

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI WEDNESDAY 14 | APRIL 2021

WEATHER



Max: 32°C
Min: 25°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Chithirai 1
Tithi: Dhuvithiyai
Star: Bharani
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
Yamagandam: 7.30 am to 9 am
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.50 am
Lunar: 12.16 pm
Asar: 3.25 pm
Maghrib: 6.21 pm
Isha: 7.33 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.22 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.57 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.23 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 9.02 PM



DC wishes its readers a
Happy New Year & Vishu

COUNTER POINT



It's a free and fear elections!



CITY | 2

Daily Covid tally
nears 7,000 mark in TN



FINANCIAL CHRONICLE | 5

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

SPORT | 6

Ben Stokes ruled
out of IPL



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Flutter over rechristening of EVR Periyar Salai in Chennai

■ Signage of ‘Grand Western Trunk Road’ blackened

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, APRIL 13

The surprise rechristening of Periyar EVR Highway, one of the longest arterial roads in Chennai, to ‘Grand Western Trunk Road’ by the Highways Department, earned the ire of the followers of Periyar E.V. Ramasamy with several leaders coming out with statements condemning the government.

With social media bringing to light the clandestine name change by publishing the photograph of the new signage put up opposite Ripon Building with the new name on Tuesday, television channels picked



A signage that came up on Periyar EVR Salai renaming it as ‘Grand Western Trunk Road’ on Tuesday. (Bottom): The signage with blackened name.

up the news, causing wide-spread flutter.

Besides the anger that was expressed through social media, a group of volunteers belonging to the Dravidar Viduthalaai Kazhagam blackened the new name on the board with tar. DMK president M.K.

Stalin wondered if the name change was the handiwork of the religious chauvinists who shivered on hearing the name of Periyar. He said if the old name was not restored immediately, necessary orders would be passed after May 2. ■ **P2**

RECORDS CALL IT GWTR, SAYS HD

B. VIJAYALAKSHMI | DC
CHENNAI, APRIL 13:

An official of the highways department of the state government on Tuesday denied renaming the road. “As per our records, the road is called Grand Western Trunk Road since the British era,” he told DC. “EVR Periyar Salai aka Poonamallee high road is in Chennai corporation records.” The name GWT was aimed at helping the passengers, he said.

REPOLL AT BOOTH IN VELACHERY ON SATURDAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, APR 13:

The Election Commission has ordered a repoll on Saturday, at booth No 92 of Velachery assembly constituency, from where an EVM and accessories were taken in a scooter by a couple of officials. **P3**

Maha declares 15-day curfew

Mumbai, April 13: The Maharashtra government on Tuesday announced a 15-day long statewide curfew from April 14 amid the spike in coronavirus cases in the state.

The curfew, which excludes essential services, will come into effect from 8 pm on Wednesday, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said in his address via social media to people of the state.

Section 144 (prohibitory orders) of the Criminal Procedure Code will be in force till the “lockdown-like” restrictions are in place, Mr Thackeray said. He refrained from terming the new curbs as a lockdown.

There is a shortage of medical oxygen and beds and the demand for Remdesivir has increased in Maharashtra, he said, adding the Centre should help supply oxygen for coronavirus patients in the state by using Air Force planes.

Meanwhile, a total of 1,61,736 new coronavirus infections have been reported in a day pushing India's tally of cases to 1,36,89,453, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate dropped further to 89.51 per cent, according to data updated by the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday.

The death toll increased

CLEARANCE FOR FOREIGN JABS TO BE FAST-TRACKED

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

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

to 1,71,058 with 879 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

Registering a steady increase for the 34th day in a row, the number of active cases rose to 12,64,698, or 9.24 per cent of the total infections. The active case-load was at its lowest at 1,35,926 on February 12, 2021 and it was at its highest at 10,17,754 on September 18. — **PTI**



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New stores now open at Thoraipakkam, Ambattur, Cathedral Road & Chrompet in Chennai

OTHER STORY

Daughter harassed by kin and pastor: Singer

Chennai, April 13 : A playback singer has lodged a complaint alleging her 15-year-old daughter was harassed by three men, including her brother-in-law and a pastor, police said.

The singer has alleged her sister's husband, his brother and a pastor harassed her daughter and her sister abetted the crime, police said.

The crime had occurred during the girl's stay at her aunt's house and when her mother was away.

"We have received a complaint and an FIR is registered and we are questioning the accused persons, a probe is on," a police officer told PTI, adding based on the outcome of questioning, they may be arrested. Further information on the complaint, harassment to the teen and legal provisions invoked against the accused men and woman is awaited. —PTI

Bengaluru couple commit suicide

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, APRIL 13

A young Bengaluru couple allegedly committed suicide by drinking pesticide in Chitalapakkam near Pallikarai on Monday night. The deceased have been identified as Abinash, 30, and his lover, Pallavi, 24.

According to Perumbakkam police, the locals in Chitalapakkam alerted the police after they spotted the bodies of two persons on Arasankalani main road at around midnight. The police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies. After a preliminary investigation, police found the duo ran away from their houses in Bengaluru after their parents did not approve of their relationship.

Police sources said the couple had left Bengaluru last month and reached Chennai. They had been staying at Abinash's sister's house in Chitalapakkam. However, they were facing troubles from both families. On Monday night, Abinash and Pallavi informed his sister that they were going to Bengaluru and left the house. However, within hours, they were both found dead allegedly due to consuming pesticide. A case has been registered and a probe is on. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem.



The shopping crowd at Flower bazaar on Tuesday on the eve of Tamil new year.

—DC



Railway Protection Force organises a corona awareness programme at Egmore railway station on Tuesday.

—DC

Daily Covid tally nears 7,000 mark

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, APRIL 13

The state on Tuesday registered a steady rise in Covid-19 with nearly 7,000 new cases and 18 deaths.

According to the data provided by the state health department, 6,984 new cases were reported, a rise from 6,711 on Monday. Now total positive cases in the state have reached 9,47,129 while the death toll is 12,945. The Chennai district alone reported 4,337 deaths so far.

Chennai contributed 2,482 fresh cases, a jump from 2,105 on Monday. With this, the district recorded a total 2,69,614 cases so far.

Chengalpattu district continues to be a major contributor to the chart, adding 771 cases, a surge from 611 on Monday. The total cases in the district have now crossed the 6,20,000 mark.

Showing some relief, Coimbatore reported 504 cases, a dip from 604 on Monday. For the last couple of days, the district recorded a decreasing trend.

Over 1.4 lakh vaccinated in Tiruchy dt: Collector

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, APRIL 13

As many as 1.41 lakh people have been vaccinated for Covid-19 in Tiruchy district so far, and arrangements are being made to vaccinate private sector workers in their work spot itself, said Collector S. DivyaDarshini, soon after inspecting anti-Covid measures adopted at the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial government hospital here on Tuesday.

