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HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | 3 APRIL 2021

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**SHAH: WILL WIN
50 OF 60 IN WB**

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, APRIL 2

Union home minister Amit Shah on Friday claimed the BJP will win more than 50 seats out of the 60 which went to the first two phases of the Assembly polls including Nandigram. He made the claim at two back-to-back BJP rallies in North Bengal. At Sitalkuchi in Coochbehar Shah said, "All have seen the first two phases of polls. Kamal Khila Hai (Lotus has bloomed). Mark my words. The BJP has already won more than 50 out of 60 seats."

**6 DROWN AT VIP
PUSHKAR GHAT**

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, APRIL 2

Three children and three men drowned while attempting to rescue a child who had ventured deep into the Godavari river, at the VIP pushkar ghat at Pochampad in Nizamabad district, near the Sriram Sagar Project, on Friday.

■ Report on Page 6

Local polls after bypoll in N'sagar

SEC plans elections in second week of May

L. VENKAT RAM
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

The stage is set for yet another electoral battle between the TRS and the Opposition parties in May, after the Nagarjunasagar Assembly bypoll is held on April 17.

Elections to the Warangal and Khammam municipal corporations and five municipalities — Siddipet, Achampet, Jadcherla, Nakrekal and Kothur — are likely to be held in the second week of May.

The government has completed the process of delimitation of divisions and wards in these corporations and municipalities.

The department of municipal administration and urban development is expected to issue a government order in a week or two notifying the delimitation of wards.

This will pave the way for the TS Election

KCR APATHBANDHU
FOR MBCs TO START
ON APRIL 27

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

A new scheme, 'KCR Apathbandhu' for the uplift of Most Backward Classes (MBC) will be launched on April 27 to mark the 20th TRS formation day, BC welfare minister Gangula Kamalakar said on Friday.

Under it, ambulances will be given to unemployed MBC youth.

Commission to issue the notification for the civic polls.

The number of divisions in Greater Warangal

Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has been increased from 58 to 66 and at the Khammam Municipal Corporation (KMC) from 50 to 60. The wards in Siddipet have been increased to 43, Jadcherla 27, Achampet 20, Nakrekal 20 and Kothur 12.

With this, all the elections in Telangana state from the village to the national level will be completed.

With this, all the parties are giving utmost importance to these civic elections believing that they will set the tone for the 2023 Assembly polls.

While the TRS is aiming to win all these corporations and municipalities to prove yet again that it's unbeatable, the Congress and BJP are competing to prove that they are the only alternative to the TRS.

■ Page 2: BC corporation to give aid to buy ambulance

■ Page 2: KTR to start campaign in Khammam

JOBLESS YOUTH
WHO TRIED TO END
LIFE SUCCUMBS

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

Boda Sunil Kumar Naik, 25, a student of Kakatiya University, died here on Friday, a week after he attempted suicide.

His extreme step came after the government announced an increase in the retirement age of state government employees, that could adversely affect the job chances of youths.

Naik's death led to an outcry from political parties demanding that the government immediately start recruiting staff for vacant posts and pay ₹1 crore as ex gratia to Sunil's family.

Police said Naik, a native of Thejavat Ram Singh thanda of Gudur mandal in Mahabubabad district, had tried for a job in the police in 2016 but did not succeed.

However, he continued to prepare for the competitive examinations from a hired room at Hanamkonda.

■ Page 2: Sunil took video after drinking pesticide

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KTR: TS grows despite Centre fund cut

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KHAMMAM, APRIL 2

Information technology minister K.T. Rama Rao said here on Friday that the state was being developed even though the Centre was not extending cooperation.

Rama Rao, inaugurating various projects in

Khammam, said that many people had their doubts about new investments coming to Telangana state. "But they are coming. The problem is, the Centre is taking money from Telangana in the form of taxes and it is not helping the state when it came to the crunch," he said. "The

Minister K.T. Rama Rao drinks Mission Bhagiratha water from a tap in a 2BHK flat in Khammam. — DC

assurances given by the Centre during AP Reorganisation Act are not being implemented. There is no response to the proposed ITIR (Information Technology Investment Region) project in TS and the plea for a railway coach factory in Kazipet," he said. "TS is getting investments due to

the efforts of the TRS government and the growth rate of Telangana is higher than India's average rate of growth. Chief Minister is implementing policies to attract investments," he said.

■ Page 2: Software exports rose to ₹1.4 lakh crore: KTR



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IN BRIEF

KTR to start campaign

From Page 1

TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao has kickstarted the campaign in Khammam by launching a slew of development programmes on Sunday. The term of the Warangal and Khammam corporations ended on March 14, while that of Siddipet will end on April 15.

Kothur and Nakrekal are newly formed municipalities while elections for Jachchela municipality could not be held earlier due to legal issues.

Credai postpones Property Show

Hyderabad:

The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India, Hyderabad chapter, on Friday announced that it was postponing the 10th edition of the Credai Hyderabad Property Show, originally scheduled to begin on April 16. The show, which was to be organised at Hitex, has been put off indefinitely in view of the government orders prohibiting public gatherings and events till the end of this month following the rising Covid-19 cases. The revised schedule will be shared following the appropriate government notifications, Credai said.

Software exports rose to ₹1.4L cr: KTR

From Page 1

"Software exports were of ₹56,000 crore when Telangana was formed in 2016, and it is of 1.4 lakh crore now. The coming up of the second IT Hub in Khammam is the best example of new investments," Rama Rao said. He said transport minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar showed immense interest in bringing the IT Hub in Khammam and sanctioned ₹35 crore for the second phase. Now, IT projects are spreading to Tier II towns like Warangal, Siddipet, Khammam and Nizamabad, he said. Pertaining to the new RTC bus stand, the transport minister said a new bus stand was built over seven acres in place of the two acre of the old bus stand. The government sanctioned ₹28 crore for the project despite the Covid-19 situation. He said about 350 candidates got jobs in the first phase of the IT Hub and another 57 will get jobs in second phase.

THIEF ARRESTED, 5 TOLA GOLD RECOVERED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

Chandanagar police nabbed an alleged thief, recovered five tolas of gold from him and claimed to have solved 11 cases. The accused was identified as Parankusham Ashok, 31, a car driver from Medchal. Police said that in the last three years, Ashok was involved in robbery, attempt to murder and burglary cases at Chandanagar, Jeedimetla, Pet Basheerabad police station limits. Police arrested him on the complaint of a woman that he had stolen three tolas of gold and escaped.

HC RELIEF TO RAJANNA SIRCILLA COLLECTOR

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

Giving relief to Rajanna Sircilla collector Krishna Bhaskar, joint collector Yasmeen Bashan and an officer of the land acquisition wing of the district, a division bench of the Telangana High Court on Friday stayed a single judge order which had sentenced them to undergo three months imprisonment for contempt of court.

The stay is till September. The bench did not intervene in the single judge order on the aspect of imposing fine and the payment of court expenses to 11 petitioners who had filed the contempt case.

The contempt case pertained to not complying the court orders regarding fulfillment of rehabilitation and resettlement package to project outees of Illenthukunta village of the district. The single judge had sentenced the three officers to three months in jail and ₹2,000 costs. The court had also directed them to pay ₹10,000 to each of the petitioners who filed the contempt case as court expenses. The three officers had then filed appeals with the division bench.



A Passion Play organised to mark Good Friday at the St Joseph's Cathedral in city. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Good Friday services go online for churches

Devotees turned away at churches, not allowed to enter

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL I DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

Good Friday was observed in the city with online worship services and adoration of the Cross even as several channels telecast live the services for the day.

As the Covid-19 related curbs existed against gatherings, the traditional Passion Plays were suspended in most places. One of the biggest such events, at St Joseph's Cathedral, was staged and was telecast live for the faithful to watch. The evening's special church services too were live streamed. The few devotees who turned up at the venue to watch the unfolding of the Passion Play that depicts the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

allowed to enter and offer prayers briefly.

At the St Joseph's Cathedral at Gunfoundry, known for its Passion Play for 49 years, this was telecast live.

People were not allowed to enter the premises. In the pre-Covid-19 times, thousands used to gather at the venue to watch the unfolding of the Passion Play that depicts the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

the event." Dr D.H. Paul of John Wesley Methodist Church, Malkajgiri, said: "The online service went on from noon to 3 pm. The choir took part in the same manner and a special speaker spoke on the seven words Jesus spoke while on the Cross, and explained to all what they meant." At the St Thomas Church, Badi Chowdi, a reading from the scriptures was organised, Fr David Francis said.

The Lord's passion and veneration of the Cross was led by Poola Anthony, Metropolitan Archbishop of Hyderabad Archdiocese, in the evening mass at the Holy Family Church, Trimulgherry.

Passion Play that depicts the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Naveen Johnson, who was taking part as a soldier in the play for 19 years, said, "We practise for 40 days, the audio is prerecorded. The recording we use today was recorded 49 years ago. The same voices ring loud every Good Friday during

MANY 45-YR-OLDS FLOCK TO TAKE COVID-19 VACCINE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

The opening up of Covid-19 vaccinations for everyone over the age of 45 years appears to have been widely welcomed. The number of people in the 45-59 years age group who received their first shot of the vaccine on April 1, the day vaccination was opened to this cohort, shot up to 31,214, from 12,648 on March 31, the last day when the vaccination was restricted to those in this age group with comorbidities.

The total number of people who received their shots, both the first and second doses, on April 1 also witnessed a steep increase to 62,581, from 33,689 the previous day. On April 1, 59,439 received the first dose of the vaccine, with another 3,142 getting their second dose.

Vaccinations were administered across the state in 1,023 centres, their numbers increased to accommodate more people coming in to get their shots.

Meanwhile, 1,297 healthcare and 1,851 frontline workers received their vaccine shots on April 1.

So far, 13,26,607 people have received vaccine shots in the state.

Inter exams: Practicals format may change

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

The TS Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) is likely to change the format of practical examinations as a one-time step for junior college students appearing for Intermediate examinations this year. This is in the context of the pandemic situation and a second shutdown of educational institutions.

"TSBIE secretary Syed Omar Jaafar received the representation on

The move comes a day after student representatives met education minister Sabitha Indra Reddy, education department officials and the State Human Rights Commission, seeking redressal of student grievances in the state, saying they were not well-prepared to appear for practical exams.

"TSBIE secretary Syed Omar Jaafar received the representation on

● STUDENTS HAVE demanded that the government reopen colleges for some days ahead of the examination, to help students clear their doubts.

Thursday, after which there is an extended weekend due to holidays.

We have to seek approval from the government before announcing any decision. But it is likely

there will be a change in the format of practical examinations for the benefit of students this year," said an official in the education department.

The official added that the education department understands the issues and is trying to resolve them.

A decision on the likely change in pattern of practicals will have to be approved by the government in the next few days,

before announcing it, he said. The practical examinations for the Intermediate Board are scheduled from April 7.

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The official added that the education department understands the issues and is trying to resolve them.

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EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender Notice No. 2020/WP/MECH/DNR-RGD-DDU/WT-02 (OPEN) for & on behalf of Government of India, Dy. CME-II/ WP/Patha invited e-tender for the following works as detailed.

