THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | SATURDAY | 13 MARCH 2021





Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Maximum/ Minimum 36/22 ºC

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Magha Bahula Amavasya Star: Purvabhadra till 12.23 am Varjyam: Sunrise to 7.22 am Durmuhurtam: 6.29 am to 8.04 am Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am HIJRI CALENDAR Rajab 28,1442 AH

PRAYERS Fajar: 5.26 am **Zohar:** 12.36 pm Asar: 4.45 pm Maghrib: 6.31 pm Isha: 7.39 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.25 AM SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM MOONSET TODAY 5.38 PM **MOONRISE TOMORROW 5.50 AM**



We should not have taken leaders of different factions of the same party!

NEET for under

grads on Aug 1 New Delhi: The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for admis-

sion to undergraduate medical courses will be conducted on August 1, the ministry of educa-tion's National Testing Agency announced on Friday. "The NEET (UG) is going to be conducted by NTA for admission to MBBS, BDS, BAMS, BSMS, BUMS etc.

Inflation rises to 3-month high

New Delhi: Inflation rose to a three-month high of 5.03 per cent in February mainly on account of higher food prices, government data showed on

Friday. The Consumer Price Index based retail inflation stood at 4.06 per cent in January. The previous high was witnessed at 6.93 per cent in November 2020.

File case against **Kangana: Court**

Mumbai: A Mumbai court has asked the city police to register an offence against actor Kangana Ranaut after the author of 'Didda: The Warrior Queen of Kashmir' accused her of copyright violation, an official said on Friday. The author, Ashish Kaul, accused Ranaut of copyright



NATION 4

Mamata discharged from hospital

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



WORLD 5

Turkey to host Afghan talks

SPORTS 6

Mithali Raj in 10K runs club



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Campaign ends for MLC polls, Quad to aid India TRS eyes higher voter turnout vaccine capacity

Booth-level panels will reach out to voters ahead of elections

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

As the campaign for the Legislative Council elections for graduate seats ended on Friday, the TRS leadership has shifted its focus to micro-level booth management and is working hard to ensure a high voter turnout in its favour.

The ruling party has chalked out a strategy to reach every voter by convening of booth-level party committees in the crucial hours before the March 14 polling. The party has formed a 30member team per booth, and these entities are being monitored by incharge ministers, party MPs, MLCs and legisla-

The booth teams were asked to personally reach out to every voter, track the voter slips distribu-tion, help voters in identifying polling booths and ensure they reach the booths and exercised their franchise. Each team will have at least three women besides students and employees from government and private

The 2015 graduate MLC polls had witnessed poor voter turnout — around 35 per cent — and the party leadership believes that this was a prime rea-son why TRS lost the Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahbubnagar seat.

■ Page 2: KCR guides TRS



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao addresses an event organised to launch the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav programme in Hyderabad on Friday.

KCR launches India's 75th **Independence Day fete**

DC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Friday launched 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' (India@75) celebrations at the Public Gardens here. This is the run-up to the diamond jubilee celebrations of Independence Day.

To commemorate the day, the Chief Minister released Tricolour bal-

initiative to organise the event nationwide to celebrate the 75th years of India's Independence in a grand man-

Rao said the Telangana statehood agitation was inspired also by Mahatma Gandhi's peaceful fight for India's Independence.

"Mahatma Gandhi launched the Dandi march for salt satyagraha Sarojini Nadu too participated in the march. What began as a small gathering soon turned into a national movement.'

"The next generation should be made aware of the struggles and sacrifices of our freedom fighters in achieving India's Independence," he said.

■ Page 2: Freedom struggle

Grouping vows to keep Indo-Pacific region open

New Delhi, March 12: In their first ever summit, leaders of the Quad countries on Friday finalised a landmark initiative under which huge investments will be made in India to create additional produc-tion capacities for the export of doses of Covid-19 vaccines to the Indo-Pacific region, seen as an effort to counter China's expanding

vaccine diplomacy.

The Quad leaders — Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Australian PM Scott Morrison and Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga — vowed to strive for an Indo-Pacific region that is free, open, inclusive, healthy, anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion, in an apparent message to

In his opening remarks at the virtual summit, Modi said Quad has come of age and its agenda covering areas like vaccines, climate change and emerging technologies makes it a force for global good.

Modi said India's formidable vaccine production capacity will be expanded with support from Japan, US and Australia to assist countries in the Indo-

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in an apparent mes-

sage to China.

Pacific region and that Quad would now remain an important pillar of stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

'We are united by our democratic values, and our commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. Our agenda today — covering areas like vaccines, climate change and emerging

technologies — makes the

Quad a force for global good," he said.
In his comments, Biden

said the Quad is going to be a vital arena for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. "A free and open Indo Pacific is essential to each of our futures," Biden told the meeting from the White House.

In a media briefing, for-eign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said, referring to the vaccine initiative and making India a major production hub, the aim is to produce a billion doses of vaccines by the end of 2022. He said the financing for creation of additional production capacities in India will come from the US and Japan, while Australia will contribute to the logistics and delivery issues.

Asked whether the situation in eastern Ladakh figured in the talks, the foreign secretary said there was a discussion on regional issues important to the Quad member nations but declined to give the details saying the nature of the discussions were confiden-

"There was a commonality of views on these issues.

Bhatti protests higher petrol price

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, MARCH 12

Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said people of rural areas are feeling the pain of repeated hikes in prices of petrol, diesel and essential commodities.

So much so, farmers with tractors are afraid of going to petrol stations, he stataccused PM Narendra Modi of caring only about industrialists, without bothering about the poor in rural India. Crores of rupees are being given in loans to the corpo

rate sector while denying the same to rural India. He said people of the countryside have come to the conclusion that the NDA government is in favour of only corporate companies.

■ Page 2: Bhatti criticises

hits scary levels

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 12

People across religious faiths feel taking a bath in Godavari is sacred and this would wash away their sins. The flip side is the dumping of waste, flow of drainage water into the river and discharge of effluents from factories and industries. The Godavari river is

polluted as a result, making its water unsuitable even for irrigation needs. With the throwing of plastic, photos of gods prepared of glass and cardboard and materials used for prayers including garlands and flowers by the devotees, with the immersion of Ganesh

Manthani, Godavarikhani and Dharmapuri towns add to a scenario in which the water from Godavari is polluted and becoming hazardous.

Before the construction of the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project, all the waste used to get washed away along with the nor-mal, steady flow of water in Godavari. Now, as the water is remaining stag-nant from Medigadda to Yellampalli reservoirs following the construction of KLIS, the pollutants are remaining stuck in the river.

The gates of Medigadda barra-ge are opened only when there are heavy rains; that too for a few Godavari river.

River pollution Serving staff can't head EC, says SC

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

In a major ruling aimed at upholding the indepen-dence of the election commission, the Supreme Court on Friday said that no person serving the gov-ernment could be appointed as election commissioner as they have to be independent and act independently. Having held that no per-

son serving the govern-ment or associated with it could be appointed as an election commissioner, a bench comprising Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman, Justice B.R.Gavai and Justice Hrishikesh Roy said that independence of election commission can-

The top court gave a direction to all states to comply with the constitutional scheme of independent SEC if they are in

The strong observation from the court came as it took dim view of Goa government for giving additional charge of State Election Commissioner to a secretary serving under

Describing it a "disturbing feature" that an officer serving under the Goa government was given an additional charge as State election commissioner, the court noted that this officer attempted to overreach the HC in the holding elections to Panchayats in the State.

The court directed the State election commission to issue notification for Panchayat polls in Goa within 10 days and complete the election process by April 30.

days, due to which large not be compromised at idols made of plaster of paris and chemicals, with amou-nts of pollutants are accumulated in the any cost in a democracy and that giving additional charge of State Election mixing of the remains of the dead, the scenario Commission to a govt offibecomes scary. The flowing in of infringement. Page 2: Devotee flow cial is mockery of the con-Hyd-based firm ties up with state to set 20,000 food processors the money. The company entrepreneur and the com-The TS government,

GREEN PUSH

TS eyes micro units to help farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Hyderabad-based farm tech major Our Food on Friday tied up with the Telangana government to set up village-level micro food processing units in partner-ship with rural entrepreneurs in the state.

"Post-harvest losses in India are as high as 30 per cent. Value addition at the farm level would cut down post-harvest losses and help farmers get better pricing. After the Covid pandemic, a lot of people have lost their jobs and have returned to their villages. They are looking to take up farming as a profession. Our initiative will also help such people by creating rural jobs in addition to helping farmers to earn more," Balareddy, the CEO of Our Food, told

this newspaper.

The company, which entered into an MoU with the Telangana government on Friday, plans to set up 20,000 micro food processing units in the state. The company manufactures food processing units at its facility in Zaheerabad in Sangareddy district.

Under this initiative, the

meanwhile, would identify beneficiaries and help entrepreneurs and the company to get hassle-free permissions for setting up of the micro food processing units.

company would offer its franchise to rural entrepreneurs. The franchisee holder needs to invest around 40 per cent of the sum that is required to set up a micro food processing unit, while the company would help him or her to get a loan from the bank for the rest of and help the village-level

would train the entrepreneur and undertake to procure the entire processed food, which reduces the risk factor for the investors. The total investment

required for setting up 20,000 units is ₹1,535 crore. Apart from this, the company needs to invest exclusively in the expansion of its manufacturing lines and marketing network. The Telangana government, meanwhile, would

franchisees by the company

pany to get hassle-free permissions for setting up of the micro food processing units. According to an estimate,

Bala Reddy said this initiative would create direct employment for at least 40,000 rural youth and indirect employment for at least 60,000 people in the state. "An investment of ₹1,535

crore will generate a revenue of ₹24,409 crore, a net profit of ₹2,440 crore to the identify people who could farmer franchises and up to be considered for awarding ₹4,881 crore to farmers over a period of five years," he



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CRITICISES KCR OVER IRRIGATION PROJECTS

From Page 1

The CLP leader pointed out that during his "cycle yatra", people are largely complaining about increasing fuel prices and the three farm acts. He said people have decided to teach a lesson to the NDA government whenever the occa-

On TRS government's rule, Bhatti Vikramarka said Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has designed irrigation projects not to give water but make money through the backdoor.