The collector was accompanied by Dr.

Vanita, Dean, Dr. K.A.P. Viswanatham government medical college hospital, and other health department officials. She told newsmen that at present 450 beds were ready for Corona outpatients at MGMGH, and if needed, bed numbers will be increased.

She said, on an average, authorities have collected fine of Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.5 lakh per day for Corona violations in the district. The district administration has declared 14 areas including 11 within the

city corporation limits as containment area, as part of the anti-Covid activities, she added.

She further said 68 persons, 64 from Tiruchy district and one each from Cuddalore, Thanjavur, Perambalur and Pudukcherry, were under treatment for Covid-19 infection at the MGMGH, but were discharged on Tuesday. She warned stern action against both wholesale and retail vegetable traders of the Gandhi market for violating anti-Covid norms.

surrounding districts including Thiruvallur and Chengalpattu are the main contributors to the tally. These districts together added a total of 3,538 cases on Tuesday.

Active cases have touched 49,985 registering a rise from 46,308 on Monday. The total active cases in the Chennai district, which is the worst hit, now stand at 18,673.

While five people died in

Chennai, Chengalpattu registered three cases. Thirunelveli and Cuddalore reported two deaths each. Erode, Kancheepuram, Kanyakumari, Madurai, Thanjavur and Thiruvallur also reported deaths.

At least 82,236 persons were subjected to RTPCR test, a slight increase from 82,202 on Monday. A total of 2,03,54,041 individuals tested so far in the state.

Second wave another shocker for sex workers

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, APRIL 13

The second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, which is spreading its tentacles across the city fast, has turned the life of hundreds of sex workers in and around Chennai miserable again. This comes at a time when they are still struggling to come to terms with the blues of lockdowns last year.

Following the restrictions imposed by the authorities to contain the spread of the virus, many non-governmental organisations and activists in the city have extended their support for collecting and distributing provisions to these workers after the general public stayed away from them fearing infection.

Emmanuel Prasanth, project manager, Real Charitable Trust, Vyasarpadi here, said they have found many sex workers are now out of work since the second wave hit the city. "We are trying to get provisions including rice, dal and groceries from various quarters to distribute to around 844 workers associated with us. The second wave is absolutely painful for this community.

● Following the restrictions imposed by the authorities to contain the spread of the virus, many non-governmental organisations and activists in the city have extended their support for collecting and distributing provisions to these workers after the general public stayed away from them fearing infection.

● This comes at a time when they are still struggling to come to terms with the blues of lockdowns last year.

We are working among them for many years. Many of them are continuing in this business unwillingly as they are unable to find other jobs. Since the pandemic hit, we had been conducting skill development programmes among them so that they could fight the pandemic stress. Now the second wave has completely shattered the livelihood of this community once again", he said.

A local activist working for the welfare of sex workers in the city also pointed out that the second wave hit the city when the community is still under stress due to the impact of lockdowns.

"The community has never been put under any social security schemes despite them struggling for a long time. Their livelihood has now completely collapsed as the general public is under the scare of Covid-19 infection. So the government has to support them to overcome this tough time", he said.

It may be recalled that the National Human Rights Commission report, "Human rights of women in the context of Covid-19", released in October last year had recognised sex workers as informal workers. The Supreme Court in September had also directed all states to provide dry rations to sex workers identified by National AIDS Control Organisation and legal services authorities, without insisting on any identity proof. Under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, sex work, not maintaining any place as brothel, is not illegal.

"We were struggling to cope with the situation ever since the pandemic broke out. We have no work. Now the second wave is another shocker. We can't survive without the support of the government", says a sex worker.

HC declines to forbear Pondy govt from constructing community hall

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, APRIL 13

The Madras high court has declined to forbear the Pudukcherry Adi Dravidar Development Corporation from constructing a community hall in the land at Kathasthar in Periapet Thirubuvanai, Pudukcherry. The first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy disposed of the PIL filed by M.Shivakumar.

The bench said the petitioner makes it out that the petitioner was a public spirited citizen with the

interest of children and young adults in his heart. The petitioner has instituted this PIL for the ostensible purpose of preserving what the petitioner describes as a playground that has been traditionally used by children and young adults in the locality to play there, the bench added.

The bench said according to officials, there was a smaller community centre and the property was recorded as a community centre and a park. The photographs relied upon by the officials reveal that there was a dilapidated building and the general

area was rundown and used as a dumping ground for waste and rubbish. According to the officials, following an appeal from the local residents, work has been taken up for building a modern community centre and substantial money has been expended and partial construction has been completed, the bench added.

The bench said for a start, the petition does not appear to be in public interest. The petitioner's motive may be to stop the construction and allow the land nearby the petitioner's residence, which the petitioner had free use of,

to be preserved in its original state. However, since the construction appears to have progressed substantially, as would be evident from some of the photographs relied upon by the officials, no order was made on the petition except to request the officials to ensure that some amount of open and green area was left preserved so that the building being constructed does not cover the entirety of the land. However, the open space may be used as car parking space or open ground for use in connection with the community center, the bench added.

HC declines to restrain authorities from taking action against water lorry owners

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, APRIL 13

The Madras high court has declined to restrain the authorities from initiating any action against the members of the South Chennai Private Water Lorry Owners Association while transporting water in lorries.

Disposing of the petition filed by South Chennai Private Water Lorry Owners Association, the first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy said nonetheless, the members of the petitioner association who possess the necessary approvals are permitted to seek permission from the Tahsildar concerned for trans-

porting water by lorries. The necessary documentary proof of having obtained necessary approvals shall be enclosed with such individual applications, the bench added.

The bench said it was stated that there were 425 members in the petitioner association and that such members operate about 2000 lorries to transport water to the public, including IT companies, hospitals and the like. The petitioner states that all its members draw water from agricultural wells, which were not used for cultivation purposes and that such extraction does not affect the groundwater table. It was further asserted

that the officials frequently intercept these lorries and harass the members of the association on the ground that the water has been extracted from bore wells. In spite of submitting a representation on July 18, 2019, no action has been taken thereon and therefore the present petition has been filed, the bench added.

The bench said state government pleader V.Jayaprakash Narayanan submitted that various approvals were required both for the extraction of ground water and for the transportation thereof. In case individual members of the petitioner association possess the requisite approvals,

the transportation of water by such persons would not be prevented by the officials. On the other hand, the present petition has been filed by the association and the petition does not contain averments to the effect that the requisite approvals have been obtained by the members of the association. Consequently, he submitted that the petition was liable to be dismissed. "On the basis of the facts set out in the affidavit in support of the petition, an order of the kind requested for by the petitioner association cannot be granted because there was no basis to conclude that the members of the petitioner association have the requisite approvals from the authorities concerned", the bench added.

