

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 9 APRIL 2021

WEATHER

Max: 37.5°C
Min: 27.3°C
RH: 25%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Maximum/Min temp. 38/25°C



WORLD | 5

Lanka's 'Mrs World' held for assault



SPORTS | 8

Tendulkar discharged from hospital

TABLOID

Upset Chiranjeevi quits MAA



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ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana

Tithi: Phalguna Bahula Trayodasi till 4:28 am (Saturday)
Star: Poornavabhadra full day
Varjyanam: 11:50 am to 1:33 pm
Durmuhurta: 8:36 am to 9:25 am; 12:42 pm to 1:31 pm
Rahukalam: 10:30 am to 12 noon

HIJRI CALENDAR

Shaban 26, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajr: 5:04 am

Zohar: 12:28 pm

Asar: 4:38 pm

Magrib: 6:36 pm

Isha: 7:45 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6:30 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6:04 AM

MOONRISE TOMORROW 3:50 AM

MOONSET TODAY 3:33 PM

COUNTER POINT



Reply to all these EC notices? No hurry! Let them issue some more!

SHORT TAKES

Army man sets cycling record

New Delhi: Indian Army's Lieutenant Colonel Bharat Pannu has earned two Guinness World Records for his fastest solo cycling feats from October last year, said officials on Thursday. The first record was created when Pannu cycled from Leh to Manali (472 km distance) on October 10, 2020, in just 35 hours and 25 minutes, the Army officials noted.

No SC relief for former Maha HM

New Delhi: In a setback to former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh, the Supreme Court on Thursday refused to interfere with the Bombay HC order allowing the CBI to conduct a preliminary inquiry into the allegations of corruption levelled against Deshmukh by former Mumbai top cop Param Bir Singh.

■ Full report on Page 4

New Zealand bans Indian travellers

Melbourne/Wellington: New Zealand has for the first time imposed a temporary ban on travellers coming from India, including its citizens, from April 11 to 28 due to a surge in Covid-19 cases among visitors to this country, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said.

■ Full report on Page 5

HIDDEN WEALTH

Naxals release abducted jawan

RABINDRA NATH CHOURDHY | DC RAIPUR, APRIL 8

The CRPF's CoBRA commander Rakeshwar Singh Manhas walked free on Thursday evening after spending five days in the custody of the Maoists.

The jawan of 210 CoBRA battalion who was abducted by the Maoists after the April 3 Naxal ambush on security forces in Terram on Sukma-Bijapur border in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar region was handed over to a four-member emissary team, constituted by the Chhattisgarh government to negotiate his release, at an undisclosed location.

The jawan, with his hands tied, was produced before a *jan adalat* or kangaroo court of Maoists in the presence of scores of armed rebels, villagers and reporters before being set free at 4 pm.

With relief writ large on his face, the jawan after his release told reporters, "They (Naxals) treated me well when I was in their custody".

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With relief writ large

IN BRIEF
VJIT postpones examinations

Hyderabad: The Vidya Jyothi Institute of Technology, an autonomous college, decided to abruptly postpone the supplementary exams on Thursday.

Thursday, hours after it released the seating plan for students. The college is owned by MLC Palla Rajeshwar Reddy. Twenty teaching staff have tested positive at the institute, sources told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Despite this and the government orders not to hold offline exams, the college had scheduled these exams. When this newspaper asked the college authorities about the exams, they said these were not regular exams

and that only about 20-30 students were supposed to take them, with the teaching staff present on the campus.

After this enquiry, however, another circular was issued by the college declaring that the exams were postponed indefinitely.

ARCHAEOLOGY TEAM VISITS PEMBARTHY SITE

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, an archaeology department team visited the spot and is trying to gather evidence of any historical significance of the find.

Pembathy sarpanch Ambala Shankar Goud said that Hyderabad-based realtors purchased 11 acres of land from a farmer Narsimha two months back for a venture beside National Highway-163 between Hyderabad and Warangal.

POLICE RESCUE ABDUCTED INFANT IN 30 HOURS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 8

The Rachakonda Special Operations Team cracked a kidnapping case and rescued the two-year-old boy within 30 hours.

Police said that on April 6, the accused, M. Muthiah, 45, a worker, spotted the victim, Abhilash, alone under a tree at Kotapet and abducted him. The boy's mother Manju had left the child there and gone to relieve herself.

