# DECCAN nicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA VIJAYAWADA | FRIDAY | 2 APRIL 2021



Forecast: Clear.

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Phalguna Bahula Panchami till 8.17 am; Phalguna Bahula

Durmuhurtam: 8.40 am to 9.28 am; 12.44 pm to 1.33 pm Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

Asar: 5.15 pm Maghrib: 6.25 pm

**SUNSET TODAY 6.20 PM** MOONRISE TODAY 23.15 PM **MOONSET** TOMORROW 10.40 PM



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

### **Centre withdraws**

interest rate order New Delhi: Old small savings

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on Thursday withdrew its decision to cut interest rates saying that the "orders were issued by oversight and shall be withdrawn".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

#### **Pak gets cold feet**

over India trade

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

sugar from India, Geo TV

reported, citing sources.

#### WEATHER



Max/Min temp. 42/24 ºC

Shasti till 5.58 am (Saturday) Star: Jyeshtha till 3.44 am (Saturday) Varjyam: 10.32 am to 12.02 pm

**HIJRI CALENDAR Sha'ban** 19,1442 AH

**PRAYERS Fajar:** 5.50 am **Zohar:** 1.30 pm

**Isha:** 8.15 pm **SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.00 AM** 

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

last year but the then Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar post-poned elections citing the spread of Coronavirus. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy severely objected to the decision of indefinite

## WORLD 6

**Court lets Rana** file reply



**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC** 

ing fighting from another

constituency.
"Didi, is there any truth in the rumour that you are

going to file nomination

from another constituen-

cy? First, you went there

(Nandigram), and the people gave you an answer. If you go somewhere else, the

people of Bengal are ready," PM Modi said

while addressing a rally in

Uluberia, which will vote in the third phase on

Reacting to his potshots, the TMC tweeted, "Didi is

winning Nandigram. The

question of her fighting from another seat doesn't

arise. @narendramodiJi,

retract from your efforts to

mislead people before they

see your lies with the end

of nomination in WB. Look for a safer seat in 2024, as

you will be challenged in

Referring to the ongoing

polls in the state, Mr Modi

April 6.

Varanasi.'

SPORTS 8

**Macedonia stun** Germany

#### **TABLOID**

**Flamboyant** stars



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### TD likely to skip BJP will win 200+ in WB: PM local elections

DC CORRESPONDENT /IJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

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

It has been alleging YSRC illegalities in the u n a n i m o u s MPTC/ZPTC verdicts and demanding fresh notification for the election

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

April 10.
The elections were first scheduled in March

### **AP TO CONDUCT MPTC/ZPTC POLLS ON APRIL 8**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

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

> Page 2: Model code comes into force

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

Page 2: SEC to meet

claimed the huge turnout of voters would help the BJP surpass its surpass target of 200 seats out of 294 to come to power for the first time in the seats Even as polling was under-

way in Nandigram on Thursday, the BJP's star campaigner, Prime Min-ister Narendra Modi, on Addressing a BJP rally at Thursday said at a poll rally in West Bengal that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had made a "big mistake" by contesting Joynagar in South 24 Parganas, Mr Modi attacked Ms Banerjee's latest Bengali poll slogan: "Thanda thanda, Cool cool, from Nandigram and asked Ebar Trinamul". whether she is contemplat-

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

Bloodbath will not happen



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee arrives at a polling station during the second phase of West Bengal Assembly Polls, at Boyal in Nandigram on Thursday. -P7

### Nandigram turns violent

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC with agency inputs KOLKATA, APRIL 1

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

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

in West Bengal Assembly elections where Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is taking on her pro-tege-turned-adversary Suvendu Adhikari — reeled under violence on Thursday, leaving Ms Banerjee stranded at a polling booth for over two

Banerjee had to be res-

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

> Page 2: Mamata dials Governor for rescue

### CM Jagan, wife take Covid jabs

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

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

Bharatpeta in Gunturm, initiating the vaccination process. The CM urged all the

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

be conducted with vilvolunteers and Asha workers ensuring that every eligible person got the jabs done. Volunteers would be collecting the details, enrolling people, and giving them the



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

vaccination date.

As a precautionary measure, an ambulance will be made available along with the health staff at the secretariat. After the vaccination. the CM was under med-

ical observation for a while. Ministers Alla Nani, Mekathoti Sucharita. Sucharita, Sriranganatha Raju, MLAs Ambati Rambabu, Kilari Rosaiah, Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, and others were present.

### **EXPLOSIVES KEPT KILL DOG, BOAR**

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

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

### **NEAR SV VARSITY** DC CORRESPONDENT

TIRUPATI, APRIL 1

Explosives placed near a hostel on Sri Venkateswara University campus when the animals chewed on them. The explosion took place around midnight near SVU Hostel-I block, police said.

has been registered. In the meanwhile, the



#### Award for superstar on his favourite day THURSDAY | SENTIMENT

## Rajini wins Dadasaheb Phalke

SUBRAMANIAN | DC with agency inputs CHENNAI, APRIL 1

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

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



screenwriter has been icon-

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

Presented annually at the National Film Award cere-

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

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

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

Rajinikant dedicated the award to those who made him what he is now: "I dedicate this award to my friend and bus driver Raj Bahadur, who discovered my acting talent and he can win over fa encouraged me, my elder appearing on screen.'

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

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

Rajinikanth said he thanked the government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for conferring him the "Indian cinema's highest honour.' His long-time co-actor and

friend Kamal Haasan said on Twitter: "...The award is 100 per cent appropriate for Rajini, who has proven that he can win over fans by



IN BRIEF

#### **30 contestants in** fray for bypoll

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

#### **LOKESH DEMANDS CM MOUNT** PRESSURE FOR SCS

**DC CORRESPONDENT** VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

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

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

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

#### **MODEL CODE COMES INTO FORCE DURING POLLS**

From page 1

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

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

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

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

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

on March 18. New SEC, Nilam Sawhney, after assuming charge on Thursday for a period of five met Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan and briefed him about the preparations for conduct of polls to the MPTCs/ZPTCs. She held a meeting with chief secretary Aditya Nath Das and senior officials and took stock of the situation.

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

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

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

## **Opposition applies strategies** to outwit YSRC in byelection

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

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC

TD leaders have been toiling away to beat the ruling party in the prestigious by-election to the Tirupati Lok Sabha seat on April 7. As part of the election strategy, the TD has divided every constituency into clusters consisting of 20,000 to 25,000 voters each. An incharge and four observers apart from a senior leader to oversee the election campaign have been posted for every 25 polling stations.

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

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

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

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

is known for a strong cadre base at the grassroots level, he expressed surprise over lack of serious efforts from the leadership to save the rocking boat. The most common com-

plaint from the loyalists is that most of the leaders have been confined to social media and have neglected the sentiments and needs of the cadres. Stressing that TD nomi-

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT

While appealing to the

electorate to vote for their

nominee K. Ratna Prabha

for the Tirupati LS

seat, former BJP state

president Kanna Laksh-

minarayana hinted that

she is likely to become Union minister if elected.

Addressing the media at the BJP office in

Nellore on Thursday, he

said that Ratna Prabha

has rich experience in public service being an

NELLORE, APRIL 1



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

K. Narayana Swamy

Minister had been paying

special attention to devel-

op every constituency as

brought about innovation

in the education system

through unique reforms.

Speaking on the occasion, TTD Chairman Y.V.

Subba Reddy said the

Chief Minister had been

through welfare programmes irrespective of

Development is being seen

in all the sector and Jagan

Mohan Reddy is being considered a successful

While lauding the CM

for nominating a "com-moner" like Dr Guru-murthy, Sarvepalli legisla-tor Kakani Govardhan

Reddy reminded that ot-

her parties fielded well-

known persons. He also said the YSRC govern-ment had developed the Sarvepalli constituency

with ₹320 crore for roads

and drains within 18 mo-

nths of coming to power.

He appealed to the voters

to rally behind the YSRC

nominee and ensure an

unprecedented majority.

He also asked the party

cadre to work hard for the

success of the LS nomi-

Dr Gurumurthy said the Chief Minister had been

striving hard in the state

to benefit all sections of

the people. Develop-ment

is the only agenda of the

CM while expressing his gratitude for selecting

him as a candidate for the

development of Tirupati

He claimed credit for the Centre for setting up IIT in Tirupati, SEZs in Menakauru and Sri City

apart from Obulapuram

Krishnapatnam rail-

BJP district unit presi-

dent Gundlapalli Bharat

Kumar, state vice-presi-

dents K. Vijayalakshmi

and P. Surendra Reddy

and Mukku Radhakri-

shna were present, among

Station and

Railway

wav line.

Chief Minister, he said.

and

benefits

religion.

out

majority.

his own Assembly seg-ment. He said CM had

said that the Chief

### Ministers ask voters to support Murthy

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, APRIL 1

Ministers and senior leaders of the YSRC called upon the electorate to back party nominee Dr M. Gurumurthy in the Tirupati Lok Sabha seat by-election to endorse their confidence once again in Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. Addressing a large gath

ering during the launch of the election campaign, after worshipping at the Sri Bhagawan Venkaiah Swamy temple at Golgadmudi in Sarepalli Assembly constituency, Deputy Chief Minister K. Narayana Swamy said that the Chief Minister had been paying special attention to develop every constituency as his own Assembly segment. He said Jagan Mohan Reddy had brought about innovation in the education systhrough unique reforms.

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

In his address, panchayat raj minister P. Ramachandra Reddy claimed that the YSRC had fulfilled 90 per cent of its poll promises within 18 months.

He said the focus of the country would be on the Tirupati by-election if the voters give Dr Gurumurthy a five lakh vote

Prabha will become Union

minister if elected: Kanna

IAS officer while express-

ing confidence in her vic-

He alleged that both the

ruling party and the main Opposition do politics

only during elections and

switch over to business

He demanded to know the contribution of TD

and YSRC for Tirupati

while pointing to Central

government sanctions

pertaining to six-lane

highway between Naid-upeta and Tirupati, fly-

over in Tirupati, and

thereafter.

# A FREE AND

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, APRIL 1

BJP Rajya Sabha member of India (ECI).

Narasimha Rao, who

Tirupati LS seat.
The BJP leader also alleged that the ruling elections", he noted.

Veerraju sought the RO and SO to deploy central paramilitary forces in Tirupati LS constituency and recruit polling officials from neighbouring states to deploy them in all polling stations. He asked the election officials to keep away volunteers from visiting any households in this segment till the conclusion of polling on April 17..