Govt urged to change fishing ban period

A. ARUL PALANI | DC
CHENNAI, APRIL 13

Urging the state government to change the fishing ban period on the east coast of Tamil Nadu, the fishermen have demanded the government not to impose a ban on fishing this year. They stated that last year their livelihood was affected for more than 135 days due to the Coronavirus-induced lockdowns. If the government insists on a fishing ban, it may reduce it to 45 days instead of the usual 61 days, said Nanjil P. Ravi of the All-India Fishermen Association.

He said the fishing ban is enforced from April to June every year to facilitate the breeding of fish and conservation of fish stock in marine ecology. Ravi said due to fluctuations in weather conditions, the period from October to December may be considered as the lean period and impose ban during this period instead of April to June. The state receives heavy rainfall during northeast monsoon in the months of October-December, with winds from the western disturbances emerging over the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean.

Over the years, cyclones ravaged the state, especially the coastal dis-

tricts. As a result, among others, the fishing activities also get affected on the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean.

Fishermen are able to pursue their job without any disturbance from April to June since it is summer season and there is hardly any natural disturbance. While this being so, the government permits the fishermen to venture into sea during the rainy northeast monsoon season. Hence, the ban on fishing using mechanised boats can be shifted to the northeast monsoon season to ensure fishermen are not unemployed twice a year.

When fishing is permitted during the hatching/breeding period, the fishing population and their growth get affected. Hence, the government must amend the Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1983 suitably. For more than two decades the fishermen had been demanding the government to change the period. However, so far there is no response from the government, he said.

He also demanded the government to provide ₹5 lakh per year for repairing the mechanised boats. He appealed to the government to ensure that families of all active fishermen get financial assistance without delay.



NEW DAWN

Ugadi celebrated at Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts and Science College for Women in the city. —DC

Harichandran statue found damaged

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, APRIL 13

A statue of Harichandran in Chromepet's Bharathipuram was found damaged on Tuesday.

After being alerted by the locals, the police rushed to the spot and examined the statue. According to the police, tension prevailed in the area after the statue was vandalised by miscreants.

The statue was installed by the local residents about 100 years ago and they had been maintaining it regularly. A complaint was lodged with the Chitlapakkam police.

Police officials visited the spot and conducted spot inquiries.

Congress man's house in Chengalpatt burgled

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, APRIL 13

Burglars broke into the house of a Congress functionary in Chengalpatt's Thimmavaram on Monday night and

decamped with 28 sovereigns of jewellery and ₹5 lakh in cash.

According to police, Praveenkumar, a contractor and a Congress functionary, lived in a house at Palaru

Nagar in Thimmavaram. On April 6, he and his family went to Chennai for medical treatment and have been staying there since.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday morning his neighbours alert-

ed him that some unidentified persons entered the house by breaking the front door lock. He immediately rushed to the house. Inside, the almirah was open and around 28 sovereigns of jewels and Rs 5 lakh were

missing. Based on his complaint, the Chengalpatt taluk police registered a case and began a probe. Forensic experts collected fingerprints from the scene. Further investigations are underway.

COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



Aries: Today, you can expect to have a good time on the social front. Plans to meet your partner may have to be revised due to an unforeseen commitment.



Taurus: On the work front, you will be efficient enough. Your undivided attention on the one you love are likely to win him or her over and make your day!



Gemini: Keeping good relations with coworkers will help you in getting out of a tight corner on the professional front. A fun time with family is foreseen.



Cancer: An overseas journey may materialise for some of you. Your revenues are likely to pick up as the business flourishes. Expenses may rise suddenly.



Leo: Someone may attempt to take credit for a job done by you on the professional front, but you will get the better of him or her. You can plan a business expansion now.



Virgo: Casual acquaintance with someone may turn to serious love on the romantic front. Those married are likely to enjoy a second honeymoon by planning a vacation.

You share your b'day with

Sarah Michelle Gellar, an American actress. She is best known for her roles in Buffy the Vampire Slayer, I Know What You Did Last Summer, Scream 2, Cruel Intentions, Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed and The Grudge.



Libra: Additional work will come your way that promises a handsome payout. Relief is in sight for those suffering from ailments. Financial front looks good.



Scorpio: Urgent professional commitment will be completed in an efficient manner. Disagreements and arguments can dampen your spirits today, so avoid any conflict.



Sagittarius: Some worries on the professional front regarding a task is set to disappear, as help comes form a most unexpected quarter. Money flow will be good.



Capricorn: It is not a good time to invest in real estate and stock market. Try to make out time to go on a vacation with your loved ones. Relationships need attention, shower love on your partner.

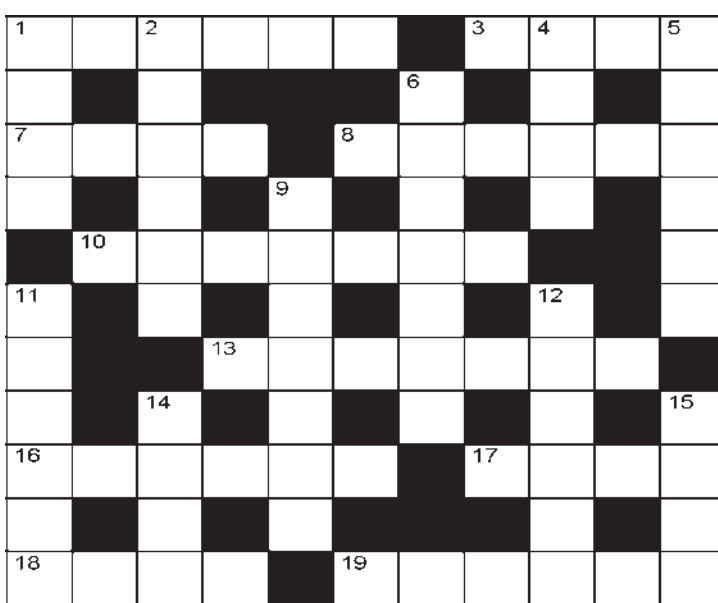


Aquarius: You just need a little patience. This is a bit tricky day for some of you. Try to follow your inner voice and intuition. There are certain deceptive forces operating, but you can easily spot them.



