLKATA, APRIL 1

Despite prohibitory orders issued under Section 144 of the CrPC, massive presence of Centre-ordered paramilitary forces and aerial surveillance by the Election Commission, Nandigram — the hot seat

in West Bengal Assembly elections where Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is taking on her protégé-turned-adversary Suwendu Adhikari — reeled under violence on Thursday, leaving Ms Banerjee stranded at a polling booth for over two hours. Banerjee had to be res-

cued by Central paramilitary forces stationed in the state after she was confined at a polling booth in Nandigram amid an extremely tense face-off between the BJP and Trinamul Congress supporters.

■ Page 2: Mamata dials Governor for rescue

CM Jagan, wife take Covid jabs

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy said on Thursday that the Coronavirus vaccination drive in the state would be completed in 90 days. During the day, Reddy and his wife Bharati took the jabs at Ward 140 of the Secretariat at Bharatpetta in Guntur, initiating the vaccination process.

The CM urged all the eligible persons aged above 45 to get vaccinated. Reiterating that coexistence with Covid is inevitable, the CM said vaccination is the only way to prevent the spread of the pandemic.

The CM said a house-to-house survey would be conducted with village volunteers and Asha workers ensuring that every eligible person got the jabs done. Volunteers would be collecting the details, enrolling people, and giving them the



Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy being administered vaccine, in Guntur on Thursday.

vaccination date.

As a precautionary measure, an ambulance will be made available along with the health staff at the secretariat.

After the vaccination, the CM was under medical observation for a while. Ministers Alla Nani, Mekathoti Sucharita, Sriranganatha Raju, MLAs Ambati Rambabu, Kilari Rosaiah, Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, and others were present.

EXPLOSIVES KEPT NEAR SV VARSITY KILL DOG, BOAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, APRIL 1

Explosives placed near a hostel on Sri Venkateswara University campus here claimed the lives of a stray dog and wild boar when the animals chewed on them. The explosion took place around midnight near SVU Hostel-I block, police said.

According to circle inspector N. Ravindra, it appeared the explosives were placed to hunt wild boars and pigs. The explosives were kept at two locations. On being informed by the varsity, the SVU campus police reached the spot with a dog squad. A search by the dog squad led the police to two more bombs in this vicinity. A case has been registered.

In the meanwhile, the police are learnt to have nabbed two persons, suspecting their role in the incident. As per sources, they persons were found to be local poachers, who are allegedly involved in clandestine sale of wild animals' meat.

THURSDAY | SENTIMENT

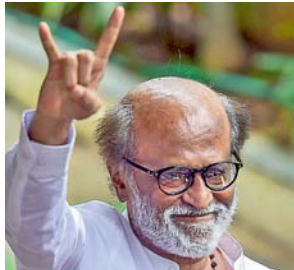
Award for superstar on his favourite day

Rajini wins Dadasaheb Phalke

ANUPAMA
SUBRAMANIAN | DC
with agency inputs
CHENNAI, APRIL 1

It looks like the Dadasaheb Phalke jury had done their homework on Rajinikanth's 'Thursday' sentiments and timed its award accordingly. Superstar Rajinikanth was conferred with the 51st Dadasaheb Phalke award on a Thursday, a day he consider special and when he schedules important events.

Prakash Javadekar, Union minister of information and broadcasting, took to social media to share the news. He wrote, "Happy to announce #Dadasaheb Phalke award for 2020 to one of the greatest actors in history of Indian cinema Rajinikanth. His contribution as actor, producer and



Rajinikanth

screenwriter has been iconic."

The jury for this year for the prestigious award included ace playback singer Asha Bhosle, director-producer Subhash Ghai, Malayalam superstar Mohanlal, music composer and singer Shankar Mahadevan and actor-politician Biswajeet Chatterjee.

Presented annually at the National Film Award cere-

mony, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award recognises 'outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema.' Instituted in 1969, Amitabh Bachchan was awarded with the honour in 2019.

Rajinikanth is the 12th south Indian to be conferred with this award. Legends like Dr Rajkumar, Sivaji Ganesan, Akkineni Nageshwar Rao, K. Balachander and K. Vishwanath have been awarded before.

The legendary actor has been honoured with the Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan in the past.

Rajinikanth dedicated the award to those who made him what he is now: "I dedicate this award to my friend and bus driver Raj Bahadur, who discovered my acting talent and encouraged me, my elder

brother Sathyanarayana Rao Gaekwad, who sacrificed a lot to make me an actor while struggling with poverty, my guru K. Balachander, who created this Rajinikanth," he said.

In a statement he also dedicated the award to producers, directors, technicians, distributors, theatre owners, media, the Tamil people, "who have given me my life, and my fans across the world."

Rajinikanth said he thanked the government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for conferring him the 'Indian cinema's highest honour.'

His long-time co-actor and friend Kamal Haasan said on Twitter: "...The award is 100 per cent appropriate for Rajini, who has proven that he can win over fans by appearing on screen."

KAMA AYURVEDA

AUTHENTIC • TIME-TESTED • EFFECTIVE

INTRODUCING MIRACLE IN A *mini* BOTTLE



KUMKUMADI NIGHT SERUM

**2.5X IMPROVEMENT
IN SKIN BRIGHTENING***

20% Reduction
in Pigmentation

15% Reduction
in Wrinkles

**In just 4 weeks
Clinically Proven****

Shop now at
www.kamaayurveda.com
& at Our Exclusive Stores.
Order directly on 18001232031

Also available on
   

* X represents skin conditions before product usage ** Based on clinical trials conducted over 28 days

IN BRIEF

30 contestants in fray for bypoll

Vijayawada: Thirty contestants are in fray for the Tirupati Lok Sabha bypoll scheduled to be held on April 17. The office of the Chief Electoral Officer issued a statement saying that the nominations of four contestants including Seelam Tirupaiah (TD), Prasada Annapurna (YSRC), Srikanth Puli (All Indian Forward Bloc) and Kunadoddi Eemian (Independent), were rejected after scrutiny on March 31. Some of the prominent nominees in the fray include, Chinta Mohan (INC), Nellore Yadagiri (CPM), Panabaka Lakshmi (TD), Maddila Gurumurthy (YSRC) and K. Ratna Prabha (BJP).

LOKESH DEMANDS CM MOUNT PRESSURE FOR SCS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

TD MLC Nara Lokesh demanded the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to start mounting pressure on the Union Government for the Special Category Status in fulfillment of the AP Reorganisation promises. He asked how the AP special status could become a closed chapter when the special union territory status was being promised to Puducherry in the latest BJP election manifesto.

Lokesh advised Jagan Mohan Reddy to stop his double-game and start making genuine efforts to ensure justice to the people of the state. He recalled that at the time of 2019 election, Reddy had vowed to bend the necks of the Centre in order to bring the rightful special status to the state.

The TD leader asserted that the Chief Minister should realise the fact that he would not be able to continue his secret journey with the BJP in AP any longer.

MODEL CODE COMES INTO FORCE DURING POLLS

From page 1

Accordingly, polling will be held wherever necessary on April 8 from 7am to 5pm and a re-poll can be held on April 9 from 7am to 5pm. Counting will be on April 10 from 8am and the results will be declared after the counting.

With the issue of notification, the model code of conduct has come into force with immediate effect in rural areas of the state. It will remain in force till the end of the election process.

Election will not be held to any MPTC/ZPTC where a court stay is in force or it is not feasible due to administrative/legal impediments. Election will not be held in case of territorial consciences, where death of a contesting candidate occurred. A notification on this will be issued separately.

A notification had been issued on March 7 last year for conduct of elections to MPTCs and ZPTCs in the state and the process was completed up to the stage of publication of the final list of contesting candidates on March 14 last. Subsequently, the SEC stopped the election process for six weeks due to the Covid-19 restrictions since March 15 last year.

Subsequently, the SEC conducted polls to gram panchayats in four phases from Feb 9, to 21 this year, as also to municipal corporations, municipalities and nagar panchayats and completed these on March 18.

New SEC, Nilam Sawhney, after assuming charge on Thursday for a period of five years, met Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan and briefed him about the preparations for conduct of polls to the MPTCs/ZPTCs. She held a meeting with chief secretary Aditya Nath Das and senior officials and took stock of the situation.

Later, the state government informed the SEC about its preparedness for resumption of elections to MPTCs/ZPTCS and pleaded for early resumption of the election process.

Accordingly, the state election commissioner held a video conference with collectors, superintendents/commissioners of police and chief executive officers of Zilla Praja Parishads and reviewed their preparedness for the suspended elections.

Later, the SEC issued the notification to resume the election process from where it was stopped last year.