### **BJP DEMANDS FAIR ELECTION**

G.V.L. Narasimha Rao on behalf of AP party chief Somu Veerraju submitted a memorandum to Ret-urning Officer K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu and Special Observer Dinesh Patel for the Tirupati parliamentary by-election to take the alleged chaotic situation prevailing in this LS segment to the notice of Election Commission

met the RO and SO along with BJP functionary Bhanuprakash requested the election officials to ensure a free and fair election by preventing the alleged mis-use of state government machinery, police department and volunteers' system for the political benefit of the YSRC Congress candidate.

In the memorandum submitted to the RO and SO at their respective office in Nellore on Thursday, the state BJP chief alleged that the YS-RC leaders have misused the state government maconcluded local body elections for illegitimate political gains. He expressed serious apprehensions that the ruling party is resorting to similar practices in the by-election to

party has been misusing the village/ward volunteers appointed by the government. "The ruling party has appointed their party cadre and sympathisers as volunteers for every 50 households and they are putting pressures on voters to cast their vote only for the rul-ing party. The government machinery including police, revenue and other departments are functioning as YSRC workers and supported them in the distribution of money, liquor and freebies for gathering support to the ruling party in the recently concluded local

### **TELUGU DESAM LAUNCHES 'SAVE** TIRUPATI' WEBSITE

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, APRIL 1

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

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

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

TD state general-secretary Chintakayala Vijay said, "In an unprecedented way of conducting gov-ernmental affairs, voices that raise concerns, and issues that deserve debates, silenced by the high-handed rule of the YSRC leaders. In this political crisis, it became a moral imperative for the TD to continue its fight to voice the sufferings of affected people". "More than 40 false cases

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

#### **508 AGED PEOPLE,** 234 DISABLED APPLY FOR POSTAL BALLOT

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, APRIL 1

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

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

delivered at the doorstep of the voters and they will be collected by the offi-cials after issuing a receipt to the voter.

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

## SEC to meet parties today

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

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

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

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

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

### **SCRAP NEW PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION SYSTEM, SAYS APUCF**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

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

Babu Rao said that those who pay property tax before April 30 would get a 5 per cent discount. He said that the amendments to the law and the GO 198 issued by the government to calculate the tax component based on property value should be cancelled. He stated that furthermore GOs 196 and 197 pertaining to increase water and drainage charges every year are unchanged. He expressed fear that with no action taken on the GOs they can be brought to force any

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

### Mamata dials Guv for rescue

From page 1

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

pen at any moment. There is total breakdown of law and order," wheelchair-bound Banerjee said, adding that she feared for her life. She was escorted out by the security forces, who managed to bring the situa-tion under control after long-drawn negotiations with the villagers. Soon after, the Governor

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

Despite this Nandigram recorded voter turnout of over 81 per cent till 5 pm. Though sporadic incidents of violence and allegations of vote fraud marked the second phase of West Bengal Assembly polls, a large voter turnout of more than 80 per cent was recorded. Bankura recorded the highest turnout at 82.92 per cent, followed by Purba Medinipur at 81.23, South 24 Parganas at 79:65 per cent, Paschim Medinipur at 78 per cent.

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

the high-profile constituency as the polling gent to the spot.

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

got underway in the

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

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

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

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

### SAFETY | FIRST | CM asks newly-elected civic chiefs to work with transparency in urban areas

## Sanitation, water, housing a priority, says Jagan

**DC CORRESPONDENT** VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has told the newly elected civic chiefs to work with transparency and said the positioning has increased their responsibility as they are

now civil servants. Addressing an orientation-programme for the newly elected mayors, deputy mayors, chairpersons, and vice-chairpersons here on Thursday, the chief minister advised

cipalities and corpora-While congratulating the

newly elected civic chiefs, he advised them to avoid discrimination and corruption, reminding that are representatives for 30 per cent of the population. "Like never before in the country, the state govern-ment has ensured social justice by giving 67 civic posts to SC, ST, BC and minorities and appointing women as mayors,

sons and vice-chairpersons, he said.

The CM said providing sanitation, drinking water and housing for the people in urban areas is the top priority of the government and stressed that safe drinking water has to be made available to every household. Works related to the water distribution network are in progress in 53 municipalities.

He urged the newly elected personnel to pay special attention to keeping the

maintaining sanitation in urban areas. The Chief Minister said

a special sanitation drive will be rolled out in July, wherein the government has procured 8,000 automatic trucks, allocating two trucks for each ward for door-to-door garbage collection. He emphasized on providing housing for the middle class at affordable pricing alongside the housing scheme for the

He said the government

them to focus on develop- deputy mayors, chairper- state clean and ensure shall acquire 100 to 150 ing their respective muni- sons and vice-chairper- maintaining sanitation in acres of land to provide class at affordable prices with clean titles on a nonprofit basis. Also, all the layouts should have CC roads, footpaths, underground drainage, parks, open-air gym, walking tracks, electricity lines, greenery, smart bus stops,

as in Jagananna layouts. The CM said focusing on development of these colonies will put the state in the forefront. Ignoring these would turn

them into the large slums. also advised Jagan the elected representatives to give their valuable suggestions in improvising the village and ward secretariat system in order to help people more efficiently. "The government had spent one lakh crore rupees towards welfare schemes in a span of 22-months with zero corruption and zero discrimination. All the government schools and being hospitals

with

better

revamped

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

Deputy chief minister Dharmana Krishnadas,

infrastructure

ministers Satyanarayana, Venkatramaiah (Nani) Velampally Srinivas, higher officials of the municipal administration department, local leaders, mayors, deputy mayors, chairpersons of civic bodies were present.

SHORT

#### **GOV. TELLS PEOPLE TO FOLLOW RULES ON GOOD FRIDAY**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

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

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

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

#### STATE RECORDS 1,271 NEW COVID **CASES, 3 DEATHS**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

Andhra Pradesh continues to witness a surge of fresh cases of Covid-19 as 1,271 cases have been reported with three deaths in the last 24 hours

The state health authorities reported here on Thursday that out of 31,809 samples tested, 1,271 persons were infected with the Covid-19. Out of a total number of 1,51,14,98 samples tested so far in the state. 9.03.260 persons were infected with the virus and of them, 8,87,898 were recovered and discharged from the hospitals while 8,142 are still active with the virus.

Among the daily Covid-19 cases, Chittoor found to be the worst hit with 285 followed by 279 in Guntur, 189 in Visakhapatnam, 161 in Krishna, 63 each in Kadapa and Prakasam, 61 in Anantapur, 52 in Kurnool, 43 in Nellore, 27 in East Godavari, 21 in Srikakulam, 15 in Vizianagaram and 12 in

West Godavari.
Chittoor district again took
the lead in registering the highest number of cumulative active cases at 1,537.



#### NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER (through https://ireps.gov.in)

Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer Construction, Traction Distribution South Central Railway, Secunderabac invites e-tender on behalf of the President of India for the followin works:

S.No. 01 NIT No.: E.29/C/TRD/SC/18/ 2020-21 dt.31.03.2021 Name of the work: Tender No.E.29/C/TRD/SC supply, erection, testing and commissioning of 25 kV, 50Hz single phase a.c. traction overhead equipment with 65 sq.mm catenary and 107 sq.m HDG copper contact wire, LT supply transformer stations including modifications to the existing OHE in view of New Line between **New** Piduguralla (incl.) and Savalyapuran (incl.) section (RKM:45 TKM:60) with associated vards on Nadikude Srikalahasti section of SC Rly. Estimate Cost (₹): 14,64,65,731 EMD (₹): NIL. Bid Security decaration in lieu of Bid Security / Earnest Mone Deposit, has to be submitted by the tenderer. Document Cost: Online ender document can be downloaded free of cost. Completion period: 18 Months Date of closing: 27.04.2021 at 15.00 hrs.

1) For bid document and other details please login to website http://ireps.gov.in

2) Tenderer can submit their offers online during tender submission period which is fifteen days period to closing of tender.

3) Tenderer should watch for any Corrigenda (issued online only) upto the date of commencement of the Tender submission period

Dv.Chief Electrical Engineer

Const.,TRD,Secunderabad

On behalf of the President of India, the Dy.Chief Mechanical Engineer/RYPS South Central Railway, Wagon Workshop, Guntupalli - 521 241 invite

RYPS/2021, Dated.01.04.2021

e-tender for the work up to 15.00 hrs on 06.05.2021. S.No. 01 Tender No.: GR/M/163/ BOXN-RH/2021 Name of the work: "Complete renewal of end wall, side wall

and flooring of BOXN wagons-600 Nos." Quantity (Nos.): 600 Period of completion: 24 Months Tender Value (₹): 38,17,09,942/- EMD (₹): NIL (In eu of EMD, the bidders are mandatorily submit the Bid security declaration along with their offer.) Cost of Tende Document (₹): NIL

Last Date for Submission of e tender: Up to 15.00 Hrs. Date 06.05.2021

Date and time of opening of e tender: 15.15 Hrs. Date.06.05.2021

Dy.Chief Mechanical Engineer WWS.Guntupalli A0322

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at https://www.ireps.gov.in or

#### **RINL MAKES RECORD TURNOVER OF** ₹18,000 **CRORE**

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **WOMAN, 75, GETS FRESH LEASE OF LIFE**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

was given a fresh lease of life and discharged three days after undergoing a rare surgerv.

Eminent cardiac surgeon Dr. Gunturu Varun performed mitral valve replacement surgery on Lakshmi Devi, who underwent balloon mitral valve surgery 20 years ago and was suffering from heart problems.

She went to various hospitals but doctors, given the age-factor, did not dare to perform heart surgery. After knowing about the keyhole surgery, she with her husband Seshadri Rao consulted Dr. Varun who successfully performed mitral valve replacement through

keyhole surgery. Dr Varun said they had successfully performed the rarest 'mitral valve replacement surgery' on

Lakshmi Devi. He said that the woman was advised to undergo mitral valve replacement surgery.

Dr. Varun said that however, due to her age, the case turned high-

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC

Kurnool has become a

transit point for gold and

silver smugglers, as seen

from a series of seizure of

contraband in the recent

Gold traders in Adoni,

Rayalaseema districts are

using couriers to trans-

port gold from South

African countries and

The state is losing rev-

enue as zero business is

also one of the reasons

the

KURNOOL, APRIL 1

Nandyal and

Dubai to dealers.



A medical staff administers Covid vaccine to an old woman in an autorickshaw who was unable to move out, at a PHC centre at Chinna Waltair Junction in Visakhapatnam on Thursday.

## **Left condemns NIA** raids, arrests

#### Govt trying to weaken VSP stir: Leaders

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

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

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

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

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

Strongly condemning

Mahila Chetana conven-The state joint secretary of CPI J.V. Satyanarayana Murthy demanded immediate

release of activists and lawyers and stated that NIA raids were terrorising the people and civil rights activists in the two states only to prevent them from taking part in the steel plant agitation.