1. Name of the work and location: Composite Works (Civil, Electrical & Mechanical) involving construction of Industrial sheds, other ancillary buildings, Track works, Drainage system, Electrification and illumination works, Procurement and commissioning of specified Mechanical Machineries & Plant (EOT crane etc.) in connection with (i) Up-gradation of Rajir Coaching Depot, Rajir Dist-Nalanda, Bihar (ii) Construction of Store depot for C&W at Danapur, Dist-Patna, Bihar (iii) Extension of 2ST & 50T Bay with 2 nos. Additional crane and 01 no. Pit-in Diesel Shed/TRS to facilitate safety checking at DDU, Dist-Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh. 2. Estimated cost : Rs. 15,20,13,194.20. 3. EMD: Nil. (Bid Security Declaration (Annexure O) in lieu of Bid Security/Earnest Money Deposit). 4. Date & Time for closing of tender: 18.05.2021 up to 13:00 hrs., 5. Website particulars and Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and downloaded: Tender can only be downloaded and Bid from IREPS website: www.ireps.gov.in for any other information please contact office of CAO/Workshop Projects/Indian Railways, Chamber Bhawan, 3rd floor J.C. Road, Patna-800001. Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer-II Workshop Project/Patha PR/00003/WP/02/MECH/T/21-22/4

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited for execution of the following works by Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.), E.C. Railway, Dhanbad: Sl. No. 1, E-Tender No. 01-DHN-2021-22, Name of the work with its location & completion period: Provision of boundary wall of height upto 2.25M in connection with raising of sectional speed to 160 kmph from Nitchipur to Gomoh under Sr. DEN(2)/DHN.

15 (Fifteen) Months, Approx. cost of work (In Rs.): Rs. 9,35,08,278.93

Sl. No. 2, E-Tender No. 02-DHN-2021-22, Name of the work with its location & completion period: Provision of boundary wall of height upto 2.25M in connection with raising of sectional speed to 160 kmph from IAH to Tanupura under Sr. DEN(2)/DHN.

15 (Fifteen) Months, Approx. cost of work (In Rs.): Rs. 7,08,33,679.07

Sl. No. 3, E-Tender No. 03-DHN-2021-22, Name of the work with its location & completion period: Provision of boundary wall of height upto 2.25M in connection with raising of sectional speed to 160 kmph from Larabid to IAH 10 under Sr. DEN(2)/DHN.

15 (Fifteen) Months, Approx. cost of work (In Rs.): Rs. 9,04,33,679.45

Sl. No. 4, E-Tender No. 04-DHN-2021-22, Name of the work with its location & completion period: Changing of rusted members, replacement of bolts by rivets and rusted/loose rivet and strengthening of Br. No.20A (ROB) (tx3.60) between SJA ANJE at Km.10/2-4, Br. No.34A UP & DN between station TET-NPJE at Km.280/17-19, Bridge No.202(UP & DN) (tx18.30M) between PSB-SMND at Km.27/29-29 and 117(9x3.30) between station BKRO-GMIA at Km.43/9-11 under SSE(Bridge) / DHN in Dhanbad Division of E.C. Railway, 11(Eleven) Months. 15 (Fifteen) Months. Approx. cost of work (In Rs.): Rs. 1,43,11,097.85

Date & Time for closing and opening of e-tender : Date of closing of e-tender at 17:00 hours on 26.04.2021. Date of opening of e-tender from 02:00 hrs. on 27.04.2021. Website particulars : http://www.ireps.gov.in

No manual tender will be accepted against e-tendering.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering), Dhanbad PR/0005/DHN/Engg./T/21-22/64

TS Covid caseload nears 1,000 per day



A police officer offers roses to residents and requests them to wear masks and maintain social distance in front of the Mecca masjid on Friday. — P. SURENDRA

Inter exams: Practicals format may change

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

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TOUGH TIMES

Donations will decline this year by 25% due to the economic slowdown

Covid-19 crisis impacts zakat collection

ATHER MOIN I DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

When the Covid-related lockdown stole the income of many families last year, many philanthropists put food on their plates by opening their lockers. A large number of the donors spent money in the form of 'advance zakat', but, this time, they may not be in a position to show a simi-

lar level of generosity due to various factors. Clearly, the Coronavirus has impacted Zakat donations.

Zakat-collecting institutions are worried that donations will decline this year by as much as 25 per cent due to the economic slowdown. Zakat calculations are done after the completion of one year of owning of assets. Many deeni

madrasas are on the verge of closure as they did not receive a satisfactory collection last year and this year the situation will be worse.

The Zakat collecting institutions said that the lockdown had affected the income of every class, due to which many people could not increase their assets either in the form of properties or gold. Besides, those people who

depend on community charity, especially on Zakat.

Though many madrasas have shut their hostels, they still have expenses like staff salaries, rents, electricity bills and water cess etc. They could not mobilise the funds needed to keep operations further.

Hafiz Zakir Mohiuddin, who runs a madrasa in Hafeezbabbnagar, said that

due to the financial crises a large number of institutions had borrowed to pay salaries and meet other expenses. If these institutions will not get sufficient help, they will be forced to close.

Moulana Gias Ahmed Rashadi, president, Safa Baitul-Maal, said that philanthropists should come forward to help those institutions which depend on Zakat.

No manual tender will be accepted against e-tendering.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering), Dhanbad PR/0005/DHN/Engg./T/21-22/64

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4 BEDROOM Flat Spacious 2000 Sft, Fully Renovated in posh Adarsh Nagar Colony, Birlamandir. Ph:9849017077. (HYCL/2122/C00007)

GACHIBOWLI NEAR Narsingi, exclusive luxury project, Muppa Insignia by Muppa Akshaya Projects, 2Cells+ 8Flors. 2&3BHK for sale. Sizes 1210 to 1810sqft. Apartments for possession for interiors in one year. Please Contact: 9849539003. (HYMM/2021/C00618)

KOKAPET 4BHK East facing 3230Sqt Semi-Inter, ready to move in brand new 15th floor maid room with attached bathroom. Contact: TulasiNath 9494445678 (HYMM/2021/C08794)

KONDAPUR ready to move 3BHK corner Deluxe Flats 1657, 1702sft, East facing 100% vastu. Ph:9100774959. (HYCL/2021/C03517)

KOTHAPET, GREEN Hills Colony, Road No.4, New 3BHK Super Deluxe spacious Flats (2275, 2450 &2475 sft) for sale. Swimming-pool, Gym, Banquet-hall, Indoor games, waiting Hall and more amenities. Eternal Group. Call: 9550752757, 9246504935. (HYCL/2122/C00058)

MARUTHI VAN (Ambulance) good condition running vehicle for sale. Contact: 9705012136, 9989537872. (A/2122/C00008)

FOR SALE Flat no:406 in Block-B, East facing, 2165sf builtup Area, 3BHK, 1Carparking, A.G.R. Castle, Near Dews Villa villas, Manchirevu, Gandeepet (M), R.R.Dist. Ph:8919331645. (HYMM/2122/C00058)

3BHK NEW Ready to Move/In flats perfect Vasthu, East/West facing @Marredpally 24hrs Water/ Party hall/ Gym/ Generator Backup/ Play area. Details call: 996814987/ 040-27803848. (HYMM/2021/C08340)

NAGARAJ NEAR Indian Oil Petrol station "SV Shanthikethan" Flats Ready to occupy 283 BHK E.N.W facing. Available Ph:8314119206, 9848892582. (HYCL/2122/C00015)

EMERALD HEIGHTS Pocharam, Infosys, fully furnished 3BHK Flat for sale 1895 Sft, 2 Car Parkings. Rental- 18K - 80% B/L. Ph:7995803827. (HYCL/2122/C00015)

3RD FLOOR, 6900 Sft Office Space with Tenant for immediate Sale at Road No.10, Banjara hills, opp IAS Apartments. Contact: 9949533203. (B/2122/C00003)

GACHIBOWLI MAINROAD independent Building for sale/lease, Opposite Central mall, beautiful glass & Marble elevation, total 12700sf bsp area, 9500 carper area, G+3 plus 2BHK stay office space, 2500sqft offices & 2200sqft, ft. 4000sqft land. 9car+10twn w/ all parking, Suitable Restaurants, Software, Furniture, lights, Jewellery Showroom/ mall concept, hospitals, Clear title. Ph:9502032226. (HYMM/2122/C00005)

JUBILEE HILLS, Road No:45, 1464 Sq.yards, North Facing Commercial plot for sale. 100% Vastu. For more details Ph:8522015555/ 970422245. (HYCL/2122/C00002)

URGENT SALE: Absolute Black Granite Quarry in Ac. 13-23.Gts. @Dharmaram (V), Maripeda (M), Mahabubnagar (D) with all Licenses. Price: Rs.4Cr. Call: 7799942123. (HYMM/2021/C00607)

PILOTS

WE PURCHASED Plots With 100% Market Rate Janaharsha Dreamcity 1 & 2, Ibrahimpatnam, Mangalpally, Abdullapuram, Tocpan, Ghatesar, Spot Cash. Ph:9849675068. (HYCL/2122/C00029)

HMDA OPEN Plots in gated community with excellent amenities & club house by Modi Builders @ Aushapuri near Ghatesar. Rs.11,500/- Sq.yd. HMDA Approved. Call 7677120120. (B/2122/C00011)

EACH PLOT 1000sq.yards, Plot no.7 and 8, Uma Gardens, Aziznagar cross road, Himayat sagar road. Ph:9640157257, 9059837792. (HYCL/2122/C00014)

HMDA OPEN Plots Available at Low Cost With in The Radius of 3.5 Km. From B.B.Nagar Aims Along With Construction, Bank Loans Available Ph:8885050050 (HYMM/2021/C08787)

COMMERCIAL PLOTS in HMDA approved layouts sizes 160 sq.yards to 900 sq.yards. Facing 100ft. Road, suitable for Apartments, Schools, Hostels at BHEL Defense Colony, Chitkuli, 2kms from Inskip X-Road, Bonny Highway. Ph:7989589526, 7688811638. (HYCL/2122/C00013)

Y.T.DA APPROVED Open Plots On Warangal Highway, @Bhongir Opposite Collectorate Office Close to N.H & Bhongir Town. 14,999/- Per sq.yard. With All Developments. Ph:9247716214. (HYCL/2021/C03510)

PATANCHEVU-SULTANPUR HMDA Approved Layout, LP No.9911451045/Ph:9247716211 Near to Miyapur, Chandanagar, BHEL Bank. Loan Available. Ph:8688023402/ 8688021020 (HYCL/2122/C00032)

FOR SALE 900sqyards (167sqyards- 300 & 283sq-yards -2nos) HMDA approved 3-side road, corner plots east- and west-facing at Apple County, Chatanpally Village, Shadnagar Municipality, Faroonaqar Mandal, Ranga Reddy District. No Brokers. Contact: 9912514937. (HYMM/2122/C00003)

NEAR ECI, Damaiguda, Nagaram X Roads and RLNagar Open Plots for Sale in Gated & Non Gated Community. www.happyhomeshyderabad.com. Ph:772999728 & 772999732. (S/2021/C02793)

CHERILAPALLY, READY to Occupy 3BHK flats half in Gated Community with Clubhouse & Swimming Pool. Gst. MMST. Must. Seal Just. Rs.3.74/- per sft. Call: 950220071. (S/2122/C00003)

SHANTHOSHI NAGAR G-5 Building 11th floor, inclining platform. New construction with open car park area for Commercial Lease. Owaisi Hospital 400mts, IS Sadan 150mts. Main Road 50mts. Ideal for Colleges Schools Office Spaces Backend offices for Corporate & Banks. Ph:9849254582. (W/2021/A001364)

MAHADIPURAM 400sqft, Office Space with plug and play 45 workstations, 4th floor Available for rent in Ayappa Society 100feet road Uptown Cyberabad Building. Ph:9849051788, 6303656641. (HYMM/2021/C08609)

WEST MARREDPALLY, Above Hemudu Fresh Office space of 700Sft, 1st floor, 10-workstations, pony, partition, attached bathroom, metro 300meters. Contact: 8106883078. (HYMM/2021/C08612)

PRAGATHINAGAR, NIZAMPET Corporation, Commercial Complex 4 Floors, 8000sf. Each Floor 2000sf. 100ft. Mainroad for Rent. Suitable for IT/ Colleges/ Hospitals/ Offices/ Godowns etc. Ph:934851045. (HYCL/2021/C03497)

SAINTHOOSH NAGAR G-5 Building 11th floor, inclining platform. New construction with open car park area for Commercial Lease. Owaisi Hospital 400mts, IS Sadan 150mts. Main Road 50mts. Ideal for Colleges Schools Office Spaces Backend offices for Corporate & Banks. Ph:9849254582. (W/2021/A001364)

MANI THANGAM 400sqft, Office Space with plug and play 45 workstations, 4th floor Available for rent in Ayappa Society 100feet road Uptown Cyberabad Building. Ph:9849051788, 6303656641. (HYMM/2021/C08609)

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DC ESTATE

DECCAN CHRONICLE, HYDERABAD
SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2021

Skies may not limit Vasavi

DC CORRESPONDENT

Hyderabad city, over the past decade, has been going vertical, especially with respect to residential complexes. And dwarfing all that exist in the city, and elsewhere in Telangana, construction of a 44-floor residential towers — Vasavi Sumadhura Olympus — is all set to be announced by Vasavi Group, a 26-year-old construction firm in state.