When she returned and did not find the child, she and her husband G. Srinu, a labourer from Saidabad, booked a case with the Saroornagar police who started investigations.

A police said the cops tracked the kidnapper via CCTV camera footage and managed to establish his identity. On Wednesday night, Muthiah was arrested from his house at Anthampet village in Marriguda mandal of Nalgonda and rescued Abhilash. The accused told police that he wanted to raise the boy.

UGADI STATE FEST TO BE HELD AT ENDOWMENTS HQ

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 8

There will be no official Ugadi celebrations at Pragathi Bhavan on behalf of the state government on April 13 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, said endowments minister A. Indrakaran Reddy on Thursday.

He said the Ugadi Panchanga Sravnam (almanac predictions) would be organised at the endowments head office in Bog-gulakunta in the city. The event will be telecast live.

Prior to 2018, the official Ugadi celebrations used to be held at Ravindra Bharathi every year when Chief Minister K Chandra-shekhar Rao shifted the venue to Pragathi Bhavan.

However, these celebrations were held only once in 2018 at Pragathi Bhavan. They were cancelled due to the Lok Sabha elections in 2019 and the lockdown in 2020.

On Ugadi, instead, Indrakaran Reddy will unveil the Ugadi Panchara-ngam of the Yadadri Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple. Later, noted vedic scholar Bachampalli Santosh Kumar will read out the predictions for the coming year.

The minister stated that the Rama Navami festival on April 21 at the famous Bhadrachalam temple, the Sri Sita Ramachandra-swamy temple, would be performed in a simple manner like last year due to the Coronavirus.

He said the money will be returned to those devotees who had booked tickets online to witness the Sita Rama kalyanam celebrations at the Bhadrachalam temple.

HC questions cops on laxity on Covid

Seeks report on cases against halls and pubs which broke Covid norms

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA I DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 8

The Telangana High Court on Thursday expressed its displeasure over the police being lax in enforcing the Covid-19 rules and guidelines set under the Disaster Management Act.

While going through a report given by the DGP, which said some 16,400 cases were booked for not wearing mask in public places, a division bench of Chief Justice Hima Kohli and Justice B. Vijayash Reddy observed that this reflected the laxity of the police.

The bench was dealing with PILs seeking steps from the government for containment of the pandemic.

Chief Justice Kohli said if the police go to the Old City or any thickly populated area in Hyderabad, they would find many people not wearing mask and not observing the social distancing norms.

The court was not impressed by the report which stated that the police had booked 13,219 cases — 4,600 cases for not maintaining social distance, 81,400 cases under the Disaster Management Act and 300 cases on those who were found spitting in public places.

"We could see large numbers of people are thronging pubs, bars, wine shops, malls, function halls and banquet halls by violating the covid guidelines, but a paltry number of cases

have been booked. This meant the enforcement is very lax," the bench observed.

The bench noted there are long lines before the wine shops. The executive authority should swing into action and cancel the licences of wine shops where people flout covid norms, it said.

The court directed the DGP to submit a report on April 14 as to how many cases were registered against banquet halls and pubs which had allowed more than 200 persons in, in violation of the SOP guidelines.

The court asked the police not to find any violation of its circular restricting function halls and closed premises from allowing more than 50 per cent of seating capacity to be occupied and more than the maximum of 200 persons. The CJ asked the government why it was not enforcing restrictions on huge gatherings for marriages, other functions, at cinema halls, pubs, bars, wine shops, clubs, malls, whereas there are restrictions on religious places. Many marriages will be held in May, which has many auspicious days, and the

absence of restrictions could cause a huge spurt in Covid cases, the CJ noted. Chief Justice Kohli asked the government to examine the proposal of the high court to issue an advisory requiring every person entering Telangana state to have a RT-PCR test report. This could be considered at least for travellers from states having high rates of infection.

"This court is not asking the government to go for a lockdown. But we are insisting on the state to identify and create micro containment zones and containment zones, hold a strict vigil on the ingress and egress into such zones by posting home guards and issue advisories to the people to avoid entering containment zones so as to curtail the spread of the disease," the CJ said.

On the vaccination drive, the court asked advocate general BS Prasad about the wastage of Covid-19 vaccines because there is huge paucity of vaccination across the country and the government should take utmost care in storing and administering Covid-19 vaccination.

It directed him to furnish information on the number of people who were administered vaccination district-wise and how many doses went waste.

