

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SUNDAY 11 | APRIL 2021

## WEATHER



Max: 38°C  
Min: 22°C  
Rainfall: Nil

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Panguni 29  
**Tithi:** Amavasyai  
**Star:** Uthrattathi-Revathi  
**Rahukalam:** 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**Yamagandam:** 12.00 noon to 1.30 pm  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 4.50 am  
**Lunar:** 12.16 pm  
**Asar:** 3.25 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.21 pm  
**Isha:** 7.33 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.33 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.13 AM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 5.46 AM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 6.52 PM**

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+1,52,397)	(+795)
1,33,55,297	1,69,262

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,989)  
TN: 9,26,816 12,886

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

13,56,81,299

DEATHS  
29,33,793

COUNTRIES  
AREAS WITH  
CASES 219

worldometers.info

## New party wins poll in Tripura

**Agartala:** The newly-formed TIPRA, led by former state Congress president Pradyot Kishore Deb Barman, swept the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) elections on Saturday, winning 18 of the 28 seats that went to the polls, official sources said.

The Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance (TIPRA) secured 18 seats, the BJP won nine seats and one seat was bagged by an independent candidate, they said. In the 30-member tribal council, elections were held in 28 seats on Tuesday. Representatives in the remaining two seats will be nominated by the governor on the advice of the state government.

The TTAADC area is two-third of the state territory, and is the home to the tribals, who constitute one-third of Tripura's population. Mr Deb Barman urged his supporters to maintain peace as celebrations broke out with the newly-formed party getting an absolute majority in the elections.

"We have to maintain unity. I appeal to the people to refrain from attacking the party office and houses of the supporters of IPFT, BJP, CPI(M) and Congress."

— PTI

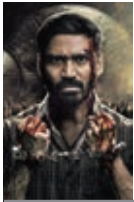
## COUNTER POINT



It is risky to send children to school!

## KARNAN - MOVIE REVIEW | 4

Dhanush elevates this hard hitting socio-political drama



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Kejriwal says lockdown not option

## SPORT | 8

Sunrisers to meet KKR today...



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# TN restricts beach entry, allows more film shows

Prayers at places of worship allowed till normal time

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WITH AGENCY INPUTS  
CHENNAI, APRIL 10

With the pandemic Covid-19 spreading across the state, the Tamil Nadu government on Saturday announced fresh restrictions including banning of entry to the beaches in Chennai and two other nearby districts on weekends and all government holidays. The new measures will be effective from Sunday.

A government order (GO) said beaches in Chennai, Tiruvallur and Chengalpattu districts would be out of bounds for the public on Saturday, Sunday and all other government holidays. Access for public to beaches including the Marina here was allowed last December after a gap of about eight months.

The GO, which outlined fresh restrictions and relaxations, said one additional screening of new movies would be allowed in cinemas during the first week of release, over and above the already permitted four shows. However, seating capacity shall remain restricted at only 50 per cent.

In a fresh relaxation, the government said people could offer prayers in places of worship till their 'usual time' or till 10 pm (the maximum allowed time-limit).

The relaxation follows requests from Muslim bodies seeking extension of time for prayers in view of the holy Ramzan month (April 12-May 12). The government, however, made it clear that there would be



A health worker collects swab sample from a labourer for COVID-19 test, at Koyambedu Vegetable Market in Chennai, Saturday.

— PTI

## Covid tally up 1.45 L, Maha for lockdown

DC CORRESPONDENTS  
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, APRIL 10

In view of rising Covid-19 cases, Maharashtra is all set for a harsher and longer lockdown, the date and time for which is yet to be finalised. During the all-party meeting called by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday, it was decided that a lockdown of minimum one week and maximum 15 days can be imposed to break the chain of transmission of novel coronavirus.

However, a final decision in this regard will be taken in a couple of days

no permission to hold congregations in places of worship and gatherings shall also be not allowed for festivals.

Meanwhile, Greater Chennai Corporation com-

after consulting health experts.

The Centre too is yet to give its nod for such a plan as the Union government had suggested that states go for "micro-level" lockdowns instead of shutting down the entire state. Maharashtra on Saturday reported 55,411 fresh Covid-19 positive cases with 309 deaths.

In a new high, India reported over 1.45 lakh fresh cases of novel coronavirus with 794 deaths in 24 hours on Saturday. Among the latest to catch infection in Maharashtra is RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat.

missioner G Prakash said all the residents above 45 years are expected to get vaccination in 10 days. Fever camps will be conducted at 50 locations, he said.

# Ship entry met internat'l norms, insists Pentagon

Washington, April 10: The Pentagon has defended its Navy asserting its navigational rights within India's exclusive economic zone without taking New Delhi's permission, calling the move "consistent with international law".

In an unusual move, the US Navy announced that on Wednesday it conducted a freedom of navigation operation in Indian waters without prior consent to challenge India's "excessive maritime claims", triggering a reaction from New Delhi, which on Friday said it has conveyed concerns to Washington through diplomatic channels.

The ministry of external affairs (MEA) also contested the US Navy's 7th Fleet statement of April 7 that the freedom of navigation operation (FONOP) by the guided-missile destroyer USS John Paul Jones "upheld the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses" of the sea recognised in international law by challenging India's "excessive maritime claims".

●We continue to maintain the right, indeed the responsibility, to fly, sail, and operate in accordance with international law," the Pentagon spokesperson said.

When asked about India's reaction over the US Navy's move, Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby on Friday said: "I can tell you is that the USS John Paul Jones, a Navy destroyer, asserted navigational rights and freedoms in the vicinity of the Republic of the Maldives by conducting innocent passage through its territorial sea in normal operations within its exclusive economic zone without requesting prior permission".

Earlier, announcing about the operation, the statement by the 7th Fleet said, "On April 7, 2021 (local time) USS John Paul Jones (DDG 53) asserted navigational

rights and freedoms approximately 130 nautical miles west of the Lakshadweep Islands, inside India's exclusive economic zone, without requesting India's prior consent, consistent with international law."

In response to a question from reporters at a Pentagon news conference, Mr Kirby said: "That's consistent with international law."

"Again, we continue to maintain the right, indeed the responsibility, to fly, sail, and operate in accordance with international law," he said.

The MEA in its statement said: "India's stated position on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is that the Convention does not authorise other states to carry out in the exclusive economic zone and on the continental shelf, military exercises or manoeuvres, in particular those involving the use of weapons or explosives, without the consent of the coastal state."

— PTI

## VACCINATION DRIVE TO BE INTENSIFIED

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, APRIL 10

In view of the Covid-19 cases spiralling across the state, the Health Department has decided to intensify the drive creating more awareness about vaccination programmes.

Admitting that the pace of current drive not up to the expected level, health secretary J. Radhakrishnan said they kept the vaccination awareness campaigns did not gain momentum as the model code of conduct imposed for the recently-concluded assembly poll was in force. "Now elections are over and will resume the campaign," he said. P3/P2

## NIGHT CURFEW IMPOSED ON K'TAKA TOWNS

Bengaluru, April 10: The Karnataka government relaxed the night curfew norms for industrial personnel barely hours before it came into effect on Saturday. The Karnataka government has decided to impose night curfew from 10 pm to 5 am in major cities, district headquarter towns and other urban areas for 11 days from Saturday till April 20.—PTI

## DC shock for Chennai



Prithvi Shaw (left) and Shikhar Dhawan put on 138 runs for the opening wicket as Delhi Capitals made a mockery of Chennai Super Kings' 189-run target in an IPL game in Mumbai on Saturday. Delhi won by nine wickets. Shaw scored 72 and Dhawan made 85.

— IPL

## NOT MANDATORY TO DISPLAY PHOTOS OF LEADERS IN GOVT BUILDINGS: TN



REPORT ON PAGE 4

# India, China agree to continue talks

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

India and China during Corps Commanders meeting on Friday agreed on the need to resolve the outstanding issues in an expeditious manner in accordance with the existing agreements and protocols, said a statement issued by defence ministry.

"In this context it was highlighted also that completion of disengagement in other areas would pave the way for two sides to consider de-escalation of forces and ensure full restoration of peace and tranquility and enable progress in bilateral relations," said the statement issued on Saturday.

The 11th round India-China corps commander-level meeting was held at Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on Friday

on the second phase of disengagement from Depsang plains and Gogra-Hotsprings friction points in Ladakh. "The two sides had a detailed exchange of views for the resolution of the remaining issues related to disengagement along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh," said the statement.

It said that the two sides agreed on the need to resolve the outstanding issues in an expeditious manner in accordance with the existing agreements and protocols. "The two sides agreed that it was important to take guidance from the consensus of their leaders, continue their communication and dialogue and work towards a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest," said the statement.

## SC notice to centre on decriminalisation of begging

New Delhi, April 10: The Supreme Court has asked the Centre and four states, including Maharashtra and Gujarat, to file their response within three weeks on a plea seeking a direction to repeal the provisions criminalising begging.

A bench of justices Ashok Bhushan and R. Subhash Reddy noted in its order that though a notice was issued on the plea on February 10 this year, only Bihar has so far filed its response in the matter.

"Although notice has been issued on February 10, 2021, a reply has been filed by the respondent - state of Bihar - only and other respondents have not yet filed their reply. Let reply be filed within three weeks," the bench said in its order passed on Friday.

The apex court has posted the matter for hearing after three weeks.

The top court had in February sought a response from the Centre, and the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and Bihar on the plea which has claimed the sections of the statute criminalising begging are violative of constitutional rights. The plea filed by Meerut resident Vishal Pathak has referred to the August 2018 verdict of the Delhi High Court which had decriminalised begging in the national capital and said that provisions of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 which treats begging as an offence cannot sustain constitutional scrutiny.

— PTI

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC  
RAIPUR, APRIL 10

Has a "swap deal" between Chhattisgarh police and Maoists secured the release of CoBRA commando Rakeshwar Singh Manhas from Naxal custody?

A "mystery man" who accompanied the team of emissaries to the jan adalat (kangaroo court) set up by the Maoists in the forested hamlet of Tumla to take cus-

tody of the commando on April 8 is now at the centre of a raging debate over whether the jawan's release was indeed unconditional, as claimed by the Chhattisgarh police.

A local villager was seen in the company of the team of emissaries who included four official interlocutors and seven local scribes.

"A man, identified as Kunjam Sukha, was accompanying the journalists who were travelling with us

(four 'official emissaries'). We dropped him in Tumla where Maoists were conducting the 'jan adalat', Talem Boraiya, one of the four official interlocutors told this newspaper on phone from Awapalli in south Bastar district of Bijapur on Saturday.

Dharampal Saini, another emissary, disclosed to this newspaper that at the jan adalat, the tribal who accompanied them narrated his ordeal after being

"captured" by the security forces during the April 3 encounter. The "jan adalat" took place nearly 15 from Jonaguda, one of the three sites that witnessed fierce encounters between rebels and security forces on April 3 leading to the killing of 23 jawans.

Sources said Mr Kunjam was "held" in Tiklagudam village by CoBRA commandos during the Maoist ambush on security forces in Terram area on April 3

and was used as a "shield" to come out of the attack site safely.

Bastar inspector general of police Sunderraj P, however, has denied any "swap deal" with the Maoists to secure the release of the jawan. "No arrested Maoists have been released to secure release of abducted CoBRA jawan. No one has been arrested in connection with the Tiklagudam encounter case so far," he said.



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## OTHER STORIES



## Man arrested for lifting over 100 bicycles in 6 months

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, APRIL 10

As many as 40 bicycles were seized from Kumar (32), a resident of Thiruneermalai in Pallavaram. Following a complaint from Raja (56) from Pammal, Pallavaram, that his daughter's cycle had been stolen from their apartment parking area, Sankar Nagar police registered a case and began an investigation.

