THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI WEDNESDAY 14 APRIL 2021



NATION 4

Covid-19 pandemic an opportunity to reshape the world order: Modi



SPORT 8

Russell takes 5 wickets to limit Mumbai to 152, but his team, KKR, lose by 10 runs

TABLOID 16

Badminton player Jwala Gutta, actor Vishnu Vishal to enter wedlock April 22



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People shop at a market for the holy month of Ramzan near Jama Masjid in New Delhi on Tuesday. The first fast will be observed today in most parts of India.

Tehran to enrich uranium to 60%, the highest ever

Dubai: Iran will begin enriching uranium to 60 per cent purity, higher than the pro-gramme ever has before though still short of weapons grade, after an attack on its Natanz nuclear facility, an Iranian negotiator said Tuesday. The announcement marks a significant escalation after the sabotage, suspected to have been carried out by Israel. It could result in further action by Israel, whose PM Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed never to allow Tehran to obtain a More on Page 6

'Graft-stung' Kerala mantri Jaleel resigns

Thiruvananathapuram: Kerala higher education minister K.T. Jaleel on Tuesday resigned from the Pinarayi Vijayan Cabinet days after the state Lokayukta held that he had "abused" his position as a public servant to obtain a favour for a relative. Mr Jaleel had also moved the Kerala high court. ■ More on Page 3

Sushil Chandra takes

charge as new CEC

New Delhi: Senior most election commissioner, Sushil Chandra, will be the next chief election commissioner, President Ramnath Kovind appointed him on Sunil Arora's demitting office on Monday. Chandra will assume the charge of office of the CEC with effect from April 13, according to a press release.

More on Page 3



It's a free and fear elections!



RH: 17% **Rain:** 10%

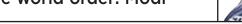
Forecast: Partly cloudy

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana **Tithi:** Chaitra Shuddha Vidiya till 12.48 pm Star: Bharani till 5.22 pm Varjyam: Nil **Durmuhurtam:** 11.51 am to Rahukalam: 12 pm to 1.30

> **SUNSET TODAY 6.46 PM** SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.55 AM MOONRISE TOMORROW 7.49 PM

> > **MOONSET TODAY 8.48 AM**





Govt to fast-track nod for foreign vaccines in India

NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

In a major step to improve vaccine coverage in India, government Tuesday announced its decision to fast-track emergency approval for all foreign-produced Covid-19 vaccines that have been approved for use in certain other countries, like the United States and European Union member states. The first 100 beneficiaries of foreign vaccines shall be assessed for seven days for safety outcomes before these are rolled out for further immunisation programmes within the country.

The Union health ministry said the plan is to add these jabs to the existing basket of vaccines for domestic use and increase the pace and coverage of



More than 150 beds ready for Covid-19 patients at a facility in Nehru Science Centre in Mumbai on Tuesday.

(which is known in other countries as the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine) and the locally made Covaxin for vaccinations, while Russian shots of Sputnik V given formal Tuesday approval on morning after recommen-

experts committee of the Drugs Controller General of India. The SEC noted that the safety and immunogenicity data pre-sented by applicant Dr Reddy's from the Indian study was comparable with that of the Phase III clinical now is using Covishield dation from the subject trial interim data from

cated for active immunisation to prevent Covid-19 disease in individuals of over 18 years of age. The vaccine should be administered intramuscularly in two doses of 0.5 ml each with an interval of 21 days. The pricing of the vaccine is yet to finalised. The first doses of Sputnik V are expected to be available through direct import by the end of April.

'The matter of augmenting the 'basket of vaccines' available for fighting the pandemic as well as to accelerate the pace and coverage of domestic vacci nation programme was discussed at the 23rd meeting of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 held on 11th April 2021, chaired by Dr V.K. Paul, Niti Aayog member (health). The NEGVAC recmember

No 'lockdown', but Maha imposes strict curbs across state till May 1

SONU SHRIVASTAVA MUMBAI, APRIL 13

Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday announced the imposition of prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC from 8 pm on Wednesday to 7 am on May 1 in order to break the chain of Covid-19 transmission. Only essential services will remain open between 7 am and 8 pm daily. Public transport will continue to function only for essential services' workers and for essential activities by the general

public.
"Nobody would be allowed to use the public

Skymet claims

monsoon set

to be 'healthy

normal' this yr

New Delhi, April 13: The

which brings more than

75 per cent of the coun-

try's rainfall during

June-September, will be

normal this year, Skymet

Weather, a private weather forecaster said

on Tuesday.
The north India plains,

along with a few parts of

the northeast region, are likely to be at risk of

being rain deficient

through the season, the

G.P. Sharma, President

(Meteorology) of the

Skymet Weather said the Long Period Average

(LPA) of the rainfall during June to September

will be 103 per cent with an error margin of plus

or minus 5 per cent.

"That is the healthy nor-

He added that there is 60 per cent probability of a 'normal' monsoon and

15 per cent probability of

Monsoon in the range

of 96-104 of the LPA is

considered to be normal

and 103 per cent of the

LPA is on the higher side

On a monthly scale,

June is likely to receive

rainfall of 106 per cent of LPA, while July is

expected to record 97 per

cent of LPA. August and

September are expected

to receive 99 per cent and

116 per cent of the LPA, the Skymet said. —*PTI* ■ More on Page 7

of the normal range.

'above normal' rainfall.

mal," Mr Sharma said.

Skymet said.

monsoon,

Southwest



transport without a valid reason, excluding the people notified under essential services in an order issued by the disaster management unit of the relief and rehabilitation department," Thackeray said in a video

Nobody would be allowed to use the public transport without a valid reason, excluding the people notified under essential services.

Uddhav Thackeray Maha CM

address to citizens on Tuesday evening. Stating that the situation is very grim in Maharashtra, Mr Thackeray said the state government would use

Maharashtra on Tuesday reported 60,212 new Covid-19 cases, taking the total positive cases to 5,93,042. The state also reported 281 deaths on Tuesday. Underlining the shortage

of oxygen and Remdesivir injections, among other things, Mr Thackeray said: "At present, 1,200 MT oxygen is being produced in our state. Of these, 950 MT to 1,000 MT oxygen is used daily. The demand for Remdesivir injections is also increasing.'

The CM also said he would speak to Prime Minister Narendra Modi this 15-day period to scale up its health infrastructor to request him to provide the Indian Air Force's ■ Turn to Page 4

NGT doesn't have the power to strike down laws, says SC

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that the National Green Tribunal (NGT) was not vested with the powers to examine the validity of any law or to strike it down.

"Prima facie we are of the view the National Green Tribunal can't strike down a law," said Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, heading a bench comprised also Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian.

The court's observation on the limits of the powers

THE COURT'S observation on the limits of the powers of the green tribunal came in the course of the hearing of a petition by NGO Environment Support Group

of the green tribunal came in the course of the hearing of a petition by NGO Environment Support

Environment Support Group had challenged the Karnataka high court order transferring a case to NGT and asking it to adjudicate a challenge to Section 40 of the Biodiversity Act that empowers the Central government to exempt certain biological resources.

Staying the proceedings before the green tribunal, the court has posted the matter for further hearing next week.

Section 40 of the Biodiversity Act reads: Notwithstanding thing contained in this act, the Central Government may, in consultation with the National Biodiversity Authority, by notification in the official gazette, declare that the provisions of the act shall not apply to

Turn to Page 4



spokesman Mandeep "We have Commander Huda said: received the application from the TMC for a no objection certificate for the Gandhi statue protest. It was received at 9.40 am today. It is under process. We have not yet issued the NOC for that. We are processing it as per laid down procedures and guidelines.



RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, APRIL 13

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday wrapped up her dharna in protest against the Election Commission's undemocratic and unconstitutional" ban on her campaign for 24 hours in the Assembly election within few hours after the EC ordered similar steps, in a balancing act, against three BJP leaders - Rahul Sinha, state chief and Midnapore MP Dilip Ghosh and Nandigram candidate Suvendu Adhikari -- over their con-

troversial remarks.
Though the Trinamul Congress supremo had announced she would sit on dharna from 12 noon, she reached the Gandhi Statue at the Maidan, which falls under the authority of the Army's Eastern Command as it is defence land, quite early. From 11.45 am Ms Banerjee, in her wheelchair, began her silent protest, also a rare scene, sitting there alone.

As she was seen talking on her mobile before getting busy at painting, it came to light that her party's application to the defence ministry for per-mission for her demonstration at the venue was yet to

Command Eastern

Meanwhile the EC, in wake of the TMC's questions on its impartiality, ordered a 48-hour campaign ban, starting from 12 noon on Tuesday, on Habra

Turn to Page 4



a wheelchair, holds a dharna in protest against the EC's 24-hour campaign ban on her, in front of the Gandhi statue in central Kolkata on Tuesday.

Shah plays Gorkha card, pledges 'solution' in hills

AGE CORRESPONDENT

the Gorkhas about their separate statehood demand for a "Gorkhaland" ahead of the West Bengal Assembly polls, Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday assured them in Darieeling that "two governments of the BJP" — one at the Centre and another in West Bengal, if the saffron party comes to power in the state, would work out their "per-

In his desperate bid to woo

manent political solution" Constitution. He also made it clear that the BJP government at the Centre does not have any plan to implement worried about the permanent political solution for the Gorkhas... I promise you today that the permanent political solution for the Gorkhas will be worked out by two governments of the BJP, one at the Centre and state.'

Cong-Left-ISF allies fight battles in Murshidabad

PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI

BEHRAMPORE (WEST BENGAL), APRIL 13

The fate of the triangular alliance in West Bengal has come under the hammer in state Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury's stronghold as four more key seats in Murshidabad are seeing a contest among the three Sanjukta Morcha partners. On April 8, the last date of filing nominations.

it emerged that the Indian Secular Front had fielded candidates in three seats against its Congress ally.

Mohammad Meraj Sharif is contesting against five-time Congress MLA Moinul Hoque at Farakka, Masum Reja is fighting Congress MLA Firoza Begum at Raninagar with Habib Sheikh against Congress Riazuddin Ahmed in Murshidabad.

More on Page 3

Biden to withdraw all US troops in Afghan by 9/11's 20th anniv

Move to defy earlier May 1 deadline risks retaliation by Taliban against US and Nato forces, also intensified attacks on Ghani govt

Washington, April 13: US President Joe Biden will withdraw all troops from Afghanistan by September 11, the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on

nated from that country, US officials said Tuesday. The decision defies a May 1 deadline for full withdrawal under a peace agreement the Trump administration reached with the Taliban last year. But Mr Biden has been hinting for weeks that he was going to let the dead-

line lapse, and as the days

went by it became clear

that an orderly withdrawal

of the remaining 2,500 troops would be difficult

America that were coordi-

and was unlikely. A senior administration official said the drawdown would begin May 1.

Mr Biden's choice of the 9/11 date underscores the reason that American troops were in Afghanistan to begin with — to prevent extremist groups like Al Qaeda from establishing a foothold again that could be used to launch attacks against the US and the

The President decided that the deadline for withdrawal of US forces had to be absolute, rather than provisional on conditions inside Afghanistan as the deadline neared, the senior administration



US President Joe Biden

said. "We're committing today to going to zero" US forces by September 11, and possibly well before, the official said, adding that Mr Biden concluded that a conditioned withdrawal would be "a recipe for staying in Afghanistan

forever US officials provided



details on Mr Biden's decision on condition of anonymity, speaking ahead of the announcement. It was first reported by The Washington Post. According to the administration official, the only

deemed necessary to pro-

US forces remaining in Afghanistan will be those have called the endless war.

troops in coordination with Nato allies, the administration official added. Mr Biden's decision risks retaliation by the Taliban on US and Afghan forces, targeting the government of President Abdul Ghani in Kabul and possibly escalating the 20-year war. And it will reignite political division over America's involvement in what many

An intelligence commu-

tect diplomats in the coun-

try. An exact number had yet to be decided. The

extended timeline will

allow a safe and orderly

withdrawal of American

the next year said prospects for a peace deal in Afghanistan are "low" warned that "the Taliban is likely to make gains on the battlefield". If the coalition withdraws support, the report says, the Afghan government will struggle to control the Taliban. In a February 2020 agreement with the administration of President Donald Trump, the Taliban agreed to halt attacks and hold peace talks with the Afghan government led by President Abdul Ghani, in exchange for a US commitment to a complete withdrawal by Turn to Page 4

about global challenges for

















SHORT TAKES

Man kills self at

Metro station

New Delhi: A 55-year-old man allegedly committed suicide by jumping in front of a moving train at Chawri Bazar station on the Delhi

Metro's Yellow Line on Tuesday, police said. Services were briefly delayed between Rajiv Chowk and Kashmere Gate stations due to the incident, according to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). The man, who has been

identified as Mohammad Khizar, a resident of Sitaram Bazar, jumped in from of the moving train around 12 PM at Chawri Bazar metro station, a senior police officer said. The body was sent to Lady Hardinge Hospital for a post-mortem examination, the officer said. The DMRC took to Twitter to inform commuters about the delay in services. "Delay in services between Rajiv Chowk and Kashmere Gate due to a passenger on track at Chawri

Constable injured in road accident

Bazar. Normal services on all

other lines," it said in a

tweet posted at 12:16 pm.

New Delhi: A 30-year-old Delhi Police constable was injured after an Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) was hit allegedly by a tempo in north Delhi's Civil Lines area in the early hours of Tuesday, officials said. The constable, Anil, who is posted at Civil Lines police station, was on duty as a driver with assistant sub inspector (ASI) Devender when the incident took place around 2 am, they said. According to the police, the team was patrolling in the ERV along the dark stretches between Chandigram Akhara and Majnu Ka Tilla when they stopped the vehicle and stepped down to check the air pressure in one of the tyres. Meanwhile, a tempo allegedly hit the ERV, injuring Anil, and fled from the spot. The ASI immediately shifted the injured constable to Parmanand hospital where is undergoing treat-

Chain snatching gang busted in Ghaziabad

ment, a senior police

Ghaziabad: Police on Monday busted a Delhibased gang of chain snatchers and arrested four people, an official said. Indirapuram circle DSP Anshu Jain said the gang was active in Delhi-NCR. Those arrested have been identified as Rizwan, the gang leader, Khalid, Arif, and Asif. The police have recovered nine gold chains, two country-made pistols and two knives from their possession. During interrogation, Rizwan told the police that he used to sell the stolen chains to a goldsmith in Kondli. Later, Sunder Lal, the goldsmith, was also apprehended, the DSP added. — PTI

AT 40.2°C, CITY SEES APRIL'S HOTTEST DAY

New Delhi: Delhi on Tuesday recorded a maximum temperature of 40.2 degrees Celsius, the highest so far this month, the India meteorological department (IMD) said. The minimum temperature settled at 19.4 degrees Celsius, a notch below normal, it said. The mercury is expected to hover around 40 degrees Celsius for the next two days. Thereafter, cloudy skies are likely to bring it down by two to three notches. India meteorological department officials said a heatwave is not predicted in Delhi for another week. A heatwave is declared in plains when the maximum temperature is more than 40 degrees Celsius and at least 4.5 notches above normal. A severe heatwave is declared if the departure from normal temperature is more than 6.5 degrees

Celsius, according to the

India meteorological

department. - PTI

Kejriwal urges Centre to cancel Class 10, 12 exams

for plasma donation

Arvind

chief minister said

planned surgeries

like knee replace-

months though he

stressed that there

is enough capacity

for emergency sur-

appeal to the youth

to step out of the

house only when it

is necessary and follow all Covid protocols," Aam

"I would like to

ment can delayed for

geries.

AGE CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

Delhi chief minis-

Kejriwal Tuesday

said very less plas-

ma is available in

stock for treating

Covid patients and

appealed to those

who have recov-

ered from the dis-

ease to actively

A day after 14 hospitals in the nation-

donate it.

Delhi sees highest daily spike of 13,468 Covid cases

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs **NEW DELHI, APRIL 13**

Reeling under the fourth wave of Covid, the national capital Tuesday recorded the highest-ever spike of 13,468 cases and 81 deaths due to the infection, giving it the dubious distinction of being the worst affected city in the county.