He addressed a meeting of Congress leaders and activists at the DCC office after completion of his cycle yatra on Friday. He cycled to the DCC office through Manchukonda, Budidampadu and Panditapuram.

HIGH COURT ISSUES WARRANT AGAINST TAHSILDAR

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

The Telangana High Court on Friday issued a bailable war-rant against Hayathnagar mandal tahsildhar Prameela Rani for ignoring its orders to appear before the court.

Taking a serious view of the "obstinate attitude" of tahsildhar for not appearing in court despite twice being ordered to do so, Justice M. S. Ramachandra Rao issued a bailable warrant. He directed district authorities to produce the tahsildhar before the court on March 19.

The High Court was dealing with a contempt case challenging inaction of the tahsildhar in inspecting and marking bo-undaries of a plot at Sahe-bnagar village of Hayathnagar mandal in Ranga Reddy district.

owner had approached High Court stating that revenue authorities had been stopping construction on his Plot No. 53 in Survey No. 7. However, authorities submitted that the peti-tioner's plot was on land belonging to the government, which is adjacent to Survey

Following that, the court directed the tahsildhar in 2019 to conduct a survey and demarcate the petitioner's plot. Even after lapse of two years, the orders had not been implemented. Hence, the petitioner filed a contempt of the bailable warrant.

NIA FILES FRESH CHARGE SHEET AGAINST ISI MAN

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, MARCH 12

National Investigative Agency (NIA) on Friday filed a fresh charge sheet against an ISI operative in Visakhapatnam Espionage Case in the NIA special court in Vijayawada.

According to a press release issued by the agency, NIA has filed a supplementary chargesheet against Imran Yakub Giteli @ Giteli Imran, a resi-dent of Gujarat, for his involvement in raising funds for espionage activities in

The case was initially registered under various sections of IPC and UAPA at Counter Intelligence Police Station, Intelligence Department, Vijayawada. It pertained to conspiracy hatched by Pakistani ISI agents with their associates based in India to carry out terrorist acts in the country. In furtherance of this conspiracy, they were collecting sensitive and classified information relating to vital defence installations.

The agency had earlier filed a charge sheet against 14 accused persons, including three civilians with business interests in Pakistan, on June 15 last year. It has re-registered the case and taken up investigation accordingly.

Investigations so far have established that accused Giteli Imran was in contact with Pakistani-based handlers. He also used to meet them during his visits to Pakistan. On instructions of Pakistani ISI agents, he was transferring money into accounts of Navy personnel for passing sensitive and strategic information. He was raising funds for terrorist activities in the garb of

illegal cloth business. Investigations further revealed that there is an further organised network within Pakistan that is utilising services of operatives like Imran Yakub Giteli in India.

It's time to welcome **New India: Tamilisai**

TS Governor inaugurates 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, MARCH 12

Heralding the celebrations leading up to the 75th year of India's Independence, Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan inaugurated 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' at the police parade ground in Hanamkonda where she hoisted the National Flag.Beginning speech in Telugu, Dr Tamilisai wished the people of Warangal and said: 'As the entire nation celebrates this momentous occasion, I take pride in eulogising the glorious era of Independent India

the country's progress.' She noted that when several countries across the world, including the most developed, are still struggling to overcome the worst-ever crisis created by the Covid-19 pandemic in the last one year, India has not only endured its wrath but also showed a new direction to the world by developing, producing, and supplying indigenous vaccines to combat the

'We must all be proud that our country is sup-



Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundarajan releases the Tricolour balloons to mark the inaugural of 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' at the police parade ground in Hanamkonda

Covid vaccines to more than 50 countries including many developed nations across the globe. This truly signifies the new and Atmanirbhar Bharat," she stressed.

The Independent India has made tremendous progress on all fronts during the last 75 years. "In my opinion, the biggest success achieved by India in these 75 years is sus-

taining the parliamentary form of democracy braving all odds and it gave the country stability for so many years," the Governor said.

Dr Tamilisai said the second biggest success story of Independent India is preserving unity and integrity despite diverse cultures, religions, langulifestyles and ethos. languages,

"Azadi ka Amruth Mahotsav is not only an occasion to remember the freedom fighters and cherish our achievements, but also gives us an opportunity to vision and plan for India at 100 years of independence,' Dr Soundarajan observed. Later, she released Tricolour balloons into the air to mark

ED TIGHTENS NOOSE AROUND CITY-BASED NRI IN SAUDI

DC CORRESPONDENT

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has stepped up investigation into the alleged money laundering by Habib Abdul Razzaq Hadi Ali Baghdadi, a city-based non-resident Indian (NRI) presently living in Saudi Arabia.

The probe agency is said to have chanced up on property registration documents of Baghdadi in which both the quantum of sale consideration and the payment methods were questionable. In some documents it was merely mentioned that the sale consideration was received by him while the crucial data on mode of payment was

missing from the records.
Sources said that in one instance, Baghdadi, representing his company Hira Multi Construction Ventures Pvt Ltd, executed two sale deeds in favour of Mohd Hadi Ali and Huda Hadi Ali in

Devotee flow declines on Shivaratri

From Page 1

On special occasions and festival times, many devotees from within the state visit the bathing ghats at Kaleshwaram, Manthani, Godavarikhani, Velgatoor and Dharmapuri towns for a holy bath in the Godavari river. But due to pollution of water, very few devotees were seen coming in during the Maha Shivarathri on Thursday for a holy dip.

P. Prakash, secretary of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee, asked: "What is the use of such a massive project, constructed investing crores when foul smell is emitted from the backwaters of the project? The government is not taking any steps for cleaning the Godavari, he said. The Congress party Ramagundam assembly segment in-charge, MS Raj Takur alleged that with the negligence of the local MLA and the ruling estab-

Ramagundam municipal corporation, the sewage and drainage water from various released directly into the Godavari without any filtering. "Because of this, the water in the Godavari is polluted and this is resulting in the formation of fog.

Consumption of such water will result in several health-related problems,

There is a need to clean the Godavari using modern technology along with setting up of sewerage treatment plants for filtering of the drainage water released from various towns, he pro-

Youth Congress leader P. Arun Kumar alleged that the officials are not taking steps for prevent the release of effluents from factories Godavari. They must not allow devotees to throw waste and immerse idols along with plastic into the

Freedom struggle set an example, says KCR

From Page 1

Rao said that among all the struggles and fights for freedom, the Indian independence struggle is far more important since it set an example for others on what non-violence can

Mahotsav is a series of events being organised by the Centre to celebrate the anniversary Independence.

The mahotsav will be celebrated as a Jan Utsav in the spirit of Jan Bhagidari. The Telangana state govvarious programmes till August 15, 2022.

recently allocated ₹25 crore for the Amrut Mahotsav

events.

He formed a committee headed by adviser K.V. Ramana Chary to chalk out



daughter of Pingali Venkayya, at her house at Macherla in Guntur district on

AP CM presents ₹75L to Tricolour creator's kin

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 12

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on felicitated National Flag creator Pingali Venkayya's daughter Ghantasala Seetha Mahalakshmi and his other family members on the occa-sion of 75 years of the Flag, and announced the launch of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav in

Andhra Pradesh.

The CM flew down to the remote town of Macherla in Guntur district in a helicopter, went to the house of Seetha Mahalakshmi at PWD Colony and offered cash aid of ₹75 lakh from the state government and interacted

with the family members.

He garlanded the statue of Mahatma Gandhi and paid floral tributes to a portrait of Venkayya. The CM also felicitated Seetha with a shawl and a bouquet.

The CM said it was a matter of great pride to the state that the National Flag was designed by Venkayya. The family members expressed immense happiness and gratitude towards the CM for taking time out to hail the patriotic works of Venkayya.

The financial aid that Jagan Mohan Reddy extended to Seetha has been sanctioned via a youth advance, tourism and culture (YATC)

department order on March 11. The money has been credited to her account on March 12.

The event was concep tualised and coordinated by special chief secretary Dr Rajat Bhargava, in which state ministers Muttamsetti Srinivas Rao, Mekathoti Rao, Sucharita.

Ranganatha Raju, MLAs Kasu Mahesh Reddy, Bolla Brahma Naidu, Vidadala Rajani, Dr. G Srinivas Reddy and Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy, MLCs Dokka Manikyavaraprasada Rao, Krishnamurthy U m m a r e d d y Venkateswarlu, Collector Vivek Yadav and other officials par-

SPEED UP WORK ON NEW MEDICAL COL-

KANIZA GARARI I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 12 A resurgence of the Covid-

19 pandemic in neighbouring Maharash-tra has put the Telangana state govern-ment on a special alert. Health minister Etala HYDERABAD, MARCH 12 Rajendar ahs ordered an immediate stepping up of the testing process in the

Increased surveillance has been ordered for Nizamabad, Jayashankar-Bhupalapally, Jagtial and other districts bordering Maharashtra. Ground-level health care staff such as Asha workers and village officials have been asked to monitor the arrivals from outside and test them for Covid-19 before they mixed with the local population.

teleconference with district medical and health officers and superintendents of government hospitals, said the number of tests every day must be raised to 50,000. The daily testing count on March 11 was

The testing of samples had been reduced as it was

LEGES, ETALA TELLS OFFICIALS Tandur and Sangareddy

Alert in state as Covid cases rise

DC CORRESPONDENT

Construction of medical colleges must be completed as soon as possible, health minister Etela Rajendar said at a meeting with health officials and senior government officials. The Union health min-

istry has not sanctioned medical colleges to the state, and the state government is keen that clearances are received soon. districts Karimnagar, Khammam, Kothagudem, Asifabad,

cases was coming down. Private diagnostic centres say the sample collections remain high. An official of a diagnostic chain here said. "We have 10 centers and each of them get more than 200 samples a day. The main centre gets 500 sam-

ples a day." The rise in cases across are to have medical colleges. Completing all the works will ensure that permission can be obtained soon, said Rajendar.

The minister said that the Aarogyasri scheme of the state government has to be linked with PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) so that more people can avail the benefits.