Police sources said the complainant also submitted a CCTV footage of the man stealing the bike. Police found the man to be Kumar and arrested him on Friday. During investigation he confessed to the crime, said police.

According to police, Kumar told his family members that he worked in a hardware store. He uses to leave the house in the morning, wander in Pallavaram, Chromepet, Tambaram, Chitalpakkam, Selaiyur and neighborhood areas and stole the bicycles. After stealing the cycles he would sell the bicycles to migrant labours working in the suburbs for cheaper price. Sankar Nagar police recovered at least 40 cycles that he had stolen.

He had also confessed to having stolen over 100 cycles in the last six months. Kumar was remanded in judicial custody and a probe is on.

## Gold worth ₹65.38L seized by Chennai customs

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, APRIL 10

The customs officers at the Chennai airport seized 1.36 kg gold worth ₹65.38 lakh.

As per the press statement from the commissioner of customs, based on intelligence that gold was likely to be smuggled from Dubai by concealing in aircraft, Air India flight AI-906 which arrived from Dubai was rummaged.

On rummaging 10 heavy pieces weighing 583 grams and 6 gold paste bundles weighing 870 grams, wrapped with white adhesive tape were found concealed in two rear toilets of aircraft. On cut opening heavy pieces, 10 gold cut bits with foreign marking weighing 583 grams were recovered and on extraction of gold paste 782 grams of gold was recovered. Total 1.36 kg of gold valued at ₹65.38 lakh was recovered and seized as unclaimed gold under Customs Act.

Further investigation is on.

**On rummaging 10 heavy pieces weighing 583 grams and 6 gold paste bundles weighing 870 grams, wrapped with white adhesive tape were found concealed in two rear toilets of aircraft**

# Daily Covid tally nears 6,000-mark in state

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, APRIL 10

While the government is imposing stringent measures to contain the spike of Covid-19 cases, the state has added nearly 6,000 more positive cases and three deaths on Saturday.

According to the data provided by the state health department, 5,989 people tested positive, a rise from 5,441 on Friday. The total positive cases in the state now are 96,816 and deaths 12,886.

Chennai, which has a total of 2,63,129 cases, has added 1,977 new cases, and continues to retain the top position in the table. The tally in the city on Friday was 1,750. Chengalpattu, which has reported 60,122 cases so far, has emerged as the second main contributor on Saturday with 615 cases. It is a rise from 427 on Friday. Coimbatore reported 501 cases registering an increase from 473 on Friday. The district has total 62,575 cases so far.

While Chennai, Coimbatore and Chengalpattu crossed the 500 mark, districts like Cuddalore, Kancheepuram, Madurai, Nagapattinam, Selam, Thanjavur, Thiruvallur, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Trichy and Tirupur registered more than 100 cases



A Greater Chennai corporation health worker taking swab samples from a worker at a construction site in Madipakkam on Saturday.

each on Saturday.

Active cases have touched 37,673 on Saturday, an increase from 33,659 on Friday. Active cases started surging from mid-march with around 5,000 cases. Chennai's contribution to this table has gone up to 14,382 cases from 11,633 on Friday.

While 12 people died in

Chennai, districts like Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram and Nagapattinam recorded two cases each. Dindigul, Nilgiris, Salem, Thiruppur and Vellore also reported fatalities.

Meanwhile, at least 83,895 persons underwent the RTPCR test, a dip from 87,505 on Friday taking to a total of 2,01,01,836 in the

state. Health secretary J. Radhakrishnan said that no double mutant has been reported so far. Only local variants are spreading across the state. He also reiterated that there were enough beds available in both government and private hospitals to deal with the situation.



Albert theatre in the city operated with 50 per cent occupancy on Saturday.

## ₹200 fine for not wearing masks on metro trains

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, APRIL 10

CMRL has been allowing passengers at the entry point only after ensuring that every passenger is properly wearing a face mask. However, some passengers, after crossing the screening point at metro entrance and while traveling on metro train, are not wearing the face mask or not properly wearing the mask, even though regular displays and public announcements are being made at metro stations and inside metro trains.

The fine shall be imposed by station controllers/CMRL staff deputised for this purpose at metro station premises and by a flying squad on metro trains, duly issuing a receipt from the penalty receipt booklet

Due to the surge in Covid cases, Government of Tamil Nadu has ordered a spot fine of ₹200 on anyone found without a face mask in public.

A fine of ₹200 will be collected if a passenger is

found not wearing a face mask or not properly wearing a face mask on metro station premises / while travelling in metro trains.

The fine shall be imposed by station controllers/CMRL staff deputised for this purpose at metro station premises and by a flying squad on metro trains, duly issuing a receipt from the penalty receipt booklet. The fine will be imposed from Sunday, according to a press release issued by the joint director / public relations officer, CMRL.

## TN to ramp up vaccination drive to contain virus spread

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, APRIL 10

In view of Covid-19 cases spiralling across the state, the health department has decided to intensify the vaccination drive by organising more awareness programmes.

Admitting that the pace of the current drive is not up to expectation, health secretary J. Radhakrishnan said that they kept the vaccination awareness campaigns in abeyance in adherence to the model code of conduct for the recently concluded assembly poll.

"Now, elections are over. Hence, we are planning a widespread vaccination programme across the state by next week. Though all persons above 45 are eligible to get Covid-19 vaccine jab, the willingness among them is still below par compared to senior citizens. So far only 36 lakh doses of vaccines were administered against a target of 54 lakh.



Passengers wearing face mask in a government bus in Velachery on Saturday.

**Denying possibilities of vaccine shortage, the health secretary said the state has currently stock of 18 lakh doses and the Centre was providing vaccines based on the pace of the consumption**

None of the districts was able to achieve the target. When the Chennai Corporation is targeting 30,000 doses, it is only able to achieve 20,000 doses. Likewise, other districts administrations achieve 3,000 against a target of 5,000. The state has opened 5,000 centres that have the capacity to vaccinate at least 5 lakh people a day," he said.

Dr Radhakrishnan also said the government had enough stock of life-saving medicines such as Remdesivir and Enoxaparin.

"At least 1.49 lakh Remdesivir and 2.7 lakh Enoxaparin are in stock to distribute to government hospitals", he said.

As per the data provided by the health department, a total of 3,605,307 beneficiaries were vaccinated

across the state through 138,257 sessions till Friday. While 1,201,571 senior citizens took jabs, 1,079,092 beneficiaries aged between 45 and 60 with comorbidities received the Covid vaccine.

Meanwhile, epidemiologists continue to suggest that taking vaccines would provide immunity to reduce the severity of virus infection.

If a vaccinated person gets infected by the virus, the available data shows that the severity level of the virus and duration of cure will be less compared to non-vaccinated individuals. So it is important to make the vaccines available to maximum people as early as possible to arrest the spread," says Dr Jayaprakash Muliyl, noted epidemiologist.

# Oh, what a relief, the elections are over



G. Babu Jayakumar

## Just spamming

Most people heaved a sigh of relief when the elections were over on Tuesday. It's a different matter that the electoral process has not been exactly completed and the real stakeholders should still be wringing their hands in anxiety till the votes are counted on May 2 and the results announced. So, what was it that brought relief to so many common people when the polling was over? One was the end of intrusive political advertisements that the people had been enduring for quite some time.

It is not just the advertisements that the newspapers

regularly carried in the front pages, at times in the first four or more pages, which meant that to know the Page One headlines readers had to delve deep into the middle section. The trend of newspapers carrying such paid drivel started quite some time back with the government patting itself in its own back on the various great things that it had done to the people, as though the people did not know or remembered what the rulers had been doing in the past four years.

Such publicity blitz by the ruling party, using people's money to inform the people on what had been done to

the people, provoked the opposition parties to also go for a kill in the same fashion, hitting at newspaper readers from the front page. Readers endured it. Whether they read the contents in those advertisements running into pages or not, they patiently turned over to reach the real front and did not complain about it.

More than the newspaper readers, those who turn on the television for either entertainment or news and those who log on to YouTube channels for whatever purpose, too, were subjected to the same torment. They had to grit their teeth and wait for the video advertisements to have their full run. What was more torturous was that the same advertisement - like it is in the case of every commercial playing gooseberry since the advent of visual entertainment - being repeatedly shown, driving

the viewer to the verge of suicide.

As some YouTube watchers vouched for, when they searched for a video relating to a political party or one of its leaders or speakers, the advertisement that popped up unsolicited would invariably be of the rival party. So it was an irony that before you could watch a visual relating to your favourite political party, you would have learnt what the rival party had to tell you as to why you should vote for it. It was also the case with other social media channels, where too paid promotions stopped after April 6.

But when those political advertisements were up and running on the whole gamut of media channels, their impact on the viewers was just the same as that of any other commercial. To put it otherwise, it looked as though every party that aspired to capture power at

Fort St George - yes, there were a few also-rans that jumped into the fray with other ideas - in the Assembly election of 2021 was relying on business strategies that corporates, commercial establishments and trading houses adopt to push products or promote brands or sell services.

Though the drift of engaging strategists, who, we are told, charge a bomb as they invariably claim to have come down from foreign lands, began at least in 2014 when Narendra Modi romped home, it had entered the State, too, some time back. But this was the first time the people felt the presence and touch of the strategists. While the DMK was unabashed about hiring Prashant Kishor for devising poll strategy and declared it openly on social media long time ago, the AIADMK was rather shy of openly admitting that Sunil Kanugolu was guiding their

campaign.

Since both Kishor and Kanugolu had worked for Modi's campaign, they consider themselves to be successful in their careers in guiding political parties. Their operations in the State, in fact, gave a new format to the campaigns undertaken by the principal parties, ie the DMK and AIADMK. It is said that even Kamal Haasan, at one point of time, was in negotiations with Kishor. Whom Haasan roped in finally is not known - probably the Sakalakala Vallavan (Master of All Arts) thought nobody could exceed him even in politics - though the public relation company that he engaged during the launch of his party was unmistakably one that had celebrities and upper crest corporates as clients.

Other than infusing the frills of ostentatious corporate culture into the elec-

tioning, what the strategists exactly did to change the voting pattern of the people is something that is not perceptible, at least for the common people. True they did try to influence some media persons in the same fashion in which corporate public relations companies operate. But beyond that what were the devices they had in their armory to win the hearts of the people?

At the end of the day, it was the traditional army of political foot soldiers that reached out to the voters in the nooks and crannies of rural Tamil Nadu and not the employees of the firms run by the highbrow strategists, who could not even draw the urban crowd to the polling booths. So, will foreign-trained strategists have relevance in future elections?

One does not know. But as of now they are all gone. What a relief?

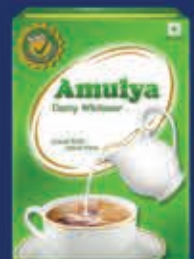
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100 g | ₹ 40\*



Amulya  
24 g | ₹ 10\*



Amulya  
12 g | ₹ 5\*



## IN BRIEF

VCK workers protest  
cadres' murderDC CORRESPONDENT  
PERAMBALUR, APRIL 10

A few members of the Perambalur district unit of Viduthalaikal Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) led by district secretary, Tamil Manickam, staged a demonstration near the central bus stand here on Saturday, protesting the recent murder of two party functionaries at Chithampadi village in Ranipettai district. They also demanded concerned officials to book the culprits in connection with the murder and also pay suitable compensation to the kin of deceased and those injured. They also wanted the government to ban the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) immediately. Similar demonstrations were also held in other central districts like Tiruchy, Karur, Ariyalur, Pudukkottai, Tiruvarur and integrated N a g a p a t t i n a m - Mayiladuthurai district, and in a few places all over the state.