The reports should be filed by the DGP and the Telangana government separately on or before April 14 and the PILs were adjourned to April 19 for further hearing.

Vaccination fete may be symbolic

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS I DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 8

The much-hyped 'Vaccination Utsav', a four-day vaccination drive announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday may end up more of symbolic due to acute shortage of both Covaxin and Covishield vaccines, particularly in Andhra Pradesh.

Against the required 24 lakh doses for four days, the state as of now has only one lakh doses and the Centre has assured to dispatch two lakh more doses before the launch of the vaccination drive from Chennai.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to send an SOS to the Centre

seeking adequate doses at the earliest.

Official sources told this correspondent that the Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan recently replied to the state's request for adequate supplies stating that the Centre would provide one crore doses to cover all the 45 plus in the state. But in reality, the Centre with great difficulty may be able to arrange 10 lakh doses by end of April.

The Chief Minister held a review meeting with officials after the video-conference with the Prime Minister. During the four days, the Chief Minister wanted that at least 24 lakh people should be vaccinated, and directed authorities to arrange for

enough vaccine supplies by coordinating with the Centre.

Home minister Mekathoti Sucharita, Chief Secretary Adityanath Das, DGP Gautam Sawang, special chief secretary Anil Kumar Singhal (medical and health) and Secretary Muddada Ravichandra (Covid-19 management and vaccination), health and medical commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar and other senior officials were present at the meeting.

The Chief Minister asked officials to take stern action against private hospitals fleecing the public in the name of Covid treatment. "Implement price fixation for the treatment and have strict supervision over the private hospitals," he said.

HUSBAND STABS WIFE TO DEATH AFTER QUARREL, ARRESTED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 8

the man, Basavappa, and handed him over to the police. According to the police, Basavappa came home on Wednesday night in an inebriated condition and picked up a fight with his wife Padmamma. "Later, in a fit of rage, he killed her by stabbing," the police said.

Bhatti: KCR giving boost to defectors

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 8

doing a similar crime by driving unemployed youth and teachers to suicide, he said.

The CLP leader said that the Chief Minister had lured Congress MLAs towards TRS after promising huge rewards to them.

He said that merger of parties, which was a violation of the constitution, was a matter within the purview of the Election Commission.

The process should take place on the basis of a letter given by the presidents of both parties. He maintained that it was not enough to give a letter to the Speaker of the Assembly. Bhatti said that the Chief Minister has to take note of the fact that no matter how many MLAs and leaders are wooed by him, people are watching and would deliver a befitting reply at the most appropriate time.

CM: Vaccinate frontline staff

From Page 1

Jagtial, Pedd-apalli, Ramagundam, Bhongir, Jangaon, and Vikarabad.

He said that all frontline workers should be vaccinated, and wanted the process to be completed in a week.

The CM spoke to DGP M. Mahendar Reddy, principal secretaries Sandeep Sulta-nia, Arvind Kumar (MA&UD) and Sunil Sharma (transport) and GHMC commissioner Lokesh Kumar over the phone. The CM instructed that the staff and employees in all these departments to be vaccinated.

The CM said the progress in the vaccination programme should be reported to the CMO every day.

Chandrashekhar Rao said collectors and district-level officers should hold a videoconference and launch a special drive for vaccinations.

FOREST DEPARTMENT ARRANGES SAUCER PITS FOR THIRSTY ANIMALS

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 8

variety of fauna. The cameras have captured pictures of leopards, deer, bear and wild cattle drinking from the moats and saucer pits.

"This practice is going on for years now. Animals are also approaching saucer pits. The camera traps are helping us to identify the kind of animals that are coming to the watering hole. Also, it helps us keep a tab on poaching activities," A. Shankaran, DCF (retd), told *Deccan Chronicle*.

"If there is a provision to have a solar water motor we use that to refill tanks so that there is minimal human interaction," he said.

CM provides financial aid to private school teachers

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 8

TEACHERS AND staff had complained that they were not getting salaries due to shutdown of educational institutions since March last, and again from March this year.

tions during the pandemic.

The teachers and staff had complained that they were not getting salaries due to shutdown of educational institutions since March last, and again from March this year after reopening for about a month. The teachers and staff working in the recognised private educational institutions.

respective district collectors by giving their bank account details and other relevant information.

