

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | MONDAY | 12 APRIL 2021

WEATHER

Max: 34.8°C
Min: 23.6°C
RH: 41%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
May rain in evening.
Max/Min temp. 36/24°C

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvati: Uttarayana
Tithi: Phalguna Bahula
Amavasya till 8.01 am
Star: Revati till 11.30 am
Variyam: Nil
Durmuhurtam: 12.42 pm to 1.31 pm; 3.10 pm to 4 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
HILARI CALENDAR
Sha'ban 29,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.01 am
Zohar: 12.27 pm
Asar: 4.37 pm
Maghrib: 6.37 pm
Isha: 7.46 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.31 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.01 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 6.14 AM
MOONSET TODAY 6.49 PM

COUNTER POINT



I like polls with more phases... we are earning more money attending more election rallies!

SHORT TAKES

PLA: India must cherish +ve trend

Beijing: With no forward movement at the latest round of Sino-India military talks on disengagement from the remaining areas in eastern Ladakh, the Chinese military has said that India should cherish the "current positive trend" of de-escalation and cooling down of tensions in the border area. There was no progress at the latest round of military talks between the two countries as the Chinese came to the talks with a "pre-meditated mindset", people familiar with the negotiations said.

IMD WEATHER WARNING NOW COVERS ALL TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

It would be rainy days ahead for Telangana. The state would experience thunderstorms coupled with gusty winds till April 15.

Under the influence of a trough travelling over the state which goes from Madhya Pradesh to Cape Comorin, there would be thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds of 30-40kmph range at isolated places in the state, a warning issued by the weather office said on Sunday.

■ **Page 2:** Hailstorms are likely, says IMD

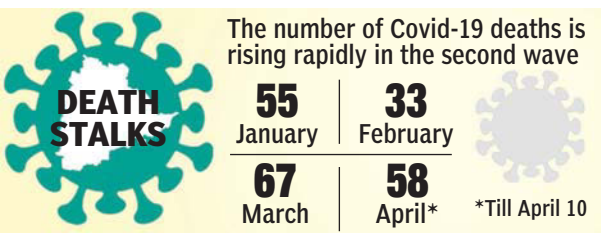
GLOOMY | SCENARIO

TS sees highest Covid tally

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

The state recorded its highest-ever Covid-19 tally of 3,187 cases on Saturday, according to data released by the state health department on Sunday. The previous high was 3,018 cases on August 26, 2020. The first case was discovered in the state on March 2 last year.

The highest daily tally of the pandemic came even as the number of people dying from the disease is seeing an uptick with each month this year. Seven more people died of Covid-19, taking



to 1,759 the fatalities from the disease so far. The overall Covid-19 cases have reached 3,27,278, as on Saturday evening, the department said.

While the rapid increase in the number of cases has become a daily affair in this

second wave of Covid-19, the number of deaths is increasing rapidly. Compared to 67 deaths reported by the state government as Covid-19 related in March, the first 10 days of April have seen 58 people die of the disease. This fig-

ure representing almost 87 per cent of deaths during the 31 days of March.

"There are more and more people going to the hospitals late and neglecting the need to get proper medical attention because they believe that this disease no longer poses any danger and will go away," a senior government doctor said. It is feared that even well before the second wave of Covid-19 peaks, TS may see many more people losing their lives.

■ **Page 2:** Over 500 cases in Hyderabad, GHMC areas



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Suspicious blackout in Iran's plant



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Dhoni is my go-to man: Pant

TABLOID

Walk through your fear



Remembering Jyotiba Phule



Leaders of several parties joined to pay tribute to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and recalled his services to reform Indian society of its evils, including his peerless contribution to fight to eradicate untouchability and against caste oppression, on the occasion of his 195th birth anniversary. TRS leader and health minister Etala Rajendar, senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao, BJP's OBC Morcha president K. Laxman were among those who paid tribute and spoke on the occasion. — DC

Mamata provoked TMC violence on CISF: Shah

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, APRIL 11

Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday squarely held West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's recent "provocative speech" responsible for the violent mob attack on the Central paramilitary forces which, in turn, shot dead four villagers at a polling booth in Shitalkuchi of Cooch Behar during the fourth phase of the election a day earlier.

Asking the Trinamul Congress supremo to apologise for her instigation, he questioned her silence on the killing of a first-time voter, Ananda Burman of the Rajbanshi community, after linking him to the saffron party.

Rejecting Ms Banerjee's demand for his resigna-

Model code is BJP code, alleges Didi

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, APRIL 11

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday described the Election Commission's Model Code of Conduct (MCC) as the "BJP Code of Conduct ... or BCC" after she failed to visit the aggrieved family of the four villagers who were shot dead by the Central paramilitary

forces at a polling booth at Shitalkuchi in Cooch Behar due to the 72-hour ban imposed by the EC on the visit of any political leader to the district.

The TMC chief also called the killings a "mass murder" in a virulent attack on the EC and the BJP after speaking to the victims' relatives.

■ **Page 2:** Didi vows relief for each family

■ **Page 2:** Forces acted in self-defence: Shah

Tika Utsav second big war against Covid-19, says PM

New Delhi, April 11: Asserting that 'tika utsav', a vaccination drive between April 11 and 14, marks the beginning of the another major war on Covid-19, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday made several suggestions on curbing the virus and urged them to focus on personal and social hygiene.

In a blog, he urged them to remember four things, including "each one, vaccinate one"— helping those getting vaccinated who are less educated and elderly and who cannot go for the job themselves, and "each one, treat one"— helping those who do not have the means or do not know about the facilities available for vaccination.

He also spoke of "each one, save one", saying emphasis should on wearing mask so as to save oneself and others too. He asked families and members of society to take lead in setting up micro containment zones if anyone gets the disease, saying it is an important way to fight Covid in a densely populated country like India.

"Our success will be determined by our awareness of the micro containment zone and by not leaving house when there is no need. Our success will also depend on whether we wear masks and follow other rules," he said, adding that it will also depend on getting those eligible for vaccine inoculated. — PTI

CENTRE BANS EXPORT OF REMDESIVIR

New Delhi, April 11: In view of increased demand for remdesivir due to a surge in Covid-19 cases, the Centre on Sunday said the export of the antiviral injection and its Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients has been banned till the situation improves.

In addition, to ensure easy access, all domestic manufacturers of remdesivir were advised to display on their site details of their stockists and distributors, the health ministry said. — PTI

N'sagar saboteurs give parties sleepless nights

Politicians suspect disgruntled leaders may help Oppn

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

Political parties are deeply worried about "saboteurs" ahead of polling in the Nagarjunasagar Assembly byelection on April 17.

All parties are keeping a close watch on movements of disgruntled leaders, suspecting them of resorting to covert activities and sabotaging their party's prospects in the bypoll.

Earlier, the respective party leaderships had made all efforts to convince these disgruntled leaders into withdrawing from race in favour of the party's official candidates by offering them different possts. Still, there are fears that they may resort to covert activities and help rival parties.

While the ruling party has engaged the services of the intelligence department sleuths to keep a tab on such leaders, the Opposition parties are relying on their close aides to track the saboteurs and submit daily reports on their activities.

There had been multiple serious contenders for party tickets to contest the



Congress leader K. Jana Reddy goes on a roadshow for the Nagarjunasagar bypoll accompanied by TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and other party leaders on Sunday.

bypoll, especially from the ruling TRS and the BJP.

Though there were no contenders in Congress other than K. Jana Reddy, the Congress too is wary of saboteurs, as the ruling party has lured several prominent Congress leaders from village to district level into its fold over the past three months in presence of ministers, TRS

MLAs, MLCs and so on.

The Congress is worried that several of such leaders, though continuing to remain in the party, have been in touch with TRS leaders and sabotaging party's prospects by "leaking" the party's strategy.

Congress suspects that seizure of liquor worth nearly ₹40 lakh on Friday from the residence of a

local party leader known to be the close aide of Jana Reddy in Nagarjunasagar is handiwork of "coverts". Congress leaders argue that though all parties are distributing cash and liquor in the bypoll, a few coverts had leaked information to ruling party leaders, who ordered police raids and seized stocks.

The Congress has now demanded that police raid residences of key leaders belonging to all parties if they are really sincere in curbing distribution of cash and liquor.

TRS leadership is worried that a few leaders from the Reddy community in the constituency are angry with the party for giving ticket to Yadava community. Thus, they are silently working for Jana Reddy on "caste grounds", besides keeping away from campaigning for the party to register their dissent.

In the BJP, too, there had been many aspirants from the Reddy and BC communities. The party gave ticket to an ST candidate, leading to resentment among other communities. The party too is thus tracking movements of its disgruntled leaders.

LOCKDOWN NOT A SOLUTION TO COVID: CHOUHAN

Bhopal, April 11: There is no lockdown in Madhya Pradesh nor will it be imposed, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday said, adding that "corona curfew" was enforced in some parts with people's support. Talking to reporters here, Chouhan said lockdown is not a solution to the Covid-19 crisis and economic activities should continue to allow people to sustain their livelihood.

"There is no lockdown in MP. Nor will it be imposed state-wide. The crisis management groups in some places, imposed self-restrictions like remaining indoors," Chouhan said. — PTI

Thanksgiving tour



CJI designate Justice N.V. Ramana visits the hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara on Sunday morning along with his family members to offer prayers after his appointment as the Chief Justice of India. He would take charge of office on April 24.

— DC

UDDHAV TO TAKE FINAL DECISION ON LOCKDOWN

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, APRIL 11

Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government is likely to impose a stricter lockdown from April 14 for two weeks as most of the members of the task force opined are in favour of it.

However, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray is yet to take a final call.

The Chief Minister held a meeting with the task force and senior bureaucrats of the state administration on Sunday to seek their views on form of lockdown and took stock of the present Covid situation in district-wise.

According to a senior official, the meeting lasted for about two hours. Most of the task force members have suggested imposing stricter lockdown for two weeks. The details of the lockdown are expected to be finalised within next 24 hours.

An official statement issued by the chief minister office (CMO), Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that during the stricter curbs, they would establish an Oxygen generation plant, make arrangements of beds, other medical facilities and Remdesivir injection.

Ex-school owner reduced to operating tiffin centre

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC
KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 11

A tiffin centre Nirudyogi @ M. Sc., B. Ed., B. Li. Sc. being run at Huzurabad mandal headquarters of Karimnagar district has been attracting attention of people and has also gone viral on social media.

It is being run by Maddela Sampath, native of Huzurabad mandal. Sampath was earlier correspondent of a private school - Lily Flowers - in Shankarapatnam mandal while also provided employment opportunities to rural educated youth. The school functioned well till Coronavirus pandemic struck last year. Since then, he has run into debts of around ₹15 lakh.

Sampath says unable to pay rents and no sign of running the school in near future, he had decided to end his life along with his family. But his friends discouraged him and extended support. With their help, he has decided to run a tiffin centre in Huzurabad, naming it Nirudyogi with a tagline of his educational qualifi-



The push cart being operated by pandemic-hit former school correspondent Maddela Sampath.

cations M. Sc., B. Ed, B. Li. Sc.

The once school owner says Covid-19 pandemic has shattered lives of many private teachers and lecturers. He feels the government's announcement of ₹2,000 and 25 kg of rice per month to every family is too little. "How even a small family with two children can survive with such a little amount? The government must instead help all private teachers revive themselves economically. Or it must provide employment opportunities along with job security," Sampath remarked.

Mathematics teacher Prakash feels the Nirudyogi tiffin centre

depicts the pitiable state of private education in society. Coronavirus and shut down of schools and colleges has led to thousands of private teachers and lecturers losing their jobs. Many small budget schools that once provided employment opportunities to others are facing tough times. Their owners and teachers are unable feed even their family members.

The teacher pointed out that those who once taught children to live with self respect are now doing menial jobs as farm labour, whereas some have even ended their lives by committing suicide.

OTHER STORIES

GOVT TO IMPOSE FINE FOR NOT WEARING MASK

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD APRIL 11

To prevent the spread of Covid-19, the Telangana state government on Sunday issued orders fixing the penalty of ₹1,000 for violation of face mask regulations. Not wearing the mask in public places would attract a penalty of ₹1,000. The government has directed the district collectors and commissioners and superintendents of police to strictly implement the related instructions.

STATE TO CLOSE COVAX CENTRES DUE TO SHORTAGE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

The state government, now left with Covid-19 vaccines enough to last may be two days at best, is facing the prospect of closing some of its vaccination centres in the next few days, even as the 'Tika Utsav' — the vaccination festival ordered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi began on Sunday.

The state was waiting to hear from the Centre on its Saturday's request for supply of 30 lakh doses of the vaccine. It may be recalled that Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar wrote to the Centre on Saturday seeking urgent additional vaccine supply with the state planning to ramp up vaccinations to 2 lakh doses a day.

On Saturday, according to Somesh Kumar, the state had 5.66 lakh doses of vaccines — Covishield and Covaxin — left with it. The state is vaccinating at the rate of 1.5 lakh people every day, leading to fears that the stocks will run out in three to four days.

The state, according to officials, has more doses of Covishield than Covaxin, which has left the officials worried. As a consequence, they have stopped dispensing first doses of Covaxin, of which there is a shortage, and saving the available stocks of this vaccine for those lining up to take their second dose of this particular vaccine.

According to the health department, on Saturday, the state administered a total of 1,62,385 doses of vaccine, of which 1,53,295 were to people getting their first shot, with 9,090 people receiving their second dose. So far, the state has administered 20,61,395 first and second doses.