Vegetable shandy  
timingsDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUCHY, APRIL 10

The wholesale vegetable sale at the Gandhi market will be held as usual in the market premises while retail trade of vegetables in and around Gandhi market, will be shifted to G-Corner area from Sunday (April 11), as part of preventive measures against Covid-19. II, said Collector S. Divyadarshini. After discussions with officials including City corporation commissioner S. Sivasubramanian and others on Saturday, the collector said the corporation will provide all basic amenities at the makeshift retail outlet of vegetables sale, and asked traders to strictly maintain social distancing and face mask norms. She also appealed to the general public to wear face masks and to follow social distancing while visiting the market. Those without face masks would be fined, she added.

Big Temple car  
festival cancelled

**Thanjavur, April 3:** Chithirai festival started at Big temple here from Friday with flag hoisting. In view of Covid-19, festival events will be held only inside the temple. Authorities have cancelled the car festival this year also, like last year due to Corona. The temple car festival was started after a gap of 100 years in 2015 with efforts taken by former chief minister J. Jayalalithaa.

Don't allow a person to resume  
work, pending inquiry, says HCDC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, APRIL 10

The Madras high court has said while the government employer should not waste the taxpayer's money in giving subsistence allowance to a perceived delinquent without completing the disciplinary proceedings expeditiously, it has to be equally accepted that a person should not be allowed to resume work pending the inquiry into his conduct.

The first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy made the observation while disposing of a petition by G. Raja, a suspended judicial officer, who sought to quash his suspension and reinstate him in service.

The bench said the petitioner was a judicial officer who discharged the duties of a chief judicial magistrate. The petitioner was suspended pursuant to a notice dated December 30, 2019. There were several charges against him including



● **The first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy made the observation while disposing of a petition by G. Raja, a suspended judicial officer, who sought to quash his suspension and reinstate him in service.**

moral turpitude, connivance with his brother to undertake commercial activities while in service, assets and funds grossly disproportionate to his known sources of income and the like. The petitioner said he has been under suspension for a long time with the expected disciplinary proceedings showing no sign of taking off.

Relying on a judgment, the petitioner says that the Supreme Court has frowned on

continued suspension with reduced pay since, in such a scenario, it does not enure to the benefit of the employer to pay the employee without obtaining any services and it does not enure to the benefit of the employee to not undertake any work and receive less payment. However, the rule was not of universal application and there were certain caveats thereto, the bench added.

The bench said in the present

case, the petitioner has made appeals for the revocation of his suspension, enhancement of his subsistence allowance and conclusion of the disciplinary proceedings. The petitioner will be free to urge that the subsistence allowance to the petitioner should be increased. The petitioner would be entitled to seek an early conclusion of the disciplinary proceedings, but cannot cite such grounds for either his suspension to be revoked or the petitioner to be reinstated honourably. It was for the employer to ensure that the petitioner's prayer for enhanced allowance during suspension was taken up for consideration along with the petitioner's prayer for the expeditious conduct of the disciplinary proceedings. "Since the matter is pending for quite some time, it is hoped that the disciplinary proceedings are conducted in course of this year, without any delay being attributable to the petitioner", the bench added.

House surgeon  
assault: Two heldDC CORRESPONDENT  
THANJAVUR, APRIL 10

The police arrested two youth in connection with an attempt to assault a house surgeon, Arun Pandian, who was on night duty on Friday night at the Thanjavur medical college hospital.

Police said, two persons Madhavan (26), son of Rajendran of Vandikara street here and Madheswaran (18), son of Nagarajan of Pottalankudikadu near Orathanadu, were riding a two-wheeler from Orathanadu to Thanjavur by 8 pm on Friday, when they fell off the bike and were injured. Three of their friends took them to TMCH for treatment.

Duty house surgeon Arun Pandian in the hospital enquired with them about how the accident happened and the injuries on them, when suddenly the three friends started assaulting the doctor saying, "Being a doctor, you should find out." They also alleged tried to slam the doctor with a chair. Arun Pandian, found them to be

in an inebriated mood, and escaped from them, and informed the other doctors about the incident.

Meantime, the three persons along with the patients Madheswaran and Raghavan, fled from the place, and got admitted in a private hospital. Arun Pandian informed TMCH dean Dr. Ravi Kumar also about this.

Soon, doctors on duty started an agitation demanding arrest of the persons. Police and revenue officials rushed to the spot, and later police arrested Madheswaran and Raghavan.

Collector M. Govinda Rao also

rushed to the hospital, and doctors there appealed to him to book the culprits under the

Goondas Act.

Rao told presspersons on

Saturday that doctors and para-

medical staff have been doing a

good work during the Corona

period, and those assaulted the

house surgeon would be booked

under the Goondas Act. Police

are on the lookout for the three

friends who accompanied

Madheswaran and Raghavan.

## AMMA CALLING



People thronging Jaya memorial in the city after it opened to the public on April 9.

—DC

Cops blamed for death of  
rowdy in KumbakonamDC CORRESPONDENT  
THANJAVUR APRIL 10

The death of a history sheeter who was chased by police, turned into a controversy at Kumbakonam.

Police said, rowdy sheeter Silambarasan (30) of MGR Colony in Darasuram, against whom many murder and theft cases were pending in Sirkali and Mannargudi police stations, came to his parents house at Darasuram, on Friday.

Police tried to catch him, but he escaped and jumped into a tank in the colony, and vanished.

On Saturday morning, his body was found in the tank and police sent it for postmortem to the government hospital.

Meanwhile, relatives of Silambarasan, alleged that his body had injuries on the head and mouth, and hence, could have been attacked by the police, due to which he died.



Saravanan (57), a retired army Engineering Group Regiment trainee sailor, hails from Salamanatham village near Kammavanpet in Vellore district. A sailor trainer himself, Saravanan who has a son, Vishnu Saravanan (22) and daughter Ramya Saravanan (20), had coached his children in sailing since age six. Both siblings have received over a 100 awards in the national, Asian and global contests. When he was 17, Vishnu Saravanan joined the MEG Regiment as JCO Naib Subedar, and is currently a Subedar. He has been selected to participate in the Yachting competition in the Tokyo Olympics in Japan, making him a proud youngest Indian athlete to take part in the games. People in the district are happy that Vishnu is participating in the Olympics. People from all over India have been pouring their felicitations on him.

—K.Senthil Nathan

## One held for possessing fake notes

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC  
SALEM, APRIL 10

Police have arrested a man who tried to exchange a counterfeit ₹500 note here.

Sources said Balaji (38) hailing from Satyanayakanpalayam area of Tiruchengode in Namakkal district, is a weaver and also runs a vegetable business at home. It is customary for him to come to Salem and buy vegetables in bulk.

On Friday, Balaji had bought coconuts on Friday

and gave Rs 500 to shop owner, Murugan.

Murugan, who was suspicious of the ₹500 note, asked for another. Balaji gave another ₹500 note, which increased his suspicion.

Murugan informed the Salem town police about this. Balaji was arrested and questioned by the police. He said he received ₹2,000 at the Salem old bus stand and received counterfeit notes. Balaji was arrested and ₹500 counterfeit notes were confiscated from him.

## Two NIT-T students bag 8th ranks in GATE

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC  
TIRUCHY, APRIL 10

Shivam Negi, and S. Ananthanarayanan Potti, final year, B.Tech Chemical Engineering students, National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli (NIT-T), has secured All India Rank 8 and 220 respectively in the competitive

Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering 2021 (GATE) exam, conducted by IIT Bombay this year in the Chemical Engineering stream among 16,705 students who appeared in this stream all over the country.

A NIT-T release here said on Saturday that the GATE is a national examination conducted jointly

by Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore, and seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) at Bombay, Delhi, Guwahati, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Chennai and Roorkee, on behalf of the National Coordination Board (NCB)-GATE, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education

Government of India.

Qualifying in GATE is a mandatory requirement for those seeking admission and/or financial assistance to Post-Graduate Programs (Master's and Doctoral) with Ministry of Education (MoE) and other Government scholarships / assistantships, subject to the admission

criteria of the admitting institute, it added.

Dr. Mini Shaji Thomas, Director, NIT-T, congratulated the achievers. Dr. P. Kalaichelvi, Professor and Head, Chemical Engineering Department, along with the other faculty members and supporting staff, also congratulated both the students on their achievement.

Dhanush elevates this hard  
hitting socio-political drama

## Movie review

## KARNAN

CAST: Dhanush, Lal, Rajisha Vijayan, Natraj

Direction: Mari Selvaraj

RATING: 4 / 5

ANUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN

Director Mari Selvaraj of Pariyerum Perumal fame has proved that he is no flash in the pan with his second outing Karnan, a hard-hitting socio-political drama brilliantly helmed by powerhouse performer Dhanush who essays the titular role.

The plot of Karnan might sound familiar, but the authentic and terrific manner in which Mari has presented the life of the oppressed and how their grievances come back to bite makes all the difference.

The film begins with a young girl lying in the middle of the road suffering from epilepsy with buses and cars plying on both the sides. No one stops to help her. She eventually dies and the camera pans to show her becoming a deity. We are also later shown that the people of Podiyankulam village in Tirunelveli in which the story is set, have a custom of worshipping faceless deities.

Then the story shifts to the chart-buster song 'Kanda Vara Sollunga', where we see the entire village praying for the return of hero Karnan (Dhanush), who is subjected to police brutality. Though a mythical aspect of Mahabharata comes to fore, Mari



surprises us by making his Karnan different from the mythological character with the lines 'Suriyanum pekkavilla, Chandranum saatchiyilla', and 'Kavasathaiyum kandathilla Entha kundalamum koodayilla' from the song.

The scene then cuts to 1997, and recounts the elevation of simple youth Karnan as the savior of his village. Karnan is an angry young lad who stands up for his oppressed villagers. He awaits his selection in the army. He has a Godfather like figure Yaman (Lal). The upper caste men of the neighboring village Sulur always

are hostile towards the Podiyankulam people, who are even

denied a bus stop in their village. A stage comes when Karnan decides to take things into his hands. He smashes a private bus to forcefully tell the government that their needs are to be heard. This leads to the entry of merciless and ego bloated police officer Kannabiran (Natraj Subramanian) into the village. Inconceivable violence is unleashed and how Karnan hits back forms the rest.

Kudos to Dhanush for accepting a script where the director has placed utmost importance on the vision than any single individual. With his remarkable screen presence and impeccable performance Dhanush shines every bit. He is a treat to watch in action sequences as well as in the witty interactions with grandpa Lal. Rajisha Vijayan as Draupathi, the love interest of Dhanush performs naturally. Lakshmi Priya Chandramouli as Dhanush's elder sister stands out with her alluring feat and she also gets her Tirunelveli diction to perfection. Yogi Babu in a role with negative shades and Natraj as a ruthless cop do their part well. Gowri Kishan, GM Kumar, Shanmugapriyan lend their support.

Mari uses several metaphors like the girl soul wandering in the village, a donkey whose legs are tied up, eagles that steal the newborn chicken and headless painting on the wall to take the story forward.

The screenplay is a bit slow in the first half and overloading of symbolism lessens the interest factor. However, these are only minor glitches.

Santhosh Narayanan's captivating songs and BGM hugely help Mari in the effective narration of his story. Theni Eshwar's cinematography is yet another strength of the film. Mari's firm grip over the craft is apparent and by delivering a momentous feat like Karnan, he asserts that he is here to stay!

