

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | MONDAY | 29 MARCH 2021

## WEATHER

Max: 38.8°C  
Min: 22.6°C  
RH: 15%  
Rainfall: Nil

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



## WORLD | 9

France 'critical' as Europe tightens curbs



## SPORTS | 12

Ronaldo fumes as Cup qualifying goal denied



## TABLOID

Married actresses get on Brand Wagon

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## SHORT TAKES

## TEMP CROSSES 40°C IN NORTH TELANGANA

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

A few northern districts on Sunday saw the mercury breach the 40°C Celsius mark according to temperature measurements of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).

"The temperature has begun rising, in areas like Ramagundam and Bhadrachalam the temperature has already hit 40°C," said A. Sravani, a meteorologist with IMD, Hyderabad.

The city recorded 38.8°C, and the temperatures will only rise hereon.

"The city would see a rise in temperature of 1.9°C or more towards the weekend because of the dry conditions. There is an intense convection in the southern districts which makes conditions conducive for the temperature to rise," Sravani added.

■ Page 5: Allipur hottest in TS at 41.49°C

## INSIDE

■ CITY... PAGE 3  
Drunk driver triggers 2 accidents, 3 injured

## Azhar, Ayub fight at HCA meet

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

The Hyderabad Cricket Association's (HCA) much-delayed annual general meeting (AGM), held here on Sunday amidst ruckus and pandemonium, remained inconclusive and got deferred by two weeks to April 11.

In the meeting, members could not agree on the all-important appointment of the ombudsman and ethics officer, which led to trading of charges between president Mohammad Azharuddin and former president Arshad Ayub, both former Test cricketers.

They vociferously discussed everything but cricket and accused each

## AFTER THE BREAK

The agenda of the HCA annual general meeting that was stalled because of a fracas and will be taken up on April 11:



- a. Report and recommendations of the apex council, The CEO and the committees and to propose policy directions to the apex council.
- b. The report and recommendations of the governing council and to propose policy directions to the apex council.

Continued on page 2

**India beat England, clinch series 2-1. Report on Page 12**

other of misconduct.

Trouble at the meet, held at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Uppal, began at the six point — after a

smooth closure of the first five routine business points on the agenda.

■ Page 2: Arshad asks Azhar to step down

## IAF TO GET 10-11 RAFALE AIRCRAFT IN A MONTH

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 28

Indian Air Force (IAF) will be getting 10-11 new Rafale fighter jets from France in over a month which will be a major boost to its firepower.

IAF has already got 11 Rafale which are stationed at Ambala Air Station. With the coming of new aircraft, IAF will have 21-22 Rafale jets which are armed with deadly weapon systems.

Some of the new Rafale aircraft will be moved to Hashimara where the process of starting the second squadron has already begun.

## ROTTEN PLANS 'Remediation' to eradicate bad odour, stop algae

## New bid to clean Hussainsagar

MADDY DEEKSHIT | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

After trying bio-remediation methods, Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) has decided to try "remediation" to eradicate the foul smell, stop the growth of algae and improve water quality at the Hussainsagar.

HMDA officials have floated global tenders of ₹10 crore for the job. The

bio-remediation attempted so far is a process that treats contaminants by altering environmental conditions and stimulating growth of microorganisms that degrade pollutants. In remediation, water will be tested and external chemicals used for neutralisation, which could arrest bad odour and improve water quality.

Last year, the HMDA had entrusted bio-remediation

to Matrix Environment Inc. for a period of six months after floating global tenders. Matrix reportedly started work in March 2020 and continued till August, as the agreement period was for six months. Authorities contended that they terminated the work of Matrix as rainwater expected into the lake in the monsoon would wash away contaminants. Prior to that, the HMDA floated

global tenders and accorded the project to city-based Ezox Environment LLP.

Expressing satisfaction

over the pilot project, the Ezox, in collaboration with Matrix Environment, a Canada-based firm with expertise in controlling water pollution and removing sediments in water bodies, was given the project.

■ Page 2: Firm registered to mechanic shed

## Modi pushes for modernising agri

## Bats for farming innovations amid stir

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 28

Facing stiff resistance from farmers in some of the northern Indian states on the three farm laws, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that "modernisation in the field of Indian agriculture is the need of the hour" as "we have already lost a lot of time".

Addressing the nation in his monthly "Mann Ki Baat" address, which was its 75th episode, the Prime Minister added that "adopting new alternatives, new innovations, along with traditional farming, are equally important to create new opportunities for employment in the agriculture sector; to increase the income of farmers".

PM Modi also hailed the world's largest vaccination programme being carried out in India against the Covid-19 and stressed on "dawai bhi, kadai bhi" (medicines as well as strict preventive measures).

Asserting that adopting modern practices in the agriculture sector is imperative, he said in



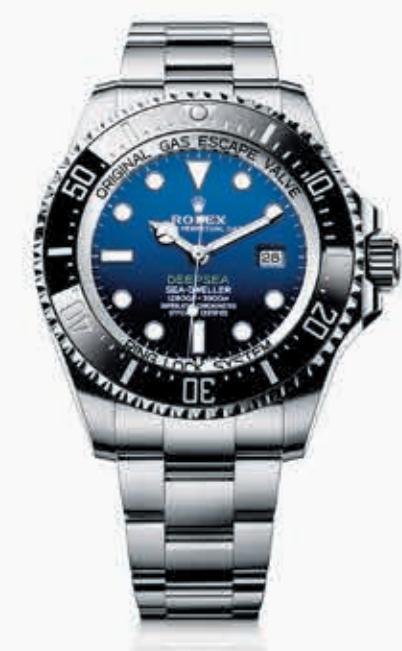
Narendra Modi

dreds of farmers have been camping at Delhi's border points at Ghazipur, Singhu and Tikri since November last year demanding that the Centre repeal the three contentious farm laws.

Noting that bee farming is becoming the foundation of a honey revolution or sweet revolution in the country, Mr. Modi said farmers in large numbers are associating with it.

The natural organic honey of the Sundarbans areas of West Bengal is in great demand in the country and the world, he said.

"Just as a village Gurdum in Darjeeling, West Bengal... people here started the work of honey bee farming, and today, there is a sizeable demand for honey harvested at this place. This is also increasing the income of farmers. I also have had one such personal experience in Gujarat... You will be happy to know that in such a short time, Banaskantha has become a major centre for honey production. Today, farmers of Banaskantha are earning lakhs of rupees annually through honey," PM Modi added.



OYSTER PERPETUAL ROLEX DEEPSSEA

## THE ROLEX DEEPSSEA

Engineered for the extreme depths of ocean exploration, the Rolex Deepsea is the watch of choice for professional divers when ultimate reliability is a must. Its helium escape valve, patented by Rolex in 1967, is indispensable for saturation diving, and its Ringlock System architecture enables it to withstand depths of up to 3,900 metres. Based on more than 60 years of collaboration with underwater explorers, it continues to go where no other divers' watch has gone before.

#Perpetual

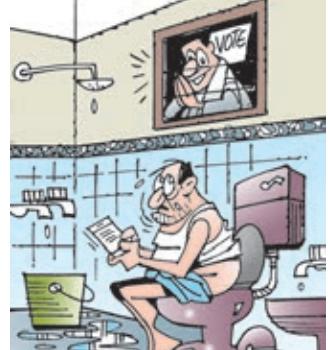
ROLEX



## ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttaryana  
Tithi: Phalguni Bahula Padyami till 8.53 pm  
Star: Hasta till 3 pm  
Varjyam: 10.07 pm to 11.32 pm  
Durmuhratam: 12.45 pm to 1.33 pm; 3.11 pm to 3.59 pm  
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am  
**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
Sha'ban 15, 1442 AH  
**PRAYERS**  
Fajr: 5.13 am  
Zohar: 12.31 pm  
Asar: 4.42 pm  
Maghrib: 6.34 pm  
Isha: 7.42 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY** 6.28 PM  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW** 6.13 AM  
**MOONRISE TODAY NA**  
**MOONSET TODAY** 5.56 AM

## COUNTER POINT



One more important promise, our government will protect your data privacy!

## SHORT TAKES

## DOCS PERFORM RARE SURGERY ON BABY

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

A four-month-old infant who had intense bluish discolouration due to his complex heart anatomy underwent an emergency surgery in Apollo Hospitals and is recovering.

The baby had only one pumping chamber in the heart and one heart valve was missing. Blood flow to the lungs was completely blocked.

The veins bringing blood from the upper and lower body and from the lungs to the heart were abnormally connected. His oxygen levels were low at 50 per cent.

He was put on mechanical ventilation and an emergency operation had to be conducted. In view of the urgency, doctors did not wait for the Covid-19 report and performed the surgery to allow flow of blood into the lungs.

The child was put on a heart lung bypass machine and his veins bringing blood from the upper body were disconnected from the heart and connected to the lungs on either side in a procedure called the Glen Operation. The four-hour-long surgery helped restore oxygen levels and child turned pink.

Dr Sunil Swain, paediatric cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr Kavitha Chintala, paediatric cardiologist, and team of intensive and pediatric anaesthetist carried out the surgery.

Dr Chaintala stated that eight to nine out of 1,000 live births suffer congenital heart disease of which 25 per cent are considered critical. Advances in paediatric cardiology and cardiovascular surgery are helping treat these complex heart anomalies early.

● **THE CHILD** was put on a heart lung bypass machine and his veins bringing blood from the upper body were disconnected from the heart and connected to the lungs on either side in a procedure called the Glen Operation.

## Holika Dahan



Devotees perform Nera Pora also known as Holika Dahan ahead of Holi near high court on Sunday.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

## Drunk driver triggers 2 accidents, 3 injured

**SUV involved in the mishap had 3 challans pending on it**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

A home guard and a civilian were injured after a speeding car driven by a drunk driver rammed them during a routine check for drunk driving here on Saturday night. In quick succession, an assistant sub-inspector who reached the spot was hit by another car.

The injured police personnel were identified as home guard Prahlad and assistant sub-inspector

Mahipal Reddy of the KPHB police.

"The first accident occurred while the police was conducting the check at Kolan Raghava Reddy Garden, Nizampet Road, KPHB colony, around 11.40 pm. Within a few minutes, the second mishap occurred," police said.

The errant driver in the first accident was Srujan, driving an SUV (TS03 EZ 9119). A medical examination showed Srujan's blood alcohol level of 161, more than the permissible

of 30, police said.

On being alerted to the accident, ASI Mahipal Reddy, 45, reached the spot. As he was carrying out investigations, a speeding car (TS08 UD 2984) driven by one Aslam, hit the police official. Mahipal Reddy fell down on a roadside boulder and sustained a head injury and a leg fracture. He has been hospitalised.

A medical examination of driver Aslam confirmed he was not drunk. The condition of the home

guard and the civilian were stable and they were out of danger.

The condition of Mahipal Reddy was critical and he was undergoing treatment at KIMS Hospital, Kondapur.

The SUV involved in the accident has three challans pending on it and all of them were for overspeeding. The second car has five pending challans, most of them for wrong-side parking. Police took both the motorists into custody.

## Police warns offenders of jail for tampering number plates

### Cop caught on bike with tampered number plate

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

Hyderabad city police said that those caught with tampered number plates will be booked for cheating under the Indian Penal Code and prosecuted. Officials also asked parents and guardians not to give vehicles to the underage drivers as they had caught several minors during recent checks during late nights.

"With the rise in surveillance cameras in the city, there has been an increase in vehicle owners resorting to various techniques to hide or deface the registration numbers to avoid penalties. Unless we can press criminal charges against vehicle owners for disfiguring the number plates, this will go on," say traffic officials.

Explaining the process, police said that the traffic police will be contacting the local law and order police station and make a complaint against the violator. "The case will be registered under the Section 420 (cheating and wrong gain) of the Indian Penal Code and the vehicle will be seized," officials said.

Police also explained that said cases under Section 420 (cheating), 465 (forgery)

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

While city police are imposing fines and punishment on motorists carrying tampered number plates, a photograph of a cop on a bike with a similar violation went viral on social media platforms on Sunday.

The posts have the hashtag #EvenWeCareForYouMrCop and a caption saying 'PractiseWhatYouPreach'.

It was later noted that the bike also had unpaid challans of ₹4,200 from July 2018 — mostly for not wearing the helmet.

In the photo attached to the Tweet, a police officer

is seen on the bike, registered to one Shaik Dilshad. The number plate reads TS 2 EH 2786, instead of TS 12 EH 2786, with the number 1 having been rubbed off.

"Policeman spotted the improper number plate on the Puranapul-

and Section 471 (using as genuine a forged document) were being invoked by the police for tampering with number plates.

According to the annual report, 1,51,267 cases of tampered number plates were booked in Hyderabad in 2019, which rose to 1,66,657 last year.

The vehicle owners are changing the complete registration number. Challans are generated and forwarded based on the registration number of the vehicle," a traffic official said adding that the quantum of punishment if convicted under Section 420 (cheating) was punishment was up to two years imprisonment and fine.

ment of up to seven years imprisonment or fine while under Section 465 (forgery), the punishment was up to two years imprisonment and fine while for Section 371 (using as genuine a forged document) the punishment was up to two years imprisonment and fine.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Bahadurpura road at 1.19pm on 28-03-2021.

Already so many challans pending on the above-said vehicle.

PractiseWhatYouPreach,

#EvenWeCareForYouMrCop" (sic)" read the Tweet.

The Tweet had two photos, one being of the pending challan list and the second of the fresh violation with the tampered number plate.

Within a few hours of the Tweet going viral, the pending challans were cleared. Police said a fresh challan was issued on Sunday night for having the tampered plate with the violation reading "Wilfully withholding the vehicle information".