The CM has instructed ministers Sabitha Indra Reddy, Gangula Kamalakar and government chief adviser Rajiv Sharma to hold a video-conference on Friday to finalise the modalities for the scheme.

The CM said that this decision was taken on a humanitarian consideration and it would help 1.5 lakh teachers and staff working in the recognised private educational institutions.

Gov. wants to improve nutrition among primitive tribes

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, APRIL 8

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Thursday called for an exhaustive survey to identify the community, family, and individual-based needs in the so-called primitive tribal habitations.

"The exhaustive survey will help take up individual-based nutritional interventions," she said. She also directed officials to come up with other infrastructure and development initiatives necessary in these villages.

Every member of the primitive tribes should be benefited from the outcome of the survey, she said.

The Governor interacted with people of the Kondareddy tribe through a videoconference from the Puducherry Raj Bhavan. The people of the Kondareddy people from Pusukunta were at the MPDO office in Dammappet in Bhadravidi-Kothagudem district.

Village sarpanch Ummala Durga, ZPTC member Paidi Venkateswarlu, habitation elder Rajireddy, anganwadi helper Sujata took part in the pro-

gramme. The Kondareddy people thanked the Governor for initiating the programme to improve their nutritional status.

Responding to their fervent appeal to visit their habitation, the Governor assured them that she would visit Pusukunta at the earliest. She also enquired about the welfare schemes and other programmes being availed by the tribal people in their habitations and sought to know any difficulties in accessing them.

She lauded the efforts of the Raj Bhavan team led by joint secretary to Governor J. Bhavani Shankar and Indian Red Cross Society, Bhadravidi-Kothagudem district branch, in conducting health camps for the children, distributing health and hygiene kits, providing medical services to the Kondareddys there.

The representatives and experts from National Institute of Nutrition and ESIC Medical College involved in the programme. The Governor took up the programme to solve the problems of nutrition among the primitive tribes.

Village sarpanch Ummala Durga, ZPTC member Paidi Venkateswarlu, habitation elder Rajireddy, anganwadi helper Sujata took part in the pro-

OTHER STORIES
FOCUS ON SAFETY OF MINERS, NOT PROFITS: BANDI

DC CORRESPONDENT
 WARANGAL, APRIL 8

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar extended his condolences to the families of two workers —Katham Narsaiah and Saliveni Sankaraiah — who died on Wednesday in the Kakatiya Knani (KTK) incline 6 of the Singareni Collieries in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district after the roof collapsed.

In a statement released on Thursday, Sanjay said the roof appeared to have collapsed due to a lack of minimum safety measures in the workplace. It is clear that the director-general did not follow the mines safety regulations, he said.

Sanjay demanded that a full investigation should be conducted into the incident and action should be taken against those who acted negligently.

"Only when such incidents occur do officers rush in, and then forget about the matter. Managing the company only with a business perspective ignores the protection and welfare of the workers. Such incidents have been taking place frequently in recent times," Sanjay, the Karimnagar MP, said.

"The company is reducing the number of workers and targeting an increase in production which in turn is increasing the mental and physical stress on workers. They are mentally worried that the company will close if losses occur. I urge the authorities to focus not only on profits but also on the safety of workers," he stated.

Sanjay demanded a full investigation into why these accidents occur so often and the action taken against those responsible.

"ONLY WHEN such incidents occur do officers rush in, and then forget about the matter", Sanjay, the Karimnagar MP, asked.

Jagtial gets drone for spraying pesticides

Farmers will be saved from side-effects of chemicals: ZP chief

DC CORRESPONDENT
 KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 8

Zilla parishad chairperson Dava Vasantha launched a drone that will be used for spraying of pesticides. The project was designed by the Regional Agriculture Research Centre in association with Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) at Thakkapally village of Jagtial district on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, Vasantha said that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao was striving hard to achieve 'grama swarajyam', the dream of Mahatma Gandhi. The credit of "transforming agriculture into a festival" goes to Chandrashekhar Rao, she added.



ZP chairperson, Dava Vasantha launches the drone to spray pesticides at Thakkapally village of Jagtial district on Thursday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

Introducing technology into agriculture — using drones for spraying insecticides and pesticides — not only saves time but also helps in uniform spraying of chemicals on the crops. Moreover, the farmers will be saved from side-effects of medicines they use in the fields.