Opposition applies strategies to outwit YSRC in byelection

TD divides every constituency into clusters consisting of 20,000 to 25,000 voters each

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, APRIL 1

TD leaders have been toiling away to beat the ruling party in the prestigious bye-election to the Tirupati Lok Sabha seat on April 7.

As part of the election strategy, the TD has divided every constituency into clusters consisting of 20,000 to 25,000 voters each. An incharge and four observers apart from a senior leader to oversee the election campaign have been posted for every 25 polling stations.

This is in addition to teams deputed by well-known psephologist Robin Sharma to every segment for studying the situation at the ground level over the past month. They have been giving feedback to the party on the effectiveness of the campaign and suggesting the needed change in approach.

While appreciating party chief N. Chandrababu Naidu for fielding a popular figure like former Union minister Panabaka Lakshmi, party loyalists have been appealing to the leaders to take urgent steps to motivate cadres.

According to the local leaders and cadres has been the non-availability of the constituency incharges who have been consciously avoiding their constituency.

This has become a major advantage to YSRC to poach the constituency leaders. "Whether it's the stick or the carrot, the strategy has paid off with many villages having no TD presence," a party leader said.

Reminding that the party is known for a strong cadre base at the grass-roots level, he expressed surprise over lack of serious efforts from the leadership to save the rocking boat.

The most common complaint from the loyalists is that most of the leaders have been confined to social media and have neglected the sentiments and needs of the cadres.

Stressing that TD nominee Lakshmi is a strong candidate compared to the nominees of other parties, party loyalists said that failures of YSRC government can be converted to the advantage of TD if urgent steps are taken to address the resentment and frustration among party cadres.

● **An incharge and four observers apart from a senior leader to oversee the election campaign have been posted for every 25 polling stations by TD.**

Prabha will become Union minister if elected: Kanna

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, APRIL 1

While appealing to the electorate to vote for their nominee K. Ratna Prabha for the Tirupati LS seat, former BJP state president Kanna Lakshminarayana hinted that she is likely to become Union minister if elected.

Addressing the media at the BJP office in Nellore on Thursday, he said that Ratna Prabha has rich experience in public service being an



TTD chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy, YSRC nominee for Tirupati Lok Sabha seat Dr M. Gurumurthy, Deputy CM Narayana Swamy, ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy and Adimulapu Suresh and Sarvepalli legislator Kakani Govardhan Reddy conduct an election campaign at Sarvepalli segment on Thursday.

Ministers ask voters to support Murthy

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, APRIL 1

Ministers and senior leaders of the YSRC called upon the electorate to back party nominee Dr M. Gurumurthy in the Tirupati Lok Sabha seat by-election to endorse their confidence once again in Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. Addressing a large gathering during the launch of the election campaign, after worshipping at the Sri Bhagawan Venkaiah Swamy temple at Golgadmudi in Sarepalli Assembly constituency, Deputy Chief Minister K. Narayana Swamy said that the Chief Minister had been paying special attention to develop every constituency as his own Assembly segment. He said Jagan Mohan Reddy had brought about innovation in the education system through unique reforms.

Taking a dig at the TD state president K. Atchannaidu for his utterances against the YSRC, Narayana Swamy alleged that the Telugu Desam had contributed nothing to the state after bifurcation and had failed to bail the state out of difficulties. He expressed the confidence that the party would win by a five lakh vote margin.

In his address, panchayat raj minister P. Ramachandra Reddy claimed that the YSRC had fulfilled 90 per cent of its poll promises within 18 months. He said the focus of the country would be on the Tirupati by-election if the voters give Dr Gurumurthy a five lakh vote

● **K. Narayana Swamy said that the Chief Minister had been paying special attention to develop every constituency as his own Assembly segment. He said CM had brought about innovation in the education system through unique reforms.**

majority. Speaking on the occasion, TTD Chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy said the Chief Minister had been doling out benefits through welfare programmes irrespective of caste and religion. Development is being seen in all the sector and Jagan Mohan Reddy is being considered a successful Chief Minister, he said.

While lauding the CM for nominating a "commoner" like Dr Gurumurthy, Sarvepalli legislator Kakani Govardhan Reddy reminded that other parties fielded well-known persons. He also said the YSRC government had developed the Sarvepalli constituency with ₹320 crore for roads and drains within 18 months of coming to power. He appealed to the voters to rally behind the YSRC nominee and ensure an unprecedented majority. He also asked the party cadre to work hard for the success of the LS nominee.

Dr Gurumurthy said the Chief Minister had been striving hard in the state to benefit all sections of the people. Development is the only agenda of the CM while expressing his gratitude for selecting him as a candidate for the prestigious seat.

IAS officer while expressing confidence in her victory.

He alleged that both the ruling party and the main Opposition do politics only during elections and switch over to business thereafter.

He demanded to know the contribution of TD and YSRC for Tirupati while pointing to Central government sanctions pertaining to six-lane highway between Naidupeta and Tirupati, flyover in Tirupati, and

development of Tirupati Railway Station and Airport.

He claimed credit for the Centre for setting up IIT in Tirupati, SEZs in Menakauru and Sri City apart from Obulapuram — Krishnapatnam railway line.

BJP district unit president Gundlapalli Bharat Kumar, state vice-presidents K. Vijayalakshmi and P. Surendra Reddy and Mukku Radhakrishna were present, among others.

TELUGU DESAM LAUNCHES 'SAVE TIRUPATI' WEBSITE

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, APRIL 1

Seeking to save Tirupati from the alleged all-round degradation, the Telugu Desam's digital wing on Thursday brought a new website titled — 'Save Tirupati' — and launched a mobile number to receive and react to the complaints from the public.

Speaking to media after the launch of new website — www.savetirupati.com at the party's office on Thursday, Tirupati EX-MLA M. Sugunamma said the objective of the new website is to highlight the atrocities committed by the ruling party on the people of pilgrim city. She also appealed to show their support to the TD, giving a missed call to +91 8099975975.

TD state president K. Atchannaidu, in a release, stated that the new website will break the silence and give voice to the Assembly constituency-wise issues concerning common people. He called upon the public to join them in the campaign of "Vinipiddam Tirupati Gonthur".

TD state general-secretary Chintakayala Vijay said, "In an unprecedented way of conducting governmental affairs, voices that raise concerns, and issues that deserve debates, are being silenced by the high-handed rule of the YSRC leaders. In this political crisis, it became a moral imperative for the TD to continue its fight to voice the sufferings of affected people".

"More than 40 false cases on Dalits and women have been registered across Tirupati since the YSRC government came to power. Besides, we are also witnessing continuous attacks on temples, appointing immoral people and employing non-Hindu personnel to manage TTD affairs, increasing accommodation costs for pilgrims at Tirumala, giving leeway to unofficial conversions, and treating Tirumala as a money-making machine", he alleged.

508 AGED PEOPLE, 234 DISABLED APPLY FOR POSTAL BALLOT

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, APRIL 1

Taking advantage of the Election Commission's directions to provide postal ballot facility to persons above 80-year-old and physically challenged, as many as 508 voters who are above 80-year-old applied for postal ballots.

In addition to this, 234 disabled persons also sought the provision to exercise their franchise during by-poll to Tirupati LS seat.

The ballot papers will be delivered at the doorstep of the voters and they will be collected by the officials after issuing a receipt to the voter.

A videographer, a micro-observer, and a police constable will also accompany the officials to ensure transparency in the exercise.

SEC to meet parties today

From page 1

The TD alleged illegalities when YSRC won 2,217 MPTCs unanimously. TD expected an anti-incumbency wave but to its surprise, YSRC swept both elections. Fearing more illegalities under the new SEC regime, it is planning to boycott the MPTC and ZPTC elections, sources said.

On Thursday, TD politburo member Varla Ramaiah wrote to Sawhney seeking fresh notification for MPTC and ZPTC elections. He stated that YSRC resorted to illegalities through forceful unanimous verdicts in 24 per cent posts in MPTCs and 19 per cent in ZPTCs. He recalled that

her predecessor had written a letter to the Union Home Secretary about the sheer violation of norms through forcible unanimous process in MPTC and ZPTC elections. He alleged that the police had also danced to the tunes of the government.

The SEC is convening a meeting of all political parties on Friday to discuss the MPTC and ZPTC elections.

TD AP president K. Atchannaidu said that they would reiterate their demand for fresh notification and explain the reasons. He said that they had not decided on boycotting the MPTC and ZPTC elections and would take a decision after the meeting with the SEC.