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Muslims visit a graveyard and offer flowers on the occasion of Shab-e-Baraat in Hyderabad on Sunday.

— P. SURENDRA

## Churches reverberate with 'Hosanna' on Palm Sunday

SANJAY SAMUEL  
PAUL IDC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

Palm Sunday was celebrated across churches in the twin cities. The devout carried palm leaves and entered churches with slogans like 'Hosanna, hosanna to Christ Jesus.'

According to the Christian faith, on this day Christ was taken in a procession with Jews shouting 'hosanna, hosanna' and waved palm leaves as a symbol of exclamation.

Palm Sunday is followed by the Holy Week, which is the most important week for Christians in the twin cities, with 1,400 families, arranged festivities in the open ground to

maintain physical distancing, pointed out Michael Abraham, committee member of the church.

Rev M. Prashanth Babu, St George's Church, Abids, said "Palm Sunday service went online beside physical service. All norms were followed strictly. Ushers kept a constant watch to ensure that no one removes the face mask."

Rajani Isaac, member of CSI St John the Baptist Church, Marredpally, said that there was a government notification. We took all safety norms and Palm Sunday service went on well. Last year, we were under strict lockdown."



Devotees hold palms during a procession on Palm Sunday at the Wesley Church near Clock Tower in Secunderabad.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

## Shab-e-Baraat remains a low key affair in city

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

It was a low-profile Shab-e-Baraat on Sunday as people preferred to remain indoors and did not congregate in mosques.

The historic Macca masjid put up a notice stating that only its staff will offer prayers and outsiders were barred from entry. This was in keeping

with the recent directions of the state government to avoid crowding due to the resurgence of Covid-19.

Its gates were closed and the congregational prayer was cancelled. However, the mosque staff performed Salat-al-Isha.

Several masjid committees in the city urged community members to observe the occasion from home. Managing committees of graveyards also appealed to the people not to visit graveyards. Many religious scholars decided to avoid public meetings and addressed their disciples online.

Shab-e-Baraat is the time when Muslims spend the night praying and visiting graveyards. It is observed on the 15th night of the Shabaan, the month of the Islamic calendar. It is also observed as the night of forgiveness.



Muslims visit a graveyard and offer flowers on the occasion of Shab-e-Baraat in Hyderabad on Sunday.

RBI Kehta Hai...  
Jaankaar Baniye,  
Satark Rahiye!



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**SHORT TAKES**  
**COVID +VE GIRL QUARANTINED IN AGRI FIELD**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, MARCH 28

An Adivasi girl student of Intermediate first year, who tested positive for Covid-19, has for the last seven days been quarantined in a field away from her house at Saluguda village in Indravelli mandal of Adilabad district.

The girl, a student of Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential College at Mudhole in Nirmal district, had been sent home after she contracted Coronavirus along with some other students. She says she is staying away from her family members and villagers as they may otherwise contract the virus from her. The student maintains she will return home after completing her 14 days of isolation.

Her father Madavi Mahadu is staying with her though at a distance. Their other family members are bringing food for them.

**BHATTI CONDEMNS ATTACK ON LAMBADAS**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

An alleged incident of forest guards attacking members of the tribal Lambada community and injuring over 100 of them at Nagarkurnool has drawn sharp protests.

Congress Legislative Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka condemned the alleged action and demanded medical quality treatment for 14 women and nine men who were seriously injured in the incident at Chenchuppalugu thanda in Achampet division.

As many as 123 persons suffered injuries as they were roughed up by forest guards at the thanda in the Amrabad tiger reserve forest area on Friday night, he said. The incident occurred as a group of Lambadas went into the forest to collect 'mahua' flowers. Bhatti said the forest guards attacked them with sticks while they were asleep. "The brutality of the forest staff has touched a new high. The guards hit these Lambadas in their private parts and some men were made to undress while they were beaten up," he said quoting first reports.

The Congress leader said that for the past seven years of the TRS rule, tribals have been subjected to extreme harassment by multiple agencies. He demanded that the chief minister take a serious note of the incident and promise in the assembly that the tribals' life will be made secure.

The CLP leader also urged Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao to initiate action against the police and forest officials indulging in such heinous acts. "KCR must also take steps to resolve the podu land issue to restore confidence among the tribals in Telangana," he said.

**FOREST FIRES CAUSING ALARM IN OLD ADILABAD**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, MARCH 28

Forest fires caused by rising temperatures are on the rise in old Adilabad district. It is being felt that forest officials should intensify patrolling in the forest areas even at nights to put off the fires and save flora and fauna.

Meanwhile, forest department officials are taking the help of satellite images and to control and prevent forest fires from spreading to other areas. Even the locals are helping in dousing the fire.

The worrying aspect is that forest fires breaking out in the nights are engulfing other areas and destroying flora and fauna. At times, the fires are caused when farmers burn cotton plant stalks in their fields close to the forest without taking preventive measures.

Fire broke out in the forest area near Nilayapalli on the way to Madaram at Tandur mandal in Mancherlai district on Sunday. Many big trees were burnt to ashes and the reasons for the fire are not known. There was fire for two days in the Jamgam forest area between Ushegam and Dimkapelli villages and many trees were burnt in the incident in Jainoor mandal on March 27 and 28.

It is said that forest department staff burn dry leaves. Sometimes, contractors burn dry leaves in order to get more quantity of beedi leaves.

An Adivasi leader of the Jainoor mandal said some miscreants were burning trees and bushes deliberately.

**AFTER GREAT SHOW, MANY DOUBTS**

Government had procured record quantities of foodgrains last year

SEASON	VANAKALAM		YASANGI		TOTAL	
	Buying centres	Paddy purchased (in MTs.)	Buying centres	Paddy purchased (in MTs.)	Buying centres	Paddy purchased (in MTs.)
KMS 2014-15	1,639	11,04,640	1,690	13,25,079	3,329	24,29,718
KMS 2015-16	1,721	15,13,483	1,286	8,42,508	3,007	23,55,991
KMS 2016-17	2,178	18,24,802	3,040	37,21,766	5,218	53,69,390
KMS 2017-18	2,716	18,24,802	3,313	35,74,017	6,029	53,98,819
KMS 2018-19	3,297	40,41,286	3,509	37,04,995	6,806	77,46,281
KMS 2019-20	3,670	47,08,960	6,408	64,16,797	10,078	1,11,25,757
Vanakalam 2020-21	6,497	4,49,319	-	-	6,497	4,46,9319

# Bumper yasangi yield but state may not buy

State not keen on procuring foodgrain as it fears losses

L. VENKAT RAM  
REDDY | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

The state has surpassed all records this Rabi season (yasangi) with regard to the extent of land under cultivation: 69.62 lakh acres, the highest since the state's formation in 2014. Of this, paddy accounted for 52.73 lakh acres.

The normal crop area during yasangi used to be 36.43 lakh acres. This has almost doubled now, thanks to the government extending schemes like Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bhima and 24x7 free power to farmers

duce in Rabi on the pretext of shortage of storage capacity and bleak import prospects. She pointed out that government officials were mentioning that eight lakh metric tonnes can be procured this year but not later.

Kisan Congress state president Anvesh Reddy

stated that farm laws were more of a bane for farmers, who are also in a confused state because of lack of assurance by the state government.

Recently Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao ruled out village-level procurement centres while at the same time, mentioning that Indira Kranti Pathams and other procurement centres would continue in villages. This contradiction is demoralising farmers, she said.

Meanwhile, the Congress asked the Chief Minister Narendra Modi was ready to do anything to farmer welfare.

## New laws, lack of centres to buy grain to hit farmers

IREDDY SRINIVAS  
DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

Telangana Rythu Sangam leader Pasya Padma slammed Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao for "lying" to farmers on the issue of procurement of agricultural produce.

She said that when the Centre had promised to procure wheat and other farm produce from the north, Rao announced that the state government could procure paddy and other crops, although he did not specify from which year he would do so.

Padma said the Food Corporation of India (FCI) had hit farmers by revising its procurement norms and making it clear that it was not keen on maize, which even the government wasn't keen on procuring last year.

Padma said that FCI is not willing to procure paddy and other pro-

duce in Rabi on the pretext of shortage of storage capacity and bleak import prospects. She pointed out that government officials were mentioning that eight lakh metric tonnes can be procured this year but not later.

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Meanwhile, the Congress asked the Chief Minister Narendra Modi was ready to do anything to farmer welfare.

Opposition parties were provoking farmers unions to save their skin with temporary agitations at Delhi. He made it clear that Prime Minister Narendra Modi

was ready to do anything to farmer welfare.

Opposition is the nodal agency to set up procurement centres, procure stocks from farmers for MSP and make payments to farmers online within two to three days.

However, there are no instructions from the state government to the corporation though yasangi stocks will start arriving within a fortnight.

When contacted, TS Civil Supplies Corporation chairman Maredy Srinivas Reddy said, "The government is yet to take a decision on procurement. We have no instructions from the government on this issue. I can't say anything more on this issue unless clarity comes from the government."

In the wake of Centre's farm laws, the state government is not keen on procuring foodgrain this yasangi as it fears that it would lead to losses. It is already concerned over the ₹17,500 crore loss from procurement since 2014.

A senior official of civil supplies department said, "The government had incurred ₹7,500 crore losses due to purchase of paddy, sorghum, maize, red gram, bengal gram and sunflower. Though the government had purchased these crops for MSP, it had to sell them at lower prices, as there was no demand for them."

Data shows that due to paddy procurement alone the government suffered a loss of ₹3,935 crore and for corn ₹1,547.59 crore, sorghum ₹52.78 crore, red gram ₹413.48 crore, red sorghum ₹52.47 crore, black gram ₹9.23 crore, Bengal gram ₹108.07 crore, sunflower ₹14.25 crore.

After including wages paid to hamals and other administrative expenses, the total loss was ₹7,500 crore, he explained.

The civil supplies department has recommended the government not to set up village-level procurement centres in order to avoid further losses.

The civil supplies cor-

porate is the nodal agency to set up procurement centres, procure stocks from farmers for MSP and make payments to farmers online within two to three days.

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A senior official of civil supplies department said, "The government had incurred ₹7,500 crore losses due to purchase of paddy, sorghum, maize, red gram, bengal gram and sunflower. Though the government had purchased these crops for MSP, it had to sell them at lower prices, as there was no demand for them."

Data shows that due to paddy procurement alone the government suffered a loss of ₹3,935 crore and for corn ₹1,547.59 crore, sorghum ₹52.78 crore, red gram ₹413.48 crore, red sorghum ₹52.47 crore, black gram ₹9.23 crore, Bengal gram ₹108.07 crore, sunflower ₹14.25 crore.

After including wages paid to hamals and other administrative expenses, the total loss was ₹7,500 crore, he explained.

The civil supplies department has recommended the government not to set up village-level procurement centres in order to avoid further losses.

The civil supplies cor-

porate is the nodal agency to set up procurement centres, procure stocks from farmers for MSP and make payments to farmers online within two to three days.

However, there are no instructions from the state government to the corporation though yasangi stocks will start arriving within a fortnight.

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**IN BRIEF**  
**PD Act invoked on inter-state burglar**

**Hyderabad:** Cyberabad police invoked the Preventive Detention Act against a inter-state burglar, Farhan Muntaz Shaik of Maharashtra, who had struck at several houses. He has been detained at the Cherlapally prison. Police said Shaik had been arrested after he stole 119 phones from an outlet at Miyapur with his associates from Mumbai. Last year, the gang had burgled three houses in Cyberabad, Sangareddy and Hyderabad. To stop him, Cyberabad police commissioner V.C. Sajjanar invoked the PD Act against Shaik.

**ALLIPUR HOTTEST IN TS AT 41.4°C, SAYS TS SOCIETY**

FROM PAGE 1

In the last 24 hours, the TS State Development Planning Society reported that the highest maximum temperature of 39.3°C was recorded at Narayanguda in the city. The hottest place in the state was Allipur in Jagtial district which recorded 41.4°C.

**GETTING WARM**

Ramagundam tops the temperature chart of the IMD

- Ramagundam 41°C
- Adilabad 40.8°C
- Nizamabad 40.5°C
- Bhadrachalam 39.2°C
- Mahbubnagar 39°C
- Hyderabad 38.8°C
- Nalgonda 38.5°C
- Medak 38.3°C
- Hanmakonda 38°C
- Khammam 37.2°C

**8 FROM CHENNAI KILLED IN NELLORE ROAD MISHAP**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, MARCH 28

In a ghastly road accident, eight persons were killed, seven of them on the spot, and another six suffered grievous injuries when a speeding vehicle crashed into a parked truck on the Mumbai highway close to Damaramadugu village near Nellore early on Sunday.

There were 14 people in the vehicle and 13 of them were from Chennai while the driver was from Nellore. They were returning home after a Srirailam pilgrimage.

**Airport opens, Kurnool to get industrial park**

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC  
KURNOOL, MARCH 28



Buggana Rajendranath Reddy

"I AM EXCITED to see the airport buzzing with passengers and aircraft. I am sure that this will become one of the busiest airports in the days ahead," the minister said.

Bramananda Reddy

Rajendranath Reddy said that the proposal for establishing an airport at Kurnool was made even before it became the capital of the undivided Andhra Pradesh between 1953 and 1956. It took 60 long years to realise this dream, he said.

"I am excited to see the airport buzzing with passengers and aircraft. I am sure that this will become one of the busiest airports in the days ahead," the minister said.

There was a festive atmosphere at the airport on Sunday when the first flight arrived from Bengaluru carrying 52 passengers. A ceremonial water cannon salute was given to the Indigo flight after it landed.