DIDI VOWS RELIEF FOR EACH FAMILY OF VICTIMS

From page 1

She also assured them of government compensation for each family.

At Siliguri in North Bengal, the CM alleged Sunday morning, "We were supposed to visit Shitalkuchi. I wanted to stand by the victims' families. But you can see what is happening. They did not allow us anyway to meet the family members of those who were killed. Such a forcible decision is unprecedented. I respect the EC. But everything cannot be changed in the interest of a particular party. A system cannot be changed. It has to be maintained. The institution can continue forever. Yes, they can do anything. But there must be something which is essential for democracy and a free and fair election."

She claimed: "Since the ban is for 72 hours, I wait because of the MCC. I will visit the families on April 14, though I think the MCC has become the BJP Code of Conduct now. It will do whatever they will ask it to do. Why will campaigns not be allowed for 24 hours? Just because the BJP's last date of campaign is April 13. I cannot be restricted in this way."

Wearing a black robe to protest against the killings of the four at a rally in Jalpaiguri later, the TMC chief said: "On Saturday the BJP government, using its police, took the lives of four people by shooting them. All the bullets hit the upper parts of the victims. There has been no bigger mass murder and murder of democracy than this. I condemn this. I condemn Union home minister Shah, the Government of India and those who carried it out."

Banerjee said the state government's compensation for the victims' families will be announced by chief secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay. "Permission has been sought (from the EC). Now permission is required for everything, even helping the family of someone killed," she quipped.



Minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy talks to the voters of Nagarjunasagar on Sunday.

—DC

Dump TRS, urges BJP

Kishan asks voters to remind govt of 2BHK homes, jobs

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy slammed the ruling TRS and Opposition Congress for their failure to develop Nagarjunasagar constituency.

The minister on Sunday participated in several road shows at Anumula, Manneppally, Thripuraram and Halia in the constituency.

He said that although elected seven times from the seat, Congress candidate K. Jana Reddy had done precious little for Nagarjunasagar. Even

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao failed to honour his promises for the area, Reddy said.

Kishan Reddy asked the voters to give a chance to the BJP candidate Dr P. Ravi Kumar, who was a practicing doctor and who can forcefully raise people's issues in the Assembly. He said Congress has been reduced to a non-entity and the TRS was corrupt from top to bottom and they should not fall prey to the money and muscle power of TRS.

He urged the people of Nagarjunasagar to question the Chief

● **KISHAN REDDY** asked people of N'sagar to question the Chief Minister about double bedroom houses, employment notification, women empowerment groups loan issues and three acres promised for Dalits, and the tribal land issues.

Minister about double bedroom houses, employment notification, women empowerment groups loan issues and three acres promised for Dalits, and the tribal land issues.

In another road show at Halia, Union minis-

ter Arjun Ram Meghaval alleged that TRS was looting Telangana and Chandrasekhar Rao and his family were "fully into corruption."

He stated that Nagarjunasagar constituency was ridden with bumpy roads and water problems despair the Sagar project. He said that KCR Kit was actually a Union government scheme, which Rao hijacked and gave it a new name.

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar and former MP Vijayashanti are likely to address road shows on Monday.

MISCONCEPTIONS AMONG YOUTHS ABOUT VIRUS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

The government's current stand on Covid-19 vaccination eligibility is resulting in a misunderstanding among youth that they have nothing to worry or fear about the disease, the Indian Medical Association has said, IMA national president Dr J.A. Jayalal said that with the government focusing on 45 years and plus age group to be the vaccine recipients in the country, the youth and those under 45, were increasing under the misapprehension that they are not vulnerable to Covid-19.

Indicating that nothing could be farther from the truth, Dr Jayalal told *Deccan Chronicle* that the second wave of Covid-19 is seeing more and more youths, aged 18 years and more, succumbing to the disease. "Fatalities in the youth group were less than one per cent of all deaths during the first wave," he said. He said that the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi just a couple of days ago had pointed out that of the 140 critical cases of Covid-19 in the 18-to-40 age group, 36 had lost their lives. "This is more than 30 per cent of the cases and is worrisome," Dr Jayalal said.

Overall, during the current resurgence of Covid-19 that India is witnessing, 20 to 35 per cent of all Covid-19 victims are children and youth. "This is something we are seeing across the country," he said. It may be recalled that there have been repeated calls from Telangana, Delhi and some other states to open up vaccination for all age groups but the Centre has so far not agreed to these requests.

Centre silent on vax supply: KTR

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

TRS working president and IT minister K.T. Rama Rao said that, to his knowledge, the state government had not received any communication from the Centre on its request for supply of more Covid vaccines.

Referring to the shortage of the vaccine in the state, Rao said, "There is a shortage all over India from what I hear." On whether he has taken the vaccine, he replied, "Not yet."

During a 90-minute #AskKTR session on Sunday, Rama Rao answered a volley of questions from Twitteratti and shared his thoughts on national politics, political, entertainment and also spoke about the future plans for the development of the state.

Replying to a query on the upcoming Nagarjunasagar byelection, he said, "TRS will win it with the blessings of the people of Nagarjunasagar. The contest is between a leader who represents the past (Jana Reddy) and a young man who symbolises future hope, Nomula Bhagat."

He said government job recruitment notifications will be released after the byelection.

When some asked about the possibility of postponing SSC and Inter exams this year, he said, "You have to ask educa-

— K.T. RAMA RAO
IT Minister

● TRS will win it with the blessings of the people of Nagarjunasagar. The contest is between a leader who represents the past (Jana Reddy) and a young man who symbolises future hope, Nomula Bhagat

tion minister Sabitha Indra Reddy."

On the possibility of a complete lockdown in Telangana, he said, "I don't think it's a good idea."

When asked about the likely winners in West Bengal and Kerala, Rama Rao said, "at the end of the day, democracy should win."

On holding town hall meetings, he said, "We had done it

Over 500 Covid-19 cases in Hyderabad GHMC areas

From page 1

"If this current rate continues, we may well see three times the deaths compared to last month," the doctor said.

Meanwhile, Hyderabad city and the rest of the GHMC areas have shot past the 500 mark in daily Covid-19 cases with the health department in its bulletin, reporting 551 cases in the GHMC limits on Saturday, compared to 487 on Friday. With 333 new cases, Medchal-Malkajgiri district was in second spot, while 271 cases were reported in Ranga Reddy, and 251 from Nizamabad districts.

SCARY SCENE

NINE DISTRICTS REPORTED CASES IN THREE-FIGURES ON SATURDAY

GHMC (Hyderabad) : 551	Nirmal : 154
Medchal-Malkajgiri : 333	Jagtial : 134
Ranga Reddy : 271	Kamareddy : 113
Nizamabad : 251	Karimnagar : 104
	Sangareddy : 104

The number of active Covid-19 cases rose past the 20,000 mark on Saturday to stand at 20,184 while the number of people in isolation increased to 13,366. On Friday, these fig-

ures stood at 17,791, and 11,495 respectively. The department said it conducted 1,15,311 tests in the state on Saturday, but of these, results were pending for 3,753 tests.

It was self-defence: Shah

From page 1

Shah said: "In the fourth phase of polls, a very sad incident took place. Some unidentified people attacked a polling booth and tried to snatch the weapons of the Central armed police forces (CAPF) personnel. When the CAPF jawans opened fire in self-defence and to protect their weapons, four people were killed. What is more sad is the way the entire incident is being politicised." He was speaking to the media at Shantipur in Nadia district.

He added: "I saw Mamata's statement. A few days ago, at the same Shitalkuchi seat, Mamata gave a brazen speech asking the people to gherao and

attack the CAPF. I want to ask her: 'Isn't her speech responsible for the death of the four?' Would the four have dared to attack the Central forces had she not made the speech?' Provoking them, you made a cause for firing."

Mr Shah later claimed at a BJP rally at Basirhat South in North 24 Parganas: "Didi, you, sitting in a wheelchair, left anyway but it was because of you that the four youths died." He said: "I feel Mamata still has time to offer her respect to the fifth slain youth, talk about him and apologise to the people for her provocative speech."

Complaining about Ms Banerjee's sympathy only with the four victims, who

were Muslims, the home minister said: "At the same booth, some goons of the TMC killed our worker in the morning so that polling could not take place. Later, the attack on the CISF followed. But Mamata mourned the loss of four lives only. She is not bothered by the death of Burman. This is a clear example to what level she brought down the politics of Bengal through her appeasement and vote bank politics even in death."

He added: "We are equally saddened by the death of the four like that of Burman. The death of whosoever should be above politics. But she did not mourn the death of Burman, or shed tears... This type of politics is neither the culture nor the tradition of Bengal."

Police using hi-technology to arrest cyber criminals

DURGA PRASAD
SUNKU | DC
HYDERABAD APRIL 11

The police, in the forefront in using technology, are busy equipping themselves with state-of-the-art technology in investigating crimes. Their expertise is already helping them nab cyber fraudsters from hotspots like Jharkhand, Bengaluru and New Delhi. Decoding the digital evidence has always been a challenge before cops on the ground and they generally take the help of forensic experts. However, the Telangana Police are equipping the personnel with basic knowledge in digital analysis of evidence. Recently, K. Nagendar Rao Koppula, inspector in charge of the cybercrime vertical of the state police, published a research paper in the 'International Journal of Computer Science and Technology'.

When digital devices are seized in any crime investigation, police send them to the forensic science lab and wait till its report is arrived. This evidence plays a crucial role in cracking a case.

Styling 2021 as the 'Cyber Safety Year', Director

● **STYLING 2021** as the 'Cyber Safety Year', Director General of Police M. Mahendar Reddy is personally training cyberwarriors.

General of Police M. Mahendar Reddy is personally training cyberwarriors. The state police aims to train at least two or three constables from every police station. They will learn how to examine mobile phone hard discs, how to break password code, how to have a call data record (CDR) analysis etc. Some 200 police constables from different police stations have already been trained in cyber security.

"Where to search what in a computer seized from an accused? How to analyse a digital evidence — these are some of the challenges being faced by investigation officials," said Nagendar Rao.

In his research paper, 'Role of Microsoft Windows Key Artifacts in Exploring Digital Evidence for Investigation Purposes', Nagendar Rao discussed the analysis of artifacts created due to user's interaction with different applications.

"The process of creating a

reference document as standard operating procedure (SOP) to examine the digital evidence is in the pipeline," said Nagendar.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Nagendar said, "A majority of computers have the Microsoft Windows operating systems. Data created by the user like browsing, creating files and folders and others is called artifacts."

"Microsoft Windows provides a wealth of information that can help investigators understand the various actions performed by its users, resulting in the creation of a variety of artifacts. Storage and memory provide vital information and hence investigators should understand how data is internally organised," explained Rao in his research paper.

According to the paper, digital forensics applications are meant to explore details of the applications installed on the system and information stored by the operating system of the user and application activity. The state of the operating system can also be evaluated, which may result in cops finding some important clues.

ROAD | SAFETY

Experts: Pillion rider at greater risk of injuries

Helmets must for kid pillion riders

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD APRIL 11

With the traffic police enforcing helmet rules for both rider and pillion, children are left vulnerable to accidents. On Monday, a teenage student who rode pillion on his father's scooter died in an accident. He was not wearing a helmet.

Helmet dealers in the city say there is no demand for kid helmets and hence they do not stock it.

Traffic cops say parents should ensure the kids are safe in pillion seat and have something to hold on to in case of sudden breaks.

CASES BOOKED ON MINOR DRIVERS

Minors driving motorbikes is a common sight in India.

YEAR	CYBERABAD	HYDERABAD
2019	2,150	4,610
2020	665	1,412

Road safety experts

note the pillion rider is at greater risk of suffering serious head injuries.

While the traffic police here is forcing helmet rule on riders, they ignore pillion riders, specially kids, even as they are at a greater risk, says Vinod Kanumula, chief functionality of the Indian Federation of Road

Safety. "Helmets are mandatory in all the states but the safety of children is neglected." "Helmets for children are not much in demand, but a few stores stock them. Even if physical stores fail a parent, he could always count on online shopping for kid's helmet. The point is: there is no room for excuses," argues Kanumula.

"The life of the pillion rider is as vulnerable as the rider. In my experience, there is no fear in the public mind. The fear of getting caught should be there among them," said a member of National Road Safety Council, Dr. Kamal Soi.

"The rules are very strict on paper, but the authorities should work more on the ground level," added Soi.

Mohd Salim, a helmet businessman from Abids, said, "We do not see much demand for helmets. We do not keep one for display and usually don't keep the stock at the store."

—DC

OTHER STORIES

KCR CLAIMS OF CORRUPTION-FREE FARCE: NIRANJAN

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

The alleged involvement of Srinivas Reddy, son-in-law of former minister late Naini Narasimha Reddy, in IMS scam regarding purchase of unnecessary medicines at exorbitant prices for ESI hospitals, proves that the claim of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao that his government is corruption-free government is a farce, said TPCC spokesperson G. Niranjan.

Srinivas Reddy and Narasimha Reddy's personal assistant had been raided by the Enforcement Directorate on Saturday.

"The IMS scam, minister Malla Reddy's threats asking for commissions, the involvement of TRS legislators in the Karnataka drugs case and the case booked against an associate of a TRS corporator for an illegitimate affair with a woman and extracting ₹10 lakh from her for a double bedroom house shows the level of corruption in the TRS government", he alleged.