SCRAP NEW PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION SYSTEM, SAYS APUCF

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

Welcoming the circular issued by the municipal department to collect taxes for the year 2021-22 in the old tax format, Andhra Pradesh Urban Civil Federation (APUCF) convenor Ch. Babu Rao demanded the state government to cancel GO No. 198 under which tax would be collected on the basis of property value under the new system.

Babu Rao said that those who pay property tax before April 30 would get a 5 per cent discount.

He said that the amend-

ments to the law and the GO 198 issued by the government to calculate the tax component based on property value should be cancelled. He stated that furthermore GOs 196 and 197 pertaining to increase in drinking water and drainage charges every year are unchanged. He expressed fear that with no action taken on the GOs they can be brought to force any time.

He appealed to all the newly-elected members of the municipal councils to pass resolutions seeking abolition of these GOs and send them to the government.

Mamata dials Guv for rescue

From page 1

From the spot, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee dialled Governor Jagdeep Dhankar, telling him the situation was a failure of the Election Commission.

"Anything might happen at any moment. There is total breakdown of law and order," wheel-chair-bound Banerjee said, adding that she feared for her life. She was escorted out by the security forces, who managed to bring the situation under control after long-drawn negotiations with the villagers.

Soon after, the Governor tweeted, "Issues flagged @MamataOfficial a while ago on phone have been imparted (sic) to the concerned".

Despite this Nandigram recorded voter turnout of over 81 per cent till 5 pm. Though sporadic incidents of violence and allegations of vote fraud marked the second phase of West Bengal Assembly polls, a large voter turnout of more than 80 per cent was recorded. Bankura recorded the highest turnout at 82.92 per cent, followed by Purba Medinipur at 81.23, South 24 Parganas at 79.65 per cent, Paschim Medinipur at 78 per cent.

The Election Commission has sought a report from the East Midnapore district administration on Banerjee's presence at the booth for a long time and her allegations of electoral malpractices.

Violence erupted across the high-profile constituency as the polling

got underway in the morning. At Satengabari, TMC activists pelted stones on the convoy of Ms Banerjee's nemesis, Suwendu Adhikari of the BJP, and shouted "Go Back". Bombs were hurled at Sonachura and Kalicharanpur.

In Bhetukiya a BJP worker, Uday Dube (48), was found hanging in his residence. His party accused the TMC of driving him to commit suicide.

Allegations also surfaced against the BJP of not allowing TMC agents at voting booths, rigging and booth capturing at many polling centres.

Banerjee, who was keeping a tab on the polling from her temporary address at Rayapara in Nandigram, came out in the afternoon. She visited booth (No. 7) at Boyal Moktab Primary School at around 1.15 pm after getting complaints from her party of booth capturing and rampant rigging by the BJP in the absence of Central paramilitary forces.

The TMC chief was taunted by BJP workers with "Jai Shree Ram" slogan and her party workers, shouting "Khele Hobe", clashed with them. Sitting in her wheelchair inside the booth, a helpless CM was seen calling up Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar to complain as the fight between BJP and TMC workers escalated despite prohibitory orders. Stones were hurled and abuses traded, prompting the administration to rush a police contingent to the spot.

infrastructure under Nadu-Nedu initiative, RBKs were set up at the village level to help farmers," he said.

Deputy chief minister Dharmana Krishnadas, ministers Botsa Satyanarayana, Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani), Velampally Srinivas, higher officials of the municipal administration department, local leaders, mayors, deputy mayors, chairpersons, and vice-chairpersons of civic bodies were present.

SHORT TAKES

GOV. TELLS PEOPLE TO FOLLOW RULES ON GOOD FRIDAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan said that Christian brethren all over the world observe Good Friday in memory of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the Governor said that Jesus Christ showed great love for the entire humanity and made the ultimate sacrifice for their well-being and added that such sacrifice would be remembered with solemn hymns and prayers of thanksgiving.

The Governor appealed to the people to follow Covid-19 guidelines by wearing a mask and maintaining social distance.

WALTAIR DIVISION CREATES IN FREIGHT HANDLING

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 1

Despite the Covid-19 challenges, Indian Railways closed 2020-21 financial year with record freight loading. Waltair Division of East Coast Railway did commendable work towards freight transportation and uninterrupted supply of essential commodities.

In the closing month of this fiscal year 2020-21, Waltair Division surpassed last year's originating loading earnings of Rs 811.61 crore compared to last year's earnings of Rs 753.53 crore, which showed the growth of 7.71 per cent.

In this period, Waltair Division has shown good performance with the earnings to the tune of ₹7272.88 crore by transporting 61.13 million tonnes of freight at an average of 2,750 wagons per day. Waltair Division has maintained the momentum of highest ever loading on the closing day with 81 rakes. Divisional Railway Manager Chetan Kumar Shrivastava appreciated the staff and said the freight loading for March 2021 crossed last year's loading and earnings for the same period. East Coast Railway is the highest loading zone in Indian Railways with 204.88 million tonnes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Shaik Parveen (Old Name), D/o. Shaik Abdulla, Flat No. 101, Radhika Residency, Sabbanipeta, Tagarapuvallasa, Bheemunipatnam, Visakhapatnam - 531162, AP. Changing my name from Shaik Parveen (Old Name) to Koppala Anusha (New Name). Shall henceforth be known as Koppala Anusha (New Name), W/o. Koteswara Rao for all purposes.

RINL MAKES RECORD TURNOVER OF ₹18,000 CRORE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 1

Amid the privatisation threat, RINL, the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, achieved a record turnover of ₹18,000 crore during the last financial year. This is the second highest turnover since inception of the steel plant.

Chairman and Managing Director of RINL P.K. Rath said the company made an impressive growth of 13 per cent and the sales volumes reached 4.45 million tonnes, with a growth of 4 per cent. RINL registered a net profit of about ₹740 crore in the last four months.

In March alone, the company achieved a sales turnover of ₹3,300 crore and sales volume of 7,11,000 for the first time in the history of the company. This sales turnover is a whopping 42 per cent more than the previous best of ₹2,329 crore in March 2019.

Addressing senior officers in a virtual meeting on Thursday, Rath highlighted the overall improvement in the performance of the company which achieved best ever production figures exceeding capacity of 6.3 MTPA (Million Tonnes Per Annum) expansion.

"During the year, we achieved export sales of 1.3 Million Tonne, which is 261 per cent higher than the previous year. In addition to this, 35 out of total 57 Ocean export contracts were finalised with 100 per cent advance payment terms. Having established such a good market for exports, there should not be any looking back," the CMD told the officials.

He said the RINL spent around ₹10 crore during the year under CSR which includes ₹5 crore to PM Cares fund for Covid 19.

Rath also announced that the Forged Wheel Plant in Raebareilly is expected to start production from the first week of April.

● "During the year, we achieved export sales of 1.3 Million Tonne, which is 261 per cent higher than the previous year. In addition to this, 35 out of total 57 Ocean export contracts were finalised with 100 per cent advance payment terms.

Left condemns NIA raids, arrests

Govt trying to weaken VSP stir: Leaders

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 1

The Left parties, including CPI and CPM, strongly condemned the NIA raids and arrests of activists and lawyers in the Telugu states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

A committee fighting against the UAPA repeal, members of mass organisations and Left leaders held a meeting in CPI office in Visakhapatnam on Thursday.

The state joint secretary of CPI J.V. Satyanarayana Murthy demanded immediate release of activists and lawyers and stated that NIA raids were terrorising the people and civil rights activists in the two states only to prevent them from taking part in the steel plant agitation.

He said the central government was resorting to repression against those demanding the implementation of constitutional rights. "We will fight against repression in both the states," Murthy said and added that the government should implement the High Court order on NIA.

Strongly condemning the raids, district secretary of CPM, K. Lokanadham said the government was trying to weaken the agitation against the steel plant privatisation by resorting to the arrests of mass leaders.

"Carrying our raids and arresting people without the consent of the state governments is against the spirit of the federal system," Lokanadham said. He said the first UAPA case was registered in Munchingput and the lawyers who have been fighting against the case were being targeted, he said.

Stree Shakti convenor Lalita said the government has imposed undeclared curfew in both the states. She said the main mission of the government was to scuttle the steel plant stir.

● The state joint secretary of CPI J.V. Satyanarayana Murthy demanded immediate release of activists and lawyers and stated that NIA raids were terrorising the people and civil rights activists in the two states only to prevent them from taking part in the steel plant agitation.

Mahila Chetana convenor K. Padma, advocate K. Padma and IFTU leader Y. Kondaiah were present in the meeting.