After the introduction of the new scheme, there are duplications and and it is important to prevent that, the state health minister

believed that the number of different states has made it important for the government machinery to be reactivated. Aspects like the wards earmarked for Covid-19 treatment, safety protocols of healthcare workers and the preparedness to deal with serious cases were reviewed by the minister and health officials. A government doctor must do it."

said, "Gandhi Hospital is the nodal centre. In Osmania General Hospital, the isolation ward has been kept ready and those who are positive are sent to Gandhi for treatment. The protocols are the same as was followed the last time." Doctors in government hospitals say they are isolating suspected cases early. Apart from fever, cough, cold, loss of smell and taste, people are also complaining of symptoms of diarrhoea, muscle pain, body ache and fatigue.

A government doctor explained, "There no longer are clusters but single cases are either mild or serious. There are changes in the pattern and it is important to understand which strain is prevalent." Health minister Rajendar said, "We are urging people to be alert and not relax. Health officials in Medchal Malkajgiri, Ranga Reddy, Sangareddy and Hyderabad are also vigilant as preventing the spread in densely populated areas is important. Vaccination process would continue and people

KCR guides TRS leaders on strategy

To avoid the repeat of the 2015 MLC election, the party leadership has taken several steps. TRS president and Chief

Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and working president K.T. Rama Rao on Friday held a tele-conferece with all in-charge ministers and other leaders overseeing the elections and guided

them on the strategy to be adopted in the final hours before the polling to boost party's winning chances

The data of each and every graduate voter, comprising their address and phone number was provided to all party election incharges. They were asked to share the data with booth-level party commit-Instructions

given to booth committees to track each and every voter, reach out to them and ensure they cast their vote. Micro-level booth management became all the more important in the wake of fears about a poor voter turnout due to the long weekend.

All parties fear that the four-day holiday — Maha Shiyaratri on March 11, Shab-e-Meraj on March 12,

13 and Sunday on March 14 would adversely impact the voting. Parties that secured mobile phone numbers of voters have shared the data with their boothwise teams. These teams are calling up the voters, requesting them not to leave the city and urging those who already left the city to return by March 14

SPYING | CASE | Giteli in contact with Pak-based handlers: Agency

NIA files fresh charges on ISI man raising funds

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, MARCH

National Investigative Agency (NIA) on Friday filed a fresh charge sheet against an ISI operative Visakhapatnam Espionage Case in the NIA special court in Vijayawada.

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in contact with Pakistanibased handlers. He also used to meet them during his visits to Pakistan. On instructions of Pakistani ISI agents, he was transferring money into accounts of Navy personnel for passing sensitive and strategic information.

He was raising funds for terrorist activities in the garb of illegal cloth busi-Investigations further

revealed that there is an organised network within Pakistan that is utilising services of operatives have established that like Imran Yakub Giteli

CM: Yadadri queue complex by April 15

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Minister Chief Chandrashekar Rao has instructed officials to complete giving final touches to renovation works at Sri Yadadri Laxmi Narasimha temple complex for quicker reopening of the temple. Reviewing ongoing works

at the temple premises in Pragathi Bhavan here on Friday, he suggested decorations at the queue complex. He wanted brass fittings along the 350-feet queue line. Officials showed the CM four designs of Kalash (metal pots) to be placed along queue lines. He then zeroed in on one. He wanted the compound wall on the northern side demolished for the queue complex, which he

wants to be completed by

The Chief Minister desired that there be a brass Deepa Sthamba (light pole) and pedestal. Inquiring about Shivalayam, he said brass tridents should be erected along the compound wall. He wanted no obstructions for 360-degree view of the tem-

ple, which should be iconic. Like display of Sudershan Chakra during Brahmotsavam, K. Chandrashekar Rao wanted tridents all along the Shiva temple and Radhasala. He suggested that a compound wall be constructed around the Vishnu Pushkarini Hills, which should be illuminated from

lamppost must be erected at the center of the lawn. The CM appreciated construction of Addala Mandapam (mirror hall) and said it is

both sides. He said an 80-feet

autiful. He witnessed a demo of lighting around the temple complex during nights.

Speaking at the meeting

Chandrashekar Rao said, should have an exclusive look compared to temples all over the world. The entire Yadadri temple, renovated with Krishna Sila (black stone), will become known for its uniqueness. After the reopening, devotees will visit the temple in lakhs. Measures should be taken to ensure that devotees do not face any difficulties during their holy

Government's chief advisor Rajiv Sharma, adviser Anurag Sharma, chief secretary Somesh Kumar, CMO secretary Smita Sabharwal, special Bhoopal Reddy.

SHORT TAKES

6TH PERSON HELD FOR ADVOCATE COUPLE'S MURDER

DC CORRESPONDENT KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 12

Ramagundam police commissionerate personnel arrested one more person Kapu Anil, 33, who allegedly helped Bittu Srinu in the murder of the advocate-couple, Gattu Vaman Rao and P.V. Nagamani at Kalvacherla village mandal Ramagiri Peddapalli district

Anil, the sixth accused to be arrested, is a native of Arukalagudem of Manthani and a cousin of Bittu Srinu. He reportedly accompanied Srinu and helped him in the execution of the murder plot.

Those arrested earlier include Srinu, Shivandula Chiranjeevi, Akkapaku Kumar, Udari Lachaiah and Kunta Srinu.

Nine persons were produced before the Manthani magistrate as eye-witnesses. including a driver and conductor, and Gattu Kishan Rao, father

NMC APPROVES BUDGET OF ₹390 CRORE FOR '21-22

DC CORRESPONDENT NIZAMABAD, MARCH 12

Nizamabad Corporation (NMC) has placed annual budget proposals for ₹390.92 crore for the financial year 2021-22 on Friday. A special budget meeting was conducted at New Ambedkar Bhavan, chaired by mayor Dandu Neethu Kiran.

The budget estimate projects income through taxes is at ₹62 crore. Deposits and loans at ₹60 crore and followed by nonplan, plan grants at ₹226.35 Total revenue expenditure is estimated at ₹86.11 crore. The members unanimously approved the budget estimates for 2021-22 financial

Nizamabad urban MLA Bigala Ganesh Gupta, rural MLA Bajireddy Govardhan, MLCs V. Gangadhar Goud, Akula Lalitha, additional collector (local bodies) B.S. Latha, municipal commissioner Jithesh V. Patil, municipal corporators and officials were

Speaking at the municipal council meeting, urban MLA Bigala Ganesh Gupta said that a new shopping complex at the cost of ₹6.5 crore will be constructed at Ahmad Bazaar. The existing building is in a dilapidated condition, and to avoid any untoward incident, a new shopping complex is planned, he explained.

MLA assured that priority would be given to the existing traders in municipal shopping complexes at Ahmad Bazaar and Shambhu temple. He said that shops would be allotted on rate fixed by the corporation and open auction. Meanwhile, MLA Ganesh Gupta, mayor Neethu Kiran inspected the newly constructed municipal corporation building

SWEEPING MACHINE INAUGURATED

DC CORRESPONDENT NIZAMABAD, MARCH 12

A sweeping machine was inaugurated at Rajiv Gandhi auditorium premises here on Friday. Nizamabad municipal corporation procured the sweeping machine at a cost of ₹60 lakh from Pattana Pragathi funds.

Nizamabad urban MLA Bigala Ganesh Gupta, Nizamabad Bajireddy Govardhan inaugurated the sweeping machine on the occasion. Mayor Dandu Neethu Kiran, commissioner Jitesh V. Patil and others were

MAN THREATENS WITH PISTOL OVER LAND DISPUTE

DC CORRESPONDENT NIRMAL, MARCH 10

person from Hyderabad allegedly threatened the members of a family with a pistol during heated arguments over a land dispute in Sofinagar in Nirmal town on Friday evening. Nirmal two-town police started an inquiry into the incident following the complaint lodged by Bishal Pasha Khadri.

The police are now searching for the person who allegedly threatened a family's members with a pistol. The person has been identified as Abdul Rasheed of Malakpet of Hyderabad. There was a dispute on the land ownership belonging to Sufi Dargah.

Tips on firefighting



Fire department personnel exhibit how to escape from sudden fire and give tips on firefighting at the women and child hospital in

Cops change approach to end Bhainsa tension

Efforts on to control the spread of false information on social media

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, MARCH 12

The police department is in the process of identifying miscreants, who are often involved in communal clashes and inciting hatred among the people of Bhainsa in Nirmal district. Towards this, the police will keep a close tab on movements of such miscreants.

The state government about such elements.

took a serious note of the communal clashes in the town as they were impacting tranquility and denting otherwise the state's 'safe' image. It has been noticed that

some youngsters are notorious for whipping up communal passions even during petty issues. Bhainsa police are colinformation that some youngsters are notorious for whipping up communal passions even during petty issues. Bhainsa police are collecting information about such ele-

It has been noticed

Adilabad Superintendent of police, and in-charge for Nirmal, A step towards this is to

Vishnu S. Warrier said that they would use the PD Act against all individuals who foment trou-ble. Efforts are also being made to control the spread of false information on social media, which is considered a potent medium.

The police are also trying to find out policing lapses and be vigilant to

network in and around Bhainsa.

Meanwhile, police arrested five persons on charges of setting fire to two autos and a hotel at Mahagaon village in Bhainsa Rural mandal in the early hours of Friday. Reportedly, police rushed to the spot and put out the fire soon after receiv-

Have faith in government, appeals minister

WARANGAL, MARCH 12

Proving all sceptics wrong, the Telangana state is heading towards development in just six years after the formation said minister for panchayat raj and rural development, Errabelli Dayakar Rao.

Association Officers members here on Friday, he asked the people to note the petty politics of the opposition against the TRS government and Minister Chief K. Chandrashekar Rao is striving for a 'Bangaru Telangana.' The Central

Interacting with Government is neglect- state on the path of devel- employee fitment was Telangana Gazetted ing the coach factory and opment. During the delayed due to coron-Steel plant in Bayyaram included in the state Reorganisation Act.

"The hard work of all the employees in building a better Telangana state is unforgettable. Chief Minister KCR is constantly reviewing the employees' work to keep the

Coronavirus pandemic, the employees served as warriors. assure you that the problems of the employees will be resolved soon. employees must refrain from making hasty decisions," he said

Further adding, the

pandemic. avirus However, employees are going to benefit more Employees will hear that good news in a few days.