Not mandatory to display photos  
of leaders in govt buildings: TNDC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, APRIL 10

The Madras high court has disposed of a Public Interest Litigation, which sought a direction to authorities to take appropriate steps to display the portrait of the incumbent Prime Minister of India and President of India in all the government offices and public buildings in the state of Tamil Nadu as per a GO dated June 4, 2006.

The first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy disposed of the PIL filed by R.Jayakkumar.

The bench said the prayer in the petition is to make it mandatory for all government offices to have photographs of the persons indicated in a GO dated June 4, 2006.

The bench said advocate general Vijay Narayanan representing the

state says that the relevant notification gives an option to the government offices to carry one or more of the photographs of the several national leaders indicated therein, but there is no mandatory force in the notification and it may not be in public interest to make it mandatory, particularly since the memorandum refers to past Chief Ministers and the like.

Since the relevant government notification does not make it mandatory for all government buildings to carry the photographs of the persons indicated therein, it will be for the individual government offices to deal with the matter in accordance with law. "Since this is a public interest litigation and the petitioner in such a case is treated as an informant, the petition is disposed of without requiring any action to be taken on the basis of the petition," the bench added.

## SUMMER FLAVOUR



With summer setting in, sales of vadu manga (tender mango) pick up in Mylapore on Saturday.

—DC





## SHORT TAKES

10 KILLED, 40 HURT  
AS TRUCK FALLS  
INTO GORGE IN U.P.

**Lucknow:** At least 10 people were killed and over 30 injured as a truck on which they were travelling fell into a gorge in UP's Etawah on Saturday, police said.

"The incident took place in the Barhpura police station area after the driver of the vehicle lost control over it. There were 40 to 50 people travelling by the truck,"

Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Prashant Kumar Prasad said, adding that the accident took place in a ravine area.

A police PRO said, "The number of people who have died stands at 10 while 30-35 are injured. The injured have been admitted to the Etawah district hospital. Depending upon the seriousness of the cases, the injured will be shifted to higher centres for medical treatment."

CBI INVESTIGATES  
NAXAL ATTACKS  
IN CHHATTISGARH

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

Central intelligence agencies are investigating the possibility that some of the Maoists involved in the killing of 22 CRPF commandos in Chhattisgarh last week might have been trained in the use of sophisticated arms and explosives at terror camps operating in Myanmar, close to the India border.

The terror camps on the Myanmar border are run by northeast militant groups with active assistance from some elements of the Myanmar Army. Sources claimed that local unit of the Intelligence Bureau based in Raipur was conducting a detailed investigations of the Maoist ambush in south Bastar.

FARMERS  
BLOCK KMP  
EXPRESSWAY

**Chandigarh:** Intensifying their protest against the three farm laws, farmers blocked the KundliManesarPalwal expressway at some places in Haryana on Saturday.

The blockade started at 8 am and would last 24 hours.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of protesting farmer unions spearheading the agitation against the agriculture-related legislations, on Friday gave a call for a 24-hour blockade of the KMP expressway.

The 136-km-long expressway is also known as the Western Peripheral Expressway.

Protesting farmers, however, said emergency vehicles will be allowed to ply.

Bhartiya Kisan Union (Lakhnow) general secretary Harinder Singh Lakhowal said the blockade would be for 24 hours.

Haryana Police in the meanwhile issued a traffic advisory, asking travellers to avoid the KMP expressway.

Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Navdeep Singh Virk on Friday said elaborate arrangements were in place to maintain peace and order, prevent any kind of violence and facilitate traffic movement and public transport on the expressway.

INDIA FINALISES  
AIR BUBBLE PACT  
WITH SRI LANKA

**New Delhi:** India has established a bilateral air bubble arrangement with Sri Lanka for operation of special international passenger flights between the two countries, the Civil Aviation Ministry said on Saturday.

With this, India now has such pacts with 28 countries, including Afghanistan, Bahrain, Canada, France, Germany, Iraq, Japan, the Maldives, Nigeria, Qatar, the UAE, the UK and the USA. Under an air bubble pact between two countries, special international passenger flights can be operated by their airlines into each other's territories under restrictive conditions.

"India has finalised an air bubble agreement with Sri Lanka, making it the 6th such arrangement in SAARC region and the 28th in total," the Civil Aviation Ministry said on Twitter. "All the eligible passengers will be able to travel between the 2 countries in the near future," it noted. Scheduled international flights have been suspended in India since March 23, 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

## Uddhav signals harsher, longer lockdown, awaits Centre nod

In Delhi, Kejriwal says lockdown not option, restrictions will be imposed

**DC CORRESPONDENTS**  
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI,  
APRIL 10

In view of rising Covid-19 cases, Maharashtra is all set for a harsher and longer lockdown, the date and time for which is yet to be finalised. During the all-party meeting called by Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday, it was decided that a lockdown of minimum one week and maximum 15 days can be imposed in the state to break the chain of transmission of Coronavirus. However, a final decision in this regard will be taken in a couple of days after consulting health experts.

The Centre too is yet to give its nod for such a plan as the Union government had suggested that states go for "micro-level" lockdowns instead of shutting down the entire state. Thackeray said lockdown is the only option given the high volume of cases and difficulty in contact tracing.

"Last year during lockdown people were at home so it was not difficult to trace the infection. Since everything is open now, it is practically very difficult to trace people. The Centre must understand this. I have been speaking to many people from different sectors, even private hospitals for the last few days. All are ready to support the government," Thackeray said.

Maharashtra on Saturday reported 55,411 fresh Covid-19 positive cases with 309 deaths. Out of this, Mumbai had 9,327 new cases and 50 deaths.

In a new high, India reported over 1.52 lakh fresh cases of Coronavirus with 795 deaths in 24 hours on Saturday. Among the latest to catch infection in Maharashtra is RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. The rising cases have put substantial pressure on the health infrastructure of the country with several states reporting shortage of Remdesivir, Oxygen and hospital beds. As state governments scramble to test and treat Covid patients, there were also reports of shortage of RT-PCR kits in some places.

With several vaccination centres in Maharashtra shut due to shortage of vaccines, former MP and farmer's leader Raju Shetti has threatened to stop Serum Institute India's supply of Covid-19 vaccines to other states.

In a letter written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana (SSS) head Raju Shetti has stated that if supply of vaccines



A Deserted look of M G road after the authorities announced the night curfew amid surge in coronavirus cases in Bengaluru, Saturday.

## Assam stares at vaccine shortage

**MANOJ ANAND | DC**  
GUWAHATI, APRIL 10

Amidst the growing number of Covid-19 positive cases, Assam government has issued guidelines for upcoming festive season of the state with focus on social distancing, hand sanitisation and strict use of masks. The guidelines underlined the norms of public gathering yet, we are hopeful," sources in the state health department said while confirming that in some districts they are providing vaccines only to those who are eligible for a second dose of vaccine. "The

is also staring at a shortage of Covid-19 vaccine, with officials confirming that the existing stock would be exhausted in two to three days. The state had around 2.70 lakh doses of vaccine on Saturday morning.

"Central government has said that a consignment of vaccines will be sent by April 12. Though there is no confirmation yet, we are hopeful," sources in the state health department said while confirming that in some districts they are providing vaccines only to those who are eligible for a second dose of vaccine. "The

Dibrugarh Joint Director health has stopped vaccination of first dose from Saturday through a notification," sources said.

Meanwhile the state government has asked the health officials to focus simultaneously on the three Ts — Testing, Tracing and Treatment while ramping up the vaccination for eligible beneficiaries as part of its Covid-19 management strategy.

The guidelines for celebration of Bihu festival further said that event organisers will have to seek prior permission from the district adminis-

trations and the programmes will have to conclude by 11 pm. All the organisers and volunteers will have to get tested three days prior to the event and after the event.

The event site should be spacious for maintaining adequate physical distance and should have multiple entry and exit points. Also, all participants should be screened for symptoms.

Passengers coming from Mumbai and Bengaluru will have to undergo compulsory Covid-19 tests in the airports and railway stations of Assam.

## Sonia slams Centre's Covid Management

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI) Congress president Sonia Gandhi accused the Centre on Saturday of "mismanaging" the Covid situation and creating a vaccine shortage in the country by exporting it, as she called for cancelling all public gatherings and poll rallies in view of the rising number of Coronavirus cases.

Addressing a virtual meeting with the chief ministers of the Congress-ruled states and ministers of the party in states where it is in power in alliance with others, she said the priority should be to test, track and vaccinate.

She was reviewing the

efforts by the states ruled by the Congress to tackle the second wave of the Coronavirus infection in the country.

Rahul Gandhi called for putting money in the hands of the poor.

All public gatherings and poll rallies should be cancelled as the number of Covid-19 cases is on the rise.

"Mass gatherings for elections and religious events have accelerated Covid-19 for which all of us are responsible to some extent. We need to accept this responsibility and keep the interest of the nation above our own," Sonia Gandhi said.

— PTI

**Kishor says Dalits voting for BJP a major factor**

**LEAKED | AUDIO**

## BJP releases Kishor's audio chat with scribes, creates stir

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

In the electoral battle for West Bengal, leaked audio clips purportedly between chief minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee's election strategist Prashant Kishor and some journalists ended up creating a major embarrassment for the ruling party with the BJP claiming that the TMC has conceded the BJP is winning.

As BJP leaders latched onto the leaked audio clips and tried to pull down the TMC, Kishor dared the BJP to release the full chat on ClubHouse, a social media platform, and reiterated that the saffron party will not get more than 100 Assembly seats in the elections, for which fourth phase of polling took place on Saturday.

In the several excerpts of the conversation that



People arrive to cast their votes at a polling station at Kalikapur, under Jadavpur assembly Constituency of South 24 Parganas district during the 4th phase of the west Bengal State Assembly Election on Saturday.

— PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

were shared by the BJP's IT cell head and co-incharge of the state, Amit Malviya, Kishor is purportedly heard saying that Dalits and the Mathua communities voting for the BJP is a very important factor.

Sharing the clips, Malviya claimed, "TMC's election was just thrown away!" The chat session took place on ClubHouse late Friday and the BJP shared the

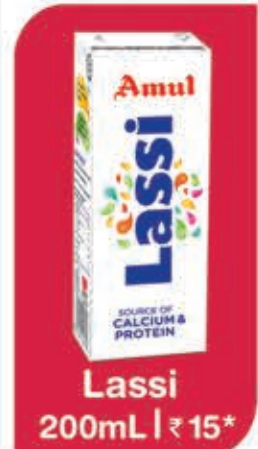
are a factor in the elections and about the BJP's election machinery. Kishor is also heard saying that Dalits and the Mathua communities voting for the BJP is a very important factor.

Sharing the clips, Malviya claimed, "TMC's election was just thrown away!" The chat session took place on ClubHouse late Friday and the BJP shared the

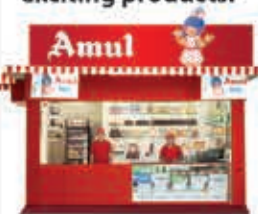
audio on Saturday. "Modi is hugely popular in Bengal, and there is no doubt about it. There is a cult around him across the country. There is anti-incumbency against TMC, polarisation is a reality, SC votes is (are) a factor plus BJP's election machinery, says Mamata Banerjee's strategist in an open chat," Malviya tweeted after releasing the audio clips.