The highest single-day spike in Mumbai stands at 9,986 cases till date, fol-lowed by Bengaluru (6,387 cases), Chennai (2,105) and Kolkata (1,271 cases).

In the wake of an exponential rise in coronavirus cases in Delhi, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal appealed to the Centre to cancel the Class 10 and 12 board exams and explore alternative methods, including online exams. Warning that conducting the exams may contribute to a large-scale spread of the virus, he said the centres could emerge as major

hotspots.
"Six lakh children in Delhi are going to write the CBSE exams. Nearly one lakh teachers will be a part of it. These (the centres) can become major hotspots leading to large-scale spread of corona. corona. Children's lives and health are very important to us. I request the Centre to cancel the CBSE exams," he said at a press conference on Tuesday afternoon.

The Central Board of Education (CBSE) can explore other

JGU launches

admin service

for varsities, a

first in India

NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

AGE CORRESPONDENT

The O.P. Jindal Global

University (JGU) has

announced India's first

U n i v e r s i t y Administrative Service

programme for its graduates. This will redefine

leadership and manage-

ment services at univer-

sities and create a group

of highly talented and

qualified people who can

be fast-tracked into exec-

utive management and

leadership teams for the

governance and adminis-

Administrative Service

has the potential to iden-

tify, retain and train tal-

ent and capability. This

JGU initiative can be a

game-changer in the world of Indian acade-

mia as higher education

institutions across the

country need fundamen-

tal institutional reforms,

the heart of which relates to improving their internal gover-nance. Announcing the

launch, JGU's founding

vice-chancellor C. Raj Kumar said: "The higher

education sector in India

has grown tremendously

over the last few years. Strong institutional gov-

ernance will be critical to

the next stage of evolution of Indian universi-

ties as envisaged in the

National Education Policy 2020. As a young Institution of Eminence, JGU has always commit-ted itself to leading new

pathways of strengthen-

ing institutional excel-

lence, and to enabling

young leaders to reimag-

ine the future of Indian higher education."

Administrative Service

is open to graduating stu-

dents and JGU alumni of B.A./BBA LL.B. (Hons.), LL.B., LL.M., MBA, IBM,

M.A.(DLB), and M.A.(PP)

University

University

tration of universities.

HC refuses to entertain plea to relax age criterion for corona vaccination

New Delhi, April 13: The Delhi High Court Tuesday refused to entertain a plea seeking direction to the Centre and AAP government to relax the age criterion for Covid vaccination and to allow more private sector participa-

A bench of justices Rajiv Sahai Endlaw and Amit Bansal said it appeared that the public interest litigation (PIL) has been filed for publicity rather than doing any good to the society.
"We are prima facie of

the view that the court does not have the wherewithal to deal with such matters which require

methods, including online

exams and promoting stu-

dents on the basis of internal assessments, he said. 'Several countries have done it; some states in India are doing it too. Some alternative methods could be thought of. Children can be promoted this time on the basis of either online exam or internal assessment. But the exams should be cancelled," he added. The CBSE Class 10 and 12 exams are scheduled to begin on May 4. With the exponential increase in coronavirus

cases, the chorus for can-

empirical data..," the high court said.

It said since the petitioner is withdrawing the plea and has understood the consequences and in future will not indulge in such litigation, it was refraining from imposing costs. The high court was hearing a petition, filed by a final year law student of Delhi University, seeking direction to the authorities to formulate a policy to provide the benefits of vaccination drive to senior citizens, differently-abled persons and poor sections of the society by initiating door-todoor vaccination services in Delhi.

Meanwhile, Mr Kejriwal said very less plasma is available in stock for treating Covid patients and he appealed to those who have recovered from the virus to actively donate it.

"During the previous waves, people actively donated plasma. When the situation improved, there was less demand for plasma and subsequently the donations went down. Now, the cases have again risen and there is very less plasma available in stock. I appeal to those who have recovered from the virus to aid the fight against the

cellation or postponing the board exams is growing. Anil Shukla returns to Delhi

New Delhi, April 13: Senior IPS officer Anil Shukla returned to his parent cadre Delhi Police after successfully completing his tenure of six years in the NIA, during which he led investigations into terror funding in Jammu and Kashmir, Pulwama attack and the recent Sachin Waze case.

Shukla, a 1996-batch officer from Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre, completed his six years on central deputation on Monday and was expected to join Delhi Police soon in the rank of joint commissioner, officials

During his tenure in National nvestigation Agency Shukla entrusted with the important case of unravelling the funding of terseparatist and groups in Jammu and

Kashmir, where stone pelting had become an order of the day in 2016 Mujahideen

camped continuously in Kashmir and started probing the role of certain politicians and business persons till he finally laid his hand on Zahoor Watali, a promi-nent citizen of the Valley and well connected within the political circles of the erstwhile state. After registering a case

ried out searches at the including Syed Ali Shah Geelani Umar Farooq, and started cracking the whip on who acted as overground workers of



post the killing of Burhan Wani, poster boy of the banned Hizbul group. Shukla and his team

in May 2007, the NIA carresidences of well-known separatists, and Mirwaiz separatist groups" cadres terror



PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

The Supreme Court, on Tuesday, said that the police has the "statutory right and duty" to investigate into a cognisable offence and the courts would not interfere in any investigation into such offences as they are barred from usurping the jurisdiction of the police.

"The police has the statu-tory right and duty under the provisions of the Code Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to investigate into a cognisable offence and the courts would not thwart any investigation into the cognisable offences," said bench comprising Justice D. Y. Chandrachud, Justice M. R. Shah, and Justice Sanjiv Khanna in a judgment pronounced on

Speaking for the bench,

THE COURT said that it is only in cases where no cognisable offence or offence of any kind is disclosed in the FIR that the court will not permit an investigation to go on

Justice Shah said, 'Ordinarily, the courts are barred from usurping the jurisdiction of the police since the two organs of the state operate in two specific spheres of activities and one ought not to tread over the other sphere. The functions of the judiciary and the police are complemen-

tary, not overlapping."
It further said that excluding exceptional cases where non-interference would result in miscarriage of justice, the court and the judicial process should not interfere at the stage of investigation of offences.

The court said that it is

'Angry with God', man

Medics attend to a Covid patients at Shehnai Banquet Hall, temporarily converted into an isolation ward, as coronavirus cases surge across the country near Lok Nayak **Kejri appeals Delhiites Noida records highest**

deaths in 4 months

Noida, April 13: Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddh Nagar recorded four coronavirus deaths on Tuesday, taking the district's toll to 97, official data This is showed. the first time in over four months that the district witnessed more than a single death

due to Covid in a day. On November 24, it had recorded

new cases and the tally rose to 27,957. The number of active active cases climbed to 1,602, the health department said. Fifty-five more

patients recuperated, taking the recoveries 26,258, it said.

Gautam Buddh Nagar has a toll of 97 with a mortality rate of 0.34 per cent. The recovery rate reached 93.92 per cent, the statis-

only in cases where no cog-

nisable offence or offence

of any kind is disclosed in

the FIR that the court will not permit an investiga-

However, in a rider, the

court said that the power

of quashing FIR should be

exercised "sparingly with circumspection" in rarest of rare cases. The court

clarified that rarest of rare

cases may not be confused

with the doctrine of rarest

of rare cases in the award of capital punishment.

The court said this in a

slew of 18 directions

issued by it while quash-

ing and setting aside a

Bombay high court's inter-

im order protecting three

accused from any coercive

action in a case involving

forgery and fabrication

of Board Resolution and

the fraudulent sale of a

valuable property, Naziribagh Palace, ad-measuring 111,882 sq.ft.

tion to go on.

Govt to health facilities: Strictly follow protocol for admission

New Delhi, April 13: With an exponential rise in Covid cases in the city, the Delhi government has directed health facilities to strictly follow admission protocol while admitting coronavirus patients and said mild or asymptomatic cases can be considered for home isolation. The DGHS said that severe cases involving respiratory distress requiring mechanical ventilation should be admitted to a dedicated Covid hospital.

The government has warned of action for failure in adherence to laid down admission protocol. In an order issued last week, the directorate general of health services said that it has been observed that hospitals are admitting mild and moderate cases of Covid which are not in line with the prescribed admission protocol.

On Monday, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had appealed to people to avoid rushing to hospitals. He had also said the AAP government did not want to impose lockdown in Delhi but such a situation may arise if there is a rush to the hospitals and beds are unavailable for the serious patients.

HC to hear Hegde's plea on July 8

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

The Delhi high court, on Tuesday, said that it will hear advocate Sanjay Hegde's plea challenging the suspension of his Twitter account on July 8. A single-judge bench of Justice Prathiba M. Singh listed his plea for hearing on July 8.

The court was hearing an application filed by Mr Hegde seeking an early hearing in his plea. The plea was filed by Kishore. In his early plea, the advocate has sought a direction to Twitter to restore his account, wnich was permanentiy suspended on November

The petitioner has said that the suspension of his Twitter account is contrary to the 'Twitter Rules' and its terms of use, illegal and arbitrary. It is a violation of his right to free speech and expression guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) and a violation of his right to assembly and right to form association guaranteed by Articles 19(1)(b) and 19(1)(c) of the Constitution.

defiles 3 Hanuman idols AGE CORRESPONDENT was upset and angry with God as there has been no rain this year and that it is

NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

Upset and "angry with God" over rising temperature and lack of rain, a man defiled three idols of Lord Hanuman in south-west Delhi's Kakrola village which landed him in jail on Tuesday. The accused, Mahesh (50) of Bharat Vihar J.J. colony, is a cobbler, police said. The matter was reported

by a priest on Tuesday morning who first spotted the damaged Hanuman idols at three adjacent spots in Kakrola, a senior police officer said. "We received a call at 7.45

am regarding defiling of statue at three spots in Kakrola area," the officer According to the police,

the accused told them during interrogation that he getting hotter with every passing day. Following the incident, a

group of people, including residents, local leaders and those associated with the Bajrang Dal, gathered at Dwarka Mor and stopped traffic movement. Efforts to calm them down were successful, and

traffic movement was regulated, the police said. "We have registered a case under section 295

(injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class) and 295 A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) of the IPC. The accused, Mahesh,

3 arrested for killing man, injuring friend

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

Three people were arrested for allegedly stabbing a 22-year-old man to death and injuring his friend in east Delhi's Kalyanpuri area in the early hours of Tuesday, police said.

According to police, they received information regarding a quarrel from the area around 2 am.

On reaching the spot, they found Abhimanyu of Khichdipur and Abhishek with stab wounds. They were attacked with knives by a group of men, a sen-

ior police officer said. They were rushed to the Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital, Abhimanyu succumbed to injuries, the officer added.

A case under sections 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder) and 34 (common intension) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered at the Kalyanpuri police station, and an investigation is being carried out, the police

Skymet claims monsoon set to be 'healthy normal' this yr

per cent of the country's rainfall during June-September, will be normal this year, Skymet Weather, a private weather forecaster said on Tuesday.

The north India plains, along with a few parts of the northeast region, are likely to be at risk of being rain deficient through the season, the Skymet said.

G.P. Sharma, president (Meteorology) of the Skymet Weather said the Long Period Average (LPA)

New Delhi, April 13: The Southwest monsoon, which brings more than 75 of the rainfall during June to September will be 103 per cent with an error margin of plus or minus 5 per

festival in New Delhi on Tuesday.

"That is the healthy normal," Mr Sharma said. He added that there is 60 per cent probability of a normal monsoon and 15 per cent probability of 'above normal' rainfall.

Monsoon in the range of 96-104 of the LPA is considered to be normal and 103 per cent of the LPA is on the higher side of the nor-On a monthly scale, June

record 97 per cent of LPA. August and September are expected to receive 99 per cent and 116 per cent of the LPA, the Skymet said. Mr Sharma said 2021 will be the third consecutive

year of a good monsoon. Last two years have recorded above normal rainfall. In terms of geographical risk, the plains of north India along with a few parts of the northeast

region are likely to be at

risk of being rain deficient

Artists sing religious songs at Jhandewalan Temple during the first day of Navratri

is likely to receive rainfall of 106 per cent of LPA, while July is expected to through the season, the Skymet said. "Ålso, interior parts of Karnataka face the scare of

scanty rains in the core monsoon months of July monsoon months of July and August. The onset month of June and the withdrawal phase of September is assuring good countrywide rainfall distribution," it added.

Yogesh Patil, CEO, Skymet, said the La Nina conditions prevailing in the Pacific Ocean since last

the Pacific Ocean since last year presage softening and are expected to remain neutral through the monsoon season. La Nina refers to the cooling of the Pacific waters. It has an impact over the sub-

"ENSO continues to wield a spike mid-way through the season sugthe monsoon, is ruled out,"

continent's weather.

gesting a fresh phase of cooling, albeit marginal, over the central Pacific Ocean. Therefore, the occurrence of El Nino, which normally corrupts he said. Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is neutral and is oscillating lightly on either side of the zero line.

This parameter seems to incline with a negative shift but remaining within the threshold limits. In this case, it may not heave the monsoon spurts but will refrain from harming the season, the Skymet added. Negative IOD refers to

IOD refers to its cooling. The Skymet Weather, in its forecast in January, had also predicted a normal monsoon. Last year, the Skymet Weather did not issue a monsoon forecast.

the warming of Indian

Ocean waters and positive

SHORT TAKES

'Didi's plight is that of defeated player'

Kolkata: BJP president J.P. Nadda, taking a dig at the Trinamul Congress' "khela hobe" slogan, said on Tuesday that West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's plight is that of a "defeated player". Alleging that a culture of violence has crept in West Bengal during different regimes, Mr Nadda said that the state now needs a new alternative in its political landscape, which can reestablish the rule of law. "Mamata's condition is like that of a defeated player in a game. She has done injustice to the people of the state for many years. The BJP, however, will usher in development, stop atrocities on women and create jobs for youth, if voted to power," the BJP leader said. Mr Nadda also said that the TMC supremo seems to have forgotten that she has not done anything creditworthy for the people of the state. — PTI

C'garh armed force officer kills himself

Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh: A 59-year-old Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) officer allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his service weapon in Bastar district on Tuesday, the police said. Kuber Singh, company commander of CAF's 19th "Pokhran" battalion, shot himself with his Insas rifle this evening at his unit's camp in Karanpur vil-lage under Nagarnar police station limits, a senior offi-cial said. "When his colleagues heard the gunshot from his barrack, they rushed there and found him lying in a pool of blood. Singh was declared dead on arrival by doctors. Why he took this step is being probed," he said. He was a native of Chhatarpur in MP but his family was currently staying in Chhattisgarh's Durg dis-trict, the official said. — *PTI*

Cong's 'INC TV' to be launched today

New Delhi: The Congress will launch its digital media platform "INC TV" on Wednesday aimed at conveying the party's message directly to the people, sources said. The details about the online platform will be spelt out at a press conference at 11:30 am at the party's headquarters in New Delhi. Leader of the the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala, Mahila Congress chief Sushmita Dev and Youth Congress president Srinivas B.V. will be present at the launch press conference. Sources said the platform was aimed at helping the party convey its message to the people directly and raise issues of importance. The details will be revealed at the press con-

ED SET TO GRILL 3 BENGAL COPS OVER COAL SCAM

ference, they said. -PTI

Age Correspondent New Delhi, April 13

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is all set to question three senior officials of the West Bengal police in connection with its money laundering probe into the alleged coal scam in the state. According to sources decision to question three senior cops has been taken following the custodial interrogation of the recently arrested West Bengal police officer Ashok Mishra. Mishra, the inspector-in-charge of the Bankura police station. was arrested by the Central probe agency from Delhi. He is alleged to have links with Anup Majee, alias Lala, who is considered to be the kingpin of the scam. This is the second arrest in the case Sources further said, "Apart from these three senior cops, role of several other officials of the West Bengal Police is also under the scanner of the ED". It is suspected that several other officials of the West Bengal police were in regular touch with Majee, sources said adding the agency will soon call three senior cops for guestioning in connection with the case. The ED recently attached immovable assets,

worth ₹165.86 crore, owned

investigation into the case.