Appreciating the efforts put by the Regional Agriculture Research Centre and ATMA, Vasantha said that by inventing new machinery helpful for farmers in agriculture, both organisations are bringing name and fame to Jagtial district not only IN state but also in Andhra Pradesh.

Participation of farmers is a must when there are new inventions, she said. Farmers must understand that advanced technology is useful for agriculture to implement them successfully for getting maximum benefits, she suggested.

MPP Gangaram, sarpanch Jaipal Reddy, MPTC Surendra Reddy, ADR of Regional agriculture officer P. Suresh Kumar were present among others.

DRAFT ELECTORAL ROLL FOR KMC ANNOUNCED

DC CORRESPONDENT
 KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 8

Khammam: Municipal corporation commissioner Anurag Jayanthi said that the draft electoral roll for corporation is announced, and the representatives of political parties can submit their objections on it before April 11. He said that the officials completed the caste enumeration in each polling station and the re-presentatives can go through it and submit their objections on it. The officials identified all the polling stations in corporation limits. If the parties had any objections on the locations and polling stations they can report it to the concerned officials.

Will blast pump house if water not supplied, threatens Cong.

• **WHAT IS** the use of having such an enormous pump-house in Choppadandi and if it is not able to supply water to all the mandals.

problems when cultivating crops.

Instead of supplying Kaleshwaram water to Choppadandi first, water lifted through Bahubali motor pump sets at Lakshmi pump house are being diverted to his native district, which exposes the partiality of Chief Minister, K. Chandrasekhar Rao.

What is the use of having such an enormous pump-house in Choppadandi if it is not able to supply water to all the mandals of Choppadandi constituency, he said.

If the TRS government will not take immediate steps for supplying water to all the mandals of Choppadandi constituency, then along with farmers, Congress leaders of Congress will blast the Lakshmi pump house and bahubali motor pump sets, he warned.

The government must conduct a survey from gross-root levels and pay an ex-gratia of Rs.50,000 for each crop which dried up, he demanded.

Party leaders K. Padmakar Reddy, Santosh Reddy and K. Rajashekhar were present on the occasion.

More benefits in palm oil cultivation: Officials

DC CORRESPONDENT
 KARIMNAGAR, APRIL 8

Rajanna Sircilla district is best suitable for oil palm plantation, which will give yields for 30 years and not face the problems of pests, officials of the district horticulture department said in a statement on Thursday.

The horticulture department has allotted 8,398 acres for oil palm plantation to the district, and has directed Pre Unique Private Limited to supply saplings for the purpose. The government will sanction 85 per cent subsidy for the purchase of saplings, they stated.

It is an eco-friendly crop as it consumes around 20 tonnes of carbon dioxide per acre and releases 22 tonnes of oxygen into the atmosphere. The farmers who are interested to go with oil palm plantations in Vemulawada constituency can contact V. Govardhan at 7997725078 and the farmers of Sircilla constituency M. Sravanthi at 9849911111.

RUN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES WITH COVID-19 NORMS: NARSI REDDY

DC CORRESPONDENT
 KHAMMAM, APRIL 8

all the institutions", he said. Thousands of teachers and other staff working in private educational institutions are suffering due to lack of salaries. The teachers of private schools are committing suicides and the government should check the menace immediately. He said that the tribal welfare hostels were changed as tribal residential schools in 2013 and not a single vacancy in it was filled up from the last eight years. Telangana State United Teachers' Federation (TSUTF), state general secretary, Chava Ravi has requested the government to issue PRC orders immediately and extend all the PRC benefits to the teachers, who retired after July 1, 2018.

PUBLIC NOTICE
 We M/s Sun Stone Crusher Industries have been accorded Environmental Clearance for our 4.0 Ha of Building Stone & Road Metal Mining project proposed at Survey No: 819, Annaram (V), Manakonduru (M), Karimnagar District, Telangana State from State Level Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Telangana State. The copies of Clearance Letters are available with SEIAA, Telangana State Pollution Control Board, A-3, Industrial Estate, Santhagaram, Hyderabad. Order No: SEIAA/TSOL/KRM-149/2020, Dt: 20-03-2021 M/s. Sunstone Crusher Industries Managing Partner

PUBLIC NOTICE
 Under the instructions of my client Sri. Raja Ram Chintawar, S/o Late (Sri.) Yadvah Chintawar, Age: 60 years, Occ: Business, R/o. Tiripelli, Adilabad, District Adilabad. It is to inform to the Public in General that, my client is the absolute owner of the Municipal House Bearing its No. 1-2-65 (Old), 1-2-10/43 (New), Bokkalguda, Adilabad, Dist. Adilabad total measuring 30' x 60" = 1800 Sqft = Squards = 167.44 Sqmts situated at Ward No. 1, Block No.2, Bokkalguda, Adilabad within the limits of Adilabad Municipality vide Assessment No. 1094001136 and within the jurisdiction of District Registration & Sub District Adilabad and the same is bounded by: East: Road, West: Road, North: Plot No. 14, South: Plot No. 16.