"Mamata Banerjee's election strategist concedes that even in TMC's internal surveys, BJP is winning. The vote is for Modi, polarisation is a reality, the SCs (27% of WB's population), Matuas are all voting for the BJP! BJP has cadre on ground. Another candid admission by Mamata Banerjee's election strategist — all that the Left, Congress and TMC ecosystem have done in the last 20 years is Muslim appeasement.

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DECCAN  
Chronicle

11 APRIL 2021



Sanjeev Ahluwalia

Off the beaten track

Indian subnationalism  
past its expiry date?

Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu — all awaiting new governments in early May this year — are the last bastions of strong linguistic and cultural regionalism which have resisted the mainstreaming of politics under BJP's "one country one party" theology. Assam capitulated in 2016 and is expected to remain within the BJP's fold in May this year.

It is not as if other Indian states have no binding cultural roots. Punjab, for instance, is actively demonstrating its independence of spirit and community strength via the ongoing anti-farm bill agitation.

Smaller states in the North-East have a similar ethos. Sikkim, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur and Nagaland — all have a strong preference for self-rule by locals per local culture and customs, although they are not averse to partaking of the bountiful central endowments, showered on them annually, in exchange for remaining politically aligned with the ruling party in Delhi — a domestic version of the subsidiarity which Imperial China demands from its subalterns in Southeast Asia.

Jammu and Kashmir — another border state previously (now a Union territory) with a strong cultural identity, including its delectable *wazwan* — erred in confusing notional constitutional autonomy with the freedom to act independently. The result was that the BJP — never one to shrink from radical political disruption — took the unprecedented step of reordering the constitutional relationship making its subsidiarity nature both de facto and de jure in 2019.

The BJP has a stunning record in mainstreaming border areas. Assam is the best example of deep mainstreaming per the prevailing political philosophy in the heart of India, spreading out in a 1,000-kilometre radius around Nagpur. A dispassionate observer could reasonably conclude that regionalism is past its expiry date in India.

Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, represent exemplar benchmarks for regionalism with deep political, social, linguistic and cultural roots. Not surprisingly, all three are coastal states with thriving, historical, global commercial links. All three are unlikely to roll over and succumb to the centralisation of politics, which the BJP represents. But of the three, West Bengal appears the most vulnerable.

"Didi", alias Mamata Banerjee, diehard, street fighter and firebrand politician, the presiding deity of the All-India Trinamul Congress (AITC), has ruled Kolkata now for a decade and the political stress shows. Not for nothing, has the redoubtable political spinner, Prashant Kishor, who now advises her, rebranded her moniker "Didi" — meaning sister, who, per mainstream Indian tradition, leaves the family to start another — into "Banglar meye" — daughter of Bengal — implying a familial obligation on all Bengalis to support her.

The idea is to "other" the BJP as a modern-day East India Company. Any Bengali voting for becomes a default "Mir Jafar", whose chicanery smoothed the way for the defeat of Siraj-ud Daulah, the then Nawab of Bengal, at Plassey and the subsequent ingress of the British into India in 1757.

This strategy is rich in irony. Didi projects herself as the great assimilator of a heterogeneous, cultured, secular Bengal spanning all religions. She paid monthly stipends to mullahs from 2012 and to Hindu priests from this year — a caricature of even-handed "ersatz secularism" and a gesture which, perversely, benefits upper castes only because dalits and tribal folk do not perform such services. More gratifying, the liberalism does not include "foreigners" like "Gujaratis" — thereby labelling all Gujaratis as "Non-Resident Indians".

Didi herself, was a political disrupter, a decade back, cutting through the three-and-a-half-decade old Communist gridlock on Bengal by consolidating the have-not votes. Over the past decade, she has systematically sandpapered the Red remnants into a bright Blue — the AITC colour code. Her strategic depth is substantial — gender is a trump card, "secularism" is another, her deliberate "ordinariness" is another, although the levers of power have unveiled authoritarian streaks in governance, to match those of the BJP.

The BJP increased its vote share from 4.1 per cent in 2011 to 10.2 per cent in the 2016 Assembly elections and an exaggerated 40.6 per cent in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal. All this despite its strategic disdain for seeking Muslim votes to win an election — its defiant signature tune. If votes were polled the way stocks are chosen — on trailing growth trends — the BJP should be able to encroach on the disempowered dalit and tribal vote banks, reducing the 2016 vote share of the AITC (44.9 per cent) CPI(M) (20 per cent) and the INC (12.3 per cent) to, at the very least, force Didi into uncomfortable coalitions with other parties for survival.

Should the AITC, Congress and the Communists have come together to fight these elections? Yes, of course. But the Indian political class favours the hubris of exclusive control over a party, even with just one bird in hand, rather than collaborating to go after the many other birds in the bush — a doomed strategy, as illustrated by the decline of the once storied Indian National Congress.

Meanwhile, in Kerala — the template of secular democracy — the Left Democratic Front is expected to retain power, not least because of its performance during the pandemic and despite the perceived personal pull of BJP's "metro-man" — E. Sreedharan. Looking ahead, Kerala could well become the crucible for a new version of the Left movement in India — less pedantically ideological, less anti-wealth and more pro-poor for delivering shared growth and equity.

Tamil Nadu remains the most insulated from the assault of the "Northern invaders" for the moment. Time will tell whether, despite the passing of stalwart leaders — Jayalalithaa and Karunanidhi — credible substitutes emerge which are able to keep their Northern gates firmly shut.

As things stand, ironically, by the first week of May 2021, the BJP's political empire could replicate that of the last Great Mughal, Emperor Aurangzeb. Only Didi stands, like a diminutive David, against the Goliath BJP and the fulfillment of that aspiration.

*The writer is adviser, Observer Research Foundation*

Subhani

The long view  
from New Delhi

Manish Tewari

State of the Union

The persisting stand-off with China must make India rethink its relationship structures both in the Asian and global context.

How is India geo-strategically placed currently? On its northern borders it confronts an aggressive China. On its western borders it is currently in a state of a partial thaw qua Pakistan. A melt that can again go back to a state of deep freeze at any point of time. On the east the strains with regard to the economic blockade of Nepal in 2015 still continue to linger. Bhutan is caught in the Sino-Indian cleft stick. Bangladesh, though reaffirming the centrality of India to its external environment, is both conscious of and eager to leverage the rise of China. Myanmar is in the throes of violent convulsions following a military coup d'état on February 1, 2021, that is having reverberations across the Indo-Burmese border as well.

Down south, the Rajapaksa administration in Sri Lanka still continues to bend to the Chinese wind. Relations with Maldives have definitely improved after Ibrahim Mohamed Solih ascended to office in September 2018. His predecessor President Abdulla Yameen foreign policy was most eloquently summed up by current Maldivian foreign minister Abdulla Shahid in the following sentence, "The mistake President Yameen made was to play India against China and China against India. That is a childish way of dealing with international relations; it will blow up in your own face." However, Maldives' debt to China that ranges from 1 to 3 billion USD should worry India, too, for Maldives' GDP is only 5.46 billion USD in 2021. Things could easily go the Hambantota way. On balance it does not seem to be a very happy situation

for India overall.

However, it is the reinvigorated "great game" in Afghanistan that could once again have a profound impact on the future of the region. As the Americans desperately attempt to sever the two-decade-old umbilical chord in Afghanistan, a deep void may open up in that country once more. Pakistan, Iran, Turkey China and Russia view this vacuum from their own strategic perch. India should also seriously evaluate what its hard strategic interests are in Afghanistan and then proceed accordingly.

Further west, the Saudi Arabia-UAE-Israel triangle is not going to have a free run of the Middle East and Gulf region as it did under the Trump Administration. President Joe Biden is seeking to pick up the threads of the Donald Trump aborted Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) colloquially referred to as the Iran Nuclear deal once again in Vienna through the E3+2 process.

The JCPOA signed on July 14, 2015, was further endorsed by the UN Security wide Council Resolution 2231, adopted on July 20, 2015. President Trump unilaterally walked out of this arrangement on the 8th of May 2018 and reinstated sanctions against Iran.

The irony is that none of the Second Nuclear Age powers are party to the current process as they were not to the previous one either.

For India, the Iran situation is further compounded by the epic 25-year Sino-Iranian Strategic Partnership agreement signed on the 27th of March 2021 that envisages a range of investments by China into Iran in fields ranging from oil to agriculture. Interestingly, Iran metaphorically booted India out of the Chabahar-Zahedan railway link in the

July of 2020, citing a lack of interest by the Indian side. If the Iran nuclear deal gets reinstated it would further expand Iranian influence in the Middle East.

Iran has been the biggest gainer of the ill-conceived American intervention in Iraq and the subsequent developments in the region post 2003. The US invasion of Iraq allowed Iran to create the Shia crescent encompassing Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, and embracing the Shia populations in each of these countries. Anchored by Tehran, it spawns major surrogate satellites such as Hezbollah, Hamas, Houthis, and southern Iraqi militias. A rejuvenated Iran in partnership with China having its own strategic interests in Afghanistan and profoundly averse to the growing Saudi-UAE-Israel-India bonhomie would be something New Delhi should watch closely.

India's great power relationships are also far from rock steady. With Russia warming up to both Beijing and even Pakistan and the United States also requiring Pakistan's help qua the Taliban to action the Doha deal signed between the US on February 29, 2020, things look rather messy for India.

What then are India's options to protect its broader strategic interests, namely, keep the Chinese at bay, guarantee that the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) in the Indo-Pacific open, not allow Afghanistan to become Pakistan's strategic depth, insulate India's energy security from the evolving dynamic in the Middle East and ensure that the "great powers" while acting in their own interests do not end up acting against

India's interests?

One option that needs to be focussed upon among myriad others is to renege with the European continent across the spectrum. This essentially from a strategic perspective entails an assignation with Nato (North Atlantic Treaty Arrangement) Conceived as a cold war construct in April 1949 to keep the Soviet Union at bay, Nato, over the years, has evolved both in its role and character.

An engagement does not mean that India should become a Nato adjunct or be designated as a Non-Nato ally by the United States. What it would mean is that India would be able to have access to both political and the military-to-military relationship with 30 odd European nations. Europe remains the neglected template that can still be leveraged by India to further its interests

The experience and evolution of the Nato alliance over the past seven decades could provide interesting institutional pointers to New Delhi if it were to consider at some point in time in the future the possibility of turning the "Quad" between US, Japan, Australia and India into the linchpin of a broader Asian Nato.

Moreover, India's engagement with Nato would also be a salutary signal to even Russia that, while India values the "special relationship of the erstwhile years", it would not be averse to exploring alternative avenues, including alliance arrangements, if Russia's relationships with China or Pakistan start becoming too close for comfort.

To the Chinese, the message would also be clear that its belligerence would only expand the hub and spoke US-anchored security architecture in Asia currently from Japan all the way downwards to Australia into a more multilateral framework with Nato as the foundational template. It is an idea whose time may have come.

*The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari*

## LETTERS

ENFORCE RULES  
STRICTLY

The contemplated night curfew and increased testing and maintaining containment zones will not help. The urgent need is to prevent the infection which is rapidly spreading. The 527 deaths reported in Teynampet alone is the grim reminder how Covid-19 is threatening the populace. The public is not ignorant but arrogant in not wearing facemasks and not practising social distancing, which are the root causes. The real spreaders are the auto-rickshaw drivers and share-autos carrying more than 5 or 6 persons without masks. A fine of Rs.200 will not deter the determined public who show scant respect to rules. Increase the fine amount to Rs.1,000 as in Telangana. Unless the rulers entrust the responsibility to the police department to deal with the violators, all efforts would fail to prevent the virus spread and Chennai city will become another Madrid, Spain's capital as in 1918 with lakhs of infections and thousands of deaths.