These assets included land

factory premises, plant and

machinery, and other assets

of two companies.

by Anup Maiee, as part of its

■ Minister makes it clear Centre has no plan to implement NRC

Shah: Gorkha problem to be fixed if BJP is voted to power in Bengal

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, APRIL 13

In a desperate bid to woo the Gorkhas on their separate statehood demand of Gorkhaland amid the Assembly elections in West Bengal, Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday assured them in Darjeeling that "two governments of the the BJP" — one at the Centre and the other in West Bengal, if the saffron party comes to power in the state would work out a "permanent political solution" under the ambit of the Constitution.

He also made it clear that the Centre does not have any plan to imple-National Register of Citizens.

"I know you are wor-ried about the permanent political solution for Gorkhas. But our Constitution is also vast. There is a solution for every problem in our Constitution. I promise you today that a permanent political solution for the Gorkhas will be worked out by two governments of the BJP, one at the Centre and the other in state. You do not need any movement for this," Mr Shah told a rally in the hills.

Though Mr Shah did not spell out the word "Gorkhaland" in his speech, this was perhaps the first time when any arrises Br leaden in the senior BJP leader in the Narendra Modi government gave a reference to the use of constitutional provisions to sort out the issue which has slipped out the saffron party's hands.

Not impressed by the Union home minister's assurance during the poll season, Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) president Binay Tamang,

WB firing:

Forces told

to exercise

AGE CORRESPONDENT

All Central paramilitary

forces deployed in West

Bengal which include the CRPF, BSF, CISF and

SSB have been strictly

told by the Union home

ministry to "show maxi-

mum restraint and avoid

using firing at all cost

unless grave provoca-

ing election process in

the state. The advisory

comes in wake of the

Cooch Behar firing inci-

dent in which four peo-

ple were killed and trig-

gered a major war of

words between the BJP

and Trinamul Congress.

to firing last Satruday in

Cooch Behar's Sitalk-

uchi area when a mob of

almost 400 people attack-

ed a QRT unit of the CISF. The incident

became entirely political

and the Election Commi-

ssion had to announce

that no political person

would be allowed to visit

Following the incident, the entire situation was

reviewed by the Election

Commission along with

security experts from

the home ministry.

Cooch Behar.

The CISF had to resort

in managing crowds during the ongo-

'restraint'

NEW DELHI, APRIL 13



MP and actress Jaya Bachchan during an election rally for Trinamul Congress

could a "permanent political solution" mean to the Gorkhas other than "Gorkhaland"

He alleged, "Mr Shah might have remained silent on the particular word but we understand that a 'permanent political solution' means Gorkhaland. Such false promise from the BJP is not new to us. The saffron party starts to feel for us on the eve of every elections. In 2014, they got our support when Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister. After a gap of five years they remembered us and got our support after Mr Shah made a lot of assurances. But we got nothing from the BJP.'

Announcing sops for the hills, Mr Shah also tried to reach out to the GJM faction led by the outfit's founder and erstwhile chief Bimal Gurung, talking of a BJP government's withdraw al of all cases, slapped by the Mamata Banerjee

'BJP, TMC playing politics of violence'

AGE CORRESPONDENT BERHAMPORE, APRIL 13

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Tuesday accused the BJP and Trinamul Congress of trying to grab power in West Bengal by playing a "dirty game" of violence and blood.

At a party rally in Sagardighi, he alleged, "Both the BJP and TMC want to grab power over the bodies of our slain youth and an 18-year-old Rajbanshi youth in Cooch Behar. It is a dirty game they are playing. They are dividing the people on the basis of caste, creed and religion to trigger communal disharmony and hatred. The TMC even branded us as 'outsiders' here."



is that the Congress is weak while the TMC is bring development here. We are not outsiders or guests here. We are here to stay to fight the panchayat as well as Parliament polls for the betterment of Muslims.

"Murshidabad been ruled by Congress, TMC, ČPI(M). Then why are people not getting pure drinking water and education? Why are the poor vil-lagers compelled to go Kashmir and get slain by

Cong allies all set to face off in Adhir's stronghold

Ties between ISF chief, Chowdhury not good: Sources

PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI

BERHAMPORE, APRIL 13

The fate of the triangular alliance in West Bengal has come under the hammer in state Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury's stronghold as four more key seats in Murshi-dabad are seeing a con-test among the three Sanjukta Morcha part-

On April 8, the last date of filing nominations, it emerged that the Indian Secular Front had fielded candidates in three against Congress ally.

Mohammad Meraj Sharif is contesting against five-time Congress MLA Moinul Hoque at Farakka, Masum Ŕeja is fighting two-time Congress MLA Firoza Begum at Raninagar with Habib Sheikh with Habib Sheikh against Congress greenhorn Riazuddin Ahmed

in Murshidabad. also The Congress faces a challenge from another ally in Nowda, where a CPI(M)-backed Independent, Shamik fighting is against its candidate Mosharraf Hussain.



West Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chawdhury during a rally at Kumarganj in South Dinajpur district on Tuesday.

This comes after the Congress, defying the seat-sharing formula, fielded its candidate Rejaul Biswas at Shamshergunj, where CPI(M)'s Modassar Hussain is the

alliance's candidate. Mr Sharif, the ISF candidate Farakka, alleged that Mr Hoque did not do anything for the people of Farakka.

ISF spokesman Samsul Ali Mullik, however, called the party's fight against the Congress in three seats a "friendly contest" while denying of any rift within the alliance in the remaining seats Murshidabad district

Congress spokesperson Jayanta Das, however, claimed, "It will not affect our poll prospect because Farakka, Raninagar and Murshidabad are our stronghold. It is the ISF which, defying alliance formula, fielded its candidate."

But sources claimed that despite an alliance, relations between Peerzada Abbas Siddiqui, the influential Muslim cleric of Furfura Sharif who is the founder of ISF, and Mr Chowdhury are not good.

Mr Chowdhury said, "I have no knowledge about candidates Murshidabad. So I can not say anything about it. Our alliance with CPI(M) is getting stronger everyday. I am personally campaigning for the CPI(M) candidates in many seats. The CPI(M) rank and file are also fighting for the Congress whole-

India, France talk trade, Indo-Pacific

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

External affairs minister S. Jaishankar on Tuesday held bilateral discussions with visiting French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian during which "they explored ways to strengthen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, including the India-France-Trilateral mechanism" and "recognised the immense opportunities for greater collaboration in diverse sectors such as trade and investments, defence and security, health, education, research and inno-

INDIA, FRANCE also discussed 'a number of regional and global issues of mutual interest reiterating their shared commitment to a multipolar world and faith in multilateralism'

vation, energy and climate change". India also 'welcomed France's decision to take up the "Maritime Resources" pillar of India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)". Also, "to tap the full potential of bilateral trade and economic relations, both sides recognised the importance of fast tracking the discussions on an India-EU and investment agreement" The two foreign minis-

ters also discussed "a number of regional and global issues of mutual interest reiterating their shared commitment to a multipolar world and faith in multilateralism", while "addressing emerging challenges in the maritime and space domains and working together in the area of climate action and biodiversity protection"

India is a major strategic partner of France and has close defence ties rently in the midst of the process of acquiring 36 state-of-the-art Rafale fighter aircraft from France, with several of these aircraft already inducted into the Indian Air Force.

In a statement, the MEA said, "Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, minister for Europe and foreign affairs of France, is on an official visit to India from April 13-15, 2021. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar hosted the visiting foreign minister for bilateral Hyderabad House on April 13.

Indicted by Lokayukta, Kerala minister resigns

Move hours before HC was to hear his plea challenging report

AGE CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

Kerala higher education minister K.T. Jaleel, who was indicted by the Lokayukta of nepotism, abuse of power and breach of oath of office, resigned on Tuesday.

Mr Jaleel sent his resigna-tion to chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the latter forwarded it to governor Arif Mohammad Khan. In an emotional Facebook post, Mr Jaleel said that those who were baying for his blood could find some relief now. The minister's

before the Kerala high court was scheduled to hear his plea challenging the Lokayukta damning report. In his petition, Mr Jaleel had contended that the Lokayukta findings were not based on evidence or proper investigations, hence the ruling should be set aside by the high court. The Lokayukta had indicted him of appointing his close relative K.T. Adeeb by altering the educational qualifications needed for the post of general manager at the state minorities development finance corpo-



IN HIS petition, the minister had contended that the Lokayukta findings were not based on evidence or proper investigations, hence the ruling should be set aside by the high court

▶ THE LOKAYUKTA had indicted him of appointing his close relative by altering the educational qualifications needк.т. Jaleel ed for the post of general manager

The division bench of Lokayukta had ruled that power, favouritism and nepotism against Mr Jaleel had been proved.

It was the Muslim Youth League leadership which had first alleged that Mr Jaleel's cousin Adeeb was appointed general manager in the Kerala State Minorities Development Finance Corporation, flouting rules. At the time of appointment, Mr Adeeb was working as manager of a private bank.
"This forum is satisfied

that the allegation of abuse of power, favouritism, nepotism and violation of oath of office is substantiated against Dr K.T. Jaleel, minister for higher education and minority welfare," Lokayukta observed.

Mr Jaleel had written to

secretary public administration (minority welfare) demanding an alternation in the educational qualifications required for the post of general manager, in July 28, 2016. The secretary objected and made a note saying that the change could be done with the approval of the Cabinet.

Mr Jaleel came out with a

clarification that Cabinet nod was required as only an addition would be made in education qualification and it could be done by the chief minister.

Mr Vijayan approved Mr Jaleel's suggestion on August 9, 2016.

But the probe by the Lokayukta revealed that the norms regarding educational qualification had been tweaked without the approval of the Cabinet or finance department.

Sarma takes a dig at Cong front for flying MLAs out of Assam

MANOJ ANAND

Assam minister and top BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is confident about his party returning to power second time in the state, on Tuesday said that the Congress led grand alliance has shifted its candidate outside the state, ignoring the safety of strongrooms where EVMs are

Pointing out that most of the candidates are keeping a close watch and joint surveillance on strongrooms, Mr Sarma told reporters that the Congress-AIUDF which have shifted their candidates should not blame him for defeat.

If they lose elections in the counting of votes they will have a new refrain that in their absence something was done with EVMs. Hope they will not blame me for doing something wrong with EVMs," said Mr Sarma while taking a dig at Congress-AIUDF alliance for shifting at least 20 candidates in the Assam assembly polls to a hotel in Jaipur.

Suspecting motive behind this move, Mr Sarma said, "This was the time when all



Himanta Biswa Sarma

the candidates should keep a close watch on stron-grooms where EVMs are stored but surprisingly the Congress-AIUDF have shifted their candidates outside the state.

He said that these political parties should clarify their stand that they have left the strongrooms at their risk and would not blame him for defeat in counting of votes on May 2.

It is significant that at least 20 candidates of the Congress-AIUDF alliance in the Assam Assembly polls have been shifted to a hotel in Jaipur.

They were flown to Jaipur in a chartered flight and taken to a hotel on the Delhi highway on the outskirts of Jaipur. Most of them are AIUDF candidates.

Chandra assumes charge as new CEC

New Delhi, April 13: Chandra assumed 🔳

charge as the 24th Chief Election Commissioner Tuesday.

Mr Chandra was appointed as the CEC on Monday, the day Sunil Arora demitted

Mr Chandra was appointed as an election commissioner on February 14, 2019, ahead of the Lok

Sabha elections. He would demit office on May 14, 2022. Under him, the Election Commission the (EC) Will hold assem

bly polls in Goa Manipur, Uttara Manipur, Uttara-khand, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.
The term of the

assemblies of Goa, Manipur, Uttarak-hand and Punjab ends on various dates in March next year. The term of the

Uttar Pradesh Assembly ends on May 14 next year.

France aims at having 20K students from **India by 2025**

New Delhi, April 13: French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian on Tuesday said that the country has set a target of having 20,000 Indian students in France by 2025. There were 10,000 Indian students studying in the European nation in 2019, according to officials at the French embassy. 'We have set a target —

it is to have 20,000 Indian students in France by 2025, and we will make it. We want to bring French and Indian youth even closer," minister Le Drian said. "We will support the

students during their stay in France... Living in France is quite something," he said. minister

speaking at an event at the French embassy where he appointed 15 alumni ambassadors to boost student mobility between the two coun-

minister mentioned that he got late in reaching the embassy for the event as he "had so many things to discuss" with his counterpart Union minister S. Jaishankar.

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Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender und single packet system for the under noted work: Name of Work with its Balance work of Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25 KV AC OHE inconnection with Electrification of stabling line no. 8 & 9 at NDLS and Washing line at DLI.

2 Approx. Cost of work Rs. 78,95,480.05/-Earnest Money Deposit Rs. 0/-26.04.2021 (00.00 Hrs.) to 10.05.2021 (15.00 Hrs.) E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period 10.05.2021 (15.00 hrs.) End Date & E-Tender Oper Date & Time 6 Fund Allocation

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SEARCH FOR MISSING General Public is hereby informed that a



Website particulars where

boy namely Mangal Singh, S/o Harnam Singh, R/o H.No. 72, Sandeep Ka Makaan, Gali No.3, Vijay Colony, Bawana, Delhi, Permanent Address Village Bari, P.S. Arwal, Distt. Hardoi, (U.P.) Age: 21 years, Height: 5'3", Complexion: Sallow, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Identification Mark: Scar mark on forehead, Wearing: Sky Colour Jeans Pant and White Colour Shirt and Sleeper in his feet has been missing from his home since 23.03.2021 at 5.00 am. In this regard vide DD No. 108A, dated

25.03.2021 has been registered at PS. Bawana, Delhi Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing boy but no clue has come to light so far. if any one having any information about this boy please inform undersigned.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.nic.in Ph.: 011-24368638,24368641 Fax: 011-24368639 DP/939/ON/2021

P.S. Bawana, Delhi Ph.: 011-27752534 / 7065036321





SHORT TAKES

Yogi self-isolates

as officials test +ve

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath said on Tuesday he has isolated himself after some officers in his office tested positive for Covid-19. "Some officers in my office have been infected with Corona. These officers have been in contact with me, so I have isolated myself as a precaution and am starting all the work virtually," Adityanath said in a tweet in Hindi. Mr Adityanath, however, did not identify the officials who tested positive. The development comes shortly after Adityanath wrapped up his extensive campaign for the West Bengal assembly elections, where he was one of the star campaigners for the Bharatiya Janata Party

NCB finds LSD in Hitler's biography

(BJP). Some officials, includ-

Kaushik, tested positive for

the coronavirus disease.

reported news agency.

ing his OSD Abhishek

Mumbai: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) seized commercial quantity of LSD concealed inside a copy of German dictator Adolf Hitler's biography at a post office in suburban Vile Parle here, an official said on

Tuesday. Based on a tip-off a zonal team of the NCB seized a parcel from the post office in Vile Parle (East) on Monday, the official said. On examining the contents, the team from 80 dots of LSD concealed in a copy of Hitler's biography, he said. Investigations

revealed that some youngsters had allegedly procured the contraband through darknet from Europe and had paid for it using Bitcoin or crypto currency, the official said, adding that further probe is underway.

Cop fined ₹2,000 for not wearing mask

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha police on Tuesday imposed a fine of ₹2,000 on an on-duty traffic constable posted in the pilgrim city Puri for vio-lating Covid-19 guidelines by not wearing a face mask Puri superintendent of police (SP) Samarth Verma took to Twitter and shared the news. "We have fined our own Traffic constable of ₹2000 for not wearing a mask. And he, as a responsible citizen has paid," the SP tweeted. In his post, the SP cautioned the public to always wear a mask. else pay the penalty. On April 9. the Odisha government doubled the fine amount for violation of the mask-wearing norm. Accordingly, violators will have to pay ₹2,000 for the first two violations and ₹5,000 for subsequent

Maha imposes strict curbs across state

■ Continued from Page 1 assistance in the supply of

oxygen for medical use from nearby states.

Petrol pumps, financial institutions associated with Sebi ATMs and construction work will be allowed to continue. Hotel and restaurants would remain closed for dine-in, and only takeaway/home deliveries would be allowed.

Mr Thackeray also appealed to retired nurses, doctors and other health workers to extend their help during the Covid-19 crisis in the state.

All banking and financial services, the RBI and its affiliated offices, insurance offices and pre-monsoon works will remain operational, he said.