Among the first passengers to disembark was Hindupur MP Gorantla Madhav. The passengers were welcomed by Rajendranath Reddy, labour minister Gummamur Jayaram, Nandyal MP Pocha

Kurnool-born pilot Satish Veera flew the inaugural flight to the city from Bengaluru on Sunday. He said he was thrilled to fly the first flight to his native city.

The spanking new airport at its hometown was excellent for maneuvering and better than many airports, he said becoming the first pilot to land a commercial flight in the Oravakal air-

port.



Pilot Satish Veera

he had achieved.

A passenger in the flight, Hari Kumar, said it was a memorable day for him. A smallscale entrepreneur in Bengaluru, Hari Kumar said that the dream of Kurnool people was realised as flights had started operating from the city, thanks to the initiative of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy.

Another passenger, SMD Sarif, a native of Kurnool,

said it takes 15 hours to travel from Kurnool to Visakhapatnam by bus. The availability of a flight comes as a major boon, he said.

A six-year-old girl passenger was accorded a rousing reception on her arrival from Bengaluru.

The maiden flight left for Visakhapatnam with 72 passengers on board. Kurnool collector G. Veera Pandian left for Chennai on another flight from Kurnool.

# Online classes a 'luxury' for budget pvt school students

TRSMA pleads with govt to provide electronic devices free of cost

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

The shutdown of educational institutions barely a month after its reopening in the state has led to a fresh wave of panic among students and parents. Students are facing problems in getting linked to the online classes.

"This is more so for budget private school students. Most of the students do not possess a device to attend the classes and are thus being denied the Right to Education," said private schools welfare body, the Telangana recognised schools' management association (TRSMA). It pleaded that the government provide the electronic devices to students free of cost.

"There is low attendance to online classes for most subjects in budget schools. Some 23 lakh of the total 33 lakh students in the state either do not possess the systems or cannot afford a smart phone or electronic device to attend to these classes. Parents don't know whether their child back home studies or attends to classes regularly while they are at work," said Sadulla Madhusudhan, TRSMA general secretary.

Parents echoed the same sentiment and said their children would suffer as a result of the return to the online class room. "I have three children, one in Class 10, another in Class 8 and the third in Class 4. It's difficult to give each one a smartphone. At least one of them regularly misses out on these online classes," said Karuna Jyothi, a parent in Hyderabad, herself a teacher at a budget school.

A parent of Wisdom school in Ameerpet said most parents have difficulty buying a smartphone to help their kids attend to classes, and children are facing problems in understanding the curriculum properly.

Farhana Khan, director of a budget private school, the Milat Model School, said the attendance at her school for online classes has dropped by half since the shutdown. "Most families in budget schools are from BPL segments of the society, with just one



Garbage is dumped in front of the Government Primary school as it was closed due to Covid-19 pandemic, on the main road of the residential colony in Nehru Nagar, Masab Tank, on Sunday.

— R. PAVAN

## Schools closure rakes up old issues

SANJAY  
SAMUEL PAUL | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

Schools that started physical classes just last month have again been closed due to the resurgent Coronavirus infection. Parents are unhappy that they had to pay full fee for classes that have hardly been held.

Private teachers are sad that just when they hoped their livelihood is getting secure, getting salaries has once again come in doubt. Some schools that provide transport and food facilities are being charged with collecting the fee when their kids are continuing to remain at home.

Deccan Chronicle spoke to parents, teachers and Hyderabad district educational officer (DEO) R. Rohini in this regard.

Salla Prasad, whose son is a student in Hyderabad Public School, Ramanthapur, said, "The school has charged full

fees as well as for transport and food, which have not been provided from the time of the lockdown."

Prasad said the school management is harsh with them when questioned. Neither has government come to rescue of parents, he said.

G. Subbalakshmi, women's wing president of Telangana Private Teachers' Forum, said, "Private schools had removed most of the staff during the lockdown. Only a few teachers were working for half of their salary for taking online classes, though the managements were collecting full fee from students."

Subbalakshmi said their forum had made many representations to the education authorities but they were of no help.

"When schools restarted on February 1, we teachers had some hope of life getting back to normal. But closedown of schools has made us sad," she remarked.

Deccan Chronicle inter-

viewed with R. Rohini, DEO, Hyderabad, in this regard.

acted with R. Rohini, DEO, Hyderabad, in this regard.

@yahoo.com

Q Most schools are not paying teachers their salaries. In many cases, partial salaries are being paid.

A Apart for 15 to 20 private schools, others are low budget schools. Many students of those schools have not paid their fees. Because of that managements are in a tough situation. Still, we are trying to reach out to schools are helping teachers get their salaries.

Q There is a demand from parents about conducting this year's exams online. What do you have to say about it?

Most students come from lower income families. They cannot afford gadgets. We are telecasting classes, which some are watching at their neighbours' homes. Taking exams online will be difficult.

Not a single such complaint has been lodged with us so far. If parents do not come forward who can we do? They can even email their complaints to d e o - h y d e r a b a d a

Deccan Chronicle.

The TRSMA pleads that the government either reopen schools from April 1 or provide smartphones and electronic

devices to students of government and budget schools. This would ensure each student his or her right to education, it says.

## Bomb threat delays Nashik-Hyd flight

Nashik, March 28: A Nashik-Hyderabad flight of Alliance Air was delayed due to a bomb threat call received shortly before its take-off. It later turned out to be a hoax call, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday evening and the police later arrested the caller after he allegedly failed to get a seat on the flight, they said. The caller was identified as Pabbinedi Viresh Venkat Narayan Murthy, 33, an engineer from Kakinada, in Andhra Pradesh, who had booked a ticket with the airline to go to Hyderabad.

The flight was scheduled to take off at 8.25 pm on Saturday from the airport in Maharashtra. With 20 minutes to go, the Nashik Rural police control room received a call that a bomb was planted on the plane, an official from Dindori police station said.

The passengers and crew were immediately deplaned and a police team and the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) were immediately deployed. A case was registered against Murthy under the Indian Penal Code, the police official added. — PTI

## Gov., KCR extend greetings for Holi

Hyderabad, March 28: Governor Dr T. S. Rama Rao, while conveying his greetings on the occasion of Holi, also urged the people to celebrate Holi by observing Covid guidelines. He asked the people not to celebrate the festival in public places but in their own homes.

"I wish you all that this festival of colours truly ushers in the joy, health, peace, and prosperity in your life and society. The joyful celebrations of Holi signify the bonding between various sections of the people and truly reflect our unity in diversity and national integration," the Governor said in his message.

He said that the festive spirit of Holi transcends social barriers, strengthens the social fabric and symbolises the power of truth and good triumphing over evil. "I appeal to all of you to safely celebrate the Holi festival by adhering to all preventive norms to contain the spread of the prevailing second wave of Covid-19," Dr Soundararajan said.

Chief Minister Chandrashekhar Rao, while conveying his greetings on the occasion of Holi, also urged the people to celebrate Holi by observing Covid guidelines. He asked the people not to celebrate the festival in public places but in their own homes.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that Ms. Kilo Pharma Pvt. Ltd has been granted Environmental Clearance (EC) by the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) of Telangana for the project of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (Bulk Drugs and Intermediates) under Synthetic Organic Chemicals Manufacturing Unit in the name of M/s. Kilo Pharma Pvt Ltd, Sy.No. 512 to 518, 524 & 525, Khamapur (V), Shankarapet (M), Medak District vide Order No. SEIA/AT/OL/MDK-7/2020 dated 16th Feb. 2021.

Sd/-  
M/s. Kilo Pharma Pvt Ltd.  
(Authorized Signatory)

### EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

(Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Division)

e-tender Notice No.-80 of 2020-21

(Open) - Engg/DDU

On line (through e-tendering) for the following work is invited by DRMs/Engg/DDUs for and on behalf of the President of India from experienced and financially as well as technically sound contractors including those enlisted with the Railway, CPWD, BSNL, MES, PWD and other public sector undertakings. (i) Name of work with its location - Tender No.69-DDU-SRDEN-II-20-21 Replacement of existing CMS Crossing with WCMS, Replacement of switches with TWS and Replacement of SEJ with improved SEJ etc. on Main line in the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/II/DDU in G.C. Section (ii) Approx. Cost of the work. Rs. 57388637.55 (iii) Closing Date & time for submission of e-tender - 19.04.2021, Up-to 12:00 hrs. (iv) Website particulars of e-tendering www.ireps.gov.in D.R.M., E.C.R.Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Division PR/01695/DDU/T/44

TELANGANA STATE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES LTD.  
Tender call notice for 'Procurement of Desktop Computers, Laser Printers, UPS and Scanners for the Northern Power Distribution Company of Telangana Limited, Warangal' Tenders details of various tenders and events .

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Bid Closing Date	08/04/2021, 03:00 PM
Bid opening date/time	08/04/2021, 03:30 PM
Bid Document Fee	Rs. 10,000/-
TSTS Contact Person	General Manager srinivasarao.T@gov.in Manager (HWP2)-ksrivar-TSSTS@telangana.gov.in
Note	No pre-bid meeting due to Covid-19 effect.
For further details regarding detailed Tender Notification, specification and digital certificate please visit <a href="http://tsts.telangana.gov.in">http://tsts.telangana.gov.in</a>	
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# DECCAN Chronicle

29 MARCH 2021

## Good start in Bangla, but Teesta is credibility test

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's just-ended visit to Bangladesh is likely to be noted as an effort on India's part to pull back from the brink and rescue what is arguably the most mutually fruitful relationship this country has with any other neighbor. It is to be welcomed.

No matter how the effort is eventually assessed, a genuine attempt has doubtless been made. The tone struck in Dhaka by both sides was one of warmth, indicating that a return to a positive normal, and then moving to a higher plane, is an aspiration of both countries.

India's governing party's regrettably communal pitch on the question of citizenship, as manifested through the Modi government's relentless pursuit of NRC, specifically in the context of being the primary step toward giving effect to the CAA, cast a shadow on a perfectly productive relationship with Bangladesh.

Since then it would appear that the Modi government is learning that it is a bad idea to play domestic politics in a manner that adversely impacts India's diplomatic ties and hurts its heritage of being a country that promotes high human values in a mind-bogglingly diverse democracy.

In its own years since liberation from Pakistan, Bangladesh has travelled a fairly rocky path. Communalists and Islamists in that country, finding encouragement from influential political quarters, acted as obstacles to friendship with India. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has shown immense courage to counter that trend, and continues to do so. Mr Modi's visit was viciously opposed by Islamist elements. The Hasina government stood up to them, and this could cost her.

If India is to strengthen the hands of secular politics in Bangladesh in order to strengthen bilateral relations with that country as a key element of our neighbourhood policy, in its dealings with Dhaka, a higher profile must be accorded to aspects that touch ordinary people. Easing trade, transport, and irrigation bottlenecks suggest themselves.

It is in this context that the interim agreement to share the waters of the Teesta river with Bangladesh, signed in January 2011, was flagged yet again by the Bangladeshi leader in her conversation with the Indian PM. New Delhi is yet to find creative ways to help West Bengal overcome its reservations on the sharing of the Teesta waters. It is time for India to apply itself with diligence to this subject, lest in Bangladesh it acquire the status of being the touchstone of good intentions on India's part.

During Mr Modi's visit, India signed five important agreements in areas such as disaster management and trade. Better border management, starting new train services to connect the people of the two countries, invitation to innovative Bangladeshi start-up entrepreneurs to find angel investors in India, looking at cooperation in the fields of civil nuclear energy and artificial intelligence, besides supplying the anti-Covid vaccine, are among the many likely areas of future cooperation. The going will be smoother in these and other important areas if past promises and agreements are not lost sight of.

The 50th anniversary of Bangladesh as an independent country and the centenary of the birth of its charismatic founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was seized on by Mr Modi to try to re-invigorate ties with our neighbour. In the fitness of things, the PM should have taken with him an all-party delegation to Dhaka and not made the journey a purely governmental affair. The liberation of Bangladesh was a non-partisan affair in India, and this should have been reflected.

## Killings by junta an outrage

The Myanmar Army is shooting to kill protesters. Even as the senior general, Min Aung Hlaing, was mouthing platitudes about protecting the people and restoring democracy after the next elections, his soldiers were carrying on with their brutal repression of protests, firing indiscriminately at people, including children, and killing at least 114 persons on Saturday. Ironically, it was Myanmar's 76th Armed Forces Day while the rebels marked it as Resistance Day whose history goes back to World War II. At least 400 civilians may have been killed, besides at least one policeman who had joined anti-coup protesters demonstrating against the February 1 coup that displaced the government led by of Aung San Suu Kyi of NLD.

The lack of a strong international response, thus far limited only to sanctions against top military brass and a few companies they deal with, may be contributing to a worsening situation in which the people are under the thumb of a bloodletting junta, which had backed Opposition parties in the November 2020 polls. The response of India, which shares a long border with its eastern neighbour and hence is likely to be affected more than the others, has also been wishy-washy in merely expressing the hope that democracy would be restored soon. Saturday's bloody incidents should draw a much harsher response, to do which India must abandon thinking only about its old ties with the junta, which used to prove useful in pushing back rebels who run insurgency movements in India's Northeast.

India's soft power may be seen to be declining these days when its own freedoms are in peril. But, if it still retains its ambitions of a seat at the high table at the UN and a voice to be reckoned with in international affairs, it must learn to stand up against injustice. It may seem intriguing that Suu Kyi's people are protesting suppression while they had discriminated against Rohingya Muslims who were forced to flee Myanmar. But India must stand up for the rights of the Myanmarese citizens against a brutal Army that thinks nothing of shooting civilians.

