

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | WEDNESDAY | 14 APRIL 2021

WEATHER

Max: 35.2°C
Min: 24.8°C
RH: 34%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Light rain likely
Max/Min temp. 36/25°C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Vidiya till 12.48 pm
Star: Bharani till 5.22 pm
Varjyam: Nil
Durmuhurtam: 11.51 am to 12.41 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HILIRI CALENDAR
Ramzan 1,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.49 am
Zohar: 12.26 pm
Asar: 4.38 pm
Maghrib: 6.37 pm
Isha: 7.47 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.31 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.24 AM
MOONSET TODAY 8.26 PM

DC WISHES ITS READERS A HAPPY



RAMZAN TIMINGS

IFTAR: 6.37 pm (Wed)
SEHRI: 4.36 am (Thurs)

COUNTER POINT



It's a free and fair elections!

SHORT TAKES

Monsoon to remain normal this year

New Delhi: The Southwest monsoon, which brings more than 75 per cent of the country's rainfall during June-September, will be normal this year, Skymet Weather said on Tuesday. The north India plains, along with a few parts of the northeast region, are likely to be at risk of being rain deficient through the season, said G.P. Sharma, the president (Meteorology) of Skymet. He said the rainfall will be 103 per cent with a five per cent error.

Sushil Chandra takes over as CEC

New Delhi: Sushil Chandra assumed charge as the 24th Chief Election Commissioner on Tuesday. He was appointed as the CEC on Monday, the day Sunil Arora demitted office. Chandra was appointed as an election commissioner on February 14, 2019, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. He would demit office on May 14, 2022. Under him, the EC will hold assembly polls in Goa, Manipur, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

Kerala min quits after indictment

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala's higher education minister K.T. Jaleel resigned on Tuesday, days after the Lokayukta indicted him for nepotism, abuse of power and breach of oath of office. Jaleel has sent his resignation to the Chief Minister and it has been forwarded to the Governor, CMO sources said. The resignation has been accepted by Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, Raj Bhavan said.



NATION | 4

Didi calls off dharna as EC acts on 3 BJP leaders

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KCR meet to give big boost to TRS in bypoll

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

All eyes are on Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's high-stakes public meeting in Halia on Wednesday. The TRS has pinned all its hopes on the CM's rally to boost the ruling party's chances of a win in the Nagarjunasagar assembly bypoll scheduled for April 17.

Rao will give the final, decisive push for the TRS poll campaign by addressing an estimated turnout of one lakh people, mostly of beneficiaries of the state government's welfare schemes.

This is the second public meeting to be addressed by the Chief Minister in the poll-bound constituency. On February 10, Rao kick-started the campaign by addressing a public meeting in Halia, in which he showered sops worth several thousands of crores, and promised implementation of lift irri-



● This is the second public meeting to be addressed by the Chief Minister in the poll-bound constituency. On February 10, he kick-started the campaign by addressing a public meeting in Halia

gation projects, laying of roads and provision for other facilities to the people in the region.

Arrangements for the grand finale of the TRS campaign were made over a plot of 50 acres with adequate space to ensure the Covid norms on social distancing are adhered to by

the participants. The public meeting will be held over a space of 20 acres and the remaining 30 acres will be left for the parking of vehicles.

Circles were drawn on the ground to ensure a mandatory six-feet distance between participants.

EC officials have warned people and the organisers that cases will be booked and penalties imposed if they flouted Covid norms on the mandatory wearing of masks, sanitation and social distancing. Special observers were deployed to examine whether the Covid regulations were followed or not at the meeting.

Ministers G. Jagadish Reddy, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Mohd Mahmood Ali, V. Srinivas Goud and dozens of TRS MLAs, MLCs, MPs and other local leaders have camped in Nagarjunasagar for the past two weeks to make arrangements fool-proof for the public meeting.

ALMANAC SAYS TS WILL PROSPER THIS NEW YEAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Telangana state will taken on the Covid-19 pandemic and prosper further in the new Telugu new year, predicted vedic scholars.

Reading out the panchangam (almanac) for Plava Nama Samvatsaram, noted vedic scholar Bachampalli Santosh Kumar Sastry of Sringeri Sarada Peetham said the state will prosper as the Plava nama samvatsara (Telugu New Year) signifies one traversing from darkness to light.

"Monsoon will be slightly delayed but there will be bountiful rains. There is a danger of land scams surfacing in the state and the property buyers should take utmost precautions during realty transactions. The relations between the state government and the Centre will be cordial," he said, at official Ugadi celebrations held on behalf of the state government at the head office of the endowments department in Bogglakunta here on Tuesday.

He said the state government would implement various welfare schemes this year.

Sastry predicted that bumper crop this year because of abundant rains.

Sastry however, cautioned people about flash floods at few places as was witnessed in Hyderabad in October 2020.

■ Page 2: People will have wasteful expenses this year

TS may move SC to block Centre's plan on Krishna

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

The state government is seriously exploring legal options with the Supreme Court to stall the Centre's move to notify the jurisdiction of Krishna River Management Board (KRMB).

Stating this, official sources in the irrigation department said this is in view of reports from Delhi that the Union Jal Shakti ministry has completed all the modalities and the Centre is all set to notify the jurisdiction of KRMB.

If notified, all the common projects on River Krishna that serve both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana would come under the administrative and operational control of the board. The KRMB will be the supreme authority and both the states have to seek KRMB approval to take up any new projects.

The states will also have to seek approval for continuation of the works on irrigation projects that were already started without seeking approvals from the apex council and also for any redesigning of the existing projects on River Krishna.

As per the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, both KRMB and GRMB (the Godavari river management board) were to be constituted and their jurisdiction notified within 60 days from the date of bifurcation of AP in June 2014. However, it

● If notified, all the common projects on River Krishna that serve both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana would come under the administrative and operational control of the board.