However, there will be a com plete ban on religious, social. cultural and political functions in the state till May 1, the

For political rallies during elections, not more than 200 people can attend an event or 50 per cent of the seating capacity of the hall, Mr

Thackeray said. The number of participants at marriage and funeral was capped at 25 and 20, respective-

Saloons, spas, schools, colleges, private coaching classes, beaches, clubs, swimming pools, gyms, drama theatres and cinema halls will remain close during the next 15 days,

the chief minister said. Though roadside eateries are allowed to operate, buyers can not consume food on the street and only take away will be

available, said Thackeray. He announced a package of ₹5,476 crore for the poor whose

earnings will be impacted.

Pandemic an opportunity to reshape the world order: PM

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI **NEW DELHI, APRIL 13**

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented us an opportunity to reshape the world order and we must think of the entire humanity and not merely of those who are on our side of the borders, Prime Minister Narendra Modi

said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the inaugural session of Raisina
Dialogue 2021, he said: 'We must create systems that addresses the problems of today and challenges of tomorrow. And we must think of the entire humanity and not merely of those who are on our side of the borders. Humanity as a whole must be at the centre of our thinking and action."

PM Modi promised that India would continue to share its "experiences, expertise and resources with the entire humanity

pandemic", adding that the "mistakes and misdeeds of the past seven decades need not constrain our thinking for the future"

PM Modi further pointed out that "while humanity has not faced the Third World War, the threat of violence has not reduced in people's lives" and that "with a number of proxy wars and unending terror attacks, the prospect of violence is ever-present". He called for collective

response to defeat the pan-

Calling upon the participants "to emerge as a pow-erful voice for a humancentric approach", he reminded them that 'while we may be used to having Plan A and plan B, there is no Planet B, only planet Earth" and that we must remember that we hold this planet merely as trustees for our future

generations".
The Raisina Dialogue is



Narendra Modi

"India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics, held annually since 2016" and is "jointly organised by the ministry of external affairs (MEA) and the Observer (thinktank) Research Foundation.

PM Modi said, "... Is it perhaps because in the race of economic development the concern for the welfare of humanity has been left behind. ...Is it perhaps because in the age of competition, the spirit of cooperation has been forgotten. ... After the end of

the second world war, over the next few decades many structures and institutions were created but under the shadow of the two wars, they were aimed at answering only one question, how to prevent the Third World War? Today I submit to you that this was the wrong question, as a result, all the steps taken were like treating a patient symptoms without addressing the underlying causes. Or to put it differently, all the steps taken were to prevent the last war, not the next

BHAGWAN PARAB

Eleven Covid deaths were

reported at two hospitals

at Nalasopara in Maharashtra's Palghar district on Tuesday. While angry relatives of the

deceased blamed it on the

oxygen shortage, the gov-

ernment officials denied

the allegations, saying

both the hospitals have

ample oxygen stock. The

deaths occurred as the

patients were critical,

According to Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation (VVMC) offi-

cials, seven Covid deaths

were reported from the

Vinayak hospital, four patients died at the Riddhi

Vinayak hospital. Both

the hospitals are treating

The relatives of the deceased stormed the hos-

pitals as the rumour spread that the deaths were caused due to the

shortage of the oxygen.

Police personnel were deployed in large num-

bers to prevent any unto-

VVMC former mayor

Rajiv Patil, in an audio

message that went viral

on social media, said the

oxygen cylinders are in short supply and enough to last only for three hours. If oxygen is unavailable, Covid patients may suffer and

patients may suffer and

even die, he said. However, the VVMC offi-

cial said that both the hos-

pitals had adequate oxygen stock. "Vinayak

RABINDRA NATH

Covid patients.

ward incident.

MUMBAI, APRIL 13

Talking about the Indian experience, PM Modi pointed out, "During this pandemic, in our own humble way, within our own limited resources, we in India have tried to walk the talk. We have tried to protect our own 1.3 billion citizens from the pandemic. At the same time, we have also tried to support the pandemic response efforts of others."

Mumbai process to

SHAHAB ANSARI

The Mumbai police have begun the process of dismissing the suspended police officer Sachin following arrest by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Waze is accused of planting a vehicle loaded with explosives near the home of industrialist Mukesh Ambani in Mumbai and the murder of businessman

Mansukh Hiran. According to a police officer, the city's special service branch (SSB) had recently written to the state anti-terrorism squad and the NIA and sought documents pertaining to the case, including the copy of the FIR registered in connection with the murder of Mansukh Hiran and statement of his widow who raised suspicion over Waze's role in his death.

After receiving documents from the concerned agencies, the SSB initiated the process of dismissing Waze from service under Article 311 of the Constitution of India. The SSB is now expected to send Waze's dismissal proposal to the

government.

The NIA has so far arrested Sachin Waze, Riyazuddin Kazi, former policeman Vinayak Shinde and cricket bookie Naresh Gor in connection with Ambani bomb scare and Mansukh Hiran murder case.

police starts sack Waze

MUMBAI, APRIL 13

CHOUDHURY RAIPUR, APRIL 13 Raipur administration on Tuesday took over all the 18 crematoriums and burial grounds falling under city civic limits in the wake of opposition to cremation of bodies of Covid-19 victims by the locals in some areas. Raipur district collector Bharathidasan took

stock of the situation in a video conference with officers concerned and ordered the use of all 18 crematoriums and burial grounds falling under Municipal Corporation for performing funeral rites of the Covid-19 victims. Earlier, two crematori-

ums were used for the cremation of the bodies of the Covid-19 victims.

However, the two crematoriums have failed to dispose of the bodies of the victims who succumbed to the coronavirus in Dr B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Hospital (BRMH) in Raipur, the biggest medical

the oxygen shortage in the Vasai-Virar region. "There is an acute shortage of oxygen in the Vasai taluka. There are more

Uddhav

than 7,000 active cases and more than 3,000 patients require oxygen supply daily. I request to look into this serious matter and provide ample oxygen supply to the tehsil. This will prevent any more loss

facility in Chhattisgarh. Bodies of Covid-19 vic-

tims have been piling up

in mortuaries and crema-

tories in Raipur with the

state administration find-

ing it a challenging task to cope up with the sudden

spurt in cases of viral

infections and fatalities in

the last fortnight.
Some videos in social media captured the hor-

rific sight of bodies lining

up on stretchers outside

the mortuary of BRMH.

"Due to sudden rise in Covid-19 fatalities, the

bodies piled up in mortu-

On Monday, the mortu

ary had 40 bodies, mostly

those of Covid-19 victims,

which is more than its capacity", he added.
"The situation is con-

cerning. The district

administration and the

municipal corporation

have been asked to ensure

that last rites of the bodies are performed at the

Singhdeo told the media.

The situation in the neighbouring district of

Durg was equally grim.

health minister

Chhattisgarh

ary," a civic officer said.

MLA from Nalasopara,

Thackeray to highlight

Minister

C'garh: Morgues overflow

with Covid victims' bodies

district

11 die in 2 Maha hospitals,

kin blame oxygen shortage

Officials say patients died due critical condition

Devotees gather to offer prayers during Ganga aarti at Kumbh Mela in Hardwar, Haridwar reported 594 new cases of coronavirus on Tuesday, taking the active caseload of the city to 2,812, as thousands gathered to take dips in the Gana for the 13th day of Mahakumbh. -PTI

Hospital received 139 jumbo oxygen cylinders Jaishankar and one dura cylinder (of 28 jumbo cylinder capaci-ty), whereas Riddhi Vinayak Hospital had backs India's vaccine received around 50 jumbo jumbo cylinders," the official said. Kshitij Thakur, the local diplomacy

AGE CORRESPONDENT from the Bahujan Vikas Aghadi (BVA) has written NEW DELHI, APRIL 13 to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Chief

External affairs minister S. Jaishankar on Tuesday defended and justified India's decision to supply Covid-19 vaccines to other countries and said that there is a need for ensuring equitable access to it across the world and the country's ability to make vaccines is a result of international cooperation which is not a "one-way street'

He, however, accepted that "if any country is under stress, if the numbers are going up, which by the way they are for us right now, I think it's completely legitimate that we apply, and repurpose our production to where the immediate challenge is" The EAM also batted for "additional capabilities" in India for producing vaccines, arguing that "unless you have greater production, (global) distributive justice by itself will not be adequate". He also said that "to the extent that you have margins and the ability and the obligation to help oth-

Mr Jaishankar was participating in a "panel discussion at the Raisina Dialogue-2021 on "The Health Central: India, SDGs, vaccines & Global Expectations".

ers, I think it's the decent

thing to do, as I said, doing good is also doing

The EAM said, "For those who actually question international cooperation, I want people to also understand this, that our ability to make vaccines... is itself a result of international cooperation. So international cooperation is not a oneway street where we are giving things to other people and somewhere shortchanging ourselves, I think people need to understand that."

Minister: Not enough Covid-19 beds, ambulances in Lucknow

Lucknow, April 13: In a letter that surfaced on social media, the Uttar Pradesh law minister has lashed out at his state's health authorities, complaining that beds for coronavirus patients are falling short and ambulances take hours to arrive in the UP capital, which he said could face a lockdown again.

Law minister Brajesh Pathak's purported letter on the situation in his constituency also blamed the recent death of a scholar on the lack of an ambulance, though Padma Shri-winner Yogesh Praveen's family has denied making this charge.

When contacted Mr Pathak did not reject the existence of a letter.

Sunni Board

moves HC over

Gyanvapi ruling

Allahabad, April 13: The

Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board on

Tuesday moved an

urgent petition before

court in the Kashi

Gyanvapi Masjid case in

which the trial court at

Varanasi allowed an ASI

study of the mosque on

Sunni Board's standing

counsel Puneet Kumar

Gupta argued that the

trial court passed the order illegally and with-

out its jurisdiction as the

matter is in the high court and Justice Prakash Pandia reserved

its order on March 15 this year. -PTI

■ Continued from Page 1

for Covid-19, which have

been developed and are

being manufactured in

foreign countries and

which have been granted

emergency approval for

EMA, UK MHRA, PMDA

Japan or which are listed in WHO (Emergency Use Listing) may be granted

emergency use approval

in India, mandating the

requirement of post-approval parallel bridging

clinical trial in place of

conduct of local clinical

trial as per the provisions

prescribed under Second

Schedule of the New

Drugs and Clinical Trials

Rules 2019," the health ministry said in a state-

Officials said this move

will facilitate quicker

access to foreign vaccines

by India and would encourage imports,

including import of bulk

drug material, optimal

utilisation of domestic fill

and finish capacity etc,

which will in turn provide

a fillip to vaccine manu-

facturing capacity and

total vaccine availability

for domestic consump-

ICMR chief Balram Bhargawa said the vac-

cines are disease modify-

ing and have shown 85 per

cent reduction in hospital-

isation after the shots.

ment.

high

Mandi-

the Allahabad

Vishwanath

which also appears to challenge the UP government's claim that it is on top of the fight against coronavirus.

"I had written a confidential letter to the government," he said, refusing to elaborate further.

"The beds for Covid-19 patients in hospitals should be increased, testing should be increased and enough testing kits should be made available, said the letter written Monday to additional chief secretary (medical and health) and additional chief secretary (medical education). If Covid-related circum-

stances are not controlled soon, we will have to impose a lockdown in Lucknow to prevent its

spread," it added. The let-ter surfaced Tuesday on social media. "It is with extreme pain

that I am informing that currently in Lucknow district, the condition of health services is extremely worrying. For the past one week, I have

been getting hundreds of phone calls from the entire Lucknow district,' he said.

"No reply is given when the office of the chief medical officer is dialled. After complaining about this to the medical and health minister and to the additional chief secretary-health, the phone is picked up, but no positive work is done, he charged, seemingly referring to his

SC adjourns plea against SIT clean chit to Modi

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

iea by Zakia Ensan Jairi challenging the clean chit to then Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi and others by the special investigation team (SIT) for their alleged inaction in 2002 post-Godhra riots, including an attack on

Gulberg society.
A bench of Justices
A.M. Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari and Krishna Murari adjourned the hearing by two weeks on a request by Zakia Jafri. Zakia Ehsan Jafri widow of Congress leader

government said

there was no shortage of

vaccines and Remdesivir

injections in the country

as of now and over 1.67

crore vaccine doses are

still available with the

states and UTs. The

Centre said the problem is

not of vaccine shortage

but of better planning. Union health secretary

Rajesh Bhushan said so

far states and UTs have

received 13,10,90,370 vac-

cine doses, out of which

the total consumption,

including wastage, has

"As per 11 am data, the

unutilised doses available

with states and Union ter-

ritories for administration is 1,67,20,693. From

now till end-April, 2,01,22,960 doses are in the

supply pipeline to states

and UTs. This clearly shows the problem is of

lack of better planning,

shortage. We have made

available vaccine doses to

states and UTs from time

to time, and as we told you

earlier, that to bigger

states we give supply of

four days at once and on

the fourth and fifth day we

replenish the supply. For

smaller states, at once we

supply 7-8 days vaccine

doses and on the seventh

or eighth day their supply

Mr Bhushan said Kerala

is replenished," he said.

not of vaccine doses

been 11,43,69,677.

and former MP Ehsan Jafri — has challenged the October 5, 2017 order The Supreme Court on of Gujarat high court Tuesday adjourned for upholding the Magistrate two weeks hearing on a court order rejecting Jairi's protest petition challenging report giving clean chit to top political leaders and state functionaries for the alleged larger conspiracy and inaction during post-Godhra riots.

Ehsan Jafri was among the 68 people killed at Gulberg Society in Ahmedabad on February 28, 2002. The hearing on that is pending before the top court since 2018, was adjourned on March 16 to

has zero wastage of vac-

cine doses while there are

states which are register-

ing 8-9 per cent wastage. Talking about the over-

all Covid-19 situation in the country, Mr Bhushan

said India had already

crossed the previous high-

est surge and the present

trend is going upwards, which is a "cause for

worry". India on Tuesday

had about 1.62 lakh new

"The previous highest surge was 94,372 daily

cases in September, which

is now 1,61,736 every day.

There are 53 Central

teams which are camping

in 53 districts of the coun-

try which are showing a

surge in cases, and these

Central teams are helping

the district administra-

tion as well the state

administration, particularly the health depart-

ment and revenue offi-

cials, in tackling the pan-

demic," he said. The daily

deaths too are showing an

Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana

and Gujarat are among the

Delhi on Tuesday had a

record 13.500 new cases.

which is the highest so far.

The Delhi government urged the CBSE to post-

pone its Class 10 and Class

12 board exams in view of

major states of concern.

trend

Uttar

increasing

Maharashtra,

the high cases.

cases 879 deaths.

Afghanistan **Fast-track nod for vaccines**

■ Continued from Page 1 May 2021. Over the past year, US military commanders and defence officials have said that attacks on US troops have largely paused, but they say the Taliban have increased attacks on the Afghans. Commanders have argued that the Taliban have failed to meet the conditions of the peace pact by continuing attacks on Afghans and failing to totally cut ties with Al Qaeda and

other extremist groups. When Mr Biden entered the White House in January, he was keenly aware of the looming deadline and had time to meet it if he had chosen to do so. He began a review of the February 2020 agreement shortly after taking office and has been consulting at length with his defence and military advisers as well as allies.

In recent weeks, it became increasingly clear that he was leaning toward defying the deadline. "It's going to be hard to meet the May 1 deadline," Mr Biden said in late March. "Just in terms of tactical reasons, it's hard to get those troops out." Tellingly, he added: "And if we leave, we're going to do so in a safe and orderly way."

Didi holds silent dharna

■ Continued from Page 1 BJP candidate Rahul Sinha for his inflammatory remarks on the killings of four persons by the Central paramilitary forces at Shitalkuchi in Cooch Behar during the fourth phase of the polls.

"Not four, eight people should have been shot dead by the Central forces there! The Central forces should be issued a showcause notice asking why they killed only four and not eight. Goons are trying to deprive people of their democratic rights. Central forces responded appropriately. If it happens again, they will answer again," the former state BJP president had claimed at a campaign rally on Monday.

