

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | SATURDAY | 3 APRIL 2021

WEATHER



Max: 39.3°C
Min: 23.1°C
RH: 21%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky.
Max/Min temp.
39/23 °C



WORLD | 6

Iran nuke talks in Vienna next week



SPORTS | 8

Covid +ve Tendulkar is hospitalised

TABLOID

Thick jungles Tollywood's new canvas



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

Vol. 20 No. 307 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana
Tithi: Phalguna Bahula Saptami till 4.13 am (Sunday)
Star: Moola till 2.39 am (Sunday)
Varjyam: 1.07 am to 2.39 am (Sunday)
Durmuhurtam: 6.12 am to 7.50 am
Rahu Kalam: 9 am to 10.30 am

HIJRI CALENDAR

Shabaan 20, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajr: 5.08 am

Zohar: 12.29 pm

Asar: 4.40 pm

Maghrib: 6.34 pm

Isha: 7.43 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.09 AM

SUNSET TODAY 6.29 PM

MOONRISE TODAY 11.26 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 9.51 PM

COUNTER POINT



Bad news, sir! Your name is missing from the NRC list!

SHORT TAKES

Maha warns of healthcare shortage

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday said the state may face a shortage of healthcare infrastructure soon if the present "alarming situation" on coronavirus cases continued.

Addressing people of the state, Thackeray said stricter curbs will be imposed in one or two days. "Some people are getting infected after vaccination because they stop wearing masks," he said.

New monsoon forecast strategy

New Delhi: A new forecasting strategy was planned for monsoon this year, Secretary in the Ministry of Earth Sciences M. Rajeevan said.

"Reviewed preparations for monsoon forecasts. Will release a new forecasting strategy next few days planned this year with new products. Watch @Indiameteordept for announcement," the secretary tweeted.

Stones pelted at Tikait's car

Jaipur: Some people threw stones at a cavalcade of farmer leader Rakesh Tikait damaging his car's rear windshield when he was going to address a rally in Rajasthan's Alwar district on Friday, police said. Tikait was not in his car when the stones were pelted at his cavalcade, Bhawali Superintendent of Police Ram Murti Joshi said.

Thermal plants get emission deadline

New Delhi: The environment ministry has amended rules allowing thermal power plants within 10 kilometres of the National Capital Region (NCR) and in cities with more than 10 lakh population to comply with new emission norms by the end of 2022, according to official notification. A task force will be constituted by the Central Pollution Control Board to "categorise thermal power plants (TPPs) in three categories on the basis of their location", the ministry said.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah addresses an election campaign rally for the West Bengal Assembly polls, at Shitalkuchi in Cooch Behar district, on Friday. — PTI

50 out of 60 seats for BJP in WB, claims Shah

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, APRIL 2

Continuing his trick to demoralise West Bengal's ruling Trinamul Congress and garner votes for the BJP with his exit poll-style assessment, Union home minister Amit Shah on Friday put more than 50 seats including Nandigram out of 60, which went to the first two phases of the Assembly Election in the state, in the saffron party's winning tally.

He made the startling claim at two back-to-back BJP rallies in North Bengal where he set a target before his party of bagging another 50 seats. At Sitalkuchi in Cooch Behar Mr Shah said, "All have seen the first two phases of polls. What happened there? Kamal Khila Hai (Lotus has bloomed). Mark my words. The BJP

has already won more than 50 out of 60 seats."

At Kalchini in Alipurduar he added, "Two phases of polls covering 60 seats were held. Among these, Lotus is going to bloom in 50 seats for the BJP. I have come to North Bengal because here 50 seats out of 60 will not be enough. BJP needs 50 out of 50 here."

On May 28, Mr Shah made a similar forecast, apparently based on the feedback from his party and internal security agencies, from New Delhi, a day after the first phase polls in the state, predicting the BJP's victory in 26 seats out of 30.

Though he did not reveal this time exactly how many seats the BJP won out of another 30, a straight arithmetic calculation hints at the figure to be at least 24 seats in the second phase of the polls.

Under it, ambulances

will be given to unemployed MBC youth.

The government has completed the process of delimitation of divisions and wards in these corporations and municipalities.

The department of municipal administration and urban development is expected to issue a government order in a week or two notifying the delimitation of wards. This will

match his assessment of his party's win in 50 plus seats so far.

Triggering a speculation like Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr Shah also asserted that two-time chief minister Mamata Banerjee, who contested at Nandigram against her nemesis Shuvendu Adhikari of the BJP, suffered defeat and mocked the TMC chief for allegedly refusing to contest from any seat in North Bengal.

"Yesterday Didi contested the polls in Nandigram. It is now certain she has lost there. Time has come now for her to go. Later her adviser met and asked her: where will you now fight from? She told him: Field me anywhere except North Bengal because people of the region will not elect me," he sarcastically claimed.

EC BARS HIMANTA FROM CAMPAIGN FOR 48 HOURS

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, APRIL 2

In what may be a major setback for the BJP, its chief campaigner and Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma was banned from campaigning for next 48 hours ahead of the third and final phase of Assembly elections, which are due on Tuesday.

The EC issued its order late Friday night, after it upheld a complaint by the Congress party which said that Sarma had openly threatened to send Hagrama Mohilary - whose BPF (Bodo Land People's Front) is a member of the opposition alliance - to jail by misusing the NIA. The ban comes into effect from Friday night, effectively implying that Sarma - who is the BJP's main poll strategist and listed as a 'star campaigner' - can no longer campaign in this election.

tive as teaching and learning through online mediums or alternative methods was fairly new then," a CBSE official said. Schools across the country were closed in March last year, ahead of a nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of the coronavirus. The teaching and learning activities majorly moved online during the lockdown. While a few states allowed a partial reopening of the schools in October, several states are again resorting to online classes in the new academic session amid a surge in the number of COVID-19 cases.

In its syllabus rationalisation exercise, the board had dropped the chapters on democracy and diversity, demonetisation, nationalism, secularism, India's relations with its neighbours and growth of local governments in the country, among others.

— PTI

Given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The assurances

given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in Telangana and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to the efforts of

IN BRIEF
Editor's Clarification

It was brought to our notice that a decades-old annual tradition of playing a good old-fashioned prank with our readers for fun on a universally acknowledged day of humour has been misconstrued. Several leaders and activists of the Telugu Desam have sought an acknowledgment of their consternation and grievance arising out of their "sense of hurt". Deccan Chronicle neither had nor will ever have any desire to deliberately hurt anyone's feelings, including those who do not share our sense of humour. We genuinely regret if any hurt has been caused to the followers of the party.

KTR to start campaign

From Page 1
TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao has kickstarted the campaign in Khammam by launching a slew of development programmes on Sunday. The term of the Warangal and Khammam corporations ended on March 14, while that of Siddipet will end on April 15.

Kothur and Nakrekal are newly formed municipalities while elections for Jadhela municipality could not be held earlier due to legal issues.

Credai postpones Property Show

Hyderabad: The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India, Hyderabad chapter, on Friday announced that it was postponing the 10th edition of the Credai Hyderabad Property Show, originally scheduled to begin on April 16. The show, which was to be organised at Hitex, has been put off indefinitely in view of the government orders prohibiting public gatherings and events till the end of this month following the rising Covid-19 cases. The revised schedule will be shared following the appropriate government notifications, Credai said.

Software exports rose to ₹1.4L cr: KTR

From Page 1
"Software exports were of ₹56,000 crore when Telangana was formed in 2016, and it is of 1.4 lakh crore now. The coming up of the second IT Hub in Khammam is the best example of new investments,"

Rama Rao said. He said transport minister Puvvada

Ajay Kumar showed immense interest in bringing the IT Hub in Khammam and sanctioned ₹35 crore for the second phase. Now, IT projects are spreading to Tier II towns like Warangal, Siddipet, Khammam and Nizamabad, he said.

Pertaining to the new RTC bus stand, the transport minister said a new bus stand was built over seven acres in place of the two acre of the old bus stand. The government sanctioned ₹28 crore for the project despite the Covid-19 situation. He said about 350 candidates got jobs in the first phase of the IT Hub and another 57 will

HC RELIEF TO RAJANNA SIRCILLA COLLECTOR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

Giving relief to Rajanna Sircilla collector Krishna Bhasker, joint collector Yasmeen Bashan and an officer of the land acquisition wing of the district, a division bench of the Telangana High Court on Friday stayed a single judge order which had sentenced them to undergo three months imprisonment for contempt of court.

The stay is till September. The bench did not intervene in the single judge order on the aspect of imposing fine and the payment of court expenses to 11 petitioners who had filed the contempt case.

The contempt case pertained to not complying the court orders regarding fulfillment of rehabilitation and resettlement package to project oustees of Illenthukunta village of the district. The single judge had sentenced the three officers to three months in jail and ₹2,000 costs. The court had also directed them to pay ₹10,000 to each of the petitioners who filed the contempt case as court expenses.

Remembering Bade Ghulam Ali Khan



On the occasion of 119th birth anniversary of renowned Indian classical vocalist Padma Bhushan Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, his great daughter-in-law Samina Raza Ali Khan and great grandson Fazle Ali Khan pay floral tributes at his tomb at Daira-Mir-Momin, Hari Bowli, in the Old City on Friday. Co-convenor Intach, Telangana, Anuradha Reddy is also seen.

— P. SURENDRA

KCR public rally in N'sagar on hold

KTR to campaign for Nagarjunasagar bypoll in April 2nd week



K. Chandrashekhar Rao

TRS president and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao's proposed public meeting in the Nagarjunasagar Assembly constituency for the bypoll campaign is likely to be held on April 10 or 14, the two dates proposed by party leaders of Nalgonda district. The CM's approval is awaited.

Nalgonda district incharge minister G. Jagadish Reddy said, "We are ready to hold the CM's meeting any day from the second week."

However, there are doubts over whether the meeting will be held, due to the increasing Coronavirus cases and the Covid-related restrictions on public gatherings until April 30.

Party working president and IT minister K.T. Rama Rao will campaign in the constituency in April second week. Party leaders have planned his

road shows for two days covering all the six mandals of the constituency.

The CM had launched the party's campaign by addressing a huge public meeting in Halia on February 10. Party leaders want him to address another meeting ahead of polling on April 17.

The CM had avoided campaigning for the Dubbak Assembly bypoll which the TRS lost to the BJP by a slender margin. In the meeting held with Nalgonda party leaders in Telangana Bhavan after issuing the B-form to Nomula Bhagat last week, Chandrashekhar Rao had stated that the Dubbak result would have been different had he campaigned there. He had assured the party leaders that he and Rama Rao would campaign in Nagarjunasagar.

MANY 45-YR-OLDS FLOCK TO TAKE COVID-19 VACCINE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

The opening up of Covid-19 vaccinations for everyone over the age of 45 years appears to have been widely welcomed. The number of people in the 45-59 years age group who received their first shot of the vaccine on April 1, the day vaccination was opened to this cohort, shot up to 31,214, from 12,648 on March 31, the last day when the vaccination was restricted to those in this age group with comorbidities.

The total number of people who received their shots, both the first and second doses, on April 1 also witnessed a steep increase to 62,581, from 33,689 the previous day. On April 1, 59,439 received the first dose of the vaccine, with another 3,142 getting their second dose.

Vaccinations were administered across the state in 1,023 centres, their numbers increased to accommodate more people coming in to get their shots.

Meanwhile, 1,297 healthcare and 1,851 frontline workers received their vaccine shots on April 1.

So far, 13,26,607 people have received vaccine shots in the state.

Inter exams: Practicals format may change

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

The TS Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) is likely to change the format of practical examinations as a one-time step for junior college students appearing for Intermediate examinations this year. This is in the context of the pandemic situation and a second shutdown of educational institutions.

The move comes a day after student representatives met education minister Sabitha Indra Reddy, education department officials and the State Human Rights Commission, seeking redressal of student grievances in the state, saying they were not well-prepared to appear for practical exams.

"TSBIE secretary Syed Omar Jaleel received the representations on

STUDENTS HAVE demanded that the government reopen colleges for some days ahead of the examination, to help students clear their doubts.

Thursday, after which there is an extended weekend due to holidays. We have to seek approval from the government before announcing any decision. But it is likely

there will be a change in the format of practical examinations for the benefit of students this year," said an official in the education department.