CPM, Lokanadham said the government was trying to weaken the agitation against the steel plant privatisation by resorting to the arrests of mass leaders.

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

Stree Shakti convener Lalita said the government has imposed undeclared curfew in both the states. She said the main mission of the government was to scuttle the steel plant stir. M. Lakshmi of POW, er K. Padma, advocate K. Padma and IFTU leader Y. Kondaiah were present in the meeting. In Kadapa, CPI district

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

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

He said it was time for tuals to speak out against such heinous

### **SEB launches Operation** Savera to curb drug menace

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 1

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

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

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

nelising gold through

illicit means, said a

Kurnool police seized

14.8 kg worth ₹6.86 crore

on National Highway 44,

near Panchalingala che-

ckpost on the Telangana

state-Andhra Pradesh bo-

rder under the jurisdic-

tion of the Kurnool talu-

ka police station last

A couple of days back,

the Kurnool Special Enf-

orcement Bureau (SEB)

seized 32.3 kg of silver

articles and arrested four

police official.

#### 4.2 KG GANJA SEIZED, THREE **WOMEN AMONG THE 5 ARRESTED** Ravikumar

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, APRIL 1

Police arrested five people, including three women, for smuggling ganja at Dorala Gorilu area under Kadapa Two Town police station. Kadapa in-charge DSP

to discuss the measures initiated to curb the drug menace.

He said that intensive checks were conducted mine in Ibrahimpatnam, Gannavaram. Krishnalanka. Satayanarayanapuram and Patamata in Krishna district and Guntur, Sattenapalli, Piduguralla, Vinukonda, Narasaraopeta. Repalle and Tenali of Guntur dis-

Brijlal said that 44 persons were arrested in 22 cases and 59.70 kg ganja was seized in Guntur district. In Krishna district, 12 persons were arrested in 10 cases and room and a meeting was held 19 kgs of ganja were

gling it a Telanagana

state RTC bus and a pri-

vehicle

Panchalingala checkpost

The accused were iden-

tified as Kurnool resi-

dents Mahipal Singh,

Panchota in Rajasthan.

Singh,

Singh

SEB circle inspector N.

Lakshmi Durgaiah said

that the accused were to

deboard the TSRTC bus

near Alampur crossroad

in Gadwal district and

early on Wednesday.

near

and

from

Singh and

vate

Kuldeep

Shyam

Govind

them. seized from them. He stated that besides this. four grams of methylenedioxy methampheta-(MDMA) were seized from four persons.

reporters that Kadapa

urban police inspector

Mohmmed Ali and SI

Jeevan Reddy had led

the operation. They recovered 4.2 kg of ganja

from them. A case has

been filed against all of

He warned drug peddlers of stern action and appealed to the people to give information about drugs at the following numbers: SEB state control room 9491030853 and 0866-2843131; Tollfree 18004254868; number Guntur district control room 9490619395 Vijayawada city control room 8332900100 and Machilipatnam control

in the vicinity of

Panchalingala checkpost

from where they were

travelling by a car to go to

gold trader, said there is

heavy competition in the

unscrupulous traders are

resorting to selling gold

and silver jewellery with-

out issuing sales invoices

and bills and evade GST.

It is a revenue loss to the

government but cus-

tomers are not on insist-

ing bills, giving a fillip to

and some

Nichenametla Gopal, a

Kurnool.

business

#### ables from the victims. They were culprits identified as M. were Venkanna (33) from Vijayawada, M. Murali

The culprits also portrayed themselves as spe-

cial party police from the vigilance department, conducting checks and

seized money and valu-

SIX ARRESTED, GANJA RECOVERED

The police team arrested the habitual offenders Krishna (38) Ranga Reddy district (TS), M. Kasi near the old Kozylon factorv under Gudivada Vishwanath (40) Guntur, rural limits, following a tip-off. The police said Naresh (30) and K. that SP Ravindranath Venkata Durga Babu had issued instruc-Ganesh Kumar (41) both tions that no one involved from Vijayawada, and D. Krishna in such nefarious activi-Rama Visakhapatnam Rural.

### **HEATWAVE CONTINUES TO SWEEP COAST**

ties would be spared.

DC CORRESPONDENT

Gudivada police on Thursday nabbed six per-

sons involved in ganja

peddling and recovered

six kgs of the banned sub-

stance worth Rs. 17 lakh.

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STATE DISASTER Relief Fund commission-

#### er K. Kannababu alerted district administrations to prepare relief meas-

Adoni is a hub of gold

business as it is connect-

ed on the Chennai-

Mumbai

the

Karnataka

Telangana states.

from Chennai.

Mumbai rail line. Contraband coming from

Sri Lanka is also suspect-

ed to be reaching Adoni

A few Mumbai traders

allegedly deal with the

Adoni bullion market,

said a person in the know

The district police find

with

it challenging to guard

borders

of their operations.

**ILLEGAL | BIZ** | **Traders in AP, TS using couriers to transport gold from Africa, Dubai** Kurnool a transit point for gold smuggling

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**JOCKEY** 

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OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL
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My client has got schedule mentioned property from Sri. Vangara Ranga Rao and another, and registered as Sale deed document No.7278/2004, dated 16-09-2004, at SRO., Mangalagiri, and its link Document Nos.2423/2003, 5115/1999, 4544/1996, 5116/1999 and 4543/1996.

On 30-03-2021, at about 11.00 A.M. near Mangalagiri RTC Bus-stand while she was going to Xerox Cente she lost original link documents, Sale leed document Nos. 5115/1999 545/1996, 4544/1996, at SRO. 4545/1996, 4544/1996, at SRO., Mangalagiri, after knowing the same she was searched for the said link documents, but in vain. My client also lodged the complaint before Mangalagiri Town Police Station on 31-03-2021. If anybody got this link documents they may return to my client or to me and my client will award good prize to him.

anybody has got objections, or sealable or mortgageble any alienable rights of my client please inform the same to me within ONE WEEK from his public notice date, in writing, fal which other claims will not bind

Schedule:- Guntur District, Mangalagir Sub-District, Mangalagiri Municipa Area, Mangalagiri Village, D.No.223/C, Ward No.5, Door.No.5-182-A26, vacant ouse site, bounded by:

East:- Property of Uddanti Venkateswara Rao Udatha Venkateswara Rao, 49.3 Feet. South:- Site of Gunda Pullaiah, 54.6 Feet. West:- 15 feet wide joint bazaar, 49.3 Feet. North:- Site of Kolli Kameswara Rao, 53.0 Feet ameswara Rao, 53.0 Feet. An extent of 293.4 Sq. yds or 246.45 Sq. mts of vacant house site with all

#### V. Rama Gopal Goud

Advocate, Door No.11-468, Mangalagiri - 522 503 Guntur District. A.P., Cell: 9848116475









## Chronicle

### Small savings U-turn: Bad economics, bizarre optics

t is a bizarre moment for policy. Since Assembly elections are on in many states, evidently the fear of electoral backlash has forced an about turn by the Centre in something like 12 hours flat. On Wednesday night, the government ■ announced substantial cuts in interest rates for small savings, meaning instruments such as PPF, post office savings, bank fixed deposits, Kisan Vikas Patras, and Senior Citizen Savings Scheme which ordinary people use to save their lifelong earnings. On Friday morning, the announcement was reversed in a tweet by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Small savings, or common people's savings, are critical. They constitute as much as 60 per cent of all savings in the economy. The savings rate in the country was already touching a 15-year low, with household savings (small savings) declin ing steadily on account of shrinking interest rates, especially since early 2020. If
the savings rate is low, investments will be inade-

The ordinary people, rather than the better off citizens, were being asked to shoulder the burden of government borrowings which be ₹12.06 trillion

quate. As a result of low investment funds available within the country, India has had to take recourse to external borrowings. So, that's how important small savings are.
The core inflation rate in India was six per cent

in January. The proposed cuts in interest rate for small savings would have brought the real value of most of these savings into negative territory. So, why was the finance minister unmindful of the for the financial year
2021-22 is slated to

he ₹12.06 trillion

with was the financial manner

daily needs of ordinary Indians when it is well
known that millions of people depend on the interest earnings from their savings to meet their everyday needs?

This is not just bad poll-time optics, hurting the lower end of society is deplorable political economy. During the year-long pandemic, and for three years before that (as a consequence of demonetisation), it is the poor, the middle classes, and small and medium businesses that really suffered in terms of job losses and output losses. They have struggled to survive. In contrast, the richest Indians — especially big industry — have made handsome gains. And yet, the government's policy on interest rates, which is done quarterly, singled out small savings for punishment.

A probable reason is that the government may have calculated that if the interest rates are pushed down, it can borrow on better terms to meet its needs. Which means the ordinary people, rather than the better off citizens, were being asked to shoulder the burden of government borrowings which for the financial year 2021-22 is slated to be 12.06 trillion rupees. In effect, the section of the population which is already teetering on the brink was expected to surrender more to finance the

government's plans, as compared to the big boys.

The plan was jettisoned overnight, but even at the prevailing rates of interest for small savings, the ordinary householder is eking out a hard living. Is the present finance minister responsible for the poor woman's misery, or is it that the policy set responsible for accelerating poverty pre-dates her assuming charge of finance?

Policymaking is highly centralised in the present set-up. Whether it is finance or foreign affairs or defence, or matters concerning home, agriculture or industry, it is widely thought that decisions are made on high. That is where answers ought to be sought for the goof-up. On account of elections, the panic button was pressed at the last minute. But what happens in the next quarter will be keenly watched.

### K'taka: 'Lotus' probe welcome

he Karnataka high court has allowed an inquiry into the "Operation Lotus" controversy that surfaced before the Janata Dal-Congress government of H.D. Kumaraswamy was brought down in July 2019 through defections. This is a setback for the BJP as well as its Karnataka chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa who was charged with engineering the collapse of the government through various inducements, including an offer of money reportedly made in a telephone call with the son of a JD(S) legislator.

The judge John Michael D'Cunha, known to take a tough stand on corruption in politics as evidenced in his sensational 2014 ruling to convict J. Jayalalithaa of graft and fine her ₹100 crore, has based his judgment on the allegations and the contents of the complaint being so serious as to not allow a court to empower itself to quash the complaint and FIR. It is a different matter that the agencies that will be tasked with running the probe would be controlled by the powers that be. The highest degree of morality would be sustained only if Mr Yediyurappa were to step down for the pendency of the probe but such ideals have been thrown by the way side long ago in Indian politics.