After the order, he how-

ever said: "I hold the EC in high respect. But it is a severe punishment to me."
The EC also served a

showcause notice to Mr Ghosh directing him to explain his recent threat Shitalkuchi-style killings

at many places" during the polls by 10 am on Wednesday. The poll panel also

warned and advised Mr Adhikari, after getting his reply to its notice on his 'begum" remark, in a veiled reference to Ms Banerjee, and his assertion that voting for his political opponent would imply voting for a "mini-Pakistan", "to desist from using such statements making public utterances during the

period when the Model Code of Conduct is in

Five hours before the end of the ban on her campaign, Ms Banerjee cut her dharna at short around 3 pm and headed home at Harish Chatterjee Street in Kalighat.

Resuming her campaign on Tuesday evening, Ms Banerjee said: "On one hand the BJP leaders will keep campaigning while on the other hand I cannot campaign. You be the judge... I will leave it to the masses to judge... I fail to understand why there has been an all-round attempt to stop me from campaigning," the chief minister said at Barasat in North 24 Parganas.

NGT cannot quash laws

■ Continued from Page 1 any items, including biological resources normally traded as commodi-

Appearing for the NGO Environment Support senior Group, lawver Nikhil Nayyar told the court that earlier the Supreme Court had in the Sterlite case said that the

strike down rules or regu-

The court had in its February 18, 2019, order said: "It is clear, therefore, that under the NGT Act, the tribunal exercising appellate jurisdiction cannot strike down rules or regulations ... Therefore, it would be fallacious to

green tribunal cannot state that the tribunal has powers of judicial review akin to that of a high court exercising constitutional powers under Article 226 of the Constitution of India ... We must never forget the distinction between a superior court of record jurisdiction....



THE ASIAN AGE

14 APRIL 2021

Vaccine crisis intensifies, scale up production now

he decision of the subject expert committee of the Central Drugs and Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO), the country's drugs regu-latory agency, to recommend Russia's Covid vaccine Sputnik V for emergency use authorisation is a welcome, if not belated, step. The CDSCO cleared the Sputnik V for use, making it the third such product available in the country. The vaccine, developed by Russia-based Gamaleya National Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology, is based on the human adenoviral vector platform and has a proven efficacy rate of 91.6 per cent in the interim analysis of phase 3 clinical trial. It may be remembered that the CDSCO panel had in February deferred its decision on the emergency licence seeking additional data on immunogenicity from the Indian company that was conducting the bridge study in the country.

The Russian vaccine is expected to join India's fight against the virus at a time when the country is facing two crises — one, an unprecedented spike in the daily caseload of Covid-19, and two, short supply of the two vaccines

The government did little planning on both upgrading the healthcare infrastructure and on rolling out an inoculation programme despite it getting almost a vear since the pandemic arrived here

manufactured locally. Data on every single parameter, from the number of new infections to total active cases to test positivity rate and fatality rate, show a new high, putting the nation on the edge. There are reports from several states including Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh of the healthcare infrastructure coming under extreme strain as we had witnessed in the United States and Italy last year when the first wave of the pandemic hit the world. On top of it, India is facing a shortage of vaccines with several states complaining about being compelled to close down many vaccination centres. The Union government and the Prime Minister had lost no opportunity in going to town with the

story of the two made-in India vaccines going to help the world contain the pandemic but the reality at home is starkly different from the claims.

It must not go unsaid that the government did little planning on both upgrading the healthcare infrastructure and on rolling out an inoculation programme despite it getting almost a year since the pandemic arrived here. Several state governments relaxed the restrictions imposed during the lockdown even on social, political and religious gatherings without recognising the fact that the virus had not gone. And the nation now is made to pay a price for it. There was little planning on the manufacturing and distribution of the vaccines either. Both the companies that manufacture the vaccines in India are finding it difficult to meet their targets due to a variety of reasons, which include shortage of funds and even raw materials. The government's lackadaisical approach has landed them in a vicious circle. The Serum Institute of India (SII), which manufactures Covishield, has been served a notice by its foreign partner AstraZenaca for reneging on its obligation of exports, which hit the company's cash flow. SII and Bharat Biotech, which manufactures Covaxin, have both reportedly approached the Centre for funds. The government must immediately consider their request and facilitate ramping up production. Plucking the low-hanging fruits is easy, but going for the ones at the top is tough. The government must realise it.

Winners and losers

'n what must rate as one of the finest IPL innings seen in a big run chase came the lesson that sometimes even the most valorous must bow to the dictates of Lady Fortune. Success and failure are not the same as victory and defeat as there will always be valiant sportsmen who shine as winners like Sanju Samson even if he did end up on the losing side. A gifted cricket writer used to describe the limited-overs game as "a perfumed harlot" who bestowed her favours one minute and dashed your hopes the next. Samson must have felt the weight of such an allegory as he took it upon himself to keep the strike and aim for that one more lofted drive for victory on a night of inspired stroke

play and keen reading of the cricket compass.

As it transpired, a yard or so made all the difference between victory and defeat as Rajasthan Royals' skipper Samson was caught on the line to leave the Punjab Kings the victors. It was clear enough though who the star gladiator of the night was. It was a similar story but one with the happiest ending for another sportsman at the other end of the world as Hideki Matsuyama of Japan held on to his lead to earn the right to wear the coveted Green Jacket at

Golf must seem even more of a perfumed harlot in the bestowing of favours as there can be many a slip between the ball and the lip of the cup that makes the hole. No victory could have been more dramatic and more inspiring than that of a Japanese journeyman golfer scaling Olympian heights. Eyebrows may rise at the sight of international sportsmen minting millions while billions cower in fear of the virus. But IPL has the money to create a safe bio-bubble for players while viewers are entertained in these grim times. It is Japan's wish then that Matsuyama headline the Olympics while the Games go on to show the world that humanity can emerge from the life-and-death fight

> THE ASIAN AGE T. VENKATRAM REDDY

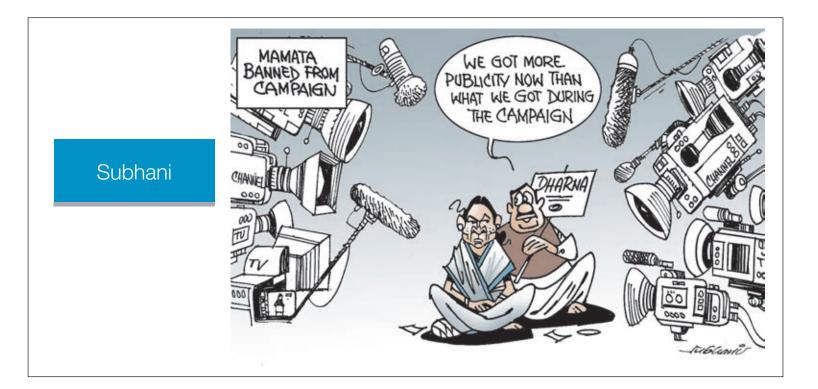
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India's isolation likely to grow in the entire region



K.C. Singh

ome recent diploof them lowing from shifting global power equations, hold much significance for India. The overlapping visits by Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov and US spe-cial presidential climate envoy John Kerry raised eyebrows. India frets over the growing Russian proximity to the China-Pakistan axis. Mr Kerry met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss India's Paris Agreement commitments. But Mr Lavrov could not, either due to Mr Modi's preoccupation with the Assembly elections or India conveying a subtle snub as Mr Lavrov, unmindful of Indian sentiments, combined his Indian trip with one to Pakistan. Also, when Russia hosted an intra-Afghan meeting, India was not invited. To shape events in post-transition Afghanistan, Russia President Russian

Vladimir Putin's India visit later this year will be against this background. India wants to retain Russian goodwill while enhancing America's role as arms supplier and strategic partner. Thus, India retains its order for Russia's S-400 air defence system, despite US warnings about the inevitable US sanctions under the America's Countering Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). External affairs minister S. Jaishankar termed India-Russia ties as time-tested and warm. Mr Lavrov listed areas of cooperation ranging from combating the Covid-19 pandemic, to nuclear energy, peaceful uses of space and infrastructure projects, in the Far East and the Arctic. Afghanistan, Syria, Iran and the Gulf were also discussed.

Russia strongly supported the Russia-India-China grouping (RIC), besides the East Asia Summit. A Russian role in the Sino-Indian de-escalation in

first double doctorate holder in eco-

nomics in South Asia.

Ladakh has been speculated about. Russia realises that India-Russia ties will get impacted if Russia's burgeoning engagement with China is accompanied by China-India tensions. Both ministers emphasised the centrality of Asean in developing cooperative ventures in East Asia. This addressed Russian concerns, which China shares, about the "Quad", of which India is a member alongside Australia, Japan and the United States. During his media interac-

tion, Mr Lavrov spoke on

many issues. Asked about

a possible military alliance

between Russia and China.

he said though their relations have "reached the best level ever", such an alliance was not envisaged. waters, where UNCLOS allows full sovereignty, extending to just 12 nauti-In turn, he asked if a Middle Eastern or Asian Nato was possible, thus cal miles. indirectly raising India's membership of the Quad. Russia's primary preoccupation is with the European theatre and ato, with Ukraine as the friction point. China's focus is on the Indo-Pacific, including South and East China Seas, Taiwan and the shoals and islands that its neighbours control or claim. In Central Asia, their interests diverge, as Russia will resent any Chinese consolidation of its influence via Belt and Road Initiative projects. India cannot veto Russia's outreach to Pakistan but must have warned it ment of peace". Simultaneously Iran and against defence cooperation. On Afghanistan, Mr Lavrov argued that he "Taliban members are a part of Afghan society and thus any settlement

China approach. India views the Taliban with suspicion, if not hostility. Then news broke about USS John Paul Jones sailing 130 nautical miles west of India's Lakshadweep Islands, without New Delhi's permission. Being within 200 nautical miles of the island baseline, it fell in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The US is not a signatory to the

must include all groups.

This mirrors the Pakistan-

UN Convention on Laws of the Seas (UNCLOS) and asserts its freedom of navigation through such zones. unilaterally declared by some nations, under customary international law. UNCLOS Articles 55-75 outline EEZs and the rights and obligations of coastal states. But Article 51 allows "other legitimate activities" of non-coastal states in the EEZ. Indian law prescribes prior approval for military exercises and manoeuvres in its zone. It's not clear why the US publicised the issue at this stage, but it also underscores the contradiction in India joining its Quad partners in asserting that right in the Indo-Pacific while, like two score other nations, restricting it in its own EEZ. The US objects to any unilateral delimitation of the high seas as it impacts its naval operations. For India, the interpretation is important as otherwise the naval vessels of China and Pakistan can manoeuvre near India's mainland and islands, the territorial

Two other important developments are underway in India's western neighbourhood. The intra-Afghan dialogue to be hosted by Turkey, tentatively on April 16, faces uncertainty. The Taliban demands issues like the withdrawal of American troops by May 1 be settled before they name their delegation. The Kabul government's vision, as spelt out by President Ashraf Ghani at the Heart of Asia conference in Tajikistan, calls for a negotiated political settlement and ceasefire before a presidential election and establishment of a "govern-

P-5+1 prepared to meet in Vienna to restore Iranian

Iran and Russia,

India's steadfast

allies during the 1990s to counter the Taliban's rise, are now positioned differently, with one leg in Taliban camp. India is perceived to be in the Saudi-Emirati-US corner.

conformity with the nuclear deal, called the Joint Comprehensive Programme of Action. Neg-otiated during Barack Obama's presidency, it was abandoned by the Trump administration. stumbling through more post-election uncertainty, took credit for a cyberattack on Iran's nuclear enrichment facility at Natanz, causing a power failure. It may have set back the plant by a year. It was intended to undermine the Vienna talks and may do so as the Iranians favouring talks are isolated by such attacks.

In both these developments, India is just a spectator. On March 26, the China-Iran 20-year \$400-600 billion "comprehensive partnership" was announced. Typical of Iranian tactics, a foreign ministry official later called it a "non-binding agreement". Iran was using the China deal to lure the US and European interlocutors to the dialogue table, preferably with sanctions relief in hand. Iran realises that an India unwilling to defy Washington is of marginal use to its strategy of retaining its strategic gains in West Asia and advancements in its nuclear programme while normalising relations with not also the US

Similarly, Afghanistan, India can't help Ghani government retain power or even negotiating influence when the Taliban are gaining on the ground and the US keen to cut and run. Iran and Russia, India's steadfast allies during the 1990s to counter the Taliban's rise, are now positioned differently, with one leg in Taliban camp. India is perceived to be in the Saudi-Emirati-US corner, with marginal gains like calibrated de-escalation with Pakistan. The fragility of that and the trio's ineffectiveness in restoring even partial trade between India and Pakistan indicates that Pakistan is recovering its mojo as the master of serial diplomatic blackmail. If India cannot quickly get on top of the pandemic respike, its diplomatic isolation in the neighbourhood will only grow.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS

BAN GATHERINGS

On one hand, the country is witnessing large political rallies and religious gatherings under the watch of the government while, on the other, it is preaching about observing Covidappropriate behaviour. The return of the virulent virus was very much in the offing. Rather than drawing lessons, all the gains were frittered away by tacitly declaring the end of the pandemic. **Even now many Cabinet** ministers are predicting that the second wave will be short-lived. But inoculating our humongous population is a tall order. The Centre in no uncertain terms has to ensure Covid-appropriate behaviour for at least the next one year.

Deepak Singhal Noida

CAUSE FOR ALARM

THE SHARP SPIKE in Covid cases is a matter of grave concern. India reported 1,69,899 new cases and 904 deaths on Sunday. This was the second day on the trot when the country Maharashtra topped the charts with around 63,294 infections, followed by Uttar Pradesh and Delhi in that order. While the government has banned the export of Remdesivir and plans are under way to import Sputnik V, the Russian vaccine, we would do well not to take the virus lightly anymore.

N.J. Ravi Chander Bengaluru

MISPLACED PRIORITIES

THIS REFERS TO the article "Despite Modi's push, BJP yet to reach tipping point" (April 12). The BJP must have expected West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee to buckle under the onslaught of the propaganda unleashed by it. But Ms Banerjee is standing strong. Obviously, the stretched schedule of the polls suits the BJP better as they have better resources. It is the right of the Prime Minister to campaign for his party in the Assembly polls, but the extent on his campaigns when the second wave of Covid-19 is peaking, speaks a lot about his priorities.

Anthony Henriques

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Bandaru



It was education that helped him make a difference

abasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar is the greatest exemplar of the belief that education enables a man to overcome all obstacles in life, be they social, cultural or economic in nature.

Born on April 14, 1891, Ambedkar. whose 130th birth anniversary we are celebrating today, was the 14th and last child of soldier Subedar Ramji Maloji Sakpal and Bhimabai Sakpal, daughter of Laxman Murbadkar. Born into the Mahar (dalit) caste, he experienced caste discrimination and humiliations early in life. But his life is an inspiration to everyone, especially the subaltern wishing to rise in life. With 26 degrees and titles, including PhDs, associated with his name, Ambedkar believed education can alone pave the way for change in society. "Cultivation of the mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence," Ambedkar said. Ambedkar holds the distinction of

being the first Indian to pursue a doc-

toral degree in economics abroad. He was the first PhD in economics and the

Ambedkar experienced discrimina-

tion since he was a child. Two incidents had a huge impact on him. Once, while returning home with a cousin after school, they alighted at the railway station in scorching heat and found no one had come to receive them from their village. They managed to hire a bullock cart to travel to their village but on learning the boys were Mahars, the driver forced them to get down from the cart. Babasaheb offered to double the price and even offered to drive the cart himself but the owner refused. On the way, no one allowed them even to drink water. In another incident, Ambedkar went to drink water from a roadside tap. He was beaten up.

Despite the Bole Resolution passed by the Bombay legislature in 1923 called for opening of public places and public water reservoirs to untouchables, there was no change in the plight of the dalits. Ambedkar conceived the Mahad Satyagraha in 1927 to highlight the issue of untouchability discrimination. caste Surendranath Tipnis, president of Mahad municipality declared public spaces open to dalits and invited Ambedkar to hold a meeting in 1927. After the meeting, they proceeded to Chavadar tank. A riot broke out following a rumour that Ambedkar and his followers were planning to enter a Hindu temple in town. In December

and use water from the tank. With the Kalaram temple entry movement, Ambedkar led a protest outside the temple on March 2, 1930, asserting the right of dalits to enter temples. It was a nonviolent movement attended by over 15,000 people, who squatted before the temple and sang bhajans.