The official added that the education department understands the issues and is trying to resolve them.

A decision on the likely change in pattern of practicals will have to be approved by the government in the next few days,

in Warangal and later to Hyderabad for better treatment but died at the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences on Friday morning. His body was shifted to Gandhi Hospital for post-mortem and later taken to his home village.

not allowing Sunil's body to be carried to martyrs statue near the Assembly. He said police in the state have been showing high handedness by insulting the unemployed youth.

TPCC working president A. Revanth Reddy termed the incident as state-sponsored murder and said Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao and his men who raised the emotions of youths during the statewide agitation and killed hundreds of students were now responsible for Sunil's suicide.

Recording his statement on the mobile phone, he asked students to protest for jobs. "If I come back, I will join you in the struggle for jobs. If not, you must continue the agitation," he said.

He was immediately shifted to MGM Hospital

and the police arrested him. The police removed them from the spot to control the situation.

Reacting on the incident, BJP state president Banda Sanjay Kumar expressed anguish over the police

BC Corporation to give aid to buy ambulance

From Page 1

Financial assistance from the BC Corporation will be given to youth from Most Backward Classes (MBC) to buy ambulances.

BC welfare minister Gangula Kamalakar was reviewing allocations made for the welfare of BCs in the State Budget and the plan to implement BC welfare schemes this year.

Further, a new scheme with ₹100 crore will be launched to provide employment opportunities to the community youth. Under this, about 10,000 women from the BC communities would be trained in stitching. Sewing machines and other material would be provided to each unit comprising 25

members, the minister added.

Educated youth would be trained at National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) here. He directed the officials to take measures to provide employment to all BCs through the 11 BC Federations.

This apart, ₹300 crore would be spent to provide vocational training such as AC and two-wheeler repair etc for 50,000 BC youth.

The minister stated that the government would include another 25 castes in the list of Backward Classes.

He thanked Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao for sanctioning an additional ₹12,000 crore in Budget for BC welfare this year despite financial constraints.

KCR FORMS PANEL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RR, MEDCHAL

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao has constituted a nodal agency headed by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar for the integrated development of Ranga Reddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri districts, which are developing fast and are integrated with the Hyderabad city, and to find permanent solutions to the problems faced by the districts.

The CM said that all the Assembly segments, municipalities and other important towns under these districts jurisdiction, construction of integrated vegetarian and non-vegetarian markets, town halls, laying of roads, developing the infrastructure like power, drinking water, cleanliness, repairing of the sewerages and drainages, finding a permanent solution to the traffic, floodwater, submerging of areas under flood water etc, are to be taken-up.

The Chief Minister instructed the CS to meet local ministers, MLAs, MLCs and officials of the departments concerned to develop a plan. He was speaking at a review meeting on Friday at Pragathi Bhavan on the two districts.

"To keep pace with the changing times and the needs, there is a need to form plans for the integrated development of the municipalities and corporations in these areas," the CM said. "A comprehensive plan should be prepared for the integrated development of these districts along with Hyderabad." The CM advised that public representatives should have at least one meeting per month with the CS. The nodal officer should review the program regularly. The government is ready to provide adequate funds for this, the CM said.

As part of this, the CM said development works should be taken up in all municipalities and municipal corporations in these districts. The CM said all these areas have become a part of Hyderabad and since a lot of people from all over the country are coming here and settling down, plans should be prepared based on the growing needs.

THE CHIEF Minister instructed the CS to meet local ministers, MLAs, MLCs and officials of the departments concerned to develop a plan.

SOME DISTS TO EXPERIENCE INTENSE HEAT

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday cautioned that a few districts in the state will experience high temperatures for the next 24 hours. Juljurapad was the hottest place in the state with the temperature at 43.6°Celsius. In Hyderabad, Gunfoundry, Narayanguda and Himayatnagar recorded 39.6°C. The IMD heatwave caution covered the districts of Bhadrak, Kothagudem, Khammam, Suryapet, Nalgonda, Mahbubnagar and Nagarkurnool in Telangana and alerted the State Disaster Management Agency, traffic police and the health department. In its extended range forecast, the Meteorological Department said heatwave conditions are likely to occur at isolated pockets in the next two days.

TS Covid caseload nears 1,000 per day

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

Telangana state, witnessing a surge in Covid-19 cases over the past few weeks, on Thursday stood poised to cross the 1,000-cases-a-day mark, with the health department announcing 965 fresh infections.

The department also said that five Covid-19 patients had died on April 1, the highest one day toll from the disease in the state since January 1, this year.

The total Covid-19 deaths stand at 1,706, and the overall caseload at 3,09,741.

The most cases, 254, for April 1, were from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits, followed by 110 in

Medchal-Malkajgiri — the district crossing the 100 mark for the first time this year — and 97 in Ranga Reddy districts. Nizamabad with 64 new cases too is witnessing a surge, followed by 39 in Nirmal, 29 each in Sangareddy and Karimangar, and 22 in Khammam district.

The number of active cases stood 6,159, and of these, 2,622 people are in home and institutional isolation.

The department said that 59,343 tests were con-

ducted on April 1. Of these, 50,827 were in govern-

ment hospitals and 8,516 were in private hospitals.

Calling on people to fol-

low safety measures including wearing of face masks and maintain distance from others in public places, the department

said 78.1 per cent of cases being found now were asymptomatic, while the rest, 21.9 per cent, were symptomatic.

Donations will decline this year by 25% due to the economic slowdown

Covid-19 crisis impacts zakat collection

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

When the Covid-related lockdown stole the income of many families last year, many philanthropists put food on their plates by opening their lockers. A large number of the donors spent money in the form of 'advance zakat', but, this time, they may not be in a position to show a simi-

lar level of generosity due to various factors.

Clearly, the Coronavirus has impacted Zakat donations.

Zakat-collecting institutions are worried that donations will decline this year by as much as 25 per cent due to the economic slowdown. Zakat calculations are done after the completion of one year of owning of assets. Many deeni

madrasas are on the verge of closure as they did not receive a satisfactory collection last year and this year the situation will be worse.

The Zakat collecting institutions said that the lockdown had affected the income of every class, due to which many people could not increase their assets either in the form of properties or gold. Besides, those people who

had paid Zakat in advance during the lockdown may not donate this time.

The state has over 4,000 deeni madrasas which also provide boarding facilities and require around ₹1,000 crore annually. Almost all of these

depend on community charity, especially on Zakat.

Though many madrasas have shut their hostels, they still have expenses like staff salaries, rents, electricity bills and water etc. They could not mobilise the funds needed to keep operations further.

Hafiz Zakir Mohiuddin, who runs a madrasa in Hafeezbaba Nagar, said that depend on Zakat. To the financial crises a large number of institutions had borrowed to pay salaries and meet other expenses. If these institutions will not get sufficient help, they will be forced to close.

Moulana Gias Ahmed Rashadi, president, Safa Baitul-Maal, said that philanthropists should come forward to help those institutions which depend on Zakat.

Deccan Chronicle | Karimnagar | Saturday | 3 April 2021

OTHER STORIES
2 ARRESTED FOR FORCING KIDS TO EAT CATTLE DUNG
DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, APRIL 2

Two minor boys were tied up with rope and cattle dung was forced into their mouth by the guards of a mango orchard after the boys entered the orchard in search of their lost pet dog at Thorur Mandal in Mahabubabad district.

Accusing the children for entering the orchard to steal mangoes, they brutally beat them up and forced cow dung into their mouths despite their pleas to release them.

Two other persons recorded their acts on a mobile phone. The video later got viral on social media. The parents of the children lodged a complaint with the police who arrested the accused.

Thorur DSP Venkata Ramana said the guards were identified as Banoth Yaku and Banoth Ramulu who were booked under sections 342, 324, 504 IPC and section 75 of the juvenile justice act. The other two persons who recorded the video were identified as Palle Sathish and Dongari Ramu who are yet to be arrested.

Animals dying in search of potable water, high temp.

Poachers taking advantage of the situation, trapping wild animals

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, MARCH 2

Peacock found dead on roadside at Burkapalli village near Neredigonda Mandal three days ago in Adilabad district.

Herbivores from within forests are coming out of forests into human habitations in search of drinking water. Groups of deer and neelgai have been seen drinking water near Pochera waterfalls. The

● **HERBIVORES** from within forests are coming out of forests into human habitations in search of drinking water. Groups of deer and neelgai have been seen drinking water near Pochera waterfalls.

● **SEVERAL FOREST** animals have also died while crossing National Highway 44 after being hit by speeding vehicles. Five months ago, the cub of a leopard died after a vehicle rammed into it.

● **VILLAGERS SAID** Forest Department should develop water bodies and saucer pits inside forests and fill them up with water to help wild animals quench their thirst. They fear that otherwise they would enter villages in search of drinking water.

by trapping wild animals near water bodies and killing them for their meat.

Several forest animals have also died while crossing National Highway 44 after being hit by speeding vehicles. Five months ago, the cub of a leopard died after a vehicle rammed into it near Mekalagandi in Gudihathnoor mandal. People of villages on

fringes of forests say Forest Department should develop water bodies and saucer pits inside forests and fill them up with water to help wild animals quench their thirst. They fear that otherwise they would enter villages in search of drinking water.

Many people do not have any knowledge about autism. Several people affected by ASD are unable to properly communicate and interact with others. The disorder is increasing in huge

People must be aware of autism, says collector

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 2

Collector K. Shashanka addresses the gathering on the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day at the camp office in Karimnagar on Friday.

R. Mahesh said autism is a kind of disability related to growth that is usually seen among growing children. Proper diagnosis at an early stage and medical treatment would help in dealing with the disorder in the long run, he observed.

Municipal commissioner Valluri Kranthi, SRR degree college retired principal, captain Madhusudhan Reddy, and representatives of Karimnagar Runners and Cyclists' Association were among those present on the occasion.

Tension prevailed in KU as Sunil dies

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, APRIL 2

File photo of Boda Sunil

'SUNIL WAS DEJECTED WITH GOVT DECISION OVER RETIREMENT AGE'

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, APRIL 2

Boda Sunil's brother Srinivas said it was the announcement by the state government to increase the retirement age of the government employees which drove his brother to suicide. "My brother tried very hard to earn a government job. After completing his graduation in 2016, he applied for many jobs but could not get any. I am working as a private employee. We both were hopeful of the promised

death should not be considered a suicide but TRS government murder.

Several protests were

50,000 job notifications by the state government which were never released," he said. Adding, "After the announcement that the retirement age has been increased, my brother spoke to me and expressed his anguish that there will not be any more job notifications for another three years. My brother wanted the agitation for job notifications to continue after him. The state government must immediately announce the job notification as aspire by my brother."

held across the erstwhile Warangal district by student unions who demanded justice for Sunil.

STUDENTS REFUSE TO CONDUCT FINAL RITES

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, APRIL 2

The dead body of Sunil reached his native village Ramsingh thanda in Gudur mandal at about 5pm. Scores of students and political leaders reached the village by that time and argued with the police officials for bringing the dead body late.

They obstructed the ambulance on the outskirts of the village and said they will not conduct the final rites Sunil until they receive assurance from the state government regarding the job notifications. The villagers refused to budge until late in the evening. District superintendent

of police N. Koti Reddy reached the village and tried to specify the villagers but they remained adamant. Tribal welfare minister Satyavathi has promised to provide a double bed room house to the family, a job to one of the family members and ₹1 lakh for the final rites.

However, the villagers demanded a written assurance from the district collector that a job in the electricity department would be provided to Srinivas, the brother of Sunil and ₹1 crore ex-gratia to the family. Congress MLA Seethakka said the state was negligent towards providing jobs and also showed negligence in providing better treatment to Sunil.

Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani
Pilani | Dubai | Goa | Hyderabad

Gear up for the challenge
BITSAT 2021

Applications are invited for Computer based online test BITSAT-2021 for admission to B.E., B.Pharm., M.Sc., Integrated First Degree Programmes of BITS at Pilani, Goa and Hyderabad Campuses for First Semester 2021-2022.

The deadline for submission of the completed Application form is **29th May 2021**. Those candidates who have already applied for BITSAT-2021, need not apply again.