● THE IMS scam, minister Malla Reddy's threats asking for commissions, the involvement of TRS legislators in the Karnataka drugs case and the case booked against an associate of a TRS corporator for an illegitimate affair with a woman

BOY TOUCHES TRANSFORMER, SUFFERS BURNS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

An eight-year-old boy suffered burns when he accidentally came in contact with a transformer on Friday under the Malkajigiri police station limits. On learning of the incident, IT minister K.T. Rama Rao on Sunday assured that he would take care of the child's medical treatment.

The boy's mother Janaki appealed to the government and public to help. Janaki in a video message explained that she was a single mother and her husband died two years ago. "On Friday afternoon while I was taking care of my second child at home, Nishant went out to play and accidentally touched the transformer and suffered burns," she said in a video clip.

With the clip being widely shared, Rama Rao on his official social media handle said, "Will take care of Nishanth," and directed his team to contact the family and assist them.

Mynampally Hanumanth Rao, TRS Malkajigiri MLA, visited Nishant in hospital and spoke to the family and directed the hospital to treat the child well. The Malkajigiri police have booked a case and started investigation.

● WITH THE video clip boy's mother Janaki being widely shared, Rama Rao on his official social media handle said, "Will take care of Nishanth," and directed his team to contact the family and assist them.

MAN BEATEN FOR QUESTIONING SPITTING AT GATE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

A 64-year-old man was allegedly assaulted by three men whom he questioned for spitting at the gate of an Urban Healthcare Centre (UHC) at Malakpet on Sunday morning. Police said the victim, a GHMC staffer, had visited the hospital for getting the Covid-19 vaccine when the assault took place.

According to a complaint received from one R. Devender, 26, he and his father R. Sudharshan had gone to the UHC at Shalivahananagar to get the vaccine and were waiting outside the place when three men — a man aged about 70 and his two sons — spat at the place where they were standing.

"Upon asking them how they can spit during such a pandemic, they got hostile and allegedly assaulted the victim and abused them using filthy language, leaving them with bleeding injuries," said the Malakpet police, who booked a case and started an investigation.

Cong demands sanction of 2BHKs during KTRs' tour

If KTR doesn't, we will gather beneficiaries, do it ourselves: Naini

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, APRIL 11

The Municipal Administration and Urban Development minister K.T. Rama Rao who is going to visit Warangal on Monday must sanction the 2bhk houses complex at Ambedkar Nagar and Jitender Nagar to the beneficiaries without any further delay. If he does not do it, we will unite the beneficiaries and distribute houses ourselves, warned district Congress committee president Naini Rajender Reddy.

He along with several Congress leaders staged a protest at the double bedroom houses complex at Ambedkar Nagar.

Naini questioned why



Naini Rajender Reddy along with Congress leaders stage protest at the double bedroom houses complex in Ambedkar Nagar in Warangal on Sunday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

these houses are not being provided to the beneficiaries despite the houses completing construction years ago. Even in

"The slum dwellers here were ousted from this area with a promise of handing them 2bhk houses within three months.

However, even after five years, the state government has failed to provide them with houses and they are being forced to live in rented accommodations. If KTR does not give the eligible beneficiaries and do it ourselves when KTR is in the city," he stated.

Greater Warangal mahila Congress chairman Banka Sarala, city Congress vice president Pallole Rahul Reddy, city Congress general secretary Bonta Sarangam Youth leaders Ranjit, Akhil, Nikhil were present among others.



The three women constables on a bike at Anand Vihar centre in Khammam on April 9.

FINE IMPOSED ON CONSTABLE FOR TRIPLE RIDE

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, APRIL 11

Shaik Nafeez, a woman constable of the Armed Reserved Wing, was penalised ₹3,335 on various charges including riding a two-wheeler without helmet, dangerous driving, cellphone driving and triple riding.

The fine was imposed after Khammam police commissioner Vishnu Warrior noticed the cop violating traffic rules at 2.30 pm on April 9 at Anand Vihar on CCTV camera footage.

Nafeez and two other women constables, who were on duty at the Y.S. Sharmila public meeting on Friday in Khammam, were riding on the two-wheeler (TSO4 FD 0822) at that time along with Nafeez.

The commissioner has also ordered disciplinary action against the three constables. He said that they had behaved in an irresponsible manner. The break-up for the penalty was ₹1,200 for triple riding, ₹1,000 each for cellphone driving and dangerous driving, ₹100 for not wearing helmet and ₹35 as user charges.

Minister starts election exercise in Khammam Training held to ROs: GWMC polls

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, APRIL 11

Ten to 15 TRS corporators may not get the party ticket for the upcoming elections to the Khammam Municipal Corporation.

Transport minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar is citing various reasons including land-grab allegations against them or allocation of their divisions to the reserved categories, or local disinterest for grant of another term to some corporators as was reflected in a recent opinion survey.

Four corporators close to former MP Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy and former minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, are also likely to be kept out of the electoral race.

TRS corporators like Jaswanth, J Bhaskar, CN Rao, Swetha and PN Raju might not get re-nomination. Deputy mayor B. Murali and TRS corporator K. Krishna are not keen on having another term for various reasons like the sharp rise in money requirement for vote-fetching.

Reliable sources in the Puvvada camp said, "The minister is angry with some of the corporators who fleeced him during the last assembly elections. They took money from him for election campaign and did not spend it." These corporators too might not get the party ticket.

The minister plans things in a way as to complete the KMC election process by April 30, by getting the election notification issued immediately after the Nagarjunasagar election.

Ajay Kumar organised Athmeeya Samavesam

publication of the list of contesting candidates and preparation of ballot papers," he noted.

Returning and assisting returning officers should collectively carry out election duties seriously and collectively carry out their duties with utmost care.

Mr Hanumanth said that small errors can lead to big problems and the guidelines laid down by the State Election Commission were detailed in the diary of the returning officers for reference so that no problems can arise. He said strict action would be taken against 10 ROs and 9 AROs who were absent for training.

GWMC commissioner, additional electoral officer Pamela Satpathy said that through this training on election management, a complete understanding should be developed and the election process should be conducted smoothly. ROs need to be vigilant as elections are conducted through ballot papers. Officials and staff attending training classes must vote by postal ballot, she suggested.

with key TRS leaders in wards 17 and 18. TRS leaders Punukula Neeraja and Golla Venkat participated in the meeting.

"The KMC elections will be important for us and the TRS flag should be unfurled in each and every division. TRS lead-

ers should do only one thing, just highlight the KCR government schemes to the voters," the minister stated at the meeting.

About 50 persons from various parties joined TRS in the presence of the minister.

Vaccination drive picks up in Adilabad

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, APRIL 11

Covid vaccination has been picking up pace and medical teams are visiting villages and vaccinating locals following an increase in Covid positive cases in old Adilabad district.

The medical and health department took the help of sarpanches to motivate people to get Covid vaccinated.

● THE MEDICAL and health department took the help of sarpanches to motivate people to get the vaccination since villagers are not showing much interest.

vate people to get the vaccination since villagers are not showing much interest in it. This began in all the gram panchay-

ats on Sunday.

Additional district medical officer (DMHO) of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district, Dr Sudhakar Naik appealed to the people to avail the free vaccination being provided at PHCs and Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences.

Members of self-help groups are being urged to get Covid vaccinated to

avoid serious complications.

Around 10 women from Marlavai village took the vaccine at the primary health centre, thanks to the lead taken by sarpanch Kanaka Prathibha.

Meanwhile, officials have told each PHC to take at least 10-20 villagers for the vaccine every day.

Govt to set up 119 BC study centres: Gangula

DC CORRESPONDENT KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 11

The state government is striving to ensure that students from Backward Class (BC) will become highly qualified persons, said minister for BC welfare, Gangula Kamalakar on Sunday.

After paying floral tribute to the portrait of Mahatma Jyothibha Phule on his death anniversary in Hyderabad, Kamalakar announced that the state government is to establish 119 BC study centres across every constituency. They will be formally inaugurated on June 2, the Telangana Formation Day. Top-grade coaching will be provided to BC students through these study centres and help them to crack various state and national level competitive examinations. Focus will also be on improving spoken English and personal-ity development.

Kamalakar said that in present pandemic situations, students cannot attend physical classes.



BC welfare minister, Gangula Kamalakar pays tribute to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule on the occasion of his birth anniversary at his office in Hyderabad on Sunday.

Study centres will be established in either junior and degree colleges or in polytechnic colleges of respective constituencies, with modern technology and advanced computer labs. Since the formation of Telangana State, BC study centres have been established in Siddipet and Gadwal. As many as 15,214 students have undergone coaching in the two study centres and around 1,302 students got jobs in various departme-

nts. Very soon one more study centre will come up in Sircilla town, he said.

The Minister after inaugurating an exclusive digital studio said that all lessons that have been taught in the study centres will be uploaded on YouTube for live streaming.

To fulfill the dreams of Mahatma Phule, the youth of present generation must utilise the opportunity provided by BC study circles and land with plum jobs.

Jyotirao's birth anniv. observed in Adilabad

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, APRIL 11

Many government officials, MLAs, minister and people paid rich tributes to social reformer on Mahatma Jyotirao Phule's on 195th jayanti at various places in the old Adilabad district on Sunday.

Nirmal municipal chairman Gandra Eshwar, minister for forest and environment Allola Indrakaran Reddy paid rich tributes to Phule at a function organised in the Nirmal town.

Adilabad MLA Jogu Ramanna garlanded the Jyotirao Phule's statue at

SATTUPALLI MLA PAYS HOMAGE TO PHULE

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, APRIL 11

Sattupalli MLA Sandra Venkata Veeraiah said that the TRS government is fulfilling all the aspirations of Mahatma Jyothirao Phule. Sandra paid homage to Phule on the occasion of his birth anniversary in Sattupalli on Sunday.

He said that Phule worked against untouchability, development of backward classes and inequality.

He fought against caste and gender discrimination in his life.

He said that the reformis Phule tried to extend education to the women and oppressed classes by setting up schools.

a function held in Adilabad. "SWAERO", Adilabad district president, Ushanna is also present at the event.

● MINISTER ALLOLA Indrakaran Reddy paid rich tributes to Phule at a function organised in the Nirmal town.

HIKE AGE LIMIT FOR PVT. STAFF TO APPLY FOR JOBS, DEMANDS DASOJU

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

AICC spokesperson Dr Sravan Dasoju on Sunday demanded that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao increase the age limit by 10 years to enable unemployed persons to apply for all job recruitment notifications. The age limit should be 44 years, as was done in the past, he said.

He explained the TS Public Service Commission had reduced the candidates' upper age limit to 34 years, thereby eliminating lakhs of unemployed persons who have actively partici-

pated in Telangana movement since 2009.

The Congress leader made the demand that he wrote to the Chief Minister. In the letter, Dr Dasoju asked the CM to consider the rising unemployment as a social emergency and constitute a special task force to address the issue on priority.

Dr Dasoju requested the CM to organise an all-party meeting to discuss the unemployment issue and find a way out. He said a majority of unemployed youth were in deep distress, unable to face their family and friends, unable to get married and settle in life.

MAN, CHILD DIE IN SEPARATE TRAGIC INCIDENTS

Khammam: An elder person and a kid died in two separate incidents in Khammam district on Sunday. An man drowned in the Nagarjunasagar Left Canal at Medepalli in Modigonda mandal of Khammam district on Sunday. Police said K. Suresh Kumar, 45, had gone for his morning walk along the canal with his children. The kids entered the water but were washed away by the flow of water. Suresh jumped into the water and saved them but drowned in the process.

In the second incident, Kukka Eswar, 6 years old, died in Penuballi after a cement circle fell on him.

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SHORT TAKES

BJP WITHDRAWS
SENGAR'S WIFE'S
CANDIDATURE

Lucknow, April 11: The BJP on Sunday withdrew the candidature of former MLA and Unnao rape convict Kuldeep Singh Sengar's wife from the Uttar Pradesh panchayat polls.

The BJP had made Sangeeta Sengar a candidate for the district panchayat member from Ward No. 22 of Fatehpur Chaurasi, according to a list released by it earlier.

"The candidature of Sangeeta Sengar, the wife of former BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who is a convict in the 2018 Unnao rape case, has been cancelled," state BJP chief Swatantra Dev Singh said.

Singh said the Unnao party president has now been asked to submit three fresh names for finalising a candidate.

He, however, exuded confidence that the BJP will emerge victorious in the four-phase panchayat elections, beginning April 15. Unnao will go to the polls on April 26.

Kuldeep Sengar was awarded life sentence by a Delhi court on December 20, 2019 for raping a 17-year-old girl in Unnao.

After his conviction, Sengar's membership as an MLA was cancelled. Sangeeta had earlier held the post of the district panchayat chairperson. Earlier, BJP spokesperson Harishchandra Shrivastava had said names of all candidates were recommended by the district unit and were forwarded to the party headquarters through the regional unit.

NIA ARRESTS
RIYAZ KAZI, CLOSE
AIDE OF WAZE

**SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, APRIL 11**

The National Investigation Agency on Sunday arrested Assistant Police Inspector Riyaz Kazi, a close aide of arrested API Sachin Waze, in connection with Mukesh Ambani bomb scare case and Mansukh Hiren murder case. Police has alleged Kazi is co-conspirator in Ambani case. A holiday court remanded Kazi to NIA custody till April 16.