In a sensational audio clip that became public at the time, a conversation between Mr Yediyurappa and Sharanagouda Patil, son of JD(S) MLA Naganagouda Patil, had revealed an offer of ₹10 crore as well as a ministerial berth if he could get his father to switch sides. Mr Yediyurappa had, of course, dismissed it as a conspiracy hatched by the then chief minister to entrap him.

Facile explanations should cut no ice with probe agencies provided they run a thorough investigation to get to the bottom of the affair and establish that compelling offers had indeed been made for legislators to switch loyalties. The fact that a probe has been ordered itself brings into focus the widely held view that the ruling party at the Centre had been playing toppling games through which non-BJP governments were targeted and brought down, as in Madhya Pradesh and Puducherry, but proved unsuccessful in Rajasthan.

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Subhani



## BJP has a different take... On history, science, cows!



Karan Thapar

**As I See It** 

outlandish things said by leaders of the BJP. I am not sure how it started, and I doubt if we follow other parties equally assidu-ously. But the BJP collection, if I can use that term, is quite a hoard. It includes the offensive and the ludicrous, it ranges from the Prime Minister to the least known MLA, and it cov-ers subjects as varied as religion, mythology, history, couture, cuisine, practically everything to do with cows and, of course, sex. On a slow day it can be quite fun to

over the recent holidays and I noticed a few intriguing patterns. Perhaps the most striking is that the BJP has a very poor grasp of history. For instance, Tirath Singh Rawat, the new minister Uttarakhand, believes "America enslaved India for 200 years". His counin Tripura, Biplab Kumar Deb, is convinced that Rabindranath Tagore returned his Nobel Prize to protest against the British. But what really surprised me is the number of times the Prime Minister is confused by

Well, that's what I did

the past. Alexander's army, he once said, conquered the entire world but was defeated by the Biharis. On another occasion he relocated Taxila to somewhere not far from Patna. On a third, he said when he thinks of the Gupta dynasty, he remembers Chandragupta. Of course, at the time he was wooing the voters of Bihar so perhaps this was intended as

flattery. But what do you make of this? In 2018 he claimed Kabir, Guru Nanak and Baba Gorakhnath "sat together and discussed spirituality". It's an interesting idea but as impossible as the claim Jesus and Muhammad had a fireside chat or as inaccurate as the belief Buddha and Zarathustra were

However, my favourite is a bloomer about the man many consider the Prime Minister's party's revered founder. This is what Mr Modi told a gathering in Gujarat in 2013: "Syama Prasad Mookerjee was a revolu-tionary. He died in 1930 in London." I would call that a three-in-one. Mookerjee was not a revolutionary. He was a member of Jawaharlal Nehru's first Cabinet. Before that he was president of the Hindu Mahasabha. Earlier, he was a lawyer and academic. He didn't die in 1930 but 1953. It wasn't in London but in a jail in Jammu and Kashmir. And, of course, he founded the Bharatiya Jan Sangh.

A second theme in the file is the BJP's questioning of science alongside its conviction that most modern achievements actually occurred centuries or even millennia earlier. When he was minister human resources development — which, incidentally, includes education — Satyapal Singh said Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution was "scientifically wrong". Since no one had seen "an ape turning into a man", he said, that was proof dear Charles had got things mixed up. Our textbooks, he concluded,

need to be changed. And not surprisingly, long is the list of BJP leaders who believe some of the greatest modern achievements actually existed in the times of the Mahabharata. Tripura's Biplab Deb claims the Internet and satellite communications were known to the Kauravas

Dhankhar that had arrows power. Sharma maintains journalism started to cover the battle at Kurukshetra. Not just that, there were live tele-casts too. And he adds: 'Your Google has started now but our Google started long time back"

Much the same sort of claim is made about genetic science, plastic surgery and test-tube babies. In 2014, in a speech at the inaugura-tion of the Reliance Hospital in Mumbai, the Prime Minister said the fact Karan was born from Kunti's ear is proof that genetic science was known at the time. He added the fact Ganesh has an elephant head is proof there were plastic surgeons in those days. No doubt inspired by his leader, Dinesh Sharma has more recently pro-claimed Sita was a testtube baby!

Less surprising but also far more frequent is evidence of the BJP's incredible faith in the Indian cow and its many products. Suman Haripriya, a member of the Assam Assembly, believes "gaumutra" and "gobar" can cure Coronavirus. Sadhvi Pragya believes it's already cured her cancer. Meanwhile, for those who have blood pressure problems, she strongly recommends a good rub of a cow's back.

however, wealth rather than health is your concern Dilip Ghosh, the BJP's Bengal chief, insists that cow's contains gold. 'There's a *nari* (blood vessel) that helps pro-

My favourite is a bloomer about the man many consider the PM's party's revered founder. This is what Mr Modi told a gathering in Gujarat in 2013: 'Syama Prasad Mookerjee was a revolutionary. He died in 1930 in London.

duce gold with the help of sunlight", he has declared. So rather than Arjun's drink a glass of the stuff. nuclear you ought to sift it. Dinesh Michael Lobo, a BJP minister in Goa, says

that cows in Calangute have recently changed their character and now 'only eat non-vegetarian food". I wonder if earlier they were fond of beef? Uttarakhand's former chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat had once proclaimed that cows exhale oxygen. So what do they breathe?

Our file reflects these days BJP leaders have become specialists in haute couture. They've taken to advising women what to wear. Uttar-akhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat has firmly ruled out ripped jeans. He doesn't approve of bare knees. "If this kind of woman goes out in society to meet people and solve their problems, what kind of message are we giving to society and to our kids?", he asks. So clearly, he's not in favour

of a plunging décolletage. Dilip Ghosh, his colleague in Bengal, who perhaps hopes to replace Mamata Banerjee as chief minister, is more avant-garde. He's suggested Ms Banrejee should wear Bermudas. gested "If she has to keep her leg out then why wear a sari", he asks. "She could wear a pair of Bermudas instead. So that it can be seen clearly Of course, the thickest

part of the file is what BJP leaders have to say about Muslims, their religion Islam and the fact that they would be better off in Pakistan. Termites feature in this part fairly substantially. So does the size of their families. But there's nothing imaginative or fanciful about this portion. Just offensive and horribly wrong.

Now I don't know how other parties compare with the BJP. My office hasn't kept a track of their statements. My producer, Arvind Kumar, tells me this is something he intends to do. But will it be as much fun? Or is this one respect in which the BJP is truly special?

> The writer is a  $television\ commentator$

#### **TD'S FUTURE**

In its 40th year, the TD needs a dynamic leader to take it forward to win the 2024 polls after a series of setbacks (TD merges with BJP, Naidu finalises deal, DC. April 1). Naidu has his task cut out. If not, the prank news might come true in coming days.

### Sajid Farooq

Though it was an April 1 prank, the TD supremo has actually been exploring this option ever since he got a decent drubbing in the 2019 Assembly polls. His emissary MPs are working overtime but in vain in this regard and Naidu's silence on Modi/BJP points towards this. Probably the BJP sensed the issue and got alert. Otherwise, the AP unit of BJP would have by now been a pocket burrow of erstwhile TD, with Naidu at the helm.

Govardhana Myneedu Vijayawada

#### **INTEREST RATES**

The possibility of negative vote in the elections may have prompted the FM to roll back the interest

P. Ramakrishna

#### Rajahmundry **INHS KALYANI TRAFFIC**

The Traffic Police Commissioner of Visakhapatnam must reduce the congestion near INHS Kalyani Sriharipuram. The jams near HPCL main gate to Coast Guard main gate from 8 am to 10 am is creating a lot of trouble. Large trucks parked near HPCL main gate is an hindrance. Auto drivers taking U-turn between INHS Kalyani and HPCL main gate take passengers near HPCL main gate and Nausena Bagh creating a bottleneck. RTC buses stop near main gate of HPCL reducing the chance of any movement of vehicle.

Chetan Shankar Visakhapatnam



E. Pak towns in flames: bitter fighting on

CALCUTTA, April. 1

Several East Pakistani towns were burning after heavy bom-bardment by Pakistani Air Forces planes as part of what appeared to be an all-out armed forces offensive against Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's forces today.

The Pakistani Army and Air Force launched a fresh offensive against Bangla Desh Liberation Forces over wide areas.

### Vincenzo de Luca



Linking Italian, Indian cultures, past & present, in Covid times

his year marks a very special one as we celebrate the Festival of Italian Culture in India which is held in parallel with the Indian Cultural Festival in Italy. The initiative was promoted at the last bilateral digital summit held on November 6, 2020 between the two Prime Ministers and it was also acknowledged by the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella, as one of the pillars of the bilateral cooperation between Italy and India. In his message to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occa-sion of Republic Day, Mr Mattarella said: "The Festival of Italian Culture in India and Indian Culture in Italy will take place in 2021. These events will facilitate the reciprocal comprehension and the closeness among our We inaugurated the festival in

January and had the honour to host the minister of external affairs, S. Jaishankar, for the first in-person event since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The festival is a unique opportunity to further strengthen the historical cultural relations between the two countries

and to share the new dynamics of exchanges between the protagonists of the Italian and Indian culture and creative industries

The cultural exchanges between the two countries date back to ancient history. Not only can ties between European and Indian cultures be traced back to 700 BC, there are also testimonies of linguistic influences in the sixteenth century. In the last century, Giuseppe Tucci and Luigi Tessitori contributed to the knowledge of Indian culture and artistic tradition in Italy by collecting scientific studies and artistic testimonies still preserved in Italy. Thanks to these experiences, Italy boasts the most important tradition of Indology studies in the world outside India. In the last 50 years, exchanges in the cinematic field have flourished with the production of docu-films by Pierpaolo Pasolini and Roberto Rossellini and awards at the Venice Film Festival to Satyajit Rav and Mira Nair. We recently hosted the screening of Rossellini's and Pasolini's masterpieces during a three-night open-air "Notti Stellate, Italian Cinema under the Sky",

where unedited images from their travels throughout India in the late 1950s and 1960s are a testament of life in those days.

Cultural ties between Italy and India are not only rooted in the past, but they are very much driven by innovation, creativity and contemporary cultural contamination.

To celebrate the Festival of Italian Culture in India, together with the Embassy of India in Rome, we crafted a rich agenda of events in various fields — cinema, music, literature, visual arts, fashion and design. This year Italy celebrates the 700th anniversary of the death of the most important figure of the Italian culture — the father of Italian language and its most famous poet, Dante Alighieri. We are commemorating him in many of our cultural activifrom theatre to literature, exhibitions and musical performances. In February, I moderated a panel with two eminent professors from Rome and Trento University in which we analysed the figure of Dante Alighieri and how contemporary its masterpiece The Divine *Comedy* is today.