For more details, please visit the website: www.bitsadmission.com.

Note: (1) Candidates who appear for BITSAT-2021 may also seek admission to the Dubai campus of BITS Pilani. For more details visit: <http://universe.bits-pilani.ac.in/dubai/>. (2) Candidates holding a foreign passport and having valid SAT scores are also eligible to apply for admissions to Pilani, Goa and Hyderabad campuses of BITS for admissions under "International students scheme". More at: www.bitsadmission.com/ois.

Dean Academic-Undergraduate Studies BITS Pilani

KTR drinks water of MB in 2BHK flat

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, APRIL 2

● **KHAMMAM MP** Nama Nageswara Rao said, "KTR has shown respect to Mission Bhagiratha water as though it is Gangajalam,"

attention was Rama Rao opening the water tap at one of the DBR apartments, drinking its water with zeal, and pouring some water drops on his head in devotion. The incident was highlighted at a meeting by Khammam MP Nama Nag-

eswara Rao during his speech in a meeting. Nama said, "KTR has shown respect to Mission Bhagiratha water as though it is Gangajalam," he remarked.

Rama Rao also visited a Vaikuntadhamam (crematorium) in Khammam and appreciated the atmosphere there and its maintenance. He laid a foundation stone for a road from Sri Sri Circle to Venkatayapalem in Khammam. Roads and buildings minis-

ter V. Prasanth Reddy was present on the occasion. In Sattupalli, Rama Rao assured that he would develop Vesiyakanthal Cheruvu on the lines of Tank Bund in Hyderabad. He unveiled a statue of Chakali Ilamma and opened a new municipal building in Sattupalli.

MLA Venkata Veeriah announced that KTR is interested in taking up several development projects in Sattupalli.

2 KIDS DIE AFTER EATING TAINTED WATERMELON

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 2

Two children of a family died reportedly after consuming watermelon that was tainted with rat poison in Visampet village of Anthargam mandal in Peddapallli district on Friday. Three others of the family are undergoing treatment in the Karimnagar government hospital.

The victims were identified as Shivanand, 10, and Sharani, 8. Their parents Daraboina Srisailam and Gunavathi are in hospital along with Srisailam's mother. Police said that on Thursday night, they had placed rat poison to kill rodents in the house. It is suspected that the rats, after consuming the poison, tried to eat the watermelon in their death throes. The watermelon was consumed by five members of the family, except Srisailam's father.

After some time, all the five started suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting. Srisailam's father and locals shifted them to Karimnagar government hospital. The two children died in the hospital. As the condition of Srisailam and Gunavathi turned serious, they were sent to a private hospital at Hyderabad. Srisailam's mother is also in a serious condition and has been kept under observation. The police has registered a case and started an investigation.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE PROPERTY

FLATS
SAINIKPURI 3 & 4 BHK flats, 1500 sq ft to 2460 sq ft with all amenities, 100% vastu. Ready to occupy, gated community. www.happyhomeshderabad.com. Ph: 7229999728 & 7229999732. (S/2021/C02793)

PLOTS
WE PURCHASED Plots With 100% Market Rate Janaharsha Dreamcity 1 & 2, Ibrahimpatnam, Mangalpally, Koheda, Abdullapurmet, Tooran, Ghateswar, Spot Cash. Ph: 9 8 4 9 6 7 5 0 6 8 . (HYCL/2122/C00029)

PHARMACY, SAGRHIGHWAY yacharam DTCP approved 70 acres fully developed layout. "Temple trees" adjacent to 100ft roads. Bank loan available. Persyd 7999/ more details ph: 0797623456 (HYMM/2122/C00011)

SITUATION VACANT

ADVT. SALES & MKTG.

WANTED EXPERIENCED Sales Executives for selling fabrics and sarees of leading textile brands in Rayalaseema-Andhra Pradesh. Good Salary. Contact: 9971152852. (S/2122/C00001)

BUSINESS

EARN 1,00,000 to 10,00,000 per month Install Ladies Sanitary Pad & Baby Diapers Plants. You can also sell ready Materiel to our company. Contact: 011-25193158, 8929557841, 8929557844, 8929557840, 8376089771. (W/2021/A001361)

BUSINESS OFFER

GREATEST BUSINESS Opportunity - Franchise Model for Tiffin Centers, Chai Centers and Baji Centers, which are already existing or proposed to start new one. Visit: www.ibmenu.in and Call: 7416924370/1/2/3/4. Monday to Saturday between 10AM and 5PM. (S/2021/C00219)

EDUCATIONAL

CAREER/ENTRANCE COURSES

ONE-SITTING / Fasttrack-Graduations (All), Post Graduations (All), PG Diplomas, Polytechnic Diplomas, Secondary (10th) & Senior Secondary (12th), Provided Online results & Online verifications, Eligible for Private & Abroad. Ph: 9912540011, 7337291133, www.hyderc.com (A/2021/C000125)

DISTANCE EDUCATION

ONLY FOR Educational Consultants / Academies. No Advance Fee. Students please no call. Contact for

Verifiable +Fast Track

:Graduation (15,000)/B.Ed.-M.Ed. -NCTE-Recognised (30000)/BBA- MBA-BCA-MCA (20-25,000)from Government University, WES Documentation & Attestation Support Available. 47-years Educational Experience. Shiksha Bharti, Varanasi. Mobile: 9519759663, 9915103781. Email: shikshabharti@yaahoocom (HYMM/2122/C00007)

NOTICE

Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries while responding to advertisements in these columns. Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. does not vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers. The Printer, Publisher, Editor and Owner of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. shall not be held responsible / liable for any consequences, in case such claims are found to be false.

DECCAN Chronicle

BOOK YOUR CLASSIFIED / DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS at

EDITION CENTRE :

KARIMNAGAR

H.No. 1-21/2/1, Cherlapatukur Road, Muddumpur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186

9000650508

e-mail: krmadvt@deccanmail.com

9121183123

BRIGHT HERE, BRIGHT NOW.

The new Polaroid Sustainable Collection.

Polaroid

The Original Polarized since 1937

Eye Connect Optics Nh563, Christian Colony, Karimnagar 9246600700

Mark Vision Eyecare and Opticals Christian Colony, Beside Surya Nursing Home, Karimnagar 9010681078

My Vision Express #3-1-856, Opposite Mission Hospital, Karimnagar 9505025556

Oyster Eye Wear & Clinic Nh563, Jyothinagar, Karimnagar 9866588805

Renuka Eye Hospital Near Chanakya Hospital, Vemulawada, Sirilla 9440506966

Sri Rama Eye Care & Opticals Gandhi Chowk, Jammikunta, 9885876066

www.polaroidforyou.com



DECCAN Chronicle

3 APRIL 2021

South India is different: Hopes rest on Left, DMK

Situated as they are in the peninsula, the southernmost states of India — Tamil Nadu and Kerala — go to the polls on Tuesday (April 6) to face another litmus test of their political insularity that has been instrumental in keeping national parties out or largely marginalised their roles in alliances dominated by powerful regional forces. While the Congress, facing an existential threat, is hoping to be a force to be reckoned with in Kerala while leading the LDF against the UDF, the BJP is piggybacking on the remnants of Jayalalithaa's AIADMK with the hope of gaining a foothold in the deep south.

The smaller Union territory of Puducherry, till recently ruled by Congress before it was displaced by defections engineered from the national capital, might still be the exception to the formidable image of a southern bulwark against the national ruling party since BJP has aligned with N. Rangasamy's AIINRC and AIADMK.

Puducherry, till recently ruled by Congress, might still be the exception to the formidable image of a southern bulwark against the national ruling party since BJP has aligned with N. Rangasamy's AIINRC and AIADMK

The former CM may be riding a wave of popular support in the wake of a near five-year misrule marked by innumerable governance issues in an awkward fight with Raj Nivas, invariably seen as a symbol of the capital's control freak nature.

In the absence of a conspicuous anti-incumbency wave in Tamil Nadu, the ruling AIADMK, led by CM Edappadi Palaniswami who has performed as an efficient administrator, including in the battle against Covid-19, may have begun to feel the campaign burden of carrying the BJP on its shoulders. It is the absence of the charismatic leader Jayalalithaa, who had foreseen allies in 2016 to emulate her mentor MGR in scoring a second successive victory to a "Lady versus Modi" campaign theme, which may weigh heavily against AIADMK.

The other Dravidian major DMK has similarly reduced the seats for the Congress in its alliance of Tamil forces aiming to recapture Fort St George. An assertion of a Tamil identity might see red over the income tax raids, conducted mostly against the Opposition parties and suggesting the misuse of central agencies in a battle for votes. A preference to place M.K. Stalin, who had stayed in his father M. Karunanidhi's shadow for decades on end, on the seat of power seemed well-indicated in popularity polls till A. Raja's indiscretion changed things somewhat.

A campaign that was running smoothly enough on promises to keep the State out of NEET, fight CAA imposition as it is symbolic of a law being thrust by the Union against people's wishes and such issues may have been marginally affected by Mr Raja's references to the CM's late mother. The CM milked it for sympathy dramatically as any seasoned politician would. The larger theme of this being another prestige fight between two Dravidian majors who have given Tamil Nadu a unique outlier status in national politics was still dominant.

The Congress' fight to stay relevant in the South might hinge on a good performance from DMK+ as the prospects of the LDF benefiting from Kerala historically plumping for the alternative in five-year cycles may be denied by the impressive record of CM Pinayari Vijayan who has steered the government with a focus on the people's welfare. The fickle nature of voters' behaviour at the EVM notwithstanding, it does appear the South India is ready to show once again that it is a different world.

Right honour, wrong timing

There is no doubt that actor Rajinikanth deserves the Dadasaheb Phalke award for his rich repertoire of celluloid marvels. He is one artiste much sought after in the industry. Besides, he has been a spectacular journey of 45 years in filmdom. Starting as an anti-hero, he moved up the ladder step by step to touch the pinnacle of stardom with absolute grace.

Yet if the award gave rise to some doubts, it was in the timing of the announcement. And in no way can one blame Rajinikanth for the scepticism that descended on the state. The time chosen by the BJP government to announce a momentous decision like this was monumentally flawed. You do not proclaim an admiration for an artiste's greatness out of the blue when the state is in the throes of a bitterly fought election. And that when the superstar had distanced himself from the humdrum of the same election quite consciously. So many saw a crass political motive behind the BJP government's apparent recognition of Rajinikanth's cinematic talents and contribution.

Was it all aimed at influencing the voters of Tamil Nadu, particularly those who love Rajinikanth and his films, in favour of the ruling dispensation? Did the poor crowds that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other upcountry BJP honchos drew during their campaign prompt the ruling party at the Centre to come up with an idea as brilliant as handing over a prestigious award lying in their kitty to Rajinikanth? Or did it suddenly dawn on them that there is an actor in Tamil hinterland waiting to be honoured? Whatever it was, people in Tamil Nadu congratulated their superstar from the depth of their hearts before moving on to vote for the party and leader of their own choice.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256

Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234

Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3 Beach Road, Near Kailasgiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-255233/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

Rajahmundry: Venagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904

Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Avilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Buranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennmugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammagam, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255

Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/S/348/2006-08

Farrukh
Dhondy
**Cabbages &
Kings**

"All things vile and murderous
Bacteria great and small
Sent to plague and burden us,
The Lord God made them all."

*The Covid 19 Virus
The mutant RNA
Sent to kill or mire us
The Lord God at his play?"*

— From The Waist Band by Bachchoo

**Signs of hope in
UK's Batley, as
teacher triggers
extremist calls**

Living in Britain all these decades, I hadn't heard of the West Yorkshire town of Batley. It's now very much in the news and in the public eye because in its grammar school a teacher brought cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed, first published in the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, and displayed them to his pupils in a lesson about free speech. Without referring to Google or an atlas, I can confidently say that Batley sounds to me what one may call a mill-and-mosque town.

This definition arises from the fact that after the Second World War, the textile mills of the north of England suffered a shortage of indigenous labour and imported immigrants, in

very large number from Mirpur in "Pakistan" Kashmir and from what later became Bangladesh, to man the night shifts and settle in these towns. Thence the mosques and religion in these communities as a central, motivating and governing dimension.