According to sources, the probe agency suspects that Kazi destroyed important evidence like fake number plates and digital video recorder (DVR) of the society where Sachin Waze resides.

Kazi was seen in several garages where he got fake number plates made and later confiscated the DVRs from all the garages and destroyed them.

Meanwhile, the CBI on Sunday questioned two personal staffers of former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh in connection with the allegations of corruption levelled against him by former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh.

Those questioned by the CBI are Deshmukh's personal assistant Kundan Shinde and personal secretary Sanjeev Palande.

PAWAR ADMITTED
FOR GALL
BLADDER SURGERY

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, APRIL 11**

The NCP president Sharad Pawar on Sunday has been admitted to Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai for a surgery of his gallbladder. He would be undergoing surgery on Monday morning for his gallbladder ailment.

In a tweet, NCP chief spokesperson and Maharashtra cabinet minister Nawab Malik said, "Pawar has been admitted in Breach Candy Hospital and as informed earlier, a surgery will be performed tomorrow to address his Gall Bladder ailment."

Last month, the veteran politician had undergone an emergency endoscopy for the removal of a stone from his bile duct in the same hospital after he complained about abdominal pain. After conducting all the diagnosis, the main reason was revealed behind his abdominal pain was stone, which was developed in Gallbladder. The stone was removed through endoscopy. Post this, he was discharged from the hospital earlier in this month.

The doctors had then informed that the NCP chief would undergo a surgery after 15 days keeping in mind his other health parameters.

The doctors took the decision on surgery so that abdominal pain does not occur frequently. It was also decided then he would be re-admitted for the same.

BANGLADESH, A
ROLE MODEL
IN FIGHTING
POVERTY: ENVOY

**SRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11**

Bangladesh High Commissioner Muhammad Imran has said that his country has become a role model in the world in fighting poverty.

He was speaking at a cultural event recently organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Bangladesh High Commission in the Capital to celebrate "Mujib Barsho" and 50 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh.

"Mujib Barsho" refers to the centenary birth anniversary celebrations of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman - popularly known as Bangabandhu - who successfully led the Bangladesh freedom struggle in 1971.

The Bangladesh High Commissioner also spoke about the close ties and connectivity projects between his country and India. He also spoke about the large number of tourists from his country visiting India every year as ties between the two neighbours gets even stronger, in what is seen as a "Shonali Adhyaya (golden chapter)" in bilateral ties. This comes even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bangladesh just last month. The cultural event comprised a dance performance by the troupe from the renowned Srishti Cultural Centre in Bangladesh.

TIBETANS CAST
VOTES TO ELECT
NEXT SIKYONG

Dharamshala, April 11: Tibetans living in 26 countries including India on Sunday voted for the final phase of the general election for the Dharamshala-based parliament-in-exile to elect the next Sikyong (president), an official said.

Forty-five members of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), also called as Tibetan-parliament-in-exile, will also be elected by the voters, Wangdu Tsering, the chief election commissioner of the Tibetan election commission said.

There are around 1.3 lakh Tibetans living in exile in India and across the globe. The Tibetan government-in-exile will elect its head on May 14.

In the last phase of the polls to the post of the president of the CTA only two candidates — Pempa Tsering and Aukatsang Kelsang Dorjee — are in the fray, Wangdu Tsering said.

However, Pempa Tsering, the former chairman of Tibetan parliament, is the front runner.

During the first phase of elections, there were eight candidates contesting for the post of Sikyong. Pempa Tsering secured the maximum votes (24,488) followed by Dorjee (14,544). Sikyong is the head of the Kashag or Cabinet, part of the executive branch of the CTA, and the post was created by the Tibetan parliament in 2011 to provide democratic governance to exiled Tibetan community. — PTI



As India continues to record high Covid-19 cases, Union home minister Amit Shah holds a roadshow where a huge crowd gathered violating Coronavirus norms imposed by the Centre to control the spread of the virus, ahead of the 5th phase of West Bengal Assembly polls in Santipur of Nadia district on Sunday.

WB BJP chief warns of more
Cooch Behar-style killings

Says those who think CAPF carry guns only for show have felt the heat

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, APRIL 11**

A day after four people were shot dead by the Central paramilitary forces during a violent mob attack on a polling booth at Shitalkuchi in Cooch Behar during the fourth phase of the Assembly election in West Bengal, state BJP chief Dilip Ghosh called them *dushtu chhele* (bad boys).

Blatantly defying appeals by Union home minister Amit Shah and West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar to everyone to maintain peace in the remaining phases, the Midnapore BJP MP also threatened the public of a "repetition" of Shitalkuchi-style killings in the event of an "excess".

On Sunday he told a party rally at Baranagar in north Kolkata: "Where did so many *dushtu chhele* come from? Those who were hit by the bullets at Shitalkuchi on Saturday

Gurung: Cooch Behar killings
turning point in Bengal polls

Darjeeling, April 11: Asserting that Saturday's firing by the CISF in Cooch Behar, which claimed four lives, will be a "turning point" in Bengal polls, Bimal Gurung, the chief of one of the two GJM factions, claimed that the BJP is set to face the wrath of voters in the next four phases of elections, especially in the northern part of the state.

Gurung reaffirmed that "statehood is a dream nurtured by every Gorkha" living in the hills, while also noting that the TMC's

pitch for a "permanent political solution" and the overall development of Darjeeling and its adjoining areas sounds "very encouraging".

Lashing out at the BJP for "deceiving the Gorkha jaati for 12 years with fake promises", Gurung, who deserted the NDA and joined hands with the TMC in October last year, said he will teach the saffron camp a "lesson for life", with Mamata Banerjee by his side.

The BJP had won the Darjeeling seat thrice since 2009 — with Jaswant

Singh, S.S. Ahluwalia and incumbent Raju Bista representing the seat respectively over the past 12 years.

Condemning the Cooch Behar incident, Gurung said, "Killing of innocent people — be it by the state police or the central forces — is not acceptable. What happened on the polling day is nothing short of genocide; the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would feel the heat in North Bengal. The party would be wiped out from the region."

— PTI

forces will be posted at the booths. No one will be able to show red eyes. Otherwise, we will be there. If anyone crosses the limit, you have seen what happened in Shitalkuchi. Shitalkuchi will be repeated in places. So be careful."

His warning came on the day Shah said at Shantipur in Nadia: "I appeal to the people to maintain peace and cast their votes for their favourite candidates in the remaining phases of the polls. I also urge leaders of all political parties for a peaceful conduct of the polls according to the EC guidelines."

Dhankhar tweeted: "All must unitedly condemn and abjure violence that has no place in democracy. Pained and anguished at violence in Cooch Behar leading to the loss of lives. People in authority must show statesmanship & ensure respect for constitutional institutions & CAPF engaged in public duty."

4 terrorists killed in encounters

Militants gun down
civilian in Budgam

Srinagar, April 11: Four militants from Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and al-Badr outfits, including those involved in the killing of an off-duty Territorial Army soldier in Anantnag on Friday, were gunned down on Sunday in two encounters with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, police said.

With this, the death toll in the encounters that began on Saturday in Anantnag and Shopian has climbed to five as one militant was killed in the initial exchange of fire.

Towseef Ahmad Bhat and Aamir Hussain Ganie, both from Bijbehara and linked to the LeT, were killed at village Semthan in the Bijbehara area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district after they refused to surrender and fired indiscriminately on a search party, the police said.

Both of them were wanted in many terror crimes including the killing of an

afternoon, a police official said.

He said Khan was rushed to a hospital, where he succumbed to the injuries.

The area has been cordoned off and a manhunt has been launched to nab the attackers, the official said.

— PTI

off-duty Territorial Army soldier Mohammad Saleem Akhoun near his home in Goriwan Bijbehara on Friday. They were also wanted in the case of an attack on a CRPF party in which a CRPF jawan was killed, an official said.

The security forces rescued all the civilians trapped in the area and halted the operation for

the night, he added.

In the wee hours, the operation was resumed and both the militants were eliminated, the official said.

The ultras were also involved in threatening and intimidating the civilian population of the area and enticing young boys to join terror ranks, he said. According to police

records, Bhat was active since 2017 and Ganie had joined the militant ranks in the year 2018.

Terrorists responsible for the killing of Army jawan have been neutralised within two days in Bijbehara encounter, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said. Arms and ammunition, including two AK series rifles, were recovered from the site. The IGP said one of the slain militants in the Shopian encounter was newly recruited into the militant ranks and security forces made sincere efforts to persuade him to surrender, but the other militants did not allow him.

"Parents also made appeals, but other terrorists didn't let him surrender," Kumar said.

He identified the slain militants as Aasif Ahmad Ganai and Faisal Gulzar Ganai — both residents of Chitragram Kalan.

— PTI



The helicopter in which UAE-based businessperson M.A. Yusuf Ali and his wife were travelling made an emergency landing on a marshy land at Panangad in Ernakulam of Kochi on Sunday.

— PTI

NRI biz man safe
after copter crash

Kochi, April 11: A helicopter carrying prominent NRI businessman M.A. Yusuf Ali, his wife and four others crashed landed at a marshy land near here on Sunday morning, police said.

All passengers including Yusuf Ali, who is Chairman of international retail group Lulu Group, his wife and two other passengers along with two pilots on board the chopper owned by the company have been admitted to a private hospital here. "All of them are safe. They are currently under observation," a top official of the Lakeshore hospital where they are treated said.

The incident occurred at Panangad area at around 9 am on Sunday, according to a statement issued by Lulu Group International.

"Yusuff Ali, currently in Kerala, was on a short trip from his home in Kochi to visit a relative at nearby hospital. Due to

AFTER AIUDF,
BPF SHIFTS ITS
CANDIDATES
TO SINGAPORE

**MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, APRIL 11**

After the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) shifted prospective winning candidates to Jaipur in Rajasthan, fearing poaching by the ruling BJP, the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), a constituent party of the Congress-led grand alliance, has also shifted 10 of its 11 candidates in the recently held Assembly polls in Assam to a foreign location. They are understood to be in Singapore.

It is significant that two days ago the 10-party Opposition grand alliance had flown out 20 candidates — 18 from the AIUDF and two from the Congress — to Rajasthan.

The only BPF candidate left in Assam is former minister Pramila Rani Brahma, who herself confirmed this development. "Yes, they have left on Saturday but I have no idea which country exactly they are visiting. I could not contact them," Brahma told reporters.

Pointing out how one BPF candidate was lured to retire from the contest a few days before polling, a BPF party source said that their party chief decided to send them to Singapore on a pleasure trip. Sources said 16 members of the Council Legislative Assembly (MCLA) of the Bodoland Territorial Council also accompanied them.

Brahma, however, clarified that the MCLAs had plans to go on a foreign holiday after the month-long hectic election campaign. She also feared that the possibility of horse-trading could not be ruled out.

Asserting that the ruling BJP-led alliance was not going to get a majority in the Assembly polls, she said that given the past record of some BJP leaders, the Opposition can't be complacent and be a silent spectator.

"We have to be cautious. We are trying to protect our candidates from the BJP's anti-democratic activities," Congress MLA and Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia told reporters.

IN BRIEF

Flood traps 21 Chinese miners

Beijing, April 11: Rescuers on Sunday were trying to reach 21 coal miners who were trapped by an underground flood in China's northwest, a state news agency reported.

The mine in Hutubi County in the Xinjiang region flooded at about 6:10 pm on Saturday, the *Xinhua News Agency* said. It said eight people were rescued. China's coal mines are among the world's deadliest, regularly suffering explosions and gas leaks despite repeated safety crackdowns.

Nasa delays Mars copter flight

Washington, April 11: Nasa has delayed by at least several days the first flight of its mini-helicopter on Mars after a possible tech issue emerged while testing its rotors, the US space agency said Saturday.

Ingenuity's trip, which is to be the first-ever powered, controlled flight on another planet, was set for Sunday but is now on hold until at least April 14. A high-speed test of the four-pound (1.8 kilogram) helicopter's rotors on Friday ended earlier than expected due to an alert of a potential issue.

No power, water in Saint Vincent

St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, April 11: Massive power outages struck the Caribbean island of Saint Vincent before dawn on Sunday, as officials recorded more explosive activity at a long-dormant volcano that launched into a series of eruptions.

After remaining quiet for nearly 42 years, La Soufriere rumbled back into life Friday, blanketing the island in ash and permeating the air with the stench of sulphur.

The eruptions prompted thousands to flee for safety, with around 16,000 people living in areas under evacuation orders.

Clark, Saddam lawyer, dies

Washington, April 11: Ramsay Clark, who promoted civil rights as America's top law enforcement official in the 1960s but later helped defend Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic in court, has died at 93. The often controversial liberal figure and former attorney general died April 9 at his home in New York City, a niece, Sharon Welch, told US media. No cause of death was given.

His political arc was extraordinary. While serving under president Lyndon Johnson, Clark's Justice Department prosecuted popular author and pediatrician Benjamin Spock for helping Vietnam War protesters evade the draft. But he also filed the first school desegregation and voting rights suits in the US North. Within years of leaving government in 1969, he had become a stunningly direct critic of US foreign policy, which he called "genocidal," and of military spending, which he termed "certifiably insane."