**A. Seshagiri Rao,**  
*Chennai*

PRINCE AND THE  
PANDEMIC

Britain mourned the death of Prince Philip, the husband of Queen Elizabeth II, with the BBC interrupting its scheduled programming to broadcast the national anthem, God Save the Queen. The flag at Buckingham Palace, the queen's residence in London, was lowered to half-mast after the announcement of Philip's death. The Royal Family's website featured a black-and-white portrait of the prince, also known as the Duke of Edinburgh. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Philip earned the affection of generations in Britain, across the Commonwealth and around the world. Like the expert carriage driver that he was, he helped to steer the royal family and the monarchy so that it remains an institution indisputably vital to the balance and happiness. His fine record of public service, first as a naval officer during World War II and then during more than 70 years of marriage to the queen is there for all to see. He will be remembered most of all for his extraordinary commitment and devotion to The Queen and his presence during Wimbledon Championship and that too during finals was a sight to watch. Their marriage has been a symbol of strength, stability and hope, even as the world around them changed and most recently during the pandemic. It was a partnership that inspired millions in Britain and beyond.

**C.K. Subramaniam,** *Chennai*

Rod Liddle

The dilemma of  
vaccines: Why  
all need to take  
the Covid-19 jab

In Britain, we have a government which is basically libertarian in its instincts, despite its current affection for telling us what we can and can't do on a daily basis. This seems like a paradox or a non-sequitur, but it isn't really, because in a sense it's a coalition between libertarian politicians and a big-statist regulatory medical clergy. It's an interesting political marriage, a marriage of expediency. And it will soon become very strained.

The government is about to run into big problems over its rollout of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, which many scientists believe could have a causal link to the prevalence of blood clots in a very small minority of the people who take it. The European Medicines Agency will soon announce its official finding on all this. Britain's own medical regulator may soon suggest the jab not be given to under-60s. Many British epidemiologists have suggested a causal link is more likely than not.

This will unquestionably deter some people from getting their jab, especially in the younger age groups. The government's advice is that we should

continue to receive our first and second jabs because the risk of not doing so far outweighs the risk of thrombosis. But I am not entirely sure that's correct. The risk to society is far more dangerous if we don't take our jabs. But the risk to certain individuals may be too close to call, frankly, or even the other way about.

Look at the figures. The health regulator has said 30 blood clots were reported out of the 18.1 million people in the UK who already had the Oxford vaccine, of which seven people have died. That seems, on the face of it, an incontestably tiny proportion — which is why, of course, the government and the doctors wheel it out. But there are problems with this figure. The blood clots tended to present themselves in the younger age groups: we don't yet have the statistics for precisely what age group is the most vulnerable. However, we do know that of those 18.1 million vaccines, the overwhelming majority were given to people over the age of 60. It was only one month ago, fully 12 weeks into the rollout, that people in their 50s were asked to come forward for their first shots.

The further you go down through the age groups, the more blood clots are likely to appear — which is perhaps why everyone is beginning to get worried about them now, because they have only recently started to present in numbers.

The point I am making is that 30 thromboses out of 18.1 million vaccines is rather misleading. The likelihood, indeed certainty, is that it becomes very much higher than that because hitherto it has largely been the elderly who have been vaccinated, and they are apparently far less susceptible to this unfortunately lethal side effect. The overall figure would probably be closer to the 1.5 per 100,000, which has been suggested by various international agencies.

Now, imagine that you are a healthy twentysomething woman and are weighing up the pros and cons of having your jab. The figures so far suggest that women are more susceptible to the blood-clotting side effects than men, particularly younger women. What are your chances, if you are a woman within that age range, of contracting Covid-19 and then dying as a

consequence of it? On the latest figures, your chance of having been diagnosed with the wretched bug has been almost one in ten, while your chance of dying of it has been approximately 2.3 in 100,000. That is a similar level of risk to getting a clot from the vaccine, even on that 1.5 per 100,000 figure which we already know is an underestimate for people in your age range, because it covers all ages.

In other words, the reluctance of people to come for their shots — which will be described as witless plebeian jackasses misunderstanding the science by the experts and government ministers — probably has a very good scientific rationale, even if they don't know it. Nor should we single out poor old AstraZeneca, mind. Who knows what side effects will attend those vaccines which have not been given to huge numbers of people so far? The caveat to my numbers, incidentally, is that while there may be a causal link between the vaccine and blood clots, we don't know that there was a causal link in every one of those who developed the clots. The other caveat is that all these figures still represent only a

tiny amount of risk.

So, a reluctance to take the jab may be well founded in some age groups. Further, that reluctance is likely to be deepened by the fact that if they do take their jab, their own lives will not be enhanced as a result. Still masked up and barred from travel, etc. The government is aware of this, which is why the debate over Covid passports has suddenly gained such traction. The ministers know that an incentive is needed among those age groups for whom Covid-19 poses very little risk indeed — at the very most a risk comparable with having the vaccine.

The only way you can sell the vaccine, then, is through engendering a sense of communitarianism. Or at least, that's the only honest way. You are taking this jab, despite the tiny risk that goes with it, not to benefit yourself, but for the good of the country. If it's sold the right way, with sufficient wartime exhortations of sacrifice and duty, people might sign up. Otherwise, they might just smell a rat.

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## IN BRIEF

**B'desh mosque attacked, 12 hurt**

**Dhaka, April 10:** Activists of a hardline Islamist group attacked devotees inside a mosque in northern Bangladesh, injuring at least 12 persons, according to a media report.

The incident took place on Friday at the mosque in the Gaibandha district when self-proclaimed Hefazat-e-Islam activists snatched the mic from the Imam and preached about the organisation, Dhaka Tribune reported.

They attacked the devotees who tried to intervene, Imam Motlob Uddin said.

**Blasphemy: 2 Pak nurses booked**

**Lahore, April 10:** Two Christian nurses have been booked under blasphemy charges in Pakistan's Punjab province following a complaint by hospital authorities, police said, as people staged demonstrations against the duo demanding strict action against them.

An FIR has been registered against the two, Mariyum Lal and Newish Arooj, working in District Headquarters Hospital, Faisalabad, on Friday on the complaint filed by Deputy Medical Superintendent Dr Mohammad Ali.

**Indonesia quake kills 7 in Java**

**Malang, April 10:** A strong earthquake killed at least seven people, injured 12 others and damaged more than 300 buildings on Indonesia's main island of Java and shook the tourist hotspot of Bali, officials said Saturday. No tsunami warnings were posted. The US Geological Survey said the magnitude 6.0 quake struck off the island's southern coast at 0700 GMT. It was centred 28 miles south of Sumberpucung town of Malang District in East Java province, at a depth of 82 kilometres. Rahmat Triyono, head of earthquake and tsunami centre, said the tremor did not have the potential to cause a tsunami.

# IMF, WB urged to ensure timely vaccine delivery

**Jt. ministerial panel asserts virus effects will be felt for years**

**Washington, April 10:** Asserting that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic will be felt for years, a joint ministerial committee of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank has urged the two global financial bodies to ensure timely delivery of safe and effective vaccines across all countries.

"Timely delivery of safe and effective vaccines across all countries is critical to ending the pandemic, especially as new variants emerge. Developing countries need to strengthen their readiness for vaccination campaigns and develop coordinated strategies to reach vulnerable populations," the Development Committee said in a communique after the Spring Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank here on Friday.

The panel noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented public health, economic and social crisis, threatening the lives and livelihoods of millions.

The economic shock is increasing poverty, worsening inequalities and reversing development gains. As the global economy begins a gradual recovery, uncertainty surrounds near- and medium-term prospects, it said.

According to Johns Hopkins University, the deadly Coronavirus pandemic that is likely to have originated from the Chinese city of Wuhan in 2019 has so far infected 134,545,099 people and claimed 2,914,590 lives globally. "We call for sustained, differentiated, and targeted financial and technical support for an adequate policy response, strong coordination across bilateral and multilateral organisations,



A French gendarmerie officer scans the QR code of a driver at an exit of the A10 motorway linking Paris and Bordeaux, during the lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in Virsac, southwestern France, on Friday. — AFP

tions, and further support to the private sector. We urge the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in line with their respective mandates, to work closely together and with other partners to contain the impacts of the pandemic," the communique said.

The committee called for redoubling the efforts to support manufacturing capacity for vaccines and the pandemic-related medical supplies in developing countries.

"The pandemic has triggered far-reaching consequences, and we must strengthen global preparedness for future pandemics, and at the same time make progress in building robust health systems with universal coverage," it said. — PTI

## Vaccine shortage hit poor countries

**London, April 10:** As many as 60 countries, including some of the world's poorest, might be stalled at the first shots of their Coronavirus vaccinations because nearly all deliveries through the global programme intended to help them are blocked until as late as June.

COVAX, the global initiative to provide vaccines to countries lacking the clout to negotiate for scarce supplies on their own, has in the past week shipped more than 25,000 doses to low-income countries only twice on any given day. Deliveries have all but halted since Monday.

During the past two weeks, according to data compiled daily by Unicef, fewer than 2 million COVAX doses in total were cleared for shipment to 92 countries in the developing world — the same amount injected in Britain alone. On Friday, the head of the World Health Organisation slammed the "shocking imbalance" in global Covid-19 vaccination.

WHO DG Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that only one in 500 in poorer countries had got a dose against one in four people in rich countries. — AP

## Pentagon chief to visit Israel amid Iran talks

**Jerusalem, April 10:** US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin is due to arrive in Jerusalem on Sunday, the highest ranked member of President Joe Biden's administration to visit Israel. The two-day visit comes as the Biden administration attempts to return to an Iran nuclear deal abandoned by its predecessor — a deal Israel opposes.

Austin is expected to meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defence Minister Benny Gantz and armed forces chief Lieutenant General Aviv Kochavi. The trip will also include a tour of the Nevatim air force base and visits to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial and to a Jerusalem memorial to fallen soldiers. Austin arrives days after representatives of the remaining parties to the troubled 2015 nuclear deal launched talks in Vienna on bringing the United States back into it. Then president Donald Trump withdrew from the deal in 2018. The Vi-

enna talks are focused not only on lifting crippling economic sanctions Trump reimposed, but also on bringing Iran back into compliance after it responded by suspending several of its own commitments. All sides said the talks, in which Washington is not participating directly but has the European Union as intermediary, had got off to a good start.

Israel opposes the US attempt to rejoin the accord. Speaking last week, Netanyahu said Israel would not be bound by its terms. "An agreement with Iran that would pave the way to nuclear weapons — weapons that threaten our extinction — would not compel us in any way," Netanyahu said in a speech on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day. Iran and Israel have both recently attacked each other's commercial shipping, reports say.

Austin will also visit Germany, the United Kingdom and Belgium on his tour, according to the Pentagon. — AFP

## US WARNS OF CONSEQUENCES TO RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE

**Washington, April 10:** The Biden administration is carrying a review of its policies against Russia over its escalating aggression in eastern Ukraine and there will be "consequences", some seen and some unseen, to Kremlin, the White House has warned. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki during her daily briefing said the US is in close consultation and working with partners and allies in the region over Russia's

troop movements on Ukraine's borders.

Of the actions that have already been taken, that we've had an ongoing review about we've been clear. There will be consequences, some unseen and some seen. We will hope to have more about those soon, Psaki said on Friday.