● The KRMB will be the supreme authority and both the states have to seek KRMB approval to take up any new projects.

remained pending for nearly seven years due to lack of a consensus between TS and AP.

Official sources said the Telangana government wants the Centre to notify the KRMB jurisdiction only after the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II finalised the allocation of Krishna water to TS.

The AP government on the other hand wants the Centre to notify the jurisdiction at the earliest so that the project management would be in the hands of the board, thus ensuring transparency in water allocation and usage.

The TS government fears that its projects on River Krishna, namely the Palamuru-Rangareddy, Dindi, will be in trouble if the Centre notifies the KRMB jurisdiction without making water allocations.

■ Page 2: TS, AP continue to fight against each other



SPORTS | 6

Sunrisers to meet RCB today

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

Centre fast-tracks nod for foreign Covid jabs

Russia's Sputnik V will be available by the end of April

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
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 the plan is to add these jabs to the existing basket of vaccines for domestic use and increase the pace and coverage of vaccination.

India as of now is using Covishield (which is known in other countries as the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine) and the locally made Covaxin for vaccinations, while Russian shots of Sputnik V were given a formal approval on Tuesday morning after recommendation from the subject experts committee of the Drugs Controller General of India.

The SEC noted that the

TABLOID

Covid widens gender divide in companies

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EVERYTHING BUT ESSENTIALS SHUT IN MAHARASHTRA FOR 15 DAYS

Mumbai, April 13: As Maharashtra reels under a severe Covid-19 wave, the MVA government on Tuesday announced over a 15-day-long statewide curfew from April 14, entailing stricter curbs on public activities, to stem the infection spread and flagged a "shortage" of medical oxygen and beds.

Stopping short of announcing a full-scale lockdown, as was being speculated, Chief Minister

Uddhav Thackeray, in his address to the state via social media, said the curfew, which excludes essential services, will come into effect at 8 pm on April 14 and remain in force till 7 am on May 1. Section 144 of the CrPC, dealing with gatherings and assembly of people, will be in force till the "lockdown-like" restrictions are in place, he said.

■ More reports on Page 4

U.S. SUSPENDS USE OF J&J SHOT AFTER CLOTS

Washington, April 13: The US is recommending a pause in using the single-dose Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine to investigate reports of potentially dangerous blood clots. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the US FDA said Tuesday they were investigating unusual clots that occurred 6 to 13 days after vaccination.

■ Full report on Page 4



Muslims perform Taraweeh prayers at Macca Masjid on Tuesday, marking the beginning of the holy month of Razman. — S. SURENDER REDDY

Mosques hold Taraweeh prayers

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

The Ramzan fasting began on Tuesday night in Hyderabad with Taraweeh prayers. The duration of first day's fast will be 14 hours while on the last day, it will be for 14 hours 39 minutes.

Muslim worshippers performed the Taraweeh prayers in almost all mosques while maintaining physical distance. Elderly people voluntarily

refrained from attending the Taraweeh prayers, while children were not allowed into many mosques.

These mosques had earlier been washed and cleaned. In several of them, disinfectant material was used to sterilise all surfaces and floors to ensure a healthy environment. Masks were distributed among worshippers. Managements of many mosques shortened the duration of Taraweeh

prayers. Unlike previous years, there is no interpretation of the Quran amidst the Taraweeh prayers.

Moulana Hafiz Rizwan Qureshi and Moulana Ahsan bin Mohammed Alhamoomi will recite the three chapters of the Holy Quran daily till 9th Ramzan in Mecca Masjid and Shahi Masjid respectively.

In both these masjids, women performed the night prayers in separated enclosures.

HYDERABADI | HABIT

Experts warn spitting in public could risk cause Covid, but cops remain silent

Public spitting goes unabated despite a ban

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL, 13

One of the prohibited actions, to prevent the spread of Covid-19, is spitting in public places. However, despite the well-known fact that the virus spreads through spit, or particles ejected while coughing or sneezing by people who do not cover their mouth or nose at such times, people in Hyderabad, are chomping their way through an esti-

mated 10 lakh paans (some spices, lime, and many times tobacco, wrapped in betel leaves) every day and spitting anywhere and everywhere without anyone attempting to put a stop to this unhygienic, and now during the pandemic, a dangerous habit.

And when someone objects to such acts, the person objecting is viewed as a nuisance and asked to go his or her way instead of bothering about such acts. And at worse, as in the incident on April 11 at the

● When someone objects to such acts, the person objecting is viewed as a nuisance and asked to go his or her way. At worse, a 64-year-old was beaten up when he objected to their spitting in the open

Urban Primary Health Centre in Malakpet, gets thrashed. It may be recalled that a 64-year-old man was beaten up three others at the UPHC when he objected to their spitting in the open. This case

was with the Malakpet police, who on Tuesday said the complainant and the attackers 'compromised' and that was the end of the matter.

Incidentally, the responsibility to catch people spitting in the open and penalising or punishing them under the provisions of various laws pressed into force to control the Covid-19 pandemic, lies with the police. At least according to officials in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, who other-

wise, are vested with the responsibility of keeping the city clean and hygienic.

On their part, police officials say that they have no data on if anyone has been caught or punished for spitting and violating Covid-19 prevention norms in and around the city.

Health officials say that more than 80 per cent of all Covid-19 cases that are being discovered are people who are completely asymptomatic, and are the main cause for the current fast spread of the virus

among the population.

Inquiries at Paan Mandi revealed that the betel leaves that arrive in the city every day, are enough to make more than 17 lakh paans. Betel leaves that are enough to make about 10 lakh paans are consumed in the city each day, while the rest are transported to different districts. At least half of the paans consumed are laced with chewing tobacco, traders say.