GERMAN POLL: 2 GOVS THROW HAT INTO RING

Berlin, April 11: Two German state governors on Sunday declared their willingness to become the centre-right candidate for the country's Sep 26 national election.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel isn't seeking a fifth term after 16 years in power. Her centre-right Union bloc has yet to choose its candidate between two state governors, Armin Laschet and Markus Soeder. "Markus Soeder and I had a long talk," Laschet told reporters after a meeting of the leaders of the parliamentary party factions of the Union bloc. "We both have declared our willingness to run for the candidacy for the chancellorship."

Armin Laschet, who is the governor of Germany's most populous state North Rhine-Westphalia, won the leadership of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, or CDU, in Jan. He hopes to succeed Merkel as chancellor as does Soeder, who is Bavaria's governor and the head of the CDU's Bavaria-only sister party CSU.

The centre-right Union bloc, which is made up by the two parties but dominated by the CDU, hasn't yet decided on its candidate for the parliamentary election. However, a decision is expected in the coming days. "There's a big expectation to come to a solution together, rather sooner than later, regarding the question of the candidacy for chancellorship," Soeder said.

Blackout hits Natanz atomic site, Iran calls it 'N-terrorism'

Raises regional tensions as world powers, Tehran negotiate tattered N-deal



The Natanz atomic facility in Iran.

Dubai, April 11: Iran on Sunday described a blackout at its underground Natanz atomic facility an act of "nuclear terrorism," raising regional tensions as world powers and Tehran continue to negotiate over its tattered nuclear deal. Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, stopped short of directly blaming anyone for the incident. Details remained few about what happened early Sunday morning at the facility, which initially was described as a blackout caused by the electrical grid feeding the site.

Many Israeli media outlets offered the same assessment that a cyberattack darkened Natanz and damaged a facility that is home to sensitive centrifuges.

While the reports offered no sourcing for the evaluation, Israeli media maintains a close relationship with the country's military and intelligence agencies. If Israel caused the blackout, it further heightens tensions between the two nations, already engaged in a shadow conflict across the wider Middle East. "To thwart the goals

of this terrorist movement, the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to seriously improve nuclear technology on the one hand and to lift oppressive sanctions on the other hand," Salehi said, according to state TV.

He added: "While condemning this desperate move, the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes the need for a confrontation by the international bodies and the (International Atomic Energy Agency) against this nuclear terrorism." The IAEA, the United Nations' body that monitors Tehran's atomic

programme, earlier said it was aware of media reports about the incident at Natanz and had spoken with Iranian officials about it. The agency did not elaborate. Sunday's developments also complicate efforts by the US, Israel's main security partner, to re-enter the atomic accord aimed at limiting Tehran's programme so it can't pursue a nuclear weapon.

Power at Natanz was cut across the facility, which is comprised of above-ground workshops and underground enrichment halls.

— AP

Israel: Will see Iran deal saves interests

Tel Aviv, April 11: Israel will work with Washington to ensure any "new agreement" on Iran's nuclear programme will safeguard regional security, Defence Minister Benny Gantz told his US counterpart Lloyd Austin on Sunday. The comments came as Austin made the first high-level US trip to Israel since talks resumed on reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear accord, which the Jewish state fiercely opposed.

Gantz said "we will work closely with our American allies to ensure that any new agreement with Iran will secure the vital interests of the world and the United States, prevent a dangerous arms race in our region and protect the State of Israel".

Austin, the highest-level envoy from President Joe Biden's administration yet to visit ally Israel, said Washington would work

with Israel "to advance shared security interest and priorities".

Stressing America's "iron-clad" bond with Israel, Austin said the US will "continue close consultations to ensure Israel's qualitative military edge and to strengthen Israel's security". Austin's visit came just days after the US said it had offered "very serious" ideas on reviving the hobbled nuclear agreement reached between Tehran and world powers, which was abandoned by former president Donald Trump in 2018. Israel under hawkish Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been a fierce critic of the Iran nuclear deal, dating back to when it was being negotiated during Barack Obama's administration. Netanyahu applauded when Trump withdrew from the deal and imposed sanctions on Tehran.

— AFP

Underground newsletters aid Myanmar youth

Yangon, April 11: Myanmar youth are fighting the junta's internet shutdown and information suppression with an explosive underground printed newsletter they are secretly distributing across communities.

For 56 days straight there have been internet outages in coup-hit Myanmar, according to monitoring group NetBlocks.

The country has been in turmoil since democratically-elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi was ousted in a February 1 coup, triggering a mass uprising that has resulted in a brutal security crackdown and more than 700 civilian deaths.

Thirty-year-old Lynn Thant, not his real name, started the underground newsletter and gave it the edgy name Molotov to appeal to young people.

"This is our response to those who slow down the flow of information — and that's a threat to us," he said.

Thousands of readers across the country are downloading the PDF version of the publication and printing out and distributing physical copies

across neighbourhoods in Yangon and Mandalay and other areas.

Lynn Thant is conscious of the risks involved.

Police and soldiers have arrested more than 3,000 people since the coup, according to local monitoring group Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. Two hundred high profile celebrities, including actors, singers and social media influencers are on an arrest warrant list and could face three years' jail if convicted of spreading dissent against the military.

"If we write revolutionary literature and distribute it like this, we could end up in prison for many years," he said, his face concealed by one of the Guy Fawkes masks popularised by the dystopian movie "V for Vendetta".

"Even if one of us is arrested, there are young people who will carry on producing the Molotov newsletter. Even if one of us is killed, someone else will come up when someone falls. This Molotov newsletter will continue to exist until the revolution is successful."

— AFP

CHINESE SHIPS IN SCS: U.S., PHILIPPINES SHOW CONCERN

Aboard a US Military Aircraft, April 11: Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin on Saturday discussed with his Philippine counterpart China's recent positioning of "militia vessels" near the Philippines in the South China Sea.

Austin spoke by phone with Philippine Secretary of National Defence Delfin Lorenzana while Austin was flying from Washington to Israel to begin an international trip. Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said Austin and Lorenzana discussed the situation in the South China Sea and the recent massing of Chinese vessels at Whitsun Reef, which has drawn criticism from Manila. China has said its vessels are there for fishing. Austin proposed to Lorenzana measures to deepen defence cooperation, including by "enhancing situational awareness of threats in the South China Sea," Kirby said.

Kirby said earlier this week that the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt and its strike group, as well as the amphibious ship USS Makin Island, are operating in the South China Sea. The US has no military forces based permanently in the Philippines but sometimes rotates forces to the country under the US-Philippines Visiting Forces Agreement. The recent gathering of Chinese vessels near the Philippines is among moves the US has criticised as efforts by Beijing to intimidate smaller nations.

— AP

● AUSTIN PROPOSED to Lorenzana measures to deepen defence cooperation, including by "enhancing situational awareness of threats in the SCS," Kirby said.



Demonstrators take part in a march organised by the anti-restriction movement 'Men In Black' in Copenhagen on Saturday against mass testing and restrictive measures during the Covid-19 pandemic.

— AFP

China vax found less effective

Beijing, April 11: In a rare admission of the weakness of Chinese Coronavirus vaccines, the country's top disease control official says their effectiveness is low and the government is considering mixing them to get a boost. Chinese vaccines "don't have very high protection rates," said the director of the China Centers for Disease Control, Gao Fu, at a conference Saturday in the southwestern city of Chengdu.

Beijing has distributed hundreds of millions of doses abroad while trying to promote doubt about the effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine made using the previously experimental messenger RNA, or mRNA, process.

"It's now under formal consideration whether we should use different vaccines from different technical lines for the immunisation process," Gao said.

Officials at a news conference Sunday didn't respond directly to questions

Cops fine 100 at Paris restaurant

Paris, April 10: Paris police said Saturday they had fined over 100 diners at an underground restaurant flouting Coronavirus restrictions and arrested its organiser, after a week of allegations that ministers attended similar rule-breaking events.

Officers were "called out for an excessive noise complaint about a restaurant" late Friday and "put

an end to a gathering of over 110 people," the French capital's police posted on Twitter.

"Guests fined for failing to respect applicable health measures. Organiser and manager arrested," they added.

The prosecutor's office said the two were released Saturday as the investigation continues.

— AFP

UP TO 80% IN SICILY REFUSE AZ VACCINE

Rome, April 11: Up to 80 percent of people offered the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine in Sicily refuse it out of fears over its safety, according to the southern Italian region's president Nello Musumeci.

Public confidence in the Anglo-Swedish jab has been badly shaken by reports linking it to rare, but potentially fatal, blood clots, and by conflicting recommendations on its use. "In Sicily, there is an 80-percent refusal rate of the AstraZeneca vaccine. Every 100 people, 80 say no. It is natural" for people to be particularly concerned, "but we have a duty to believe scientists when they say it is more dangerous not to get vaccinated than to get vaccinated," he said.

— AFP

ROYAL | SNUB Prince Charles pays tribute to 'Papa', says family misses him

No Meghan at funeral for Prince Philip

London, April 11: The funeral of Queen Elizabeth II's husband, Prince Philip, will take place next week, Buckingham Palace said on Saturday, announcing a stripped-back ceremony due to Coronavirus restrictions, and a return for exiled royal Prince Harry but not his wife, Meghan. The announcement came as the couple's eldest son, heir to the throne Prince Charles, 72, paid a heartfelt tribute to his "dear Papa", and said he and the royal family missed him "enormously".

"My dear Papa was a very special person who I think above all else would have been amazed by the reaction and the touching things that have been said about him, and from that point of view we are, my family, deeply grateful for all that," he added.

"It will sustain us in this particular loss and at this particularly sad time." The Duke of Edinburgh — the 94-year-old queen's husband of 73 years — died peacefully on Friday just two months short of his 100th birthday, triggering

eight days of national mourning. Royal officials said his funeral, which will be televised, will take place at 1400 GMT on Saturday, April 17 in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, west of London.

It will be preceded by a national minute's silence.

Government guidelines restrict mourners to just 30 people and close attention has been paid to the pared-down guest list for the funeral, particularly whether the duke's grandson Harry would attend.

Palace officials confirm-

ed he would but his American wife, Meghan, who is pregnant with their second child, had been advised against travelling from the United States on medical grounds.

The couple, who quit frontline royal duties last year, have launched a series of broadsides against the royals, including accusing them of racism, and of failing to treat Meghan's mental health.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will also not be attending the funeral because of Covid restri-

ctions, Downing Street said. "The Prime Minister has throughout wanted to act in accordance with what is best for the Royal household, and so to allow for as many family members as possible will not be attending the funeral on Saturday," a spokesperson said. Gun salutes earlier echoed around the United Kingdom on Saturday as the armed forces paid solemn tribute to the duke.

The coordinated 41-round volleys to the former Royal Navy commander were fired.

— AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

12 APRIL 2021

Disquieting signals in forces firing on voters

The death of four persons in firing by the personnel of Central Industrial Security Force in a booth in Sitalkuchi Assembly constituency in West Bengal, and the death of a fifth person in violence in another booth in the same constituency, give out far too many disquieting signals. A clear picture of the two events is yet to emerge but a preliminary assessment leaves one in no doubt that the central armed police forces that were entrusted with the task of facilitating free and fair elections failed to meet the challenge.

The claim of the security forces that they fired at the people in self-defence prima facie defies logic. There have been no reports of widespread violence or of security personnel suffering injuries. It is natural that minor issues could crop up during elections but there will mechanisms to deal with them. It looks like there was no effort to take the local political leadership into confidence and calm the mob which the security forces allege gheraoed them. They forgot the fact that they were called in to help the polling process, and not to quell a local mutiny. It is deeply disturbing that the protectors, who have been trained to do a professional job, became responsible for the death of those they are to protect. A thorough investigation must be conducted to unearth the facts that led to the loss of so many lives in an otherwise eventless and protracted election process.

The claim of the security forces that they fired at the people in self-defence prima facie defies logic. There have been no reports of widespread violence or of security personnel suffering injuries.

Politicians joined issue no sooner had the news of the mishap reached them. West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee has been inimical to the central forces from the very beginning, and the latest incidents will fuel her charge against them. Her series of statements against the central forces would have made the local population suspicious of their intentions. It is an irony that Ms Banerjee had betted on the presence of the same central forces to ensure a

fair election in the state 10 years ago. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was campaigning in West Bengal at the time when the unfortunate incidents happened, lost no time in blaming the chief minister for the violence. This is unfortunate. The Prime Minister should have counselled peace and calm instead of targeting his political opponent. The very fact that it was the forces under the Union government that shot the people down should have tempered the Prime Minister's response but it did not work that way.

The Election Commission has a lot to learn from the Cooch Behar incidents. It practically takes over local governance once the election process is set in motion. We do not know what instructions it had passed on to the security forces when it despatched them to the states; clearly they used the force not to the optimum but to the maximum. It is also evident that there is no local command and control system to address issues even though the West Bengal elections are conducted in eight phases with only two or three districts going to the polls at a time. The EC must ensure that it uses its powers to act in an efficient and non-partisan manner; grand statements alone are not enough.

A modernising royalist

Considering the circumstances the world finds itself in now, only 30 members of the British royal family will attend the service for Prince Philip on Saturday. If not for Covid-protocol restrictions, half of Britain would have liked to turn up at the royal consort's funeral when he will be wheeled in a Land Rover hearse. So beloved a royal was he for his nation that an outpouring of grief over his passing, when just short of a century, is understandable. His ceremonial presence was a feature of over 22,000 public events besides any number of occasions on which he willingly walked two steps behind his wife, the long reigning monarch Queen Elizabeth II. He symbolised selfless public service while also making 5,496 speeches and undertaking 637 solo trips abroad.