"We appeal the employ ees to stand by the government and cooperate. the minister said.

WITH SPECIFICATION No. 1/2020-21

Sealed tenders are invited from TSNPDCL registered contractors of Waranga District for Shifting of 33 KV Double circuit line i.e., 33 KV KUC and 33 KV Chinthagattu feeders emanating from 220/132/33 KV SS Warangal due to Road widening at Rayapurawada in Yadavanagar section in Hanamkonda Town Division of Warangal Urban Circle. The details of the works and other information can be obtained from our website www.tsnpdcl.in Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Operation Circle, Waranga

SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO. 01/ 2020-21 OF DE/ OP/ NARSAMPET WITH SPECIFICATION No. 01/2020-21

Sealed tenders are invited by the TSNPDCL registered contractors of Warangal District for various works in Narsampet division. The details of the works and other information can be obtained from our website www.tsnpdcl.in Sd/- Divisional Engineer, Operation, Narsampet

SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO. 05/ 2020-21 OF DE/ OP/ HANAMKONDA TOWN WITH SPECIFICATION No. 1 TO 3/ 2020-21

Sealed tenders are invited from TSNPDCL registered contractors of Waranga District for the work in Hanamkonda Town Division. The details of work can be

Sd/- Divisional Engineer, Operation, Hanamkonda Town

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Human Resource Department
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(An Institution of National Importance)
A-10/A, Sector-24, NOIDA-201301, Distt.Gautam Budh Nagar (Uttar Pradesh)



Campaign for MLC polls ends

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, MARCH 12

Stage is set for polling in Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduates' constituency on Sunday with campaigning ending on Friday.

Total 71 candidates are in fray in the constituency with 5.05 lakh graduate voters, including 87,112 in Khammam district. They will exercise their franchise at 127 polling stations in 40 locations. Thirty nodal officers, 12 sectoral

offices, 22 route officers, 153 presiding officers and 153 assistant presiding officers will be among those taking care of polling. Kothagudem district has 42,679 voters and 62 polling stations.

District collector said 22 flying squads and an equal number of video teams will be deployed to ensure that the model code of conduct is not violated. There will be 19 micro observers keeping a vigil against distribution of money to

Forty RTC buses have been readied for shifting polling material and personnel to polling stations.

State election officer Sasank Goel has asked all returning officers to exercise caution while shifting ballot boxes from reception centres to polling stations and then to strong rooms after polling.

All the candidates have started calling up graduates to vote in their

Forty of the total 71 candidates have not been serious about their campaign. Many candidates are concentrating more on their native

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SHIVRAJ LIKELY TO GO FOR CABINET EXPANSION

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MARCH 12

Chief Madhva Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan may go for expansion of his cabinet after ongoing budget session Assembly.

Chouhan held discussions with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leaders here in this regard a couple of days ago, a senior BJP leader in know of the development told this newspaper on

Friday.
"The Chief Minister awaits nod from the Central leadership to go ahead with his plan to expand his ministry", the BJP leader said unwilling to be anoted

Sources said the Chief Minister has been lobbying hard with the Central party leadership and RSS to induct his lovalist and former minister Rajendra Shukla, an influential leader from the Rewa region, considered a strong-hold of BJP.

VHP RAISES ₹2,500 CR FOR **RAM TEMPLE**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MARCH 12

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has so far raised ₹2,500 crore through contributions from devotees across the country for construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

This was revealed by VHP national general secretary Milind Parande here.
Talking to reporters here late

on Thursday, Parande said mobilisation of funds for construction of Ram temple have been carried out in different parts of the country and in some other countries.

However, details on funds mobilised in other countries were yet to be compiled, he added. VHP has mobilised ₹200 crore in Madhya Pradesh for construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

He said around 5.50 crore people belonging to 1.10 crore families in MP have made their contributions for the purpose.

have spread in around 45,000 villages in MP to seek contributions from people for construction of Ayodhya Ram

NOTICE TO CENTRE ON PLACES OF **WORSHIP PLEA**

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

The Supreme Court on Friday issued notice to the Centre on a plea challenging the Places Worship Act that mandates maintaining status quo on religious structures as it exist-

ed on August 15, 1947.

The law that was brought at the peak of the Ayodhya agitation led by octogenarian leader Lal Kishan Advani protected the status of all the religious structures as it existed on August 15, 1947, except then disputed Ram Janmabhoomi three-dome structure that was brought down on December 6,

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde and Justice A.S.Bopanna issued notice on a plea by a lawyer and BJP's Delhi unit leader Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

The law under challenge had barred the courts from entertaining pleas questioning the character of the religious

Stalin's son to contest from Karuna's seat

DMK chief to contest again from Kolathur in Chennai, while son tries luck for first-time in polls

D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, MARCH 12

The DMK announced its full list of 173 candidates for the April 6 Assembly elections, which was a balanced mix of old and new faces, with the names of party president M.K. Stalin and Youth Wing sec-retary Udhayanidhi Stalin.

Stalin will be contesting again from Kolathur in Chennai, while
Udhaynidhi Stalin will be
trying his luck for the first
time from Chepauk-Triplicane constituency, which once elected the late M. Karunanidhi to the Assembly.

The release of the list by Friday noon by Stalin evoked celebrations in several parts of the state even as party cadre and functionaries geared up for the campaign in their respective constituencies. Stalin arrived at Anna Arivalayam to make the announcement with thousands of party cadre and

aspirants waiting eagerly. Earlier in the morning. the DMK president went to the Gopalapuram residence to pay homage to the portrait of his father and also call on his mother Dayaluammal. He then drove down to the resting places of C.N. Annadurai and Karunaidhi.

Stalin expressed the hope that the DMK would win overwhelmingly the April 6 elections, repeating the results of the 1971

ATTSA DECLARES

SHUTDOWN OF

TEA GARDENS

MANOJ ANAND | DC

GUWAHATI, MARCH 12

In what may snowball

into a major political iss-

ue in the ensuing Asse-

mbly polls, the Assam Tea Tribes' Students' Association (ATTSA)

has announced complete

shutdown of all tea gar-

dens in Brahmaputra

and Barak valley on

March 22 accusing step-

motherly attitude of the government towards tea

The ATTSA president

Dhiraj Gowala told

reporters that the gov-

address problems of tea workers. "The state gov-

ernment has given a lol-

lipop to the tea workers

by hiking the wage to

₹217. Additional ₹50 was

hiked by the govern-ment. We are demanding

a hike of daily wage of

the garden workers to

High Court recently

asked the government

not to take any coercive

action against the tea

companies and an asso-

ciation for not comply-

ing with wage revision

notification of tea work-

ers in Assam. The case is

Just before the election

was announced, the BJP-led government in

Assam had increased

the daily wages of tea

workers from ₹167 to ₹217. Following which the Indian Tea Associat-

ion and 17 others tea pla-

nters have moved HC.

Gowala said that the

issue of tea wages has

been politicised.

listed for March 15.

₹351," said Gowala. The issue came to focus after the Gauhati

workers of Assam.

IN ASSAM



Udhayanidhi Stalin (L) DMK president M.K. Stalin's son and party's Youth Wing Secretary being greeted by senior leader A. Raja in Chennai on Friday.

G 23 leaders not part

of 'star campaigners'

elections that saw the 'Rising Sun' symbol emerging victorious in 184 constituencies.

Now, though the DMK is fielding only 173 candidates, a total of 187 candidates would be contesting in the 'Rising Sun' sym-

Of the 173 DMK candidates, dates, including 12 women, 124 of them will be directly confronting the AIADMK in the polls and 14 of them will be facing BJP nominees. Almost all senior party leaders and 74 sitting MLAs have been chosen to contest the elections, apart from fist

DC CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

The Congress on Friday released a list of its "star campaigners" for the

coming Assembly elec-

The party will have total

of 30 "star campaigners", including party chief Sonia Gandhi, Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi, AICC

general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, former Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh, former

chief minister Sachin

Pilot, Mohammed Azharuddin, R.P.N. Singh,

Salman Khurshid, among

Interestingly, however, the party has left out the

names of most of the "G-

23" letter-writers' group,

deputy

Rajasthan

tions in West Bengal.

Besides Udhayanidhi Stalin, the prominent among the first-time candidates are Dr N. Ezhilan, a doctor by profession who had been the voice of the party and the Dravidian movement in many platforms for quite some time, and Prabakar Raja, son of traders' association presi-

dent Vikramaraja. Handing over the Virugambakkam con-stituency to Prabakar Raja earned the ire of the local DMK leader, Danasekar, who visited Anna Arivalayam later in the day to express his resentment over the party

including Ghulam Nabi

Azad, Anand Sharma,

Tewari, Bhupinder Singh

Hooda and Raj Babbar,

The G-23 leaders had

written to the Congress

president Sonia Gandhi in August last year

demanding sweeping changes in the function-

ing of the party.

A couple of weeks back,

some of the change seek-

ers addressed a pro-gramme in Jammu, including Mr Azad, Mr Sharma, Mr Sibal and a

The high command loy-

alists had chided these

instead of being in Jammu they should be

campaigning in the poll-

Sibal,

among others.

few others.

KAMAL HAASAN **TO CONTEST FROM COIMBATORE SOUTH**

Chennai, March 12: Actor-turned politician Kamal Haasan would make his electoral debut, contesting from Coimb-atore South constituency in the April 6 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

The Makkal Needhi Ma iam (MNM) president made the announcement here on Friday, releasing the second list of 43 party candidates which included veteran politician Pazha Karuppiah and yesteryear actor Sripriva who had pa ired with Haasan in many films in the 70s and 80s.

The party also named candidates for 18 constituencies in neighbouring Puducherry which also goes to polls on April 6 for its 30-member assembly.

Haasan, whose party is heading a three-party coalition in Tamil Nadu, will be up against the nominees of BJP and Congress, partners in the AIADMK and DMK led alliances respectively, in Coimbatore South.

Three years after floating the MNM, the 66-year old Haasan is taking the electoral plunge.

He chose not to contest the 2019 Lok Sabha elections while his party polled 3.7 per cent votes, entering the fray in 37 constituencies.