■ Page 2: Paan Mandi sees no effect on its business

OTHER STORIES

CM PAYS TRIBUTES TO AMBEDKAR ON BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has paid rich tributes to Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on his 130th birth anniversary on Wednesday. In his message on the occasion, he pointed out that efforts put in by Dr. Ambedkar had made the country secular with no caste or religious bias.

The CM said it was due to Dr. Ambedkar's foresight that Telangana could be formed constitutionally. He said taking inspiration from Dr Ambedkar, the state government is implementing several schemes and programmes for welfare and development of oppressed classes.

Chandrashekar Rao recalled that TS Pride programmes for entrepreneurs among

Dalits have yielded good results. He pointed out that the state government is providing funds at 25 paisa interest rate to Dalit industrialists for setting up food processing units. Dalits are also being given reservation in works taken up in market yards.

The Chief Minister recalled good results being produced by residential educational institution exclusively set up for SCs and STs. Besides quality education, these institutions provide SCs and STs special skills and training. He said it is a matter of pride for him that students of these residential institutions are not only showing their merit in academics, but also in various sports and co-curricular events both nationally and internationally. He pointed out that under Videsh Vidya Nidhi, students from these communities are provided financial support to pursue their studies abroad.

AP WILL VACCINATE FOUR LAKH PEOPLE TODAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 13

Andhra Pradesh will take up a massive Covid-19 vaccination drive on Wednesday with a target to vaccinate four lakh beneficiaries.

Though the centre announced Tika Utsav from April 11 to 14 and AP targeted to administer vaccine to 24 lakh beneficiaries at the rate of six lakh doses per day, there was no vaccination on April 12 and 13 as doses were not available. On the first day of Tika Utsav too on April 11, AP vaccinated only 2.38 lakh beneficiaries.

However, as the state government has received from the centre 6.40 lakh doses including 4.40 lakh doses of Covishield and two lakh doses of Covaxin on Monday night and Tuesday afternoon, the state government has come up with plans to take up a massive vaccination programme on the last day of Tika Utsav.

Accordingly, state health authorities will provide the job at 1,400 Covid vaccination centres by deploying additional health personnel. 500 persons on an average will be administered the vaccine at each centre from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, with the main target of covering people aged over 45 and 60 years, apart with healthcare and frontline workers.

Authorities have directed all district medical and health officers and also district immunisation officers to gear up for the occasion by making all necessary arrangements, including mobilisation of beneficiaries. So far, 82-83 percent of healthcare workers and 50 percent frontline workers have been administered the dose. Remaining have been advised to take their dose on Wednesday.

State health director Dr. T. Geetha Prasadini said, "We are taking up a special Covid-19 vaccination programme to administer the vaccine to nearly four lakh targeted beneficiaries on the last day of Tika Utsav on Wednesday.

People who cannot take it on the day can take their jab on Thursday. After that, based on the available stock, we will continue the vaccination programme in the state."

State health authorities say the centre is insisting on exhausting existing stocks of vaccine doses before releasing the fresh stocks. This is the reason why the state government is taking up a massive drive to exhaust the existing stocks and place fresh indents for additional doses.

After a dip, Covid-19 cases see 3K a day

GHMC area reports 406 cases, highest in the state

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

After the weekend testing slump that saw a dip in fresh Covid-19 cases in the state on Sunday, fresh Coronavirus infections were back in their 3,000 plus a day category on Monday.

The state health department reported 3,052 new cases for the day compared to 2,251 on Sunday. The number of tests were up from 79,027 on Sunday, to 1,13,007 on Monday.

Meanwhile, seven more people lost their lives to Covid-19 in the state on Monday, taking the total deaths from the disease in Telangana to 1,772 even as the total cases rose to 3,32,581.

The number of people who are currently suffering from Covid-19 in Telangana state, according to the department's Covid-19 bulletin, as on Monday, was 24,131, of whom 8,013 were in various government and private hospitals. Of the patients in hospitals, a

State receives additional 4.6 lakh doses of vaccine

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Covid-19 vaccination in Telangana state is continuing at a fairly rapid pace with more than 1.2 lakh people above 45 years, lining up to take their first dose in the state on Monday. Even as the health authorities, in a focused drive, are mopping up the leftover healthcare and frontline

workers' vaccination, as many as 1,22,712 people above 45 years received their first dose of the shot, the health department has said.

Along with them, 772 healthcare workers, and 19,096 front line workers too got their first dose of the vaccine on Monday, the department said.

Director of health services Dr G. Srinivasa Rao said that on Monday, the

state received 4.6 lakh additional doses of the vaccine which would be sufficient, along with the pre-existing stock for about a week. "We expect to keep receiving regular supplies of the vaccines," he said.

As on Monday evening, a total of 19,79,534 people in the state got their first vaccine dose, while 3,09,834 also got their second dose.

Campaigns add to spike in cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Covid-19 cases in Nalgonda district, in which the Nagarjunasagar Assembly constituency that has been witnessing a high decibel election campaign over the past couple of weeks, on Monday reported that the number of new Covid-19 cases have topped the one hundred mark.

According to the state health department, the district reported 109 new cases, almost four times the 28 cases reported from Nalgonda on April 3.

Covid-19 cases in the district have been steadily rising over the past 10 days with dips only on two days that coincided with drop in testing numbers, that appears to regularly occur

NALGONDA COVID-19 CASES	
DATE	CASES
April 3	28
April 4	16
April 5	45
April 6	40
April 7	54
April 8	88
April 9	89
April 10	83
April 11	31
April 12	109

during the weekends in the state.

Deaths surpass March total toll

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Deaths from Covid-19 in Telangana this month, in the first 12 days of April, have surpassed those reported during the entire March.

The number of people who died in Telangana after getting infected with the Coronavirus and

being declared Covid-19 positive this month till April 12 on Monday stood at 71. Compared to this, the month of March saw 67 people losing their lives in the state after contracting Covid-19.

The deaths from Covid-19 this month now stand at more than double the 33 fatalities reported in February in the state.