Pisces: You will enjoy yourself in the company of your family members. Socially this is a busy time. Health-wise there is likely to be a tendency to overindulgence during this day.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

1. Dash (6)
3. Black bird (4)
7. Go first (4)
8. Daytime nap (6)
10. Infatuated (7)
13. Thwarted (7)
16. Knot (6)
17. Hog (4)
18. Pet bird house (4)
19. Underhand (6)

Down

1. Cargo area (4)
2. Blood fluid (6)
4. Deception (4)
5. Enervate (6)
6. Quandary (7)
9. Imposing, dignified (7)
11. Feverish (6)
12. Hat (6)
14. Cosy (4)
15. Wild party with drink and sex (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 1. Unlimited, 6. Dowel, 7. Shaft, 9. Null, 10. Defend, 12. Myriad, 14. Tome, 17. Colon, 18. Hoist, 19. Trademark.

Down: 2. Newel, 3. Idle, 4. Issued, 5. Elate, 6. Dynamic, 8. Tidiest, 11. Tanned, 13. Ruler, 15. Osier, 16. Sham.

Word Mine

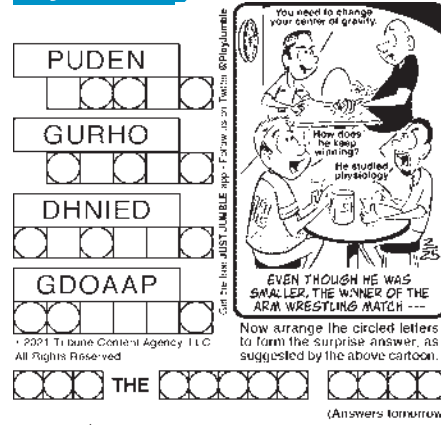
H
L E B
O U U S C

TODAY'S RATINGS: 14 AVERAGE; 16 GOOD; 18 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid.

There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

Jumble



Yesterday's Jumble: MFTAI
Answer: When the L, V, X and I went for a hike together, they were — "FOAMIN' NUMERALS"

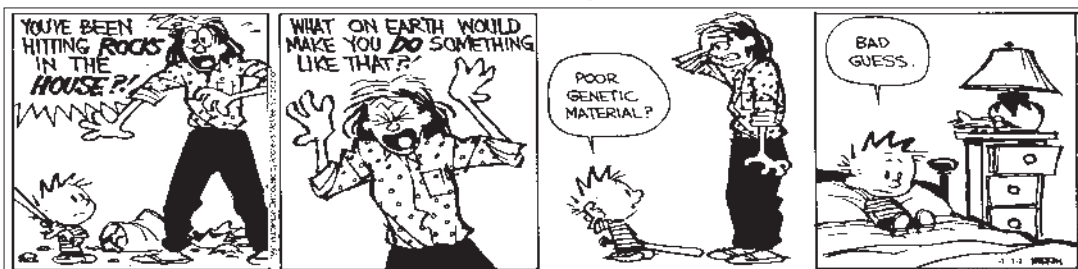
a minor-suit lead.) In six spades, South needs one minor-suit finesse to work. So, he should finesse in diamonds at trick one. If it loses, he wins East's return, draws trumps and tries the club finesse.

In seven spades, though, the diamond finesse is a red herring. Even if it wins, declarer still needs the club finesse to succeed. And, if the club finesse is working, there are three club tricks available,

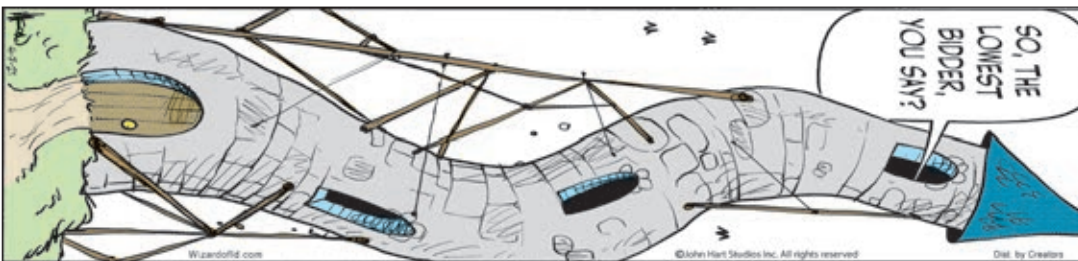
to go with six spades, three hearts and one diamond. So, South should win with dummy's diamond ace, draw trumps ending in hand and run the club jack. If it wins, the opponents will feel that declarer's fortune was outrageous.

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(Asia Features)

CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



OTHER STORY

Document registration on auspicious days at extra fees

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, APRIL 13

The state government will permit registration of documents relating to property transactions on highly auspicious days like Chithirai Thirunal (April 14), Aadi Peruku (August 3) and Thai Poomam (January 8, 2022) by keeping the Registrar's office open and charging extra fees.

According to a government order, the move was to generate more revenue for the Registration Department as the registration charges would be more than the normal charges as per the Table of Fees.

There has been a demand from the public to enable them to do the property registrations on the highly auspicious days of the year Chithirai Thirunal, Aadi Peruku and Thai Poomam, which are otherwise government holidays, the order said.

So, according to the popular demand, the offices would be kept open and registrations would be allowed on those days for those willing to pay the extra fees.

Neolithic painting, human habitat found in Tirupattur district

AUSPIN BAYLIS AND K. SENTHIL NATHAN | DC TIRUPATTUR, APRIL 13

Based on information about the presence of caves located three kilometers away from Gajalnaickenpatti, Tirupattur district, a research team comprising Tamil Prof. Dr. A. Prabu, Archaeologist Prof. Sekar, and research scholars Dharanidaran and Krishnakumar, during a field visit found the caves and remains of

human habitat there. Explaining their findings, Dr. Prabu said the team visited the Selliamman temple located in the vicinity and found 'New Stone Age' stone daggers kept there for worship. Opposite the temple, is a spot called 'Thamburan Kuntru', a cave in which 'New Stone Age' (now called 'Neolithic Period') humans lived. Thamburan could mean 'leader' or 'god'. The cave which has three sides, could

have accommodated at least 10 persons. On one of its sides are three troughs which are constantly filled with water, even in summer. The cave interior is painted white and has five paintings. Three of them are still intact, while two others have been eroded slightly. One of them is understood to indicate either a place where those early residents lived or could be a picture of the lamp used by them. A human figure with a bow in

his right hand and an arrow in his left is yet another painting, which refers to a hunting event. There are more than six natural caves near this place behind the Selliamman temple, called 'Kuhai kuntru'. The painting of a white bird in the entrance of one of the caves indicates that these caves were used by people of that time. These paintings are very new findings which have never been seen before, said Prof. Dr. K. Rajan.

Although many rock paintings have been found in these parts of the state, this is the first rock painting found in the district after the division of Tirupattur into a separate district. The rock paintings are on the verge of extinction due to locals who use these caves to mostly drink and eat. Hence, the team has urged the district administration and archeology department to take immediate action to protect these sites.