MUSLIM LEAGUE FIELDS WOMAN CANDIDATE

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 12

Muslim League, the second biggest constituent in Congress UDF, announced its candidates list for the Assembly polls and Malappuram Lok Sabha bypoll on Friday. The party is contesting

27 seats in the coming Assembly polls. The party fielded a woman candidate after a gap of 25 years. Noorbina Rashid will contest from Kozhikode (South) con-

stituency.
The last time the party 1996 when in Khamarunissa Anwar had contested the elec-

TMC delegation meets EC, demands high-level probe Commission Friday and

TMC delegation met the Election (EC) on demanded a high-level probe into an alleged attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram and claimed it was not an "unfortunate" incident", but a conspiracy. The six-member delega-

tion of the Trinamul Congress (TMC) met the full EC team, including Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora, for over an hour and submitted a

memorandum to it, high-lighting how BJP leaders in West Bengal had threatened the Chief Minister through tweets and other

"Injuries to Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram were not a result of an unfortunate incident but that of a conspiracy. The events leading up to the attempt on her life leave no doubt that the attack was part of a deep-rooted conspiracy," TMC MP Saugata Roy told reporters after meeting the EC.

In the memorandum, the TMC has made allegations against Suvendu Adhikari, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate from Nandigram in the upcoming Assembly polls.

"When an attempt was made on the life of Banerjee, in which she was grievously hurt, to cover up the attack, eye-witnesses were planted, illustratively, eye-witnesses Chittaranjan Das and Debabrata Das, who testified that Banerjee's car was hit against an iron pillar, are associates of Suvendu Adhikari, BJP candidate Nandigram," the memorandum said.

The party said BJP's state president Dilip Ghosh had uploaded a caricature depicting that she Nandigram. Around the same time, numerous complaints were filed by the saffron party with the EC seeking immediate removal of the then police chief and IGP of West

The TMC also gave similar instances of other



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee greets party activists as she leaves SSKM Hospital in a wheelchair after being discharged in Kolkata on Friday. -PTI

ED, CBI summon TMC candidates

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 12

On the eve of West Bengal Assembly election, two central agencies have summoned two heavy-Trinamul Congress candidates including a two-time minister of the Mamata Banerjee government with a key party post for their questionning in two separate chit fund scams.

One of them is Partha Chatteriee who is contesting from his seat Behala West in Kolkata.

He has been called by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the multi-crore I-Core chit fund scam to appear at its office in CGO Complex of Salt Lake next week. Dr

Chatterjee is the state education as well as parliamentary affairs minister. He is also the TMC secretary general. This is the first time Dr

Chatterjee with a clean image came under the scanner of the CBI following a central vigilance commission's report over his suspected link with collapsed scheme company

Another is the Saradha chit fund scam accused former transport minister Madan Mitra who is again contesting Kamarhati where he lost in 2016.

by the Enforcement Directorate in the same case to appear on March 18 at its

He has been summoned

Amrit mahotsav



Modi flagged off a 'Padyatra' (Freedom March) from the Sabarmati Ashram on the occasion of the launch of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' India@75.

PANDEMIC I BLUES New date for state public service exam announced under political pressure Lockdown back in several parts of Maha

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, MARCH 12

Mumbai city reported 1,646 new Covid infections registered in the last 24 hours, recording the highest singleday spike in months. Maharashtra too sustained its surge with 15,817 fresh Covid infections, which was the highest single-day spike ever since pandemic was

declared. However, even as the state is experiencing the second wave of Covid, the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) on Friday announced a new date for its preliminary examination under immense political

pressure. The exam will be held on March 21. The announcement came a day after the BJP and Congress had expressed its opposition for postponing the exam. Earlier, the exam was scheduled on March 14.

The government sources said that the exams were postponed as lockdown has been imposed in several parts of the state in order to contain the spread of the virus. Since the outbreak of the Covid, the MPSC exam has been postponed five times affecting the lives of students. The new date was announced after Chief Minister Uddhav

Thackeray's intervention.

Meanwhile, chief secretary of Maharashtra Sitaram Kunte held a review meeting of the districts via video conferencing. Kunte directed the district administrations to impose preventative measures to contain the spread of the infection.

Mumbai city has reported 1,500 plus new Covid cases for the third day in a row and more than 1,000 cases

for the 10th straight day Not only Mumbai, Pune and Thane, but several cities and towns in Maharashtra, including Vidarbha and Marathwada regions, have been witnessing spike in cases. Lockdown or restrictions have been imposed in

several cities or districts in the state in a bid to prevent the spread of the virus. A week-long lockdown has

also been imposed in Nagpur. Due to the increase in cases in Parbhani district, lockdown will be imposed from tonight 12 am till 6 am on Monday morning. "We appeal to the people of Parbhani and other neighbouring districts, to cooperate,' said Nawab Malik, Maharashtra cabinet minister.

As many as 79 persons including students, teachers and staff of three residential schools in Maha-rashtra's Palghar district have tested positive for Covid in the last week.

MAHA, KERALA, PUNJAB, GUJARAT, TN **ACCOUNT FOR 85.6% OF NEW CASES**

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

India reported 23,285 fresh Coronavirus cases and 117 deaths in the last 24 hours with Maharashtra alone detecting 14,317 new infections. It is followed by Kerala with 2,133 while Punjab reported 1,305 new cases. Punjab finance minister Manpreet Badal is among the latest to have tested positive for Covid-19. Gujarat and Tamil Nadu

too continue to report a

surge in the daily cases and all these five states cumulatively account for 85.6 per cent of the new cases reported in the past 24 hours.

India's total active caseload reached 1,97,237 on Friday and is 1.74 per cent of the country's total positive cases.

Union health ministry said the Centre is actively engaging with all states and UTs, especially those showing an upsurge in daily new cases and with a high caseload of active cases.

Quad leaders to strive for 'free, inclusive' region

Washington, March 12: The Quad leaders, including US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Friday vowed to strive for a "free, open and inclusive" region unconstrained by "coercion, in an apparent reference to China which is flexing its military muscles in the Indo-Pacific region and

beyond. In a joint statement issued after the first Leaders' Summit Quadrilateral alliance attended by President Biden, Prime Minister Modi, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, the leaders pledged to strengthen cooperation on the "defining chal-

lenges of our time.
"We bring diverse perspectives and are united in a shared vision for the free and open Indo-Pacific. We strive for a region that is free, open, inclusive, healthy, anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion, said the joint statement titled

'The Spirit of the Quad'. The virtual Quad summit took place as China and India are involved in a military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh since May last year. After lengthy rounds of talks, the two simultaneously

VIRTUAL QUAD summit took place as China and India are involved in a military standoff since May last year. withdrew troops from the

Pangong Lake area last month while talks are on for the withdrawal of soldiers from the rest of the friction points along the LAC. China is also engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea. In the East China Sea, Japan has maritime disputes with China.

'Together, we commit to promoting a free, open rules-based order, rooted in international law to advance security and prosperity and counter threats to both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. We support the rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, peace-ful resolution of disputes, democratic values, and territorial integrity," the joint statement said.

It said the Quad leaders will continue to prioritise the role of international law in the maritime domain, particularly as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and facilitate collaboration, including including in maritime security, to meet challenges to the rules-based

GURDEEP SINGH TAKES OATH AS PAK SENATOR

Islamabad: Gurdeep Singh from the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party took the oath on Friday as a Senator, becoming the first turban-clad Sikh representative in the upper house of Pakistan's Parliament.

Singh, from the party of Prime Minister Imran Khan became the first turban-clad Sikh representative from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan's Senate on March 3. He defeated rival candidates on a minority seat by a huge margin in the elec-tion to the upper chamber of

Parliament. Singh secured 103 votes in the House of 145 whereas Jamiat Ulema-e Islam (Fazlur) candidate Ranjeet Singh secured just 25 votes and Asif Bhatti of the Awami National Party received 12. Forty-seven other Senators also took oath

SA ZULU KING GOODWILL ZWELITHINI DIES

Johannesburg: King Goodwill Zwelithini, the traditional leader of South Africa's Zulu nation, has died aged 72 after being hospitalised for more than a month, his family announced on Friday.

Zwelithini had health problems related to diabetes, according to local news reports. Zwelithini, the eighth Zulu king, reigned for more than 50 years, making him the longest-serving Zulu monarch. As the traditional leader of the Zulu nation, Zwelithini did not hold political office but had considerable influence over the country's estimated 12 million Zulus, the largest ethnic group of South Africa's

60 million people. King Zwelithini was an outspoken critic of the government's planned land redistribution policy, which could affect large tracts of land belonging to the Zulu nation. The Ingonyama Trust controlled by the king owns 29 per cent of the land of the KwaZulu-Natal province, about 28,000 square kilometers, or 10,811 square miles.

ISRAEL, GREECE, **CYPRUS HOLD NAVAL DRILL**

Jerusalem: The Israeli military said on Friday that it has conducted a joint naval exerin the latest sign of increased cooperation among three countries that increasingly view Turkey as a rival in the Mediterranean Sea.

It said the "Noble Dina" exercise, which was led by Israel and also included France, covered "anti-submarine procedures, search and rescue scenarios, and a scenario simulating battle between ships." The exercise was concluded on Thursday.

"Over the past week, the Navy led a large-scale exercise in which it implemented capabilities in underwater warfare, search and rescue, convoy escort and surface combat." Rear Admiral Eval Harel. the head of Israeli naval operations, said. "These exercises are of paramount importance in strengthening the Navy's connection with foreign fleets who share common interests,

WOMAN HELD FOR ASSAULT ON UBER DRIVER

San Francisco: A woman was arrested on Thursday on suspicion of pepper-spraying an Uber driver in San Francisco who was coughed at and insulted after he demanded a passenger wear a mask, police announced.

Malaysia King, 24, was arrested in Las Vegas on suspicion of assault with a caustic chemical, assault and battery and other charges. She was being held without bail.

It wasn't immediately clear whether she had an attorney to speak on her behalf. Arna Kimiai, 24, who also was sought in connection with Saturday's attack, indicated through legal counsel that she intended to turn herself in soon, a San Francisco Police Department statement said.