1937, the Bombay high court ruled that

untouchables have the right to drink

Throughout his life, Ambedkar fought for securing human rights for the downtrodden and the oppressed. He was the first labour minister of India and also our first law minister. On August 29, 1947, he was appointed chairman of the drafting committee of the Constitution. He studied the salient features of constitutions of over 60 countries and distilled the best features that suited the Indian context. He is recognised worldwide as the maker of the Indian Constitution.

The Constitution drafted Ambedkar ensures justice and equality to each and every citizen of India. Civil liberties, freedom of religion, abolition of untouchability, reservation and prohibition of all forms of discrimination are the gifts of Ambedkar to Indians. Ambedkar championed economic and social rights for women and advocated affirmative action for the Scheduled

Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Not many people are aware that Ambedkar refused to draft Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir on grounds that it was discriminatory and against the principles of unity and integrity of the nation. The article was finally drafted by Gopalswamy Ayyangar, former Diwan to Maharaja Hari Singh.

Ambedkar's commitment to equality and justice is best established by his resignation as law minister when the Hindu Code Bill was dropped by Parliament. He had introduced the bill to elevate the social status of Hindu women. Most labour laws protecting the interests of workers are his contribution. He made provisions for maternity benefits for working women.

In 1990, he was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour. His birth anniversary is celebrated as a day to reflect upon the progress made in achieving social equity and ending oppression.

As a nation, we are going to celebrate the 75th anniversary of our Independence in 2022. But even today, all evils against which Ambedkar fought have not been eradicated. The worst of these is communal hatred. The real tribute to Babasaheb would be to establish social and economic justice.

> The writer is the governor of Himachal Pradesh













IN BRIEF

Egypt releases

activist: Lawyer

Cairo, April 13: Egyptian authorities on Tuesday released an activist known for his outspoken criticism of the government after he spent more than a year and a half in pre-trial detention, his lawyer Gamal Eid said. Khaled Dawoud, an opposition leader and former head of the liberal Dostour, or Constitution party, arrived at his home in Cairo after his release. Dawoud, a journalist, was set free pending an investigation into whether he disseminated false news.

Biden dog goes back to school

Washington, April 12: The Bidens' rambunctious young dog Major is leaving the White House again, this time for extra schooling in how to behave more like a presidential canine. Michael LaRosa, a spokesman for First Lady Jill Biden, said Major would "undergo some additional training to help him adjust to life in the White House.

"The off-site, private training will take place in the Washington, DC area, and it is expected to last a few weeks,' LaRosa said.

Tennessee school shooting: 1 dead

Washington, April 13: One person was killed and a police officer wounded in a shooting at a high school in the US state of Tennessee on Monday, police said. Knoxville city police said on Twitter "multiple gunshot victims" had been reported at Austin-East Magnet High School, before adding in a statement read out on local televi-sion that one of the injured

Officers had responded to reports of a "male subject" who was possibly armed in the school, the Knoxville Police Department said.

"Upon approach of the subject, shots were fired."

Vatican probe: U.S. Bishop quits

Rome, April 13: A Minnesota bishop who was investigated by the Vatican for allegedly interfering with past investi-gations into clergy sexual abuse has resigned.

The Vatican said Tuesday that Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Bishop Michael Hoeppner and named a temporary replacement to run the Crookston diocese. Hoeppner is 71, four years shy of the normal retirement age for bishops. The Vatican did not say why Francis accepted the resignation, but the Vatican in 2019 authorised an investigation into claims that Hoeppner had engaged in "acts or omissions intended to interfere with or avoid civil or canonical investigations of clerical sexual misconduct.

The Vatican tasked St Paul-Minneapolis Archbishop Bernard Hebda with conducting the investigation. Hoeppner is accused of stating that a priest was fit for ministry despite allegedly knowing the priest had abused a 16-year-old boy.

HK's LEGISLATIVE POLL TO TAKE PLACE IN DEC.

Hong Kong, April 13: Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said Tuesday that the semiautonomous Chinese territory's leg islative elections will take place in December, more than a year after they were postponed by authorities citing public health risks from the Coronavirus pandemic.

Lam also said that laws will be amended so that inciting voters not to vote or to cast blank or invalid votes will be made illegal, although voters themselves are free to boycott voting or cast votes as they wish. "When a person willfully obstructs or prevents any person from voting at an election, we will consider it corrupt co nduct," said Lam

Lam said that the elections will take place on Dec. 19. The elections were initially slated to be held last September. Lam was speaking a day ahead of the first reading of draft amendments to various laws in the city's legislature, to accommodate Beijing's planned changes to the city's electoral system. Beijing in March announced changes to Hong Kong's electoral system, expanding the number of seats in the legislature while reducing the number of directly-elected seats from 35 to 20.

The move is part of a twophase effort to rein in political protest and opposition in Hong Kong, which is part of China but has had a more liberal political system.

Iran to enrich uranium to highest level

to 60 per cent purity, higher than the programme ever has before though still short of weapons grade, after an attack on its Natanz nuclear facility, an Iranian negotiator said Tuesday. The annou ncement marks a significant escalation after the sabotage, suspected to have been carried out by Israel. It could result in further action by Israel, whose Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed never to allow Tehran to obtain a nuclear weapon, and further raise tensions across the Mideast. Nuclear negotiator Abbas Araghchi's comment, quoted by the staterun İRNA news agency, came after Iran's foreign minister warned that the weekend assault could hurt ongoing negotiations over its tattered atomic deal with world powers.

Dubai, April 13: Iran will begin enriching uranium

Those talks are aimed at finding a way for the United States to re-enter the agreement, the goal of which is to limit Iran's enrichment of uranium in exchange relief on sanctions. Iran had been enriching up to 20 per cent. That is a short tech-nical step to weapons-gr-

ade levels of 90 per cent. The International Atomic Energy Agency said it was aware of the media reports but had no comment at the time. Press TV, the Iranian state television's English-language

JAPAN'S MOVE TO RELEASE N-PLANT WATER: CHINA OBJECTS

Beijing, April 13: China on Tuesday objected to Japan's move to release treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant into the sea, warning Tokyo that "it reserves the right to make further reactions". Japan decided on Tuesday to release treated radioactive water from crippled Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant into the sea, having assessed there will be no negative impact on human health or the environment despite concerns from local fishermen and neighbouring countries, Japan Times reported. Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga met with members of his Cabinet to formalise the decision.

arm, separately said that the IAEA had been informed of the move. It said the enrichment would begin as of Wednesday. broadcaster also quoted the negotiator as saying Iran would introduce another 1,000 centrifuges at Natanz, without elaborating.

500 troops to be added by US in Germany: Austin

Berlin, April 13: Defence will augment our existing Secretary Lloyd Austin announced on Tuesday that he is expanding the US military presence in Germany by 500 troops, suggesting he will not carry out a Trump administration order to withdraw thousands of them.

'This planned increase in US personnel underscores our commitment to Germany and the entire NATO alliance," Austin said in a notable counterpoint to the Trump administration's repeated complaints that Germany is a weak partner on defence and security.

Austin made the announcement after talks with German Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer on his first tour of Europe since becoming Pentagon chief in January. Kramp-Karrenbauer welcomed the announcement as a "strong signal" of a healthy US-German relationship. They also discussed a pending decision by President Joe Biden on whether to withdraw completely from Afghanistan by May 1, a deadline the Trump administration pledged to the

Taliban militants. Germany is a key part of the US-led coalition in Afghanistan. Austin said at a joint news conference with Kramp-Karrenbauer that the extra 500 US troops will be stationed permanently in Germany's Wiesbaden area as early as this fall.

'These forces will strengthen deterrence and defence in Europe. They abilities to prevent conflict, and, if necessary, fight and win," Austin said in prepared remarks. "This move will also cre-

ate more space, more cyber, and more electronic warfare capabilities in Europe," he added, and he said it will "greatly improve our ability to surge forces at a moment's notice to defend our allies Last year, President

Donald Trump ordered the withdrawal of 12,000 troops from Germany as retribution for what he considered Germany's refusal to spend more on its own defence. Austin suspended that move shortly after taking office. He said decisions on troop levels would be made as part of a comprehensive review of the US military presence around the wo-

rld, including in Europe. Austin's announcement on Tuesday is the first concrete indication that he may not carry out the Trump decision, which included moving US European Command headquarters from Germany

The US currently has about 35,000 troops in Germany. Asked by a reporter whether the decision to add 500 troops means Washington will not carry out Trump's move, Austin said the Pentagon has "ceased planning" for troop reductions. The German minister said she had Biden's word that "there will be no troop reduction as was previously planned." -AP

Washington, April 13: US health authorities recommended a "pause" Tue-sday in the use of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine "out of an abundance of caution" over potential links to a

similar to that observed in rare cases of people who received the AstraZeneca vaccine in Europe — and the shots by both compa-nies are based on adenovirus vector technology. The US Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control are assessing the "pot-ential significance" of six reported cases of a type of clot in the brain called cerebral venous sinus thro-mbosis (CVST) in combi-nation with low levels of blood platelets (thrombocytopenia).

All the cases involved women between the ages of 18 and 48, and symptoms occurred six to 14 days after vaccination.

As of Monday more than 6.8 million doses of the single-shot J&J vaccine had been administered in the US — meaning that the rare effect appears to have been detected in around one in a million cases.

"People who have received the J&J vaccine who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should con-

tact their health care provider," the FDA said. The CDC will convene a meeting of a top expert committee on Wednesday to further assess these cases and their significance, and the FDA will also carry out its own investigation. "Until that process is complete, we are recommending this pause out of



US suggests 'pause' in use of

J&J vax over blood clot fears

Demonstrators argue with police in riot gear during a protest against restriction measures to curb the spread of Covid-19, at the Circus Maximus in Rome, on Tuesday.

an abundance of caution," it said, to ensure the medical community was aware of the development and could develop appropriate treatment plans.

The pause deals a hit to the United States' Covid vaccination campaign, which has so far administered 45 percent of the adult population at least one

dose — among the most rapid rates in the world.

The J&J vaccine was celebrated for the fact it can be stored at fridge temperature and requires just one dose — unlike Pfizer and Moderna that need

two and require freezing. But even before the pause, the company was affected by supply problems after a contractor spoiled 15 million doses that never

J&J delays Europe vax rollout

& Johnson said Tuesday it is delaying the rollout of its Coronavirus vaccine in Europe amid a US probe into reports of rare blood clots in some recipients. The announcement came

after regulators in the United States said they were recommending a "pause" in administration of the

ended up shipping. Nonetheless, with Pfizer and Moderna continuing to deliver their hundreds

of millions of promised doses on time, the US is

likely to maintain a high

vaccination pace.

dangerous blood clots. We have been reviewing these cases with European health authorities," Johnson & Johnson said. "We have made the deci-

gate reports of potentially

sion to proactively delay the rollout of our vaccine in Europe." The delay is a further blow to vaccinati-

The FDA said that norm-

ally, an anticoagulant drug

called heparin is used to

treat these blood clots, but

in this case administering

on drives in European nations, plagued by supply shortages, logistical problems and concerns over unusual blood clots in a small number of people who received the AstraZeneca vaccine. The blood clot reports prompted several countries to limit the vaccine to older age

the disorder resembles a

rare reaction to heparin,

in which the body forms

heparin might be danger-That might be because

antibodies in response to the thinner which in turn triggers platelets to form

UN: MYANMAR MAY SEE HUGE CONFLICT

Geneva, April 13: The UN rights chief warned Tuesday of possible crimes against humani-ty in Myanmar and said it seemed to be neading towards a massive conflict like the one ravaging Syria.

In a statement, the UN rights office urged countries to take immediate and decisive action to push the military leaders behind a February 1 coup in Myanmar to stop their "campaign of repression and slaughter of its people."

"I fear the situation in Myanmar is heading towards a full-blown conflict," Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said in the statement.

"States must not allow the deadly mistakes of the past in Syria and elsewhere to be repeat-Myanmar is in chaos and its economy paralysed since the military seized power from civilian leader Aung San

Suu Kyi on February 1. junta crackdown against dissent has resulted in the civilian death toll reaching at least 710 as of late Monday including 50 children, according to a local monitoring group.

Nato countries of turning Ukraine into a "powder keg," after the West sounded the alarm over Russian soldiers massing on the border. "The United States and

other Nato countries are deliberately turning Ukraine into a powder keg,' Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryahkov was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies, adding that countries were increasing their arms supplies to Ukraine. Clashes between Ukrai-

nian forces and Moscowbacked separatists in eastern Ukraine have escalated in recent weeks, upend ing a ceasefire brokered last vear. Following an uptick in violence, Russia has built up troops along the border, raising fears of a major escalation in the long-running conflict in Ukraine's mainly Russianspeaking east.

If there is any aggravation, we of course will do everything to ensure our security and the safety of our citizens, wherever they are," Ryabkov said. "But Kiev and its allies

in the West will be entirely responsible for the consequences of a hypothetical

'powder keg', accuses Russia Moscow, April 13: Moscow on Tuesday accused the United States and other Withholding Quran: US TO LEAVE Navalny to sue jail

US, Nato turning Ukraine into

Moscow, April 13: Imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny said Tuesday he was suing his prison for withholding the Quran, which he intended to study while serving time in a prison outside Moscow. Navalny has been on a hunger strike for two weeks, protesting prison officials' refusal to let his physician examine him behind bars after he developed severe back and leg pain.

But he said Tuesday in an Instagram post that his first lawsuit against prison officials had to do with the Muslim holy book.

exacerbation," he added. On Tuesday morning, a Ukrainian soldier was killed and two more injured near the village of Mayorske some 35 kilometres (21 miles) north of the separatist stronghold Donetsk when a drone dropped grenades on the positions of Kiev's troops, the mili-

tary said. The latest casu-

alty brought the number

giving my Quran. And it pisses me off," Navalny said, adding that "deeply studying" the Quran was one of several "self-improvement" goals he set for himself while in prison. The politician said he hasn't been given access to any of the books he brought or ordered over the past month, because they all need to be "inspected for extrem-ism," which officials say takes three months.

"The thing is, they're not

"So I wrote one more petition to the (prison) chief and filed a lawsuit, Navalny said.

of Ukrainian troops killed since the start of the year to 29, compared to 50 in all of 2020. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba was in Brussels on Tuesday, where he met with NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg. Kuleba was also set to meet with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Brussels later

TROOPS IN **AFGHANISTAN BEYOND MAY**

Washington, April 13: President Joe Biden has decided to leave American troops in Afghanistan beyond the May 1 deadline negotiated with the Taliban by the Trump administration, and has set the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks as the new goal, US officials said Tuesday.

Biden has been hinting for weeks that he was going to let the deadline lapse, and as the days went by it became clear that an orderly withdrawal of the remaining 2,500 troops would be difficult and was unlikely. US officials provided details on Biden's decision on condition of anonymity, speaking ahead of the announce ement. His decision risks retaliation by the Taliban on US and Afghan forces possibly escalating the 20year war. And it will reignite political division over America's involvement in what many have called the endless war.

TRIBAL I TRADITION Kingdom undergoing dramatic economic, social reforms

Saudis keep 'Taasheer' war dance alive

Taif, Saudi Arabia, April 13: In Saudi Arabia's west, muzzle-loading classic rifles are carefully prepared for the traditional Taasheer" war dance, a striking display of leaping

and gunpowder blasts. Men and boys take weapons laid out in the bed of a truck and fill the barrels with gunpowder before, one by one, they take centre stage to showcase their skills in what is also known as the fire

Dozens of onlookers, including women and chil-

dren, stand on the sidelines of a grassy clearing lined with gazebo tents. In a collision of the ancient and the modern, some hold up mobile phones to film the spectacle.

Barefoot and in their traditional thobe and ghutra headdress, the performers dance to traditional music against the backdrop of mountains in the western province of Taif.

They bounce up and down with their knees pressed close together, as they wave the gun and finally reach for the sky

and fire at the ground, resulting in a blast of sparks and smoke under their feet.

tribal tradition believed to date back hundreds of years, the dance is now performed at weddings, festivals and on other special occasions. In a rapidly modernising

kingdom, which is undergoing dramatic economic and social reforms spearheaded by the de facto Črown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudis are seeking to maintain some long-held

traditions.