In Kadapa, CPI district secretary Gujjula Eswaraiah called it a vicious act of NIA. He said it was a conspiracy by the governments to stifle public movements and questioning voices. He said it was undemocratic to conduct searches in homes to prosecute unrelated cases. He said the central government was conspiring to murder constitutional rights and democracy by making false allegations against all those who spoke on behalf of the people against the government's policies. NIA searched homes of faculty, lawyers, writers and artists.

On the arrest of Varalakshmi, a native of Proddatur in Kadapa district and former secretary of the Revolutionary Writers' Association (VIRASAM), he said she was teaching in the college and writing occasionally but the NIA took her into custody.

He said it was time for democrats and intellectuals to speak out against such heinous acts.

SEB launches Operation Savera to curb drug menace

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

The State Enforcement Bureau (SEB) has formed task force teams at the state and district levels under 'Operation Savera' to end the drug menace. SEB state commissioner Vineet Brijlal said that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had sought stern action against drug peddlers and to free AP from the drug menace.

A press meet at Guntur on Thursday, Brijlal said the task forces had been formed following the following the directions of the CM to bring about awareness against drugs.

Brijlal said a pilot project of Operation Savera had been started in Krishna and Guntur districts under which awareness programmes were conducted over the past week. Joint task forces led by the SEB commissioner, range DIGs and district SPs and district task forces

● Brijlal said a pilot project of Operation Savera had been started in Krishna and Guntur districts under which awareness programmes were conducted over the past week. Joint task forces led by the SEB commissioner, range DIGs and district SPs and district task forces conducted programmes and a meeting was held to discuss the measures initiated to curb the drug menace.

conducted programmes and a meeting was held to discuss the measures initiated to curb the drug menace.

He said that intensive checks were conducted in Ibrahimpatnam, Ganavaram, Krishnalanka, Satyanarayanaapuram and Patamata in Krishna district and Guntur, Sattenapalli, Piduguralla, Vinukonda, Narasaraopeta, Repalle and Tenali of Guntur district. Brijlal said that 44 persons were arrested in 22 cases and 59.70 kg ganja was seized in Guntur district. In Krishna district, 12 persons were arrested in 10 cases and 19 kgs of ganja were seized from them. He stated that besides

this, four grams of methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) were seized from four persons.

He warned drug peddlers of stern action and appealed to the people to give information about drugs at the following numbers: SEB state control room 9491030853 and 0866-2843131; Tollfree number 18004254868; Guntur district control room 9490619395; Vijayawada city control room 8332900100 and Machilipatnam control room number 9182990136. Guntur Urban SP R.N. Ammi Reddy, Guntur Rural SP Vishal Gunni and other SEB officials participated in the programme.

HEATWAVE CONTINUES TO SWEEP COAST

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 1

Heatwave conditions continued in the coastal Andhra Pradesh with the temperature 6° Celsius above normal in some places on Thursday. The IMD said the conditions would continue till Sunday, when thunderstorms were expected to lash the coast under the influence of a trough over north coastal Andhra Pradesh.

The report said the heatwave persisted in isolated pockets of Krishna, Guntur and Prakasam district and in some places in East and West Godavari district.

On Friday, Chittoor district might experience heatwave conditions in some isolated places.

Thunderstorms and gusty winds and lightning are expected in north coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam from Saturday to Monday due to the trough.

State Disaster Relief Fund commissioner K. Kannababu in a release from Amaravati said that 207 mandals will experience heatwave and severe heatwave conditions in 148 mandals on Friday. Of these, 33 mandals would be in Guntur, 24 in Krishna, 18 each in West Godavari and Vizianagaram, 16 in East Godavari, 15 in Visakhapatnam and 10 in Srikakulam.

He alerted the district administrations, which are likely to experience the severe weather conditions, to prepare relief measures.

The highest temperature was recorded in Tirupati with 43°C, 4.6 degrees above the normal for this time of the year, Amaravati and Nellore 42.6°C, Vijayawada 42.8°C, 5.8°C above normal, Kavali 6.1°C above normal at 41.4°C, Ongole 42.3°C at 6.7°C above normal, Visakhapatnam was comfortable at 32°C.

Meanwhile, the low pressure area over the south Andaman Sea persisted along with an associated cyclonic circulation. It is likely to become more marked over central Andaman Sea during the next 12 hours and is likely to concentrate into a depression during subsequent 24 hours. It is likely to move north-eastwards towards the Myanmar coast.

The north-south trough from Jharkhand to north Coastal Andhra Pradesh has become less marked.

TEMPLE THEFT CASE SOLVED, 3 ARRESTED

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 1

The Visakhapatnam city police solved the theft at the famous Karaka Chettu Polamamba temple, Waltair in Vizag city by arresting a family of three from Tamil Naidu. The police also recovered the stolen gold and silver of the temple and cash.

The arrested have been identified as P. Umesh (43) and his son U. Dhiraj (19) and younger son (juvenile). The trio hail from South Kundra, Kanyakumari district of Tamil Naidu.

The trio broke into the temple and decamped with over 250 grams of gold jewellery, including the gold crown of the Goddess, four kg of silver ornaments and around Rs 3.25 lakh cash from the hundi (collection box), altogether worth over ₹8.95 lakh in the early hours

on March 21. The gang also snapped the connection to 17 CCTV cameras and took away the hard disc along with the DVR.

Commissioner of police Manish Kumar Sinha on Thursday told reporters that they have collected the CCTV footage at few places and also gathered the technical evidence after which developed an information system about the gang before solving the case.

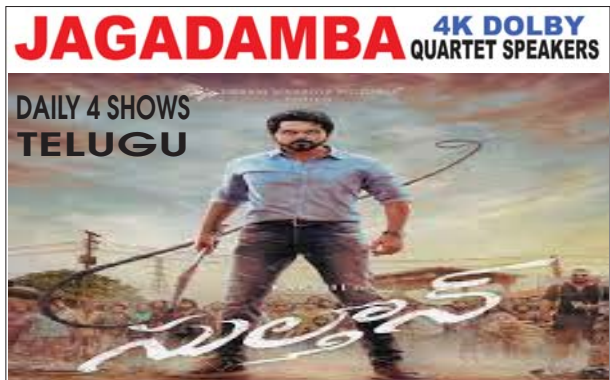
Top cop said Dhiraj was arrested near Payakaraopeta area in Vizag region on the charges of ganja smuggling on February 26 this year and after being enlarged on bail, the trio visited Polamamba temple a couple of times, he said that they found the implement used for breaking the locks and a footprint. They located the seller and examined the CCTV footage of the shop and identified the trio.

AP RECORDS 1,271 NEW COVID CASES,

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh continues to witness a surge of fresh cases of Covid-19 as 1,271 cases have been reported with three deaths in the last 24 hours. The state health authorities reported here on Thursday that out of 31,809 samples tested, 1,271 persons were infected with covid.

VISAKHAPATNAM METROPOLITAN REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
PUBLIC NOTICE
VMRDA-LAYOUT/APDPMS No. 1167/0065/LP/VMRDA/2021, Dt.31-03-2021
M/s. Surya Estates, represented by Sri D. Satyanarayana Reddy has requested for approval of layout to an extent of Ac.12.0332 cts covered in Sy.Nos.119/1P, 3P, 120/1P, 2P, 121/1P of Sarika (V), Vizianagaram (M), Vizianagaram District vide online VMRDA-LAYOUT/APDPMS No.1167/0065/LP/VMRDA/2021 is under process in VMRDA.
Hence, the general public is hereby informed to submit any objections/suggestions in this regard 7 days from the date of publication to VMRDA pertaining to the above approval of layout application failing which it will be construed that there are no objections/suggestions etc., and the above approval of layout application will be processed as per rules.
Sd/-Metropolitan Commissioner, VMRDA

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL
COMMISSIONER OF CENTRAL TAX,
HYDERABAD, GST Bhavan,
L.B Stadium Road, Basheerbagh,
HYDERABAD-500 004
SPORTS QUOTA RECRUITMENT
Applications are invited from meritorious sports persons who have represented the Country / State/ University in the International/National/Inter University (conducted by Inter University Sports board) Tournaments for appointment to three number of posts (03) of Havaldar (Level – 1 in the pay matrix (Rs. 18,000-56,900)) under Sports quota. Further details regarding the discipline of Sports earmarked for recruitments, educational qualifications and other eligibility conditions are available at departmental websites <http://www.cbic.gov.in> and <http://cgsthyderabadzone.gov.in>. The application completed in all respects should reach the undersigned on or before 04.06.2021. For candidates domiciled in North-Eastern States, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Jammu & Kashmir, the application should reach the above address by 14.06.2021.
Sd/-
Additional Commissioner (CCA)
O/o The Principal Commissioner of Central Tax,
Hyderabad, GST Bhavan, L.B. Stadium Road,
Basheerbagh, Hyderabad - 500004