The behaviour captured on video in this incident showed a callous disregard for the safety and wellbeing of an essential service worker in the midst of a deadly pandemic," Lt. Tracy McCray, who heads the Police Department's Robbery Detail, said in the statement.

WHO says AstraZeneca is safe

Severe allergy added to AstraZeneca vaccine side-effects, says EU regulator

Geneva, March 12: The World Health Organisation said on Friday there was no reason to stop using AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine after several countries suspended the roll-out over blood clot fears.

The WHO, which said its vaccines advisory committee was examining the safety data coming in, stressed that no causal link had been established between the vaccine and

clotting.

The UN health agency also said that after the injection of more than 260 million Coronavirus vaccine doses so far around the world, no deaths had yet been attributed to a Covid-19 jab.

Denmark, Norway and Iceland paused the use of

the AstraZeneca jab as a precaution after isolated reports of recipients developing blood clots. Italy and Austria have

banned the use of shots from separate batches of AstraZeneca, and Thailand and Bulgaria said they would delay the rollout of the shot. A range of health authorities around the world have insisted the jab is safe, including the Medicines (EMA) and European and Biden sets goal of July 4th to 'mark freedom' from Covid-19

Washington, March 12: Biden offered an ambi-US President Joe Biden has announced that all adult Americans will be eligible for Covid-19 vaccination by May 1 under an ambitious plan to get the country, worst-hit by the pandemic, closer to nor-mal by July 4th, Independence Day.

In his first prime-time address to the nation on Thursday since assuming office on January 20,

tious plan to lift the country from the worst health crisis using a pair of upcoming dates: May 1, by which he will order states to allow all adults to receive vaccines; and July 4, when he said Americans can again celebrate Independence Day in person.

"After this long hard year, that will make this Independence Day something truly special, where we not only mark our independence as a nation but begin to mark our independence from this virus,' he said in his address, shortly after he signed a \$1.9 trillion Coronavirus relief package approved by the US Congress.

His speech also came a year after the outbreak was classified as a pan-demic by the World Health Organisation.

"AstraZeneca is an excellent vaccine, as are the other vaccines that are being used," WHO spokes-woman Margaret Harris told reporters at a briefing in Geneva.

Yes, we should continue using the AstraZeneca vaccine," she added, stressing though that any concerns over safety must be investigated. 'We must always ensure

that we look for any safety signals when we roll out

vaccines, and we must review them," she said. "But there is no indica-

tion to not use it."

The EMA said on
Thursday that there had
been 30 cases of so-called thromboembolic events among five million people who had received the jab in Europe.

But European countries could still keep using the vaccine, the EU's drug reg-

Harris said that while a few countries had, as a start of the pandemic.

Conserving Wildlife

precaution, suspended the use of a specific batch of AstraZeneca vaccine distributed in Europe, based on reports of blood coagulation disorders, "a causal relationship has not been

"Vaccination against Covid-19 doesn't reduce deaths from any other causes," she said.
"As of March 9, there

have been over 268 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines administered since the

"No causes of death have been found to have been caused by Covid-19 vaccines to date."Harris said the WHO's advisory committee on vaccine safety, which meets at least every two weeks, systematically reviews any safety reports

coming in.

Severe allergies should be added to the possible side-effects of AstraZeneca's Coronavirus vacine of the liber libration was a series of the libration of the librat cine after likely links were found to a number of cases in Britain, the EU's drug regulator said on Friday.

The development comes a day after the European Medicines Agency said it was investigating a separate issue of blood clots that prompted Denmark to suspend use of the jab, but said it remained safe to The Amsterdam-based EMA said it had "recommended an update to the product information to include anaphylaxis and hypersensitivity (allergic reactions) as side effects".

"The update is based on a review of 41 reports of po-ssible anaphylaxis seen among around 5 million vaccinations in the United Kingdom," it said in the highlights of the EMA committee that assesses the risk of medications.

UK urges citizens to leave Myanmar

Yangon, March 12: Britain on Friday advised its citizens to flee Myanmar, as ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyer rejected ju-nta corruption claims ag-ainst her as 'groundless'. The military authorities

are cracking down with increasing severity on daily protests against their February 1 coup, with at least 70 people killed according to the UN's top rights expert on the country. The turmoil prompted

Britain, the former colonial ruler, to urge its citizens to get out if they could, warning that "political tension and unrest are widespread since the military takeover and levels of violence are rising". "The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advises British nationals to leave the country by commercial means, unless there is an urgent need to stay,' the British foreign ministry said.

The military — which has defended its takeover by citing alleged voting irregularities in November elections won by Suu Kyi's National

League for Democracy party — held a rare news -SUU KYI'S lawyer Khin Maung Zaw on Friday rejected the junta corruption claims against her as 'ground-

conference on Thursday accusing her of corrup-

Junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun said the detained chief minister of Yangon admitted giving Suu Kyi \$600,000 in cash, along with more than 11 kilograms (\$680,000

worth) of gold.
Suu Kyi's lawyer Khin
Maung Zaw on Friday rejected the claims.

This allegation against Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the state counsellor, is groundless, especially regarding the dollars and gold bars — it is the most hilarious joke of all," he said.

"I've never seen such an illegal mudslinging." Nobel peace laureate Suu Kyi faces other criminal charges including owning unlicensed walkie-talkies and violating Coronavirus restrictions by staging a campaign event in 2020. Suu Kyi — not seen in public since being detained on February 1 has a court hearing on Monday. -AFP

Gunmen abduct 30 kids in Nigeria

Lagos (Nigeria), March 12: Gunmen have attacked a school in northwestern Nigeria and kidnapped at least 30 students just weeks after a similar attack in the region, authorities said on Friday.

The latest abduction took place late Thursday night at the Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation, Afaka, in the Igabi local govern-ment area of Kaduna state, police said.

"About 30 students, a mix of males and females, are yet to be accounted for," the state's commissioner for International Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, said in a statement. Several staff of the school were also kidnapped, he added. Aruwan said the attack was carried out by

bandits," adding that the military engaged the attackers and were able to dents to safety.
An unspecified number

of the students were injured and are receiving medical attention at a military facility. Security forces "are conducting an operation to track the missing students," Aruwan said. Nigerian authorities also said that "bandits" were behind the earlier abduction of 279 schoolgirls late last month in the northwest, referring to the groups of armed men who kidnap for money or to press for the release of jailed members of their groups.

Those girls were later freed following negotiations with the government, and it is not known whether a ransom was

Turkey plans to host Afghan peace talks

Ankara, March 12: Turkey plans to host an Afghan peace conference in Istanbul in April, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Friday, ahead of a deadline for a US troop withdrawal.

In a letter leaked to Afghan media, Secretary of State Antony Blinken encouraged Afghan leaders to consider a "new, inclusive government" and proposed that talks take place within weeks in Turkey to seal a peace deal with the Taliban.

Cavusoglu said Turkey considers itself "one of the most important actors in Afghanistan." "We will do this (meeting) in coordination with brotherly Qatar," the Anadolu state agency quoted Cavusoglu as saying in reference to a separate round of talks staged in intended to appoint a special envoy to the peace

"Both the Taliban and the negotiation delegation, meaning the government side, had asked us to host such a meeting before," Cavusoglu said.

The diplomatic push comes with US President Joe Biden completing a review on whether to abide by an agreement with the Islamist insurgents negotiated by for-mer president Donald Trump to pull the final US troops out by May.

In his letter, Blinken said Washington feared "security situation worsen and the Taliban could make rapid territorial gains" if the United States ends its two-decade military involvement — AFP



People look at polar bears inside an enclosure at a newly-opened hotel, which allows guests a view of the animals from rooms in Harbin, northeastern China's Heilongjiang province, on Friday. Polar bears are listed as vulnerable species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Cuomo faces impeachment inquiry

Albany, March 12: New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's grip on power appeared increasingly threatened on Thursday as a majority of state legislators called for his resignation, Democrats launched an impeachment investigation and police in the state capital said they stood ready to investigate a groping allegation. The firestorm around

the Democrat grew a day after the Times Union of Albany reported that an unidentified aide had claimed Cuomo reached under her shirt and fondled her at his official residence late last year. The woman hasn't filed a

criminal complaint, but a lawyer for the governor said on Thursday that the



Andrew Cuomo

state had reported the allegation to the Albany Police Department after the woman involved declined to do so herself. "In this case the person

is represented by counsel and when counsel confirmed the client did not want to make a report, the state notified the police

department and gave them the attorney's information," said Beth Garvey, governor's acting counsel. An Albany Police

Department spokesperson, Steve Smith, didn't immediately return a message, but told that police had reached out to a representative for the woman. The possible involvement of police comes as more lawmakers called on Cuomo to resign over alleged misconduct with women and allegations that his administration concealed how many nursing home residents died of Covid-19.

At least 121 members of the state Assembly and Senate have said publicly they believe Cuomo should quit office now, according to a tally. The count includes 65

Democrats and 56 Republicans. The top Democrat in the state Assembly, Speaker Carl Heastie, on Thursday backed a plan for its judiciary committee to launch an impeachment investigation.

The committee can interview witnesses and subpoena documents and its ranging: from alleged sexual misconduct to Covid-19 outbreaks at nursing homes.

It won't interfere with a separate inquiry of sexual harassment allegations being conducted by state Attorney General Letitia James, according to Heastie and James. -AP

ARCTIC CLEAN-UP Moscow, March 12: Russia said on Friday it

RUSSIA TO USE

PRISONERS FOR

was considering sending prisoners to help clean-up the Arctic after a massive diesel spill hit a remote Siberian territory last year. The head of Russia's Federal Prison Service (FSIN), Alexander Kalashnikov, said that an agreement to that effect had been reached with the administration of the Arctic city of Norilsk.

"Russia's FSIN is looking into the possibility of getting convicts involved in the cleanup of the Arctic zone," Kalashnikov said at a meeting in comments confirmed by the prison service. He asked prison management officials, who are in charge of penal colonies in the Arctic, to "continue" working on the issue.

Located above the Arctic Circle, Norilsk is one of the world's most polluted cities.

Last year a fuel reservoir collapsed at a power plant operated by a subsidiary of metals giant Norilsk Nickel outside the northern city, with more than 20,000 tonnes of diesel polluting the local ecosystem.