Party offices wear deserted look

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, APRIL 13

All offices of the major political parties in Chennai that bustled with humanity in the run up to the elections now wear a deserted look, post-polls, with not even the top leaders making their customary appearances in normal times.

The close to a month long gap between polling and counting of votes has given most functionaries of the parties a sabbatical with not much political activity happening around and also the fear of Coronavirus looming over.

AIADMK top honchos like party coordinator O Panneerselvam and co-coordinator Edappadi K Palaniswami, or even their predecessors, are not used to visiting the party headquarters at Lloyds Road regularly. The practice is to turn up there only to attend meetings or discussions or special occasions that require garlanding the statues of the leaders.

But in the case of some other parties it is different. Top leaders like DMK President M K Stalin, TNCC chief K S Alagiri and also the top brass of the BJP attended office on a regular basis and interacted with the functionaries, who too would be present

there.

The tradition in the DMK is that the leaders always attended office and kept in touch with the cadre thronging the party office for various purposes. Similarly the TNCC and BJP offices provided a place for interface between the leaders and cadre and for workers to develop a sense of bonhomie.

But now with the leaders not turning up at the offices, the throngs of cadre are also missing. Enquiries at the BJP office, where of course there is some movement of people when compared to other party offices, revealed that many of the leaders had gone to West Bengal for campaign.

However, Kamalalayam in T Nagar will draw crowds when events are organised there. So even now BJP cadre turn up after the elections as the party holds celebrations like New Year's Day and so on to keep the place abuzz.

In the DMK, Stalin visited Anna Arivalayam after the elections and even held discussion with the candidates to understand the poor voter turnout in many constituencies. Other leaders too came there post elections.

With the party general secretary Duraimurugan testing positive for Coronavirus, he first went into isolation, keep-

ing away from the office, and then got himself admitted to hospital. Perhaps that was one reason other leaders too did not feel the need to visit the office and kept in touch with key functionaries over the phone.

Even during the lockdown, Stalin was in touch with functionaries and cadre through meetings held over video conference, preparing them for the elections. Perhaps the situation that is unfolding on the Coronavirus front could lead to a similar practice among all parties as the second wave is also making an impact on politicians.

Anyway, the offices of the other smaller parties like the VCK, DMDK, MDMK now draw only some cadre with some business there. The leaders do not visit the offices, VCK's Thol Thirumavalavan is said to have gone to the office in K K Nagar once after the polls but otherwise, it is only the functionaries and staff who are present there.

DMDK's office in Koyambedu used to bustle when events or discussions were held. There was a time when the party founder Vijayakanth too would visit the place often. But now with the leader not keeping well, the cadre too go there only when there is a need. So, post-polls, the place is deserted.

Tayagam, the MDMK headquarters in Egmore, too, is not a busy place nowadays as it used to be once upon a time when the party general secretary Vaiko was active. However, Vaiko does not miss an opportunity to issue statements even after the elections but without visiting the office.

In the case of the PMK, since the top honchos, S Ramadoss and Anbumani Ramadoss, even otherwise interact with their followers mostly through social media and video conferencing, their office has no reason to draw crowds.

For Naam Tamilar Katchi, the entire activity revolves around the coordinator, Seeman, who works mostly from home, preferring to reach out to cadre and voters through social media.

Once in a while he used to organise meetings to address the followers and also other events, say a feast to celebrate the ear-piercing of the leader's child, that would help him personally interact with cadre. But in general the leader does not meet up with them regularly, other than through the videos put up by the IT wing that maintains the social media accounts, and hence there is no need for anyone to visit their leader at his house now.

EVMs in scooter: Repoll ordered at Velachery booth

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, APRIL 13

The Election Commission has ordered a re-poll on Saturday, April 17, at booth No 92 of Velachery Assembly constituency, from where an EVM and accessory equipment were taken in a scooter by a couple of officials after the conclusion of polling on April 6.

The transport of the election machines independently by the

officials came to light after they were caught by the members of the public near Taramani, causing a sensation in the area.

Though it was initially claimed that the EVM was kept as a spare machine, it was later found that 15 votes were polled in that.

The Chief Electoral Officer Satyabrata Sahoo had said that he had sent a report to the ECI, which would take a final call.

The ECI, ordering the re-poll

on the particular booth, said the 'poll taken on 6th April, 2021 (Tuesday) at polling No 92 of 26-Velachery Assembly constituency to be void.'

The ECI instructed the Returning Officer to hold the re-election from 7 am to 7 pm and give wide publicity to the polling areas concerned and the political parties and contesting candidates in writing. Adequate security may also be provided, the ECI said.

Henry Irwin's grave found in Ooty

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, APRIL 13

The grave of Henry Irwin, noted architect and punter, has been discovered in Ooty.

As the 127th Ooty turf racing season, sans punters, is all set to start on Wednesday, the long forgotten grave of Henry Irwin, a British racing enthusiast and a celebrated architect, has been rediscovered recently not far from the race course here. The nearly 100-year-old graves were discovered recently by Dharmalingam Venugopal, director, Nilgiri Documentation Centre, who had discovered many famous graves including that of John Sullivan, founder of modern Nilgiris and McIvor the creator of Ooty Botanical gardens. He now discovered the grave of Henry Irwin, at the cemetery attached to St Thomas Church, here.

DK warns of rebellion if road name not restored

FROM P1

DK president K. Veeramani warned of a rebellion if the name was not restored as Periyar EVR Highway. Mr Veeramani, in a statement, recalled that it was the late M.G. Ramachandran who named the road, earlier known as Poonamallee High Road, after Periyar in 1979 on the occasion of the birth centenary of the founder of Dravidar

MAKING A MARK



Naatyaa Naadha Nataka Sangamam of 'Kalai Ilamani' S.Sruuthi stages a play Manitham Punitham, written and directed by K.S.N. Sundar at Vani Mahal in T Nagar on Tuesday.

—DC

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SHORT TAKES

COP FINED ₹2,000 FOR NOT WEARING MASK ON DUTY

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 13

Odisha police on Tuesday imposed a fine of ₹2,000 on an on-duty traffic constable posted in the pilgrim city Puri for violating Covid-19 guidelines by not wearing a face mask.

Puri superintendent of police (SP) Samarth Verma took to his Twitter handle and shared the news. “We have fined our own Traffic constable of ₹2,000 for not wearing a mask. And he, as a responsible citizen has paid,” the SP tweeted.

In his post, the SP cautioned the public to always wear a mask, else pay the penalty.

On April 9, the Odisha government doubled the fine amount for violation of the mask-wearing norm. Accordingly, violators will have to pay ₹2,000 for the first two violations and ₹5,000 for subsequent offences.