Led by Vijay Kumar Yerram, the chairman and managing director, Vasavi Group has so far delivered 10 million sq ft of space across the state. Contributing to the company's success are its directors — Abhishek Chanda, Srinivasulu, Chanda Sowmya — who, are all set to contribute to the company's further success, and reach the goal of completing 50 million sq ft by 2030, which will be considered an exceptional achievement by any construction company in Telangana.

Vasavi Group has launched three mega residential towers in one day — a record by any construction company in India. The projects — Vasavi Urban, Vasavi Metropolis and Vasavi Green Leaf — were launched at a top hotel in Hyderabad. It was graced by N.V.S. Reddy, MD, Hyderabad Metro Rail, Anil Kumar IPS, Additional DG, Bonthu Rammohan (former mayor, GHMC) and many eminent personalities.

Vijay Kumar said the Vasavi Group has laid a strong foundation for real estate development in South India. "Our sheer determination to adopt the best technological and sus-



Vijay Kumar Yerram
Abhishek Chanda & Chanda Sowmya



tainable practices, along with maintaining quality standards and on time delivery, has put us in the forefront in the South Indian real estate industry," he said.

Abhishek Chanda, director Vasavi Group, said: "Our company is led by an experienced and energetic board of directors, internationally renowned and certified project consultants, architects and engineers.

We have developed, with our joint venture partners and associates, numerous residential and commercial projects in the past decade."

Among the projects taken up by the group, Vasavi Urban is spread across 17 acres with 3,714 units designed as a 'Budget Friendly' luxury packed gated community.

With 12 towers pro-

viding ultra-modern facilities, it is in close proximity to major destinations in Hyderabad like colleges, bus stations, IT hub, hospitals, railway station, airport, etc. And as part of the 26th anniversary celebrations of Vasavi Group — the company is offering 26 gram (22 carat) pure gold coins to its first 100 customers.

Another project by the company is the Vasavi Metropolis, billed as a luxurious destination on the eastern side of Hyderabad. Located at Uppal — Vasavi

Metropolis, with 2 and 3 BHK flats in three 15-storey towers — it promises 70 per cent open space in the 2.14 acre plot.

Yet another venture of the company is Vasavi Greenleaf, 250 square yard luxury villa plots spread over 64 acres, at Shamirpet.

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SHORT TAKES
KCR forms panel for development of RR, Medchal

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao has constituted a nodal agency headed by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar for the integrated development of Ranga Reddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri districts, which are developing fast and are integrated with the Hyderabad city, and to find permanent solutions to the problems faced by the districts.

The CM said that all the Assembly segments, municipalities and other important towns under these districts jurisdiction, construction of integrated vegetarian and non-vegetarian markets, town halls, laying of roads, developing the infrastructure like power, drinking water, cleanliness, repairing of the sewerages and drainages, finding a permanent solution to the traffic, floodwater submerging of areas under flood water etc. are to be taken-up.

The Chief Minister instructed the CS to meet local ministers, MLAs, MLCs and officials of the departments concerned to develop a plan. He was speaking at a review meeting on Friday at Pragathi Bhavan on the two districts.

"To keep pace with the changing times and the needs, there is a need to form plans for the integrated development of the municipalities and corporations in these areas," the CM said. "A comprehensive plan should be prepared for the integrated development of these districts along with Hyderabad." The CM advised that public representatives should have at least one meeting per month with the CS. The nodal officer should review the program regularly. The government is ready to provide adequate funds for this, the CM said.

As part of this, the CM said development works should be taken up in all municipalities and municipal corporations in these districts. The CM said all these areas have become a part of Hyderabad and since a lot of people from all over the country are coming here and settling down, plans should be prepared based on the growing needs.

● THE CHIEF Minister instructed the CS to meet local ministers, MLAs, MLCs and officials of the departments concerned to develop a plan. He was speaking at a review meeting on Friday at Pragathi Bhavan on the two districts.

**3 CHILDREN,
3 MEN DROWN IN
GODAVARI RIVER**

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, APRIL 2

Three children and three men drowned while attempting to rescue a child who had ventured deep into the Godavari river at the VIP pushkar ghat at Pochampad in Nizamabad district, near the Sriramsagar Project, on Friday.

According to the police, a large number of devotees throng the ghats for the teppotsavam on Fridays during which they also bathe in the river.

The victims belonged to three families, who had come from Yellamagutta, Dekkampally and Maklur villages of Nizamabad district, for the tonsuring ceremony to a two-year-old boy.

When they were bathing, one of the children went deep inside the water and was struggling to return. The other family members who heard him shouting for help entered into the water to rescue him but drowned in the attempt.

Upon noticing this, locals rushed in saved one child, Ravikanth, 14, but six others—three children and three elders—died drowned. With the help of expert swimmers, the police retrieved bodies from the river.

On learning of the accident, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao expressed shock and grief over the deaths. Calling the incident unfortunate, the CM conveyed his condolences to the members of the bereaved families. Nizamabad MLC K. Kavitha also expressed her condolences to the family members.

The deceased were identified as Bobbilla Srinivas (40), his two children Srikanth (14) and Sidharth (16), native of Yellamagutta, Doddla Raju (24), native of Gudhpura village of Maklur mandal, Suresh (42) and his son Yogesh (16), native of Dekkampally village of Nandipet mandal of Nizamabad district.

The bodies have been sent for the post-mortem investigation. Police has booked a case and begun investigations.

KCR to hold N'Sagar rally

KTR to campaign in April second week, party plans 2-day roadshows

L. VENKAT RAM
REDDY I DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

trict. The CM's approval is awaited.

Nalgonda district incharge minister G. Jagadish Reddy said, "We are ready to hold the CM's meeting any day from the second week."

However, there are doubts over whether the meeting will be held, due to the increasing Coronavirus cases and the Covid-related restrictions on public gather-

● THE CM had avoided campaigning for the Dubbakk Assembly bypoll which the TRS lost to the BJP by a slender margin.

ings until April 30.

Party working president and IT minister K.T. Rama Rao will campaign in the constituency in April second week. Party leaders have planned his road shows for two days

covering all the six mandals of the constituency.

The CM had launched the party's campaign by addressing a huge public meeting in Hattia on February 10. Party leaders want him to address another meeting ahead of polling on April 17.

The CM had avoided campaigning for the Dubbakk Assembly bypoll which the TRS lost to the BJP by a slender margin.

In the meeting held with Nalgonda party leaders in Telangana Bhawan after issuing the B-form to Nomula Bhagat last week, Chandrashekhar Rao had stated that the Dubbakk result would have been different had he campaigned there. He had assured the party leaders that he and Rama Rao would campaign in Nagarjunasagar.

CM RESPONSIBLE FOR DEATH OF YOUTH: DASOJU

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

AICC spokesperson Dr Sravan Dasoju on Friday alleged that the death of Boda Sunil Naik was the TRS government's murder and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao must be held responsible for compelling innocent unemployed youth to die of desperation.

He pointed out that Chandrashekhar Rao had expressed condolences at the drowning of six persons at Pochampad but had not reacted to the death of Sunil, a Lambada unemployed youth. He demanded ex gratia for Sunil's family.

"It's a most unfortunate and a black day in Telangana. Sunil, the son of a Lambada mother, who dreamt of becoming a collector but is going to burial ground just because of blatant failure of KCR and KTR who have been doing politics on the dead bodies of Telangana fighters", Dasoju said. The Congress leader said Koppula Raju and Golla Ganesh had also committed suicide for the same reason in the last 10 days.

AVBP: FILL 1.91 L VACANCIES IN GOVT DEPTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 2

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad demanded that the state government fill the 1.91 lakh vacancies in the government departments immediately. Making the demand, ABVP state secretary Praveen Reddy alleged that the death of Boda Sunil Naik was not a suicide but government murder. The ABVP in a statement accused the government of neglecting unemployed youth, forcing them to take their lives. He said that students were preparing for government jobs for seven years but the government had not considered their requests to fill the vacancies.

The decision to increase the superannuation age of employee was another blow to the students and said it opposed the measure. The ABVP statement also pointed out that universities were struggling with insufficient staff. He demanded that the government release an employment calendar and issue notification for vacancy positions in all government departments.

"My brother tried very hard to get a government job. After completing his graduation in 2016, he applied for many jobs but could not find any. I am working as a private employ-

lace and tried to pacify the villagers but they remained adamant until late in the evening.

Tribal welfare minister Satyavathi Rathod has promised to provide a double bedroom house to the family, a job to one of the family members and ₹1 lakh towards the final rites.

The villagers demanded an written assurance from the collector that KCR was the reason for a death. Job vacancies should be filled to fulfil the Sunil's wishes," Naik said and asked, "The state decided to increase the retirement age from 58 to 61 but what about the lakhs of graduates."

They sat in front of the ambulance on the outskirts of the village and said they would not perform the final rites until they received an assurance from the government regarding job notifications.

District superintendent of police N. Koti Reddy reached the vil-

lage and tried to pacify the villagers but they remained adamant until late in the evening.

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar expressed deep condolence at the death of Kakatiya University student Boda Sunil Naik on Friday. Sanjay visited the Gandhi Hospital mortuary and expressed his condolences to the family members.

Later, speaking to the media, he alleged that it was not suicide but that Sunil "had been murdered by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao and his government." Sanjay demanded that the police file a murder case against the CM for failure to recruit for government jobs.

He asked why the CM had not issued the job notification, and wondered how many students were taking such decision to end their lives. "KCR's family got jobs, rather than students who fought for a separate state," Sanjay said.

He pointed out that no MLA or minister had come to inquire about Sunil's health and treatment. The CM talks of job notifications only during elections, he said. Sanjay asked students not to take their lives. He said the government should honour the wish of Sunil's parents to take his body to Gun Park for tribute to the martyrs.

● HE ASKED why the CM had not issued the job notification, and wondered how many students were taking such decision to end their lives. The state government must immediately announce the job notification as sought by my brother," Srinivas said.

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"After the announcement that the retirement age has been increased, my brother spoke to me and expressed his anguish that there will not be any more job notifications for another three years. My brother wanted the fight for job notification to continue after him. The state government must immediately announce the job notification as sought by my brother," Srinivas said.

babu Naidu tried his best to assert that he is not running away fearing the YSR Congress but only wanted to educate people on what he described as Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's "rule of oppression". The decision, according to party insiders, was a fall-out of the second-rung leaders' reluctance to fund or campaign for the party candidates in the wake of the drubbing in the recently-held gram panchayat and municipal polls.