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Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234  
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Kishwar Desai  
London Diary

## India wave hits UK's vax drive, amid adulation for Poonawala

At last, the Sun is shining both literally and figuratively. This is "Happy Monday" as another phase of lockdown comes to an end and we can meet in groups of two families. Or so we were told a while ago. But the Covid situation keeps changing like the London weather, and strict international travel bans come into force.

Earlier last week, India was headlined on the front page — fortunately in a way it was a compliment not a criticism. But now the news that our vaccine supply may be interrupted because the new wave in India will impact vaccine exports to UK has spread gloom. We have had only the fantastic success of the vaccination programme thus far to cheer us. By now, 32 million doses have been delivered catering to 43 per cent of the population, second only to Israel. All adults were due to be "vaxed" by end April. Now we are not sure and have to wait.

There is awe and wonder at how the Serum Institute has become the largest supplier of vaccines with special features on Adar Poonawala appearing in the media every day. (Makes a change from debates on farmers' protests being discussed in Parliament.)

And so now we have stories on the "prince of vaccines", with a fortune of 11 billion pounds, hiring a mansion on Mayfair for 50,000 pounds a week. We also know all about his property portfolio including the homes in India and about his fleet of 35 luxury cars which includes a Mercedes redesigned as a batmobile... Of course it may be modelled on the vehicle owned by the fictional superhero, Batman, but with Covid, bats have a special significance, wouldn't you say, hmm? But to be honest, while he vaccinates the world, Adar has become a superhero as well... who can grudge him his reported collection of Picasso and Dali? Well deserved — as lives have been saved, after Adar took a risk

and invested in the "Oxford" vaccine, long before anyone else thought of it.

The country remains obsessed by vaccines. On the news channels, in newspapers, in daily conversations, Covid and vaccines dominate, as now we await the Covid annual booster jabs just like we have for flu.

We are also eagerly awaiting its final release in end-June. Even so, Boris Johnson keeps on hedging his bets. Twice bitten, three times shy is his story. People are demanding a final decision but no luck. The angry ones want an inquiry into the mistakes made over the last fifteen months but Boris is in no hurry. These inquiries take so long that he may have retired by the time they give their report.

The half-serious speculation is that Boris will quit being Prime Minister — not because he can't win — but because he can't afford it. Compared to what he made as a columnist (at £2500 per column) the

Prime Minister only gets a low six figure salary. The house at No. 10 Downing Street has just the top floor flat for living purposes. There is no government budget for decoration. So when they moved, his fiancée decided that the place needed redecoration. There was no money from the government kitty. So private donations had to be made to buy a decent sofa and repaint the walls. This created another scandal, which has been running for some time... Where did the quarter million come from?

This must be the only country where the citizens don't want their rulers to spend money officially on their homes but also don't approve if they help themselves to their friends' money. So what can a poor Prime Minister do? Unlike in India, no one here gets huge budgets to redecorate their homes when they shift into an "official residence". But in India — politicians to bureaucrats — everyone is entitled to a redecoration spree.

Perhaps the saddest event of the week has been the accidental death of a seal, who had made his home in the Thames. Freddie, as the locals called him, had washed up from colder climes into the river some time back and decided to settle down. He had become a much-loved attraction. Alas, the other day, a woman, QC no less, was walking her dog by the river when the dog escaped her control and mauled poor Freddie. Freddie died but there are no guilty parties. The dog owner was helpless, as the dog would not let go. It was as if they had known each other and had a score to settle. Seals may be cute but the English treasure their dogs. After all, we are told that highly placed advisers to the Prime Minister have been transferred for being rude to Dilny the Number 10 dog.

*Kishwar Desai's latest book, The Longest Kiss: The Life And Times of Devika Rani, has just been published and she is the Chair of the Trust that set up the world's first Partition Museum in Amritsar*

Subhani



## Hosabale's rise: RSS-BJP ties still remain opaque



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

**The BJP's strategy is that the party must have its own foot soldiers. It is also questionable whether the BJP really needs the RSS to formulate Hindutva ideology since it remains a crude, simplistic ideology of majoritarianism.**

or even the other way around. The implication was that the RSS had its own self-defined goals and could not be reduced to the politics of the BJP. But many political observers have no doubt that the BJP's rule is in effect the rule of the RSS, and that Hindutva is the ideological glue. Most BJP leaders are not willing to admit that they are mere pawns and the real command rests with the RSS, and most BJP leaders avoid using the word "Hindutva" though they may be practising it in toto as in the pursuit of measures like the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the abrogation of Article 370 in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

In the run-up to the 2014 election, a middle-rung BJP leader indicated that the RSS would be working for the party in the elections, and this was the first time after 1977 that this was happening. The impressive victory of the BJP under Narendra Modi then was a collaborative effort by the RSS-BJP. In many ways, the RSS had kept away from election campaigns in 2004 and in 2009. A middle-rung Congress leader from Uttar Pradesh had opined that the importance of the RSS was exaggerated by the media, and if it was actually true then the BJP should never lose an election.

A senior RSS functionary was once quite irritated when I had sent him a questionnaire for an interview, and he said there were too many questions on RSS-BJP relations, and that the RSS should not be seen through the BJP prism

The argument that has arisen after the elevation of Dattatreya Hosabale as the RSS's second in command, replacing Bhaiyaji Joshi, is that Mr Modi and Mr Hosabale are seen as fairly close, and are on the same page

ship between the two organisations. As Mr Modi remains the dominant figure, the RSS will have to play second fiddle to the BJP. If and when Mr Modi loses his star position, the BJP will have to fall back to the secondary position of being a RSS affiliate.

One of the RSS's vaunted strengths has been its huge army of foot soldiers through its cells or shakhas, running into millions. It is this amorphous, anonymous army that got activated at election time and which was the invisible strength of the BJP. Amit Shah changed this when he was made president of the BJP by Mr Modi in 2014. He vowed to transform the BJP into a 10 million-strong organisation, and even after J.P. Nadda took over the party, the membership drive continued, and the number has reached 18 million. The BJP's strategy seemed to be that the party must have its own foot soldiers and that it should not depend on the RSS volunteers. But a friend pointed out that there is a big difference between the BJP's millions of members and the RSS cadres. The members are only BJP voters and they are not necessarily party workers. The RSS will still have the advantage as it has a dedicated cadre base.

It is also questionable whether the BJP really needs the RSS to formulate or refine the Hindutva ideology because Hindutva remains a crude, simplistic ideology of majoritarianism. There is not much need for redefining it, much less refining it. A new generation of RSS and BJP leaders are not inclined to update the Hindutva ideology because glorifying a dead national past is their basic principle. If the BJP survives in power, it may not need the RSS much longer. The RSS then will have no option but to slowly withdraw.

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

## LETTERS

### ROAD UNDER BRIDGE

The Hitec City RuB is not a good idea (GHMC ready to inaugurate Hitec City RuB on April 8, DC, March 28). The traffic police is issuing challans and not giving relief to public from the Kukatpally side. I don't think this is a great work done by the TS government and SRDP.

Mohd Zaid Hyderabad

### REGISTER FLAT ASSN

I request officials to resume registration of residents association of apartments by sub-registrars' offices. Banks are insisting on association registration certificate to open an account. Unless we open one, we cannot raise a corpus fund for unforeseen expenses in future. Sub registrars say the state government stopped registrations for over a year. We need a solution to this.

A.Srikanth Hyderabad

### AADHAAR LINKING

Owners staying at different locations outside their own properties are unable to link Aadhaar for free water supply due to address mismatches with their properties. Sometimes the property is constructed and Aadhaar cards issued later. The department should make exceptions for this flaw.

Surisetti Pankaj Kumar Secunderabad

### WEARING MASKS

The government is right in taking firm action against those not wearing masks (TS makes masks compulsory, DC, March 28). However, the leaders must take the initiative before preaching the common man. Covid will last for many more years and vaccination is not fool-proof.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao Hyderabad

### Flight takes heavy toll of civilians

PARIS, March. 29  
Pakistan's Army appears to have inflicted a heavy toll on Bengali civilians of breakaway Eastern wing since it moved out from barracks in Dacca and other places last Thursday night.

The army opened fire with automatic weapons, tank cannons and rockets, according to information reaching here. Army censorship made it impossible to get any despatches out of the country, and over 30 journalists lost their notes when they were stripped and searched before being expelled from Dacca on Saturday night.

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

According to information reaching here, Army censorship made it impossible to get any despatches out of the country, and over 30 journalists lost their notes when they were stripped and searched before being expelled from Dacca on Saturday night.

## SHORT TAKES

CRUDE BOMBS,  
FIREARMS SEIZED  
IN WEST BENGAL

Canning (WB), March 28: A large number of crude bombs and several country-made firearms were seized in different poll-bound areas in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district, police said on Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off, police personnel seized 48 crude bombs near a water body in Kathipota village in Narendrapur police station area on Sunday, an officer said.

The crude bombs were defused and further investigation is underway, he said. An arms factory was also busted in Merigunj village in Kultali police station area late on Saturday night, another officer said.

The owner of the house, where the illegal arms manufacturing unit was functioning, was arrested, he said. Four country-made firearms and an unfinished gun have been seized, the officer added. These areas will go to polls in the third phase on April 6.

TMC LEADER  
HELD IN 2009  
MURDER CASE

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, MARCH 28

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested Maoist frontman-turned-Trinamul Congress state committee member Chhatradhar Mahato early Sunday on the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and several Indian Penal Code charges for repeatedly skipping its summons for questioning in its case against him over the Naxals' guerrilla-style attack on the Rajdhani Express at Jhargram in the Jangalmahal of West Bengal in 2009.

At around 3.30 am, a 40-member NIA team raided the home of the former convenor of the People's Committee Against Police Atrocities — a frontal outfit of the Maoists for the tribals during the Communist rule — at Amlia village in Lalgarh of Jhargram. Chhatradhar and his family members were asleep then.

On Saturday morning the 57-year-old, who became the BJP's target for his entry to the ruling TMC over his influence among the tribals, cast his vote in Jhargram in the first phase of the Assembly election in the state, for the first time after languishing in jail over a decade in many high profile cases of Maoist violence.

His wife Niyoti alleged, "Around 15 members of the NIA team stormed in while others were on the rooftop. They took away the cellphones of four security personnel deputed for him." A scuffle however unfolded when Chhatradhar's family members allegedly tried to resist the NIA team from dragging him out of their home.

PILOT: ASSAM  
POLLS A STRUGGLE  
TO SAVE PEOPLE

Silchar / Karimganj (Assam), March 28: Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Sunday claimed that the Assembly election in Assam is a struggle to save the people of the state from the "misrule" of the BJP.

The BJP government never stood by the people during the hour of crisis, Pilot alleged while addressing two election meetings at Silchar and Karimganj in Barak Valley region.

"We are not fighting to come to power, but to save the people of Assam from the misrule of the BJP," he said.

The BJP is dividing people on religious lines and they need to remain united in Assam and India, the former deputy chief minister of Rajasthan said.

"When people were in crisis during the demonetisation, GST and lockdown, the BJP government was nowhere to be seen. So, it is time that we remove the party from power," he added.

The Congress will form the next government in Assam, Pilot asserted.

"In five years, the BJP gave CAA, NRC, autocracy, inflation and communalism, but not jobs. The biggest challenge today in front of the country and Assam is unemployment. The Congress has guaranteed that it will give five lakh government jobs (in five years)," he said.

Pilot along with All India Mahila Congress president Sushmita Dev also led a procession in Karimganj town in support of Congress candidates.



Union home minister Amit Shah with BJP chief spokesperson and media incharge Anil Baluni (second right) and party leaders Sanjay Mukhy (left) and Sambit Patra (right) arrives to address a press conference at his residence in New Delhi on Sunday.

— PTI

## Shah sees big win for BJP in Assam, Bengal

Says peaceful polling, high voter turnouts are positive signs

### Didi questions Shah over phase-1 poll 'predictions'

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, MARCH 28

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday questioned Union home minister Amit Shah's assertion of the BJP's victory in 26 out of the 30 Assembly seats,

polled in the first of the eight phases in the state, before her return to Nandigram where she is contesting from this time.

The Trinamul Congress supremo, who will spend next four days at the hot seat till it goes to the polls on April 1 in the second phase, addressed two rallies including one at Birulia Bazar where she got injured during her poll campaign on March 10 evening.

Targeting Shah for his prediction, Banerjee earlier told a TMC rally at Chandipur of East Midnapore, "A BJP leader today claimed to have won

everything cannot be made public.

He said that peaceful polling in Assam and West Bengal and high voter turnouts are positive signs for the two states, noting that West Bengal often witnessed violence

26 out of 30 seats. Why 26 only? Why don't you say 30 out of 30? Only then it will sound like getting more seats! They want to have Rosogolla but without its Ros (juice)! Why didn't you count the remaining four also? Are these left for the CPI(M) and Congress?"

She wondered, "Someone should have some shame at least. Only a day before polling were held in 30 seats. Now if you ask me how many seats I am winning then should I go inside the voting machines for a check? How would I know how many seats I will win? People know because they cast their votes. I can only say in view of an 84 percent voters' turnout that my brothers and sisters, farmers and labourers voted for us."

Banerjee argued, "They have given their votes for us in those seats during

during polls held earlier.

The home minister lauded the Election Commission (EC) for the violence-free polls.

Targeting the ruling Trinamul Congress in West Bengal, Amit Shah said an atmosphere of

the Lok Sabha polls where we were lagging behind. If it is not true then why were the central forces sent for beating the people at Kanthi (in East Midnapore) on Saturday? They need to work under the state police. I do not know who ensured it."