It is to inform to the general public that my client has purchased the aforementioned property from one namely Sri. Chintawar Srinivas through Registered Sale Deed vide Document No. 555/2002. Prior to the sale Sri. Chintawar Srinivas there are three (3) encumbrances as per the Registration & Stamps Department of the Government of Telangana which are nothing but the link registration documents of the aforementioned property i.e., Document No. 1816/1995 and Document No. 262/A/1979 both registered at SRO, Adilabad. Whereas while going through walk from Ashton Road, Adilabad to Vinayak Chowk Adilabad my client lost the original link registration document i.e., Document No. 262/A/1979. If any person/persons found/finds the same they may handover the same at my corresponding address below or at the concerned Police Station i.e., Police Station 1 Town. It is further informed to the general public that if anyone misuses the same then it is deemed to be void at their own risk. Place: Adilabad Date: 8-4-2021

PEDDELLI NEHEMIAH DAYAKAR
 Advocate, Adilabad
 B.A., LL.B
 # 4-3-74/60/A, Opp. Blue Fox Traders,
 Beside Mahesh Electronics, Near Netaji Chowk,
 Bhukapur, Adilabad, District Adilabad,
 Telangana State, INDIA - 504001.
 Office: 08732-295222;
 Mobile: +918686579000
 e-mail: dayakarpeddelli@gmail.com

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SHORT TAKES
ARMY CHIEF ON 5-DAY TOUR OF BANGLADESH

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

Indian Army chief General M.M. Naravane on Thursday reached Bangladesh on a five days visit to continue with the tradition of strong bilateral and defence ties between the two countries.

General Naravane's visit comes in the midst of Swarnim Vijay Varsh celebrations which mark 50 years of the liberation of Bangladesh, in which Mukti Bahini fought shoulder to shoulder with Indian Armed Forces.

General Naravane paid tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War of 1971 by laying a wreath at the Shikha Anirban. He also received a Guard of Honour at Senakunj.

Gen Naravane called on General Aziz Ahmed, chief of Bangladesh Army. Both discussed strengthening of bilateral defence cooperation and strategic ties between two countries were discussed.

Gen Naravane gifted a replica of T-55 Tank and a picture of 75/24 mm Howitzer. The original equipment are being gifted for museums of Bangladesh. Both T-55 Tank and 75/24 mm Howitzer played a stellar role in the 1971 War of Liberation.

Gen Naravane called on Admiral M. Shaheen Iqbal Chief of Naval Staff, Bangladesh Navy and discussed issues of mutual interest. He also met Air Vice Marshal M. Abul Bashar, Acting Chief of Air Staff of Bangladesh Air Force.

SHIFT OFFICES TO ASSAM: ULFA (I) TO THE TEA COMPANY

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, APRIL 8

After releasing two abducted employees of an oil company, the outlawed United Liberation Front of Assam (Independent) on Thursday served a warning to a leading tea company demanding immediate relocation of all its administrative offices to Assam and recruitment of indigenous people of the state, failing which the outfit will prevent them from doing business in Assam.

The Ulfa (I) has served this notice to Amalgamated Plantations Pvt Ltd. The Amalgamated Plantations Pvt. Ltd. (APPL) was carved out of the erstwhile Tata Tea Ltd (now Tata Global Beverages Ltd, or TGBL) 10 years ago to run tea estates in West Bengal and Assam.

The notice signed by Ulfa(I) Publicity Department member self-style Capt. Rumel Asom stated, "The United Liberation Front of Assam (Independent) has taken note of ... management of the tea estates in Assam under your ownership. We appreciate that you are in the business of making profit and to that end you must devise your corporate planning. However, you have heavy responsibilities to the land and her people. You have your head office outside Assam where no indigenous personnel from Assam is in employment. The liaison office is also not in Assam."