There will be migration of the party cadre and vote to others, predominantly the Jana Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party combine, which is waiting in the wings to become the alternative political force in the state. Besides, the cadre working hard for the party for the Tirupati Lok Sabha bypoll will get demoralised further. TD president N. Chandra-

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ee. We both were hopeful of the promised 50,000 job notifications by the state government which were never

ever performance, polled 32 per cent in municipalities and 40-45 per cent in some of the corporations," he added.

The TD president citing the YSR Congress' coercion and absence of rule of law as reasons for the boycott also did not go down well in political circles.

"The TD officially announced that they won 40 per cent gram panchayats held on non-party basis and burst crackers at party headquarters. This contradicts the theory of coercion," said a party sympathiser who actively voices TD views on social media. "We should not forget that the party, even in the worst-

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SHORT TAKES
GIRL RETURNING HOME GANGRAPED, ENDS LIFE

Meerut, April 2: A class 10 student committed suicide after she was allegedly abducted and gang-raped while on her way back from a tuition class, police said on Friday.

The girl belonging to a village under the Sardhana Kotwali area consumed poison after returning home on Thursday evening, said police adding she died in the hospital during the treatment.

Meerut's rural superintendent of police Keshav Kumar said four youths were involved in abducting and raping the girl and the police, on the basis of a suicide note left by the girl, have arrested two of the accused and have launched a manhunt to nab two others.

In her suicide note, the girl had named four men, including Lakhan and Vikas from a neighbouring village, besides two others.

Lakhan and Vikas have been arrested while the police are on the lookout for two others, the SP said.

After returning home, she narrated her woes to her parents and consumed some poisonous substance sometime later, prompting her parents to rush her to the SSD Global Hospital in Modipuram, where she died during the treatment.

NIA DETAINS 'MYSTERY WOMAN' SEEN WITH WAZE

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, APRIL 2

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has detained a "mystery woman" who was seen in the CCTV camera of a five-star hotel with Mumbai Police officer Sachin Waze.

The "mystery woman's" angle had emerged in the case on March 25, when CCTV footage of a five-star hotel showed her closely trailing Waze out of the hotel, where he had stayed for at least five days in mid-February.

Waze allegedly entered the hotel in an Innova on February 16 and left on February 20 in a Land Cruiser — both vehicles were later seized by NIA.

The agency was looking for this woman since the time the investigators saw her in CCTV footage. Finally, on Thursday night the NIA traced her location and accosted her at the Mumbai Airport and detained her. Later, a team searched her house in Thane district and was questioning her.

Initial investigation indicated that the woman was allegedly engaged in converting black money into white. According to the NIA, the woman was using currency note counting machines, one of which was found in one of the two Mercedes Benz cars used by Waze. The car was seized last month.

The NIA has claimed that Waze was running an alleged extortion racket from the room in the Nariman Point five-star hotel.

The agency has also claimed that Waze was helping a businessman to resolve some dispute and this person in turn booked the room in this hotel for Waze for 100 days at a cost of ₹12 lakh.

Waze used to check into it using a forged Aadhaar card and the fictitious name Sushant Sadashiv Khamkar. The probe also showed that Waze was operating out of room number 1964 of the hotel.

The booking was done through a travel agent by the businessman and Waze had stayed there in February while reporting for duty at the Crime Branch.

EVM transported in a private car of BJP candidate's wife, stirs violence

EC suspends four polling personnel in Ratabari (SC) for violating EVM transport protocol

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, APRIL 2

The Election Commission on Friday suspended four polling personnel in Ratabari (SC) Assembly constituency after they were found to have violated EVM transport protocol by taking a ride with a polled EVM in a private car, which they only later found belonged to a BJP candidate's wife.

Though the EVMs were found intact, the commission has decided to do a repoll at the polling booth concerned in Ratabari (SC) as precaution. The incident led to violence in Karimganj district.

The presiding officer has also been issued a show-cause notice for violation of the transport protocol and a report on the incident sought from the EC's special observer in Assam.

The polling party, after completion of polling on Thursday, was returning in a convoy escorted by an armed escort.

In all, 1,300 vehicles were returning on the national highway NH8. Combined with the inclement weather, this led to traffic congestion on the highway.

As the relevant polling party was approaching Nilam Bazaar, its vehicle broke down at about 9 pm. Due to the traffic congestion and the prevailing weather condition, the party became detached from the convoy.

The party alighted from the vehicle and called up sector officer Ajoy Sutradhar to apprise him of the snag. While the sector officer was arranging for an alternate vehicle, the polling party decided to arrange a vehicle on its own.

At about 9.20 pm, the polling party hailed a passing vehicle and boarded it along with the EVM and other things without checking the ownership of the vehicle. As reported by the polling party, they moved towards Karimganj and as they reached Kanaishil at about 10 pm, they had to slow down in the traffic. At this point, they were surrounded by a group of about 50 people which started pelting stones at them.

Meanwhile, in an unrelated development, in what may be a major setback for the BJP, its chief campaigner and Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has been banned from campaigning for next 48-hours ahead of the third and final phase of Assembly elections, which are due on Tuesday.

The Prime Minister recollects Dr B R Ambedkar's statement that there was no role for Communism in a democracy. He said Ambedkar went on to say that "communism is like forest fire, it destroys itself and everything. But I tell you that the BJP will stand against trampling of culture."

The Prime Minister said he was happy to be in the land blessed by Lord Ayyappa. "The devotees who come to the hill shrine observe 41 days of penance which makes this place more blessed. Ayyappa has taught us how to do good for all," he said.

Modi attacked the LDF government accusing it of attempting to destroy the culture. "They carried out mischief against the devotees. Instead of welcoming them with flowers,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K. Palaniswami during a public meeting as part of election campaign in support of their NDA alliance candidates ahead of Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, in Madurai on Friday. — PTI

DON'T NEED YOUR ADVICE, DIDI TELLS MODI

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, APRIL 2

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday dared Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to suggest her fighting from another seat in the ongoing Assembly election in the state. Exuding confidence once again of winning from Nandigram, the Trinamul Congress supremo also threatened to blacken his face while asking him to exercise his "control" on Union home minister Amit Shah alleging his provocation behind unrest.

"I do not belong to your party that you can control me and give a suggestion of fighting from another seat in the polls. When I have contested from Nandigram, I will indeed win there and blacken your face. I do not agree to work on your advice. I work on people's advice," Banerjee said at a TMC rally in Dinhata of Coochbehar of North Bengal.

She was replying to Modi's jibe about whether she had plans to fight from another seat in fear of losing in Nandigram to her nemesis Shuvendu Adhikari of the BJP.

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Modi slams LDF govt's stand on Sabarimala issue

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 2

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hit out at CPM-led LDF government in Kerala for what he called beating and harassing Ayyappa devotees during the Sabarimala agitation.

The Prime Minister, who began the last leg of his campaign for the forthcoming Assembly elections in Kerala, addressed a public meeting in Konni constituency in Pathanamthitta district.

Modi began his speech by chanting "Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa" a couple of times.

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● NARENDRA MODI said that the ideology which had been rejected internationally would not be allowed to trample the country's culture.

the devotees were welcomed with lathis as if they were criminals. For decades the Left government is portraying Indian culture in poor light," he said.

The Prime Minister recollects Dr B R Ambedkar's statement that there was no role for Communism in a democracy. He said Ambedkar went on to say that "communism is like forest fire, it destroys itself and everything. But I tell you that the BJP will stand against trampling of culture."

Modi said that the ideology which had been rejected internationally would not be allowed to trample the country's culture.

Taking a dig at the Congress and CPM, he said the political picture in West Bengal was clear to everyone. "Electoral after election, the Congress and left are getting closer. The logical step after such closeness is a full merger of Congress and the Left. They can call the new party CCP (Comrade Congress Party)," he said.

He claimed that the entry of highly respected professionals like "Metroman" E. Sreedharan

was a game changer in Kerala politics. "A man who achieved so much over the years, who made India's progress faster yet preferred BJP as a means to serve society," he said.

Modi said Central government has been implementing schemes to create new fishing harbours and road connectivity between the fishing harbours to the market to enhance income of fishermen.

Referring to the ₹10,900 crore worth production linked incentive (PLI) scheme recently cleared by the Union government to boost Indian brands of food, the Prime Minister hoped that the fishing industry and fish processing units were to gain a lot by this scheme.

Modi came down heavily on the ruling LDF and opposition UDF in Kerala stating that the people

were fed up with the two fronts and wanted BJP's development agenda. "People are telling the UDF and LDF enough is enough. Now they are seeking BJP and NDA's development agenda. They relate to our programmes and policies," he added.

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DMK FRONT IS A DYNASTY CLUB, SAYS MODI

DC CORRESPONDENT KANYAKUMARI, APRIL 2

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused the opposition in the state of reducing itself to a dynasty club when the NDA alliance in the state is focusing on development.

The government at the Centre was working for the welfare of Indians irrespective of their caste and creed, Modi said.

Speaking at a election meeting at Agastheeswaram in Kanyakumari district on Friday, Modi said senior leaders who worked shoulder to shoulder with Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi now feel suffocated because of the presence of the 'newly-minted crown prince'.

"The same is the case with Congress leaders," Modi said referring to the increased role DMK president M.K. Stalin's son Udhayanidhi Stalin plays in the party. "The mood of the people however is against political nepotism and entitlement," the Prime Minister claimed.

Modi accused the Congress-DMK alliance of catering to the welfare of the children and grandchildren of their leaders "while the NDA has been focusing on development and people's welfare".

Kanyakumari being a coastal district which hosts one-third of Tamil Nadu's fishermen population, the Prime Minister enlisted the schemes being implemented under the Pradhan Mantri Maysya Sambada Yojana.

Stating that his government is committed to implementing port-led growth by enhancing cargo handling capacity of the existing ports and creating new ones, Modi said

Central government has been implementing schemes to create new fishing harbours and road connectivity between the fishing harbours to the market to enhance income of fishermen.

Referring to the ₹10,900 crore worth production linked incentive (PLI) scheme recently cleared by the Union government to boost Indian brands of food, the Prime Minister hoped that the fishing industry and fish processing units were to gain a lot by this scheme.

In its strongest statement yet on the situation in Myanmar, India on Friday said "condemns any use of violence", stands for the "rule of law" and "restoration of democracy" there, even as it urged the release of political prisoners" by the ruling military junta there which had seized power in a coup two months ago.

India said it was engaged in an effort to play a "balanced and constructive role" in response to the current situation in the north-eastern neighbouring country.

On the Indian Defence Attaché in Myanmar recently attending an armed forces function of the ruling Military Junta, New Delhi said Indian diplomats "continue to discharge their regular diplomatic responsibilities" and that "nothing more should be read into this attending of event by our defence attaché".

INDIA CONDEMNS USE OF VIOLENCE IN MYANMAR

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

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2 militants killed in encounter in J&K

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, APRIL 2

agencies on us. We cannot be threatened to remain at home," he told the election meeting. He said he had learnt that the raid was conducted with some 100 police personnel providing protection to the I-T team.

In a message to his cadre, Stalin urged them not to lose focus on the elections. He asked them not be distracted by the raids and other false propaganda by the rivals, including the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi who was scheduled to campaign in Assam throughout the day on Friday had to cancel her public meetings at the last moment after her husband Robert Vadra tested positive for Covid-19.

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DECCAN Chronicle

3 APRIL 2021

South India is different: Hopes rest on Left, DMK

Situated as they are in the peninsula, the southernmost states of India — Tamil Nadu and Kerala — go to the polls on Tuesday (April 6) to face another litmus test of their political insularity that has been instrumental in keeping national parties out or largely marginalised their roles in alliances dominated by powerful regional forces. While the Congress, facing an existential threat, is hoping to be a force to be reckoned with in Kerala while leading the LDF against the UDF, the BJP is piggybacking on the remnants of Jayalalithaa's AIADMK with the hope of gaining a foothold in the deep south.