Slamming her nemesis Shuvendu Adhikari and his father Sisir, she claimed, "The father-son duo does not have the capacity to win the polls. So they harboured armed goons from Uttar Pradesh, captured booths and did not allow the women to vote. It is not the central forces' job to deny the voters without masks of exercising their rights. Who gave them so much power that they would threaten the women instead of allowing them to cast their votes? How dare they? What an audacity! I know on whose orders they did it."

appeasement and an euphemism for alleged pro-Muslim policies have prevailed in the state and illegal immigrants were allowed uninhibited while public funds were misappropriated and development plunged.

— PTI

### CONG. VOWS FREE VACCINE FOR ALL IN PUDUCHERRY

New Delhi, March 28: Free Covid-19 vaccination for all; scrapping of NEET and the new education policy; ₹1,000 as assistance for homemakers; re-opening of mills; and enhanced pension for martyrs' kin are some of the promises made by the Congress party in its poll manifesto.

The manifesto was released here on Sunday by former union minister and senior Congress leader Veerappa Moily.

The manifesto promised free vaccination against Covid-19, the expenses of which would be borne by the government. A homemaker in every family would get a monthly assistance of ₹1,000, the manifesto said. Steps would be taken to scrap NEET mode for medical admission, and the new education policy, the manifesto said.

A university of agriculture would be set up in Karaikal and a varsity of law in Puducherry, the manifesto said. It promised waiver of loans taken by beneficiaries through the Backward Class Corporation and Puducherry Adi Dravidar Development Corporation. Civic elections would be conducted immediately, it said. A quota of 25 per cent for the students of Puducherry in each of the courses available in the Puducherry University, it said.

Fifty per cent quota would be introduced for students in private medical colleges who were selected through CEN-TAC, it said.

### Cong. urges EC to register FIRs against BJP leaders

New Delhi, March 28: With the BJP advertising claims of winning all seats in upper Assam, the Congress on Sunday said it is in violation of the Representation of the People Act and urged the Election Commission to register FIRs against BJP chief J.P. Nadda and other Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

In a complaint to the Election Commission (EC), Congress leaders Randeep Surjewala, Ajay Maken and Mukul Wasnik sought directions and action against top BJP leaders for giving advertisements in newspapers claiming victory in all upper Assam seats.

They said such advertisements are in clear violation of the directions given by the EC that no one can make predictions of the results

during the prohibited period.

"We pray to the EC to take all such actions as may be necessary and required in law, including direction for registration of offences against Sarbananda Sonowal, J.P. Nadda and Ranjeet Kumar Dass and other BJP members and functionaries 'willfully and knowingly have today issued advertisements camouflaged as political predictions as headlines on front page, in various newspapers throughout Assam'."

They said through such ads, the BJP leaders have disseminated "false/untrue outcome of the results" of the first phase of voting in Assam and have "falsely claimed that BJP will win all constituencies of upper Assam". Surjewala said.

said in a memorandum to the poll body.

The Congress leaders alleged that in a "pre-planned conspiracy" and in order to "defraud the voters of Assam", Sonowal, Nadda, Assam BJP president Ranjeet Kumar Dass and other BJP members and functionaries "willfully and knowingly have today issued advertisements camouflaged as political predictions as headlines on front page, in various newspapers throughout Assam".

They said through such ads, the BJP leaders have disseminated "false/untrue outcome of the results" of the first phase of voting in Assam and have "falsely claimed that BJP will win all constituencies of upper Assam". Surjewala said.

— PTI

LOST | DIALECT

### Karbi is a Tibeto-Burman language, spoken by people in parts of Assam region

## PM lauds Assam man trying save Karbi language

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, MARCH 28

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday lauded the efforts of Sikri Tissau, a resident of Assam for his life-long mission to document the Karbi language.

Karbi is a Tibeto-Burman language, spoken by the indigenous community of Karbi in parts of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh,

Burma and Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister in his 75th episode of Mann Ki Baat said, "Tisso of Karbi Anglong district of Assam has been documenting Karbi language for 20 years. Language is now disappearing from the mainstream. Tissau decided that he would protect the identity of theirs. He has also received accolades at many places for his efforts, and has also received awards."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also

thanked listeners for their continued support as the monthly radio programme 'Mann ki Baat' reached the milestone of 75 episodes.

"It seems like just yesterday when in 2014 we began this journey called Mann Ki Baat. I want to thank all listeners and those who have given inputs for the programme. During this journey, we have discussed a wide range of subjects. We all have learnt so

much. Diverse topics have been covered," PM Modi added.

The Karbis inhabiting in hills traditionally practice "jhum cultivation" whereas those dwelling in plains earn their livelihood by engaging in agriculture and livestock rearing.

According to Assam Human development report 2003, this tribe has the highest number of people in human poverty.

PRIME MINISTER said, Tisso of Karbi Anglong district of Assam has been documenting Karbi language for 20 years. Language is now disappearing from the mainstream, so he decided to dedicate his life to protect the identity of language. Today his efforts have resulted in the documentation of information about the language.

## Tharoor: BJP's 'love jihad' will never go far in Kerala

New Delhi, March 28:

The BJP can only offer communalism, tired scare-mongering over "love Jihad" and a hate-filled politics of division that will never go far in pluralist Kerala, senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said on Sunday and asserted that the BJP's high-profile recruit 88-year-old E. Sreedharan cannot be the answer to the state's political future.

He also dismissed suggestions that not having a chief ministerial face could dent the Congress-led United Democratic Front's (UDF) chances in the Kerala Assembly polls and said the party is "richly endowed" with experienced and capable leaders, any of whom could assume the mantle of chief ministership.

Tharoor said the trend in Kerala is clearly in favour of the UDF and he expects a "strong victory" when the results are announced on May 2.

On whether the BJP would be a factor in the polls and the impact of "Metroman" E. Sreedharan being project-

ed as the key person by the saffron party, the former Union minister said the BJP can only offer communalism, tired scare-mongering over "love Jihad" and a hate-filled politics of division that will never go far in pluralist, inclusive Kerala."

"They (the BJP) have hit their ceiling on their impact peaked with the announcement of his candidacy. An 88-year-old technocrat cannot be the answer to the state's political future," Tharoor said.

But the BJP's allegation is not surprising because they have never understood or appreciated the diversity of India, he added.

Asked about home minister Amit Shah questioning Congress' secular credentials over its alliance with the Left in Bengal and fighting against it in Kerala, the MP from Thiruvananthapuram said in a vast country like India, each state has its distinctive political characteristics.

The competition between the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the UDF is deeply entrenched here, but on national issues, especially those related to secularism and opposition to the "anti-people policies" of

## BJP is behind the mask AIADMK wears: Rahul

DC CORRESPONDENTS  
CHENNAI / SALEM,  
MARCH 28

Campaigning for DMK alliance candidates in Salem on Sunday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said that the present election was no longer a fight between political parties.

Firing on all barrels, Rahul Gandhi lashed out at Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palanisami showered praises on the minister calling him 'son of the soil', a 'person who lives with you', and a familiar person who stood for the welfare of the constituency.

Campaigning for the DMK and its allies in Chennai for the first time after having visited the western and southern parts of the state earlier, Rahul addressed a public meeting in the city before flying to Salem to join DMK chief M.K. Stalin.

Chastising the BJP and the RSS, Rahul said they were trying to take Tamil culture out of the Tamils, and impose their own on them.

"We have seen many elections in Tamil Nadu, those fought between political parties. But this election is not like that. We are witnessing a full-scale attack on Tamil language, culture and history.

If you are to say that Tamil Nadu is India, then we have to say that India is Tamil Nadu. Any relationship has to be one which is equal love and

respect. India is a Union of states, languages, traditions and religions. No one idea or language or tradition is superior. They are all equally important to the country. I say this is an attack on Tamil language and culture. But it is also an attack on ideas which India knows," said Rahul Gandhi.

Slamming the AIADMK government, Rahul said, "One has to be careful during Covid-19. Today we see masks everywhere. It is difficult to recognise what is behind the mask. If you smile at someone, they do not know you are smiling. Today's AIADMK looks like wearing an AIADMK mask, but if you take out that mask, you



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and DMK president M.K. Stalin during a public meeting ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, in Salem on Sunday.

— PTI

## SHORT TAKES

## PART OF ELEVATED ROAD ON DWARKA EXPRESSWAY FALLS

Gurgaon, March 28: A portion of an under-construction elevated road on the Dwarka Expressway collapsed here on Sunday morning, injuring three workers, officials said.

The Gurgaon Police said the portion collapsed around 7.30 am and three labourers sustained injuries.

They are undergoing treatment at a hospital here, they said.

A team of officials from the National Highways Authority of India, including the regional officer and the project director, also visited the site.

When contacted, NHAI Member (Projects) Manoj Kumar said, "On first impression, it seems to be a case of mechanical failure. It is being investigated".

Union road and transport minister Nitin Gadkari had earlier this month visited the expressway to inspect progress of the 30-kilometre project which is being built at the cost of ₹10,000 crore.

## MUMBAI MANUAL SCAVENGING: THREE KILLED

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, MARCH 28

Three labourers lost their lives after a contractor sent them inside a chemical tank to paint it without providing them any protective gear. The incident happened in Ambernath in Thane district on Saturday morning.

A Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) fire brigade officials said that the three labourers went inside a gas tank of Easter Chemical Company in Ambernath area to paint it without any protective gear on Saturday.

The trio was engaged by a contractor and was sent inside the underground gas tank without any safety gear. They died after inhaling hazardous gas, said a fire brigade officer.

A fire official has stated that appropriate help could not be provided to the victims at right time because the fire brigade was informed after wasting time. According to the fire official the trio went inside the 30 feet tank situated underground, around 8 am, on Saturday morning. But after some hours when the watchman went to see them, he found them unconscious. Even then instead of informing fire brigade they wasted time in hierarchical rules and informed after two hours of the incident.

Firefighters went inside the tank and brought all three of them out, but they had succumbed by then. Ambernath police officials and fire team are investigating the matter. The bodies were sent for post mortem. Police are yet to confirm their identities.

## FIRE BREAKS OUT IN GOVT HOSPITAL IN UP'S KANPUR

Kanpur, March 28: A fire broke out near the intensive care unit (ICU) on the first floor of the state-run LPS Institute of Cardiology here on Sunday, the Uttar Pradesh government said.

"The fire broke out in the storeroom. Things are under control now and officers are on the ground. There are no casualties. Around 140 patients were evacuated," Additional Chief Secretary Avash Kumar Awasthi said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took cognizance of the incident and directed that the evacuated patients be provided immediate care. He has also sought a report from the district administration, the government said in a statement issued in Lucknow.

The Chief Minister has directed a high-level team, including the principal secretary, health education and the director general of the fire department, to visit the site and give its report immediately. The investigation team shall also include the divisional commissioner of Kanpur, the statement said.

Kanpur's Additional Commissioner of Police Akash Kulharni said a couple of fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the fire. Window panes on the first floor of the hospital were broken to let the smoke out, an official said.

According to Swaroop Nagar Station House Officer (SHO) Ashwani Pandey, the fire broke out on the first floor of the hospital. About 175 patients were evacuated from the ICU and other neighbouring wards and shifted to other wards, he added.



Amid an alarming rise in Coronavirus cases across the country, people celebrate Basanta Utsav with colours by violating the government-issued guidelines to curb the virus at Balurghat in South Dinajpur district of West Bengal on Sunday. — PTI

# Sharpest spike in 5 months, 67,890 Covid cases in 24 hrs

Last major spike recorded on October 16 when 63,371 cases were reported

## PM recalls when Janata curfew was 1st imposed

New Delhi, March 28: In

his monthly "Mann Ki Baat" radio address on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recalled that in March last year, the nation first heard about the Janata curfew.

The Janata curfew was imposed on March 22 last year on the Prime Minister's appeal following the Coronavirus outbreak.

"From very early on, the people of India have put up a spirited fight against Covid-19," he asserted.

Noting that around this

time last year, the question was whether there would be a vaccine for Covid-19 and by when would it be rolled out, Modi said it is a matter of pride that the world's largest vaccination drive is underway in India.

"We are getting to hear such news from all corners of the country...that touch our hearts. 109-year-old elderly mother from Jaunpur UP, Ram Dulaiya ji has taken the vaccination. Similarly, 107-year-old Kewal Krishna ji in

Delhi has taken the dose of the vaccine. 100-year-old Jai Chaudhary from Hyderabad has taken the vaccine and it's an appeal to all to take the vaccine," Modi said.

"I am observing on Twitter-Facebook how after getting the vaccine for the elderly of their homes, people are uploading their pictures. A youth, Anandan Nair, from Kerala in fact has given a new term to this-Vaccine service," he pointed out. — PTI

Haryana (5.41 per cent).

Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Punjab, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have also reported high number of Covid daily new cases. These states account for 81.46 per cent of the daily new cases registered in the last 24 hours. The 312 new fatalities include 166 from

Maharashtra, 45 from Punjab, 14 from Kerala, 13 from Chhattisgarh, and 10 from Delhi. A total of 1,61,552 deaths have been reported in the country include 54,073 from Maharashtra, 12,659 from Tamil Nadu, 12,492 from Karnataka, 10,997 from Delhi, 10,322 from West Bengal, 8,783 from Uttar Pradesh, 7,203 from

Andhra Pradesh and 6,621 from Punjab. The health ministry said that more than 70 per cent of the deaths have occurred due to comorbidities.

While the fatality rate stands at 1.35 per cent, over 1.13 crore people have also recovered from the highly infectious disease that has affected millions across the world.