Then came the government of "Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher, which, in its thrust towards capitalistic globalisation, allowed international competition to shut down the British textile industry and devastate the coal mining sector. Bradford, Huddersfield and of course Batley suffered mass unemployment. But despite that disastrous setback four decades ago, this week's news about the protests outside the school have made public two facts which I find curious, if not encouraging.

But first, gentle reader, the story as it happened. A teacher in his late twenties, teaching religious studies to the 690 pupils of the school, warned a class that he was going to pose a moral question. He would show them a cartoon which some people would certainly find offensive. He would then tell them that because of that cartoon several people associated with the drawing of it and publishing it in a French magazine were murdered. The question

the pupils had to address was the moral rights and wrongs, the religious taboo on drawing pictures of the Prophet and the contrasting morality of murdering people who had perpetrated the cartoon.

This teacher was aware of the fact that Batley, just outside Bradford, had witnessed large-scale protests and book burnings in support of the Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie's book The Satanic Verses. Some of the 13- and 14-year-old pupils told their parents about the lesson. An irate Muslim parent expressed his objections on the phone to the teacher. Soon there was a demonstration of 50 or so people outside the school.

The headmaster immediately suspended the teacher involved. Reports said the teacher felt threatened, apologised for showing the cartoon and went into hiding to avoid being confronted or even killed.

One of the leaders of the protests, a "preacher" named Mohammed Amin Pandor, called for the dismissal of the teacher from the school and the profession. This gentleman, Pandor, is a publicity seeker. He is a graduate engineer from Dewsbury and recently issued a fatwa against the Covid-19 vaccine. He said there

were "uncertain substances in the vaccines" and that "Allah has given a definite remedy for safety from every form of harm and disease". He urged his followers to shun the vaccine and recite a certain prayer three times. In 2017, Pandor accused Ephraim Mervis, the UK's chief rabbi, of telling Jews that it was permissible to turn Christians and Muslims into sex slaves! This year he was forced to apologise to Mervis for that offensive falsehood.

Pandor has made it known in television interviews that he opposes gay marriage and even demands that the popular TV programme Strictly Come Dancing be banned. He signed a letter to the newspapers attacking an article by a Muslim police commander which was headlined "We must reclaim Islam from the extremists" and declared himself in favour of this extremism.

While the protesters insist that they will continue to picket the school until the offending teacher is permanently dismissed and even barred from the profession, over 60,000 signatures have been collected in Batley for his immediate reinstatement.

I have no way of knowing who these signatories are, their location

or their religion. Are they all non-Muslims? Or are some of them Muslims who want to reclaim Islam from the extremists?

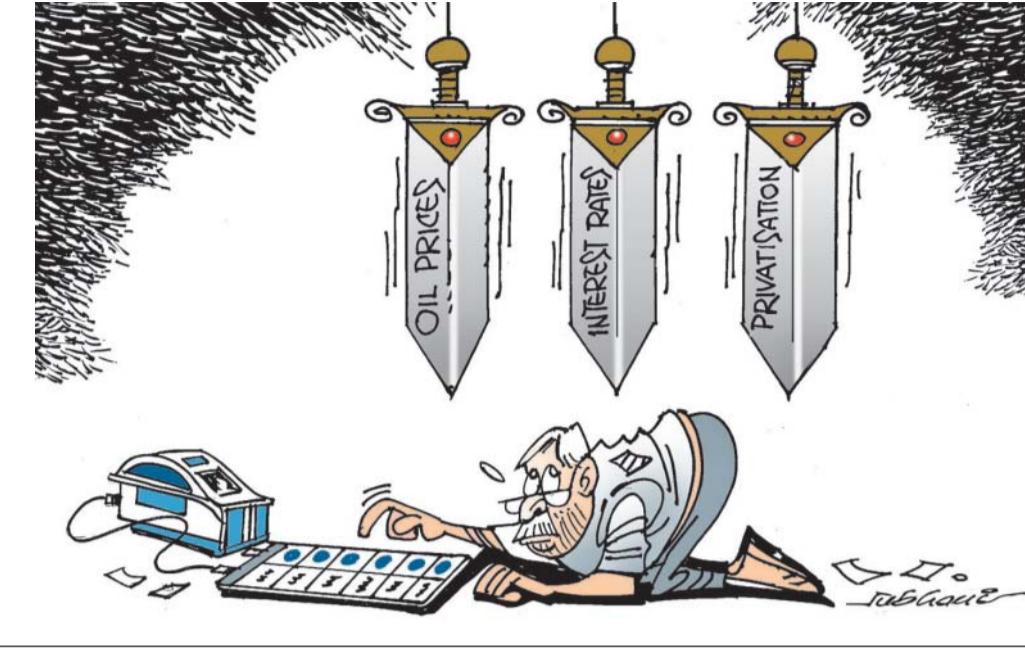
The encouraging, if curious, fact is that of the 690 pupils of Batley Grammar, 420 or so of them are "of ethnic origin". This means that the children and mostly grandchildren of the original, mostly Muslim, immigrants to Batley and Bradford have achieved the academic qualifications to gain competitive entry into this grammar school, that was founded in 1612. It implies that they are on their way to university and are guaranteed status in Britain's meritocracy.

Now 600 of the school's pupils have signed a petition in support of reinstating the offending teacher. Even if all the "non-ethnic or non-Muslim" third of the school's pupils have all signed, it still means that 330 of the "ethnic" pupils, certainly at least 300 of them from Muslim households, have taken a "liberal" attitude to the incident and the supposed offence.

Can we conclude that this generation of Batley Muslims are moving away from the extremism that their parents or grandparents clung to?

Pandor Saheb, the tide of tolerance threatens.

Subhani



Will Didi's 'dadagiri' or BJP's 'dhanda' win Bong hearts?

Shobhaa De

As I key this in on April Fool's Day, I find I have completely run out of jokes! Even those crude Covid ones. There's nothing "hahaha... HOHOHO" out there, and even our smartest, wittiest stand-up comics are struggling to come up with quips that make us laugh about the absurdity of it all. Black humour? I'll take it! Black, purple or polka dotted — who cares? I'm up for a giggle — I mean, watching the West Bengal polls, would have been amusing had it not been this ugly. I am sick to death of Didi's *dadagiri* — and the shabby tactics adopted by the BJP to counter her! At the moment Didi is winning the Big Bully race! This is a bit too rich, given that Amit Shah is India's biggest Dada... but cracking West Bengal is not all that easy, Amitbhai. Analysts can trot out all the numbers, charts and graphs at their disposal. Foreign observers of Indian origin can roll into the various districts to get a feel of what they believe is the ground level reality. Most of these experts are wealthy, well-meaning public intellectuals doing their job and filing detailed reports that nobody understands. But West Bengal operates with a logic all its own that defies standard deconstruction. Only one thing can be said with a level of certainty — Bongs are for Bongs. Simple!

At the moment, opinions on the outcome of the polls vastly vary, depending on which Bengali television channel is being watched. It is commonly agreed that the "elite" English channels are not giving the polls in West Bengal sufficient importance. Meaning, they are stupid enough to believe there is life beyond Bengal, and actually flash world news. The Suez Canal crisis over Hooghly hooliganism... It goes without saying, Bengalis do not watch Hindi channels, since Hindi is as good as a foreign language. This makes it a little difficult for those not blessed by Ma Kali to be born to Bengal parents — both parents have to be Bengali... we do not accept a concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of their Bong identity. Is it intact or getting eroded? You can promise the Bengali... we do not accept the concept called "half Bengali") to figure out the hyper sensitivities of voters. What are the actual dynamics dictating this fiery poll? It is not the economy — that's for sure. For most Bengalis, the crucial issue is a matter of

SHORT TAKES
GIRL RETURNING HOME GANGRAPED, ENDS LIFE

Meerut, April 2: A class 10 student committed suicide after she was allegedly abducted and gang-raped while on her way back from a tuition class, police said on Friday.

The girl belonging to a village under the Sardhana Kotwali area consumed poison after returning home on Thursday evening, said police adding she died in the hospital during the treatment.

Meerut's rural superintendent of police Keshav Kumar said four youths were involved in abducting and raping the girl and the police, on the basis of a suicide note left by the girl, have arrested two of the accused and have launched a manhunt to nab two others.

In her suicide note, the girl had named four men, including Lakhan and Vikas from a neighbouring village, besides two others.

Lakhan and Vikas have been arrested while the police are on the lookout for two others, the SP said.

After returning home, she narrated her woes to her parents and consumed some poisonous substance sometime later, prompting her parents to rush her to the SSD Global Hospital in Modipuram, where she died during the treatment.

NIA DETAINS 'MYSTERY WOMAN' SEEN WITH WAZE

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, APRIL 2

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has detained a "mystery woman" who was seen in the CCTV camera of a five-star hotel with Mumbai Police officer Sachin Waze.

The "mystery woman" angle had emerged in the case on March 25, when CCTV footage of a five-star hotel showed her closely trailing Waze out of the hotel, where he had stayed for at least five days in mid-February.

Waze allegedly entered the hotel in an Innova on February 16 and left on February 20 in a Land Cruiser — both vehicles were later seized by NIA.

The agency was looking for this woman since the time the investigators saw her in CCTV footage. Finally, on Thursday night the NIA traced her location and accosted her at the Mumbai Airport and detained her. Later, a team searched her house in Thane district and was questioning her.

Initial investigation indicated that the woman was allegedly engaged in converting black money into white. According to the NIA, the woman was using currency note counting machines, one of which was found in one of the two Mercedes-Benz cars used by Waze. The car was seized last month.

The NIA has claimed that Waze was running an alleged extortion racket from the room in the Nariman Point five-star hotel.

The agency has also claimed that Waze was helping a businessman to resolve some dispute and this person in turn booked the room in this hotel for Waze for 100 days at a cost of ₹12 lakh.

Waze used to check into it using a forged Aadhaar card and the fictitious name Sushant Sadashiv Khambhat. The probe also showed that Waze was operating out of room number 1964 of the hotel.

The booking was done through a travel agent by the businessman and Waze had stayed there in February while reporting for duty at the Crime Branch.

CASES | SPIKE

Delhi rules out possibility of lockdown; MP imposes partial lockdown in 4 districts

Lockdown option not ruled out: Uddhav

DC CORRESPONDENTS
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba on Friday held a meeting with chief secretaries, director general police and health secretaries of all states and Union Territories, with focus on 11 states/UTs that have been reporting very high rise in daily cases and mortality because of Covid-19 in the last two weeks.

In the last 24 hours, 88,641 fresh cases of Coronavirus were reported which was highest single day spike in the last six months. There were also 711 new deaths in a day which was the highest this year so far.

As per Union health ministry, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Delhi, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh are reporting huge surge in daily cases and account for 84.61 per cent of the new cases.

Expressing concern over the situation, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that the possibility of a lockdown in the state cannot be ruled out. Already curbs have been put in place in Pune where curfew has been imposed from 6 pm to 6 am for a week during which restaurants, bars and shopping malls will be closed. Thackeray said the government has

increased testing to 2.5 lakh per day. The number of beds in hospitals too has been increased. The Chief Minister said the Covid-19 virus has mutated and become dangerous now, hence, people cannot let the guard down. He mentioned that huge crowd is being noticed in wedding and other functions. Mumbai recorded 8,648 cases and 20 deaths in a single day spike. "I cannot rule out imposing a lockdown if the current Covid-19 situation prevails. People have become complacent. We are in a catch-22 situation — should we look at economy or health? If this condition continues, I have told you

already that in 15 days we will exhaust our infrastructure. In the next couple of days, I will give out strict restrictions guidelines. But I want to also tell you that I will be speaking to many more people. I want a solution about how to break this chain. I don't want lockdown but what's the solution?" Thackeray said.

On the other hand, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said there was no possibility of a lockdown in the national capital. Addressing a digital press conference on the rising Coronavirus cases, the Chief Minister said that the Delhi government is not planning any lockdown in

the wake of the fourth wave of Corona in the national capital. If there is a need for a lockdown in the future, a decision will be taken after consultation, he said.

However, the fourth wave of Coronavirus in Delhi is less serious than the previous ones as there are fewer number of deaths and hospitalisations this time, CM Kejriwal added.