The smaller Union territory of Puducherry, till recently ruled by Congress before it was displaced by defections engineered from the national capital, might still be the exception to the formidable image of a southern bulwark against the national ruling party since BJP has aligned with N. Rangasamy's AIINRC and AIADMK.

Puducherry, till recently ruled by Congress, might still be the exception to the formidable image of a southern bulwark against the national ruling party since BJP has aligned with N. Rangasamy's AIINRC and AIADMK

The former CM may be riding a wave of popular support in the wake of a near five-year misrule marked by innumerable governance issues in an awkward fight with Raj Niwas, invariably seen as a symbol of the capital's control freak nature.

In the absence of a conspicuous anti-incumbency wave in Tamil Nadu, the ruling AIADMK, led by CM Edappadi Palaniswami who has performed as an efficient administrator, including in the battle against Covid-19, may have begun to feel the campaign burden of carrying the BJP on its shoulders. It is the absence of the charismatic leader Jayalalithaa, who had foreseen allies in 2016 to emulate her mentor MGR in scoring a second successive victory to a "Lady versus Modi" campaign theme, which may weigh heavily against AIADMK.

The other Dravidian major DMK has similarly reduced the seats for the Congress in its alliance of Tamil forces aiming to recapture Fort St George. An assertion of a Tamil identity might see red over the income tax raids, conducted mostly against the Opposition parties and suggesting the misuse of central agencies in a battle for votes. A preference to place M.K. Stalin, who had stayed in his father Karunanidhi's shadow for decades on end, on the seat of power seemed well-indicated in popularity polls till A. Raja's indiscretion changed things somewhat.

A campaign that was running smoothly enough on promises to keep the State out of NEET, fight CAA imposition as it is symbolic of a law being thrust by the Union against people's wishes and such issues may have been marginally affected by Mr Raja's references to the CM's late mother. The CM milked it for sympathy dramatically as any seasoned politician would. The larger theme of this being another prestige fight between two Dravidian majors who have given Tamil Nadu a unique outlier status in national politics was still dominant.

The Congress' fight to stay relevant in the South might hinge on a good performance from DMK+ as the prospects of the LDF benefiting from Kerala historical plumping for the alternative in five-year cycles may be denied by the impressive record of CM Pinarayi Vijayan who has steered the government with a focus on the people's welfare. The fickle nature of voters' behaviour at the EVM notwithstanding, it does appear the South India is ready to show once again that it is a different world.

Right honour, wrong timing

There is no doubt that actor Rajinikanth deserves the Dadasaheb Phalke award for his rich repertoire of celluloid marvels. He is one artist in India whose fan following is so phenomenal that even now he is an artiste much sought after in the industry. Besides, his has been a spectacular journey of 45 years in filmdom. Starting as an anti-hero, he moved up the ladder step by step to touch the pinnacle of stardom with absolute grace.

If the award gave rise to some doubts, it was in the timing of the announcement. And in no way can one blame Rajinikanth for the scepticism that descended on the state. The time chosen by the BJP government to announce a momentous decision like this was monumentally flawed. You do not proclaim an admiration for an artiste's greatness out of the blue when the state is in the throes of a bitterly fought election. And that when the superstar had distanced himself from the humdrum of the same election quite consciously. So many saw a crass political motive behind the BJP government's apparent recognition of Rajinikanth's cinematic talents and contribution.

Was it all aimed at influencing the voters of Tamil Nadu, particularly those who love Rajinikanth and his films, in favour of the ruling dispensation? Did the poor crowds that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other upcountry BJP honchos drew during their campaign prompt the ruling party at the Centre to come up with an idea as brilliant as handing over a prestigious award lying in their kitty to Rajinikanth? Or did it suddenly dawn on them that there is an actor in Tamil hinterland waiting to be honoured? Whatever it was, people in Tamil Nadu congratulated their superstar from the depth of their hearts before moving on to vote for the party and leader of their own choice.

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Farrukh
Dhondy
**Cabbages &
Kings**



"All things vile and murderous
Bacteria great and small
Sent to plague and burden us.
The Lord God made them all."

The Covid 19 Virus
The mutant RNA
Sent to kill or mire us
The Lord God at his play?"

— From The Waist Band by
Bachchoo

Signs of hope in UK's Batley, as teacher triggers extremist calls

Living in Britain all these decades, I hadn't heard of the West Yorkshire town of Batley. It's now very much in the news and in the public eye because in its grammar school a teacher brought cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, first published in the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, and displayed them to his pupils in a lesson about free speech. Without referring to Google or an atlas, I can confidently say that Batley sounds to me what one may call a mill-and-mosque town.

This definition arises from the fact that after the Second World War, the textile mills of the north of England suffered a shortage of indigenous labour and imported immigrants, in

very large number from Mirpur in "Pakistani" Kashmir and from what later became Bangladesh, to man the night shifts and settle in these towns. Thence the mosques and religion in these communities as a central, motivating and governing dimension.

Then came the government of "Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher, which, in its thrust towards capitalistic globalisation, allowed international competition to shut down the British textile industry and devastate the coal mining sector. Bradford, Huddersfield and of course Batley suffered mass unemployment. But despite that disastrous setback four decades ago, this week's news about the protests outside the school have made public two facts which I find curious, if not encouraging.

But first, gentle reader, the story as it happened. A teacher in his late twenties, teaching religious studies to the 690 pupils of the school, warned a class that he was going to pose a moral question. He would show them a cartoon which some people would certainly find offensive. He would then tell them that because of that cartoon several people associated with the drawing of it and publishing it in a French magazine were murdered. The question

the pupils had to address was the moral rights and wrongs, the religious taboo on drawing pictures of the Prophet and the contrasting morality of murdering people who had perpetrated the cartoon.

This teacher was aware of the fact that Batley, just outside Bradford, had witnessed large-scale protests and book burnings in support of the Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie's book The Satanic Verses. Some of the 13- and 14-year-old pupils told their parents about the lesson. An irate Muslim parent expressed his objections on the phone to the teacher. Soon there was a demonstration of 50 or so people outside the school.

The headmaster immediately suspended the teacher involved. Reports said the teacher felt threatened, apologised for showing the cartoon and went into hiding to avoid being confronted or even killed.

One of the leaders of the protests, a "preacher" named Mohammed Amin Pandor, called for the dismissal of the teacher from the school and the profession. This gentleman, Pandor, is a publicity seeker. He is a graduate engineer from Dewsbury and recently issued a fatwa against the Covid-19 vaccine. He said there

were "uncertain substances in the vaccines" and that "Allah has given a definite remedy for safety from every form of harm and disease". He urged his followers to shun the vaccine and recite a certain prayer three times. In 2017, Pandor accused Ephraim Mervis, the UK's chief rabbi, of telling Jews that it was permissible to turn Christians and Muslims into sex slaves! This year he was forced to apologise to Mervis for that offensive falsehood.

Pandor has made it known in television interviews that he opposes gay marriage and even demands that the popular TV programme Strictly Come Dancing be banned. He signed a letter to the newspapers attacking an article by a Muslim police commander which was headlined "We must reclaim Islam from the extremists" and declared himself in favour of this extremism.

While the protesters insist that they will continue to picket the school until the offending teacher is permanently dismissed and even barred from the profession, over 60,000 signatures have been collected in Batley for his immediate reinstatement.

I have no way of knowing who these signatories are, their location

or their religion. Are they all non-Muslims? Or are some of them Muslims who want to reclaim Islam from the extremists?

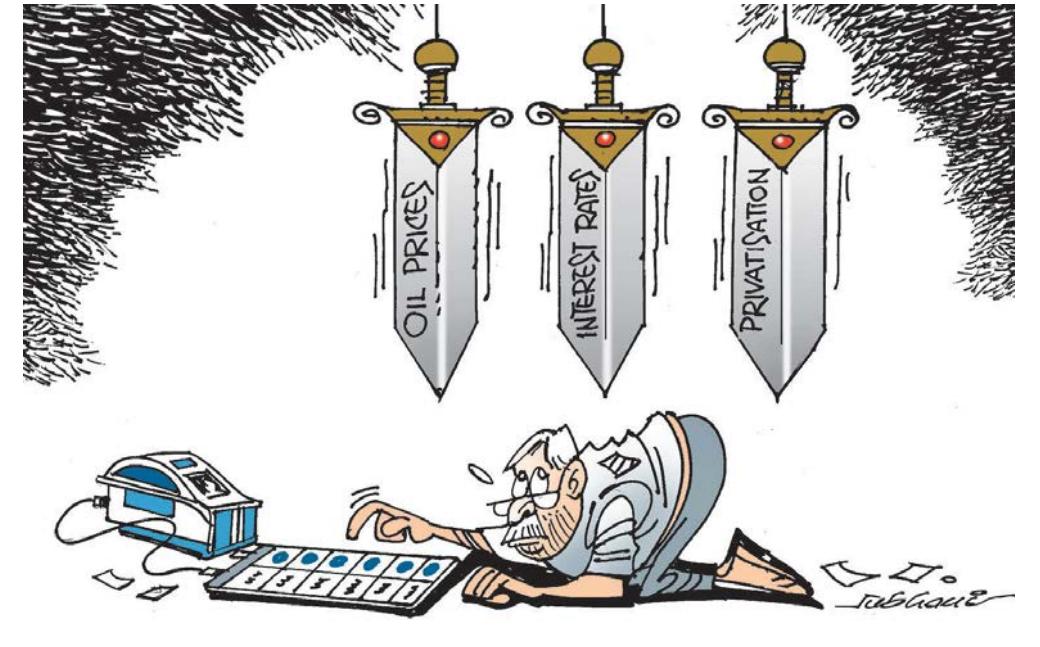
The encouraging, if curious, fact is that of the 690 pupils of Batley Grammar, 420 or so of them are "of ethnic origin". This means that the children and mostly grandchildren of the original, mostly Muslim, immigrants to Batley and Bradford have achieved the academic qualifications to gain competitive entry into this grammar school, that was founded in 1612. It implies that they are on their way to university and are guaranteed status in Britain's meritocracy.

Now 600 of the school's pupils have signed a petition in support of reinstating the offending teacher. Even if all the "non-ethnic or non-Muslim" third of the school's pupils have all signed, it still means that 330 of the "ethnic" pupils, certainly at least 300 of them from Muslim households, have taken a "liberal" attitude to the incident and the supposed offence.

Can we conclude that this generation of Batley Muslims are moving away from the extremism that their parents or grandparents clung to?

Pandor Saheb, the tide of tolerance threatens.

Subhani



Will Didi's 'dadagiri' or BJP's 'dhanda' win Bong hearts?



Shobhaa De

When Didi needs funds, she doesn't waste a moment on these fine people — she goes straight to those who have the requisite lolly — the Marwaris of Kolkata. They are a pretty canny lot, and far from 'emotional'...

ed lawns. They have zero idea about the "other" reality. Till the shoe pinches, of course. So far, their pedicured toes have been spared. The reason being simple — these relics really don't matter to any political party! For all their inflated egos and self-importance, even Didi knows she doesn't need to court this lot.

Besides, as the Next Gen figured ages ago, these old stodgy families who go on and on about "class" — may have their comical version of "class", but no money!

They're broke! Most of them ran out of dosh two generations ago. When Didi needs funds, she doesn't waste a moment on these fine people — she goes straight to those who have the requisite lolly — the Marwaris of Kolkata. They are a pretty canny lot, and far from "emotional" Bengal!