Environmentalists say the spill was the worst such accident ever in the Arctic region and it could take years to clean up. In December, Russia's prison officials publicly discussed using convicts in the efforts at forum in Saint Petersburg.

FSIN official Elena Korobkova said at the time that Norilsk authorities had already made available premises to house a "correctional centre" for up to 56 people. Convicts could also be used to clean-up illegal waste dumps in the northern Arkhangelsk region, authorities have

Officials made no mention of possible incentives for prisoners such as reduced sentences or higher wages.

Study says that increased number of twins in poorer parts of the world is a cause for concern

Twin births at 'all-time high' worldwide

Paris, March 12: More — one in every 42 children born — are coming into the world than ever before, according to new research citing the rapid rise in medically assisted reproduction as a

key factor.
Some 1.6 million twins are born each year, about a third more than four decades ago, according to a study on Friday in

Human Reproduction. and relative absolute numbers of twins in the world are higher ning rates are higher — is than they have ever been also a factor, as are

since the mid-twentieth century and this is likely to be an all-time high, said lead author Christiaan Monden, a professor at the University of Oxford. The rise of assisted reproductive technolo-

gy (ART) in developed countries since the 1970s, especially the United States and Europe, has contributed significantly to the rise in multiple births, the study found. Mothers giving birth at

an older age — when twin-

ception, women choosing to start families later in life and lower overall fertility. Researchers gathered data from 165 countries from between 2010 and 2015, covering 99 percent of the global population. For 112 of those nations twinning rates were also available for the period 1980 to 1985, making it possible to track changes over time.

increased use of contra-

In three quarters of the countries with data for both periods, twin births increased by at least 10 percent, the study found. In Asia, the rate at which twins were born went up 32 percent, and in North America it jumped by 71 percent. "In both periods, Africa

had the highest twinning rates, and there was no significant increase over time," Monden said. This was most likely due

genetic differences between African populations and other parts of the world, he speculated. There was a decrease in the number of twin births

in only seven nations.

twins in poorer parts of the world raise concerns, the study cautioned. "More attention needs to

be paid to the fate of twins in low and middle income countries," said co-author Jeroen Smits, a professor at Radboud University in The Netherlands.

"In sub-Saharan Africa in particular, many twins will lose their co-twin in their first year of life, some two to three hundred thousand each year according to our earlier research." each -AFP-AFP



Representational image.

SHORT TAKES

No Canada, US **Opens this year**

New Delhi: The Badminton World Federation on Friday announced that this years US Open and Canada Open will not take place due to the Covid-19 "restrictions and complications" across the globe

The US Open, a Super 300 tournament on the HSBC BWF World Tour, was slated to be played from July 6 to 11, while the Super 100 tournament in Canada Open was schedule for

June 29 to July 4. "The ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and complications left local organisers no choice but to cancel the tournaments," BWF said in a statement "The respective decisions of **USA Badminton and Badminton**

tion and agreement with the BWF," it added. The cancellations follow the news that Badminton Asia has postponed its flagship event the Asia Championships. -PTI

Canada were made in consulta-

Federer hopes for Wimbledon high

Doha: Roger Federer admitted his goal was to be "100 percent" back in business by the time Wimbledon rolls around after the 20-time Grand Slam title winner saw his comeback from 13 months out with injury end in Doha on Thursday The 39-year-old squandered a match point and was knocked out of the Qatar Open by Georgias Nikoloz Basilashvili in his first tournament since losing to Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open semi-finals in January 2020.

Federer, who underwent two knee surgeries last season, secured the first set against world number 42 Basilashvili but eventually wilted and lost the quarter-final tie, 3-6, 6-1, 7-

It was just his second match of his return having also needed three sets to see off Britains Dan Evans on Wednesday

Muguruza enters Dubai last four

Dubai: Garbine Muguruza overcame Aryna Sabalenka in a tight three-setter for a second consecutive week to storm into the Dubai semi-finals for a third time in seven appearances. The Spaniard, a runner-up in Doha last week, bounced back from a set down to eliminate the third-seeded Sabalenka 3-6 6-3, 6-2 and set up a showdown with Belgiums Elise Mertens. Earlier on centre court, Mertens the No.10 seed, pulled off a miraculous comeback, saving three match points en route to a 5-7. 7-5. 6-0 success over Jessica Pegula. The world No.18, who was down 5-7, 2-5 before she turned things around, is into the 15th tourlevel semi-final of her career "Its unbelievable to come back like this. I just didnt want to let it go, I just kept on fighting, and I think that was the spirit today," said Mertens. - AFP

India to play WC qualifiers in Oatar

New Delhi: India will play their remaining three FIFA World Cup qualifiers in Qatar as the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) decided to host the matches in centralised venues owing to the coronavirus-related travel and quarantine restrictions

As per the original schedule, the Indian team would have played against Qatar at home, Bangladesh away and Afghanistan at home, but the global pandemic has forced radical changes in the fixtures "FIFA World Cup 2022 host Qatar will welcome Group E opponents Oman, Afghanistan India and Bangladesh with

Japan set to provide the stage for the matches in Group F comprising Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Myanmar and Mongolia," the AFC said. - PTI

Live on TV

Indian Super League: Final -Mumbai City vs Mohun Bagan from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

Fight Night: Leon Edwards vs Belal nmad and other bouts from 6.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2

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Editor: Kaushik Mitte

LIONS ROAR

Jason smashes 49 as England rout India in first T20

Ahmedabad, March 12: Indian batsmen had little to offer in the face of a regimented English bowling effort on a twopaced track as the hosts received an eight-wicket hammering in the open-Twenty20 International here on Friday.

Indian batsmen struggled to score freely before Shreyas Iyer showed the way with a dogged 67-run knock that took Virat Kohli's men to 124 for seven at the the Narendra Modi stadium.

The home team could only manage 124 and in the absence of score board pressure, England overhauled the target with ease in 15.3 overs to take a 1-0 lead in the fivematch series.
The Indian batsmen

never got the momentum going as England's paceattack, led by Wood, used the extra bounce effectively

to trouble them.

Most of the Indian batsmen went for flashy shots when placement would have served them well, as Iyer did later in the innings.
The world's biggest sta-

dium played host to 67,000 fans, according to Cricinfo, way more than the 50 per cent capacity that was to be filled for the game in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jason Roy scored a well-calculated 49-run knock while Jonny Bairstow's big hits showed there were no demons in the pitch as the Indians made it seem after being invited to bat by England skipper Eoin Morgan.

Roy struck the ball clean and hard to form a 72-run opening wicket stand with Jos Buttler (28), ending any hopes that the Indians har-boured of getting back in the game.

The luxury of time allowed the England

batsmen to play freely. None of the Indian bowlers looked like ask-

PAKISTAN NOT IN

FAVOUR OF ASIA

CUP THIS YEAR

Karachi, March 12:

Pakistan Cricket Board

chairman Ehsan Mani has

conveyed to the PSL fran-

chise owners that the games governing body in

the country is not in

favour of having the Asia

A PCB source said this

was conveyed by Mani to

League franchise owners

on Thursday, after it was announced that the

remaining matches of

PSL 6 would be completed

in June. Mani spoke about

the Asia Cup after the

franchise owners sought to know if the dates of

PSL were clashing with

the continental tourna-

ment. "Mani made it clear

that their was little possi-

hility of the tournament

being held this year and it

would be moved to 2023

due to the commitments of

Mani told the new dates

for the Asia Cup would be

decided at the next meet-

ing of the Asian Cricket

the participating teams,

the source said.

Cup T20 event this year.

Pakistan

 Rohit Sharma (340 matches), M.S. Dhoni (331 matches),
 Suresh Raina (324 matches) and Dinesh Karthik (310 matches)
 are the other Indian to play 300 T-20 matches before Kohli. ing tough questions to the visitors.

London, March 12: The

Indian Premier League

has been extremely bene-

ficial for us, says ECB

managing director Ashley Giles, who feels English cricketers pres-

ence in the lucrative T20

tournament has helped

the national team in

achieving the number

one rank in white-ball

England's star player Jos

Buttler said that the

England and Wales

Cricket Board (ECB) had

never asked him to skip

the popular T20 event to

be available for the Test

series against New

Zealand, which is set to

clash with the final

"In my briefings with

encouraged players to

think very carefully about what their pro-

grammes are. I have not

told in a Sky Sports

players, I have

stages of the IPL.

directed them,"

this

week.

Giles

"We

formats.

Earlier

NUMBERS GAME

A TRIPLE CENTURY OF T-20 GAMES FOR KOHLI:

Virat Kohli became fifth Indian and 31st player overall to com-

plete a triple century of Twenty-20 matches. The first match of the five-Twenty-20 match series was 300th match in this form of cricket for Indian skipper.

Kohli who made his T-20 debut for Delhi against Himachal

Pradesh at Delhi on April 3, 2007 and took 13 years and 344 days to reach this landmark.

England's Jason Roy

in action against India

in their first Twenty20

in Ahmedabad on

Friday.

put 89 runs on the board. Bairstow (26) and Dawid Roy was trapped by Washington Sundar but Malan (24) took the side past the finish line. by that time England had

Giles feels IPL is very

beneficial for England

Ashley Giles

"We aren't forcing either way. The IPL isn't going anywhere. It has

extreme benefits to us.

From this group here, I

think, we have 12 of the

16 players going to the IPL.

very difficult for players to get into the IPL to

experience that tourna-

ment. Now all of our

players are in high demand and its probably

the big reason why we

are number one in world

in both white-ball for-

'Years ago we found it

Chris Jordan b Jofra Archer 19, Shardul Thakur c Malan b Jofra Archer O, Washington Sundar (not out) 3, Axar Patel (not out) - S. PERVEZ QAISER Extras (w-2) 2. Total (for 7 102-6, 117-7,

wkts, in 20 overs) 124. FoW: 2-1, 3-2, 20-3, 48-4, 102-5, **Bowler:** Adil Rashid 3-0-14-1, Jofra Archer 4-1-23-3, Mark

mats," Giles said.