Meanwhile, the Madhya Pradesh government on Friday imposed partial lockdown in four districts in the state amid surge in Covid-19 cases. Lockdown has been imposed in urban areas in the districts of Ratlam, Chhindwara, Betul and Khargone. The lockdown

will be in force in the urban areas in these districts from 10 pm on Friday till six am on April 5.

Similarly, Chhattisgarh government on Friday declared total lockdown in Durg district for nine days from April 6 in the wake of surge in Covid cases in the district. The district has reported 996 positive cases in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi who was scheduled to campaign in Assam throughout the day on Friday had to cancel her public meetings at the last moment after her husband Robert Vadra tested positive for Covid-19.

MEA: HOPE CHINA WILL WORK ON FULL DISENGAGEMENT

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

India on Friday said there was a consensus with China that the "two sides should now quickly resolve the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control" (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh following the recent disengagement in the Pangong Tso Lake area, adding that it "hopes that the Chinese side will work with us to ensure that disengagement in the remaining areas is completed at the earliest" since a "prolongation of the situation is in neither side's interest".

MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi on Friday said, "As you are well aware, after the disengagement in Pangong Lake area, we have had the 10th round of Senior Commanders meeting, a telecon between external affairs minister S. Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart and a working mechanism for consultation & coordination on India-China border affairs (WMCC) interaction on March 12. The disengagement in Pangong Lake area was a significant step forward and it has provided a good basis for resolution of other remaining issues along the LAC in Western Sector."

At both the Senior Commanders meeting and the WMCC, the two sides had detailed exchange of views on the remaining issues. The two sides continue to remain in touch through military and diplomatic channels."

He added, "As EAM had pointed out to Chinese foreign minister, a prolongation of the situation is in neither side's interest. We therefore hope that the Chinese side will work with us to ensure that disengagement in the remaining areas is completed at the earliest."

INDIA CONDEMNS USE OF VIOLENCE IN MYANMAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

In its strongest statement yet on the situation in Myanmar, India on Friday said it "condemns any use of violence", stands for the "rule of law" and "restoration of democracy" there, even as it urged the release of political prisoners" by the ruling military junta there which had seized power in a coup two months ago.

India said it was engaged in an effort to play a "balanced and constructive role" in response to the current situation in the north-eastern neighbouring country.

On the Indian Defence Attaché in Myanmar recently attending an armed forces function of the ruling Military Junta, New Delhi said Indian diplomats "continue to discharge their regular diplomatic responsibilities" and that "nothing more should be read into this attending of event by our defence attaché".

DMK FRONT IS A DYNASTY CLUB, SAYS MODI

DC CORRESPONDENT
KANYAKUMARI, APRIL 2

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused the opposition in the state of reducing itself to a dynasty club when the NDA alliance in the state is focusing on development.

The government at the Centre was working for the welfare of Indians irrespective of their caste and creed, Modi said.

Speaking at a election meeting at Agastheeswaram in Kanyakumari district on Friday, Modi said senior leaders who worked shoulder to shoulder with Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi now feel suffocated because of the presence of the 'newly-minted crown prince'.

"The same is the case with Congress leaders," Modi said referring to the increased role DMK president M.K. Stalin's son Udhayanidhi Stalin plays in the party. "The mood of the people however is against political nepotism and entitlement," the Prime Minister claimed.

Modi accused the Congress-DMK alliance of catering to the welfare of the children and grandchildren of their leaders "while the NDA has been focusing on development and people's welfare".

Kanyakumari being a coastal district which hosts one-third of Tamil Nadu's fishermen population, the Prime Minister enlisted the schemes being implemented under the Pradhan Mantri Maysya Sambada Yojana.

Stating that his government is committed to implementing port-led growth by enhancing cargo handling capacity of the existing ports and creating new ones, Modi said Central government has been implementing schemes to create new fishing harbours and road connectivity between the fishing harbours to the market to enhance income of fishermen.

Referring to the ₹10,900 crore worth production linked incentive (PLI) scheme recently cleared by the Union government to boost Indian brands of food, the Prime Minister hoped that the fishing industry and fish processing units were to gain a lot by this scheme.

In its strongest statement yet on the situation in Myanmar, India on Friday said it "condemns any use of violence", stands for the "rule of law" and "restoration of democracy" there, even as it urged the release of political prisoners" by the ruling military junta there which had seized power in a coup two months ago.

India said it was engaged in an effort to play a "balanced and constructive role" in response to the current situation in the north-eastern neighbouring country.

On the Indian Defence Attaché in Myanmar recently attending an armed forces function of the ruling Military Junta, New Delhi said Indian diplomats "continue to discharge their regular diplomatic responsibilities" and that "nothing more should be read into this attending of event by our defence attaché".

2 militants killed in encounter in J&K

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC Srinagar, April 2

been holed up.

Inspector General of Police (Kashmir range), Vijay Kumar, said that prompt investigations launched into the attack on the house of BJP activist Anwar Khan in Srinagar's Nowgam area in which one policeman Rameez Raja was killed led to the arrest of a couple of persons who had provided logistic support to the assailants.

During the interrogation, the accused identified the place where the two of the four militants involved in the attack were hiding. It was a private house located in Ghat Mohalla of Kakapora area in Pulwama.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K. Palaniswami during a public meeting as part of election campaign in support of their NDA alliance candidates ahead of Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, in Madurai on Friday.

DON'T NEED YOUR ADVICE, DIDI TELLS MODI

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, APRIL 2

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday dared Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to suggest her fighting for another seat in the ongoing Assembly election in the state. Exuding confidence once again of winning from Nandigram, the Trinamul Congress supremo also threatened to blacken his face while asking him to exercise his "control" on Union home minister Amit Shah alleging his provocation behind unrest.

"I do not belong to your party that you can control me and give a suggestion of fighting from another seat in the polls. When I have contested from Nandigram, I will indeed win there and blacken your face. I do not agree to work on your advice. I work on people's advice," Banerjee said at a TMC rally in Dinhata of Cooch Behar of North Bengal.

She was replying to Modi's jibe about whether she had plans to fight from another seat in fear of losing in Nandigram to her nemesis Shuvendu Adhikari of the BJP.

Meanwhile, in an unrelated development, in what may be a major setback for the BJP, its chief campaigner and Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has been banned from campaigning for next 48-hours ahead of the third and final phase of Assembly elections, which are due on Tuesday.

Modi slams LDF govt's stand on Sabarimala issue

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 2

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hit out at CPM-led LDF government in Kerala for what he called beating and harassing Ayyappa devotees during the Sabarimala agitation.

The Prime Minister, who began the last leg of his campaign for the forthcoming Assembly elections in Kerala, addressed a public meeting in Konni constituency in Pathanamthitta district. Modi began his speech by chanting "Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa" a couple of times.

The Prime Minister said he was happy to be in the land blessed by Lord Ayyappa. "The devotees who come to the hill shrine observe 41 days of penance which makes this place more blessed. Ayyappa has taught us how to do good for all," he said. Modi attacked the LDF government accusing it of attempting to destroy the culture. "They carried out mischief against the devotees. Instead of welcoming them with flowers,

they were fed up with the two fronts and wanted BJP's development agenda. "People are telling the UDF and LDF enough is enough. Now they are seeking BJP and NDA's development agenda. They relate to our programmes and policies," he added.

He claimed that the entry of highly respected professionals like "Metroman" E. Sreedharan was a game changer in Kerala politics. "A man who achieved so much over the years, who made India's progress faster yet preferred BJP as a means to serve society," he said.

Taking a dig at the Congress and CPM, he said the political picture in West Bengal was clear to everyone. "Electoral front and left are getting closer. The logical step after such closeness is a full merger of Congress and the Left. They can call the new party CCP (Comrade Congress Party)," he said.

He said the LDF government failed to show any forward-looking programmes to solve the problems of people.

agencies on us. We cannot be threatened to remain at home," he told the election meeting. He said he had learnt that the raid was conducted with some 100 police personnel providing protection to the I-T team.

In a message to his cadre, Stalin urged them not to lose focus on the elections. He asked them not to be distracted by the raids and other false propaganda by the rivals, including the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister.

He will not be intimidated by such raids. We are not afraid of the Centre unleashing its

searches conducted

in Chennai, Coimbatore and Karur yielded several incriminating materials on tax evasion and the searches were still on, the release said.

Stalin, who was on his way to Trichy for campaign when the I-T officials knocked at his daughter's house, spoke about it at a meeting in Jayamkondan.

"We will not be intimidated by such raids. We are not afraid of the Centre unleashing its

agencies on us. We cannot be threatened to remain at home," he told the election meeting. He said he had learnt that the raid was conducted with some 100 police personnel providing protection to the I-T team.

In a message to his cadre, Stalin urged them not to lose focus on the elections. He asked them not to be distracted by the raids and other false propaganda by the rivals, including the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi who was scheduled to campaign in Assam throughout the day on Friday had to cancel her public meetings at the last moment after her husband Robert Vadra tested positive for Covid-19.

will be in force in the urban areas in these districts from 10 pm on Friday till six am on April 5.

Similarly, Chhattisgarh government on Friday declared total lockdown in Durg district for nine days from April 6 in the wake of surge in Covid cases in the district. The district has reported 996 positive cases in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi who was scheduled to campaign in Assam throughout the day on Friday had to cancel her public meetings at the last moment after her husband Robert Vadra tested positive for Covid-19.

will be in force in the urban areas in these districts from 10 pm on Friday till six am on April 5.

Similarly, Chhattisgarh government on Friday declared total lockdown in Durg district for nine days from April 6 in the wake of surge in Covid cases in the district. The district has reported 996 positive cases in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi who was scheduled to campaign in Assam throughout the day on Friday had to cancel her public meetings at the last moment after her husband Robert Vadra tested positive for Covid-19.

will be in force in the urban areas in these districts from 10 pm on Friday till six am on April 5.

Similarly, Chhattisgarh government on Friday declared total lockdown in Durg district for nine days from April 6 in the wake of surge in Covid cases in the district. The district has reported 996 positive cases in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi who was scheduled to campaign in Assam throughout the day on Friday had to cancel her public meetings at the last moment after her husband Robert Vadra tested positive for Covid-19.

will be in force in the urban areas in these districts from 10 pm on Friday till six am on April 5.

SHORT TAKES

COURT ORDERS TO HALT 'SATAN SHOE' SALES

New York: The makers of the "Satan Shoe", a collaboration with rapper Lil Nas X, have been ordered to stop selling them after Nike filed a lawsuit, according to court documents.

The sportswear giant sued MSCHF Product Studio after they released 666 pairs of black Nike Air Max 97s customized to feature a bronze pentagram, a Bible verse referring to Satan's fall, and a drop of human blood mixed with red ink in the midsole.

DOCS COMPLETE HEART SURGERY DURING HOSP FIRE

Moscow: A team of doctors successfully completed open heart surgery inside a Russian hospital that caught fire on Friday as firefighters battled the flames from the outside, regional emergency services said.

The wooden roofed building in the far eastern city of Blagoveschensk caught fire and 60 patients were evacuated as it filled with smoke.

But a team of eight doctors performing the operation on the ground floor carried on.

"We had to save this person and we did everything," Valentin Filatov, head of the cardio surgery unit, said in an interview with state television.

JIHADIST SUSPECT BLOWS UP SELF, CHILD IN TUNISIA

Tunis: A suspected foreign jihadist blew herself and her little girl up with an explosives belt as security forces closed in in mountains of central Tunisia, the interior ministry said on Friday.

It said the child she was carrying died on the spot and another small girl was wounded Thursday as the woman detonated the belt in the remote Mount Selloum area of Kasserine near the Algerian border, a known jihadist hideout. It said the woman's husband was also killed in the operation.

National guard and army units the same day "eliminated" Hamdi Dhouib, a senior member of the outlawed Jund al-Khalifa, which is linked to the Islamic State (IS) group, in Mount Mghila, also in Kasserine, the ministry said in a statement.

PARAMEDIC SAYS FLOYD 'DECEASED' WHEN HE ARRIVED

Minneapolis: A paramedic testified that George Floyd was already dead when he arrived at the scene and Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, who is being tried for murder, still had his knee on the neck of the 46-year-old Black man.