One has to understand the emotional quotient of the Bengali to figure out why self-punishment seems to hold such an appeal! There is not such creature as an "unemotional" Bengal! Anything can trigger off a dramatic and exaggerated outburst. Mamata Banerjee is the queen of histrionics — she knows exactly which buttons to press and when. Her timing is unbeatable and when she throws one of her infamous, mother of all public fits — wow! Playing to the galleries comes naturally to Didi — she revels in high decibel acts during which she attacks opponents using offensive, crass street language — the kind lapped up by her loyal constituency. Didi cares a flying eff for what the bhadralok intellectuals make of her low-level barbs. They can sniff and snort derisively for all she cares — she knows those lofty men and women are not her core supporters. She probably consoles herself at such rare moments of self-doubt, with the thought that they could not be Amit Shah/BJP fans either! Which may be about right!

The club "kaalture" in Kolkata is unique and specific — the members are mainly antiquated boxwallahs desperately hanging on to vestiges of the Raj, while sipping gimlets on the well-tended lawns a day to win over a large and influential Muslim votebank. But it is really the clandestine money deals, that have already been brokered (according to those who claim to be in the know!), which will be the significant game changers in this bloody battle. It's all about "bijness" and "dhanda" — something the bhadralok Bong-Bongs have still to master. Till the results in May just keep watching the khela!

Readers can send feedback to www.shobhaade.blogspot.com

LETTERS

RAJINIKANT AWARD

The choice of Dadasaheb Phake award seems politically biased. Rajinikanth's tilt towards the BJP in recent times seems to be the catalyst for his success when many other stars deserve the award.

P.R. Ravinder
Hyderabad

Actor Rajinikanth deserves the Dadasaheb award. However, many feel the industry has not fully used his talent and popularity. To say the timing of the award during the elections has exposed the real intentions of the Centre is to state the obvious.

M. Somasekhar Prasad
Hyderabad

I just want to know if the award is to get his fans and first-time voters to vote for the AIADMK-BJP alliance and not an "oversight". Can we expect a one-liner from Rajini similar to what he gave against Jayalalithaa that tilted the scale in favour of the DMK-TMC (Tamil Maanil Congress).

N.S. Rajan
Hyderabad

GST COLLECTIONS

It is really good to know the GST collections for March has touched an all time high of ₹1.23 lakh crore. It raises a sense of hope for small retailers like us who are still struggling to recover in spite of a year gone by without any relief from the government. No relief from rents in lockdown, no relief on bank loan interest. The only relief is the feel good factor of tax collections.

Lai Melwani
Hyderabad

BJYM CADRE

We have plenty of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha cadre and are saturated. We don't need more of them (*Don't need cadre who fear police cases: Bandi, DC, April 2*).

Prasad E.
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

PM vows job-oriented productive schemes

NEW DELHI, April 2 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said in the Lok Sabha today that employment creation would be the first priority of her Government. All resources will be channelised to further investment activity in the public sector.

51 KILLED AS TRAIN DERAILS INSIDE TUNNEL IN TAIWAN

Hualien, Taiwan: At least 51 people were killed in Taiwan on Friday when a packed train collided with a vehicle on the tracks and then derailed inside a tunnel, in the island's worst railway accident in decades. Officials said the dev-

astating collision was caused by a railway maintenance vehicle which slipped down an embankment above the tracks and then derailed inside a tunnel, in the island's worst railway accident in decades. ("The driver) was suspected of not pulling the parking brake tight enough so the vehicle slid 20

UKRAINE SAYS RUSSIA MASSING ITS SOLDIERS

Kiev, April 2: President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Moscow of building up troops on Ukraine's border and his top ministers discussed the escalating security situation with Western allies.

He spoke after Ukrainian and US officials this week reported Russian troop movement in annexed Crimea and on the Russian-Ukrainian border, near territories controlled by Moscow-backed separatists.

"Muscle-flexing in the form of military exercises and possible provocations along the border are traditional Russian games," Zelensky said in a statement.

He accused Moscow of seeking to create "a threatening atmosphere" as Kiev hopes to resume a ceasefire brokered last year. This week, Moscow and Kiev blamed each other for a rise in violence between government forces and Kremlin-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, which has undermined the ceasefire.

Zelensky said 20 Ukrainian servicemen had been killed and 57 wounded since the start of the year. The military announced Thursday that a Ukrainian soldier was wounded in an attack it blamed on separatists.

On Thursday, US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin called his Ukrainian counterpart Andriy Taran, the Ukrainian ministry said, adding that Washington said it would "not leave Ukraine alone in the event of escalating Russian aggression". — AFP

SOUTH AMERICA INTENSIFIES TRAVEL CURBS

Santiago, April 2: South American nations severely tightened Coronavirus travel curbs including shutting their borders with Brazil, where infections are spiralling, as the WHO slammed Europe's "unacceptably slow" vaccine rollout.

Many European Union nations are reeling from dramatic spikes in cases that have forced the reimposition of unpopular restrictions, including in Belgium where police used water cannon to disperse thousands who had gathered in violation of Covid-19 rules.

Spikes in South America have reached alarming levels, fuelled by a more contagious variant first detected in Brazil, as Chile closed all borders, Bolivia sealed its frontier with Brazil, and Peru went into a lockdown over Easter.

"We are in a very critical moment of the pandemic," Chilean government spokesman Jaime Bellolio said on Thursday, as the nation announced a border closure starting Monday. Intensive care units in Chile are close to capacity, and authorities are trying to speed up vaccinations in a bid to stem the spread of Covid-19. Neighboring Peru started a four-day national lockdown for the Easter weekend as it recorded its highest number of new cases since the start of the pandemic.

The country has a ban in place on all flights from Brazil, Britain and South Africa until April 15 to try and keep out the variants first detected there. Ecuador's president also announced fresh curbs against an outbreak he described as a "public calamity". — AFP

INDIA'S BIGGEST UNDERCOVER OPERATION

WILD DOG

WRITER - DIRECTOR AHISHOR SOLOMON
PRODUCERS NIRANJAN REDDY, ANVESH REDDY

CO-PRODUCERS N M PASHA, JAGAN MOHAN VANCHI MUSIC THAMAN S DOP SHANEIL DEO ACTION SHAM KAUSHAL & DAVID ISMALONE

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STUNT COORDINATOR JASHUVA VFX SUPERVISOR YUGANDHART PRO VAMSISHEKAR PUBLICITY DESIGNS ANIL&BHANU

POWER STAR

PRODUCED BY RAJU - SHRISH

WRITER & DIRECTOR SRIRAM VENU

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POWER STAR

PROD

KING NAGARJUNA'S BLOCKBUSTER

INDIA'S BIGGEST UNDERCOVER OPERATION

Just watched Wild Dog. It's an edge of the seat thriller. A nice gem from Telugu Cinema, that will make us proud.
- Sankalp Director - GHAZI, ANTARIKSHAM

I enjoyed watching Wild Dog. It is very gripping. Couldn't take my eyes off the screen. Never seen this side of Nagarjuna Sir. He is at another level in this film.
- Ravikanti Perepu Director - KSHANAM, KRISHNA AND HIS LEELA

An out of the box script with edge of the seat action sequences. The film has been made with utmost sincerity and dedication.
- Swaroop RSJ Director - AGENT SAI SRINIVAS ATHREYA

WILD DOG

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

SHANTI 70MM
11.00am, 2.15, 6.00, 9.15pm

ARJUN 70MM
11.30am, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30pm

KONARK 70MM
11.15am, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15pm

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

INDRA VENKATARAMANA
11.15am, 2.15, 6.00, 9.30pm

MANJU 70MM
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

RAMAKRISHNA 35
11.30, 2.30, 6.00, 9.15

SHARADA 70MM
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

GOKUL 70MM
11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15

SENSATION INSOMNIA
11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30

VYJAYANTHI 70
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

VIJETHA 70MM
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

BR HITECH 70
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

SV CINESQUARE
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

SRI PREMA 70
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

ASIAN SWAPNA
11.15, 2.15, 6.00, 9.00

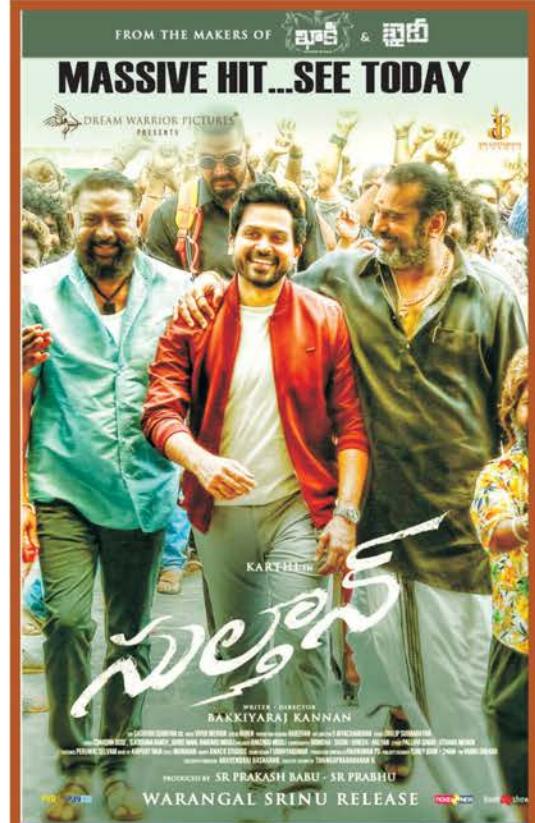
JAGDAMBA 70
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

JYOTHI IDA BOLARAM
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

MAHESHWARI
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

VENKATESHWARA
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

ASIAN MUKUND
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00



FROM THE MAKERS OF **Dejavu** & **Dejavu**
MASSIVE HIT...SEE TODAY

DREAM WARRIOR PICTURES PRESENTS

KARTHI IN **Dejavu** DIRECTED BY BAKTHYAR KANNAN

PRODUCTION: SR. PRakash Baru - SR. Prabhu
WARANGAL SRINU RELEASE

DEVI 70MM-RTC X ROADS
ENJOY 4K LASER PROJECTION & DOLBY ATMOS SOUND SYSTEM

11.00, 2.15, 6.00, 9.00

BRAMARAMBA 70MM
11.30, 2.45, 6.30, 9.45

RAJADHANI COMPLEX
11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15

SRIRAMULU 70MM
11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30PM

LAXMIKALACINEPRIDE
11.15, 6.00PM(2 SHOWS)

OAMB 10.15, 1.20, 4.15, 7.15, 10.05

PRASAD'S Multiplex
8.45, 11.45, 5.15, 7.30, 10.45PM

O ASIAN CINEMAS

Radhika-10.30, 7.35, 10.35PM

MCUBE-10.30, 1.30, 4.30, 7.35, 10.40PM

Cinesquare-10.35, 1.35, 4.35, 7.35, 10.40

GPR-10.40, 4.10, 7.30, 10.35PM

Sivaganga-11.15, 6.15PM

Sha Complex-11.00, 6.00PM

MJR Square-10.40, 1.40, 7.40, 10.40PM

TIVOLI 11.00, 1.45, 4.45, 10.20PM

PVR CINEMAS

Central-10.20, 4.45, 7.00, 10.20PM

Inorbit-10.00, 1.00, 4.20, 7.40, 11.00PM

Galleria-10.30, 1.00, 4.20, 7.40, 11.00PM

Tamil Version: 01.50pm

RK PLEX-10.15, 4.20, 7.40, 11.00PM

Irrummanzil-12.00, 3.20, 4.05, 6.40, 10.00

Hitech-12.00, 3.20, 4.25, 6.40, 10.00PM

Musarabagh-12.50, 3.05, 4.10, 7.30, 10.50

Forum-10.00, 1.00, 4.20, 7.15, 7.40, 11.00

Tamil: 10.40AM, 10.30AM

Preston: 12.30, 3.10, 6.30, 9.50PM

PLATINUM 10.40, 1.40, 4.10, 7.30, 10.30PM

PLATINUM-GACHIBOWLI 7.40, 11.00PM

PLATINUM-GACHIBOWLI 10.00, 12.00, 5.10, 7.40, 10.45PM

PLATINUM-GACHIBOWLI WHERE CINEMA MEETS LUXURY

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INDICATORS %

		%
Sensex	50,029.83	1.05
Nifty 50	14,867.40	1.20
S&P 500*	4,019.87	1.18
Dollar (\$)	73.11	0.01
Pound Sterling (\$)	101.03	-0.26
Euro (\$)	85.99	-0.25
Gold (10gm)* (\$)	44,701▲881	1.97
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	64.00	2.01
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.177	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.679	-0.067

* As of 8:30 PM/Thursday

IndiGo launches door-to-door baggage service

IndiGo said it has launched a door-to-door baggage transfer service in Delhi and Hyderabad in which customer luggage gets securely picked and transported from the first to the last destination. The airline said it will later launch the facility called '6EBagport', in partnership with CarterPorter, in Mumbai and Bengaluru. The facility includes a service insurance of Rs 5,000 per baggage item for the contents and container.