"Taasheer dance is the popular heritage of the people of Taif. It is considered an essential event at all occasions," Salman al-Tuweirgi, owner of a cof-

fee shop in Taif, said. He said that the dance, originally performed before battle to motivate fighters and intimidate opponents, has been passed down from generation to generation.

"It is an ancient war dance, and we are preserving it in this way," said Tuweiri.

"Thank God, we still continue this tradition so it will last forever.'

Young boys also take part in the dance, training at first with an unloaded weapon until they are able to handle the gun.

'We increase the level of training as they become more capable of performing the dance," said Tuweiri. "It is a popular legacy... and we are teach ing our children how to do it so that they too in the future will train their chil-

Protest after chief says cop meant to use Taser

Brooklyn Centre (US), April 13: Police clashed with protesters for a second night in the Minneapolis suburb where an officer who authorities say apparently intended to fire a Taser, not a handgun, fatally shot a PoC man during a traffic stop. Brooklyn Centre Police Tim Gannon described Sunday's shooting death of 20-year-old Daunte Wright as "an accidental discharge.' The shooting sparked protests and unrest in an area already on edge because of the trial of the first of four police offi-

cers charged in George

Floyd's death. Hundreds of protesters faced off against police in Brooklyn Centre after nightfall Monday, and hours after a dusk-todawn curfew was announced by the governor. When the protesters wouldn't disperse, police began firing gas canisters and flash-bang grenades, sending clouds wafting over the crowd and chasing some protesters away.

A long line of police in riot gear began slowly forcing back the remain-









FINANCIAL

INDICATO	RS	%
Sensex	48,544.06	1.38
Nifty 50	14,504.80	1.36
S&P 500*	4,133.82	0.14
Dollar (₹)	75.06	-0.40
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.11	-0.69
Euro (₹)	89.33	-0.50
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,093 ▼ 130	0.28
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	63.99	1.12
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.011	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.661	-0.015
* Ac of 8:30 DM IST		

China's March exports rise 30.6% as demand revives

China's exports rose 30.6 per cent over a year ago in March as global consumer demand strengthened and traders watched for signs of what President Joe Biden might do about reviving tariff war talks with Beijing. Exports rose to 241.1 billion, decelerating from the dramatic 60.6 per cent rebound in the first two months of 2021, customs data showed. Imports rose 38.1 per centover a year ago to 227.3 billion in a sign of reviving Chinese

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GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Bhuvneshwar is

Player of Month

Dubai: Experienced India seamer

Bhuvneshwar Kumar on Tuesday

won the ICC Player of the Month

award for his superlative show in

the limited overs series against

The 31-year-old Indian took six

wickets at an economy rate of

capturing four wickets at a fan-

the five T20Is to emerge as the

Bhuvneshwar became the third

award since its inception early

standout bowler on either side in

successive Indian recipient of the

Kane wins Hadlee

medal for 4th time

Wellington: New Zealand skipper

Kane Williamson won his fourth

excelling across formats and was

also adjudged the 'Test Player of

the Year' in the country's annual

Sir Richard Hadlee medal for

cricket awards on Tuesday.

Devon Conway won the men's

ly for a second year running

because of the Covid-19 pan-

Williamson's incredible home

the two awards alongside the

Test summer helped him clinch

Redpath Cup for first-class bat-

ting, after he amassed a whopping 639 runs in just four innings at an average of 159. - PTI

ODI and T20 Player of the Year

during the 2020-21 awards sea-

son which was conducted digital-

tastic economy rate of 6.38 in

4.65 in the three ODIs, while

England in March.

the white ball series.

this year. - PTI

■ Dues to Centre, states, staff extinguish with plan passage

SC: Dues not payable if not part of IBC resolution plan

New Delhi, April 13: In an important judgement, the Supreme Court on Tuesday held that all dues, including statutory ones, payable by ailing companies to the Centre, states and their tax authorities shall stand extinguished if they are not part of approved resolution plan to revive firms under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

The apex court said the principal objects of IBC is to provide for revival of the Corporate Debtor and to make it a going concern and remedied the mischief by which tax and other authorities used to keep pursuing such companies to pay their dues leading to a situation which made resolution plans for their revival unworkable.

A bench comprising justices R. F. Nariman, B. R. Gavai and Hrishikesh Roy, deciding a batch of pleas against several orders of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal, held that the 2019 amendment



made to a provision of the IBC is clarificatory and declaratory in nature and so will be effective from the date on which IBC has come into effect in 2016.

As per the amendment made in 2019 in section 31 of IBC, any debt in respect of the payment of dues arising under any law for the time being in force, including the ones owed to the Central Government, any State Government or any local authority, which does not form a part of the approved resolution plan, shall stand extinguished.

plan, shall stand extinguished and no person will be entitled to initiate or Once a resolution plan is duly approved by the adjudicating authority, the continue any proceedings in respect to a claim which

is not part of the revival Consequently all the

dues, including the statutory dues owed to the Central Government, any State Government or any local authority, if not part of the resolution plan, shall stand extinguished and no proceedings in respect of such dues for the period prior to the date on which the Adjudicating Authority grants its approval under Section 31 could be continued, the bench held.

The top court was faced with the question whether any creditor, including central or state governments, was bound by the Resolution Plan once it is approved by an adjudicating authority under IBC.

The other issue was as to whether after approval of the resolution plan a creditor is entitled to initiate any proceedings for recovery of any of the dues from the corporate debtor, which are not a part of the Resolution Plan.

Indirect taxes up 12% in FY21

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 13

Helped by a 59 per cent increase in excise duties, the country's indirect tax collections went up 12.3 per cent in the pandemic-hit

Indirect tax collections--which include GST, customs, central excise and service tax arrears--for FY21 stood at Rs 10.71 lakh crore against the actual collections of Rs 9.54 lakh crore in FY20, as per the provisional figures published by the Ministry of Finance. The collections are 8.29 per cent higher than the revised estimates of Rs 9.89 lakh crore.

Central excise and service tax arrears in FY21 grew 59 per cent to Rs 3.91 lakh crore compared to Rs 2.45 lakh crore in the previous fiscal. Diesel and petrol

GATHERING MORE Net indirect tax collection (GST & non-GST)

2019-20 2020-21 Net tax collection on account of central excise and service tax (arrears) 2019-20 2.45 2020-21 3.91

Figures in ₹ Lakh crore , and are provisional Source: Ministry of Finance, KBK Infographic are the biggest contribu-tors to excise duties and

2019-20

2020-21 1.32

the multiple hikes in petrol

growth of 21 per cent to Rs 1.32 lakh crore compared to Rs 1.09 lakh crore in the previous fiscal.

However, net tax collection on account of GST of the Centre, which includes CGST, IGST and compensation cess, was down 8 per cent to Rs 5.48 lakh crore against Rs 5.99 lakh crore in the previous financial year. Considering the sub-dued economy, the revised estimates of net GST collection was kept at Rs 5.15

The GST collections were severely affected in the first half of the financial year on account of the Covid-led disruptions. However, in the second half, the GST collections registered a good growth and collections exceeded Rs 1 lakh crore in each of

and diesel prices throughout the fiscal supported the increase in excise duties despite lower consump-Net customs duty collecthe last six months.

BUSINESS

NON-LIFE GROSS DIRECT PREMIUM UP 5% IN FY21

New Delhi, April 13: The gross direct premium written by the non-life insurance companies saw a 5.2 per cent rise in 2020-21 to Rs 1,98,734.68 crore, Irdai data showed. All the non-life insurance companies had written gross direct premium of Rs 1,88,916.61 crore in 2019-20. In March 2021, the total premium by all the players stood at Rs 19,298.85 crore, up by over 17 per cent from Rs 15,635.42 crore a year ago. Among the 25 general insurers, the total premium in FY21 rose by 3.35 per cent to Rs 1,69,840.05 crore.

BIS LICENCE FEE CUT FOR STARTUPS

New Delhi, April 13: The Centre slashed the annual marking fee to get a new BIS licence and certification by 50 per cent for micro-industry, startups and women entrepreneurs. It also said the services of BIS are now made available free of cost

men), while Malaysia has

fielded the second biggest

squad with 26 shuttlers, which includes 10 women

A total of 10 shuttlers (4

women and 6 men) from

China are also part of the

participants list.
Among the men, two-

time world champion

Momota, defending cham-

pion Viktor Axelson,

Anders Antonsen and

reigning All England Open champion Zii Jia

Srikanth Kidambi will

lead the Indian charge

along with B. Sai Praneeth, H.S. Prannoy and Parupalli Kashyap.

The last date for with-

drawal of entry is April 19

while the draw will be

The governing body said

"Delhi Government will

conduct RT-PCR test on

arrival on May 3 and 6 as

finally be able resume

badminton action. But

with the recent spike in

cases, we have to be more

cautious," BAI general

secretary Ajay Singhania

"We are really happy to

well as on May 9 and 14.

announced on April 20.

Lee will be in the fray.

and 16 men.

minister Piyush Goyal tweeted. -PTIINDIA-EU TRADE TALKS TO RESUME

to everyone and can be downloaded

from e-BIS port. The Bureau of Indian

Standards issues licences with a stan-

dard mark to help identify the unit

which has made the product at a specif-

ic location. "The government has given

50 per cent rebate on (new) BIS certifica-

tion of products for start-up, micro-industry and women entrepreneurs,"



help further strengthen ties with the European Union. The negotiations between India and the European Union on a free trade agreement have been stalled since May 2013, when both sides failed to bridge substantial gaps on crucial issues, including data security status for the IT sector. The negotiations with the 27-nation grouping were launched in June 2007.

FB, Instagram users can now appeal to Oversight Board

New Delhi, April 13: An independent board set up by Facebook to look into hate speech and other undesirable content on the platform on Tuesday said it will now accept cases Facebook and Instagram users the company wrongfully allowed such content to remain on these

social media platforms. Facebook, which has faced flak in many parts of the world over various issues, including data breaches and handling of hate speech, had set up the

Oversight Board last year. The board includes former judges, journalists and human rights activists, who review

Carolina Marin

appeals from users on material that has been down Facebook and Instagram, and make binding content decisions for the social networking platforms.

claims as provided in the

resolution plan shall stand

frozen and will be binding on the Corporate Debtor

and its employees, mem-

bers, creditors, including

the Central Government,

any State Government or

any local authority, guar-

antors and other stake-

holders, Justice Gavai, who

wrote the 139-page judg-

It said on the date of

approval of the resolution plan, all claims, which are

not a part of the resolution

ment, said.

"Enabling users to appeal content they want to see removed from Facebook is a significant expansion of the Oversight Board's

capabilities," Hughes, director of the Administration, said in a statement.

The Oversight Board said this new capability represents an important step toward delivering a more principled and transparent model of content moderation.

No fans at torch

Tokyo, April 13: The torch Osaka, which relay for the Tokyo Olympics ran through a mostly empty Osaka city park on Tuesday, showing the risks of trying to hold the postponed games during a pandemic.

It came on the same day that the government said new coronavirus cases in Osaka hit 1.099, a singleday record for Japan's second largest metropolitan

The torch relay began three weeks ago in northeastern Japan, attempting to navigate around the pandemic with a total of 10,000 runners crisscrossing the country and bound for the opening ceremony

on July 23 in Tokyo. Osaka, announced plans last week to take the relay off city streets and bar the public, became the first detour since the relay began. Organizers warned beforehand there may be more.

Wednesday's second leg in Osaka — the day the Tokyo countdown clock hits 100 day to go — will be in the same park under the same closed-doors con-

New Covid-19 cases are rising across Japan, where fewer than 1% of last week to take the relay off city streets and bar the public, became the first detour since the relay began.

announced plans

residents have been vaccinated in very slow rollout. Japan has attributed about 9,500 deaths to Covid-19, far fewer than many countries but higher than most neighbours in Asia.

Osaka, Tokyo and other parts of Japan have declared "quasi-emergency" conditions until early May with bars and restaurants being asked to close by 8 pm.

Many runners arrived in Osaka's Expo '70 Commemorative Park by bus and ran short legs carrying the torch alongside metal barriers or in

empty park space. They were accompanied by security officials who jogged or walked alongside, and followed by an 'escort" or "promotional' vehicle festooned with logos of major Olympic sponsors Coca-Cola and Toyota. — AP

EX-INDIA HOCKEY PLAYER BALBIR SINGH JR NO MORE

Chandigarh, April 13: Balbir Singh Junior, who was a member of the silver medal-winning 1958 Asian Games Indian hockey team, died here at the age of 88, his daughter Mandeep Samra said on Tuesday. He is survived by his wife, daughter and son. "My father passed away in sleep on Sunday morning due to heart failure," his daughter said.

His son is settled in Canada and could not attend the last rites of his father because of the pandemic. Born on May 2, 1932, at Sansarpur in Jalandhar, also known as the nursery of Indian hockey, Balbir

Singh Junior had played alongside legends like Balbir Singh Senior, Leslie Claudius, Prithipal Singh, Balkishan and Charles Stephen among others. Singh took to hockey when he was six years old. He

studied at Lyallpur Khalsa College in Jalandhar and was first selected to play for the Indian hockey team in 1951 during the tour of Afghanistan.

He was part of the Punjab state hockey team and also captained Panjab University team.

Star-studded field for India Open

Marin, Momota among top entries as badminton action returns to India

New Delhi, April 13: Carolina Marin and World No. 1 Kento Momota will headline a star-studded OI international shuttlers when the India Open Super 500 event is held here from May 11 to 16. albeit behind closed doors due to the raging Covid-19 pandemic.

The \$400,000 tournament, one of the last few qualification events for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, has attracted 228 (114 men and 114 women) entries from 33 different national associations, including China.

However, the Badminton Association of India (BAI) said "due to the rapidly rising Covid-19 cases in the country, the tournament will be contested in a bio-secure bubble without spectators and media while implementing strict Covid-19 safety protocols.'

"All the players and officials coming from South Africa, Brazil, Middle East and European countries including UK will be serving a 7-day quarantine period and have to report in the capital city

Dhaka, April 13: Five

SA WOMEN CRICKETERS STUCK IN

BANGLADESH AFTER POSITIVE TEST



on May 3," BAI said in a release.

... Players and officials from rest of the world can arrive on May 6 and undergo a 4-day quarantine period.

On the court, three-time world champion Marin will lead the women's singles category along with other Top-10 shuttlers Yamaguchi, 2019 world

champion P.V. Sindhu, Korea's An Se-Young and Pornpawee Thailand's Chochuwong.

India boasts of the largest contingent with 48 players (27 women and 21

Indian women to tour **England in June-July** in Chelmsford.

London, April 13: The Indian women's cricket team will play a historic one-off Test against England in Bristol as part of a multi-format series that will also feature three ODIs and as many T20 Internationals across June-July.

The Test will be played at the Bristol County Ground from June 16-19 kicking off the England team's summer. The match was first confirmed by BCCI secretary Jay Shah earlier this year but the exact date and venue were unveiled by the host

board on Tuesday. the women's team will take part in a Test for the first THE FIXTURES

June 30: 2nd ODI - The Ground, Taunton July 3: 3rd ODI - New

July 9: 1st T201 - County Ground, Northampton

July 11: 2nd T201 - Central County Ground, Hove July 15: 3rd T201 - The Cloudfm County Ground, Chelmsford.

during the 2019 Ashes. The one-off Test will be followed by three ODIs and T20Is each with the

After announcing its home fixtures, England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chief executive officer Tom Harrison, said: "We're really looking forward to a busy summer in what is a huge year for our England Women's team, and we're very excited about hosting

ture list that offers a lot for both our players and

— AFP deputy director of the time since 2014, England tour concluding on July 15

could not prevent the understrength Western Conference leaders from sliding to a surprise defeat against a Wizards team struggling near the foot of the East. Utah, with Mike Conley and Jordan Clarkson absent from the line-up, looked to be racing towards a 25th straight home victory after a dazzling opening

Wizards snap Jazz winning home run Los Angeles: Bradley Bkeal

scored 34 points and Russell Westbrook bagged a triple double as the Washington Wizards ended the Utah Jazz's 24-game home winning streak with a 125-Monday. Donovan Mitchell delivered a 42-point gem for Utah but

members of a South African women's cricket team have become stranded in Bangladesh after testing positive for Covid-19, officials said Tuesday. Seventeen other mem-

demic

bers of the South Africa Emerging team left Bangladesh late Monday, the before imposed a ban on interna-121 victory in Salt Lake City on tional flights over a surge in new cases there. The five remaining have been put into isolation in

Dhaka, said Shafiul Alam Nadel of the Bangladesh Cricket Board. "All members of the South African team gave Covid-19 test samples before their departure from Sylhet. Five of them

Osmani Medical College in the northeastern city. The team's fifth match was due to start on

Tuesday in Sylhet. But they cut short the tour because of the flight ban, which will last from Wednesday until April 14, as part of efforts to combat the new spread of infections in the South Asian nation.