"When I showed up he was deceased and I dropped him off at the hospital and he was still in cardiac arrest," paramedic Derek Smith said on the fourth day of Chauvin's trial on murder and manslaughter charges.

Chauvin, 45, was captured on video kneeling on the neck of a handcuffed Floyd for more than nine minutes during Floyd's May 25, 2020 arrest for passing a counterfeit \$20 bill.

The video of Chauvin, who is white, restraining Floyd went viral and sparked protests against racial injustice and police brutality around the world. Prosecutors are seeking to prove that Chauvin's actions led to Floyd's death while the ex-officer's attorney claims that he died due to illegal drug use and underlying medical conditions.

Holy week



Archbishop of Paris Michel Aupetit carries the holy cross at the Way of the Cross ceremony during the Good Friday as part of the Holy Week celebrations, from the Sacre Coeur Basilica in Paris on Friday. — AFP

Russia massing troops: Ukraine

Kiev, April 2: President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Moscow of building up troops on Ukraine's border and his top ministers discussed the escalating security situation with Western allies.

He spoke after Ukrainian and US officials this week reported Russian troop movement in annexed Crimea and on the Russian-Ukrainian border, near territories controlled by Moscow-backed separatists.

"Muscle-flexing in the form of military exercises and possible provocations along the border are traditional Russian games," Zelensky said in a statement. He accused Moscow of seeking to create "a threatening atmosphere" as Kiev hopes to resume a ceasefire brokered last year. This week, Moscow and Kiev blamed each other for a rise in violence between government forces and Kremlin-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, which

has undermined the ceasefire.

Zelensky said 20 Ukrainian servicemen had been killed and 57 wounded since the start of the year. The military announced Thursday that a Ukrainian soldier was wounded in an attack blamed on separatists.

On Thursday, US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin called his Ukrainian counterpart Andriy Taras, the Ukrainian ministry said, adding that Washington said it would "not leave

Ukraine alone in the event of escalating Russian aggression".

And Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba discussed the "aggravation by the Russian Federation of the security situation" on the frontline with his Canadian counterpart Marc Garneau.

Ukraine's military intelligence accused Russia of preparing to "expand its military presence" in separatist-controlled eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions. — AFP

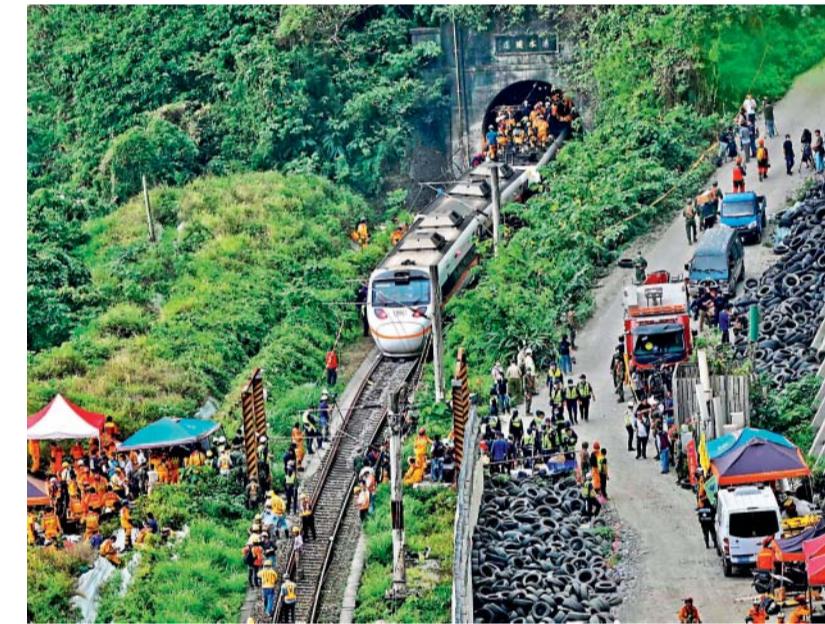
MYANMAR CUTS INTERNET AMID PROTESTS

Yangon, April 2: Myanmar's wireless broadband internet services were shut down on Friday by order of the military, local providers said, as protesters continued to defy the threat of lethal violence to oppose the junta's takeover.

A directive from the Ministry of Transport and Communications on Thursday instructed that "all wireless broadband data services be temporarily suspended until further notice," according to a statement posted online by local provider Ooredoo. After weeks of overnight cut-offs of internet access, the military on Friday shut all links apart from those using fiber optic cable, which was working at drastically reduced speeds.

Access to mobile networks and all wireless—the less costly options used by most people in the developing country—was blocked. The Norwegian telecoms company Telenor, one of the biggest carriers in Myanmar, confirmed it could no longer offer wireless services. It was offering fiber optic service of up to 40 megabits per second in its packages as of Friday, well below high-speed access, which is a minimum of 100 Mbps. — AP

● ACCESS TO mobile networks and all wireless—the less costly options used by most people in the developing country—was blocked.



Rescue workers at the site where a train derailed inside a tunnel in the mountains of Hualien, eastern Taiwan on Friday. — AFP

51 killed as train derails inside a tunnel in Taiwan

Hualien, Taiwan, April 2: At least 51 people were killed in Taiwan on Friday when a packed train collided with a vehicle on the tracks and then derailed inside a tunnel, in the island's worst railway accident in decades.

Officials said the devastating collision was caused by a railway maintenance vehicle which slipped down an embankment above the tracks near the eastern coastal city of Hualien.

"(The driver) was suspected of not pulling the parking brake tight enough so the vehicle slid 20 meters... onto the train line," Feng Hui-

sheng, deputy director of Taiwan Railways Authority, told reporters.

Local media images from the scene showed the back of a yellow flatbed truck on its side next to the train just a few metres from the tunnel entrance.

The eight-carriage train was packed with some 480 people heading down the east coast for the annual Tomb Sweeping Festival, a four-day public holiday.

The Taiwan Railways Agency said 146 passengers were sent to hospital in addition to the 51 confirmed dead.

A French national was

among those killed while two Japanese and one Macau resident were injured. One unnamed female survivor told TVBS news channel of trapped passengers—some crying out for help, others unconscious.

"There were many people pressed under the seats and others on top of those seats too," she said.

President Tsai Ing-wen visited an emergency response centre in the capital Taipei, and said investigators would get to the bottom of how such a deadly crash could have occurred.

— AFP

TECH GENIUS

Han tested his self-driving car on the roads of Seoul in 1993

S. Korea's prof's car never took to road

Yongin, South Korea, April 2: Decades before the race to build a self-driving car became a multi-billion-dollar contest between tech giants such as Tesla and Google, a South Korean professor built an autonomous vehicle and test-drove it across the country—only for his research to be consigned to the scrapheap.

Han Min-hong, now 79, successfully tested his self-driving car on the roads of Seoul in 1993—a decade before Elon Musk even founded Tesla. Two years later, it drove



Retired South Korean professor Han Min-hong posing next to his 21-year-old self-driving car in front of his office in Yongin, south of Seoul. — AFP

heavy," but he and his team

"had an enormous passion as it was something others hadn't done yet, something that hadn't come out in the

world yet."

At the time, South Korea

was more focused on heavy industry, such as steel and shipbuilding, with the

average Korean not yet familiar with cellphones. The country was yet to become the tech powerhouse it is today, and was still pursuing imitation rather than innovation. On one occasion, Han was told: "Why develop a new technology when you can always pay for it?" Han's projects were seen as dangerous.

He was once asked how much he was paying for his life insurance, he said, and whether his wife was aware of "these crazy activities of yours?"

— AFP

Iran nuke talks in Vienna next week

US welcomes Iran meeting, says ready for 'mutual steps' to return to a nuclear deal

Brussels, April 2: The United States and Iran said on Friday that they would start indirect talks with other major world powers next week to try to get both countries back into an accord limiting Iran's nuclear programme, nearly three years after former President Donald Trump pulled the US out of the deal.

State Department spokesperson Ned Price called the resumption of negotiations, scheduled for Tuesday in Austria, "a healthy step forward." But Price added, "These remain early days, and we don't anticipate an immediate breakthrough as there will be difficult discussions ahead."

Trump pulled the United States out of the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, and President Joe Biden has said rejoining the agreement is a priority for his administration.

● Agreement on the start of multiparty talks—being held to get Iran and the United States over their differences on conditions for returning to the 2015 nuclear deal.

● In a tweet, Zarif said the aim of the Vienna session would be "rapidly finalise sanction-lifting & nuclear measures for choreographed removal of all sanctions, Iran ceasing remedial measures."

talks Thursday brokered by other governments that have remained in the accord, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Agreement on the start of multiparty talks—being held to get Iran and the United States over their differences on conditions for returning to the 2015 nuclear deal—came after

participants in the accord, including Iran. "The primary issues that will be discussed are the nuclear steps that Iran would need to take in order to return to compliance with the terms of the JCPOA, and the sanctions relief steps that the United States would need to take in order to return to compliance as well," Price said.

The United States, like Iran, said it did not anticipate direct talks between the US and Iran now. Price said the United States remains open to that idea, however. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif immediately stressed that no meeting was planned between officials from Iran and the US.

In a tweet, Zarif said the aim of the Vienna session would be "rapidly finalise sanction-lifting & nuclear measures for choreographed removal of all sanctions, Iran ceasing remedial measures."

Iranian state television quoted Abbas Araghchi, Iran's nuclear negotiator at the virtual meeting, as saying during Friday's discussions meeting that any "return by the US to the nuclear deal does not require any negotiation and the path is quite clear." "The US can return to the deal and stop breaching the law in the same way it withdrew from the deal and imposed illegal sanctions on Iran," Araghchi was quoted as saying. — AFP

S. America intensifies virus curbs

Santiago, April 2: South American nations severely tightened Coronavirus travel curbs including shutting their borders with Brazil, where infections are spiralling, as the WHO slammed Europe's "unacceptably slow" vaccine rollout.

Many European Union nations are reeling from dramatic spikes in cases that have forced the reimposition of unpopular restrictions, including in Belgium where police used water cannon to disperse thousands who had gathered in violation of Covid-19 rules.

Spikes in South America have reached alarming lev-

els, fuelled by a more contagious variant first detected in Brazil, as Chile closed all borders, Bolivia sealed its frontier with Brazil, and Peru went into a lockdown over Easter.

The country has a ban in place on all flights from Brazil, Britain and South Africa until April 15 to try and keep out the variants first detected there. Ecuador's president also announced fresh curbs against an outbreak he described as a "public calamity".

Brazil is the epicentre of the Coronavirus wave sweeping South America, reporting a staggering 66,500 Covid-19 deaths in March alone. — AFP

INDIA'S BIGGEST UNDERCOVER OPERATION

MATINEE ENTERTAINMENT

WILD DOG

WRITER-DIRECTOR AHISHOR SOLOMON
PRODUCERS NIRANJAN REDDY, ANVESH REDDY

EDITOR SHRAVAN KATIKANENI DIALOGUES KIRAN KUMAR PRODUCTION DESIGNER MURALI SV COSTUME DESIGNER ASHWANTH BYRI STUNT COORDINATOR JASHUVA VFX SUPERVISOR YUGANDHART PRO VAMSISHEKAR PUBLICITY DESIGNERS ANIL&BHANU



GRIPPING ACTION THRILLER

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	50,029.83
Nifty 50	14,867.40
S&P 500*	4,019.87
Dollar (₹)	73.11
Pound Sterling (₹)	101.03
Euro (₹)	85.99
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	44,701,881
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	64.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.177
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.679
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	-0.067

* As of 8:30 PM/Thursday

IndiGo launches door-to-door baggage service

IndiGo said it has launched a door-to-door baggage transfer service in Delhi and Hyderabad in which customer luggage gets securely picked and transported from the first to the last destination. The airline said it will later launch the facility called '6EBagport', in partnership with CarterPorter, in Mumbai and Bengaluru. The facility includes a service insurance of Rs 5,000 per baggage item for the contents and container.

Suzuki Motor Gujarat's 3rd plant starts production



Suzuki Motor Gujarat Pvt Ltd (SMG), a 100 per cent subsidiary of Japan's Suzuki Motor Corporation, has commenced production from third unit at its Ahmedabad-based manufacturing facility. SMG has started production from April 2021, Maruti Suzuki India said in a filing. With production starting at the Plant C, which has an annual production ability of 2.5 lakh units, the total ability of SMG will be 7.5 lakh units, it added.