Suzuki Motor Gujarat's 3rd plant starts production



Suzuki Motor Gujarat Pvt Ltd (SMG), a 100 per cent subsidiary of Japan's Suzuki Motor Corporation, has commenced production from third unit at its Ahmedabad-based manufacturing facility. SMG has started production from April 2021, Maruti Suzuki India said in a filing. With production starting at the Plant C, which has an annual production ability of 2.5 lakh units, the total ability of SMG will be 7.5 lakh units, it added.

Construction of highways at record 37 km/day

Union minister Nitin Gadkari has said the pace of highways construction has touched a record 37 km per day in 2020-21. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has constructed 13,394 km of highways in 2020-21. Gadkari said these "achievements are unprecedented and have no parallel in any other country in the world". He said over the past seven years, the length of NH has gone up by 50 per cent.

ANG Lifesciences India acquires Mansa Print

ANG Lifesciences India Ltd said it has acquired Mansa Print & Publishers Ltd, which has undergone corporate insolvency resolution plan, as part of its strategic backward integration. Located at Baddi in HP, Mansa is engaged in printing and packaging business covering packaging products like cartons, corrugated boxes and aluminium foil. "The packaging cost in formulation segment is almost 15-20 per cent of the cost," it said.

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■ Q4 imports jump 159% to 321 tonne Gold imports hit record in March

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, APRIL 2

Gold imports in March touched a record 160 tonnes, surging 471 per cent compared to the same month last year. Imports in the March quarter were up by 159 per cent, as demand for the metal went up with the correction in prices.

Lower gold prices saw increased stocking up as well as retail buying, leading to imports going up to 160 tonnes last month, a Reuters report said. Value-wise, March imports grew multi-fold to \$8.4 billion from \$1.23 billion a year ago.

Even during pre-pandemic times, usual monthly imports range between 60 and 80 tonnes.

According to Soma Sundaram P.R., managing director, World Gold Council India, imports closer to 160 tonnes has been happening at the jeweller level. Investment demand has been already high during the March quarter.

The March quarter too saw a record import of 321 tonne, which was 159 per cent higher than 124 tonnes imported in the same quarter last year.



much of it is done," he said.

According to him, price correction from the all-time high levels in August and stability in prices for some time helped gold buying.

Gold prices have dropped more than 15 per cent from their highs.

Further, stocking up for Akshaya Tritiya has been happening at the jeweller level. Investment demand has been already high during the March quarter.

The March quarter too saw a record import of 321 tonne, which was 159 per cent higher than 124 tonnes imported in the same quarter last year.

Gold imports were 72 per cent higher in volume and 154 per cent in value during January and imports were 124 per cent up in value terms in February as well.

In February, the government had slashed import duty on gold to 10.75 per cent from 12.5 per cent. This also supported gold buying. Gold was trading at a premium in March, indicating higher demand in the market.

However, post Akshaya Tritiya, the demand in the retail market is likely to be lower and this could bring down the imports in April.

India imports more than 80 per cent of its oil needs and relies heavily on the Middle East.

Indian refiners could not cut April oil imports from Saudi Arabia as nominations were placed before the Opec+ decision in early March, the sources said, adding that plans for May were preliminary and final May nominations would be known in early April.

Oil price: Govt escalates stand-off with Saudi

NIDHI VERMA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

Indian state refiners are planning to cut oil imports from Saudi Arabia by about a quarter in May, in an escalating stand-off with Riyadh following Opec's decision to ignore calls from New Delhi to help the global economy with higher supply.

Two sources familiar with the discussions said the move was part of the government's drive to cut dependence on crude from the Middle East.

Indian Oil Corp, Bharat Petroleum Corp, Hindustan Petroleum Corp and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd are preparing to lift about 10.8 million barrels in May, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

State refiners, which control about 60 per cent of India's 5 million barrels per day (bpd) refining capacity, together import an average 14.7-14.8 million barrels of Saudi oil in a month, the sources said.

India imports more than 80 per cent of its oil needs and relies heavily on the Middle East.

Indian refiners could not cut April oil imports from Saudi Arabia as nominations were placed before the Opec+ decision in early March, the sources said, adding that plans for May were preliminary and final May nominations would be known in early April.

—Reuters

MFs turn equity buyers after nine-month gap

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, APRIL 2

After nine months of profit-taking, mutual funds have turned net investors in the equity market in March.

Mutual funds were net buyers of equities by Rs 2,476.45 crore last month, according to data from the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

This trend reversal augurs well for the equity market, now largely supported by foreign portfolio investors and other domestic institutions like insurance, pension funds and banks.

MFs were net sellers by a humble amount of Rs 50.50 crore in equities in June 2020, but as redemptions from equity-oriented funds picked up pace from the second half of the year over the sharp market rally, they began



to offload equity assets worth above Rs 9,000 crore every month from July onwards.

Barring September (-Rs 4,134.37 crore), redemptions began to rise month by month—October (-Rs 14,491 crore), November (-Rs 30,760.07 crore), July (-Rs 31,897.85 crore), August (-Rs 25,780.28 crore), September (-Rs 17,004.97 crore), October (-Rs 31,975.11 crore), November (-Rs 20,349.35 crore), December (-Rs 23,368.42 crore).

Debt investments by MFs moderated in January (Rs 11,831.74 crore) and February (Rs 8161.78 crore).

MURTHY'S CATAMARAN IN TALKS TO INVEST IN UDAAN

New Delhi, April 2: Catamaran Ventures, the private investment firm of Infosys' co-founder N. R. Narayana Murthy, is in talks to invest in B2B e-commerce platform Udaan, sources said.

Catamaran is looking at investing about Rs 80-100

crore in Udaan, and the transaction will be made through a secondary route by purchasing employees' stocks, the sources close to the development said.

In January, Udaan raised \$280 million (about Rs 2,048 crore) in funding from investors, including

Lightspeed Venture Partners, Tencent, DST Global, GGV Capital, Altimeter Capital, Octahedron Capital and Moonstone Capital. The company, which has raised \$1.15 billion in total till date, was valued at over \$3 billion post transaction.

E-way bills touch new high in March

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, APRIL 2

Around 7.12 crore e-way bills were issued in March, the highest monthly generation since its introduction in 2018.

The monthly issuance of 7.12 crore was 75 per cent higher than 4.06 crore issued in the same month last year and 11.5 per cent higher than 6.38 crore in February 2021. On March 24, 2021 alone, 27.86 lakh e-way bills were generated, which was the highest in a day in the last three years.

E-way bills had seen their lowest generation in May 2020 at 2.51 lakh. Even in April, only 84.53 lakh bills were issued. However, by June e-way bills had moved up above one crore.

Data on movement of goods on National Highways, as indicated by the FASTag and E-way bill volumes, recovered to pre-pandemic levels in September 2020. Since then, the bills have remained higher than the year-ago months.

In 2020-21, a total of 61.7

No plans to exit India biz: Franklin Templeton



New Delhi, April 2: Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund on Friday said its commitment to India remains 'steadfast' and the fund house has no plans to exit its operations in the country.

This comes following media reports suggesting intervention by the fund house's US-headquartered parent seeking the diplomatic route for a 'just and fair' hearing by market regulator Sebi in the investigation pertaining to six wound-up debt schemes.

The reports said Franklin Templeton had threatened to exit India if it was not given a fair hearing.

In a letter to investors, Franklin Templeton Asset Management (India) Pvt Ltd president Sanjay Sapre said, "we have no plans to exit our India business. Any speculation suggesting otherwise, or any rumours around sale of business in India are incorrect and simply that rumours".

He reiterated that Franklin Templeton's commitment to India remains steadfast.

The fund house had closed six of its debt funds in April 2020, citing redemption pressures and lack of liquidity in the bond markets.

These schemes together had an estimated amount of over Rs 25,000 crore assets under management.

In a statement, the fund house on Friday said its six shut schemes have received Rs 15,776 crore from maturities, pre-payments and coupon payments since closing down in April 2020.

"The six schemes have received total cash flows of Rs 15,776 crore till March 31, 2021 from maturities, coupons and prepayments since winding up," the fund house.

W. Bengal has highest share of small savings schemes



come a day before the second phase of polling in West Bengal and Assam.

As per the National Savings Institute data, West Bengal has been leader in collections, with around 12.15 per cent share of the total in the last few years.

Other poll-bound states like Assam garnered Rs 9,446.37 crore during 2017-18 (last updated), as per data collated by the National Savings Institute under the finance ministry.

The government on Thursday revoked a steep interest rate cut on small savings schemes announced the previous night.

While the government routinely announces interest rates for small savings schemes at the end of every quarter, Wednesday's decision to cut interest rates by up to 1.1 per cent across various small savings schemes, including Public Provident Fund (PPF) and National Savings Certificate (NSC), had

Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry will be held in a single phase on April 6.

Opposition leaders have expressed apprehension that the rate cut would be imposed once the assembly elections are over.

Taking a dig at finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman after she announced that the government will withdraw orders to cut interest rates on small savings schemes, the Congress on Thursday said one can imagine the functioning of the economy when such a duly approved order affecting crores of people can be issued by an "oversight".

Senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram said when inflation is at about 6 per cent and expected to rise, the BJP government is offering interest rates below 6 per cent, hitting the savers and the middle class below the belt.

The Trinamool Congress also mocked the Centre. Derek O'Brien and Mahua Moitra called it an April's Fool joke.

—PTI

ITR forms notified; option to choose new tax regime

Under the new tax regime, income up to ₹2.5 lakh is exempt from tax. Those earning between ₹2.5 lakh and ₹5 lakh will pay 5 per cent tax

ITR Form 4 (Sugar) are simpler Forms that cater to a large number of small and medium taxpayers.

Sahaj can be filed by an individual having income up to Rs 50 lakh and who receives income from salary and one house property/other sources (interst, etc.)

Similarly, Sugam can be filed by individuals, Hindu Undivided Families and firms (other than Limited Liability Partnerships) having a total income up to Rs 50 lakh and income from business and profession computed under pre-emptive taxation.

Individuals and HUFs not having income from business or profession (and not eligible for filing Sahaj) can file ITR-2, while those having income from business or profession can file ITR Form 3.

Persons other than indi-

vidual, HUF and companies i.e. partnerships, LLP etc, can file ITR Form 5.

Companies can file ITR Form 6. Trusts, political parties, charitable institutions etc. claiming exempt income under the Act can file ITR-7.

For the 2020-21 fiscal, the government had given taxpayers the option to choose a new tax regime under section 115BAC of the I-T Act.

The new I-T slabs will be for individuals not availing or foregoing certain specified deductions or exemptions while computing total income for tax purpose.