BE ON GUARD ALWAYS, CAUTIONS DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

The government alone can no longer guarantee the safety of people from Covid-19 and if people want to keep themselves safe from the Coronavirus, then they have to take protective action and not let their guard down, even for a minute, director of health services Dr G. Srinivasa Rao has said. It may be a tough message but people have to understand that they cannot take it easy because they think that Covid-19 is not something that can be dangerous. "During this wave, the morbidity is very high. Those who haven't been infected in the first wave are more vulnerable and are getting infected now,"

he said. Worryingly, it is not just the number of cases that are going up rapidly this time round, but also the fact that more people than last year, are losing their lives to the disease.

Unlike the initial experience of how Covid-19 spread when the disease made its way into India and into Telangana state last year, during the current second wave, the majority of the people who are falling prey to Coronavirus are from the middle, upper-middle, and the wealthy, he went to explain. "These are the people who understood the importance to stay safe last year. But they have become lax now and the distribution of cases among people is clearly pointing to this," he said.

HC to check history of babus filing appeals of contempt

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

As the contempt cases against state machinery and related appeals by officers are very many, the Telangana High Court has decided to check the antecedents of each and every officer who comes up with contempt appeals.

Chief Justice Hima Kohli passed an order to the Registry of the high court, directing it to not entertain contempt appeals filed by officers until they filed a separate affidavit furnishing the under-mentioned information: (i) Whether he or she has faced any contempt proceedings in the past; if so, the details thereof to be furnished along with copies of the orders passed in the contempt petition

(ii) If the officer has been held guilty for violating the order or is found to have breached

● THE DEPARTMENT said that on Monday, 778 Covid-19 patients were declared as recovered, taking the total in this category so far to 3,06,678 in the state.

bulk of them, 5,767 were in private hospitals. Another

16,118 persons are currently in isolation at their homes, or in institutions, according to the bulletin.

The most cases on Monday — 406 — were reported from the GHMC area, followed by 301 cases in Medchal-Malkajgiri, 279 in Nizamabad 248 in Ranga Reddy, 135 in

Jagitial, 123 in Sangareddy, 113 in Nirmal, 111 in Kamareddy, and 109 in Nalgonda districts.

The department said that on Monday, 778 Covid-19 patients were declared as recovered, taking the total in this category so far to 3,06,678 in the state.

PAAN MANDI SEES NO EFFECT ON ITS BUSINESS

From Page 1

The Paan Mandi in Darussalam, the only one of its kind market for Betel leaves in Telangana, stays open three days a week. "We get the leaves from Kadapa and West Bengal," says P. Murli, of PVS Paan Company, which has been in this business for more than 50 years. He said: "There are around 25 shops in this market and it is from here that the leaves go everywhere in the state." Shek Rasheed, a paan maker at a premium paan shop said, "Ten people work in my shop, in two shifts, paan prices start at ₹4 and go up to ₹65 each. We sell anywhere between a thousand and 1,200 paans a day." Some of his customers, he says, are habitual zarda (tobacco flavoured with spices) pan eaters. "There are some who eat as many as 20 paans a day," he said.

TS, AP continue to fight against each other

From Page 1

The state government has started these projects without seeking approvals for water allocations.

The AP government had already lodged a complaint with the Union Jal Shakti ministry as well as the KRMB against the Telangana government taking up the Palamur-RR and Dindi projects without obtaining any water allocation approvals.

The TS government too lodged a complaint against AP government for taking up the Rayalaseema lift irrigation scheme (RLIS), diverting Krishna water from Srisaillam without seeking necessary approvals.

The second apex council meeting was held in October 2020 — which was attended by the CMs of TS and AP through video conference mode. At this, the Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra

● TS GOVERNMENT too lodged a complaint against AP government for taking up the Rayalaseema lift irrigation scheme, diverting Krishna water from Srisaillam without seeking necessary approvals.

Singh Shekhawat announced that the ministry had decided to notify the jurisdiction of both KRMB and GRMB. Following this, the KRMB has sent the draft working manual to the ministry.

The draft manual was also circulated between both the states several times, but no consensus could be reached. However, as the TS government continued to raise objections, the Centre had in the last apex council meeting said the states' consensus was not needed and that it would go ahead with the jurisdiction notification.



Minister of state for endowments A. Indrakaran Reddy felicitates vedic scholar Bachampalli Santosh Kumar Sastry of Sringeri Sarada Peetham during the reading of the almanac on Ugadi in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

People will have wasteful expenses: Almanac

From Page 1

The income of the state government, as well as the endowments department, will increase, he predicted.

There will be wasteful expenditure from the government and even people splurge money on insignificant things. The

real estate sector in the state will witness further growth, he predicted.

But he said, overall, people will lead a happy and peaceful life in the New Year.

Due to Covid-related restrictions, the event was organised without much fanfare and was attended by endowments minister

A. Indrakaran Reddy, advisor to the government K. Ramanachary. Brahmin Sankshema Parishad member and former union minister S. Venugopala Chary.

The minister released the panchangam of Yadadri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy on the occasion.

Bandi spreading rumours on Jana Reddy: Bhatti

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Tuesday took strong objection to a remark from BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar that Congress candidate K. Jana Reddy would join the TRS after winning the Nagarjunasagar bypoll.

Vikramarka said that BJP has been spreading rumours on Congress during successive elections and misleading voters. The saffron party used similar tactics during the Dubbaka by-poll, he said.

The CLP leader said Jana Reddy has always been loyal to the Congress. "In fact, the TRS and the BJP has colluded to defeat the Congress in the bypoll.

The TRS took a U-turn after Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao meeting Prime Minister Modi in Delhi. After the Delhi tour, the TRS party did not make a single statement opposing the farms laws."

He criticised TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao for the "unparliamentary" language he used against Uttam.