To paraphrase his enormous contribution to a largely dysfunctional family that was beset with more than a fair share of scandals, induced mostly by extramarital love and marriage trouble, Prince Philip modernised the British royal family while shepherding it into the modern age. And then, in the face of the latest public outrage over charges of racism made by one of their own — Prince Harry and his wife Meghan in an interview with Oprah Winfrey in the United States — the Prince Philip was busy trying to help keep together the anachronism that is royalty. A royal consort who knelt and swore to be his wife Queen Elizabeth's "liege man of life and limb" at her coronation in 1952, was more than true to his word in holding steadfast to his own marriage for a good 73 years.

The time of his passing lends itself easily to hagiographical references. The unsentimental would, however, also see him as the gadfly that he was who often shocked the world as the prince of gaffes with his often slanderous, extempore remarks. To Indians Prince Philip seemed racist for the extent to which he could be dismissive of them — "Some Indian must have put it there" was his snooty reference to a shoddily patched-up electrical connection. Just as Britain needed in war time a Winston Churchill, with all his faults, its royalty sorely needed Prince Philip to deal with peace time turbulence.

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Subhani

POLL...



POLL VIOLENCE...



Despite Modi's push, BJP yet to reach tipping point



Shikha Mukerjee

An eight-phase Assembly election, even for West Bengal where violence is intrinsic to the process and every government has been accused of rigging the outcome, seemed excessive when the Election Commission announced the dates. On second thoughts, it is just what the BJP needed to build up a wave in its favour, however hard that may be.

After four phases and 135 constituencies that have already made their choices, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda are still hard at it, because another four phases and 159 constituencies have yet to decide. The BJP's top brass is doing some heavy lifting with Mr Modi in the lead to get that wave going. The process seems as fraught and dependent on a force of nature, meaning the wave, as were the tense days before the mega container ship blocking the Suez Canal, *Ever Given*, finally budged. The difference is the wave was not the only push that the container needed; there were dredgers and tugs pulling at the hulk to get it to move.

The staggered polling dates give the BJP the time it needs to campaign for its conquest of West Bengal. If it needs so much time to campaign when the elections are underway to build voter support, the question that must be asked is, what was the party doing between 2019 when it zoomed to winning 18 Lok Sabha seats and 40.64 per cent of the votes from a mere 10.16 per cent votes in 2016? One conclusion would be that as the West Bengal election grew closer, the BJP realised it needed time to deploy its mightiest weapon,

Mr Modi, in multiple locations to drum up the support and swing undecided voters to the safe side.

The need for a saturation campaign by Mr Modi is one way of acknowledging that Mamata Banerjee is a far stronger opponent than the BJP anticipated. It also means that the Trinamul Congress is not on its deathbed as a party and organisation, despite 30-odd recent defections, including the BJP's star acquisition Suwendu Adhikari, who seems to have dropped out of sight after the Nandigram voting.

A list of what makes the TMC and Ms Banerjee a far tougher challenge for the challenger, meaning BJP, is perhaps necessary to assess why the party is deploying Mr Modi in key constituencies to drum up the momentum it needs to get to the point where it can unseat the incumbent. In other words, the BJP has not as yet reached the tipping point.

Quite apart from usual comparisons, Ms Banerjee's popularity vis-a-vis Mr Modi's popularity, anti-incumbency at the state level, the attraction of the BJP as a new untested party in West Bengal, what will matter most is which party is best at holding the middle ground, meaning which party is most appealing to the median voter, the average woman/man in rural, urban and peri-urban West Bengal.

The BJP has shifted so far to the right, especially in terms of its Hindutva politics, and economic and divisive social engineering policies, that it is entirely dependent on the Hindu majority to give it the percentage of votes it needs to win an election,

especially in West Bengal. It boils down to being confident of getting at least 60 per cent of the total 70 per cent Hindu votes in the state, given that the overwhelming majority of 27 per cent Muslim voters are unlikely to choose the lotus symbol on EVM machines. Its leaders are quite candid that the party has no expectations of attracting Muslim votes; state party chief Dilip Ghosh as well as Amit Shah are on record about this.

Is it realistic that the BJP will get 60 per cent of the 70 per cent Hindu votes in West Bengal? It would appear, as yet, difficult. Bengalis are split between conservatives, who uphold religious and social orthodoxy, and Bengalis who reject it and embrace socially

progressive values. Till this election is over,

there is no knowing how the Bengali voter will react to state-sponsored religious orthodoxy that is divisive in its intent and destabilising of the uneasy equilibrium between the Hindu and Muslim communities. It is instructive to note that in 2019, the BJP's surge to 40.64 per cent of votes was a switch that hitherto Left voters made, sending its vote-share plummeting to 6.34 per cent in 2019 from 19.75 per cent in 2016. Congress votes declined by over 50 per cent in 2019 to 5.6 per cent; the Trinamul Congress suffered a marginal erosion of votes in 2019 compared to 2016, even though it lost 12 seats

to the BJP.

The Trinamul Congress, with over 43 per cent votes in 2019, obviously enjoys the support of a substantial section of Hindu voters. It is only if significant numbers of these voters shift away from Ms Banerjee that the BJP can muster the numbers it needs to oust India's only woman chief minister.

While the BJP campaign has focused almost exclusively on the evils of the Mamata Banerjee government, focusing on polarising the vote on religious identity lines by putting Muslim appeasement at the cost of the Hindu majority at the top of the list, it has ignored the quieter revival of the Left, led by the CPI(M), and the Samyukta Morcha as a new political combination that was created for this election. The Samyukta Morcha is contesting in all 294 seats; the Left is contesting in 177 seats, the Congress in 91 and the Indian Secular Front in 26 seats. The Left is fighting for its very survival, and in this election it is working to achieve a revival. Its pitch as the alternative is politically necessary but unrealistic. Any increase in the Left and Congress voteshare will take off votes that the BJP has been counting on to reach the tipping point. This can be offset if the Trinamul Congress loses its voters and loses the elections.

Whichever party makes it across the finishing line needs to occupy the middle ground in West Bengal in social and religious identity terms.

The BJP's promise to deliver better development and integrate West Bengal with the mainstream, which it believes it controls, comes with a promise to polarise the state on communal lines. Will that appeal to the run-of-the-mill Bengali, who as poet Shakti Chattopadhyay famously said, are into religion and into giraffes?

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist in Kolkata

LETTERS

TIKA UTSAV

I am against naming the vaccination programme as an utsav (Tika Utsav). An utsav is an occasion to celebrate. However, Covid has caused so many deaths and is still raging. There is gloom all around in several homes where family members have died or someone is being treated due to Covid. Why are many states complaining about vaccine shortage when India is exporting it? India's needs must be met first.

Baru Rajendra Prasad
Hyderabad

STINKY STREETS

The Padmaraonagar road behind the Gandhi Hospital is in a pathetic state (*Stinky streets, DC, April 11*). It needs to be urgently addressed by the GHMC. Due to the absence of garbage bins, the litter is strewn across the road. The GHMC must remove the dump immediately and collect the garbage from the residents of Padmaraonagar, door-to-door and put up a signboard against littering and impose a penalty of ₹500. In a smart and metropolitan city like ours, it is the responsibility of the GHMC to collect garbage.

Zubair Khan
Hyderabad

UNFORTUNATE DEATHS

Whenever elections are held in West Bengal in recent times, people have lost lives in violence (*4 Trinamul men killed in CISF firing during clash, DC, April 11*). In the last panchayat election also many people were killed. The economic condition of rural people in West Bengal is awful but many are involved in politics at the cost of their lives.

Dr Shankar Chatterjee
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Curfew in Ceylon as clashes continue

COLOMBO, April. 11

As pitched battles between insurgents and government forces continued throughout Ceylon, the Government identified areas with heavy fighting by reimposing a 24-hour curfew on eight administrative districts in the Southern, North Central and Central provinces. Colombo itself remained a heavily guarded city. Troops fired at curfew breakers, injuring many.

A.G. Noorani



Vestige of colonial repression, J&K surety bonds blow against democracy

IS there any country in the free world that compels its politicians in the Opposition to sign a bond for "good behaviour" before a magistrate with sureties and a named amount, and guarantees of good behaviour — threatening them with prison if they don't comply?

Developing countries have turned the imitation of repressive laws of their colonial masters into something of an art. Inevitably, on their independence, the old laws continued to be in force; subject to new fundamental rights. Our new rulers grabbed the old laws and began (mis)using them against their new "masters" — the people who voted them to power. The judiciary was not very assertive. Preventive detention laws are a good instance. But the last instance is the Criminal Procedure Code. Several codes were enacted. The Code of 1898 was in force till independence and beyond. India amended it in 1973 but ensured that the repressive elements endured — the sanction of the govern-

ment to prosecute its own minister or official in authority sitting as judge in its own case.

The code enables banning of books. There is Chapter VIII. It provides for "Security for Keeping the Peace and Good Behaviour". Even in olden times the language clearly pertained to persons of ill repute or "history sheeters" as they are called; in short, goondas. The chapter extends from Section 106 to Section 124.

Consider the scheme as a whole and you will find it has no application to political opponents. The British abused it for political ends sparingly. Restraint does not come easily to New Delhi.

The only change after Independence was the separation of the executive from the judiciary. The magistracy was divided into executive magistrates and judicial magistrates. Proper understanding is vital. To begin with, Section 106 provides for "security for keeping the peace" on conviction of an offence like criminal intimidation and

assault, in sum, plain goondagiri. Judicial magistrates make such an order. But Section 107 empowers executive magistrates to order execution of a bond if he "receives information that any person is likely to commit a breach of the peace or disturb the public tranquillity or do any wrongful act" that may be disruptive. The suspect is made to sign a bond for good behaviour. This, the courts have held, is a judicial proceeding. The section applies to persons distributing material which is likely to disturb the peace because it is seditious or communal. Section 109 applies to suspects who go into hiding. Section 110 applies to habitual offenders. The entire scheme of the chapter reveals that its object is not to control the politicians.

However, a complaint was filed in Pune against Bal Gangadhar Tilak under Section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code for disseminating "seditious matter". Tilak was defended throughout from the magistrate's court in Poona (August 1916) to the

high court (November 1916), by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. He won in the high court and did an unusual thing for him after judgment was pronounced. He turned around and shook hands with his close friend, Bal Gangadhar Tilak. The full text of his entire proceedings verbatim are reproduced in this writer's book, *Jinnah and Tilak*.

In 2019, the Government of India invoked these archaic, repressive provisions of a colonial law and put an entire people in bondage by forcing their leaders to sign bonds. Not content with the massive presence of its army and paramilitary in Kashmir since 1989, in 2019, New Delhi made a bonanza of bondage. It knew that the people would revolt if it scrapped Article 370 of the Constitution and what little was left of Kashmir's autonomy. Knowing full well that the people would protest, New Delhi got the leaders to sign bonds under Section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code as if they were criminals. The leaders were

imprisoned. By Sept 19, 2019, 36 politicians were confined.

On November 5, 2020, the People's Democratic Party president, Mehbooba Mufti, said that 19 party leaders were asked to sign an affidavit after being detained and released later for taking out a protest rally. "India is the world's largest democracy only on paper now," she said.

A PDP spokesman said the affidavit was "unacceptable in a democracy". He said the 19 leaders "refused to sign surety bonds which asked them to refrain from taking part in unlawful, anti-national activities".

The surety bond stated: "That we are permanent residents of the J&K U.T. That a case under section 107/151 stands against us.... That we will not indulge... in any unlawful, anti-national activities..."

There is no law in the statute books which defines what is "anti-national". This is sheer barbarism.

By arrangement with Dawn

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	49591.32	-0.31
Nifty 50	14834.90	-0.26
S&P 500*	4,128.80	0.77
Dollar (₹)	74.75	0.27
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.40	0.11
Euro (₹)	88.89	-0.41
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,257.97	0.20
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	63.18	-0.03
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.017	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.673	0.041

* As of Friday/Saturday

China approves third Sinopharm vaccine for trial

China has approved the third Covid-19 vaccine from Sinopharm Group Company to start clinical trials, the company said. The green light to begin testing comes after two inactivated vaccines from Sinopharm were approved and widely used both at home and in developing countries. The latest one is a recombinant vaccine that includes parts of the coronavirus's spike protein to stimulate immune response.



Packaging units face input shortage Global producers ignore BIS mark

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 11

The government's insistence on BIS certification on certain imported tin and steel products has led to a shortage in metal packaging materials. The Steel and Steel Products Quality Control Order, issued on July 17, 2020 by the Ministry of Steel, has made BIS certification mandatory for imports of tinsplate and tin-free steel. Further, restrictions have been imposed on the import of various steel products like easy open ends and peel off ends used by the metal packaging industry, which has 10 per cent share of the \$50 billion packaging industry. The restrictions have affected a large number of micro, small and medium enterprises involved in making products using tinsplate steel-sheets of steel

NOT BIG ENOUGH MARKET

- Steel ministry has made BIS certification mandatory for imports of tinsplate and tin-free steel
- Restrictions have also been imposed on various steel products like easy open ends
- But foreign suppliers have stopped shipping tin plates to India, leading to shortage

coated with a thin layer of tin that have specialised use in consumer products like cans, hairclips, pens. "It is virtually impossible to force the international suppliers to go for BIS certifications as the procedure of BIS registration is highly cumbersome. Further, for the international suppliers of tin plates, India is a small market and hence they are not quite keen to get into lengthy bureaucratic and cost-intensive BIS certification procedures," says the Metal Container Manufacturers' Association (MCMA).