Under this, annual income up to Rs 2.5 lakh is exempt from tax. Those individuals earning between Rs 2.5 lakh and Rs 5 lakh will pay 5 per cent tax.

Income between Rs 2.5 and 7.5 lakh will be taxed at 10 per cent, while those between Rs 7.5 and 10 lakh at 15 per cent.

Those earning between Rs 10 and 12.5 lakh will pay tax at the rate of 20 per cent, while those between Rs 12.5 and Rs 15 lakh will pay at the rate of 25 per cent. Income above Rs 15 lakh will be taxed at 30 per cent.

—PTI

Goldman elevates a flurry of female partners

SHORT TAKES



G. Sai Karteek Reddy poses with his trophies in Hyderabad on Friday.

Double delight for Karteek

Hyderabad: G. Sai Karteek Reddy made it a grand double by adding the men's singles title to his doubles trophy won on Thursday at the All India National Ranking Tennis tournament held at Lake View Tennis Academy in Hyderabad.

The Telangana player defeated proved too good for Dheeraj Kodancha in the final, defeating his opponent from Tamil Nadu in straight sets at 6-2, 6-2.

Earlier in the semifinals, Karteek hemmed in Hevanth 6-1, 6-3. In the quarterfinals, Karteek got past Sivadeep Kosaraju with a 7-5, 6-4 scoreline.

The Hyderabad player was stretched in the second round though, and had to come back from behind before overcoming Vineet M 6-7, 6-1, 6-0. The first round against Ajinkya Nanasaheb of Maharashtra was relatively easy as the 6-3, 6-2 suggests.



Manogyna and Pranav champs

Hyderabad: T. Sri Pranav and M. Manogyna emerged boys and girls winners respectively at the AITA Championship Series Under 16 tournament at Sania Mirza Tennis Academy in Murtazaguda, Hyderabad, on Friday.

In the boys final, Pranav prevailed over Chris Hamilton Ross 6-4, 2-6, 6-1 while Manogyna defeated Rithika Kakarlamudi 7-6(7-4), 6-2 in the girls title round.



Nikhil Saridena (left) receives the World Autism Awareness Tennis Tournament winner's trophy from chief guest G. V. Krishna as Sports Village CEO Mohammad Shamsuddin (right) looks on at Noor Tennis Academy in Hyderabad. Nikhil beat Bhavani Kedia 6-4, 7-6 (10-8) in the final.

Rahul, Aditya in joint lead

Hyderabad: Rahul Srivathsav and Aditya Varun Gampa are in joint lead with five points each after the fifth round of the Telangana State Senior Fide Rated Chess Championship being organised by Telangana State Chess Association at Lal Bahadur Stadium here.

Following them are Shaati Majumder, Shambukha Puli, Rajashekhar B, Sushanth Kamabathula, Khire Ishan, Krishna Karthik N, Kheerthi Ganta and Raghav Srivathsav with 4.5 points each.

Fifth round (selected results): Aravind PV (4) lost to Rahul Srivathsav (5), Aditya Varun Gampa (5) bt Sarah Chandra (4), Khire Ishan (4.5) drew with Shambukha Puli (4.5), Shaati Majumder (4.5) drew with Rajashekhar B (4.5), Dhruva Thota (3.5) lost to Raghav Srivathsav (4.5), Teerthal Abhinav (3.5) lost to Keerthi Ganta (4.5).

Live on TV

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Chelsea vs West Brom from 5 pm; Leicester City vs Manchester City from 10 pm; Arsenal vs Liverpool from 12.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1, Star Sports Select 1

Italian League: Torino vs Juventus from 9.30 pm on Sony Ten 2

KNIGHTS GEAR UP

KKR desperate to turn fortunes post tough transition

Kolkata, April 2: Two-time IPL champions Kolkata Knight Riders will be striving for consistency in their bid to recreate old magic which has been lost during a difficult phase of rebuilding after Gautam Gambhir's departure.

Be it the opening combination, middle-order or finding a finisher, KKR struggled for stability in the last edition in the UAE, while a change of captaincy at the halfway stage did not help them either.

Here's is a SWOT analysis of the side that will take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in their season-opener in Chennai on April 11.

STRENGTHS

In Eoin Morgan, his first stint as full-time KKR captain, the Purple Brigade have got one of the most astute brains of the white-ball format.

The English World Cup-winning skipper was one of the bright spots for the team in 2020.

KKR have made some smart additions to their squad in the mini-auction, apart from retaining their core of the side — 17 players — despite a disappointing season.

By bringing back Shakib-Al-Hasan and Ben Cutting, they have got the much-needed back-ups for the Windies duo of Narine and Russell, who failed to fire last season.

KKR will also be buoyed by the smash-hit international debut of Prasidh Krishna, who took 4/54 in the first ODI against England in the recently-concluded series. This would also mean KKR would have a settled pace attack spearheaded by Pat Cummins with Lockie Ferguson as back-up.

WEAKNESSES

Once their strength, KKR of late has struggled in the spin department. Kuldeep Yadav is a shadow of his past and returned with just one wicket in



Dinesh Karthik of Kolkata Knight Riders plays a shot during a net practice session on Thursday ahead of the upcoming edition of Indian Premier League. — Twitter

five matches, of which he was not given the ball in one. One of the architects of their twin triumphs in 2012 and 2014 under Gambhir, Sunil Narine is also floundering. It was another mystery spinner, Varun Chakravarthy a Tamil Nadu architect-turned-cricketeer who took up the responsibility in Narine's absence but his fitness has come under the scanner time and again as it remains to be

seen how he shapes up for the IPL.

OPPORTUNITIES

Having decided to step away from being captain to "focus on his batting", Dinesh Karthik too will look to make amends in 2021. Then there are the seasoned duo of Shakib-Al-Hasan and Harbhajan Singh who too will look to make most of the limited opportunities that come their way on slow tracks on offer in Delhi and

Chennai. KKR have two interesting uncapped new signings in Venkatesh Iyer and Vaibhav Arora, who too will look to grab opportunities.

THREATS

KKR would need good start from opener Shubman Gill to give better starts this year in the Powerplay overs. Gill consumed a lot of deliveries upfront in most games which did create pressure on middle-order. — PTI

Shreyas to be operated on Thursday

Mumbai, April 2: Former India captain and batting icon Sachin Tendulkar has been hospitalised as a precautionary measure, six days after he tested positive for Covid-19.

The 47-year-old took to Twitter to announce the development on Friday.

"Thank you for your wishes and prayers. As a matter of abundant precaution under medical advice, I have been hospitalised. I hope to be back home in a few days. Take care and stay safe everyone,"

— SACHIN TENDULKAR cricket legend

Tendulkar had tested positive for the dreaded infection on March 27 and was in home isolation ever since.

"He is doing fine and has been admitted for normal (course of) treatment," a source close to Tendulkar



— SACHIN TENDULKAR cricket legend

said. The batting great, who was part of India's historic World Cup win in 2011, also wished his teammates on the 10th anniversary of the victory.

"Wishing all Indians & my teammates on the 10th anniversary of our World Cup win," he tweeted.

Besides Tendulkar, former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan, his elder brother Yusuf and S Badrinath — all of whom had recently participated at the Road Safety World Series Challenge — have so far announced that they have tested positive for Covid-19.

Tendulkar had led the Indian team to victory in the veteran's tournament in Raipur where crowds were allowed inside the stadiums. — PTI

brother Yusuf and S Badrinath — all of whom had recently participated at the Road Safety World Series Challenge — have so far announced that they have tested positive for Covid-19.

Tendulkar had led the Indian team to victory in the veteran's tournament in Raipur where crowds were allowed inside the stadiums. — PTI

Four wickets fell for 17 runs. Mohammad Rizwan and Shadab Khan steadied the innings in a partnership of 53 but both were dismissed in the closing overs before Faheem Ashraf hit the winning run off the final ball. — AFP

But South Africa's total of 273 for 6 did not seem enough as Babar and Imam-ul-Haq (70) put on 177 for Pakistan's second wicket, taking them to within 88 runs of victory with 18.2 overs left before Babar was caught behind off Nortje.

BRIEF SCORES

■ South Africa 273 for 6 in 50 overs (Rassie van der Dussen 123 not out, D. Miller 50) lost to Pakistan 274 for 7 in 50 overs (Babar Azam 103, Imam-ul-Haq 70, Mohammad Rizwan 40, Anrich Nortje 4/51).

Centurion (South Africa), April 2: A century by Babar Azam set up a three-wicket, last-ball win for Pakistan in the first One-Day International against South Africa at SuperSport Park in Centurion on Friday.

The Pakistan captain hit a stroke-filled 103 off 104 balls but his dismissal started a collapse in which fast bowler Anrich Nortje took four wickets in four overs.

Rassie van der Dussen hit 123 not out, his maiden international century.

But South Africa's total of 273 for 6 did not seem enough as Babar and Imam-ul-Haq (70) put on 177 for Pakistan's second wicket, taking them to within 88 runs of victory with 18.2 overs left before Babar was caught behind off Nortje.

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Barty on a roll, in Miami final

Miami, April 2: World No.1 Ashleigh Barty bucked the upset trend at the Miami Open on Thursday, rolling into the women's final as men's second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas was toppled by Hubert Hurkacz.

Australia's Barty fired 27 winners in a 6-3, 6-3 victory over fifth-seeded Ukrainian Elina Svitolina to return to the title match of a tournament she won when it was last held in 2019.

Barty will face Canada's Bianca Andreescu, who reached her first final since winning the 2019 US Open title by beating Greece's Maria Sakkari in three sets, 7-6 (9/7), 3-6, 7-6 (7/5).

Barty has gone from strength to strength since saving a match point in her opening victory over Slovakian qualifier Kristina Kučová.

"Every single match I felt like I've done something a little bit better, and that's all you can ask," said Barty.

Just having conversations out here about 'The Hundred', I know that there are Indian cricketers out here who would love to play in The Hundred and other competitions around the world," Morgan told Sky Sports during an interaction but did not take any names.

"They love travelling and experiencing new conditions and cultures, and they would add huge value to a tournament like that," he added.

The Hundred is a franchise-based 100-ball cricket that was supposed to start last year in England. However, the Covid-19 pandemic led to its postponement to this year.

Morgan said the ICC is not doing enough to accommodate the countries which are losing players to private leagues.

"My biggest worry is that the game isn't changing and accommodating the pace at which it is growing. It is definitely an area of concern and one that needs improvement going forward because you play against countries and some aren't able to play their best XIs because they are competing against the big leagues around the world," Morgan told former England skipper Nasser Hussain during the chat.

A week earlier the Caribbean side batted through the last day at the same venue to ensure a draw after being set 375 to win. Now it will be the visitors heading to the final morning at 29 without loss after the opening pair of Lahiru Thirimanne and captain Dimuth Karunaratne navigated nine overs to the close.

For the second time in four years Kraigg Brathwaite missed out on

the rare feat of centuries in both innings of a Test when he was dismissed for 85 as the West Indies skipper was again the fulcrum of his team's second innings effort.

Having occupied the crease for eight-and-a-half hours Brathwaite was more energetic second time around with his team looking to set a declaration.

Nevertheless his five hours at the crease in which he faced 196 balls and struck only four boundaries was again typical of his phlegmatic manner.

BRIEF SCORES

Day 4, stumps: West Indies 354 & 280/4 decl in 72.4 overs (K. Brathwaite 85, J. Holder 71 not out, S. Akmal 2/62) vs Sri Lanka 258 in 107 overs (P. Nissanka 51, K. Roach 3/58).

Windies set 377 for SL on Day 5

North Sound (Antigua and Barbuda), April 2: In an almost exact reversal of roles from the first Test, Sri Lanka will go into the final day of the second and final Test having been set a challenging target of 377 after the West Indies declared their second innings at 280 for four on the fourth day on Thursday.

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