The five in isolation will be tested again and if the results are negative "we will send them back home at the earliest possible time," said Nadel. Documents seen by AFP

indicated that team manager Matshipi Marcia Letsoalo and players Sinalo Jafta, Leah Jones, Nobulumko Baneti and Robyn Searle had been left

June 16-19: Test match -**Bristol County Ground** June 27: 1st ODI - Bristol County Ground

Cooper Associates County

Road, Worcester

India and New Zealand. "The two international series will sit either side of The Hundred, and with the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy and the new Regional Twenty20 comlast played a red-ball game petition running throughout the summer, it's a fix-

our fans," Hrrison added.

quarter saw them put up 42 points. - AFP

Himangshu Lal Rov. deputy direct

country

• RAJASTHAN ROYALS • ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE • SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

THE ASIAN AGE, WEDNESDAY, 14 APRIL 2021, NEW DELHI

ORANGE Nitish Rana, KKR Sanju

Samson, RR KL Rahul,

PBKS

PURPLE

Andre Russell, KKR

Harshal Patel, RCB

Rahul Chahar, MI

Off the field



DC opener Shikhar Dhawan works out at the team hotel.

Archer's IPL return remains uncertain

England fast bowler Jofra Archer has been cleared to return to training, it was announced Tuesday, after he had surgery to remove a fragment of glass from his finger last month. But just how much of a part the Sussex quick will play in this year's edition of the Indian Premier League remains uncertain. An England and Wales Cricket Board statement said: Kumar Sangakkara, the Royals' director of cricket and a former Sri Lanka captain, said recently the franchise would not risk Archer's fitness in a year where England will want him playing in both the T20 World Cup and the Ashes. "We are always uided by the experts in English cricket."

Rohit wants to maintain fitness

Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma says he has to do "a lot of mainte-nance work" to ensure he remains in peak physical condition ever since the hamstring injury he suffered during the last IPL. The stylish right-handed batsman missed some part of the IPL last year and the initial portion of the Australia tour, including the white-ball leg, due to the injury. "Maintaining what I have built up in the last three or four months. Obviously I was injured during the last IPL. So there's a lot of maintenance work that I have to keep doing just to maintain my lower body, hamstring and stuff like that," Sharma said.

When Harshal felt insulted

 ${
m R}^{
m oyal}$ Challengers Bangalore medium pacer Harshal Patel on Tuesday revealed that he felt "insulted" after being overlooked by franchises during the 2018 IPL auctions, which motivated him to work on his batting and become a worthy allrounder. The 30-year-old was bought by Delhi Capitals for his base price of ₹20 Lakh in 2018. However, he did not get many opportunities to play. 'In 2018 IPL, a lot of people didn't show interest in me and that struck me, I took it as an insult within myself because I wanted to become a player who was a match-winner and had a lot of value," Patel said.

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RUSS HOUR CHAOS

Knights crash to 10-run defeat after Russell's mixed fortunes

AGE CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, APRIL 13

Jamaican Andre Russell turned a villain from a hero in a matter of a few hours as Kolkata Knight Riders crashed a 10-run defeat at the hands of their nemesis Mumbai Indians here on Tuesday.

Russell stood tall with a career-best 5/15 to restrict Mumbai to 152, but misfired with the bat when it mattered the most.

Kolkata were expected to make short work the chase when opener Nitish Rana (57) slammmed his second consecutive half-century. The opening stand of 72 runs between Rana and Shubman Gill (33) had set the ideal plat-

But what followed was a mini collapse. The game turned on its head as Kolkata lost wickets in a

From 103 for two, KKR slumped to 122 for five with Eoin Morgan, Nitish Rana and Shakib Al Hasan making their way back to the pavilion.

Krunal Pandya bowled a superb spell of 4-0-13-1 Leg-spinner Rahul Rahul Chahar took four wickets.

Jasprit Bumrah who was guilty of dropping Russell bowled a brilliant penultimate over to bring the equation to 15 off six

KKR skipper Morgan said it was a disappointing defeat. "A lot of the time we played good cricket, certainly the first half and a majority of the chase. We made mistakes, hopefully we can iron them out. Mumbai are a very good side. I think the perfect game is to be able to do both (all-out attack and otherwise) and we've managed to do neither in the end.

' It works for us a majority of the time, but we need to be better. The games that have been played here, it would suggest that there's a trend (of runscoring getting tough at the end). Mumbai iave been performing like this for a long time, that would be something we need to assess." he added.

CHENNAI, APRIL 13

buoyant

Sunrisers Hyderabad would be keen to plug a

big hole in their batting

line-up when they take on

Challengers Bangalore

here at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium

Warner & co's biggest

worry has been an inex-

perienced middle-order

who once again failed to

take them past the finish line in their opener against Kolkata Knight

Jammu Kashmir young-

ster Abdul Samad showed

glimpses of his big hit-

ting talent when he smashed KKR's premier

pacer Pat Cummins for a

couple of sixes. With

West Indies all-rounder

Jason Holder out of quar-

antine, Sunrisers might

draft him in ahead of

David

Tuesday.



Earlier, Russell who was brought into the attack as late as in the 18th over wiped out the bottom half of the Mumbai line-up in just 12 deliveries. His Ŵest Indies team-mate Kieron Pollard was his first victim. Pollard nicked a full and wide delivery to be caught behind.

KKR skipper Eoin Morgan deserved praise for using his bowlers dili-

RCB challenge for Sunrisers

Sunrisers pacer T. Natarajan during a training session

gently. Morgan unleashed a three-pronged spin attack with Harbhajan Singh, Varun Chakravarthy and Shakib Al Hasan operating in the

powerplay.
As the slow Chepauk pitch had something for the spinners, Mumbai had play out with caution. They made 42 runs having lost Quinton de Kock

De Kock who replaced Mumbai's previous match top-scorer Chris Lynn was out for two.

slow start, Mumbai stepped on the gas with Suryakumar Yadav taking over the control. His fifty came off 33 balls and reached the iandmark in style with a big six over off Pat Cummins. The ball sailed over the deep square-leg

had struggled his way to a

16-ball 10 against Mumbai

again Devdutt Padikkal

at the top. Padikkal was rested from the previous

game following his recov-

ery from Covid-19 Rajat

Patidar, who batted at

one-drop, is expected to be benched to accommo-

Their new recruit from

New Zealand, Kyle Jamieson has added venom to RCB's bowling

attack. Along with the

lanky Jamieson, Harshal

Patel, who took a five-for

in the season opener, and

Mohammed Siraj RCB

now have a settled pace bowling unit. Harshal is

expected to continue as Kohli's death bowling

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra

Chahal had a poor outing

in the opener. He went

wicketless and conceded

41 runs in four overs

option.

date Padikkal in the XI.

— was the highest of Mumbai's innings

Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Sunrisers Hyderabad Star Sports 1, HD1

Matches

Virat Kohli who has scored 5.911

• Rashid Khan who has taken 77 wickets at an average of 20.27 in 63 innings is the second highest wicket

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

Sunrisers beat RCB by 6 wickets

SCORECARD

Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma b Cummins 43, Quinton de Kock c Tripathi b Varun 2, Suryakumar Yadav c Shubman Gill b Shakib Al Hasan 56, Ishan Kishan c Prasidh Krishna b Cummins 1, Hardik Pandya c Russell b Prasidh Krishna 15, Kieron Pollard c Karthik b Russell 5, Krunal Pandya c Prasidh Krishna b Russell 15, Marco Jansen c Cummins b Russell O, Rahul Chahar c Shubman Gill b Russell 8. Jasprit Bumrah c Shakib Al Hasan b Russell O, Trent Boult (not out) O. Extras (lb 4, w 3) 7. Total

(in 20 overs) 152. FoW: 1-10, 2-86, 3-88, 4-115, 5-123, 6-125, 7-126, 8-150, 9-150. Harbhajan

Bowling: Harbhajan Singh 2-0-17-0, Varun Chakravarthy 4-0-27-1, Shakib Al Hasan 4-0-23-1, Pat Cummins 4-0-24-2, Prasidh Krishna 4-0-42-1 Andre Russell 2-0-15-5. Kolkata Knight Riders: Nitish Rana st de Kock b Chahar 57, Shubman Gill Pollard b Chahar 33, Rahul Tripathi c de Kock b Chahar 5, Eoin Morgan c Jansen b Chahar 7, Shakib Al Hasan c Yadav b KH Pandya 9, Dinesh Karthik (not out) 8, Andre Russell c & b Boult 9, Pat Cummins b Boult O, Harbhajan Singh (not

out) 2. Extras (b 4, lb 5, nb 1, w 2) 12. Total (in 20 overs) 142/7. FoW: 1-72, 2-84, 3-104, 4-122, 5-122, 6-140, 7-

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-0-27-2, Marco Jansen 2-0-17-0, Jasprit Krunal Pandya 4-0-13-1, Kieron Pollard 1-0-12-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-27-4 Rohit Sharma 1-0-9-0.

and landed on the canopy. Suryakumar, however, had to depart soon after being caught at long on. The partnership between Suryakumar and Rohit -

As Pat Cummins dealt a double blow by removing (43 off 32 balls), Mumbai were reduced to 115 for

Live on TV

HEAD to HEAD

SRH 10 RCB

FOR THE RECORD

runs at an average of 38.13 in 185 innings needs 89 more to become the first batsman to score 6,000 runs in IPL history.

taker for Sunrisers after

• RCB defeated Sunrisers by 10 runs

Sunrisers beat RCB by 5 wickets

at Abu Dhabi (Eliminator).

STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISER

POINTS TABLE 0.200

Sanju rues failure to cross finish line

Mumbai, April 12: Sanju Samson's magnificent 119 on his captaincy debut for Rajasthan Royals came in a losing cause but he said the second part of his innings was the best he ever played.

Samson hit 12 fours and seven sixes in his astonishing 63-ball innings but in the end failed to send Arshdeep Singh's final ball for the maximum runs as RR lost the match to

Punjab Kings by four runs. "The second part of the innings was the best I ever played. In the first part, I was not timing it very well. I took my time, respected the bowlers, took singles and got into a rhythm and then I started to play my shots in the second half," he said at the post-match

presentation.
"I enjoy my shots but I come back to the present after I play those shots. It automatically happens, when I focus on my skills and watch the ball and react. Sometimes I lose my wicket also, so I just play the same way.'

He said it was about trusting his processes and being honest to his abilities. "I did that, and it came off tonight.

"The coin (at the toss) looked really nice so pocketed it, asked the referee if I can have it, but he said no."

could not have done better than that though he rues failing to clear the ropes on the final ball. "I don't have words to tell, very close game, came close but unfortunately. think I could have done

anything more.
"I timed it well, but unfortunately couldn't clear the man in the deep. It's all part of the game. We thought the wicket was getting better and we could chase the target down. Despite the loss, I think the

team played really well. Punjab Kings captain KL Rahul said he didn't stop believing in the team and knew that a couple of wickets will give his side the

"The game went deep only because me included, we dropped some sitters. We bowled well until about 11-12 overs. We're used to this, and it's not something new for us, but a win like this brings the team together.
"We batted really well

and bowled well in patches. We weren't consistent with the lengths but the bowlers will learn. A lot of talented, skilful players, and it's important that we back them," said Rahul who scored 91 in his team's 221 for 6 after being asked to



STOKES RULED OUT OF IPL Mumbai, April 13: Star

England all-rounder Ben Stokes' IPL campaign came to an abrupt end after sustaining a finger fracture during Rajasthan Royals' opening game against Punjab Kings, the franchise confirmed on Tuesday.Stokes

will, however, remain in India for a week before flying back to United Kingdom. "Rajasthan Royals allrounder Ben Stokes injured a finger on his left hand while fielding during the team's match against Punjab Kings on

British media about his injury. "Subsequent investiga-

12 April 2021 in Mumbai,"

Royals said in a statement

after reports emerged in

tions revealed that he sustained a broken finger, which will unfortunately rule him out of the remainder of IPL 2021 season.'

This is another telling blow for the Royals after the franchise missed the services of Jofra Archer due to a hand surgery. "Everyone at Rajasthan

Royals absolutely admires Ben for being such a huge asset and a valuable member of the Royals family, both on and off the field, and wishes him a speedy recovery. We are delighted that Ben would like to stay with the group to provide his valued sup-port and inputs off the field," the statement further said.

Competition for India's T20 Cup places hots up



Ayaz Memon **Over The Top**

in Chennai.

Afghan Mohammed Nabi.

As Sunrisers are heavily

dependent on overseas

batsmen, skipper David

Warner and Englishman

Jonny Bairstow hold the

of two pulsating, last-ball finishes, fantastic Lindividual performances and unexpected results is any indication, IPL2021 promises to be a roller-coaster ride again with non-stop excitement

Royal Challengers versus Mumbai Indians and Rajasthan Royals versus Punjab Kings had all the

ingredients that make for a gripping T20 match power and panache in batting, skill and guile in bowling, grit and determination in daunting situa-tion. Also mistakes galore as tension mounted in the thrilling see-saw contests. Imagine Rajasthan and putting down seven catches between

Apart from IPL journeyman Hasrshal Patel who picked up five wickets for RCB against MI, the eyecatchers have been largely batsmen in the first week. Among these, the best were AB de Villiers and Sanju Samson.

Sunrisers Hyderabad

The battle between leg-

spinner Rashid Khan and

RCB's swashbuckling duo

Glenn Maxwell would be

an exciting affair. Washington Sundar who

AB de Villiers and

De Villiers hasn't played any cricket since IPL2020. But for some lack of speed in running between the wickets, he does not appear to have lost zest for the game or the dazzling brilliance of his batsmanship. He is an ageless genius and the pivot of RCB's aspirations to win a

Sanju Samson hit the first century this season, arguably among the best in the history of the IPL, taking his team to within a stroke of victory chasing a mammoth 222.

Whether Samson should have taken a single (possi-bly two) off the penultimate delivery is still being hotly debated. At that point in time, Samson was in full flow, and backed himself. However, a single would have shortened the odds on a tie and a possible Super Over. Take your position, but the knock was stupendous.

place in the first week, let's not ignore the competition for places in the India team for the T20 World Cup, which is also taking place currently among many claimants.

For instance, Kohli as opener obviously impacts the prospects of Dhawan, Rahul and Shaw considering that Rohit Sharma will certainly hold on to his place at the top. There is enormous pressure on these three without doubt. The good thing so far is, such pressure has seen them pep up their per-

With Pant, Iyer, Surya Yadav, Hardik, Jadeja, Krunal, Washington also in the fray, places in the top seven in the side are at a premium. At least a couple of these players will get squeezed out for the T20 World Cup. It is also likely that a couple of new names might gain promi-

As in the batting, there is tremendous competition for places in the bowling too for places in the national side. In spin bowling alone, there are 9-10 bowlers vying for 2-3 places in the squad.

Yuzvendra Chahal and

Kuldeep Yadav haven't had a good start. The former leaked runs aplenty leaked runs aplenty against Mumbai, while Yadav didn't even make it to the playing XI for Kolkata Knight Riders' first match.

These are ominous signs which these two spinners, frontliners not too long back, must pay heed to. A similar situation exists even among fast bowlers looking to get into the India squad.

Much as the IPL fast tracks careers in the Indian context, it can finish them off as quickly, players are forewarned.