Since the order came into effect, foreign suppliers have stopped shipping tin plates to India and this has led to a shortage in the domestic market. "There is a huge demand-supply gap for tinsplate and tin-free steel in India to the extent of 2.5 lakh tonnes per annum which is met through imports. Moreover, tin-free steel is produced only by one mill, Tin Plate Company, and that too once a quarter," said Sanjay Bhatia, president, MCMA. The shortage has also led to rise in prices.

Term life policies could become costlier

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

Life insurers, including Life Insurance Corporation, could increase the premium on term life insurance policies by up to 10 per cent this fiscal. They are confident that a higher premium would not affect the demand for this product for various reasons. "We expect up to 10 per cent hike in term life insurance in the near future. Even in the increased premium regime, women, who comprise half of the country's population, will continue to get it at cheaper rates, thanks to their better longevity rate than their male counterparts. Besides, the home loan borrowers, who often prefer the cost-effective term life in place of home insurance, will also continue to buy the product," said an official of a public sector insurer. A significant rise in demand for term insurance has been observed of late, regardless of the cost. "The increase in online term market is largely attributed to increasing awareness about insurance due to increased economic uncertainty during the coronavirus-led recession as well as mortality risk," said Gopal Kumar, an economist and actuary.

IBC: Recovery rate plunges after settlement of big cases

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, APRIL 11

Absence of high value companies led to a poor recovery rate for lenders from cases under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) during the December quarter of this fiscal. The recovery rate for Q3FY21 dipped to a low of 12.6 per cent, a steep fall from a high of 64.1 per cent reported in the March 2020 quarter. In the past, the recovery rate in India used to be about 26 per cent. Post-IBC implementation, the overall recovery rate till date has improved to 39.8 per cent. Of the total claims

which were settled via liquidation in Q3FY21, the realisable value was only Rs 20.3 crore, or around 21 per cent, of the total admitted claim amount of Rs 97.3 crore. According to Sanjay Agarwal, senior director of Care Ratings, "The earlier quarters of the previous year saw resolution at a very high value for large steel accounts such as Essar Steel, Bhushan Steel, JP Infratech. Similarly, there was a high value cement account (Binani Cement) getting resolved last year. The recovery rate was high for these steel and cement companies. This year, some of the companies that have been admitted

are weaker of the cases with legacy bad debt and so the recovery rate for lenders have fallen steeply." Suspension of fresh bankruptcy proceedings due to the pandemic defaults also led to a slowdown in the number of cases getting admitted for Corporate Insolvency Resolution Processes (CIRPs). For instance, the number of cases admitted slowed down in nine-month FY21 (283 cases) compared with 1,517 cases admitted in 9MFY20. The December-end quarter witnessed a drop of around 83 per cent compared with the previous year.

BUSINESS BRIEFS CAIRN TO FOREGO \$500 MN IF INDIA PAYS PRINCIPAL



New Delhi, April 11: UK's Cairn Energy Plc has offered to forego \$500 million and invest that amount in any energy project identified by the government if New Delhi agrees to honour an international arbitration award and returns the value of loss it incurred from being taxed retrospectively, sources said. The Scottish firm invested in the oil and gas sector in 1994 and made a huge oil discovery in Rajasthan. In 2006-07, it listed its Indian assets on the BSE. Five years later the government passed a retroactive tax law and billed Cairn Rs 10,247 crore plus interest and penalty for the reorganisation tied to the flotation. The state then expropriated and liquidated Cairn's remaining shares. —PTI

INFOSYS PLANS SHARE BUYBACK

New Delhi, April 11: Infosys said its board will consider a buyback proposal at its meeting on April 14. "The board of the company will consider a proposal for buyback of fully paid-up equity shares of the company at its meeting to be held on April 14, 2021." The company's board is slated to meet on April 13 and 14, to approve and take on record the audited consolidated financial results for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2021. In August 2019, Infosys had bought back 11.05 crore of its shares. —PTI

FRANKLIN 2ND TRANCHE SOON

New Delhi, April 11: SBI Funds Management (SBI MF) will distribute the next tranche of Rs 2,962 crore to unitholders of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund's six shuttered schemes this week. SBI MF has already distributed Rs 9,122 crore to investors as directed by the Supreme Court earlier. "SBI MF would be distributing the next tranche of Rs 2,962 crore to unitholders," a Franklin Templeton spokesperson said. —PTI

GAMES

SHORT TAKES India pip Argentina in Pro League tie

Buenos Aires: The Indian men's hockey team snatched a dramatic penalty shoot-out win over Olympic champions Argentina after Harmanpreet Singh kept the side afloat in regulation time with his two goals in the action-packed first game of their FIH Pro League tie here. The draw guaranteed a point for each team, but it was the tourists who walked away with the bonus point, thanks largely to some brilliant goalkeeping by P.R. Sreejesh. As per the event's rules, the team winning the shoot-out also walks away with the bonus point. —PTI

Wrestlers return empty-handed

Almaty, Kazakhstan: National champion Sandeep Singh Mann (74kg) failed to qualify for the Olympic Games at the Asian Qualifiers here on Sunday, keeping veteran Sushil Kumar's Tokyo hopes alive in the weight category. Also missing out on qualification was Satywart Kadiyan (97kg) and Sumit Malik (125kg) in the three-day competition that concluded here on Sunday. All those who missed out have one last chance to make the cut for the Tokyo Games at the World Olympic Qualifiers, scheduled to be held in Sofia, Bulgaria from May 6-9. Sonam Malik and Anshu Malik were the only ones to qualify for the Games in Almaty. —PTI

Two Indian fencers test +ve in Cairo

New Delhi: Two Indian fencers participating in the World Junior and Cadet Championships in Cairo have tested positive for Covid-19, leading to them being quarantined there. Fencing Association of India (FAI) president Rajiv Mehta said that the infected fencers were doing fine and being looked after by the team doctor. "Yes, two fencers have tested positive and they are undergoing quarantine in Cairo," Mehta said. "Both the fencers are doing fine and they are being looked after by the doctor there," he added. India had fielded 24 fencers in all the three disciplines — sabre, foil and epee — in the tournament which ends on Sunday. —PTI

Azhar bats on sticky HCA wicket ‘Stunning’ Hideki takes 4-stroke lead

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 11

Former Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin has discovered that cricket administration is a different ball game. He's batting on regardless, and playing some powerful strokes too. On Sunday, the Hyderabad Cricket Association president was up against his own team at the Annual General Meeting, which saw many a drive, pull and punch. Chairing the meet, Azhar took a firm guard and stuck to his stance as he went through with the appointment of Justice (Retd) Deepak Verma as HCA's Ombudsman and Ethics Officer as mandated by the Constitution and one which the Telangana High Court had upheld in its order recently. On March 28, the HCA's AGM was stalled and deferred for two weeks as there was no unanimity over the appointment of Ombudsman and Ethics Officer. It was decided to put the matter to vote at the next meet. "The past conventions of HCA and practice followed in other State associations, the Apex Council considers names, obtains consent of the honourable judges as required by the rules and recommends the names for appointment by the General Body. In this case, the Apex Council has made just one recommendation - Justice Deepak Verma," Azhar said on Sunday and pointed to the High Court judgement which outlines the sequence of events with dates of obtaining consent. He then put the matter to vote by show of hands and announced the former Supreme Court judge's appointment. As the opposition camp demanded voting by secret ballot that led to fracas, Azhar declared the AGM closed, walked out of the hall along with the club secretaries supporting him, and



Hyderabad Cricket Association president Mohammad Azharuddin gestures as he speaks to the press after HCA's Annual General Meeting at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad on Sunday.

addressed the press. The rival camp (vice-president John Manoj, secretary R. Vijayanand, joint secretary Naresh Sharma, treasurer Surender Agarwal and councillor P. Anuradha and their supporters) stayed back and continued with the meeting, making different appointments — Senior Tournament Committee, Cricket Advisory Committee, Junior Selection Committee (Men), Cricket Talent Committee, Grounds Committee, CEO and CFO among others. They also readied appointment orders for Justice (Retd) Nisar Ahmed Kukru (Ombudsman) and Justice (Retd) T. Meena Kumari, (Ethics Officer). "They can do whatever they want, it's not valid after the president has closed it," Azhar told reporters. "As a president it was my call to decide whether the vote to

have no ill feelings against anybody and don't want to step on anyone's toes. I want everybody to work in tandem," he added. Azhar was visibly upset by the uproar at the meet. "I will write to the BCCI, which has been embarrassed by the unruly behaviour of members of its affiliate and might consider taking action. It is bringing disrepute to the parent body, which provides us the funds to run cricketing affairs. Last time too some of the members levelled charges against Justice Verma, which tantamount to Contempt of Court if I may caution," he said. His opponents too threatened to write to the Board. "The police were set upon us. We were asked to leave the premises saying the meeting was deemed closed," John Manoj said. Others alleged Azhar left the fight midway through and felt he should've gone for the ballot if he commanded majority. "As many as 125 of the 160 members who attended the AGM have signed on the appointments we have made," Surender claimed, showing a bunch of printouts. Nevertheless, Azhar decided to bat on. "We have to make other appointments like the CEO and CFO now," he said and also promised "20 per cent of the fund which the HCA receives from the BCCI (which approximately amounts to Rs 14 crore) to the district associations affiliated to the HCA." Even as he appears to be playing a lone hand in the Apex Council, Azhar assured: "I will do my best. I am here for the betterment of cricket and will make sure that nothing will go wrong in the Association. People can cast any amount of aspersions on me but I am hell bent on clearing this, because nobody has fought this in so many years, over which all the dirt has accumulated."

‘Stunning’ Hideki takes 4-stroke lead

Augusta (United States), April 11: Hideki Matsuyama unleashed an incredible back-nine shot-making display to seize a four-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the Masters, putting the Japanese star on the brink of a historic triumph at Augusta National. Matsuyama, trying to become the first Japanese man to win a major title, fired a seven-under par 65, his career-low 18-hole Masters total and the first bogey-free round of the week, to stand on 11-under 205 after 54 holes. "It will be a new experience for me being a leader going into the final round of a major," Matsuyama said. "I guess I'll relax as best I can and do my best tomorrow." England's Justin Rose, Australian Marc

Leishman and Americans Xander Schauffele and Will Zalatoris shared second on 209. Rose, the 2013 US Open champion and a two-time Masters runner-up who led by one when the day began, needed a long par putt at 18 to salvage a second consecutive level par 72. "I didn't play well enough today, simple as that," Rose said. Matsuyama adapted as lightning-fast Augusta National was softened by rain, taking full advantage by going six-under in a seven-hole stretch of the back nine. After a 78-minute storm delay, swirling winds vanished and the wet course was receptive. However, slowed greens became tricky to read — except by Matsuyama. —AFP

SNAP SHOTS

Hishanth ton in Gajwel big win

Hishanth Prem Charan hogged Sunday's limelight in the Telangana Cricket Association U-16 Inter Districts State Championship (Group-II). Hishanth of Gajwel (Siddipet Rural) clobbered a phenomenal 131 which was followed by an impressive spell of 3 for 29 to lift his side to a massive 99-run victory against Nizamabad while Nirmal gun down Siddipet for three wicket win. Brief scores: Gajwel (Siddipet Rural) 238/3 in 20 overs (Hishanth Prem Charan 131, P. Lohith Reddy 29) bt Nizamabad 139 in 19.3 overs (R. Vishal 38, Hishanth Prem Charan 3/29); Siddipet 133/7 in 20 overs (Akhil 23, Sandeep L 2/17) lost to Nirmal 134/7 in 17.2 overs (R. Sripadhav 41, Shiva Charan 2/16).



Hishanth Prem

Ranga Reddy & Indur in semis at hockey

Ranga Reddy and Indur Hockey Club marched into the semifinals of the Dhyan Chand Cup 5-a-side Hockey Tournament being organised by Gymkhana Hockey Club at the Gymkhana Ground in Secunderabad. Ranga Reddy edged past Gymkhana-2 with a 5-0 scoreline as E. Jyothi Reddy and Aparna scored a brace each while Malkvika scored one goal. In another match, Indur Hockey Club mauled Medchal 6-1 in which Nivetha scored the most six goals for her side. Meanwhile, Gymkhana-1 toppled Royal Club 'A' 9-1 as Bhavani contributed with six goals and Kusuma with three. —AFP



David Warner's daughter sports Sunrisers jersey to cheer on her father. — Twitter

Dhoni fined ₹12L for slow over rate

Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni has been fined ₹12 lakh for maintaining a slow over rate during his side's defeat against Delhi Capitals. "As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences, Mr Dhoni was fined ₹12 lakh," a statement from IPL added.

CSK still waiting for Behrendorff arrival

Losing Josh Hazlewood was a big blow as it left the team bereft of overseas pace bowling options with Jason Behrendorff and South Africa's Lungi Ngidi also not available for the next game, said Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming. Australia pacer Hazlewood had withdrawn at the last moment to keep himself fit for upcoming international assignments. Behrendorff was named his replacement last Friday and is yet to arrive, while Ngidi is serving his quarantine after returning midway from South Africa's ODI series against Pakistan. "It's (bowling) an area that we are probably short on," said Fleming.