CLASSIFIEDS
FOR SALE PROPERTY
FLATS
SAINIKPURI 3 & 4 BHK flats, 1500 sft to 2460 sft with all amenities, 100% vastu. Ready to occupy, gated community. www.happy-homeshyderabad.com. Ph:7729999728 & 7729999732. (S/2021/C02793)
TARNAKA 2 & 3 BHK flats 1225 sft to 1725 sft with all amenities, 100% vastu, ready to occupy, gated community. www.happy-homeshyderabad.com. Ph:7729999728 & 7729999732. (S/2021/C02792)
PLOTS
PHARMACY, SAGARHIGHWAY yacharam DTCP approved 70 acres fully developed layout. "Temple trees" adjacent to 100ft roads. Bank loan available. Persoyd 7999/ more details ph:7097623456 (HYMM/2122/C00011)
SITUATION VACANT ADVT. SALES & MKTG.
WANTED EXPERIENCED Sales Executives for selling fabrics and sarees of leading textile brands in Rayalaseema-Andhra Pradesh. Good Salary. Contact: 9971152852. (S/2122/C00001)
CHANGE OF NAME
VENKATA Ratna Kamakshi Nallamalli w/o venkateswara Murty Nallamalli . Now i am changing my surname according my educational certificates and Aadhaar as chinni venkata ratna kamakshi. Now onwards my name will be Chinni Venkata Ratna Kamakshi. I will be responsible in future. (W/2122/AT000005)
EDUCATIONAL DISTANCE EDUCATION
ONLY FOR Educational Consultants/ Academies. No Advance Fee. Students please no call. Contact for Verifiable +Fast Track :Graduation (15,000)B.Ed.-M.Ed. -NCTE-Recognised (30000)BBA- MBA-BCA-MCA (20-25,000)from Government University. WES Documentation & Attestation Support Available. 47-years Educational Experience. Shiksha Bharti. Varanasi. Mobile:9519759663, 9915103781. Email:shikshabharti88@yahoo.com (HYMM/2122/C00007)
MEDICAL
PILOT MEDICALS. Guaranteed Fitness for Commercial Pilot, India, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia by very experienced specialist. Contact 9866865347, 9515805631. (S/2021/C02819)
NOTICE
Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries while responding to advertisements in these columns. Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. does not vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers. The Printer, Publisher, Editor and Owner of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. shall not be held responsible / liable for any consequences, in case such claims are found to be false.

Go for Atal Pension Yojana that ensures life of dignity after sixty

More than 3 crore beneficiaries and counting...

You also join and avail not one, but three guaranteed benefits from the age of 60 years

Life-time guaranteed pension, from ₹ 1,000 to 5,000 per month

Guarantee of equal pension to the spouse in case of the death of the account holder

In the event of the death of both account holder and life-partner, the nominee will receive the entire accumulated corpus (Indicative amount : ₹ 1.70 lakh to ₹ 8.50 lakh)

If you are between 18 and 40 years of age, you can join the Atal Pension Yojana.

Contact your nearest Post Office/Bank Branch today or call 1800 110 069 (toll-free) or Visit: www.pfrda.org.in

Follow us on : [@PFRDAOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/PFRDAOfficial) [@PFRDAOfficial](https://www.instagram.com/PFRDAOfficial) [PFRDAOfficial](https://www.youtube.com/PFRDAOfficial)

SHORT TAKES

JAWAN BEGINS KASHMIR TO KANYAKUMARI RUN

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, APRIL 1

An Army corporal on Thursday began a walk from Kashmir to Kanyakumari with a resolve to set a Guinness World Record.

Naik N.A. Velu P. of the Army's 60 Para Field Hospital who was sent off from the headquarters of the Chinara or 15 Corps headquarters here by his colleagues on the journey covering a distance of approximately 4,300 kilometres within 50 days is an "ultra-marathoner who is attempting a Guinness book of world record, defence spokesman Lt. Colonel Emron Musavi said.

He was flagged off from 92 Base Hospital at Srinagar with a heart-warming gathering of enthusiasts.

ODISHA SIZZLES UNDER SEVERE HEAT WAVE

DC CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 1

Bhubaneswar which on Wednesday recorded the country's maximum temperature of 44.2 degrees Celsius, continued to sizzle under intense heat wave on Thursday. The city, according to local meteorological office sources, recorded 39.8 degrees Celsius temperature.

While Angul and Talcher recorded the highest 42.7 degrees Celsius temperature, mercury hovered over 40 degrees Celsius in at least 13 other cities.

Stating that the heat wave conditions would continue till next 24 hours, the weather department cautioned people not to venture out under the scorching sun.

Like Wednesday, normal life was severely affected on Thursday after mercury began to shoot up after 8 am.

Soon after, the local Met office posted a tweet warning people to avoid direct heat exposure till 4 pm. The Regional Meteorological Centre forecasted that there would be a fall in temperature in the state from Friday.

TIGERESS FOUND DEAD IN MP RESERVE FOREST

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, APRIL 1

A female tiger died in Bandhavgarh reserve forest core zone which was struck by a wildfire a couple of days ago, forest officers said on Thursday. Carcass of the 13-year-old tigress was found in Rahania forest beat area under Magadhi range in the reserve late on Tuesday night, field director of Bandhavgarh tiger reserve Vincent Rahim said.

Post-mortem of the body was done on Wednesday by the veterinary doctor of the range Nitin Gupta in the presence of representatives of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and senior officers of the state forest department including Rahim.

The post-mortem report, made public late on Wednesday night, suggested that the big cat may have succumbed to injuries caused by a fierce fight with another tiger, a senior forest officer told this newspaper.

"Prima facie it appears the tigress had suffered grievous wounds due to a tussle with a male tiger during their mating. The big cat had injury marks on her shoulder and neck. She may have succumbed to her injuries", Rahim said.



People queue up to vote on Thursday during the second phase of Assembly elections in East Medinipur district of West Bengal.

— PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

Cong, AIUDF aim to make big gains in Assam 2nd phase

Assam records 73% polling in 39 Assembly constituencies in phase-II

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, APRIL 1

In the second phase of polling, Assam on Thursday recorded more than 73 per cent polling in 39 Assembly seats spread across six different regions of the state. The Nowgong seat recorded the highest turnout of 83.10 per cent.

The six regions which went to polls on Thursday included Southern Assam's Barak Valley with 15 seats, Central Assam's 12 seats, Hill districts' five seats, Bodoland Territorial Council's four seats, Kamrup rural's two seats and one seat of lower Assam.

The political battles are also different in each of these regions. The biggest chunk of seats in the second phase are in the Barak Valley, in southern Assam. Bengali speaking voters are in a majority in this region, which has a sizeable number of migrants, both — Hindus and Muslims. The BJP has traditionally been stronger among Bengali Hindus.

This region also has a sizeable number of Muslim population — 60 per cent in Hailakandi district, 56 per cent in Karimganj district and 37 per cent in Cachar district. The Barak Valley Muslims are also Bengali speaking. In the 2016 Assembly polls, the BJP had won eight out of 15 seats, the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) four and the Congress three.

This time, however, the equations have changed with the Congress and AIUDF joining hands. In 2016, out of the eight seats BJP won, four were due to a vote split between the Congress and AIUDF. This time the two parties have come together therefore, the alliance is hoping its chances of inflicting heavy losses on the BJP in this region.

Three seats each in Darrang, Morigaon, Nagaon and Hajo districts also voted in the second phase of polling on Thursday. Five seats in Nagaon have already voted along with Upper Assam in the first phase of polling.

Thursdays took his critically ill son to the Dabugan Health Centre after his condition deteriorated.

The doctor who attended the infant wrote the prescription after searching the medicine on Google, he said.

"The doctor advised that my son needed a life-saving injection. He prescribed the injection not from his memory but after doing a Google search. Soon after the baby was administered the injection, he closed eyes and died," Bisoyee added.

"The doctor didn't bother to refer us to the Umerkote hospital in time where we could have availed better treatment," he alleged.

On the other hand, the medical officer at the health centre rubbished the allegation of 'Google search' medication.

"There was no medical negligence. The child suffered from severe pneumonia and was admitted to the hospital in a critical condition. Appropriate medicines were used. But, he was in the last stage," said Subhasis Sahoo, the medical officer at Dabugan.

"They took the patient to Umerkote, but returned mid-way after his condition deteriorated. When they reached here the patient had become very critical," Sahoo claimed.