TMC, BJP PLAYING ‘DIRTY POLITICS’: OWAISI

BRANMOY PRANMACHARI | DC BERHAMPORE, APRIL 13

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Tuesday accused the BJP and Trinamul Congress of trying to grab power in West Bengal by playing a “dirty game” of body politics into the recent killings of five persons at Shitalkuchi in Cooch-behar in the fourth phase of the Assembly Election.

At a party rally in Sagardighi of Murshidabad he alleged, “Both the BJP and TMC want to grab power over the bodies of our slain youth and an 18-year-old Rajbanshi youth. It is a dirty game they are playing. They are dividing the people over caste, creed and religion to trigger communal disharmony and hatred. TMC even branded us as ‘Outsiders’ and Vote Katua here.”

Mistakes of past need not constrain our thinking: PM

Says experiences, expertise, resources must in the fight against pandemic

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented us an opportunity to reshape the world order and we must think of the entire humanity and not merely of those who are on our side of the borders, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, adding that “we in India have tried to walk the talk (and) have tried to protect our own 1.3 billion citizens from the pandemic” but that despite many constraints, India had still “supplied vaccine to over 80 countries”. Acknowledging that “the supplies have been modest” and the “demands huge”, he said it would “be a long time before the entire humanity can be vaccinated”.

Advocating that that “humanity as a whole must be at the centre of our thinking and action”, PM Modi promised that India would continue to share its “experiences, expertise and resources with the entire humanity in the fight against the pandemic”, adding that the “mistakes and misdeeds of the past seven decades need not constrain our thinking for the future”.

PM Modi further pointed out that “while humanity has not faced the Third World War, the threat of violence has not

Congress, Sena fear Kumbh returnees may worsen crisis

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, APRIL 13

Senior Congress leader and Maharashtra Cabinet minister Asalam Shaikh criticised the BJP led-Uttarakhand government for not enforcing the Covid related norms in Kumbh Mela. Shaikh stated that these were the same people who alleged that Tablighi Jamaat had spread the virus. Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut also expressed apprehension

that the people returning from Kumbh mela in Haridwar will turn out to be potential carriers of Covid.

Without taking the name of the BJP, Shaikh said that the same people who accused the Tablighi Jamaat of spreading Covid in the country have allowed lakhs of people to gather at Kumbh Mela in Haridwar.

He claimed that the number of Coronavirus patients are increasing by four times in Haridwar.

reduced in people’s lives” and that “with a number of proxy wars and unending terror attacks, the prospect of violence is ever present”.

The Prime Minister was delivering an address at the four-day sixth edition of the Raisina Dialogue conference in the Capital that began in Virtual format on Tuesday. Calling upon the participants “to emerge as a powerful voice for a human centric approach”, he reminded them that “while we may be used to having Plan A and plan B, there is no Planet B, only planet Earth” and that “we must

remember that we hold this planet merely as trustees for our future Generations”.

The Raisina Dialogue is “India’s flagship conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics, held annually since 2016” and is “jointly organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the (thinktank) Observer Research Foundation (ORF).

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

The Congress leader said that Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat should be held accountable for Covid spread. “When many states are invoking section 144 to avoid the gathering of more than five people, the Uttarakhand CM is giving opportunity to gather lakhs of people,” Shaikh said.

Raut raised the apprehension that the infections in Maharashtra are increasing because of Kumbh returnees.

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

GUJ: FRAMES OF CREMATORIUM FURNACES MELT

Surat, April 13: Metal structures of furnaces at some crematoriums in Surat have started melting or breaking as they are being used round-the-clock due to the rush of bodies amid the Covid-19 pandemic, officials said on Tuesday.

Since the past one week, around 16 gas-based furnaces at the Kurukshetra Crematorium and Ashvini Kumar Crematorium here in Gujarat are operating 24X7 to cremate bodies, hence maintenance issues are cropping up, they said.

The metal frames of gas furnaces, on which the bodies are kept, and chimneys are melting or breaking because of overheating and excessive use, the official said.

In the last couple of days, Surat city reported 18 to 19 deaths due to Covid-19 every day.

“Before the outbreak last year, around 20 bodies were cremated at the Kurukshetra Crematorium every day. Now, there is a sudden rush of bodies. At present, we are handling about 100 bodies per day,” Kamlesh Sailor, president of a trust which manages the crematorium, said. — PTI

Do not blame me for defeat: Min. to oppn

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, APRIL 13

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

Pointing out that most of the candidates are keeping a close watch and joint surveillance on strongrooms, Sarma told reporters that the Congress-AIUDF which have shifted their candidates should not blame him for defeat. “If they lose elections in counting of votes they will have a new refrain that in their absence something was done with EVMs. Hope they will not blame me for doing something wrong with EVMs,” said Sarma while taking a dig at Congress-AIUDF alliance for shifting at least 20 candidates in the Assam assembly polls to a hotel in Jaipur.

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

At least 20 candidates of the Congress-AIUDF alliance have been shifted to a hotel in Jaipur.

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

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

It is significant that at least 20 candidates of the Congress-AIUDF alliance in the Assam Assembly polls have been shifted to a hotel in Jaipur. They were flown to Jaipur in a chartered flight and taken to a hotel on the Delhi highway on the outskirts of Jaipur. Most of them are AIUDF candidates.

Days after the Congress-AIUDF shifted their candidates outside Assam fearing horse-trading, the Bodoland People’s Front (BPF) another constituent of Congress led grand alliance also shifted its prospective winning candidates outside the state.



Guest workers arriving from Maharashtra rest outside Patna junction on Tuesday, as Coronavirus cases spike across the country. — PTI

WORLD

IN BRIEF

Egypt releases activist: Lawyer

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

Biden dog goes back to school

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

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

Tennessee school shooting: 1 dead

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

Officers had responded to reports of a “male subject” who was possibly armed in the school, the Knoxville Police Department said. “Upon approach of the subject, shots were fired.”

A KPD officer was struck at least one time and transported to UT medical center with injuries that are not expected to be life threatening,” the statement said.

US suggests ‘pause’ in use of J&J vax over blood clot fears

Recommendations by health authorities is blow to immunisation campaign

Washington, April 13: US health authorities recommended a “pause” Tuesday in the use of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine “out of an abundance of caution” over potential links to a rare type of blood clot, in a blow to the country’s immunisation campaign.

The disorder appears similar to that observed in rare cases of people who received the AstraZeneca vaccine in Europe — and the shots by both companies are based on adenovirus vector technology.

The US Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control are assessing the “potential significance” of six reported cases of a type of clot in the brain called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) in combination with low levels of blood platelets (thrombocytopenia).

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

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

“People who have received the J&J vaccine who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider,” the FDA said.