## ODISHA'S PURI TEMPLE TO BE SHUT ON SUNDAYS

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 28

Devotees will no more be allowed to enter Sri Jagannath Temple, the abode of Lord Jagannath at Puri, for a darshan of the deity on Sundays from next week. This was informed by Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief Krishan Kumar on Sunday.

To curb spread of Covid-19, the temple will be sanitised on every Sunday as it used to be after reopening of the temple in December last year. The decision regarding restriction on devotees' entry inside the shrine was taken at Chhatisha Nijog meeting held on March 23, though the temple administration had not confirmed the day.

At the meeting, the SJTA had given permission for holding of rituals of Agnivansh at the shrine on March 27 and Dola Purnima on March 28.

## Indian Navy, Air Force in 2-day exercise with US

PAWAN BALI | DC  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 28

Amid growing India-US military cooperation, the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force on Sunday started a two-day passage exercise (passex) with the nuclear-powered US aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier and its escorting ships in the eastern Indian Ocean region.

What is significant is that IAF fighter jets carried out air interception and air defence exercises with the US Navy close to the Indian coast. "Fighter aircraft from the Southern Air Command are participating in the exercise," said a senior official.

Indian Navy said the INS

Shivalik with its integral helicopter and P8I, the Navy's long range maritime patrol aircraft, participated in the exercise.

The exercise is aimed at consolidating the synergy and interoperability achieved during the Malabar exercise that took place in November last. Besides, the Indian and US navies, along with those of Australia and Japan had participated in the Malabar naval exercise.

For US, India is an important country to contain China's influence in Indo-Pacific region. There is now greater inter-operability between Indian and US Navy and both can securely share information. There is also increasing confidence in each other between the two navies.

US secretary of defence Lloyd James Austin was in New Delhi two weeks back in his first overseas visit to enhance the strategic partnership between India and US for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

Earlier this month US Navy Commander for Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Philip S. Davidson had told US Senate Armed Services Committee about China continuing to militarize South China Sea and seeking to advance its territorial ambitions in the East China Sea (ECS). He had said that China has adopted an increasingly assertive military posture to exert pressure and expand its influence across the region.

However, the probe agency has not revealed how these objects are recovered.

## Raut article hints Shiv Sena-NCP ties turning sour

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC  
MUMBAI, MARCH 28

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday severely censured the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government for its inability to counter allegations levelled against state home minister Anil Deshmukh, stating that it had inadequate 'damage control' plans. The Sena leader also went on saying that Anil Deshmukh 'got the home minister's post by accident' and it is not believable that he was not aware of Sachin Vaze's illegal activities.

Incidentally, the article was written a day after the reported meeting between Sharad Pawar and Amit Shah in Ahmedabad, which the NCP denied.

However, the NCP is upset with Raut's article, which he would not have written without Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's knowledge.

The Sena leader said as to why so much importance was given to Assistant Police Inspector (API) Sachin Vaze is a subject of investigation.

"In order to counter the allegation, nobody had initially come forward. The government does not have any plant to damage control," Raut said.

Titled "Doubting Maharashtra's character, the botched damage control" — the article said Deshmukh "forgot about the sharpness required as home minister".

Calling him an "accidental home minister", the editorial said, "Sharad Pawar had handed over this post to Deshmukh after Jayant Patil and Dilip Valse-Patil refused it. This post has dignity and status... No person sitting on the post of home minister of the state can work by being surrounded by dubious characters".

"Nobody should try to play a spoilsport in a coalition government. The allotment of cabinet berths is the prerogative of head of every political party (in the coalition). No one should play spoilsport when the three-party government is functioning properly," Pawar said.

## NIA finds laptop from Mithi river

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, MARCH 28

linked to the case. But the agency confirmed that blood samples of the accused have been taken for DNA test.

According to sources, the recovered DVRs are of Vaze's housing society where the Scorpio car was allegedly parked between February 17-24, of shops where various number plates were made and of other places where Vaze suspected that his movement could have been captured.

Vaze was in charge of the investigation into the Ambani bomb scare case and when he realised that he could get into trouble because of these CCTV footage he procured them and threw it into the river to destroy the evidence.

The NIA team took Vaze to the spot in Bandra Kurba Complex around 3 pm, the official said, adding that the search is still underway and more evidences are likely to be recovered.

However, the probe agency has not revealed how these objects are recovered.

**MESSY CONCERT** Witnesses say entertainment show turned into ruckus after youth attacked the performers

## Music fest turns 'ugly' at Srinagar's almond garden

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, MARCH 28

A music event being held at Srinagar's famed Badamwara or almond garden to mark the beginning of Spring in Kashmir turned ugly when an irate crowd attacked the dais, thrashed musicians and damaged their instruments on Sunday.

The witnesses said that the entertainment turned

● HORDES OF people including families which had come to witness the spring blossom ran helter-skelter to get away from violence.

into ruckus after dozens of youth came and attacked the stage and those who were performing at Badamwara.

Hordes of people including

come to the garden on the foothills of Hari Parbat hills to witness the spring blossom and enjoy pleasant weather after the long and harsh winter ran helter-skelter to get away from violence.

Several musicians were thrashed. However, famous Kashmiri singer Shazia Bashir, who was performing on the stage at the time of the incident escaped unharmed.

Some locals said that those who attacked the stage were indignant at a music event being held and broadcast very loud through amplifiers at a time when people were heading for mosques for Shab-e-Barat, the night considered by Muslims as extremely important as it is believed that fortunes for the whole of mankind, for the coming year, are decided on this night and

it is also believed that God may forgive sinners on this occasion. "Some of them were saying that they were unhappy over such an event being held when spilling of human blood continued unabated in Kashmir", said a resident.

Police, however, said that the event turned ugly after a boy's request that Shazia may sing a particular song of his choice was ignored by her and the former

while showing annoyance over it snatched the mic, the act which prompted one of the male members of the cultural group to slap him. This evoked anger from a section of the audience, leading to vandalism.

The police statement said, "A group of miscreants created ruckus on the stage when thousands of people including large number of women and



# 20 hurt in Indonesia attack during Mass

Two attackers blow themselves up

## Canada library stabbing: 1 dead

Makassar (Indonesia), March 28: Two attackers blew themselves up outside a packed Roman Catholic cathedral during a Palm Sunday Mass on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, wounding at least 20 people, police said.

A video obtained by *The Associated Press* showed body parts scattered near a burning motorbike at the gates of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral in Makassar, the capital of South Sulawesi province.

Rev. Wilhelmus Tulak, a priest at the church, said he had just finished celebrating Palm Sunday Mass when a loud bang shocked his congregation. He said the blast went off at about 10:30 am as a first batch of churchgoers was walking out of the church and another group was coming in.

He said security guards at the church were suspicious of two men on a motorcycle who wanted to enter the building and when they went to confront them, one of the men detonated his explosives.

Police later said both attackers were killed instantly and evidence collected at the scene indicated one of the two was a woman. The wounded included four guards and several churchgoers, police said.

The attack a week before Easter in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation came as the country was on high alert following December's arrest of the leader of the Southeast Asian militant group, Jemaah Islamiyah, which has been designated a terror group by many nations.

Indonesia has been battling militants since bombings on the resort island of Bali in 2002 killed 202 people, mostly foreign tourists. Attacks aimed at foreigners have been largely replaced in recent years by smaller, less deadly strikes targeting the government, police and anti-terrorism forces and people militants

There was a man, there was an older woman, there was a younger woman, a mom, a random group of individuals in the wrong place at the wrong time," Mossop said.

"It seemed like he was just running in a direction, whoever was in his path happened to be victimised

— STEVE MOSSOP

A witness

dom group of individuals in the wrong place at the wrong time," Mossop said.

One witness, Steve Mossop, said he and his partner stopped in traffic when they saw a bloodied woman who told them she had just been stabbed. They then saw several victims within about 100 meters of each other, he said.

"There was a man, there was an older woman, there was a younger woman, a mom, a ran-

consider as infidels.

President Joko Widodo condemned Sunday's attack and said it has nothing to do with any religion as all religions would not tolerate any kind of terrorism.

I call on people to remain calm while worshipping because the state guarantees you can worship without fear, Widodo said in a televised address.

— AP



An Indonesian policeman manages the traffic after an explosion outside a church in Makassar on Sunday.

## Two dead, 3 arrested in Virginia Beach shootings

Virginia Beach (US), March 28: Overnight shootings near the Atlantic oceanfront in Virginia Beach left two people dead and eight wounded in a scene described as very chaotic.

Three men ranging in age from 18 to 22 have been arrested and face charges that include felonious assault and reckless handling of a firearm, Virginia Beach police said in a statement.

Officers patrolling the area quickly responded, police said. But more gunfire followed several minutes later.

Police said they found a female bystander about a block away who died of her injuries from a second shooting incident.

People were literally falling over themselves, Drayton said.

Investigators believe the woman's death was not related to the initial shooting.

— AP

## Arguments in Floyd murder to begin today

Minneapolis, March 28: Opening arguments begin on Monday in the trial of the white police officer accused of killing George Floyd, a PoC man whose death was captured on video and touched off protests against racial injustice across the United States and around the world.

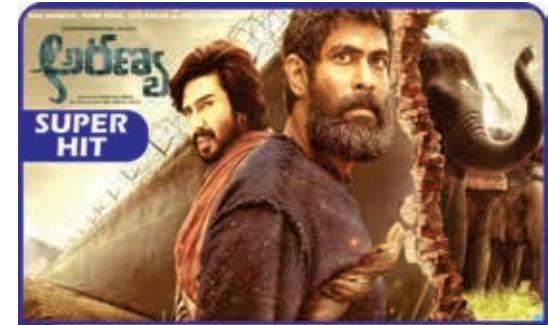
Derek Chauvin, a 44-year veteran of the Minneapolis Police Department, faces murder and manslaughter charges for his role in the May 25, 2020 death of the 46-year-old Floyd.

Chauvin, 44, who was fired from the police force along with three other officers, could be sentenced to up to 40 years in prison if con-

victed of the most serious charge — second-degree murder.

Opening arguments are to begin at 9:00 am Central time (1400 GMT) in a heavily guarded Minneapolis courtroom for a trial expected to last about a month. Fifteen jurors have been selected for the high-profile case.

— AFP



**SANDHYA 70MM**  
11.15am, 2.15, 6.00, 9.00pm

**RAJADHANI COMPLEX**  
11.00am, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00pm  
**ARJUN 70MM**  
11.30am, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30pm

**VENKATARAMANA PADMAVATI**  
11.45am, 6.15pm

**LAXMIKALA SRIDEVI 70 (R.C PURAM)**  
11.00, 2.30, 6.00, 9.30 11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

**RAJ LAXMI 70 SVR SIVASAKTHI 70**  
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00 11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

**SENSATION INSOMNIA TALLURI THEATRE**  
11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30 11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15

**SANTOSH 70 (ABIDS) METRO 70MM**  
11.30, 2.30, 6.00, 9.30 11.30 & 2.30

**ANJALI 70MM KUMAR 70MM**  
11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15 11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15