Assam polls battle between 'jhooth' & 'vikas', says Modi

DC CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI, APRIL 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday came down heavily on Opposition Congress and said that the ongoing Assam Assembly election has become a "battle" between the Congress-AIUDF grand alliance of "maha jhooth" (great lie) and National Democratic Alliance of "maha vikas" (great development).

Addressing a public rally in Kokrajhar which is scheduled to go for polling in the third and final phase of polling on April 6, Modi said, "Football is very popular among youth here. In terms of football

people have yet again shown a Red Card to Congress and its Mahajot. People of Assam have trust in the NDA for the development, peace, security of the state. This is an election between the 'maha jhooth' of Mahajot (Congress-AIUDF grand alliance) and 'maha vikas' of the double engine government."

Asserting that the BJP is set for a grand victory in Phase-I polls, Modi said the NDA government is working for welfare of Assam with the mantra of 'sabka saath sabka vikas sabka vishwas'. "People of Assam have given blessings to NDA in 1st phase of polling. In the 1st phase, Assam has put a stamp on

grand victory of NDA," he said.

Referring to BJP government's developmental initiatives in the state, Modi said, "Medical college is being set up in Kokrajhar at a rapid pace. A package of ₹1,500 crore has also been provided for development. Bodoland University, Central Institute of Technology, Bodoland Bhawan and several other institutions are becoming the identity of this region."

He said, "From providing land pattas to over 3.25 lakh families, increasing rates of workers to making the life of women working in tea gardens, the NDA has tried to bring all-round development."

EC issues notice to BJP minister

DC CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI, APRIL 1

Amidst the charges of intimidating Opposition by ruling BJP minister in the name of NIA probe, a candidate from Bodoland Peoples' Front (BPF), a partner of the Opposition Congress-led grand alliance, switched sides and joined the ruling BJP late on Wednesday night.

With less than a week to go for the third and final phase of Assembly polls, Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in a mid-night social media post announced, "Official candidate of BPF and so called Congress-led alliance from Tamulpur LAC (legislative Assembly constituency) Ram Das Basumatary met me a short while ago. He has expressed his desire to join BJP and retire from the election."

Earlier on Thursday Congress claimed that its Mahajot candidate from Tamulpur constituency is

missing and it asked the ruling BJP to answer about his whereabouts.

Congress leader Manish Tiwari who is camping in Guwahati told reporters, "Congress-led Mahajot candidate from Tamulpur constituency, Rangja Basumatary of BPF was made to disappear. It's the Assam government and BJP's responsibility to answer where he is. We demand from the Election Commission that a probe should be done in this matter."

However, soon after Rangja Khungur Basumatary, who is also known as Ram Das Basumatary appeared before the media to announce his retirement from the contest.

Meanwhile in a related development, the EC on Thursday issued a notice to Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for his alleged remark of misusing NIA against Congress candidate. The EC asked Sarma for submitting an explanation by April 2.



RAJA BANNED FROM CAMPAIGN FOR TWO DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, APRIL 1

Former union minister and DMK deputy general secretary, A. Raja, has been debarred from campaigning for '48 hours with immediate effect' by the Election Commission of India, which was not satisfied with his reply to a notice sent to him on a complaint by the AIADMK.

The ECI order on Thursday reprimanded Raja for violating the Model Code of Conduct and delisted him as DMK's star campaigner, besides advising him 'to be watchful and not to make intemperate, indecent, derogatory, obscene remarks and lower the dignity of women in future during election campaign.'

The AIADMK's complaint dated March 27, alleging that Raja had made a derogatory and scandalous speech during a campaign on March 26 at the Thousand Lights constituency, was forwarded by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Tamil Nadu to the ECI.

Raja was asked to give his explanation after the ECI obtained a factual report from the CEO and on the basis of preliminary reports and transcripts of his speeches made at Keelapalur and Meensuruti.

The order said that Raja had described Stalin as a child of good relationship and good birth and Edappadi K. Palaniswami as a child of a bad relationship and a prematurely born child at Keelapalur.

Troops sent to stop Myanmar refugees' entry

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

Additional battalions of ITBP, SSB and Assam Rifle are being rushed to the India-Myanmar border as some refugees from Myanmar have been trying to enter India in wake of Army action against protesters there. Though so far Myanmar residents are not being allowed, Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) will discuss the issue in its meeting next week, sources said.

Security and intelligence agencies are closely monitoring the situation all along the India-Myanmar border as there is considerable tension in Myanmar as Army has launched a massive offensive against protesters in their country. This has forced people to flee from Myanmar and a lot of them have been trying to enter India.

But so far border guards have managed to stop any illegal entry into India and have contained the situation along the border. India shares almost a 1,500-km long border with Myanmar.

Following the tense situation in Myanmar it has been decided that additional central paramilitary forces like ITBP, SSB and Assam Rifle have

been rushed to the Myanmar border.

Sources said so far it has been decided that illegal migrants will not be allowed into India. However, as a humanitarian gesture, Indian security forces have been providing food, medicine and water to some residents of villages in Myanmar which are close to the border. However, they are not being permitted to cross over into India.

Top security sources said that the Cabinet Committee on Security, which is likely to meet sometime next week, will discuss the Myanmar situation in detail.

A decision could also be taken on the crucial issue on whether some refugees from Myanmar should be allowed inside India purely on a temporary basis till the time the situation normalises in Myanmar.

"So far government policy is clear that no illegal migration would be allowed from Myanmar. But maybe some relaxation could be given only on temporary and humanitarian basis to give shelter to some refugees. But the decision will have to be taken by the Cabinet Committee on Security," a senior home ministry official added.

COVID UPDATE

NEW VARIANT FOUND IN CHHATTISGARH

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC with agency inputs BHOPAL, APRIL 1

New variant of Coronavirus, named N-440, has been found in Chhattisgarh indicating mutation of virus in the state, Chhattisgarh health minister T.S. Singhdeo said on Thursday.

According to him, the Centre has sent a report to the Chhattisgarh government recently confirming that the new variant of Coronavirus was found in five samples from the state.

However, doctors say a study was yet to be done as to how the new variant of the virus would exactly affect our immune system.

But, it has been found that the mutant was capable of weakening the immune system.

Singhdeo said no Coronavirus variants of Britain, South Africa and Brazil were so far detected in Chhattisgarh.

All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Raipur, gathers samples in Chhattisgarh and sends them to the National Centre for Disease Control for tests.

The first positive case in Chhattisgarh was reported in Raipur on March 18, 2020.

Meanwhile, India on Thursday recorded 79,275 new cases and 461 deaths in the last 24 hours taking the nationwide tally of cases to 1,22,99,987.

FOUR MORE DIE IN J&K, 461 NEW CASES REPORTED

DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, APRIL 1

The number of Coronavirus cases are increasing with each passing day in Jammu and Kashmir.

On Thursday, as many as 461 fresh cases of the virus were reported including 361 from the Valley and 100 from Jammu region of the Union Territory which is the highest daily rise this year.

Also, four more people died of the infection, raising the toll to 1,998. "The total number of Covid-19 positive cases in J&K has risen to 1,31,421. However, only 2,874 are active positive whereas 1,26,549 patients have recovered and 1,998 have died," an official spokesman said in Jammu.

Several areas in the Valley have been declared contaminated zones following residents in fairly large numbers contracted the virus.

Also, eight schools have been shut for three to seven days after the swab samples of more than 60 students and half a dozen teachers collected during a recent drive by the J&K Health Department turned positive for the virus.

The Jammu & Kashmir government had on Tuesday announced a slew of measures to contain Coronavirus in view of fresh surge in positive cases.

Odisha infant dies as doc gives injection after 'Google search'

AKSHAY KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 1

A couple hailing from Odisha's Nabarangpur on Thursday alleged that their six-month-old infant son died after he was administered an injection which was prescribed by the doctor after a 'Google search' at Dabugan Health Centre.

The local medical officer, however, denied the allegation and said proper injection was given to the infant. According to the reports, Prasant Bisoyee of Badaolama village in Nabarangpur district on

HOLY GATHERING

It is for the 1st time in history that the event is held for just a month

Kumbh Mela begins in Haridwar

Haridwar, April 1: The Kumbh Mela formally began in Haridwar on Thursday with several restrictions imposed on devotees coming to attend the event amid rising cases of Covid-19 in various states including Uttarakhand.

Officials associated with organising the event, including Mela Officer Deepak Rawat, Mela IG Sanjay Gunjyal and Haridwar SSP Janmejaya Khanduri, worshipped in temples along the banks of the Ganga to pray for a safe and unhindered Kumbh fair.