We are also working on a very special project on Italian Indology and Sanskrit studies. Together with the University of Rome La Sapienza, we are putting together a collection of publications by the most prominent Italian Indologists. The project is composed of four volumes — the first one will be a collection on Italian studies on Indian History, Economy, Society; the second volume focuses on culture and literature; the third is the English translation of the biography of Giuseppe Tucci; the fourth will be entirely dedicated to Indian contemporary art.

Our events are a constant dialogue between innovation and tradition. We are focusing on our traditions but also on our dynamic and contemporary cultural drive. We are also attaching great importance in forging partnerships with our Indian counterparts and are thus working on strengthening cooperation among museums, developing projects on the protection of our cultural heritage, enhancing collaboration among artists, musicians and our creative

Promoting culture in the midst of a

pandemic is not easy. As with all the cultural institutions around the world, we also had to reinvent ourselves taking full advantage of the digital tools we familiarised with, without giving up on the possibility of nurturing our Indian friends with limited outdoor events carried out in full observation of health safety protocols. It is thanks to the digital tools that we have been able to connect Italy and India even more. The availability of digital performances through the channels of the Embassy of Italy in New Delhi, the consulates in Mumbai and Kolkata and the Italian Cultural Institutes of New Delhi and Mumbai, along with the innovative platforms launched by the Italian foreign ministry have been quite successful. The promotion of arts, music, culture knows no limits.

Numerous more events still lie ahead, and I am sure the "Festival of Italian Culture in India" will further consolidate the relations between Italy and India, two culture super-

> The writer is the Italian ambassador to India

### SHORT TAKES

### **JAWAN BEGINS** KANYAKUMARI RUN

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, APRIL 1

An Army corporal on Thursday began a walk from Kashmir to Kanyakumari with a res olve to set a Guinness World

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

defence spokesman Lt. Colonel Emron Musavi said. He was flagged off from 92 Base Hospital at Srinagar with a heart-warming gathering of

#### **ODISHA SIZZLES UNDER SEVERE HEAT WAVE**

DC CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 1

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

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

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

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

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

#### **TIGERESS FOUND DEAD IN MP RESERVE FOREST**

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, APRIL 1

A female tiger died in Bandhavgarh reserve forest a wildfire a couple of days ago, forest officers said on Thursday. Carcass of the 13-year-old tigress was found in Rahania forest beat area under Magad hi range in the reserve late on Tuesday night, field director of Bandhavgarh tiger reserve

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

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

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



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

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

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

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, APRIL 1

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

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

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

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

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

this region. Three seats each in Darrang, Morigaon, Nagaon and Hojai districts also voted in the section of t ond phase of polling on Thursday. Five seats in Nagaon have already voted along with Upper Assam in the first phase of

### Assam polls battle between 'ihooth' & 'vikas', says Modi

DC CORRESPONDENT **GUWAHATI, APRIL 1** 

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

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

Central Assam too has a

sizable Muslim popula-

tion, though it is a mix of

per cent of the population

in central Assam's Nagaon district, 52 per cent in Morigaon, 53 per

cent in Hojai and 64 per

cent in Darrang. This region, too, is likely to wit-

ness a major impact of the

alliance with AIUDF.
In 2016 ND 1

out of 12 seats, but four of

these were due to a split in

votes between the Congress and AIUDF. The

political observers are of

view that the NDA may

have to struggle to hold on

to its seats in this area too.

The battle for one seat —

Barhampur in Nagaon dis-

trict has also become

interesting as the BJP has

taken over the seat of its

ally AGP, denying a ticket

was almost peaceful with a

significant number of vot-

ers turning up since morning hours to exercise

franchise

Barak Valley,

Like

speakers.

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

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

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

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

### EC issues notice to BJP minister

DC CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI, APRIL 1

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

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

retire from the election." Earlier on Thursday Congress claimed that its Mahajot candidate from Tamulpur constituency is missing and it asked the ruling BJP to answer about his whereabouts.

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

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

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

AIADMK.

Nadu to the ECI.

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

The order said that Raja had described Stalin as a ly born Keelapalur.

### Troops sent to stop Myanmar refugees' entry

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

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

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

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

Myanmar border.

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

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

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

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

#### COVID UPDATE

#### **RAJA BANNED NEW VARIANT FROM CAMPAIGN FOUND IN** FOR TWO DAYS **CHHATTISGARH**

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, APRIL 1

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

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

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

Meensuruti.

child of good relationship and good birth and Edappadi K. Palaniswami as a child of a bad relationship and a prematurechild at

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

Kumbh Mela begins in Haridwar

# **FOUR MORE DIE**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC with agency inputs

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

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

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

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

Singhdeo said Coronavirus variants of Britain, South Africa and Brazil were so far detected Chhattisgarh.

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

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

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

### **IN J&K, 461 NEW** CASES REPORTED \_\_

DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, APRIL 1

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

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

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

Several areas in the have declared contaminated zones following residents in fairly large numbers contracted the virus. Also, eight schools

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

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

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

SAHOO | DC

BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 1

A couple hailing from Odisha's Nabarangpur on Thursday alleged that their six-month-old infant son suffering from pneumonia died after he was administered an injection which was pre-scribed by the doctor after a 'Google search' at Dabugam

Health Centre. The local medical officer, however, denied the allegation and said proper injection was given to the infant. According to the reports, Bisoyee Prasant village in Nabarangpur district on Thursday took his critically ill son to the Dabugaan Health Centre after his condition deteriorated.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nagar district has been intensified to ensure that only people with a negative RT-PCR test report proceed for the Kumbh "Besides registering on our portal, it is compulsory for devotees to bring a

negative RT-PCR test report with them," Mela Officer Deepak Rawat A negative RT-PCR test

report not older than 72 hours before arrival has been made mandatory for devotees gathering for the

with Uttar Pradesh at Uttarakhand High Court. In an order on Wednesday, the high court Kashipur in Udham Singh said a negative RT-PCR

certification will be compulsory even in the case of devotees who have received the first dose of the Corona vaccine. Devotees who have taken

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

The high court has also asked the health authorities in Haridwar to ramp up testing from 5,000 per day to 50,000. Uttarakhand reported 293 positive Covid-19 cases Wednesday Dehradun and Haridwar

districts accounting for a

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

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

In normal

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

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

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

#### **PAK COURT LIFTS BAN ON TIKTOK**

Peshawar, April 1: A Pakistani court on Thursday lifted its ban on popular Chinese video-sharing app TikTok and ordered the country's telecommunication authority to make sure that "immoral content" is

not uploaded on it.
The Peshawar High Court on
March 11 had ordered a ban on the TikTok over alleged 'obscene content", the second time in less than six months. The court on Thursday lifted

#### LONDON COP IN **NEO-NAZI GROUP** CONVICTED

London, April 1: A London jury has found a rookie police officer guilty of belonging to a banned neo-Nazi organisation, the first time a British police officer has been convicted of membership of an outlawed far-right group.

After 32 hours of deliberation, the jury at the city's Old Bailey court found Benjamin Hannam, 22, guilty Thursday of being a member of the extremist group National

#### **US SAYS ISRAEL 'OCCUPIES' WEST BANK**

Washington, April 1: US President Joe Biden's administration said Wednesday that Israel's control of the West Bank is indeed "occupation," clarif-ying its stance after the relea-se of a report that seemed to downplay the term, adopting language used by the former President Donald Trump's

government.
The State Department's annichte ual report on human rights "does use the term 'occupation' in the context of the current status of the West Bank,' State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters.

'This has been the longstanding position of previous administrations of both parties over the course of many decades," he said. But under the staunchly pro-Israel Trump, the annual human rights report renamed the section on "Israel and the Occupied Territories" as "Israel, West Bank and Gaza.

## **US court lets Rana file reply**

#### Hearing of Tahawwur, declared fugitive by India, is scheduled April 12

Washington, April 1: A US court has acceded to the request of Pakistaniorigin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who is sought for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, to file an additional reply against his extradition to India.

The in-person extradition hearing of 59-year-old Rana, who has been declared a fugitive by India, is scheduled for April 12.

The United States has supported India's request for his extradition to hin a week regarding the India. US District Court scheduling of the in-pers-Judge in Los Angeles Jac-

queline Chooljian, in his brief order on Wednesday, said: Rana shall file a surreply of no more than 20 pages by not later than April 5.
The government may,

but is not required to file any surrebuttal to the surreply, which may not exceed 20 pages, by not later than April 12, the judge said. In a separate order, the judge asked both Rana and the government representatives to confer and submit a status report witon extradition hearing,

which is currently set for

Under the existing law, hearings in cases of extradition under treaty stipulation or convention shall be held on land, publicly, and in a room or office easily accessible to the public, the judge said.

However, an in-person hearing is not currently authorised due to the pandemic, the federal judge said. Nor is it clear to the Court on the current record, that Mr. Rana may waive an in-person extradition hearing and consent to proceed by video/telepho-

wished to do so, the judge said. As such, the judge ordered the two parties to confer and file a status report within a week.

Last week Rana, who is

being sought in connection with his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, approached the co-urt that it wanted to file an additional reply in opposition to the motion of the US government that supported his extradition to India. The US government quickly reached out to the court arguing that there

nic conference, even if he an additional motion. On Wednesday, the court ruled in favour of Rana.

Rana, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headlev. was re-arrested on June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks in which 166 people, including six Ameri-

cans, were killed. Pakistani-American Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist Headley was involved in plotting the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. He was made an approver in

**FOUR KILLED IN** 

**CALIF. BUILDING** 

Orange (California), April

1: A shooting at a Southern

California office building on

Wednesday killed four peo-

ple, including a child, and in-

jured a fifth person before police shot the suspect. Shots

were being fired as officers

arrived at a two-story office

building on Lincoln Avenue

in Orange, southeast of Los

Angeles, at about 5:30 p.m.,

Lt. Jennifer Amat said. "An officer-involved shooting occ-

urred", she said.

**SHOOTING AT** 

#### **London, April 1:** UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's senior-most PoC adviser, Samuel Kasumu, has stepped down from his post as Special Advis-er for Civil Society and Communities, it emerged curate," he said. Kasumu had previously handed in his resignation on Thursday, a day after the release of a controver-

Race review:

Johnson's PoC

adviser resigns

ed race review. Kasumu's resignation will come in effect from May 1 and Downing Street has dismissed as completely inaccurate reports that it is linked to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (CRED) report, which had concluded that Britain was not a structurally racist nation even though overt racism remained a reality in the country. It has been claimed that Kasumu's exit was on the cards for some time due to tensions within Downing Street and is not directly linked to the much-criticised report.

sial government-appoint-

"Mr Kasumu has played an incredibly valuable role during his time at No 10," a Downing Street spokesperson said. As he pre-viously set out, he will be leaving government in

May. Any suggestion that this decision has been made this week or that this is linked to the CRED report is completely inac-

in February but went on to retract it. At the time, he had said he wanted to continue work he had been doing fighting misinformation on Covid-19 vaccines with Britain's PoC community, with "the view to leaving at the end of May". However, according to *The Politico*, Kasumu confirmed his decision to leave Downing Street on Tuesday morning, just as the findings of the CRED report were released. It comes as racial equality campaigners criticised the findings, and the Opposition Labour Party accused the government of downplaying institutional racism.