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



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

J&J delays Europe vax rollout

Berlin, April 13: Johnson & Johnson said Tuesday it is delaying the rollout of its Coronavirus vaccine in Europe amid a US probe into reports of rare blood clots in some recipients.

The announcement came after regulators in the United States said they were recommending a “pause” in administration of the

single-dose shot to investigate reports of potentially dangerous blood clots. “We have been reviewing these cases with European health authorities,” Johnson & Johnson said.

“We have made the decision to proactively delay the rollout of our vaccine in Europe.” The delay is a further blow to vaccinati-

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

The FDA said that normally, an anticoagulant drug called heparin is used to treat these blood clots, but in this case administering heparin might be dangerous.

That might be because

the disorder resembles a rare reaction to heparin, in which the body forms antibodies in response to the thinner which in turn triggers platelets to form dangerous clots. — AFP

Iran to enrich uranium to highest level

Dubai, April 13: Iran will begin enriching uranium to 60 per cent purity, higher than the programme ever has before though still short of weapons grade, after an attack on its Natanz nuclear facility, an Iranian negotiator said Tuesday. The announcement marks a significant escalation after the sabotage, suspected to have been carried out by Israel. It could result in further action by Israel, whose Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed never to allow Tehran to obtain a nuclear weapon, and further raise tensions across the Mideast.

Nuclear negotiator Abbas Araghchi’s comment, quoted by the state-run IRNA news agency, came after Iran’s foreign minister warned that the weekend assault could hurt ongoing negotiations over its tattered atomic deal with world powers.

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

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

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

nical step to weapons-grade levels of 90 per cent. — AP

500 TROOPS TO BE ADDED BY US IN GERMANY: AUSTIN

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

“This planned increase in US personnel underscores our commitment to Germany and the entire

NATO alliance,” Austin said in a notable counterpoint to the Trump administration’s repeated complaints that Germany is a weak partner on defence and security. Austin made the announcement after talks with German Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer on his first tour of Europe since becoming Pentagon chief in January. — AP

quick BITES

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

* As of 8:30 PM IST

China's March exports rise 30.6% as demand revives

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

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■ Dues to Centre, states, staff extinguish with plan passage SC: Dues not payable if not part of IBC resolution plan

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

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

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



that the 2019 amendment made to a provision of the IBC is clarificatory and declaratory in nature and so will be effective from the date on which IBC has come into effect in 2016.

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

Once a resolution plan is duly approved by the adjudicating authority, the

claims as provided in the resolution plan shall stand frozen and will be binding on the Corporate Debtor and its employees, members, creditors, including the Central Government, any State Government or any local authority, guarantors and other stakeholders, Justice Gavai, who wrote the 139-page judgment, said.

It said on the date of approval of the resolution plan, all claims, which are not a part of the resolution plan, shall stand extinguished and no person will be entitled to initiate or continue any proceedings in respect to a claim which is not part of the revival

package.

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

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

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

— PTI

Indirect taxes up 12% in FY21

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 13

Helped by a 59 per cent increase in excise duties, the country's indirect tax collections went up 12.3 per cent in the pandemic-hit FY21.

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

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

GATHERING MORE		
Net indirect tax collection (GST & non-GST)		
2019-20	9.54	
2020-21	10.71	
Net tax collection on account of central excise and service tax (arrears)		
2019-20	2.45	
2020-21	3.91	
2019-20	1.09	Custom duty collections
2020-21	1.32	

Figures in ₹ Lakh crore, and are provisional

Source: Ministry of Finance, K&K Infographic

are the biggest contributors to excise duties and the multiple hikes in petrol and diesel prices throughout the fiscal supported the increase in excise duties despite lower consumption.

Net customs duty collec-

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

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

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

BUSINESS BRIEFS

NON-LIFE GROSS DIRECT PREMIUM UP 5% IN FY21

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

— PTI

BIS LICENCE FEE CUT FOR STARTUPS

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

free of cost to everyone and can be downloaded from e-BIS port. The Bureau of Indian Standards issues licences with a standard mark to help identify the unit which has made the product at a specific location. "The government has given 50 per cent rebate on (new) BIS certification of products for start-up, micro-industry and women entrepreneurs," minister Piyush Goyal tweeted.

— PTI



INDIA-EU TRADE TALKS TO RESUME

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said resumption of formal negotiations on India-EU trade deal during the leadership summit next month in Porto, Portugal, would help further strengthen ties with the European Union. The negotiations between India and the European Union on a free trade agreement have been stalled since May 2013, when both sides failed to bridge substantial gaps on crucial issues, including data security status for the IT sector. The negotiations with the 27-nation grouping were launched in June 2007.

— PTI

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Bhuvneshwar is Player of Month

Dubai: Experienced India seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar on Tuesday won the ICC Player of the Month award for his superlative show in the limited overs series against England in March.

The 31-year-old Indian took six wickets at an economy rate of 4.65 in the three ODIs, while capturing four wickets at a fantastic economy rate of 6.38 in the five T20Is to emerge as the standout bowler on either side in the white ball series.

Bhuvneshwar became the third successive Indian recipient of the award since its inception early this year. — PTI

Kane wins Hadlee medal for 4th time

Wellington: New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson won his fourth Sir Richard Hadlee medal for excelling across formats and was also adjudged the 'Test Player of the Year' in the country's annual cricket awards on Tuesday. Devon Conway won the men's ODI and T20 Player of the Year during the 2020-21 awards season which was conducted digitally for a second year running because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Williamson's incredible home Test summer helped him clinch the two awards alongside the Redpath Cup for first-class batting, after he amassed a whopping 639 runs in just four innings at an average of 159. — PTI

Wizards snap Jazz winning home run

Los Angeles: Bradley Bkeal scored 34 points and Russell Westbrook bagged a triple double as the Washington Wizards ended the Utah Jazz's 24-game home winning streak with a 125-121 victory in Salt Lake City on Monday. Donovan Mitchell delivered a 42-point gem for Utah but could not prevent the under-strength Western Conference leaders from sliding to a surprise defeat against a Wizards team struggling near the foot of the East. Utah, with Mike Conley and Jordan Clarkson absent from the line-up, looked to be racing towards a 25th straight home victory after a dazzling opening quarter saw them put up 42 points. — AFP

Star-studded field for India Open Marin, Momota among top entries as badminton action returns to India

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

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

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

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



on May 3," BAI said in a release.

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

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

champion P.V. Sindhu, Korea's An Se-Young and Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong. India boasts of the largest contingent with 48 players (27 women and 21

men), while Malaysia has fielded the second biggest squad with 26 shuttlers, which includes 10 women and 16 men.

A total of 10 shuttlers (4 women and 6 men) from China are also part of the participants list.