Checking

Uttarakhand's borders with Uttar Pradesh at Narsan in Roorkee and Kashipur in Udham Singh Nagar district has been intensified to ensure that only people with a negative RT-PCR test report proceed for the Kumbh Mela.

"Besides registering on our portal, it is compulsory for devotees to bring a negative RT-PCR test report with them," Mela Officer Deepak Rawat said.

A negative RT-PCR test report not older than 72 hours before arrival has been made mandatory for devotees gathering for the

Kumbh by the Uttarakhand High Court. In an order on Wednesday, the high court said a negative RT-PCR certification will be compulsory even in the case of devotees who have received the first dose of the Corona vaccine.

Devotees who have taken the anti-Covid vaccination will have to show their certificates and follow the anti-Covid guidelines like wearing masks, maintaining social distancing and frequently undertaking hand sanitisation in the Kumbh Kshetra.

The high court has also asked the health authori-

ties in Haridwar to ramp up testing from 5,000 per day to 50,000. Uttarakhand reported 293 positive Covid-19 cases on Wednesday with Dehradun and Haridwar districts accounting for a majority of them.

Dehradun reported 171 cases followed by Haridwar which reported 70, the Covid Control room in Dehradun said.

It is for the first time in the history of the grand religious congregation held on the banks of the Ganga in Haridwar once in 12 years that its duration has been curtailed to just one month due to the

pandemic. In normal circumstances, Kumbh is held for nearly four months. Its last edition was held in Haridwar from January 14 to April 28 in 2010.

Between April 1 and 30, there will be three major bathing dates (shahi snan or royal baths) on April 12, 14 and 27.

Besides the shahi snan dates when people descend in droves on the banks of the Ganga in Haridwar for a holy bath, a heavy turnout of devotees is also expected on the occasion of Chaitra Pratipada on April 13 and Ram Navami on April 21.

— PTI



SHORT TAKES

Female lifter fails
dope test, axed

New Delhi: A woman weightlifter, who was part of the ongoing national camp at the National Institute of Sports in Patiala, has been provisionally suspended after testing positive for banned substance. The weightlifter, a national record holder and who has participated in several international tournaments including the Commonwealth Championship where she won gold, was set to be a part of the Indian team for the Asian Championship to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from April 16 to 25. "Yes, she has failed a dope test. The report came about 10-15 days back," a source in the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLF) confirmed. Taking a break from the national camp, the weightlifter went home in October last year when national coach Vijay Sharma and star lifter Mirabai Chanu had travelled to the United States.

After she returned to the camp, her sample was collected by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) in November last. The weightlifter had allegedly consumed a supplement that contained the prohibited substance. — PTI

Ex-Olympian guilty
of drug smuggling

Brisbane: Former two-time Olympic silver medallist canoeist Nathan Baggeley and his younger brother have been found guilty of plotting to smuggle 200 million Australian dollars (\$150 million) worth of cocaine into Australia. The 45-year-old Baggeley and his 39-year-old brother Dru were charged with attempting to import 650 kilograms of cocaine in 2018. After about eight hours of deliberating, a Brisbane Supreme Court jury found both men guilty on Thursday. Nathan Baggeley won two canoeing silver medals at the 2004 Athens Olympics and also was a three-time world champion. But his career was tarnished with drug scandals testing positive for banned steroids in 2005 and also being jailed with Dru Baggeley 10 years later for his role in a drug manufacturing syndicate. The Baggeley brothers will be sentenced on a date yet to be decided by the court. — AP

Telangana draw
a blank in cycling

Hyderabad: Telangana failed to win even a single medal at the 72nd Senior, 49th Junior & 35th Sub-Junior National Track Cycling Championship that concluded at SATS Velodrome in Osmania University, Hyderabad, on Wednesday. It was a major embarrassment for the hosts, who had fielded 42 athletes, none of whom could make the podium in the 44 events that were part of the championships in which 552 players from 24 states participated. Officials presenting medals was the closest locals could get to the podiums. However, the meet saw 14 records being broken. Records fell in the Men's Elite Team Sprint (Manipur), Men's Elite Sprint ESOW (Andaman and Nicobar), Team Pursuit (SSCB), Individual Pursuit (Anil Manglaw from RSPB) and 1 km Time Trial (Amarjeet Singh, Punjab), Women's Elite Individual Pursuit (Swasti Singh), Team Pursuit (RSPB). The Junior Men broke four records while the Junior Women and Sub-Juniors Boys beat one record each.

20 players in lead
at Senior chess

Hyderabad: International Master Rahul Srivatsav is sharing the lead with 19 others after Round Three of the Telangana State Senior Fide Rated Chess Championship being organised by the Telangana State Chess Association at the Lal Bahadur Stadium here. Top seeds Bharat Kumar Reddy Poluri, Kheerthi Ganta, Krishna Karthik N, Sushanth Kamabathula, Karyasheel P, Rajsekhar B, Shaati Majumder, and Md Bashiq Imrose are among leaders who have three points each. **Third round (selected results):** Gudlia Shanthan Kumar (2) lost to Rahul Srivatsav (3), Bharat Kumar Reddy Poluri (3) bt Mahendar (2), Teerthala Abhinav (2.5), Aditya Varun Gampa (3) bt Surya Alakanti (2).

Live on TV

CRICKET
South Africa vs Pakistan: First ODI from 1.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

LIONS ON PROWL

After last year's low, there is lot to gain for CSK

Chennai, April 1: The return of Suresh Raina could boost the batting department but spin-reliant Chennai Super Kings will have to adapt to conditions which may assist pacers as they seek to improve upon their nightmarish show of last season.

Three-time champions CSK had a flop show last season, avoiding the wooden spoon thanks to a few victories at the back-end of the league phase as they failed to make the play-offs for the first time in the tournament's history. CSK have oodles of experience, which will stand them in good stead in crucial situations. The inspirational leadership of Dhoni is another advantage for the team. The return of Raina will strengthen the batting unit which faltered far too often in last year's IPL in the UAE.

A batting line-up of Raina, along with Faf du Plessis, Dhoni, Ambati Rayudu, Ravindra Jadeja, Sam Curran, new recruit Moeen Ali and fast improving Ruturaj Gaikwad could prove a handful for rival bowling attacks and big scores could set the platform for the bowlers to do their job.

With the likes of Lungi Ngidi, Shardul Thakur, Curran, Deepak Chahar in the line-up, CSK have a decent bowling unit. A team comprising ageing stars proved CSK's undoing last season and they have stuck pretty much to the core squad. In the fast-paced world of T20s, senior stars could prove to be a handicap. — PTI



CSK skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Suresh Raina (left) share light moment in this photo.

— Twitter

Hazlewood pulls out of IPL

Melbourne, April 1: Australia and Chennai Super Kings fast bowler Josh Hazlewood has pulled out of the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League to take a small break from cricket and keep himself fresh for the Ashes and the T20 World Cup later this year. Hazlewood was to depart with other Australia's IPL-bound players and join CSK but decided to skip the cash-rich league,

which will start on April 9 and go on till May 30, and spend time at home for the next two months.

"It's been a long 10 months in bubbles and quarantine at different times, so I decided to have a rest from cricket and spend some time at home and in Australia in the next two months," Hazlewood was quoted as saying by *cricket.com.au*.

"We've got a big winter ahead. The West Indies is

going to be a long tour, with Bangladesh (T20 tour) potentially thrown on the end of that. Then potentially the T20 World Cup leading into the Ashes, so it's a big 12 months.

"As it always is with Australia, and I want to give myself the best chance to be mentally and physically ready for that," he added.

He follows Josh Philippe (RCB) and Mitchell Marsh

(SRH) in withdrawing from the IPL, while some other Australians may consider opting out also, according to the report.

Hazlewood has been under restrictions from July last year before leaving for England with Australia's limited-overs team where he was in strict bio-secure lockdown before heading to the UAE for the IPL where again safety protocols were tight. — PTI

IPL WILL BE A
HUGE BENEFIT
TO US: STOKES

Mumbai, April 1: The increased participation of English players in the IPL, where there is constant pressure to perform, will benefit them during the T20 World Cup to be held in India later this year, reckons star all-rounder Ben Stokes.

This year, there are 14 England cricketers contracted to play IPL, Eoin Morgan, Jos Buttler, Stokes, Johnny Bairstow, Moeen Ali, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Sam Billings, Liam Livingstone and Dawid Malan.

"Yes — the percentage of English players in the IPL has probably grown in the last five or so years," Stokes told *Sky Sports*.

"Not only is that great for the individual but it is also great for the players involved in the England set-up; it gives them experience in the most high-profile competition in the world but not only that — you are under constant pressure to perform," he added.