CHECK POWER ABUSE IN N'SAGAR, EC URGED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

State Congress chief N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has sought immediate intervention of the Election Commission for smooth and fair conduct of the Nagarjunasagar assembly bypoll. There is rampant abuse of power and distribution of money by the ruling TRS party, he alleged here on Tuesday.

Reddy spoke to Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar from Kodada via a video conference and submitted a written representation to the EC. He said the entire election atmosphere would be vitiated by the alleged "misuse of power, money and liquor" by the ruling party.

The Congress leader said, "Unless Covid guidelines are implemented, there is every chance of a spread of the pandemic. Thousands of people from local and other places would be mobilised for the public meeting of chief minister Chandrashekar Rao there on Wednesday. All outsiders should be asked to leave the constituency immediately." "EC officials should seize thousands of vehicles being used for the campaign of TRS that are not included in the candidate's election expenditure register. Urgent action should be taken against violation of Covid guidelines. Central forces must be deployed at the check posts and vehicles checked for cash and liquor," he pleaded.

The TPCC president urged the EC to deploy central forces at all polling booths. It must be ensured that Covid-19 guidelines are followed in the CM's public meeting on April 14. He wondered how EC could put the lives of the people at risk with the huge spike in Covid-19 cases in Telangana. He pleaded that the borders of the constituency be sealed to restrict outsiders from entering the constituency.

The TPCC chief told the EC that the TRS party had distributed cash and liquor on a large scale during the MLC elections from the Graduates constituency last month. TRS workers have publicly distributed ₹1,000 to ₹2,000 per vote and liquor even on the polling day, he alleged.

● HE CRITICISED TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao for the "unparliamentary" language he used against Uttam.

wondered how will chief minister Chandrashekar Rao hold a mammoth public meeting on Wednesday as it would mean a violation of the Covid19 guidelines. "KCR foresaw Nomula Bhagat's defeat and has offered a ticket to him. Why did KCR offer a ticket to him when multiple surveys claimed that the Congress candidate's victory there would be inevitable," he asked.

Reddy said KCR had been messing up with the political career of late Nomula Narsimhaiah. "KCR did not give a single opportunity to Narsimhaiah to address his constituency-related issues in the legislative assembly.

"CM KCR, after Narsimhaiah's death, did not directly offer the ticket to his family members. After conducting surveys and exploring multiple options, he as a matter of strategy offered the ticket to his son to insult Nomula's family through an eventual defeat."

"I urge voters to use their discretion and vote for Jana Reddy who has been instrumental in developing the constituency since decades," he added.

OTHER STORIES

HOME GUARD
ENDS LIFE DUE TO
HEALTH REASONSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

A Home Guard working in Hyderabad Commissionerate ended his life by suicide at his residence under Narsingi police station limits owing to health issues on Monday night.

The Home Guard, identified as Rajender Prasad, 41, deployed at Tappachabutra police station of Hyderabad Commissionerate and is a resident of Narsingi village.

According to the family Prasad was addicted to drinking and was suffering from high BP, diabetes and other health issues.

"For three years he has been suffering with health issues. He tried to end his life by dousing himself with kerosene and setting himself ablaze. Although he sustained severe injuries, he recovered after treatment," said the family.

WOMAN
CHEATS PEOPLE
OF ₹50 LAKHDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

A woman running a chit fund duped several people and absconded along with family under the Uppal police station limits.

The accused cheated several people to the tune of around ₹50 lakh. Based on the complaint from one of the victims Mohammad Mannan, the Uppal police booked a case.

According to the complainant Mannan, he invested ₹1.50 lakh in the chit fund run by K. Rama Devi her family members. Thirteen others also invested around ₹50 lakh. Rama Devi of Beerappagadda has been running the chit fund along with her family.

However, she Rama Devi stopped payment to customers and even tried to avoid them.

RAIN BRINGS
RELIEF FROM
HEAT IN ADILABADDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, APRIL 13

A spell of rain that struck at various places brought the sigh of relief to people from the high temperatures combined with heatwaves they were experiencing for some days in the Adilabad district on Tuesday.

After prolonged dry weather conditions, people experienced a breeze with drizzling for some time in the evening and many people enjoyed the unexpected rain that struck at various places in the Adilabad district. Especially children were seen enjoying the raining.

'DRDO JOB'
ASPIRANTS
DUPED OF ₹10LDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

A person duped job aspirants to the tune of ₹10 lakh under the pretext of providing jobs in the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The issue came to light after a 37-year-old job aspirant approached the Vanasthalipuram police station and lodged a complaint.

The complainant said that he had met the accused, Rayabagi Sainath, a neighbor, who informed him that he was an employee of DRDO.

"The complainant believed Sainath who assured him a job in DRDO. Further, Sainath said due to lockdown job notification has been delayed and promised that he will provide job in DRDO and asked for ₹5 lakh. Sainath also assured to provide job to the complainant's wife and demanded another ₹5 lakh," said Vanasthalipuram police inspector K. Murali Mohan.

Since November 2020 the complainant paid ₹10 lakh on different occasions to accused Sainath. The accused also handed over appointment letters to them, stating it as an official letter from DRDO.

Upon inquiry the complaint realised that letters are fake, and created by Sainath, added the police.

After realising that they got cheated the complaint approached Vanasthalipuram police and lodged a complaint. The police booked a cheating case and started investigation to nab the accused Sainath who is absconding.

With shutdowns in Maha, many
labourers migrating to Adilabad

Every crop season they come as agriculture labour for picking cotton

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, APRIL 13

Many labourers and daily wage workers from Maharashtra are temporarily migrating into the old Adilabad district since the past few days in search of work. This follows unavailability of work in that state, where enormous cases of Coronavirus have brought day-to-day life, business and construction to a standstill.

The affected districts of the neighbouring state include Nanded, Yavathal, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli, which share their borders with Adilabad district.