As it relates to the escalating Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, including Russia's troop movements on Ukraine's borders. — PTI

## GAMES

## SHORT TAKES

**IOA to supervise taekwondo trials**

**New Delhi:** The selection trials for the national Taekwondo squad which will take part in the Asian Olympic Qualifiers will be conducted by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) instead of the Sports Authority of India (SAI). The decision has been taken to ensure a free and transparent selection trial since Taekwondo Federation of India is not a recognised National Sporting Federation (NSF). SAI was earlier supposed to hold the selections from April 15 to 17. All necessary support including financial assistance will be provided by SAI. — PTI

**Marquez to return for Portuguese GP**

**Paris:** Six-time MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez says he has finally recovered from the injuries that wiped out all of last season and will return at the Portuguese Grand Prix on Sunday week. "See you in Portimao next week," the Spaniard, who rides for Honda, posted on Instagram on Saturday. Marquez fractured his right arm when he fell in the first Grand Prix of last season, an injury that required three bouts of surgery, the last in December. He returned to training at the beginning of February but was unable to line up for the first two races of the new campaign in Qatar. — AFP

**Young carries Hawks past Bulls**

**Los Angeles:** Trae Young bounced back from a subpar outing to score 42 points as the Atlanta Hawks overcame Zach LaVine's 50-point performance with a 120-108 win over the Chicago Bulls on Friday in Atlanta.

The second meeting of the season between the two teams played out similar to their first game in December when Hawks top scorer Young and Bulls all-star LaVine carried their respective offences in Atlanta's 124-104 win. Young, who was coming off a poor shooting night on Wednesday against Memphis when he shot just six-of-12 from the floor, ratcheted up the intensity against the Bulls. — AFP

# Dallas double shocks Man City

**Pep and Co. suffer fourth defeat of English Premier League season at Etihad**

**Manchester, April 10:** Manchester City suffered just a fourth Premier League defeat of the season as 10-man Leeds United shocked the run-away leaders thanks to Stuart Dallas's double in a 2-1 win at the Etihad on Saturday.

Dallas opened the scoring three minutes before half-time, but hope of a famous win for Marcelo Bielsa's men seemed to have disappeared when captain Liam Cooper was shown a straight red card in first-half stoppage time.

The visitors withstood a City bombardment until Ferran Torres equalised 14 minutes from time.

But Leeds still summoned the energy to pose a threat on the counter-attack and gained their reward when Dallas slotted below Ederson.

Bielsa's first win in five meetings against Pep Guardiola propels Leeds to ninth in their first season back in the English top flight for 16 years.

Guardiola paid for heavily rotating his side with Wednesday's Champions League quarter-final, second leg, against Borussia Dortmund clearly his priority.

City still enjoy a 14-point lead at the top of the Premier League and need just 11 points from their remaining six matches to guarantee a third title in four years.



Leeds United's Stuart Dallas (centre) celebrates with teammates Raphinha (left) and Luke Ayling after scoring against Manchester City in their English Premier League match at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on Saturday. Leeds won 2-1. — AP

But Manchester United could close the gap to eight points should the Red Devils win their two games in hand, the first of which is away to Tottenham on Sunday.

A two-minute silence was held before kick-off in honour of Prince Philip, who died aged 99 on Friday.

Once the action got underway, City noticeably missed Kevin De Bruyne, Ilkay Gundogan, Riyad

## THE RESULT

<b>Manchester City</b> (Torres 76)	<b>1</b>
<b>Leeds</b> (Dallas 42, 90+1)	<b>2</b>

Mahrez, Phil Foden and Ruben Dias, who were among the stars left on the bench by Guardiola.

Raheem Sterling's presence in what was largely a second string side is a reflection of how the England international has fallen down the pecking order in the past few weeks.

Sterling did not even get on as a substitute in the first leg against Dortmund and did little to further his case for selection in midweek by slicing a great chance wide from Fernandinho's cut-back.

Leeds had wasted a number of promising attacks with their final ball, but found the finishing touch on 43 minutes.

Patrick Bamford teed up Dallas to strike low in off the inside the post.

The visitors' joy was short-lived. Just four minutes later they were a man down. — AFP

## Rizwan steers Pak in record run chase

**Johannesburg, April 10:** Opening batsman Mohammad Rizwan steered Pakistan to their highest winning run chase as they beat South Africa by four wickets in the first Twenty20 international at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on Saturday.

Rizwan made an unbeaten 74 as Pakistan chased down a target of 189 with one ball to spare.

Their previous highest T20 chase was 188 against Australia in Harare in 2018. The match swung in the last four overs of the two innings.

South Africa could score only 29 in their last four

overs, while Pakistan thrashed 52 off the last 3.5 overs.

Earlier, opening batsman Aiden Markram and stand-in captain Heinrich Klaasen made hard-hitting half-centuries against Pakistan.

Markram hit 51 off 32 balls and Klaasen scored 50 off 28 deliveries as a depleted South African team made 188 for six off 20 overs after winning the toss.

**Brief scores:** South Africa 188/6 in 20 overs (A. Markram 51, H. Klaasen 50; Mohammad Nawaz 2/21, Hasan Ali 2/28) lost to Pakistan 189/6 in 19.5 overs (Mohammad Rizwan 74 not out, Faheem Ashraf 30; B. Hendricks 3/32, T. Shamsi 2/29).

**Augusta (Georgia, USA), April 10:** Justin Rose squandered a four-shot advantage, then birdied three of the last six holes to seize a one-stroke lead after second round of the Masters.

The 40-year-old Englishman overcame a nightmare start to fire a level par 72 and stand on seven-under 137 after 36 holes at Augusta National.

"Today, ultimately, was a fairly good result in the end," Rose said. "To be honest, I felt comfortable and fairly confident all day."

"Making a few birdies just makes you feel good out there for sure."

● **Justin Rose fired a 65 on Thursday to lead by four, matching the largest 18-hole Masters edge since 1941.**

Rose, twice a Masters runner-up, fired a 65 on Thursday to lead by four, matching the largest 18-hole Masters edge since 1941.

But the reigning Olympic champion began Friday with four bogeys in his first seven holes, briefly losing the lead before a sparkling late fightback restored him to the top.

Will Zalatoris, who could become the first Masters debutant winner since Fuzzy Zoeller in 1979, and Brian Harman shared second on 138.

Meanwhile, top-ranked defending champion Johnson made bogeys on three of the last four holes to finish on 149 and miss the cut, which came at 3-over 147 and left 54 players for the weekend.

Also missing the cut were four-time major winners Brooks Koepka and Rory McIlroy and England's Lee Westwood.

American Matthew Wolff was disqualified for returning an incorrect scorecard. — AFP

## ANSHU, SONAM SEAL TOKYO GAMES SPOTS

**Almaty (Kazakhstan), April 10:** India's young wrestlers Anshu Malik and Sonam Malik produced impressive performances in the Asian Olympic Qualifiers here on Saturday to qualify for the Tokyo Games.

Anshu, 19, and Sonam, 18, making a steady transition from the junior to the senior circuit, joined senior pro Vinesh Phogat (53kg) in making the Olympics cut. India now have three women wrestlers, who will now fight for glory at the Summer Games.

Vinesh had qualified through the 2019 World Championship. Overall, India now have seven wrestlers who have qualified for the upcoming Games. Among men, Bajrang Punia (65kg), Ravi Dahiya (57kg) and Deepak Punia (86kg) have qualified in the men's free style event.

While Anshu was dominant in 57kg competition, Sonam's resilience eventually helped her secure the quota and shut the door on Rio Olympic medalist Sakshi Malik.

Sonam announced her arrival by defeating Sakshi four times in recent trials, making the 62kg category her own.

Such was Anshu's dominance that she conceded only two points en route the final, winning all her three bouts by technical superiority.

She began by beating Korean Jieun Um, then outsmarted Kazak wrestler Emma Tissina and in the semifinal she beat Uzbekistan's Shokhida Akhmedova.

Sonam edged China's Jia Long 5-2 before winning by technical superiority against Hsin Ping Pai of Taipei. In the semifinal, she trailed 0-6 against Kazakhstan's Ayaulym Kassymova but reeled of nine points in a row to secure herself the quota. — PTI

Amul





## Off the field



Mumbai batsman Suryakumar Yadav enjoys a day off at the beach in Chennai. — Twitter

## Morgan backs under-fire Narine

Kolkata Knight Riders skipper Eoin Morgan on Saturday backed under-fire all-rounder Sunil Narine to deliver in the ongoing IPL and said the Trinidadian is no different from their latest acquisition, Shakib-Al-Hasan. Narine faces some heat as KKR seemed to have got his back-up in the form of Bangladesh's star all-rounder Shakib.

"Shakib and Sunil are no different. Sunil believes in himself and in the team to go and get through and win that situation," Morgan said.

## Rohit bats for rhino conservation

Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma wore shoes highlighting the "Great One-Horned Rhinoceros" during the IPL opener against RCB to help build awareness for the need to conserve the endangered species. This IPL Rohit has taken a unique approach to speak about up a cause that he has long supported the conservation of the Great One-Horned Rhinoceros or the Indian Rhinoceros. The swashbuckling batsman sported a unique design of his IPL cricket shoes which showcased the endangered species on them.



Rohit Sharma's shoes display 'save the rhino' campaign.

## Covid certificate must at W'khede

The Mumbai Cricket Association has asked its Apex Council members to produce a COVID-19 negative certificate in order to enter the Wankhede stadium, which will host 10 matches. "As per BCCI's protocol, all the officials who would be attending matches are required to produce a Negative report of RT-PCR test conducted within 48 hours of the match day," MCA secretary Sanjay Naik, wrote in a note.

## We missed a sixth bowler, says Lynn

Mumbai Indians opener Chris Lynn feels that his team perhaps missed a trick by not having a sixth bowling option against RCB.

When asked why Hardik Pandya was not bowling, Lynn indicated that the all-rounder might be carrying a shoulder niggle apart from his workload management.

"I exactly don't know perhaps he is carrying a shoulder niggle. Obviously when he bowls, he brings in a different dimension to our side. But I think it was more of a precautionary measure," the Queenslander said.

A mix-up with Rohit Sharma led to the skipper's run-out and Lynn admittedly was a bit "nervous" after that. "These are part of the game. Yes, I was a bit of nervous," he laughed.

## SHAW AND AWE!

Prithvi, Dhawan on fire as Delhi gun down CSK for 7-wkt win

Mumbai, April 10: Prithvi Shaw smashed a hapless Chennai Super Kings attack into submission with a brilliant 72 off 38 balls as Delhi Capitals romped home by seven wickets in an IPL match here on Saturday. Shaw, who has been in sublime form of late found a perfect ally in veteran Shikhar Dhawan (85 off 54 balls), as they added 138 for the opening stand while cruising to the target of 189 in 18.4 overs.

Shaw's innings had nine boundaries and three sixes while Dhawan was equally attractive in his strokeplay with 10 fours and 2 sixes.

The CSK attack had no answers as they literally took control of the chase within the Powerplay overs with both Sam Curran (0/24 in 2 overs) and Shardul Thakur (2/53 in 3.4 overs) being carted all over the park.

Earlier, Suresh Raina announced his IPL comeback with a blazing 36-ball 54 and powered Chennai Super Kings to a solid 188 for seven. Sam Curran smashed away to 34 off only 15 balls to prop up the CSK innings towards the end. Curran hit four fours and two sixes.

The last five overs yielded 52 runs for CSK, thanks to Curran's power-packed innings.