Labour's shadow equalities secretary Marsĥa de Cordova called the report "divisive", adding it was "no wonder" the government was "losing the expertise from their team"

### WHO blasts Europe's vax rollout

#### France latest to impose curbs to combat rising infections

Copenhagen, April 1: The WHO on Thursday slammed Europe's "unacceptably slow" vaccine rollout and warned of a "worrying" surge in cases, as France became the latest country to impose new restrictions combat Coronavirus infections. In a sign of the devastation the virus is still causing while the world races to roll out vaccines, Brazil reported the country's death toll had spiralled last month. Offici als said more than 66,000 people had died of Covid-19 in Brazil in March – more than twice as many fatalities as the country's second-deadliest month of the pandemic, July

"Never in Brazilian history have we seen a sin-gle event kill so many people" in one month, doctor Miguel said Nicolelis, former pandemic response coordinator for Brazil's impoverished northeast.

With the southern hemisphere winter approaching and the virus spreading fast, Brazil is facing "a perfect

storm", he said.
The surge in Brazil has overwhelmed hospitals and forced doctors to make agonising decisions over whom to give life-saving care — prioritising those most likely



A closed street cafe is seen in Eisenstadt, Austria, on Thursday, amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The Austrian capital Vienna and two neighbouring regions entered a temporary lockdown over the Easter holiday, to ease pressure on intensive care units as Coronavirus cases surge.

to survive.

The virus has killed more than 2.8 million people worldwide since it emerged in Wuhan in late 2019. And though the world is looking to vaccines to end the upheaval the virus has brought, rollouts are off to a sputtering start in many countries, notably in Europe. "Vaccines present our best way out of this pandemic... however, the rollout of these vaccines is unacceptably slow," the World Health

Organisation's director for Europe Hans Kluge said. "We must speed up the process by ramping up manufacturing, reducing barriers to administering vaccines, and using every single vial we have in stock," he added. The organisation said Europe's virus situa-tion was "more worrying than we have seen in several months" and that slow rollouts were "prolonging the pandemic".

Five weeks ago, the number of weekly new

cases in the region had dipped to under one million. But last week there were 1.6 million new cases in Europe, the WHO said.

In France alone, daily cases have doubled to around 40,000 and hospitals are overflowing in flashpoints such as Paris.

surge forced ent Emmanuel President Macron to relent and reimpose restrictions he rejected in January.

## INDIA'S BIGGEST UNDERCOVER OPERATION



## Myanmar civil war likely, warns UN ambassador

United Nations, April 1: Burgener told the closed-The UN envoy on Myanmar door session, according to implored the Security Council to take action in the Asian nation's escalating crisis, warning of the risk of civil war and an imminent "bloodbath" as the junta violently represses pro-democracy protests. More than 520 people have died in daily demonstra-tions since the military overthrew elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1, halting Myan-mar's decade old mar's decade-old

periment in democracy.
"I appeal to this Council to consider all available tools to take collective action and do what is right, what the people of Myanmar deserve and prevent a multi-dimenremarks obtained by AFP.

She said she remained open for dialogue with the junta but added: "If we wait only for when they are ready to talk, the ground situation will only worsen. A bloodbath is imminent."Barbara Woodward, the UN envoy from Britain, which requested the meet-ing, told reporters the Security Council was "united in its condemnation" and was discussing "a range of measures at our dispos-al."But China, considered Myanmar's main ally, ruled out sanctions.

"One-sided pressure and calling for sanctions or other coercive measures

ther complicate the situation, which is by no means constructive," China's ambassador, Zhang Jun, said.

The session came after Suu Kyi's legal team earlier Wednesday said the ousted leader appeared to be in good health despite two months of detention.

Suu Kyi, 75, has not been seen in public since she was deposed but a member of her legal team, Min Min Soe, was summoned to a police station in the capital Naypyidaw for a video meet-

ing with her.
Suu Kyi is facing a raft of criminal charges, and conviction could see her barred from office for life.

The coup and the junta's subsequent actions have sional catastrophe," special envoy Christine Schraner and confrontation and furbrough triggered international confrontati

### Navalny health raises concern

**Moscow, April 1:** Supporters of jailed Kremlin on the Kremlin. critic Alexei Navalny are raising deep concerns about his decision to launch a hunger strike, saying they fear more damage to his already-fragile health.

Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponent, announced the hunger strike on Wednesday to demand proper medical treatment in prison. The 44-year-old is serving two-and-a-half years on old fraud charges in a penal colony east of Moscow. He was arrested when he returned to Russia in January from Germany, where he had ate access to doctors. spent months recovering

Navalny says he is suffering in prison from severe back pain and numbness in his legs and has only been given painkillers.

His allies said his announcement of a hunger strike is no idle threat and they do not expect he will back down.

"Navalny has always taken such a step as a hunger strike extremely seriously," Ruslan Shaveddinov, a spokesman for him, said. "We are very concerned about his condition and that's why we are demanding immedi-

## Biden allows Trump era H1-B rules to expire

Council to take action in the Asian nation's escalating crisis, warning of the risk of civil war and an imminent "bloodbath" as the junta violently represses pro-democracy protests. More than 520 people have died in daily demonstra-tions since the military overthrew elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1, halting Myanmar's decade-old experiment in democracy. Al. "But China Myanmar's magnetic out sanctions."

consider all available tools to take collective action and do what is right, what the people of Myanmar deserve and prevent a multi-dimensional catastrophe," special envoy Christine Schraner Burgener told the closeddoor session, according to

United Nations, April 1: remarks obtained by AFP.

The UN envoy on Myanmar implored the Security open for dialogue with the open for dialogue with the junta but added: "If we wait only for when they are ready to talk, the ground situation will only worsen. A bloodbath is imminent."Barbara Woodward, the UN envoy from Britain, which requested the meeting, told reporters the Security Council was "united in its condemnation" and was discussing "a range of measures at our disposal."But China, considered

Myanmar's main ally, ruled "One-sided pressure and calling for sanctions or other coercive measures will only aggravate tension after the military dramatiand confrontation and further complicate the situation, which is by no means constructive," China's ambassador, Zhang Jun,

said. The session came after Suu Kyi's legal team earlier Wednesday said the ousted leader appeared to be in good health despite two months of detention. Suu Kyi, 75, has not been

seen in public since she was deposed but a member of her legal team, Min Min Soe, was summoned to a police station in Naypyidaw for a video meeting with her. Suu Kyi is facing a raft of criminal charges, and conviction could see her barred from office for life.

The coup and the junta's subsequent actions have triggered international condemnation. Britain called for the emergency meeting cally ramped up its use of lethal force against protesters. Myanmar's military Saturday launched the first



VIJAYAWADA | FRIDAY | 2 APRIL 2021

# quick BITES

INDICATO	<b>25</b>	%
Sensex	50,029.83	1.05
Nifty 50	14,867.40	1.20
S&P 500*	4,009.89	0.93
Dollar (₹)	73.11	0.01
Pound Sterling (₹)	101.03	-0.26
Euro (₹)	85.99	-0.25
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	44,701▲881	1.97
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	64.00	2.01
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.177	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.679	-0.067
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

### No issues with bulk messages, asserts Trai

New Delhi: As bulk messages came into force, Trai asserted that no major disruptions were noticed for commercial messages and OTP generation in sectors such as banking, healthcare and government services, and that issues were limited to "few" cases. Trai said reports from telecos indicated that "no major issues came to notice" and that "messages which are in accordance with regulations are getting delivered successfully".

#### Wipro to acquire + Oz's Ampion for \$117 million



Wipro said it will acquire Ampion, an Australia-based provider of cyber security, DevOps and quality engineering services for \$117 million (about Rs 857 crore). The acquisition of Ampion is an important step for Wipro in this direction, and strengthens the commitment towards clients and stakeholders in Australia and New Zealand, Wipro said. The acquisition is expected to close in the June quarter.

#### Mastercard to put \$100mn in Airtel Africa's money biz

Airtel Africa on Thursday announced that Mastercard would invest \$100 million (about Rs 733 crore) in its wholly owned subsidiary Airtel Mobile Commerce BV (AMC). Mastercard would hold a minority stake in AMC on completion of the deal, with Airtel Africa continuing to hold the majority stake, an Airtel statement said. Sources said Mastercard would get about 3.75 per cent stake in the firm.

#### **NSE** reduces mkt lot size for Nifty 50 derivatives

The NSE has slashed the market lot size for derivative contracts on Nifty 50, a move that will reduce the burden of excessive upfront margins for retail traders. The lot size has been reduced to 50 from the existing 75. The cut will reduce the margin requirements for futures trading by one-third, stockbroking firm Fyers CEO Tejas Khoday said. Currently, traders need about Rs 1,73,000 to trade one lot, he said.



## **■** Collection tops ₹1 L cr for 6th month in a row **GST mop-up hits record** ₹1.23 lakh crore in March

**GST REVENUE COLLECTION** 

**FC BUREAU** NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

FINANCIAL

In line with the trend of constant recovery in GST revenues over the past five months, the gross goods and services tax (GST) revenue collected in March 2021 stood at a record high of over Rs 1.23 lakh crore. The total revenues earned for the month are 27 per cent higher than the GST collected in the same month last year, according to finance ministry data released on Thursday.

"The gross GST revenue collected in the month of March 2021 is at a record of Rs 1,23,902 crore, of which CGST is Rs 22,973 crore, SGST is Rs 29,329 crore, IGST is Rs 62,842 crore 1,20,000 1,00,000 50,000 60,000 40,000 Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar -- 2021 -----Figures in ₹ crore Source: KBK Infographics

(including Rs 31,097 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is Rs 8,757 crore (including Rs 935 crore collected on import of goods)," the ministry

The GST collections for March this year is the six consecutive month of revenue crossing Rs 1-lakh crore mark. The finance ministry said that a steep increasing trend over this

period is a clear indicator of a rapid economic recovery post-pandemic.
"The revenues from

"The revenues from import of goods was at 70 per cent higher and the revenues from domestic transaction (including import of services) are 17 (including per cent higher than the revenues from sources during the same month last year. The GST revenue witnessed growth rate of (-) 41 per cent, (-) 8 per cent, 8 per cent and 14 per cent in the first, second, third and fourth quarters of this financial year, respectively, as compared to the same period last

year," it said. The Centre has settled Rs 21,879 crore to CGST and Rs 17,230 crore to SGST.