Among the men, two-time world champion Momota, defending champion Viktor Axelson, Anders Antonsen and reigning All England Open champion Zii Jia Lee will be in the fray.

Srikanth Kidambi will lead the Indian charge along with B. Sai Praneeth, H.S. Prannoy and Parupalli Kashyap.

The last date for withdrawal of entry is April 19 while the draw will be announced on April 20.

The governing body said "Delhi Government will conduct RT-PCR test on arrival on May 3 and 6 as well as on May 9 and 14."

"We are really happy to finally be able resume badminton action. But with the recent spike in cases, we have to be more cautious," BAI general secretary Ajay Singhania said.

— PTI

SA WOMEN CRICKETERS STUCK IN BANGLADESH AFTER POSITIVE TEST

Dhaka, April 13: Five members of a South African women's cricket team have become stranded in Bangladesh after testing positive for Covid-19, officials said Tuesday.

Seventeen other members of the South Africa Emerging team left Bangladesh late Monday, before the country imposed a ban on international flights over a surge in new cases there.

The five remaining have been put into isolation in Dhaka, said Shafiqul Alam Nadel of the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

"All members of the South African team gave Covid-19 test samples before their departure from Sylhet. Five of them tested positive," said Himangshu Lal Roy, deputy director of the

Osmani Medical College in the northeastern city.

The team's fifth match was due to start on Tuesday in Sylhet.

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

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

Documents seen by AFP indicated that team manager Matshipi Marcia Letsoalo and players Sinalo Jafta, Leah Jones, Nobulumko Baneti and Robyn Searle had been left behind.

— AFP

Indian women to tour England in June-July

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

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

While the Indian women's team will take part in a Test for the first time since 2014, England

THE FIXTURES

- June 16-19: Test match - Bristol County Ground
- June 27: 1st ODI - Bristol County Ground
- June 30: 2nd ODI - The Cooper Associates County Ground, Taunton
- July 3: 3rd ODI - New Road, Worcester
- July 9: 1st T20I - County Ground, Northampton
- July 11: 2nd T20I - Central County Ground, Hove
- July 15: 3rd T20I - The Cloudfm County Ground, Chelmsford.

last played a red-ball game during the 2019 Ashes.

The one-off Test will be followed by three ODIs and T20Is each with the tour concluding on July 15

in Chelmsford.

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

"The two international series will sit either side of The Hundred, and with the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy and the new Regional Twenty20 competition running throughout the summer, it's a fixture list that offers a lot for both our players and our fans," Harrison added.

— PTI

No fans at torch relay in Osaka

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

It came on the same day that the government said new coronavirus cases in Osaka hit 1,099, a single-day record for Japan's second largest metropolitan area.

The torch relay began three weeks ago in northeastern Japan, attempting to navigate around the pandemic with a total of

10,000 runners crisscrossing the country and bound for the opening ceremony on July 23 in Tokyo.

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

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

— AFP

CITY CLIPS

Abhivathanan sizzles for Magnet

G.K. Abhivathanan (74* & 3/29) helped Magnet Rec Club pip Behind Stumps Academy by 15 runs in the final to lift the M.J. Gopalan Trophy, a state-level open tournament conducted by Chennai Cricket Club Academy at the Kabilan Nest Ground.

Results: Final: Magnet Rec Club 179/7 in 30 overs (G.K. Abhivathanan 74 (not out), A. Raghuva 26; Vetrivel 3/27) bt Behind Stumps Academy 164 in 30 overs (Suresh Ganesan 40, Boobalan 29; S. Sriram 3/28, G.K. Abhivathanan 3/29). Special awards: Man of the final: G.K. Abhivathanan (MRC), Best batsman: Suresh Ganesan (BSA), Best Bowler: Iyappa Dass (BSA), Best all-rounder: Martin (MRC), Promising Younger: S. Sriram (MRC).

Tamilidhasan scalps five

V.S. Tamilidhasan scalped five wickets and smashed 32 runs as Sunny Sachin CC beat Vikaravandi CC in the first division of the Villupuram DCA league.

In another match, J. Santhosh Kumar's five for 47 helped SG CC post a nine-run win over Evergreen CC in the second division.

Brief scores: I-Division: Vikaravandi CC 164 in 37.1 overs (K. Arun Kumar 40, S. Chandrakanth 37; R. Yeswanth 3/43, V.S. Tamilidhasan 5/33) lost to Sunny Sachin CC 168/7 in 48.1 overs (S. Raghu 62, V.S. Tamil Dhasan 32; N. Raja 3/19; Captain CC 168 in 40.2 overs (M. Arunachalam 29, E. Kalaiarasan 37 (not out); B. Kamalanathan 4/45, S. Senthil Kumar 3/33) bt United CC 'A' 131 in 42.2 overs (E. Ghouse 32, B. Kamalanathan 28; J. Nazir 3/15, S. Anbalagan 3/26, M. Balaji 3/34).

II-Division: SG CC 179 in 25 overs (G. Jayaprakash 59) bt Evergreen CC 170/9 in 25 overs (P. Venkatesan 46, S. Gokmul 33; J. Santhosh Kumar 5/47).

III-Division: TVS CC 89 in 21.3 overs (D. Ramkumar 33) lost to New Star CC 92/1 in 9.5 overs (K. Surya 30); Siga Management 'B' 46 in 16.1 overs lost to Power CC 47/3 in 7.2 overs (R. Amarnath 3/28); VDCA 123/6 in 25 overs (K. Kalayan Kumar 27, K. Karthikeyan 28 (not out); V. Vajravel 4/9) lost to Siga Management 'B' 125/4 in 16.1 overs (V. Vajravel 54 (not out), V. Rajasekaran 29).



Tamilidhasan

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NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE	
Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecommunication)/Northern Railway/ Lucknow division/Lucknow. For and on behalf of President of India invites E-tenders in two packet system from the experienced & established contractors satisfying minimum eligibility criteria for the under noted work:	
Tender No.	05/S&T/2020-21 (3rd Call)
Name of Work	"Signalling work in connection with turnout renewal (TWS) work over Lucknow Division."
Approximate Cost	Rs. 11.73,20,479.56
Cost of tender form	NIL
Earnest Money	NIL (BID Security Declaration)
Completion period	Eleven Months
Last date and time of submission of tender document	07.05.2021, 15:00 Hrs.
Website particulars and notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen	www.reps.gov.in Office of the Sr. DSTE, DRM office Complex/ Northern Railway, Lucknow
The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system.	
For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.	
No manual offers are acceptable.	
Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable online through net banking or payment gateway only. T. Notice No. 713-Sig/TN-05/S&T/20-21 (3 rd Call)	
Dated : 12.04.2021	