**SWAPNA 70 ARADHNA 70**  
11.15, 2.15, 9.30 11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

**BHUJANGA 70 LAXMI (Shamshabad)**  
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00 11.30, 2.30, 6.15, 9.15

**PRIYA 70MM MAHALAXMI 70**  
11.30am & 2.30pm 11.00am & 2.00pm

**SRI LAXMIKALA MANDIR**  
11.30am, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30pm

**PRASAD MULTIPLEX - 8.45am, 10.00, 11.15, 2.15, 5.15, 8.15, 10.45pm**

**AMB - 10.30am, 1.20, 4.20, 7.00, 7.30, 10.10pm**

**TIVOLI CINEMAS - 11.00, 4.45, 7.40, 10.00pm**

**PVR**

**FORUM - 10.30, 11.30, 2.20, 5.10, 7.00, 7.30, 8.00, 10.50pm**

**ICON - 1.30, 4.30, 7.20, 10.10 I RK - 11.20, 5.10, 11.00 I**

**INORBIT - 10.40, 1.30, 4.20, 7.10, 8.00, 10.00 I**

**GALLERIA - 11.20, 2.10, 5.00, 7.50, 10.40 I**

**CENTRAL - 11.00, 1.30, 4.30, 7.20, 10.10 I**

**PRESTON - 2.15, 4.00, 8.00, 10.50 I**

**S2 - Mallapur - 11.45, 5.20, 8.10, 11.00 I**

**MUSARAMBAGH - 1.00, 3.50, 6.40, 9.30 I**

**IRRUM MANZIL - 1.00, 3.50, 6.40, 9.30 I**

**SHIVAGANGA - 11.15, 6.15, 9.15 I**

**GPR - 10.20, 4.15, 7.35, 10.15 I SHA - 11.30, 6.30 I**

**CINEPLANET - 10.40, 1.45, 4.40, 7.40, 10.20 I**

**CINESQUARE - 10.40, 1.40, 4.40, 7.40, 10.30 I**

**M CUBE - 10.40, 1.40, 4.40, 7.40, 10.40 I**

**RADHIKA - 10.30, 1.30, 4.20, 7.20, 10.10 I**

**SHIVAGANGA - 11.15, 6.15, 9.15 I**

**ASIAN SWAPNA - 12.15, 6.15, 10.00 I**

**GVK - 10.10, 1.05, 4.10, 7.15, 10.20 I**

**GSM - 12.45, 3.50, 6.55, 8.00, 10.00 I**

**MP MALL - 10.10, 1.05, 7.05, 10.00 I**

**DSL - 11.40, 4.00, 6.00, 7.20, 10.15 I**

**MANTRA - 11.00, 1.50, 4.40, 7.30, 10.20 I**

**CCPL - 11.00, 1.50, 4.40, 7.30, 10.20 I**

**SUDHA - 11.00, 1.50, 4.40, 7.30, 10.20 I**

**BVK - 11.00am, 1.50, 4.40, 7.30, 10.30pm**

**Ameerpet - 12.15, 2.50, 5.30, 8.10, 10.45pm**



**SANDHYA 35MM**  
11.00am, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

**RAJADHANI DELUXE**  
11.00am, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

**SHIVAPARVATHY 70**  
11.30am, 2.45, 6.30, 9.45pm

**SENSATION INSOMNIA - 11.00am**

**PRASAD MULTIPLEX - Khairatabad 12.15pm, 5.30, 10.45pm**

**AMB CINEMAS - Gachibowli 11.00am, 2.00, 4.50, 10.20pm**

**TIVOLI CINEMAS - Secunderabad 2.00pm & 10.30pm**

**FORUM - 1.35, 7.05, 10.50pm I**

**MOOSARAMBAGH - 1.35 & 7.30pm I**

**GALLERIA - 4.45 & 9.45pm I**

**CENTRAL - 1.25 & 8.05pm I**

**RK CINEPLEX - 2.25pm I**

**INORBIT - 4.20 & 10.00pm I**

**ICON - 2.30 & 8.00pm I**

**IRRUM MANZIL - 4.25 & 9.50pm I**

**PRESTON PRIME - 5.15pm I**

**M CUBE - 11.00 & 4.50pm I**

**CINEPLANET - 10.55 & 4.45pm I**

**CINESQUARE - 1.25 & 4.45pm I**

**MJR SQUARE - 10.50 & 4.50pm I**

**LAXMIKALA CINEPRISE - 11.00am I**

**GPR - 11.00am I RADHIKA - 1.30pm**

**GVK ONE - 11.05 & 7.40pm I**

**INOX GSM MALL - 2.00 & 4.25pm I**

**MAHESHWARI - 1.55 & 7.30pm I**

**DSL VIRTUE - 12.40 & 6.50pm I**

**MANTRA - 5.00 & 10.50pm I**

**CCPL MALL - 11.00 & 7.40pm I**

**SUDHA - 11.00 & 7.55pm I**

**PLATINUM MOVETIME - 12.30pm**



## quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	49,008.50
Nifty 50	14,507.30
S&P 500*	3,974.54
Dollar (₹)	72.5
Pound Sterling (₹)	100.00
Euro (₹)	85.50
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	44,081 ▲147
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	64.69
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.123
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.641
As of 8:30 PM IST	0.027

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Trai writes to all agencies on new bulk SMS norms

Trai has written to key ministries, associations like COAI and Nasscom and nodal agencies like NIC as it pulls out all stops to ensure smooth implementation of its new regulations on bulk messages after March 31. Sources in the Trai said NIC has assured it that it is in a state of readiness to assist government organisations, as new rules for commercial messages come into force.

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# Global liquidity, buoyed market trigger IPO rush

New Delhi, March 28: Global liquidity and bull run in domestic equity market helped Indian companies raise over ₹31,000 crore through initial share-sale in the ongoing fiscal year and the IPO pipeline remains strong for 2021-22 too, experts said on Sunday.

This also marks the highest fund-raising through IPOs in last three years.

Sandeep Bhardwaj, CEO, retail at IIFL Securities, said the IPO pipeline remains strong with 28 companies holding markets regulator Sebi's approval for raising nearly ₹28,710 crore through initial share-sale going forward.

- Thirty firms raised ₹31,277 crore through IPOs in 2020-21, significantly higher than ₹20,352 crore mopped up through 13 initial share-sales in the preceding fiscal year.
- The IPO pipeline remains strong with 28 companies holding markets regulator Sebi's approval for raising nearly ₹28,710 crore through initial share-sale going forward.
- Companies such as LIC, HDB Financial Services, NCDEX, ESAF Small Finance Bank are expected to come out with their IPOs in FY22

According to an analysis of data available with the stock exchanges, 30 firms raised ₹31,277 crore through initial public offerings (IPOs) in 2020-21, significantly higher than ₹20,352 crore mopped up through 13 initial share-sales in the preceding fiscal year.

Prior to that, 14 companies had floated IPOs in 2018-19 to raise ₹14,719 crore and 45 main-board IPOs during 2017-18 collectively raised ₹82,109 crore.

Apart from IPOs, the fiscal 2020-21 witnessed a

₹15,000-crore follow-on public offer of Yes Bank.

Adding depth to the IPO markets, companies from diverse sectors like jewellery, technology, specialty chemicals, banking and financial services have made their way to the IPO space during the period under review. "The biggest factor driving companies to fund-raising through IPO is the bull run in the stock market. Improved sentiments in the secondary market acted as a support for the primary market," Naik said.

He further said new retail investors are active and a bit irrationally applying for the initial public offers and suggested that such investors should be discrete in selecting IPOs. —PTI

According to him, ample liquidity, better than expected economic recovery uplifted the market sentiment and the same was visible in the primary market.

Making similar statement, IIFL Securities' Bhardwaj said the availability of ample liquidity in the system across the world, new sectors businesses with immense opportunities and optimism around the Indian demography, demand and growth story triggered the IPOs' gold rush.

V.K. Vijaykumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services, believes that there is exuberance in the market and this has attracted large number of retail investors into the market.

He further said new retail investors are active and a bit irrationally applying for the initial public offers and suggested that such investors should be discrete in selecting IPOs. —PTI

## Higher PF cap won't help most staff

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 28

The government's decision to double the cap on an individual's investment in general provident fund (PF) is unlikely to benefit an employee in the lower or middle ranks compared to ultra-high salaried persons.

According to the law, any organisation that employs 20 or more people on a per-

manent basis is supposed to provide the PF facility to its employees. An amount that is 12 per cent of the basic pay needs to be contributed by the employee every month.

Recently, the government had amended PF rules to increase the cap on Employees' Provident Fund or EPF contribution

— whose interest income is tax-exempt — from ₹2.5

lakh to ₹5 lakh per

annum. This amendment will allow even the individuals, who are earning an annual salary of ₹83.33 lakh or a monthly salary of ₹6.94 lakh to benefit from tax-exempt interest from EPFO. Earlier, the benefit of tax-free PF interest was available only to those who received an annual income of ₹41,66,666 or a monthly income of ₹3,47,222.

A source in the govern-

ment said that the recent amendment on the EPF contributions would benefit only a very small section of staff who contribute higher amounts in provident fund because employees receiving a salary upwards of ₹3.47 lakh a month make up just one per cent of the total workforce in the country.

Ordinary employees, he said, may have nothing much to gain.

## Covid won't hit KFC expansion

New Delhi, March 28: The US-based fast food chain KFC will continue to expand its restaurant network in India despite the coronavirus pandemic bringing structural changes in the business, believing the country to be a growth market in the coming years. Definitely, it was a tough year but it hasn't deterred us from that intent.

SAMIR MENON,  
MD, KFC India

hasn't deterred us from that intent," Menon emphasised.

From a physical access perspective, he said the company continuously identifies new trade areas and potential areas and starts setting up restaurants there through its franchise partners.

"Physical access is definitely going to be a key part of growth strategy. As the year goes, a better sense of what kind of numbers we are trying to chase will emerge. It will be more than 25 for sure," Menon said.

With the pandemic bringing about a change in consumer behaviour with online orders and off-premise consumption growing, he said KFC India has also accelerated its efforts to address the changing consumer needs.

"I do feel our online portion of business would have grown at least by 50 per cent between pre- and post-COVID and that has also led us to a larger shift in the way we are communicating with the consumers, a part of it is the aggregators and part of it is our own assets," he said. —PTI

39% UNITS ARE READY UNDER CENTRE'S URBAN HOUSING SCHEME

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, MARCH 28

Out of the Centre's target houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), only 2.77 per cent housing units have been completed in FY20-21. On the other hand, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) has completed only 39 per cent of the target houses since 2015.

In FY20-21, the Centre had set a target of sanctioning 63.76 lakh houses under PMAY-G. Out of this, sanctions were provided for 34.47 lakh units, which is 54 per cent of the target.

According to data from the ministry of rural development, only 2.77 per cent of houses have been completed till February. In 2019-20, 56.63 per cent of the target houses were completed.

According to the ministry, the pace of completion has slowed down drastically. "This slow pace can be attributed to some factors like inactivity due to Covid-19, election in a few states, saturation of eligible beneficiaries from SC and ST categories, slow pace of working of demand module and lack of timely allocation of targets to districts," it said.

The PMAY-G being implemented from April 1, 2016 with the target of construction of 2.95 crore houses by 2022, has completed 1.35 lakh units. Similarly, against the demand of 1.12 crore houses, so far 1.11 crore houses have been sanctioned under PMAY-U Mission.

## GAMES

### SHORT TAKES

#### Tennis tourney at Noor Academy

Hyderabad: Sports Village and Noor Tennis Academy are jointly conducting a tennis tournament for Under-16 boys and girls on April 2, World Autism Awareness Day, at the Academy's courts in Vattinagulapally, Financial District, beside SVCG cricket ground in Gandipet mandal. The tournament will be held from 8 am to 4 pm. Spot entries are also accepted. For registrations and other details, contact coach Shaik Nooruddin on phone number 9247716811.

#### Ranga Reddy hockey champs

Hyderabad: Ranga Reddy emerged champions of the 5th Senior Inter-District Women's Hockey Tournament played at the Gymkhana Ground in Secunderabad. In the summit clash, Ranga Reddy rode on Aparna's superb goal in the 12th minute of the first quarter to send Hyderabad packing and clinched it by a solitary goal.



#### Kalyan's ton in Vikarabad win

Hyderabad: Kalyan Pavar hogged the limelight in Sunday's action at the Telangana Cricket Association's U-19 Inter Districts West-Central Zone tournament at IOC Grounds in Gajwel. Kalyan hit 100 to lift Vikarabad to an easy 112-run victory against Medchal who were bowled out for just 112 while Yadadri rode on Yogi's 4 for 16 to get the better of Siddipet by 13 runs.

**BRIEF SCORES**

- Vikarabad 214/8 in 25 overs (Kalyan Pavar 100, Praveen 40, Charan Raj 3/17) bt Medchal 112 in 24.1 overs (Karun 25, Shiva 4/9).
- Yadadri 151/4 in 20 overs (Jayanth 40, Pavan 40) bt Siddipet 138 in 20 overs (Mohan Sai 26, Yogi 4/16).



Players of the Benelli Raiders team celebrate as scores for the fourth round of the Hyderabad Premier Golf League are announced at the Hyderabad Golf Club on Sunday evening.

## Benelli Raiders find the arc

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

The Benelli Raiders, led by former Test cricketer L. Venkatapathy Raju, swung to the top in the fourth round of the Hyderabad Premier Golf League on Sunday.

The Raiders found the lost arc and steered well to take the day's honours with fine play at the Hyderabad Golf Association course.

Chakravarthi Akiri scored well, logging in 38.25 points as the Raiders rose gradually up the ranks to finish with 211.50 points on the day.

The rest of the teams were pretty close behind though, breathing right down the necks of the Benelli bunch which just about managed to stay ahead.

The Civet Rangers lived up to their name as they kept the pressure up to finish a very close second with 211 points.

The smooth Swans were not to be

left behind. They swam with a song to be third on the day with 210.25 points even as the King's Warriors were right behind with 210 points. The Markenzo Fairways finished fifth with 206.75 points to their credit.

The contest was tight in individual round play as well, with just two points separating the top five. Sanketh Kondu of Markenzo Fairways led with 40.75 points with Sharks' Sanjay Pulla Reddy chasing him with 39.50 points. G. L. Siva Reddy of Civet Rangers and C. S. Rama Rao of Synthokem Swing Kings were third and fourth with 39 points each while Chakravarthi Akiri of Benelli Raiders was fifth with 38.25 points.

However, the overall lead remained with Team Origins who are sitting pretty with 710.38 points in the bag. The Markenzo Fairways are in second spot with 696.75, followed by the Villaggio Highlanders (696.62), Swans (695.75) and King's Warriors (689.5).

#### TEAM LEADERBOARD (OVERALL)

- Team Origins 710.38 points.
- Markenzo Fairways 696.75.
- Villaggio Highlanders 696.62.
- Swans 693.75.
- King's Warriors 689.5.

#### TEAM LEADERBOARD (FOURTH ROUND)

- Benelli Raiders 211.50 points.
- Civet Rangers 211.
- Swans 210.25.
- King's Warriors 210.
- Markenzo Fairways 206.75.

#### INDIVIDUAL PLAY (FOURTH ROUND)

- Sanketh Kondu (Markenzo Fairways) 40.75 points.
- Sanjay Pulla Reddy (Sharks) 39.50.
- G. L. Siva Reddy (Civet Rangers) 39.
- C. S. Rama Rao (Synthokem Swing Kings) 39.
- Chakravarthi Akiri (Benelli Raiders) 38.25.

## Dhruva is chess champion

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

Dhruva Thota kept a clean sheet to win the Maestro Chess Academy's first sub-junior chess tournament. Dhruva of Maestro Chess Academy scored six points in six rounds, packing off his teammate Ehaan Shaikh in 38 moves in the last round.

Kolla Bhaavan was a close second with 5.5 points while Nihal Parvathaneni, Sanketh Reddi and Ehaan Shaikh finished third, fourth and fifth respectively with 5 points each.

The placings

■ Under 7 Girls: 1. Samitha Pungavanam, 2. Kolla Charvi Sri, 3. Joshini P, 4. Srihita P.