Construction of highways at record 37 km/day

Union minister Nitin Gadkari has said the pace of highways construction has touched a record 37 km per day in 2020-21. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has constructed 13,394 km of highways in 2020-21. Gadkari said these "achievements are unprecedented and have no parallel in any other country in the world". He said over the past seven years, the length of NH has gone up by 50 per cent.

ANG Lifesciences India acquires Mansa Print

ANG Lifesciences India Ltd said it has acquired Mansa Print & Publishers Ltd, which has undergone corporate insolvency resolution plan, as part of its strategic backward integration. Located at Baddi in HP, Mansa is engaged in printing and packaging business covering packaging products like cartons, corrugated boxes and aluminium foil. "The packaging cost in formulation segment is almost 15-20 per cent of the cost," it said.



■ Q4 imports jump 159% to 321 tonne Gold imports hit record in March

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, APRIL 2

Gold imports in March touched a record 160 tonnes, surging 471 per cent compared to the same month last year. Imports in the March quarter were up by 159 per cent, as demand for the metal went up with the correction in prices.

Lower gold prices saw increased stocking up as well as retail buying, leading to imports going up to 160 tonnes last month, a Reuters report said. Value-wise, March imports grew multi-fold to \$8.4 billion from \$1.23 billion a year ago.

Even during pre-pandemic times, usual monthly imports range between 60 and 80 tonnes. According to Soma-sundaram P.R., managing director, World Gold Council India, imports closer to 160 tonnes were recorded in 2016. "These are gross export numbers. We will have to see how much of this goes for export purposes and how



much of it is done," he said.

According to him, price correction from the all-time high levels in August and stability in prices for some time helped gold buying. Gold prices have dropped more than 15 per cent from their highs.

In February, the government had slashed import duty on gold to 10.75 per cent from 12.5 per cent. This also supported gold buying. Gold was trading at a premium in March, indicating higher demand in the market.

However, post Akshaya Tritiya, the demand in the retail market is likely to be lower and this could bring down the imports in April.

Gold imports were 72 per cent higher in volume and 154 per cent in value during January and imports were 124 per cent up in value terms in February as well.

In February, the government was preparing to lift about 10.8 million barrels in May, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

State refiners, which control about 60 per cent of India's 5 million barrels per day (bpd) refining capacity, together import an average 14.7-14.8 million barrels of Saudi oil in a month, the sources said.

India imports more than 80 per cent of its oil needs and relies heavily on the Middle East.

Indian refiners could not cut April oil imports from Saudi Arabia as nominations were placed before the Opec+ decision in early March, the sources said, adding that plans for May were preliminary and final May nominations would be known in early April.

Oil price: Govt escalates stand-off with Saudi

NIDHI VERMA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

Indian state refiners are planning to cut oil imports from Saudi Arabia by about a quarter in May, in an escalating stand-off with Riyadh following Opec's decision to ignore calls from New Delhi to help the global economy with higher supply.

Two sources familiar with the discussions said the move was part of the government's drive to cut dependence on crude from the Middle East.

Indian Oil Corp, Bharat Petroleum Corp, Hindustan Petroleum Corp and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd are preparing to lift about 10.8 million barrels in May, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

State refiners, which control about 60 per cent of India's 5 million barrels per day (bpd) refining capacity, together import an average 14.7-14.8 million barrels of Saudi oil in a month, the sources said.

India imports more than 80 per cent of its oil needs and relies heavily on the Middle East.

Indian refiners could not cut April oil imports from Saudi Arabia as nominations were placed before the Opec+ decision in early March, the sources said, adding that plans for May were preliminary and final May nominations would be known in early April.

—Reuters

MFs turn equity buyers after nine-month gap

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, APRIL 2



After nine months of profit-taking, mutual funds have turned net investors in the equity market in March.

Mutual funds were net buyers of equities by Rs 2,476.45 crore last month, according to data from the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

This trend reversal augurs well for the equity market, now largely supported by foreign portfolio investors and other domestic institutions like insurance, pension funds and banks.

MFs were net sellers by a humble amount of Rs 501.50 crore in equities in June 2020, but as redemptions from equity-oriented funds picked up pace from the second half of the year over the sharp market rally, they began

to offload equity assets worth above Rs 9,000 crore every month from July onwards.

Barring September (-Rs 4,134.37 crore), redemptions began to rise month by month—October (-Rs 14,491 crore), November (-Rs 30,760.07 crore) and December (-Rs 26,427.83 crore)—as market benchmarks Sensex and Nifty-50 began to make new highs almost every day.

But redemptions eased from January onwards to -Rs 13,031.78 crore in January and -Rs 16,306.03

crore in February, as inflows started in select mutual fund schemes.

On the fixed income side May 2020 (Rs 10,693 crore) onwards, mutual funds are investing in debt instruments, as investors, after booking profit in equity mutual funds, seemed to have reinvested the money in safer debt mutual funds.

From June onwards Mutual funds were investing upwards of Rs 20,000 crore in debt instruments—June (Rs 41,364.71 crore), July (Rs 31,897.85 crore), August (Rs 25,780.28 crore), September (Rs 17,004.97 crore), October (Rs 31,975.11 crore), November (Rs 20,349.35 crore), December (Rs 23,368.42 crore).

Debt investments by MFs moderated in January (Rs 11,831.74 crore) and February (Rs 8161.78 crore).

E-way bills touch new high in March

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, APRIL 2

E-way bills had seen their lowest generation in May 2020 at 2.51 lakh. Even in April, only 84.53 lakh bills were issued. However, by June e-way bills had moved up above one crore.

On movement of goods on National Highways, as indicated by the FASTag and E-way bill volumes recovered to pre-pandemic levels in September 2020. Since then, the bills have remained higher than the year-ago months.

In 2020-21, a total of 61.7

crore of bills were generated, which had come closer to 62.9 crore in FY20 despite the pandemic impact. A total of 180.34 crore e-way bills have been generated in the last three years.

E-way bills have to be generated for the movement of goods of value more than Rs 50,000, from one place to another, including multiple states. The E-way bill has helped in reducing the transport time in movement of the goods. It was launched on April 1, 2018.

No plans to exit India biz: Franklin Templeton



New Delhi, April 2: Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund on Friday said its commitment to India remains 'steadfast' and the fund house has no plans to exit its operations in the country.

This comes following media reports suggesting intervention by the fund house's US-headquartered parent seeking the diplomatic route for a 'just and fair' hearing by market regulator Sebi in the investigation pertaining to six wound-up debt schemes.

The reports said Franklin Templeton had threatened to exit India if it was not given a fair hearing.

In a letter to investors, Franklin Templeton Asset Management (India) Pvt Ltd president Sanjay Sapre said, "we have no plans to exit our India business. Any speculation suggesting otherwise, or any rumours around sale of business in India are incorrect and simply that-rumours".

He reiterated that Franklin Templeton's commitment to India remains steadfast.

The fund house had closed six of its debt funds in April 2020, citing redemption pressures and lack of liquidity in the bond markets.

These schemes together had an estimated amount of over Rs 25,000 crore assets under management.

In a statement, the fund house on Friday said its six shut schemes have received Rs 15,776 crore from maturities, pre-payments and coupon payments since closing down in April 2020.

"The six schemes have received total cash flows of Rs 15,776 crore till March 31, 2021 from maturities, coupons and prepayments since winding up," the fund house.

W. Bengal has highest share of small savings schemes



April 29.

Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry will be held in a single phase on April 6.

Opposition leaders have expressed apprehension that the rate cut would be imposed once the assembly elections are over.

Taking a dig at finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman after she announced that the government will withdraw orders to cut interest rate on small savings schemes, the Congress on Thursday said one can imagine the functioning of the economy when such a duly approved order affecting crores of people can be issued by an "oversight".

Senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram said when inflation is at about 6 per cent and expected to rise, the BJP government is offering interest rates below 6 per cent, hitting the savers and the middle class below the belt.

The Trinamool Congress also mocked the Centre. Derek O'Brien and Mahua Moitra called it an April's Fool joke.

ITR Form 4 (Sugam) are simpler forms that cater to a large number of small and medium taxpayers.

Sahaj can be filed by an individual having income up to Rs 50 lakh and who receives income from salary and one house property/other sources (interest, etc.)

Similarly, Sugam can be filed by individuals, Hindu Undivided Families and firms (other than Limited Liability Partnerships) having a total income up to Rs 50 lakh and income between Rs 5 and 7.5 lakh will be taxed at 10 per cent, while those between Rs 7.5 and 10 lakh at 15 per cent.

Under this, annual income up to Rs 2.5 lakh is exempt from tax. Those earning between Rs 2.5 lakh and Rs 5 lakh will pay 5 per cent tax. Income between Rs 5 and 7.5 lakh will be taxed at 10 per cent, while those between Rs 7.5 and 10 lakh at 15 per cent.

Those earning between Rs 10 and 12.5 lakh will pay tax at the rate of 20 per cent, while those between Rs 12.5 and Rs 15 lakh will pay at the rate of 25 per cent. Income above Rs 15 lakh will be taxed at 30 per cent.

Persons other than indi-

ITR forms notified; option to choose new tax regime

New Delhi, April 2: The Income Tax Department has notified forms for filing ITR returns for the 2020-21 fiscal.

"Keeping in view the ongoing crisis due to Covid pandemic and to facilitate the taxpayers, no significant change has been made to the ITR forms in comparison to the last year's ITR forms."

"Only the bare minimum changes necessitated due to amendments in the Income-tax Act, 1961 have been made," the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement on Thursday.

The Income Tax returns (ITR) forms ask taxpayers if they are opting for a new tax regime.

"There is no change in the manner of filing of ITR Forms as compared to last year," the CBDT said.

The ITR-1 Form, however, specifies that it cannot be used by an individual for whom income tax is deferred on ESOPs. Also, taxpayers will now have to mention quarterly dividend income, for the purpose of claiming relief on payment of advance tax.

Individuals and HUFs not having income from business or profession (and not eligible for filing Sahaj) can file ITR-2, while those having income from business or profession can file ITR Form 3.

Persons other than indi-

vidual, HUF and companies i.e. partnerships, LLP etc, can file ITR Form 5.

Companies can file ITR Form 6. Trusts, political parties, charitable institutions etc. claiming exempt income under the Act can file ITR-7.

For the 2020-21 fiscal, the government had given taxpayers the option to choose a new tax regime under section 115BAC of the I-T Act.

The new I-T slabs will be for individuals not availing or foregoing certain specified deductions or exemptions while computing total income for tax purpose.

Sahaj can be filed by an individual having income up to Rs 50 lakh and who receives income from salary and one house property/other sources (interest, etc.)

Similarly, Sugam can be filed by individuals, Hindu Undivided Families and firms (other than Limited Liability Partnerships) having a total income up to Rs 50 lakh and income between Rs 5 and 7.5 lakh will be taxed at 10 per cent.

Under this, annual income up to Rs 2.5 lakh is exempt from tax. Those earning between Rs 2.5 lakh and Rs 5 lakh will pay 5 per cent tax. Income between Rs 5 and 7.5 lakh will be taxed at 10 per cent, while those between Rs 7.5 and 10 lakh at 15 per cent.

Those earning between Rs 10 and 12.5 lakh will pay tax at the rate of 20 per cent, while those between Rs 12.5 and Rs 15 lakh will pay at the rate of 25 per cent. Income above Rs 15 lakh will be taxed at 30 per cent.

Persons other than indi-

vidual, HUF and companies i.e. partnerships, LLP etc, can file ITR Form 5.

Companies can file

SHORT TAKES



G. Sai Karteek Reddy poses with his trophies in Hyderabad on Friday.

Double delight for Karteek

Hyderabad: G. Sai Karteek Reddy made it a grand double by adding the men's singles title to his doubles trophy won on Thursday at the All India National Ranking Tennis tournament held at Lake View Tennis Academy in Hyderabad.

The Telangana player defeated proved too good for Dheeraj Kodancha in the final, defeating his opponent from Tamil Nadu in straight sets at 6-2, 6-2.