The APPL head office is in Kolkata and its corporate office in Guwahati. The Ulfa(I) notice said "We are aware you are recruiting your workers from outside Assam instead of employing local youth and warned that this was contrary to the spirit of win, win relationship between corporates and the state."

Centre playing politics over jabs: Min.

Several states complained to the centre about vaccine shortage, had to shut down centres

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

Amid the raging controversy and war of words over a shortage of Covid-19 vaccines, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday took the second dose of Covaxin. "Got my second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine at AIIMS today. Vaccination is among the few ways we have to defeat the virus. If you are eligible for the vaccine, get your shot soon," the PM said in a tweet. However, several states have complained to the Centre that they don't have enough vaccines to inoculate their population and will have to shut some centres soon.

Reports from Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Haryana and Chhattisgarh say they are facing an acute vaccine shortage. Some states also face a shortage of oxygen and Remdesivir injections. However, Union health minister Harsh Vardhan dismissed these allegations, saying enough vaccines had been given to the states.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday held a virtual meeting with the Chief Ministers of several states to discuss the Covid-19 situation and vaccine strategy. He told the Chief Ministers to focus on vaccinations and testing and hold a special drive April 11-14 to cover all eligible beneficiaries over 45. He also asked the states to prevent vaccine wastage.

However, several states have complained to the Centre over the shortage of oxygen, Remdesivir and vaccine supply and said the vaccine drive will be severely impacted due to the short supply of jabs. Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik said his state has vaccine supply only till Friday, while several vaccine centres in Maharashtra had to be closed for the want of vaccines.

Maharashtra health minister Rajesh Tope on Thursday attacked the Central government for playing politics during the



Guest workers wait for transport along the Nashik highway in Thane of Mumbai on Thursday to leave for their home states after surge in Coronavirus cases in Maharashtra.

— PTI

TN imposes more restrictions

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, APRIL 8

A total ban on religious festivals (*thiruvizhas*) and congregations and closure of fruit and vegetable retail outlets in the Koyambdu market and other wholesale markets in the state are among the new restrictions brought in to the lockdown that is in force with relaxations till April 30 with a view to combating the spread of Coronavirus. The new set of restrictions will come into force on Saturday, a government

order said on Thursday.

As per the GO, marriage-related gatherings should not exceed 100 guests and funerals and last rites should limit the number of mourners to 50. All religious places and places of worship should be closed by 8 pm and strictly adhere to the standard operating procedures (SOPs), put out on August 31, 2020.

Public transport buses in the city, within the state and to neighbouring states of Puducherry, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh will be allowed to carry sitting

passengers alone and not permit anyone to stand during the journey.

All commercial establishments, including malls, restaurants, food courts and tea shops can be kept open only till 11 pm and allow customers in only to 50 per cent of the capacity.

Recreational clubs, cinemas, entertainment and amusement parks, auditoriums, assembly halls, zoological parks, museums and such places should restrict entry of people to 50 per cent of the capacity and follow SOPs.

which said Maharashtra got 7.50 lakh doses, Uttar Pradesh 48 lakhs, Madhya Pradesh 40 lakhs, Gujarat 30 lakhs and Haryana 24 lakh doses.

"Maharashtra's population is double than Gujarat, but we got only 1.4 crore vaccine doses. Why this step-motherly treatment to Maharashtra during this time of crisis?" he said. He further gave data of vaccine distribution,

India on Thursday recorded 1,31,787 fresh cases of Covid-19 and 802 deaths. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan tested positive for Covid-19. Incidentally, he had taken the first dose of the vaccine on March 3.

Star campaigners



Actor and BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty takes part in a roadshow in support of Union minister and party candidate from Tollygunge Babul Supriyo, ahead of the 4th phase of the West Bengal Assembly election, in Kolkata on Thursday.

— PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

ABHISHEK: TAKE MONEY FROM BJP, VOTE FOR TMC

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 8

A day after Muslim League youth wing member died in post poll violence, parts of Kannur district particularly Koothuparamba and Panur areas witnessed widespread violence.

After the death of 22-year-old Mansoor, the area became tense. Widespread violence took place during the funeral procession of the youth league worker on Wednesday night.

Half a dozen offices of the CPM local and branch committees were set on fire and vandalised allegedly by youth league workers.