### Car sales rebound in March

**MICHAEL GONSALVES** PUNE, APRIL 1

Most carmakers in the country—such as Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors, Kia Motors, Motors, Kia Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Toyota Kirloskar Motors, Renault, Ford Motor, Honda Cars, MG Motor and Nissan Motor—on Thursday reported substantial year-on-year sales growth in March 2021 in comparison to the unusually low sales in March 2020

because of the lockdown. These 11 of the 14 carmakers in India who control 99 per cent of India's domestic car market clocked a 126 per cent jump in March sales to 3,15,946 units, up from 1,39,761 cars sold in March 2020 when the lockdown had begun to hit production.

Car sales have been improving in the last few months and March showed a substantial year-on-year growth.

Maruti Suzuki, which sells one car out of two bought in India, reported 91.76 per cent sales growth to 1,46,203 units last month compared to 76,240 units sold in March 2020.

South Hyundai, the Korean carmaker, clocked a 100 per cent rise in domestic sales during March to 52,600 units as against 26,300 units sold in the same month last year.

Tata Motors, India's third biggest carmaker, recorded a 422 per cent increase at 29,654 units as compared to 5,676 units sold in March last year. This is the high-est-ever sales in a month for the company in nine years. A total of 705 Nexon EVs were sold in March.

Korean brand Kia Motors logged a 123 per cent growth in volumes to 19,100 units against 8,583 units.

Sales at Mahindra & Mahindra, the SUV specialist, climbed 394 per cent to 16,700 units during the

Similarly, Toyota Kirlos kar Motors posted a 114 per cent sales increase to 15,001 units as against 7,023 units, clocking the best monthly sales for it since 2013.

Sales at French car brand Renault also jumped 278 per cent at 12,356 units last month against 3,269 units sold in February last year.

Ford Motor India clocked 7,746 units sales in March, a growth of 120 per cent from 3,519 units.

Sales at Honda Cars India was up 92 per cent at 7,103units versus 3,697 units. Its production in March was impacted due to a shortage

#### TAFE'S MALLIKA **SRINIVASAN TO SELECT PUBLIC SECTOR HONCHOS**



Mallika Srinivasar

New Delhi, April 1 Srinivasan Mallika chairman and managing director of Tractors and Farm Equipment (Tafe) Limited has been appointed as the chair-person of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB), an order issued by the personnel ministry on Thursday

This is the first time a private sector specialist ĥas been appointed as the head of the PESB, responsible for appointment of top management posts in the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), officials said.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Srinivasan as the chairperson of PESB for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge, or until the attainment of the

age of 65 years, it said. Sailesh, a 1985-batch IAS officer, has been appointed as member, PESB. He is at present secretary, Department of

Public Enterprises.
The PESB shall consist of one chairperson and three full-time members. M. K. Gupta and Rear Admiral Shekhar Mital (retd) are its two serving members

### PE/VC funding soars 85% in Q4



#### **SANGEETHA G**

Private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC) investments in the March quarter was up 85 per cent against the prelock-down quarter of last

PE and VC firms invested over \$11.86 billion across 188 deals in the first three months of 2021—an increase of about 85 per cent compared to the same period in 2020, as per the data of Venture Intelligence. The pre-pandemic quarter of January-March 2020 had recorded PE/VC investments of \$6.5 bil-

lion across 238 deals. The value of investments in the March quarter was also 58 per cent higher compared to the previous December quarter, which saw \$7.5 billion being across 231 invested However, deal volumes were down by 21 per cent against the March quarter of last year and 19 per cent compared to the

December quarter. In the past few quarters, investments into Reliance Group entities have been pushing the aggregate funding to new

highs. In the June quarter, total investments had touched \$13.95 billion and in the September quarter it stood at \$11.87 billion. However in the March quarter, there were no investments into

the group. Piramal Enterprises winning the bankruptcy bid for Dewan Housing Finance for \$5.2 billion was the largest deal in the quarter. Some of the the quarter. Some of the tech unicorns like Zomato and Byjus attracted \$500 million and \$460 million, respectively, in the quarter.

"The high level of fund

flows during the latest quarter, coming as they did without any investments into Reliance Industries Group compa-nies, is very encourag-ing. It would be interesting to see how the investment figures in the coming quarters match up against the high bar set by RIL Group deals which had dominated the last three quarters of 2020," said Arun Natarajan, founder of

Venture Intelligence. Exits too were active in the March quarter, as there were eight successful domestic IPOs of PE-VC backed companies.

### Cathay, EFL Global deliver vaccines to South America

**FC BUREAU** HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

The recent shipment of 1,00,000 Covid-19 vaccine doses that India delivered to Paraguay were sent from Hyderabad, aboard a Cathay Pacific cargo flight which carried the 10,000 vials of the vaccine. The shipment left from Hyderabad on March 26 on from a cargo only passenger plane of Cathay Pacific.

The vaccines were stored between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius as mandated from the time of acceptance of the shipment to its delivery. According to the airlines, the shipment was first taken to Hong Kong, where it was transferred to a cargo freighter plane and then flown to Miami, USA before the final leg of the journey to Para-guay in South America.

In a release, the airlines' regional general manager for South Asia, Middle East and Africa, Marck Sutch, said Cathay Pacific Cargo was happy to be able to support vaccine delivery during this crucial time. Our 'Vaccine Task Force' is well equipped to handle the shipments with utmost care.'

## Exports jump 58% to \$34 bn

**FC BUREAU** NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

Exports increased by 58.23 per cent to \$34 billion in March on the back of healthy growth in key sectors like engineering, gems and jewellery and pharmaceuticals, provisional data from the commerce ministry showed.

Exports during April-March 2020-21, however, decreased by 7.4 per cent to



\$290.18 billion compared with \$313.36 billion in 2019-20. Imports during 2020-21 contracted by 18 per cent to \$388.92 billion compared with \$474.71 billion during

In March 2020, the

exports stood at \$21.49 billion, which was a decline of about 34 per cent over March 2019 due to the global slowdown.

"India's merchandise exports in March 2021 were \$34.0 billion as compared to \$21.49 billion in March 2020, an increase of 58.23 per cent," the ministry said in a statement

It said that the "first time ever in a month", the exports crossed \$34 billion.

### Brokerage revenues may see muted growth this yr

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** MUMBAI, APRIL 1

After record-high active client additions and average daily turnover in a pandemic-marred fiscal, brokerages may see positive revenue growth in fis-2022 too, but the growth will be muted due to the market turning volatile and new margin regulations put in place by the regulator, said rating agency Crisil.

According to estimates made by the agency, broking revenue grew by around 65 to 70 per cent in FY21 against around 7 per cent in FY20, but market volatility and phased implementation of new margin regulations may act as a drag on their incremental volume growth, resulting in marginal revenue growth in financial year 2021-22.

slowdown has already begun with revenue broking growth of around 1 to 8 per cent in the third quarter of fiscal 2021 on a sequential basis," said Crisil. "This indicates that client additions are not translating into higher broking revenue of late," it said.

Suez Canal crisis: Egypt may

seek \$1 bn in compensation

"With equity markets turning volatile since January 2021 and revised regulations with higher margin requirements kicking in, sustainability of trading volumes in fiscal 2022 may be a challenge, thereby impacting revenue," Krishnan

tor, Crisil Ratings, said. In the first nine months of fiscal 2021, brokerage houses across industry added around 52 lakh clients - as much as they did during the preceding four years, cumulatively. This took the active client base to 1.6 crore as of

Sitaraman, senior direc-

December Continued buoyancy in equities and new client additions also led to average daily turnover (ADTO) hitting decadal highs.

"Ample time availability during the lockdown/pandemic; broad-based high returns in equities since March 2020, user-friendly trading platforms (including on mobile) and schemes with very low brokerage; relatively low interest yield on sayings and deposits led to influx of retail investors into equity markets during the last fiscal," Crisil said.

### **US MFG SECTOR INDEX RACES TO 37-YEAR** HIGH IN MARCH



LUCIA MUTIKANI

A measure of US manufacturing activity soared to its highest level in more than 37 years in March, driven by strong growth in new orders the clearest sign vet that a much anticipated economic boom was probably underway.

The Institute Supply Management (ISM) said on Thursday its index of national factory activity jumped to a reading of 64.7 last month from 60.8 in February. That was the highest level since December 1983.

A reading above 50 indicates expansion in manufacturing, which accounts for 11. 9 per cent of the US economy. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the index rising to 61.3 in March. The year-long pandemic has boosted demand for goods.

Economic growth is expected take off this year, juiced up by the White House's massive \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief package and the reopening of nonessential businesses as more Americans are vaccinate ed against the coron

avirus. The relief package passed last month is sending additional \$1,400 to qualified checks households and extending the government safe ty net for the unem-ployed through September 6. Households have also accumulated about \$19 trillion in excess savings, which are expected

to fuel pent-up demand. President Joe Biden on Wednesdav unveiled a plan to spend roughly \$2 trillion on infrastructure like roads and bridges over 10 years. —*Reuters* 

### Salary income of Gulf workers tax exempt: FM Moitra had tweeted a pic-Finance

Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said salary income earned by nonresident Indians in the Gulf countries would continue to be exempt from tax in India.

Quoting a tweet of TMC MP Mahua Moitra, Sitharaman clarified that the Finance Act 2021 has not brought in any new or additional tax on Indian workers in Saudi/UAE/ Oman/Qatar.

ture of an amendment in Finance Bill, 2021, saving the complicated words in the amendment is in reality a Special Gulf workers tax.