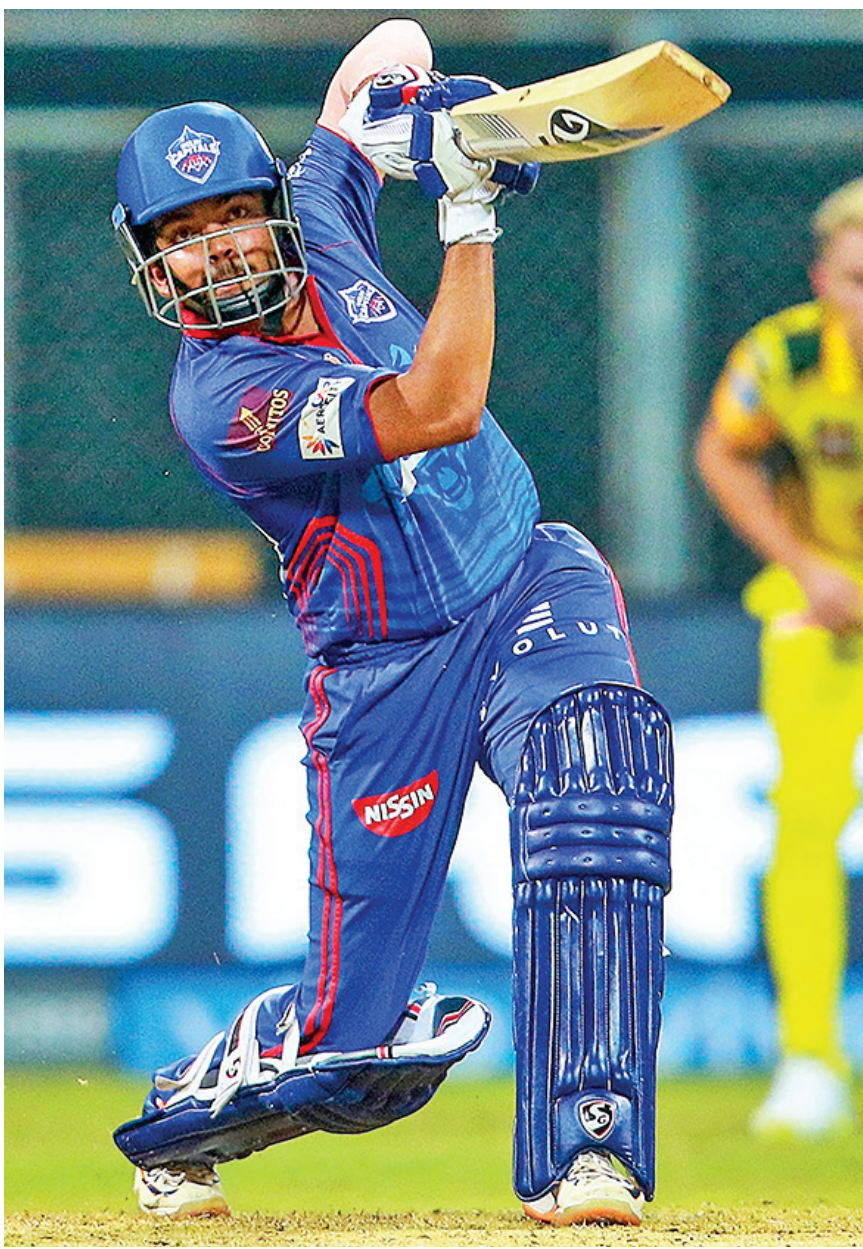
Asked to bat first by Rishabh Pant, Ruturaj Gaikwad got CSK off the mark with a pleasing drive through the off side between point and cover, two deliveries after being beaten all ends up by a Chris Woakes outswinger.

Last season's runners-up DC didn't have to wait long for their first breakthrough as Avesh Khan (2/23 in 4 overs) had Faf du Plessis trapped in front of the wicket in the second over.

In the first ball of the third over, Woakes had Gaikwad caught in the slip cordon as CSK slipped to seven for two.

The English pacer drew Gaikwad into a push with a ball that moved a slightly on pitching.

In came Raina — he had missed the last IPL offer to personal reasons — and in the company of Moeen



Delhi Capitals opener Prithvi Shaw en route to his 72 against Chennai Super Kings in an IPL match in Mumbai on Saturday. Delhi won by seven wickets. — IPL

Ali, the seasoned campaigner revived CSK's innings and looked to put up a challenging total against a strong DC batting line-up at the Wankhede Stadium.

During his 24-ball 36, Moeen struck four boundaries and two sixes, playing a fine helping hand to Raina.

Experienced off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin cut short Moeen's innings when the all-rounder got himself into an uncomfortable position while going for a reverse sweep,

the ensuing top-edge ending in a good catch by Shikhar Dhawan, who ran backwards from short third man to hold on to the ball.

Ambati Rayudu came in and straightaway got into the act, hitting a couple of sixes and a four to race away to 23 off 16 balls before Tom Curran ended his stay in the middle.

Meanwhile Raina went about his task in a manner that did not give the impression that he was coming back to top-flight after a long hiatus.

Raina got himself going with a four off Woakes and then worked Ashwin for two successive boundaries, not afraid to dance down the wicket against the wily spinner's flight.

Using his feet well, the veteran southpaw hoicked leg-spinner Amit Mishra for two and also got a maximum against Ashwin.

It was no different with Marcus Stoinis as Raina pulled the Australian medium pacer for another six before being run-out following a mix-up with Ravindra Jadeja. — PTI

## SCORECARD

**Chennai Super Kings:** Ruturaj Gaikwad c Dhawan b Woakes 5, Faf du Plessis lbw b Avesh Khan 0, Moeen Ali c Dhawan b Ashwin 36, Suresh Raina run out (Woakes/Pant) 54, Ambati Rayudu c Dhawan b Curran 23, Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 26, MS Dhoni b Avesh Khan 0, Sam Curran b Woakes 34. Extras (lb 7, nb 1, w 2) 10. Total (20 overs) 188/7.

**FoW:** 1-7, 2-7, 3-60, 4-123, 5-137, 6-137, 7-188.

**Bowling:** Chris Woakes 3-0-18-2, Avesh Khan 4-0-23-2, R. Ashwin 4-0-47-1, Tom Curran 4-0-40-1, Amit Mishra 3-0-27-0, Marcus Stoinis 2-0-26-0. **Chennai Super Kings:** Ruturaj Gaikwad c Dhawan b Woakes 5, Faf du Plessis lbw b Avesh Khan 0, Moeen Ali c Dhawan b Ashwin 36, Suresh Raina run out (Woakes/Pant) 54, Ambati Rayudu c Dhawan b Curran 23, Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 26, MS Dhoni b Avesh Khan 0, Sam Curran b Woakes 34. Extras (lb 7, nb 1, w 2) 10. Total (20 overs) 188/7.

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**Delhi Capitals:** Prithvi Shaw c Ali b Bravo 72, Shikhar Dhawan lbw b Thakur 85, Rishabh Pant (not out) 15, Marcus Stoinis c Curran b Thakur 14, Shimron Hetmyer (not out) 0. Extras (nb 1, w 3) 4. Total in 18.4 overs) 190/3.

**FoW:** 1-138, 2-167, 3-186.

**Bowling:** Deepak Chahar 4-0-36-0, Sam Curran 2-0-24-0, Shardul Thakur 3.4-0-53-2, Ravindra Jadeja 2-0-16-0, Moeen Ali 3-0-33-0, Dwayne Bravo 4-0-28-1.

## ABD STILL INTIMIDATES OPPONENTS, SAYS KOHLI

Chennai, April 10: Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli was all praise for Harshal Patel's match-winning bowling performance here on Friday, terming him their designated death bowler in this edition of the IPL. Harshal's 5 for 27 was the reason RCB were able to restrict MI to 159 for nine in the IPL opener, which is something that even losing captain Rohit Shama admitted.

"We brought Harshal in a trade from Delhi. He is relishing the responsibility and is clear with his plans. He was the difference today. He is going to be our death bowler. As a captain you want players with clarity, and he has that," Kohli said at the post-match press conference.

About AB de Villiers' 48 off 27 balls, Kohli said that the South African still intimidates the opposition. "The opposition gets nervous about AB. We have depth in the batting which we want to utilize. AB is probably the only one in the team who is so versatile. And he does it on slow wickets what not many can do."

MI captain Rohit wouldn't mind losing another opening game as long as his team goes on to win the tournament, but admitted that they were 20 runs short.

"Winning the championship is important. I guess, not the first game. It was a great fight and we didn't let it go easily. Although the score wasn't something we were happy with. We were 20 short," Rohit said after his team's ninth opening round loss.

"We made some mistakes, those are bound to happen. We need to move on. When you look at the situation with four overs left they had AB and Christian, that's why we went with Bumrah and Boult to try and get them out."

"Definitely not an easy pitch to bat on, the odd ball was gripping," he said.

The MI captain was all praise for de Villiers. "De Villiers batted really well and got them home. We haven't had much time together as a group."

## Harshal revels in role as death over specialist

Chennai, April 10: Harshal Patel was told well in advance that he will be death overs' "pointman" for Royal Challengers Bangalore, a role he played to perfection in the IPL opener against Mumbai Indians. Harshal's career-best 5 for 27 was one of the two match-winning performances for RCB with the other coming from AB de Villiers.

"When I was traded from Delhi Capitals, I was told what role I will play for the franchise," the Haryana pacer said at the post-match press conference on Friday.

He was brilliant at the death and just like skipper Virat Kohli said, Harshal also knew that he is expected to perform the tough job for which he had planned meticulously.

"There were clear instructions that I will be bowling in the last two overs (he bowled 18th and 20th). That gave me a lot of clarity. It helped me prepare certain plans against batters and kept my preparations concise."

Harshal said that change of pace and the slow yorkers have been his biggest strength. "The ball started

reversing at one stage. It was important to bowl the Yorkers and slower balls," he said.

According to Harshal, he has been bowling those slower yorkers that got rid of Ishan Kishan and Marco Jansen, for almost two seasons now.

"Just that when you don't get wickets of slow yorkers, people don't tend to see that. I always had the yorker but earlier couldn't take it into the game."

He did a lot of simulation of bowling yorkers during training session to get it right during the match. — PTI



Sunrisers Hyderabad players during a training session in Chennai. — SRH

## KKR OPEN CAMPAIGN AGAINST SRH

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, APRIL 10

## HEAD to HEAD

Matches 19

KKR 12 SRH 7

## LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

- KKR defeated Sunrisers by seven wickets at Abu Dhabi
- KKR beat Sunrisers in a Super Over at Abu Dhabi

## FOR THE RECORD

- David Warner who has scored 912 runs at an average of 45.60 in 23 innings for Delhi Daredevils and Sunrisers Hyderabad is the second highest run-getter against KKR.
- Andre Russell who has made 1,459 runs at an average of 31.04 in 57 innings, needs 41 runs to become the fourth batsman to score over 1,500 runs for Kolkata Knight Riders.

STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISAR

Pandey and Priyam Garg. Afghan leg-spinner Rashid Khan will lead the bowling attack with last year's star performer T. Natarajan hoping to continue his good show. A fully-fit Bhuvneshwar Kumar will make them a formidable bowling unit. In their 19 previous meetings, Hyderabad have lost 12 but they would be hoping that season 14 would be different.

The Caribbean duo of Sunil Narine and Kieron Pollard have to fire for KKR to do well. They both had a disappointing season in 2020. While opener

Shubman Gill was KKR top-scorer with 440 runs in 14 innings last season, Eoin Morgan's deputy Dinesh Karthik had a disappointing outing in the UAE with an average of 14. Morgan, however, believes Karthik is not only important in the brilliant department but also for his support off the field. "DK offers a lot with the bat and behind the stumps. He has been in fine form, and he is always one of those players who if you watch him train and particularly bat, he times the ball beautifully and hits the ball well."

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