Old Adilabad district is a natural choice for many labourers from Maharashtra, since many of them have relatives or known persons in Adilabad and other towns.

However, trends show that most of the labourers from neighbouring state have been coming to Adilabad town.

Thousands of them anyway come to Adilabad district as agriculture labour for picking cotton every season, as there is labour shortage in the district.

These labourers are provided shelter by landowners in their agriculture fields or adjacent areas. Considerable labour are also employed in the construction sector.

Bharath of Adilabad town said many labourers from Maharashtra are being seen coming with limited luggage in trains coming to Adilabad from Maharashtra.

He said medical and



MLA Sunke Ravi Shankar makes a man wear face mask in Choppadandi of Karimnagar district on Tuesday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

MLA urges people to wear
mask, prevent 2nd waveDC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 13

In view of increasing number of Covid-19 cases and to keep a check on the second wave of the Coronavirus, the state government issued orders making it mandatory to wear face masks, and it is the responsibility of the people to follow it without fail when they come out, said the Choppadandi MLA Sunke Ravi Shankar on Tuesday.

Ravi Shankar stopped people on the road without wearing face masks and gave them masks here

health authorities of the district should keep a close watch on these

in Choppadandi of Karimnagar district.

When the government is taking several steps to prevent the spread of the second wave of Coronavirus which is spreading at an alarming rate, it is not good on the part of people to behave negligently without following Covid-19 rules, he said.

The virus is spreading from one to another without any symptoms unlike the first strain which showed symptoms of cold, fever and cough, he cautioned.

Personal hygiene, wash-

ing of hands thoroughly, applying sanitisers, maintaining physical distance along with wearing face masks are the only precautionary steps people should follow to protect themselves from being contracted with deadly Coronavirus new strain, he suggested.

The MLA appealed to the people who crossed 45 years of age to take the Covid-19 vaccination by enrolling themselves in the nearest hospital as the process of vaccination is going on at brisk pace across the Telangana state.

them to check whether they have been affected by Covid-19.

THUNDERSTORMS
LIKELY IN SATE
TODAYDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

The Indian Meteorological Department has issued a 'Level Orange' warning for Telangana state for Wednesday saying that some places in the state can expect to experience thunderstorms accompanied by lightning, gusty winds with speeds between 30 and 40 kilometres per hour along with some hail.

Such weather, it said, is likely to occur over Ranga Reddy, Yadadri-Bhongir, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Khammam, Bhadrachalam, Kothagudem, Jangaon, Sangareddy, Siddipet, Medak and Medchal-Malkajgiri districts on Wednesday. While similar weather has been predicted for isolated places over the state for Thursday, the following two days can see thunderstorms with lightning at isolated places in Telangana, it said.

A 'Level Orange' warning means there is a 'medium' threat of such predicted weather and calls for preparation to meet any eventuality arising from such weather, a red warning means a high probability of predicted weather playing out and is also a call for taking immediate action.

SECOND WAVE IS
MORE SEVERE,
SAYS COLLECTORDC CORRESPONDENT
KOTHAGUDEM, APRIL 13

Bhadradi-Kothagudem district collector M.V. Reddy said that the research reports on Coronavirus are saying that the virus is shaped in various strains and spreading fast. Reddy said that the severity of the disease is high and the people should take all measures to check it. He said that the people of Kothagudem district stood as ideal in checking the virus in the first phase and should show the same spirit in the second wave also. "Many people after recovering from Covid think that there is no need to fear anymore. But there is no guarantee of not getting infected for the second time. Wearing a mask and sanitising is very important to check the virus. The severity is more in the second wave than the first one", he

● REDDY SAID that the severity of the disease is high and the people should take all measures to check it. He said that the people of Kothagudem district stood as ideal in checking the virus in the first phase and should show the same spirit in the second wave also. "Many people after recovering from Covid think that there is no need to fear anymore. But there is no guarantee of not getting infected for the second time.



BJP leaders welcome the Kisan rail at Lingampalli railway station in Jagtial district on Tuesday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

BJP men welcome
Kisan rail in JagtialDC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 13

Leaders of BJP Kisan Morcha welcomed the Kisan rail at Lingampalli Railway Station in Jagtial district with a shower of flowers. They also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for providing special Kisan Rail from the station to New Delhi for mango growers of the district. The train later left with 420 tonnes of mangoes in 20 wagons. There will be two more Kisan rail specials coming to Lingampalli on Wednesday and on April 19.

Speaking on the occasion, state vice president of Kisan Morcha Singireddy

Krishna Reddy pointed out that keeping in view farmers' welfare, the central government is providing Kisan rail services with 50 percent subsidy on transport charges.

The trains save a lot of time in transport and prevent the fruit from getting damaged. To transport mangoes by road to Delhi, it takes more than 72 hours. But introduction of Kisan rail services ensures that the product

reaches Delhi within one day.

Mangoes grown in Jagtial are in great demand in northern and eastern states of India, including Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Jammu, Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh, Krishna Reddy pointed out.

BJP district president Kodipally Gopal Reddy said Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposes to launch around 1,000 Kisan rails across the country this year in the interests of farmers. Several food grains, fruits and flowers will be transported through these trains.

This rail service not only gives an economic boost to farmers but also helps agriculture manufacturing units, big markets and metro cities in getting farm produce, Gopal Reddy pointed out.

BJP leaders V. Anil Kumar, M. Ramu, K. Narasimha Reddy, Shekar Reddy, N. Thirupathi, L. Rajanna, A. Uttam, M. Rajesh, Ch. Prem Sagar, S. Rajalingam, A. Gangaram, were among those present on the occasion.

Special children hit as
online classes are backDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Over a year after school closure, students of the Schools for the visually impaired continue to face difficulties due to the switch from classrooms to online schooling. This, though they are better placed and equipped with proper infrastructure now.