"You've got billions of people watching you and you've got the pressure of the franchise on you."

"Being constantly exposed to that is a huge benefit to us as a team, especially with the T20 World Cup coming up at the end of the year in India; it's a great chance for the English guys to get more experience in these conditions," Stokes said. — PTI

Germans beaten
in Cup qualifier

Paris, April 1: Germany suffered a stunning 2-1 home loss to North Macedonia in World Cup qualifying on Wednesday, while defending champions France edged Bosnia and Herzegovina 1-0 and England beat a Poland side missing the injured Robert Lewandowski.

Napoli midfielder Eljif Elmas secured a famous victory for North Macedonia in Duisburg, scoring five minutes from time to give his country a second win from three Group 'J' matches.

Veteran striker Goran Pandev, 37, put the visitors in front just before half-time but Ilkay Gundogan levelled from the spot after Leroy Sane was fouled in the area. Timo Werner missed a glorious chance after coming off the bench, and Elmas condemned the four-time world champions to a first defeat in qualifying for the global showpiece since 2001 when he steered in a cut-back from Arijan Ademi.

GRIEZMANN STARS
FOR FRANCE

Antoine Griezmann scored the only goal of the game in Sarajevo as France recorded a second away win in four days over Bosnia following their 2-0

● **North Macedonia stunned four-time World Cup winners Germany 2-1, their first defeat in a World Cup qualifying match for 20 years.**

success in Kazakhstan at the weekend. After being held 1-1 at home by Ukraine in their opening game on the road to the 2022 finals in Qatar, France are now in a strong position at the top of Group 'D'.

Harry Maguire struck a late winner for England as the 2018 World Cup semi-finalists overcame Poland 2-1 at Wembley. Harry Kane put England ahead with a first-half penalty after a foul on Raheem Sterling, but a mistake by John Stones allowed Poland to level through Jakub Moder.

WINS FOR SPAIN
AND ITALY

Goals from Dani Olmo, Ferran Torres and second-half substitute Gerard Moreno lifted Spain to a 3-1 victory over Kosovo and top of Group 'B'.

Italy defeated Lithuania 2-0 in Vilnius with Ciro Immobile adding a stoppage-time penalty for the Azzurri. — AFP



North Macedonia's Goran Pandev (right) is congratulated by his teammates after scoring his side's first goal against Germany during their World Cup 2022 qualifying match in Duisburg, Germany, on Wednesday. — AP

THE RESULTS

North Macedonia (Pandev 45+2, Elmas 85)	2	Italy (Stefano Sensi 48, Ciro Immobile 90+4-pen)	2
Germany (Gundogan 63-pen)	1	Lithuania	0
England (Kane 19-pen, Maguire 85)	2	France (Griezmann 60)	1
Poland (Moder 58)	1	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0
Spain (Olmo 34, Torres 36, Moreno 75)	3	Georgia (Khvicha Kvaratskhelia 78)	1
Kosovo (Halimi 70)	1	Greece (Kakabadze 76-og)	1

NAOMI SURRENDERS TO SAKKARI,
MEDVEDEV ALSO IS OUT OF MIAMI

Miami, April 1: Top-seeded Daniil Medvedev crashed out of the Miami Open Wednesday on a day of upsets that also saw Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka ousted from the quarterfinals.

Seventh-seeded Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut beat Medvedev 6-4, 6-2, for his third win in as many meetings with the Russian who was runner-up to Novak Djokovic at the Australian

Open and ascended to No. 2 in the world with his victory at Marseille in March.

Women's world No. 2 Naomi Osaka — seeded second behind Ashleigh Barty in the prestigious ATP Masters and WTA hardcourt tournament — had bowed out hours earlier, the Japanese star's 23-match winning streak coming to a crashing halt with a 0-6, 4-6 loss to Greece's Maria Sakkari. — AFP

Virat, AB arrive in Chennai

Chennai, April 1: India and Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli reached here on Thursday to join his IPL squad before which he will undergo a seven-day quarantine.

The team has already started its training camp on Tuesday for the upcoming season which begins on April 9.

"Captain Virat Kohli has arrived in Chennai," RCB said, announcing Kohli's arrival in a tweet, along with a picture of their captain wearing a mask.

RCB face defending champions Mumbai Indians in the tournament opener on April 9 here.

Kohli, who has been with the RCB since the inception of the IPL in 2008, quit the bio-bubble in Pune on Monday after India's ODI series win against England.

He has been part of bio-secure bubbles since the end of January, ahead of the England series, and was part of each of the four Tests, five T20 Internationals and three ODIs.

Another key RCB player and South African star batsman A B de Villiers also joined the RCB bio-bubble on Thursday.

"The spaceship has landed! AB de Villiers has joined the RCB bubble in Chennai," the RCB tweeted.

The 37-year-old batting great has been a key player for the team since he joined the franchise in 2011.

Head coach Simon Katich also came out of quarantine, along with pacer Navdeep Saini as the RCB team underwent another practice session.

UMESH READY TO HIT
THE DECK FOR DC

Out of mandatory seven-day quarantine, India and Delhi Capitals fast bowler Umesh Yadav is ready to hit the deck as he returns to be with the familiar faces at his old franchise in the Indian Premier League, beginning on April 9.

The 33-year-old Yadav,

who started his IPL career with the Delhi franchise, returned to the side after being acquired for his base price of ₹1 crore in the auction in February.

"After being in quarantine for one week, it was great to step onto the ground and spend some time with the boys," Yadav said.

"I just want to do well whenever I have the ball in my hand. I will definitely give my best for my team and keep getting better everyday," he said in a DC release.

Yadav, who has picked up 119 wickets in 121 IPL matches, said he felt at home in the Delhi Capitals camp. — PTI

Karteek & Arnav
doubles champsDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

G. Sai Karteek Reddy of Telangana partnered Arnav Pathange of Karnataka to win the doubles title, beating the top two seeds along the way, at the All India National Ranking tennis tournament being held at Lakeview Tennis Academy in Hyderabad.

In the finals, Karteek and Arnav dished out their best game to topple top seeds Ishan Hussain and Irfan Hussain of Tamil Nadu in straight sets at 7-5, 6-3.

Both teams went toe-to-toe in the first set and slugged it out for points before Karteek & Arnav clinched it at 7-5. Buoyed by the lead, they turned up heat in the second to go full throttle before sealing it at 6-3 and with it, the title.

Earlier in the semifinals, Karteek & Arnav sailed past Kavin Masilamani & Hitesh of Tamil Nadu 6-2, 6-3.

In the quarterfinals, the winners saw off second seeds K. S. Dheeraj & Ribhav Kiran of Karnataka in straight sets, 6-2, 6-4.



G. Sai Karteek Reddy (left) of Telangana and Arnav Pathange of Karnataka pose with their trophies after winning the doubles title at the All India National Ranking tennis tournament being held at Lakeview Tennis Academy in Hyderabad.

Laxmi-Rithika best pair;
Hrishik-Dhiraj also winDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

Laxmi Siri Dandu & Rithika Kakarlamudi and Hrishik Vavilapally & Dhiraj Reddy emerged winners of the girls and boys doubles events respectively at the AITA Championship Series Under 16 tournament at Sania Mirza Tennis Academy in Murtuzaguda, Hyderabad, on Thursday.

In the girls final, Laxmi &

Rithika defeated Yashasri & Sreemanya in straight sets 6-0, 6-1. Hrishik & Dhiraj were stretched by Nikhil D'Souza & P. Sandilya before clinching the boys title round with a 6-4, 3-6, 11-9 scoreline.

THE RESULTS

■ **Girls U-16 doubles final:** Laxmi Siri Dandu/ Rithika Kakarlamudi bt Yashasri P/ Sreemanya A 6-0, 6-1.

■ **Boys U-16 doubles final:** Hrishik Vavilapally/ Dhiraj

Reddy bt Nikhil D'Souza/ P. Sandilya 6-4, 3-6, 11-9. **Semifinals:** Harshik Vavilapally/ Dhiraj Reddy bt G. Yashwanth/ Krishant Reddy 6-2, 3-6, 10-5; Nikhil D'Souza/ P. Sandilya bt T. Sri Pranav/ Rohan Sriram 3-6, 6-1, 10-6.

■ **Boys U-16 singles semifinals:** Chris Hamilton bt Harsha Perla 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-3); T. Sri Pranav bt P. Sandilya 6-4, 6-4.

■ **Girls U-16 semifinals:** Rithika Kakarlamudi bt G. Hansika 7-5, 6-2; M. Manogyna bt Pushti Laddha 6-4, 6-4.