There are 12 England

cricketers, some with

million dollar contracts,

playing in the IPL. The

players include Buttler, Ben Stokes and Jofra

Archer for Rajasthan

Royals, Moeen Åli and

Sam Curran for Chennai

Super Kings and Dawid Malan for Punjab Kings.

The IPL is slated to

begin from April 9 with

the final scheduled to be

played on May 30, while

Englands opening Test

against New Zealand

players to go to the IPL.

Those two Test matches

were arranged late, they

didnt form part of the original schedule. We

had agreed with the play-

ers and with the IPL that

the players would be

available right through

the tournament and if

they got to the later

stages, they would be

able to participate.'

We have agreed for

begins on June 2.

India: Shikhar Dhawan b Mark Wood 4, K. L. Rahul b Jofra

Archer 1, Virat Kohli c Chris Jordan b Adil Rashid O, Rishabh

Pant c Bairstow b Stokes 21, Shreyas Iyer c Malan b Chris Jordan 67, Hardik Pandya c

Pandya 2-0-13-0, Washington Sundar 2.3-0-18-1. **BEDI DISCHARGED**

FROM HOSPITAL

AFTER 24 DAYS

GCA GIVES NOD

TO 50% CROWD

FOR T20 SERIES

Ahmedabad, March 12:

The Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) has decided to allow 50 per

cent spectators during the

International series at the Narendra Modi Stadium here owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. The series,

comprising five matches,

is starting on Friday with

the final fixture slated to

be played on March 20. "We are going to use

only 50% seating capacity

at the Narendra Modi

Stadium for all the T20

matches to be played here

due to Covid-19 pandemic," Gujarat Cricket

Association vice-president Dhanraj Nathwani

Nathwani said that all Covid-19 guidelines are being being followed,

adding that special task

force committees have

been formed to ensure the

safety of the fans.
"The entire stadium has

been sanitized consider-

ing safety of the specta-

tors. All Covid-19 guide-

lines are being strictly

adhered to and special

task force committees have been set up to ensure

that all required safety

measures are implemented and followed,"

Wood 4-0-20-1, Chris Jordan 4-0-27-1, Ben Stokes 3-0-25-1,

Sam Curran 2-0-15-0.

England: Jason Roy Ibw b

Washington Sundar 49, Jos

Buttler Ibw b Chahal 28, Dawid Malan (not out) 24, Jonny Bairstow (not out) 26. Extras (w-3) 3. Total (for 2 wkts, in

Bowling: Axar Patel 3-0-24-0, Bhuvneshwar Kuma 2-0-15-0,

Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-44-1,

Shardul Thakur 2-0-16-0, Hardik

15.3 over) 130. FoW: 1-72, 2-89.

SCORECARD

said in a media release.

India-England

New Delhi, March 12: Legendary former India spinner Bishan Singh Bedi has been discharged after spending more than three weeks at a city hospital here following a

bypass surgery. The 74-year-old former India captain had undergone a bypass surgery at the capitals Sir Ganga Ram Hospital last month after he suffered a heart attack.

He subsequently also underwent an operation to remove blood clotting in his brain.

"He was evaluated and was found to be having all three vessels of heart critically blocked," the statement from the hospital

"He was stabilised and underwent Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery, which was performed by Dr Ganesh Shivnani and his team on 18 February 2021. He has been discharged successfully in a stable condition on 11

March 2021," it added.

out stages. Rangers, Ajax well placed

WOMEN'S | CRICKET

Raj first Indian to join 10k club

Lucknow, March 12: Veteran batter Mithali Raj on Friday became the first Indian woman cricketer and second internationally to complete 10,000 runs across all formats, drawing praise from some iconic names of the game and the BCCI.

The 38-year-old Mithali, who leads the Indian ODI team, joined Englands Charlotte Edwards in the elite club.

Mithali achieved the feat with a boundary off Anne Bosch in the 28th over of Indias innings during the ongoing third ODI against South Africa here.

Mithali has amassed 663 runs in 10 Test matches with a best score of 214, while she has 6974 and 2364 runs from 212 ODIs and 89 T20 Internationals respectively. The figures add up to "Heartiest congratula-

tions Mithali on completing 10000 runs International Cri Terrific achievement... Keep going strong!" master blatser Sachin Tendulkar tweeted.

After reaching the mile-stone of Friday, Mithali departed in the next ball, flicking a Bosch delivery



straight to Mignon du Preez at midwicket. She made 36 runs off 50 balls and hit five boundaries in the process.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah called the India captain an "absolute legend".

"Take a bow, @M_Raj03! What an achievement to be the first Indian woman cricketer to surpass the international 10,000-run mark. Absolute legend," Shah wrote on his Twitter

Earlier, the Board too congratulated the veteran cricketer on reaching the milestone. IPL franchises Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians also congratulated the seasoned cricketer.

Lee lords over India women in third ODI

Lucknow, March 12: South African opener Lizelle Lee single-handedly destroyed India's chances with a career-best unbeaten 132 as the home team lost by six runs via the Duckworth-Lewis (DLS) method in the rain-marred third womens ODI of the five-match series here on

Chasing 249, Lee starred for the visitors with her breathtaking knock that came off 131 balls and had 16 fours and two hits over the fence. South Africa now lead the series 2-1.

Lee kept South Africa abreast with the required rate, which eventually proved crucial after rain played spoilsport with the

visitors at 223 for four in 46.3 overs, six ahead of India via the DLS method. Earlier. Punam Raut

struck a second successive

half-century — 77 off 108

balls — to power India to a

fighting score.
South Africa were off to a decent start in their chase with the pair of Lee and stand-in skipper Laura Wolvaardt (12) adding 41 runs for the opening wick-et. After Wolvaardt was cleaned up by off-spinner Depti Sharma, Lara Goodall (16) and Lee took the innings forward with a 40-run stand for the second wicket. Mignon du Preez (37) too made a significant contribution as Lee kept South Africas chase alive by scoring the third centurv of her career. Brief Scores: India 248/5 in 50

overs (Punam Raut 77, Deepti Sharma 36 not out, Mithali Raj 36: Shahnim Ismail 2/46) lost to South Africa 223/4 in 46.3 overs (Lizelle Lee 132 not out; Julan Goswami 2/20).

Kjaers late leveller gives AC advantage

Paris, March 12: Simon Kjaers last-gasp equaliser gave AC Milan a dramatic 1-1 draw at Manchester United on Thursday, handing the Italian giants a great chance of reaching the Europa League quarterfinals.

Kjaer netted with a bullet header in the final seconds of stoppage time of the last 16, first leg encounter at Old Trafford, levelling the scores after Amad Diallo had opened in the 50th minute with his first United goal.

"This is a great result, we played really well, showed personality and I think we dominated," the defender told Sky Sport Italia after the match.

In a sign of the drop in standards at Old Trafford and the San Siro, the first meeting between two of the worlds most historic teams since 2010 was their first outside the Champions League knock-

Rangers are well placed to make the quarter-finals **European champions** Ajax are almost guaranteed a place in the Europa League last eight after thumping Young Boys 3-0 in Amsterdam.

Four-time

after a 1-1 draw away to Slavia Prague.

Filip Helanders closerange finish in the first half left Steve Gerrards Rangers still in the hunt for a European trophy with the draw in Prague, days after winning their first Scottish League title in 10

years. Four-time European champions Ajax are almost guaranteed a place in the last eight after thumping Young Boys 3-0 in Amsterdam through goals from Davy Klaassen, Dusan Tadic and Brian Brobbey. Villarreal also look good

to make the quarters thanks to a 2-0 win at Dynamo Kiev.

Battle of equals as Mumbai face Bagan

Margao, March 12: As many as 114 games, 295 goals, 87,811 passes and Indian Super League 7 will culminate with a heavyweight summit showdown between

Mumbai City FC and ATK Mohun Bagan here on The match that lends meaning to every single touch taken so far, in what has been an exciting Hero

at the Fatorda Stadium. When Mumbai City FC take on ATK Mohun Bagan in the summit clash, there will be no more complex equations

in play. The winner takes

ISL season, will be played

home the trophy. Its as simple as that.

Few would argue that there is a better candidate for the final than these two -- both Bagan and Mumbai have been head and shoulders above the rest throughout the sea-

Both the teams come into the final with identical records, 12 wins and iust 4 defeats in the league stage.

Despite a nervy penaltyshootout win over FC Goa in the semifinal, it will be Mumbai who head into the final full of confidence. They did the double over

Bagan in the league stage,

ISL-7 FINAL

Both teams come into the final with identical records, 12 wins and just 4 defeats in the league stage.

the latter of those victories handing them the League Winners Shield. For Mumbai, this will be

first-ever final, but coach Sergio Lobera, and a handful of his players have been here before when FC Goa lost to Bengaluru FC in 2018-19. The team though has looked confident under Lobera.

(ATK Mohun 'They Bagan) are a very good team with good players and have the momentum. But the most important thing now is to put the focus on ourselves and try to do our best.

"We have no specific plan, only small details about the opponent. We need to work 100 per cent on our style of play," said

Lobera. There will be few selection dilemmas for Lobera, with the exception of figuring out Mandar Rao Dessais replacement. The Goan will miss the final

due to suspension.

In the other corner, there is Bagan, buoyed by Antonio Habas almost superhuman record in knockout games. He has already tasted glory twice and has a chance to create history by winning his second straight title and third overall.

On the eve of the final, the Spaniard sounded as focused as ever.

"We have to compete and our idea is to win against our opponents. My team is prepared for winning," he

Habas dismissed that previous results had no bearing on the match but that his side was braced for a tough test.

THE RESULTS

Manchester United (Diallo 50) AC Milan (Kjaer 90+2)

Slavia Prague (Stanciu 7) Rangers (Helander 36)

Dynamo Kiev Villarreal

(Torres 30, Albiol 52)

Ajax (Klaassen 62, Tadic 82, Brobbey 90+2) Young Boys

Granada (Molina 26, Soldado 76) Molde **Tottenham Hotspur** (Kane 25, 70) 0 **Dinamo Zagreb**

Arsenal (Odegaard 34, Gabriel 80, Elneny 85) Roma

Olympiakos

(El-Arabi 58)

(Pellegrini 23, El Shaarawy 73, Mancini 77) Shakhtar Donetsk