Help was on the way. For instance, the state government's Disabled Welfare Department has provided smartphones to students of Classes 8-10 in the four government-run blind schools in the state in Mahbubnagar, Hyderabad and Karimnagar.

O Ramulu, principal of the Mahbubnagar school, said students who have returned home are hard-pressed over the online style of education. "For



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

our students in Classes 8-10, the government provided over 30 smartphones to help them take lessons over voice notes and calls. But this process is easy for them."

"Students in junior classes have been provided with Braille books. Yet, the absence of an environment they were used to is missing for them," said another teacher.

Access to internet and getting used to online

learning still remain a challenge for these students as also their parents. "We have been trying to help our kid with his lessons on phone with support from his teachers. At school, someone is always around to help him with each and every doubt. But, overall, these are not of much help to the student," said Srinivas, a parent from the Darulshifa government school for the blind.

Devotional spirit



Devotees perform puja at Sri Mahashakti devasthanam on the occasion Ugadi festival at Chitanyapuri colony in Karimnagar on Tuesday.

—DC

BJP may give ticket to
TRS rejected candidatesDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, APRIL 13

Bharatiya Janata Party district president G. Satyanarayana said his party will contest all the 60 divisions within the Khammam Municipal Corporation and is evolving different strategies to win the corporation.

BJP also proposes to give tickets to corporators of ruling TRS who are denied the party ticket. Satyanarayana said some TRS corporators have already expressed their wish to join the BJP.

He said they are organising padayatra in all divisions as part of their campaign. Thousands of party youth have been given the task of getting in touch with at least 50 voters and mobilise them on the polling day.

Satyanarayana said party state leader Yadagiri Reddy has been appointed as in-charge of the KMC election. "Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy and BJP state president Bandi Sanjay will be our star campaigners," he said, adding that Sanjay

will stay for three days in Khammam and participate in the campaign.

Further, they are expecting BJP MPs, including D. Arvind, and other leaders to campaign in KMC.

"We are making all efforts to unfurl the saffron flag on KMC. People of Khammam are tired of corruption in the TRS government.

We will also expose the misdeeds of transport minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar in the corporation elections," Satyanarayana stated.

MUSLIM | WELFARE

CM urges Muslim brethren to follow all Covid guidelines

'TRS schemes paying off for Muslims'

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said many schemes and programmes of TRS government for welfare of Muslims over the last six years are now bearing fruits, bringing a qualitative change within the community.

In his message to mark the beginning of Ramadan month, he wished that "Ganga Jamuna teheeb"

● IN CM'S message to mark the beginning of Ramadan month, he wished that "Ganga Jamuna teheeb" within TS would increase manifold, strengthening the spirit of brotherhood among CM recalled several schemes implemented by the state government for welfare of economically backward classes among Muslims people.

within TS would increase manifold, strengthening the spirit of brotherhood among people He pointed out that the state government has been officially observing Ramadan as part of its plan to celebrate all

religions and ensure harmony among people of all communities. On the occasion, the CM recalled several schemes implemented by the state government for welfare of economically backward class-

es among Muslims. He said schemes like Shaadi Mubarak have brought in a qualitative change in lives of young Muslim women. Programmes implemented for educating Muslim students have also been successful and residential schools for them are yielding good results.

In view of the second wave of Coronavirus the Chief Minister urged Muslim brethren to follow all Covid guidelines while offering their prayers.

2,200 KG
GANJA SEIZED
IN COAL TOWNDC CORRESPONDENT
KOTHAGUDEM, APRIL 13

Ganja, worth ₹3.31 crore, was seized in Kothagudem on Tuesday. Police team led by sub-inspector Mahesh of Chunchupalli police station found 2,200 kilograms ganja packed in 50 bags, while it was shifting to Hyderabad from Chintoor in East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh on the Icher van bearing no-AP28-W8974. Shaik Mehaboob, resident of Toli Chowk in Hyderabad, driver of the vehicle was taken into custody. Case under sections of NDPS (Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act) was filed against the driver and others. Efforts are on for the arrest of other persons in the case.

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SHORT TAKES

K.J. JALEEL QUILTS AFTER LOKAYUKTA INDICTMENT

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 13

Kerala higher education minister K.T. Jaleel who was indicted by Lokayukta for nepotism, abuse of power and breach of oath of office, resigned here on Tuesday. Jaleel sent his resignation to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the latter forwarded it to Governor Arif Mohammad Khan.

In an emotional Facebook post Jaleel said that those who were baying for his blood could find some relief now. The minister's resignation came hours before the Kerala High Court was scheduled to hear his plea challenging the Lokayukta damning report.

In his petition Jaleel had contended that the Lokayukta findings were not based on evidence or proper investigations, hence the ruling should be set aside by the high court. The Lokayukta had indicted him of appointing his close relative K.T. Adeb by altering the educational qualifications needed for the post of general manager, state minorities development finance corporation.

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

It was the Muslim Youth League leadership which had first alleged that Jaleel's cousin Adeb, was appointed general manager, flouting rules.

At the time of appointment, Adeb was working as manager of a private bank.

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

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 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



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

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 (think-tank) Observer Research Foundation (ORF). PM Modi said, "Is it per-

haps 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 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."

CONG: KUMBH RETURNEES MAY WORSEN CRISIS

Mumbai: 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.

MAHA IMPOSES STERN CURBS TILL MAY 1

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, APRIL 13

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday announced imposition of prohibitory orders — the section 144 of CrPc (sanchar-bandhi) from 8:00 pm on Wednesday to 7:00 am May 1 in order to break the chain of the Coronavirus.

Public transport will continue to function only for essential workers and for essential activities for general public.

"Nobody would be allowed to use the public transport without a valid reason excluding the people notified under essential services in an order

issued by the disaster management unit of the Relief and Rehabilitation department," Thackeray said in his video address to people.

Stating that the situation is very grim in Maharashtra, Thackeray said that the government would use this 15 days period to scale up its health infrastructure.