Suresh Raina spends his day off cooking in the team hotel.

Yellow is a matter of pride for Raina

Suresh Raina is back with a bang in IPL but rued the fact that CSK failed to score an additional 20 runs against Delhi Capitals in their opening game which led to a seven wicket defeat. CSK put on board a competitive 188 with Raina scoring a brisk 54 but last-year's finalists Delhi Capitals overhauled the target without any fuss. "It feels amazing to be back with MS Dhoni and the Chennai Super Kings. It is always good to contribute to a side that has done so much for the players, who have done so much for every person. "It is always good to be back and wear this yellow colour. It's a pride that I have cherished all my life," Raina said. "It could have been better if we would have scored 15-20 runs more but I think we bowled better in the middle overs, in the next few days we will have a few good practice sessions where we can learn what to do better," he added. Rain had missed the last edition of the IPL held in the UAE.

RANA-WAY VICTORY

Nitish slams 56-ball 80 as Knights gallop to their 100th IPL win

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, APRIL 11

Riding on Nitish Rana's brilliant 80, Kolkata Knight Riders galloped to their 100th IPL win here at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Sunday. Kolkata got the better of Sunrisers by 10 runs.

Chasing 188, Sunrisers had a disastrous start as they lost both their openers, David Warner and Wridhiman Saha, early. When they were wobbling at 10 for two, Manish Pandey and an in-form Jonny Bairstow put on a vital stand.

While the Englishman Bairstow counter-attacked, Manish provided the solidity from the other end.

KKR pacer Pat Cummins snapped the partnership at 92 by dismissing Bairstow (55 off 40). Kolkata had the upper-hand when Sunrisers needed 69 off last five overs. But Manish's stay in the middle gave Hyderabad a glimmer of hope. The equation was reduced from 44 off 18 to 38 off 12. Then came a fearless teenager Abdul Samad who clubbed KKR's premier pacer Pat Cummins for two sixes in the penultimate over to make it 22 off 6. However, Andrew Russell's brilliant final over ensured Kolkata had the last laugh. Manish remained unbeaten on 61.

Earlier, openers Shubman Gill and Rana got KKR off to a decent start, putting on 53 runs. T. Natarajan and Sandeep Sharma found it difficult to Rana-Gill at bay as the duo made 50 runs in powerplay.

Afghan leg-spinner Rashid Khan who was introduced in the seventh over gave Sunrisers' the much-needed breakthrough by removing Gill. Rashid's wrong'un crashed into Gill's off-stump. Rana raced to his 12th IPL fifty in 37 balls, reaching the landmark by pulling a short ball off Vijay Shankar for a six over deep backward square-leg boundary.



KKR opener Nitish Rana en route to his half-century against Sunrisers Hyderabad in an IPL match in Chennai on Sunday. — IPL

Barring Rashid, Sunrisers bowlers looked below par.

Rahul Tripathi scored his fifty in 28 balls and added 93 off 50 balls with Rana to set up a perfect platform for his team's big hitters. However, they couldn't make full use of

it as Eoin Morgan and Andre Russel fell for single digit scores. It was another Afghan spinner Mohammad Nabi who removed Rana and Morgan off consecutive balls before Rashid dismissed the dangerous Russell.

As KKR slumped to 160 for five from a commendable position of 146 for one, their hopes of touching the 200-run mark suffered a big blow. If not for Dinesh Karthik's unbeaten 22 off 9 balls, KKR wouldn't have made a competitive total.

SCORECARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: Nitish Rana c Shankar b Mohammad Nabi 80, Shubman Gill b Rashid Khan 15, Rahul Tripathi c Saha b Natarajan 53, Andre Russell c Pandey b Rashid Khan 5, Eoin Morgan c Abdul Samad b Mohammad Nabi 2, Dinesh Karthik (not out) 22, Shakib Al Hasan c Abdul Samad b Kumar 3, Extras (W-7) 7. **Total (for six wickets in 20 overs) 187.** FoW: 1-53, 2-146, 3-157, 4-160, 5-160, 6-187.

Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-45-1, Sandeep Sharma 3-0-35-0, T Natarajan 4-0-37-1, Mohammad Nabi 4-0-32-2, Rashid Khan 4-0-24-2, Vijay Shankar 1-0-14-0.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Wriddhiman Saha b Shakib Al Hasan 7, David Warner c Karthik b Prasidh Krishna 3, Manish Pandey (not out) 61, Jonny Bairstow c Rana b Cummins 55, Mohammad Nabi c Morgan b Prasidh Krishna 14, Vijay Shankar c Morgan b Russell 11, Abdul Samad (not out) 19. Extras (B-1, LB-1, W-5) 7. **Total (for five wickets in 20 overs) 177.** FoW: 1-10, 2-10, 3-102, 4-131, 5-150.

Bowling: Harbhajan Singh 1-0-8-0, Prasidh Krishna 4-0-35-2, Shakib Al Hasan 4-0-34-1, Pat Cummins 4-0-30-1, Andre Russell 3-0-32-1, Varun Chakravarthy 4-0-36-0.

MoM: Nitish Rana

MSD is my go-to man, says Pant

Mumbai, April 11: Delhi Capitals' new skipper Rishabh Pant said walking out with Mahendra Singh Dhoni for the toss in their IPL opener here was a special moment for him as the Chennai Super Kings talisman has been his "go-to man."

Chasing 189 for victory, DC romped to a seven-wicket victory with eight balls to spare after Shikhar Dhawan (85) and Prithvi Shaw (72) struck blistering half-centuries. "Actually, it was special for me captaining in IPL and walking out for toss with MS. I have learnt from him and he's my go-to man," Pant said.

The likes of Chris Woakes and Avesh Khan ensured DC did not miss their first-choice pace duo of Kagiso Rabada and Andre Nortje who are serving their quarantine.

"It was good, once you win the match everything is good. In the middle phase, I was under pressure, but good job from Avesh and the bowlers.

"We were thinking as to what we will do without Nortje and Rabada



Delhi Capitals skipper Rishabh Pant is the centre of attraction as players walk back to the pavilion. — IPL

and I thought we had to do with the options we have.

"We thought whatever we have we have to work around this and put the best playing XI. We just wanted to finish the match before one over,

we didn't think about the run-rate."

Pant also lauded the opening duo of Dhawan and Shaw. "Prithvi and Shikhar did a good job for us in the powerplay. They kept it simple and looked for boundaries." — PTI

Small changes in technique worked wonders for Shaw

Mumbai, April 11: A minor change in technique coupled with focus on cutting down on silly mistakes has been Prithvi Shaw's recipe for success after a poor run of form that found him out of national team during the England series.

The 21-year-old on Saturday blasted his way to a 38-ball 72-run innings as Delhi Capitals chased down a winning target of 189 against CSK with more than an over to spare.

"I made some small changes in my batting before the IPL. I just wanted to minimize all the mistakes I was making, and I worked hard," said Shaw

in a release on Sunday.

The change that he referred to was positioning of his back-lift. Earlier, his bat would come down at an angle from the gully region, causing problems with the incoming deliveries but after working with Amre, the back-lift is more straightened reducing the gap between bat and pad.

Last year, Shaw was dropped from DC's playing XI after a string of low scores in UAE and also omitted from India's Test squad after scoring 0 and 4 in the first Test in Adelaide.

After working on his technique, Shaw returned to amass a whopping 827



Prithvi Shaw

runs in 8 matches in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. "I practised for two weeks with Strength &

Conditioning Coach Rajinikanth Sivagmanam sir and Pravin Amre sir before the Vijay Hazare

I made some small changes in my batting before the IPL. I just wanted to minimize all the mistakes I was making, and I worked hard

— PRITHVI SHAW
Delhi Capitals opener

Trophy. Then I just played my natural game with a few changes in the Vijay Hazare Trophy," he said. Shaw shared a 138-run opening stand with Shikhar Dhawan (85) before being dismissed by Dwayne Bravo in the 14th over.

"Very happy with the way I batted... the opening stand which we got was very crucial for us. Chasing 190 odd is not easy

without a good start," he said.

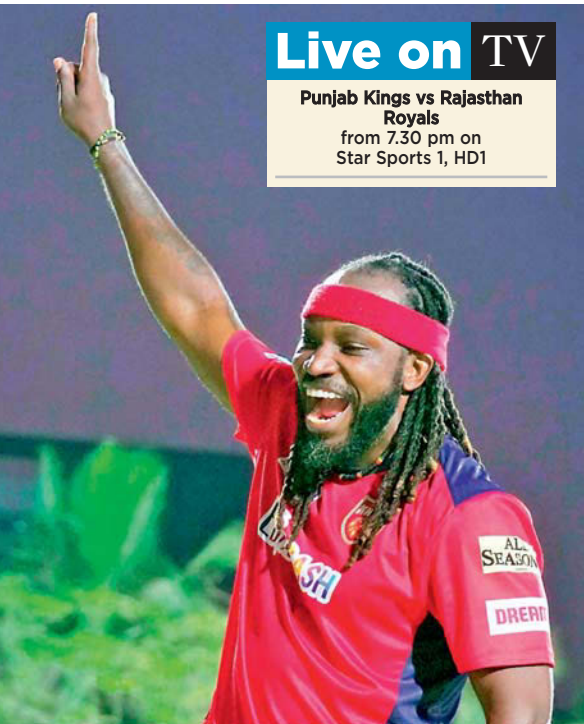
"It was a great win for us; however, I should've stayed in the middle until the end. So, if I have to rate my innings out of 10, I will give an 8 to myself." Talking about DC head coach Ricky Ponting, Shaw said: "With Ricky, I generally speak to him about tactics and strategies as a batsman.

"He has played so much

of cricket and he has got the experience which he can share with us and he does especially with the youngsters. I am really enjoying working with him."

Asked about skipper Rishabh Pant, who replaced an injured Shreyas Iyer ahead of this season, Shaw said: "We really miss Shreyas Iyer, and he led the team very well.

"However, Rishabh Pant is very smart. He is fearless and enjoys the game. He's very entertaining on the field and is very cool and calm as a captain. He's doing a fantastic job for the team." — PTI



Punjab Kings' Chris Gayle is brimming with energy during a training session in Mumbai. — Twitter

A battle of big hitters on cards

Mumbai, April 11: Another battle of big-hitters is on the cards when KL Rahul's Punjab Kings take on the Sanju Samson-led Rajasthan Royals, two line-ups dotted with expansive stroke-makers and in pursuit of a winning start to their IPL campaigns here on Monday. Rajasthan will be banking heavily on their swashbuckling all-rounder Ben Stokes. Stokes will be keen to get some runs under his belt and so will be the likes of Englishman Jos Buttler and newly-appointed skipper Samson, who is a mine-field of talent.

The Royals could opt to open with the highly-rated Yashasvi Jaiswal and Buttler. While Samson, who would be itching to prove a point, and Stokes would then form strong middle-order.

If the four fire on all cylinders, they can pummel any attack into submission and Punjab would be no exception on the Wankhede track, which is usually batting-friendly.

Royals also have a several other options at their disposal, including all-rounders Shivam Dube, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia, Riyan Parag and Liam Livingstone.

Gopal, Tewatia and Parag, all bowl leg-spin, so it would be interesting to see whether the Royals opt to go in with two leg-spinners.

Tewatia and Dube have the ability to whack the ball outside the park and look to be certainties in the playing XI.

With star pacer Jofra

HEAD to HEAD

Matches	21
RR	12 PK
	9

FOR THE RECORD

● KL Rahul who has scored 1,922 runs at an average of 54.91 in 42 innings needs 78 more to become only the second batsman after Shaun Marsh (2,477 runs) to score 2,000+ runs for Punjab.

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

● Rajasthan beat Punjab by four wickets at Sharjah
● Rajasthan beat Punjab by seven wickets at Abu Dhabi

STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISER

Archer missing due to injury, the pace attack will have to be led by Rajasthan's newest recruit — South African all-rounder Chris Morris, who will be eager to justify his huge price tag of ₹16.25 crore.

RR will have to get their combination right as only four foreigners can make the playing XI.

So, it will be interesting to see whether Royals opt for left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman or go in with either Jaydev Unadkat, Kartik Tyagi or Chetan Sakariya.

Unadkat, with his experience, might get the nod.

On the other hand, Punjab boast of some hard-hitters like Rahul (670 runs in 2020 season), Mayank Agarwal (424 runs) and Chris Gayle. Rahul and Agarwal formed a lethal opening combination in 2020. — PTI

MISSING JOFRA IS A BIG BLOW, SAYS SANGAKKARA

Mumbai, April 11: Star pacer Jofra Archer's absence because of injury is a "big blow" to Rajasthan Royals but their new Director of Cricket Kumar Sangakkara is confident that the team's young Indian fast bowlers will rise to the challenge in this year's IPL.

Archer, who played with a hand injury during the India series, is currently recuperating from a surgery and the duration of his availability during the later part is still not clear.

"Sanju and I will both agree that it's a big blow for us. Jofra is a very vital part of our make-up and not to have him is unfortunately the reality of it. We have to work around it and plan contingencies," Sangakkara said ahead of the clash against Punjab Kings. — PTI

without a good start," he said. "It was a great win for us; however, I should've stayed in the middle until the end. So, if I have to rate my innings out of 10, I will give an 8 to myself." Talking about DC head coach Ricky Ponting, Shaw said: "With Ricky, I generally speak to him about tactics and strategies as a batsman. "He has played so much