"FM going back on her words. Hardworking words. Indian workers in Saudi/ UAE/Oman/Qatar to be taxed EXTRA," Moitra tweeted

Sitharman said the said

amendment in the Finance Act, 2021, has

eral definition of the term "liable to tax" in the Income Tax Act to provide clarity. This amendment has

not altered the taxability of salary income earned by non-resident Indian citizens in the Gulf coun-Their salary income earned in the Gulf countries would continue to be exempt in India, the Office of Finance Minister tweet-

#### NIIF INVESTS ₹2,100 CR S&P 500 BREAKS ABOVE 4000-MARK **AS BULL MARKET BARRELS ON**

**KATIE GREIFELD & VILDANA HAJRIC** 

A revival in technology shares alongside budding optimism about the global recovery pushed the world's most important stock index past 4000

points for the first time. The S&P 500 rallied as much as 0.7 per cent to a investors weighed President Joe Biden's newly unveiled \$2.25 trillion stimulus plan ahead of Friday's US employment report, which is expected to show the quickest pace of hiring in five months. While it took almost five years for the index to rise from the 2000 milestone to 3000

in July 2019, the latest

1000-point trip took about 21 months. The S&P 500's recent

mark's biggest sector.

climb has largely been built on a surge in energy and financial shares as the vaccine rollout picks up speed. That's pressured Treasury yields higher and boosted inflation expectations, send-ing cyclical stocks upward. How-ever, a moderation in the bond selloff's breakneck pace has breathed life back into tech stocks, the bench-

"The market at 4000 now is a much broader and better S&P 500 than it was at the peak of February 2020," said Arthur Hogan, chief market strategist at National Securities Corp. — Bloomberg

#### IN MANIPAL HOSPITALS FC BUREAU

CHENNAI, APRIL 1

The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund, an investment platform anchored by the Government of India, has invested Rs 2,100 crore in Bengaluru-based Manipal Hospitals. The investment through the NIIF Strategic Opportunities Fund is NIIF's first funding in the Indian healthcare sector.

Manipal operates 15 hospitals and the key focus is on tertiary and quater-nary care. Last year, Manipal had acquired 100 per cent stake in Columbia Asia Hospitals for Rs 1,800 Demand for healthcare

has been growing and this

has been further accentu-

ated in the backdrop of the

TAREK EL-TABLAWY & MIRETTE MAGDY APRIL 1

around \$1 billion in compensation after a giant container vessel blocked the Suez Canal for almost a week and roiled shipping markets.

The figure is a rough estimate of losses linked to transit fees, damages incurred during the dredging and salvage efforts, the cost of the equipment, and labour. Suez Canal Authority chief executive Osama Rabie said late Wednesday to local television channel Sada Elbalad.



seek compensation from. country,"

He did not specify who the Canal Authority would Evergreen Taiwan's



its due.'

freed on Monday.

Marine Corp, the vessel's



"This is the right of the ountry," Rabie said, adding that the incident hurt Egypt's reputation. This country should get

The 400-metre-long Ever Given ship ran aground on March 23 in the southern part of the canal and was



tee arrival time of cargoes, said president Eric Hsieh, in the company's first briefing since the blockage. The ship and its cargo,

was

transporting.

which Rabie said were worth \$3.5 billion, is currently in the Great Bitter Lake, roughly halfway along the canal. Rabie said they could be

held in Egypt if the matter of compensation went to court. Such a scenario is unlikely, he said, because Egypt has a long relationship with the ship owner.
—Bloomberg SHORT TAKES

#### **Female lifter fails**

dope test, axed

New Delhi: A woman weightlifter, who was part of the ongoing national camp at the National Institute of Sports in Patiala, has been provisional. ly suspended after testing positive for banned substance. The weightlifter, a national record holder and who has participated in several international tournaments including the

Commonwealth Championship where she won gold, was set to be a part of the Indian team for the Asian Championship to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from April 16 to 25. "Yes, she has failed a dope test.

The report came about 10-15 days back," a source in the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLF) confirmed. Taking a break from the national camp, the weightlifter went home in October last year when

national coach Vijay Sharma

and star lifter Mirabai Chanu had travelled to the United After she returned to the camp. her sample was collected by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) in November last. The weightlifter had

### **Ex-Olympian guilty**

allegedly consumed a supple-

ment that contained the pro-

of drug smuggling

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

#### **Telangana draw** a blank in cycling

Hyderabad: Telangana failed to win even a single medal at the 72nd Senior, 49th Junior & 35th Sub-Junior National Track Cycling Championship that concluded at SATS Velodrome in Osmania University, Hyderabad on Wednesday. It was a major embarrassment

for the hosts, who had fielded

42 athletes, none of whom

could make the podium in the 44 events that were part of the championships in which 552 players from 24 states participated. Officials presenting medals was the closest locals could get to the podiums. However, the meet saw 14 records being broken. Records fell in the Men's Elite Team Sprint (Manipur), Men's Elite Sprint ESOW (Andaman and Nicobar). Team Pursuit (SSCB), Individual Pursuit (Anil Manglaw from RSPB) and 1 km

Time Trial (Amarjeet Singh Puniab). Women's Elite Individual Pursuit (Swast Singh), Team Pursuit (RSPB). The Junior Men broke four records while the Junior Women and Sub-Juniors Boys

**20 players in lead** at Senior chess

beat one record each

**Hyderabad:** International Master Rahul Srivatsav is sharing the lead with 19 others after Round Three of the Telangana State Senior Fide Rated Chess Championship being organised by the Telangana State Chess Association at the Lal Bahadur

Top seeds Bharat Kumar Reddy Poluri, Kheerthi Ganta, Krishna Karthik N. Sushanth Kamabathula, Karyasheel P, Rajsekhar B, Shaati Majumder, and Md Bashiq Imrose are among leaders who have three

points each Third round (selected results): Gudla Shanth Kumar (2) lost to Rahul Srivatshav (3), Bharat Kumar Reddy Poluri (3) bt Mahendar (2), Teerthala Abhinav (2.5) drew with Raghav Srivathsav (2.5), Aditya Varun Gampa (3) bt Surya Alakanti (2).



CRICKET

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

# LIONS ON PROVL Germans beaten in Cup qualifier

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

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

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

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

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



## Hazlewood pulls out of IPL

Melbourne, April 1: Australia and Chennai Super Kings fast bowler Hazlewood has pulled out of the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League to take a small break from cricket and keep himself fresh for the Ashes and the T20 World Cup later this year.

Hazlewood was to depart with other Australia's IPL-bound players and join CSK but decided to skip the cash-rich league,

Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli (left) and star batsman AB de Villiers join the RCB squad in

Virat, AB arrive in Chennai

Head

The 37-year-old batting

great has been a key play-

er for the team since he

joined the franchise in

Katich also came out of

quarantine, along with

pacer Navdeep Saini as

the RCB team underwent

another practice session.

**UMESH READY TO HIT** 

THE DECK FOR DC

Out of mandatory seven-

day quarantine, India and

Delhi Capitals fast bowler

Umesh Yadav is ready to

hit the deck as he returns

to be with the familiar

faces at his old franchise

in the Indian Premier

League, beginning on

April 9.
The 33-year-old Yadav,

coach Simon

Chennai on Thursday ahead of upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League.

Kohli, who has been

with the RCB since the

inception of the IPL in

2008, quit the bio-bubble

in Pune on Monday after

India's ODI series win

He has been part of bio-

secure bubbles since the

end of January, ahead of

the England series, and

was part of each of the

Tests, five

Another key RCB player

and South African star

batsman A B de Villiers

also joined the RCB bio-

"The spaceship has landed! AB de Villiers has

joined the RCB bubble in

Chennai," the RCB tweet-

bubble on Thursday.

Internationals and three

against England.

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

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

saying by *cricket.com.au*. "We've got a big winter ahead. The West Indies is

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

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

He follows Josh Philippe (RCB) and Mitchell Marsh

who started his IPL

career with the Delhi

franchise, returned to the

side after being acquired

for his base price of ₹1

crore in the auction in

"After being in quaran-

tine for one week, it was

great to step onto the ground and spend some time with the boys,"

"I just want to do well

whenever I have the ball

in my hand. I will defi-

nitely give my best for my

team and keep getting better everyday," he said

Yadav, who has picked

up 119 wickets in 121 IPL

matches, said he felt at

in the Delhi

February.

Yadav said.

in a DC release.

home Capitals camp. (SRH) in withdrawing from the IPL, while some other Australians may consider opting out also, according to the report. Hazlewood has been

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

### **IPL WILL BE A HUGE BENEFIT** TO US: STOKES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **GRIEZMANN STARS**

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

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

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

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

#### WINS FOR SPAIN

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

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



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

#### THE RESULTS

North Macedonia (Pandev 45+2, Elmas 85) (Gundogan 63-pen) **England** 

(Kane 19-pen, Maguire 85) **Poland** (Moder 58) Spain

(Olmo 34, Torres 36, Moreno 75) (Halimi 70)

(Stefano Sensi 48, Ciro Lithuania

France (Griezmann 60) **Bosnia** and Herzegovina

Georgia (Khvicha Kvaratskhelia 78) (Kakabadze 76-og)

### **NAOMI SURRENDERS TO SAKKARI, MEDVEDEV ALSO IS OUT OF MIAMI**

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

Seventh-seeded Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut beat Medvedev 6-4, 6-2, for his third win in as many meetings with the Russian who was runner-up to Novak Djokovic at the Australian Open and ascended to No. 2 in the world with his victory at Marseille in March. Women's world No. 2 Naomi Osaka — seeded second behind Ashleigh Barty in the prestigious ATP Masters and WTA hardcourt tournament had bowed out hours earli-

er, the Japanese star's 23match winning streak coming to a crashing halt with a 0-6, 4-6 loss to Greece's Maria Sakkari.

## Karteek & Arnav doubles champs

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

Chennai, April 1: India

and Royal Challengers

Bangalore captain Virat

Kohli reached here on

Thursday to join his IPL

squad before which he

will undergo a seven-day

started its training camp

on Tuesday for the

upcoming season which

has arrived in Chennai,"

RCB said, announcing

Kohli's arrival in a tweet.

along with a picture of

their captain wearing a

RCB face defending

Indians in the tourna-

ment opener on April 9

Mumbai

"Captain Virat Kohli

begins on April 9.

The team has already

quarantine.

champions

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

tournament being held at Tennis In the finals, Karteek Arnav dished out their best game to topple top seeds Ishan Hussain and Irfan Hussain of

Tamil Nadu in straight

sets at 7-5, 6-3.

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

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

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



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

### Laxmi-Rithika best pair; Hrishik-Dhiraj also win

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

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

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

THE RESULTS

Girls U-16 doubles final: Siri Dandu/ Rithika Kakarlamudi bt Yashasri P/ Sreemanva A 6-0, 6-1, Boys U-16 doubles final:

Vavilapally/ Dhiraj

Nikhil D'Souza/ P. Sandilya bt T. Sri Pranav/ Rohan Sriram 3-6, Boys U-16 singles semifinals: Chris Hamilton bt Harsha Perla 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-3); T. Sri Pranav

Reddy bt Nikhil D'Souza/ P.

Sandilya 6-4, 3-6, 11-9. Semifinals: Harshik Vavilapally/ Dhiraj Reddy bt G. Yashwanth/

Trishant Reddy 6-2, 3-6, 10-5;

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

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