Earlier in the semifinals, Karteek hemmed in Hevanth 6-1, 6-3. In the quarterfinals, Karteek got past Sivadeep Kosaraju with a 7-5, 6-4 scoreline.

The Hyderabad player was stretched in the second round though, and had to come back from behind before overcoming Vineet M 6-7, 6-1, 6-0. The first round against Ajinkya Nanasaheb of Maharashtra was relatively easy as the 6-3, 6-2 suggests.



Manogyna and Pranav champs

Hyderabad: T. Sri Pranav and M. Manogyna emerged boys and girls winners respectively at the AITA Championship Series Under 16 tournament at Sania Mirza Tennis Academy in Murtuzaguda, Hyderabad, on Friday.

In the boys final, Pranav prevailed over Chris Hamilton Ross 6-4, 2-6, 6-1 while Manogyna defeated Rithika Kakarlamudi 7-6(7-4), 6-2 in the girls title round.



Nikhil Saridena (left) receives the World Autism Awareness Tennis Tournament winner's trophy from chief guest G. V. Krishna as Sports Village CEO Mohammad Shamsuddin (right) looks on at Noor Tennis Academy in Hyderabad. Nikhil beat Bhavani Kedia 6-4, 7-6 (10-8) in the final.

Rahul, Aditya in joint lead

Hyderabad: Rahul Srivathsav and Aditya Varun Gampa are in joint lead with five points each after the fifth round of the Telangana State Senior Fide Rated Chess Championship being organised by Telangana State Chess Association at Lal Bahadur Stadium here.

Following them are Shaati Majumder, Shanmukha Pulli, Rajashekhar B, Sushanth Kamabathula, Khire Ishan, Krishna Karthik N, Kheerthi Ganta and Raghav Srivathsav with 4.5 points each.

Fifth round (selected results): Aravind PVS (4) lost to Rahul Srivathsav (5), Aditya Varun Gampa (5) bt Sarath Chandra (4), Khire Ishan (4.5) drew with Shanmukha Pulli (4.5). Shaati Majumder (4.5) drew with Rajashekhar B (4.5), Dhruba Thota (3.5) lost to Raghav Srivathsav (4.5), Teerthal Abhinav (3.5) lost to Keerthi Ganta (4.5).

Live on TV

FOOTBALL
English Premier League: Chelsea vs West Brom from 5 pm; Leicester City vs Manchester City from 10 pm; Arsenal vs Liverpool from 12.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1, Star Sports Select 1

Italian League: Torino vs Juventus from 9.30 pm on Sony Ten 2

KNIGHTS GEAR UP

KKR desperate to turn fortunes post tough transition

Kolkata, April 2: Two-time IPL champions Kolkata Knight Riders will be striving for consistency in their bid to recreate old magic which has been lost during a difficult phase of rebuilding after Gautam Gambhir's departure.

Be it the opening combination, middle-order or finding a finisher, KKR struggled for stability in the last edition in the UAE, while a change of captaincy at the halfway stage did not help them either.

Here's a SWOT analysis of the side that will take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in their season-opener in Chennai on April 11.

STRENGTHS

In Eoin Morgan, his first stint as full-time KKR captain, the Purple Brigade have got one of the most astute brains of the white-ball format.

The English World Cup-winning skipper was one of the brightspots for the team in 2020.

KKR have made some smart additions to their squad in the mini-auction, apart from retaining their core of the side — 17 players — despite a disappointing season.

By bringing back Shakib-Al-Hasan and Ben Cutting, they have got the much-needed back-ups for the Windies duo of Narine and Russell, who failed to fire last season.

KKR will also be buoyed by the smash-hit international debut of Prasidh Krishna, who took 4/54 in the first ODI against England in the recently-concluded series. This would also mean KKR would have a settled pace attack spearheaded by Pat Cummins with Lockie Ferguson as back-up.

WEAKNESSES

Once their strength, KKR of late has struggled in the spin department. Kuldeep Yadav is a shadow of his past and returned with just one wicket in



Dinesh Karthik of Kolkata Knight Riders plays a shot during a net practice session on Thursday ahead of the upcoming edition of Indian Premier League. — Twitter

five matches, of which he was not given the ball in one. One of the architects of their twin triumphs in 2012 and 2014 under Gambhir, Sunil Narine is also floundering. It was another mystery spinner, Varun Chakravarthy, a Tamil Nadu architect-turned-cricketer who took up the responsibility in Narine's absence but his fitness has come under the scanner time and again as it remains to be seen how he shapes up for the IPL.

OPPORTUNITIES

Having decided to step away from being captain to "focus on his batting", Dinesh Karthik too will look to make amends in 2021. Then there are the seasoned duo of Shakib-Al-Hasan and Harbhajan Singh who too will look to make most of the limited opportunities that come their way on slow tracks on offer in Delhi and

Chennai. KKR have two interesting uncapped new signings in Venkatesh Iyer and Vaibhav Arora, who too will look to grab opportunities.

THREATS

KKR would need good start from opener Shubman Gill to give better starts this year in the Powerplay overs. Gill consumed a lot of deliveries upfront in most games which did create pressure on middle-order. — PTI

SHREYAS TO BE OPERATED ON THURSDAY

Mumbai, April 2: Former India captain and batting icon Sachin Tendulkar has been hospitalised as a precautionary measure, six days after he tested positive for Covid-19.

The 47-year-old took to Twitter to announce the development on Friday.

"Thank you for your wishes and prayers. As a matter of abundant precaution under medical advice, I have been hospitalised. I hope to be back home in a few days. Take care and stay safe everyone,"

Tendulkar had tested positive for the dreaded infection on March 27 and was in home isolation ever since.

"He is doing fine and has been admitted for normal (course of) treatment," a source close to Tendulkar

said. The batting great, who was part of India's historic World Cup win in 2011, also wished his teammates on the 10th anniversary of the victory.

"Wishing all Indians & my teammates on the 10th anniversary of our World Cup win," he tweeted.

Besides Tendulkar, former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan, his elder

brother Yusuf and S Badrinath — all of whom had recently participated at the Road Safety World Series Challenge — have so far announced that they have tested positive for Covid-19.

Tendulkar had led the Indian team to victory in the veteran's tournament in Raipur where crowds were allowed inside the stadiums. — PTI

Turning the tide



State Sports Minister V. Srinivas Goud (centre) and Sports Authority of Telangana State chairman Allipuram Venkateshwar Reddy (left) congratulate swimmer Goli Shyamala, the first Telugu woman to swim the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka.

Babar belts ton as Pakistan win

Centurion (South Africa), April 2: A century by Babar Azam set up a three-wicket, last-ball win for Pakistan in the first One-Day International against South Africa at SuperSport Park in Centurion on Friday.

The Pakistan captain hit a stroke-filled 103 off 104 balls but his dismissal started a collapse in which fast bowler Anrich Nortje took four wickets in four overs.

Rassie van der Dussen hit 123 not out, his maiden international century. But South Africa's total of 273 for 6 did not seem enough as Babar and Imam-ul-Haq (70) put on 177 for Pakistan's second wicket, taking them to within 88 runs of victory with 18.2 overs left before Babar was caught behind off Nortje. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES

South Africa 273 for 6 in 50 overs (Rassie van der Dussen 123 not out, D. Miller 50) lost to Pakistan 274 for 7 in 50 overs (Babar Azam 103, Imam-ul-Haq 70, Mohammad Rizwan 40, Anrich Nortje 4/51).

INDIAN PLAYERS WANT TO PLAY OTHER LEAGUES, SAYS MORGAN

Kolkata, April 2: England's white ball captain Eoin Morgan, who also leads Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL, claims that a lot of Indian players are interested in being a part of his country's ambitious 'The Hundred' league as well as other franchise events across the globe.

Morgan also urged the game's administrators to have a roadmap for the next 10 years to ensure that top players are not forced to choose a lucrative private league career over international cricket.

"Just having conversations out here about 'The Hundred', I know that there are Indian cricketers out here who would love to play in The Hundred and other competitions around the world," Morgan told Sky Sports during an interaction but did not take any names.

"They love travelling and experiencing new conditions and cultures, and they would add huge value to a tournament like that," he added.

The Hundred is a franchise-based 100-ball cricket that was supposed to start last year in England. However, the Covid-19 pandemic led to its postponement to this year.

Morgan said the ICC is not doing enough to accommodate the countries which are losing players to private leagues.

"My biggest worry is that the game isn't changing and accommodating the pace at which it is growing. It is definitely an area of concern and one that needs improvement going forward because you play against countries and some aren't able to play their best XIs because they are competing against the big leagues around the world," Morgan told former England skipper Nasser Hussain during the chat.

For the second time in four years Kraigg Brathwaite missed out on

Barty on a roll, in Miami final

Miami, April 2: World No.1 Ashleigh Barty bucked the upset trend at the Miami Open on Thursday, rolling into the women's final as men's second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas was toppled by Hurkacz.

Australia's Barty fired 27 winners in a 6-3, 6-3 victory over fifth-seeded Ukrainian Elina Svitolina to return to the title match of a tournament she won when it was last held in 2019.

Barty will face Canada's Bianca Andreescu, who reached her first final since winning the 2019 US Open title by beating Greece's Maria Sakkari in three sets, 7-6 (9/7), 3-6, 7-6 (7/4).

Barty has gone from strength to strength since saving a match point in her opening victory over Slovakian qualifier Kristina Kučová.

"Every single match I feel like I've done something a little bit better, and that's all you can ask," said Barty.

But Greece's Tsitsipas was then quickly broken by Hurkacz at the start of the second on the way to a 2-0 lead. But just when it appeared the match was heading for a brisk conclusion, Hurkacz finally found his range. — AFP

latest in a string of upsets that saw men's top seed Daniil Medvedev and No. 3 Alexander Zverev bow out along with women's No. 2 Naomi Osaka.

Tsitsipas admitted it was a crushing outcome in a tournament where the absences of superstars Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer and his own recent solid form seemed to offer him a chance to shine.

Tsitsipas exited the tournament after a tense encounter that saw the 22-year-old Greek given a time violation after the second set for taking too long to change his shirt and headband.

The World No.5 was also reportedly involved in a tense exchange with officials before the match after refusing to share a golf cart with Hurkacz used to ferry players to the court.

There was no sign that incident had unsettled Tsitsipas early on, however, as he dominated a one-sided first set to win 6-2.

Tsitsipas then quickly broke Hurkacz at the start of the second on the way to a 2-0 lead. But just when it appeared the match was heading for a brisk conclusion, Hurkacz finally found his range. — AFP

Windies set 377 for SL on Day 5

North Sound (Antigua and Barbuda), April 2: In an almost exact reversal of roles from the first Test, Sri Lanka will go into the final day of the second and final Test having been set a challenging target of 377 after the West Indies declared their second innings at 280 for four on the fourth day on Thursday.

A week earlier the Caribbean side batted through the last day at the same venue to ensure a draw after being set 375 to win. Now it will be the visitors heading to the final morning at 29 without loss after the opening pair of Lahiru Thirimanne and captain Dimuth Karunaratne navigated nine overs to the close.

Having occupied the crease for eight-and-a-half hours Brathwaite was more energetic second time around with his team looking to set a declaration.

Nevertheless his five hours at the crease in which he faced 196 balls and struck only four boundaries was again typical of his phlegmatic manner. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES
Day 4, stumps: West Indies 354 & 280/4 dec in 72.4 overs (K. Brathwaite 85, J. Holder 71 not out, S. Akmal 2/62) vs Sri Lanka 258 in 107 overs (P. Nissanka 51, K. Roach 3/58).

100 CRORE WORTH GIFT VOUCHERS*

VA (Value Addition) STARTING FROM 3% ONWARDS

UPTO 50% OFF* ON VA (VALUE ADDITION FOR GOLD JEWELLERY)

UPTO 25% OFF* ON DIAMOND JEWELLERY

UPTO 20% OFF* ON UNCUT & PRECIOUS JEWELLERY

Unconditional gift vouchers totaling ₹100 cr INR will be issued against customer purchases at all our showrooms in India from April 1st to May 30th.

Buy Online @ www.candera.com | WARANGAL - New Bus Stand Road, Hanmakonda. Ph: 0870-2574333 | WWW.KALYANJEWELLERS.NET | FOLLOW US ON @KJEWELLERS