■ Under 11 Boys: 1. Hriday Mundada, 2. Sriram Adarsh Uppala, 3. Tanush Ritesh.

■ Best Youngest Boy: Kiyaan Goyal.

■ Best Youngest Girl: Adhvika Kedia.

K. Srerama Anjani Kumar, 5. Aaryn Rudrapati.

■ Under 13 Girls: 1. Amulya Bhagavatula, 2. Jahnavi Upadhyayula.

■ Under 13 Boys: 1. Viswajith Sai B, 2. Garimella Srivallabhaditya, 3. Suryasaahas Reddi KVVR, 4. Keerthana Reddy Anubotula, 5. Arash Reddy V.

■ Under 15 Girls: 1. Amrutha Bhagavatula, 2. Tanvitha C, 3. Bhavishya Anubotula, 4. P. Jaya Hari Chandana.

■ Under 15 Boys: 1. Sikkam Sai Vishnu, 2. Rithwik Gandikota, 3. Arash Uppugandla, 4. Dhruva Kumar T.

■ Best Youngest Boy: Kiyaan Goyal.

■ Best Youngest Girl: Adhvika Kedia.



Winners and runners-up at the Maestro Chess Academy's first sub-junior chess tournament pose with their trophies in Hyderabad.

## Krishna Priya loses in Polish Open semis

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

The Telangana State Chess Association is conducting the 7th Telangana State Senior Fide Rating Chess Championship from March 31 to April 3 at the Lal Bahadur Shastri Yoga Hall in Hyderabad.

**SHORT TAKES**  
**Krishna-Vishnu falter in final**

**Badminton:** The Indian pair of Krishna Prasad Garaga and Vishnu Vardhan Goud let slip a strong start to go down to England's Ben Lane and Sean Vendy in the men's doubles final of the Orleans Masters badminton tournament here on Sunday.

The unheralded Indians, the only ones left in contention from the country on the final day, lost 21-19, 14-21, 19-21 in a 56-minute battle with the fourth seeds.

Krishna and Vishnu had paired for the first time in this event and would be pleased with the results they managed.

Krishna, 21, is India's no. 1 ranked doubles player and used to pair up with Satwiksairaj Rankireddy in his junior days. He and Ishan Bhatnagar had reached the finals at the 2019 Bulgarian Junior international.

On Saturday, Saina Nehwal bowed out in straight games in the women's singles semifinals to end India's singles challenge at the tournament. — PTI

**Badrinath tests Covid positive**

**New Delhi:** Former India batsman S. Badrinath on Sunday said he has tested positive for Covid-19 and is currently in home isolation, making him the third ex-India cricketer from Road Safety World Series tournament to be infected by the virus in the last couple of days.

The 40-year-old Badrinath recently played in the veteran's tournament in Raipur, just like the legendary Sachin Tendulkar and former India all-rounder Yusuf Pathan, who also tested positive for Covid-19.

"I have been taking all necessary precautions and have been getting tested regularly. However, I have tested positive for Covid-19 and have some mild symptoms," Badrinath said in his Twitter handle.

"I will follow all protocols and will be isolating myself at home and will take needful action as per advise (advice) from my physician," said Badrinath who announced retirement from all forms of cricket in 2018. — PTI

**Repsol Honda eye Qatar success**

**Doha:** Pol Espargaro and Stefan Bradl kept their heads down and focused on Sunday as the first Qualifying of 2021 got underway in Losail, the pair lining up on the fourth and sixth rows of the grid. Saturday in Qatar started under an even more punishing sky as track temperatures pushed 50°C, the MotoGP field made the most of the track time in Free Practice 3 regardless but the temperatures meant there were no changes on the combined times. As on Friday, the conditions would steadily improve throughout the evening.

As a result, Espargaro earned direct passage to Q2 and accomplished the first goal of his opening weekend with the Repsol Honda Team. Saturday overall proved to be a more complicated day for Espargaro as he continued to learn the Honda in the varying conditions of the day. Espargaro will line up on the fourth row of the grid for his first race in Honda colours.

**Mitchell's hot start fuels Jazz**

**Los Angeles:** Utah's Donovan Mitchell scored 35 points and handed out seven assists as the Jazz boosted their NBA-leading record on Saturday with a 126-110 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies.

With Mike Conley taking the night off to rest a hamstring injury, Mitchell took charge early. He made his first five shots on the way to scoring 28 first-half points — his most ever in a half. He erased an early 8-2 deficit with a three-pointer and a drive to the basket for a three-point play, and his three-pointer at the buzzer to end the half put the Jazz up 70-53. Jordan Clarkson came off the bench to add 28 points.

Joe Ingles added 15 points and seven assists and the Jazz notched their fifth straight victory and 33rd of the season. The Los Angeles Clippers, chasing Utah and the Phoenix Suns in the West, won their fifth straight game, 122-112 over Philadelphia 76ers. — AFP

# INDIA 3, ENGLAND 0

**Kohli & Co. complete hat-trick of series wins after clinching a thriller**

**Pune, March 28:** The Indian cricket team completed one of their best four-month spells across formats, pipping England by a mere 7 runs in the third and final ODI after surviving Sam Curran's determined assault in an exciting contest for a well-deserved hat-trick of series victories.

For India, near domination of England in all three formats at home comes straight after humbling Australia in their own backyard earlier this year during a gruelling tour.

The 2-1 win against the reigning world champions will certainly please Virat Kohli but he will not at all be amused by the fact that India nearly let the game slip away with some unimaginative bowling and poor fielding at the death.

Rishabh Pant and Hardik Pandya hit stroke-filled half-centuries but Indian lower-order also caved in meekly to settle for a below-par 329 on a great batting track. But Bhuvneshwar Kumar (3/42) and Shardul Thakur (4/67) got the breakthroughs at just the right times before Curran (95 not out off 83 balls) almost changed the result single-handedly. England finished on 322 for 9.

Yorker specialist T. Natarajan bowled a brilliant final over with England needing 14 but Curran could manage only six runs because the Indian bowlers mostly in the block-hole.

It was a gettable total on a flat pitch but Kohli's ploy to attack with predominantly pace attack paid off for the better part of the game before Curran launched a swift counter-assault.

Bhuvneshwar brought



in his nearly decade long experience with a beautiful inswinger that castled Jason Roy (14).

He then bowled another in-cutter which left Jonny Bairstow (1) on the wrong side of the Decision Review System after the opener was forced to remain inside the crease when Pant came up to the stumps.

With half of the team gone for 155, the match became a no-contest when Thakur had Malan pulling straight to Rohit Sharma at short mid-wicket. But then Curran, first with Adil Rashid and then with Mark Wood, nearly changed the game before India prevailed.

— PTI

**India's Shardul Thakur (second from left) celebrates with teammates after dismissing England's Liam Livingstone during their third ODI at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune on Sunday. India won by seven runs.**

— AP

**SCORECARD**

**India:** Rohit Sharma b Rashid 37, Shikhar Dhawan c & b Rashid 67, Virat Kohli b Ali 7, Rishabh Pant c Buttler b Curran 78, KL Rahul c Ali b Livingstone 7, Hardik Pandya b Stokes 64, Krunal Pandya c Roy b Wood 25, Shardul Thakur c Buttler b Wood 30, Bhuvneshwar Kumar c Curran b Topley 3, Prasidh Krishna b Wood 0, TNatarajan (not out) 0. Extras (lb-1, w-10) 11. **Total (all out, in 48.2 overs) 329.**

**FoW:** 1-103, 2-117, 3-121, 4-157, 5-256, 6-276, 7-321, 8-328, 9-329

**Bowling:** Sam Curran 5-0-43-1, Reece Topley 9.2-0-66-1, Mark Wood 7-1-34-3, Ben Stokes 7-0-45-1, Adil Rashid 10-0-81-2, Moeen Ali 7-0-39-1, Liam Livingstone 3-0-20-1.

**England:** Jason Roy b Kumar 14, Jonny Bairstow lbw b Kumar 1, Ben Stokes c Dhawan b Natarajan 35, Dawid Malan c Sharma b Thakur 50, Jos Buttler (c) lbw b Thakur 15, Liam Livingstone c & b Thakur 36, Moeen Ali c H Pandya b Kumar 29, Sam Curran (not out) 95 Adil Rashid c Kohli b Thakur 19, Mark Wood run out (H. Pandya/Pant 12) 14, Reece Topley not out 1. Extras (lb-1, w-12) 13. **Total (for 9 wkt, in 50 overs) 322.**

**FoW:** 1-14, 2-28, 3-68, 4-95, 5-155, 6-168, 7-200, 8-257, 9-317

**Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar 10-0-42-3, TNatarajan 10-0-73-1, Prasidh Krishna 7-0-62-0, Shardul Thakur 10-0-67-4, Hardik Pandya 9-0-48-0, Krunal Pandya 4-0-29-0.

## Ronaldo fumes after WC qualifying winner denied



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo (centre) and Bruno Fernandes react during the World Cup 2022 Group A qualifying match against Serbia in Belgrade, Serbia, on Saturday. — AP

give everything for my country, that will never change," Ronaldo later posted on his Instagram page.

"But there are difficult times to deal with, especially when we feel that an entire nation is being harmed."

Portugal had appeared to be cruising to three points

## India ready for desert storm

**Dubai, March 28:** On a high after an impressive 1-1 draw against a fancied Oman, India are pitted against the formidable United Arab Emirates in their second football friendly here on Monday, with head coach Igor Stimac again set to experiment with a fresh set of rookies.

Ten players made their debut against Oman on Thursday as India made a fine comeback in the second half to hold the gulf side who are 23 places above them in the FIFA charts.

Oman completely dominated the first half with the Indians not being able to hold the ball for any length of time. The visitors were rather busy defending in their own half in their first international outing in more than a year.

The UAE are ranked eighth in Asia and 74th overall while India are at 104th. The UAE had won three matches out of the four played

**● The UAE had won three matches out of the four played between the two sides in the last decade while one game ended in a draw.**

between the two sides in the last decade while one game ended in a draw. But India will draw inspiration from their match against UAE during the 2019 Asian Cup group stage where they had created a lot of scoring chances even though they lost 0-2.

India paid dearly for poor finishing in that match while luck also did not favour them as two shots hit the framework. "UAE are even tougher than Oman, so I except a very tough match tomorrow. They (UAE) are technically better side and they will give a lot of pressure on us," Stimac said. — PTI

**Hamilton opens season with win**

**Sakhir (Bahrain), March 28:** Lewis Hamilton produced another stunning demonstration of his supreme racing talent on Sunday to resist a charging Max Verstappen and win a thrilling season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix.

The defending seven-time champion defended with supreme skill over the closing laps in his Mercedes to hold off the Red Bull driver and claim a record-breaking 96th Formula One victory.

"What a difficult race

that was — stopping early we knew it was going to be tough, but we had to cover Max and it was always going to take something pretty special to do it," said a delighted Hamilton.

Hamilton came home

seven-tenths of a second

ahead of the Dutchman,

who was forced to hand

back the race lead in the

closing laps after passing

the champion with a move

that had taken him off the

track and beyond the limits.

As expected, Hamilton

and his heir apparent

delivered an exhilarating

exhibition of racing as

they stormed to the flag.

the pair leaving third placed Valterri Bottas, in the second Mercedes, to finish adrift by 37 seconds.

It was Hamilton's first

season-opening triumph

since 2015 and surprised

many observers after Red

Bull had dominated pre-

season testing and two

days of practice and qualifi-

cating ahead of the race.

"Firstly, can I just say it's

the first time I've seen fans

in a long time," said a

delighted Hamilton.

"What a difficult race

that was — stopping early

we knew it was going to be

tough, but we had to cover

Max and it was always

going to take something

pretty special to do it," added

A disappointed

Verstappen said: "Of

course, it's a shame, but

you also have to see the

positives. We're putting the

fight on to them so it's

great to start the year like

that"

— AFP

## Is modern cricket making it more difficult for umpires?



**Hemant Kenkre**  
**Silly Point**

**A**s the cricket world gathered momentum with the last One Day International (ODI) of the India-England series being the last fixture (in India) before the start of the Indian Premier League (IPL) a news report must have been a dampener for cricketers and fans alike. The report cited that the Cricket Committee of the International Cricket Council (ICC) had conferred and decided that the Umpires Call element of the Umpire Decision Review System (DRS) should continue without

change. The DRS has, in the recent past, come under fire from players and experts for the aspect of inconsistency that kept cropping up more often than not in the post lock-down era. In the first series (since the cricket world opened up) between the West Indies and England, Michael Holding prised open a debate and hinted that it was the DRS that saved the on-field umpires from decisions that skewed towards the home team — England.

With the new normal feature

reversed when Indian skipper, Virat Kohli, thought the other way after India's wins in the Test and Twenty20 series' against England.

Kohli's view was towards the Umpire's call part of the DRS and thought that it is creating a lot of confusion. In his opinion, there should not be any debates if the ball is clipping the stumps or missing them, a call based on common sense. He decried decisions taken by the third umpire which are based on the percentage of the ball that will or will not hit the stumps. To him, the ratio/part hitting or missing the stumps does not matter. In short, his assessment was to keep it simple and not cause any confusion.

With the ICC ruling that non-neutral umpires officiate to help overcome travel and quarantine issues in pandemic times, these calls made it look as though there was a distinct inclination towards the home team, a highly debatable point.

Coming to recent times, the 'bias' element was

home games. Their deci-

sions, particularly the con-

tentious ones that are

reviewed through DRS get

noticed and cause people

to form opinions on the

intent of the man on the

spot.

Standing for