The Maharashtra on Tuesday reported 60,212 new cases taking total positive cases to 5,93,042. The state also reported 281 deaths on Tuesday.

Underlining the shortage of oxygen and Remdesivir injection among other things, Thackeray said, "at present, 1,200 MT oxygen is being produced in our state."

Didi calls off Dharna as EC acts against three BJP leaders

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, APRIL 13

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday wrapped up her dharna in protest against the Election Commission's "undemocratic and unconstitutional" ban on her campaign for 24 hours in the Assembly election within few hours after the Election Commission ordered similar steps, in a balancing act, against three Bharatiya Janata Party leaders — Rahul Sinha, state chief and Midnapore MP Dilip Ghosh and Nandigram candidate Suvendu Adhikari — over their controversial remarks.

Though the Trinamul Congress supremo had announced she would sit on dharna from 12 noon, she reached the Gandhi Statue at the Maidan, which falls under the authority of the Army's Eastern Command as it is defence land, quite early.

From 11.45 am Banerjee, in her wheelchair, began her silent protest, also a rare scene, sitting there alone.

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

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

Meanwhile the EC, in wake of the TMC's questions on its impartiality,

ordered a 48-hour campaign ban, starting from 12 noon on Tuesday, on Habra Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Rahul Sinha for his inflammatory remarks on the killings of four persons by the Central paramilitary forces at Shitalkuchi in Cooch Behar during the fourth phase of the polls.

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

After the order, he however said: "I hold the EC in high respect. But it is a severe punishment to me."

The EC also served a show-cause notice to Ghosh directing him to explain his recent threat to "repeat the Shitalkuchi-style killings at many places" during the polls by 10 am on Wednesday.

The poll panel also warned and advised Adhikari, after getting his reply to its notice on his "begun" remark, in a veiled reference to Banerjee, and his assertion that voting for his political opponent would imply voting for a "mini-Pakistan", "to desist from using such statements while making public utterances during the period when the Model Code of Conduct is in force".

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

WORLD

Vatican probe: U.S. Bishop quits

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

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

HK's LEGISLATIVE POLL TO TAKE PLACE IN DEC.

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

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

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

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

Iran to enrich uranium to highest level

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 technical step to weapons-grade levels of 90 per cent.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said it was aware of the media reports but had no comment at the time. Press TV, the Iranian state televi-

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

sion's English-language arm, separately said that the IAEA had been informed of the move.

It said the enrichment would begin as of Wednesday. The broadcaster also quoted the negotiator as saying Iran would introduce another 1,000 centrifuges at Natanz, without elaborating. — AP

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



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.

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

plans.

The pause deals a hit to the United States' Covid vaccination campaign, which has so far administered 45 percent of the adult population at least one dose — among the most rapid rates in the world.

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

But even before the pause, the company was affected by supply problems after a contractor spoiled 15

million doses that never ended up shipping.

Nonetheless, with Pfizer and Moderna continuing to deliver their hundreds of millions of promised doses on time, the US is likely to maintain a high vaccination pace.

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

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 vaccination 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, which are more at risk from serious illness when infected with Covid-19. The European Medicines Agency, the EU's equivalent to the FDA, said last Friday that it was reviewing cases reported in the US of

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 under-

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

Austin made the announcement after talks with German Defence Minister

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer on his first tour of Europe since becoming Pentagon chief in January. Kramp-Karrenbauer welcomed the announcement as a "strong signal" of a healthy US-German relationship. They also discussed a pending decision by President Joe Biden on whether to withdraw com-

pletely from Afghanistan by May 1, a deadline the Trump administration pledged to the Taliban militants.

Germany is a key part of the US-led coalition in Afghanistan. Austin said at a joint news conference with Kramp-Karrenbauer that the extra 500 US troops will be stationed

permanently in Germany's Wiesbaden area as early as this fall.

"These forces will strengthen deterrence and defence in Europe. They will augment our existing abilities to prevent conflict, and, if necessary, fight and win," Austin said in prepared remarks. "This move will also create more

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

Last year, President Donald Trump ordered the withdrawal of 12,000 troops from Germany as

retribution for what he considered Germany's refusal to spend more on its own defence. Austin suspended that move shortly after taking office. He said decisions on troop levels would be made as part of a comprehensive review of the US military presence around the world, including in Europe. — 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
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.



■ 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. Gai, 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 adju-

dicating 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 Gai, 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 of 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

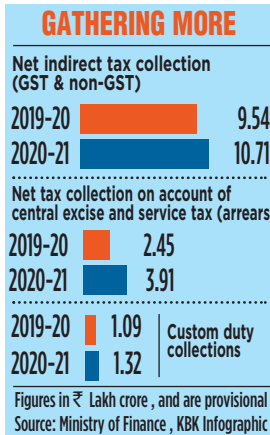
Indirect taxes up 12% in FY21

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



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 down-

loaded 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 Beal 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 Axelsen, 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 to 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 Shafiul Alam Nadel of the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

"All members of the South African team gave Covid-19 test samples before their departure from Sylhet. Five of them 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

TOKYO | OLYMPICS

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.

New Covid-19 cases are rising across Japan, where fewer than 1% of

● **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.**

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

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

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

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

EX-INDIA HOCKEY PLAYER BALBIR SINGH JR NO MORE

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

His son is settled in Canada and could not attend the last rites of his father because of the pandemic.

Born on May 2, 1932, at Sansarpur in Jalandhar, also known as the nursery of Indian hockey, Balbir Singh Junior had played alongside legends like Balbir Singh Senior, Leslie Claudius, Prithipal Singh, Balkishan and Charles Stephen among others.

Singh took to hockey when he was six years old. He studied at Lyallpur Khalsa College in Jalandhar and was first selected to play for the Indian hockey team in 1951 during the tour of Afghanistan.

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