The police had to resort to lathicharge and hurl stun grenades to disperse

the violent mobs. The houses of some of the accused in the case were also attacked.

The remand report prepared by the police stated that the Manzoor's death was a planned murder. It said a 25-member gang was behind the brutal incident.

Soon after the voting ended in the state on Tuesday night, clashes broke out between CPM and IUML workers which resulted in the death of Mansoor.

His brother Muhsin who also sustained injuries in the attack is currently undergoing treatment at a hospital in Kozhikode. The clashes were sequel to the skirmishes, arguments and minor altercation in polling booths during the day.

According to Muhsin, the assailants numbering about 20, had inquired about their names before carrying out the attack.

A crude bomb was thrown at Mansoor and Muhsin. The injury caused due to the bomb blast led to the death of Mansoor, said the post mortem report.

A CPM worker was taken into custody soon after the incident. While the IUML alleged that the CPM was behind the murder, the Marxist leaders denied any role in the incident and maintained that it was not a political murder.

The violence took place in areas falling within the Koothuparamba assembly constituency where LDF ally Loktantrik Janata Dal is pitted against IUML. The BJP is also in the fray.

Mufti's mother to be questioned by ED

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, APRIL 8

Days after former J&K chief minister and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti was grilled by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in an alleged money laundering case, her mother Gulshan Nazir has been asked to appear before its officials next week for a similar cross-examine.

The sources close to the Muftis said that ED officials on Thursday visited their residence along Srinagar's Gupkar Road to serve a notice on Gulshan, asking her to appear before the probing agency at its office in city's Raj Bagh area on April 15.

The ED officials had on March 25 questioned Mufti for about five hours in connection with the alleged

SC dismisses Deshmukh's petition

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
with bureau inputs
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI,
APRIL 8

In a setback to former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh, the Supreme Court on Thursday refused to interfere with the Bombay high court order allowing the CBI to conduct a preliminary inquiry into the allegations of corruption levelled against Deshmukh by former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh.

Dismissing the appeal filed by both the Maharashtra government and Deshmukh against the high court order, a bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Hemant Gupta said the nature of the allegations and the persons involved made an independent probe necessary.

"The nature of allegations

and personas involved needs an enquiry by an independent agency. It is a matter of public confidence. We are not inclined to entertain this. Dismissed", the court said, dismissing the two appeals.

The court order came as senior lawyer Kapil Sibal and Abhishek "Manu" Singhvi, representing Deshmukh and the Maharashtra government respectively, told the bench the high court passed the order without hearing Deshmukh, against whom the allegations of corruption had been levelled by the former Mumbai police commissioner.

When Singhvi noted that the high court didn't address the question of maintainability of the petitions before it, Justice Kaul said: "The allegations are extremely serious and it becomes curious and curious. In this scenario, is it

not a CBI probe case?" As Singhvi noted that the Maharashtra government has withdrawn the "general consent" for CBI probes in the state long back, saying the agency can investigate cases in Maharashtra only with the consent of the state government or on the orders of the high court or Supreme Court, Justice Kaul said: "He (Deshmukh) did not resign when the commission of inquiry was ordered... He was clinging to his office... You can't say it affects the federal structure. This does not happen every day. Both have been heads of institutions where something has gone wrong."

Sibal asked the court that if an allegation is made against a minister not supported by evidence, can a CBI probe be ordered? In Mumbai, meanwhile, the Shiv Sena, which is part of the state's ruling coalition, claimed that the BJP was playing "dirty politics" to destabilise the Uddhav Thackeray government.

A day after suspended API Sachin Waze made serious allegations against the sitting Maha Vikas Aghadi ministers, the Shiv Sena came out in support of its ministers and defended the government, saying the Opposition was playing "dirty politics" to defame the Maharashtra government.

Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut said efforts were being made by some people to destabilise the MVA government.

Waze had on Wednesday alleged in his four-page letter that senior Maharashtra Cabinet ministers, including transport minister Anil Parab, had asked him to extort money from businessmen and establish-

ments, claimed that the BJP was playing "dirty politics" to destabilise the Uddhav Thackeray government.

Three suspected militants have been killed and an equal number of security personnel injured in a fierce gunfight raging in a congested locality of Jammu and Kashmir's southern Shopian town since Thursday morning.

3 militants killed, 3 soldiers hurt in J&K

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, APRIL 8

The officials said that the militants were offered to lay down their weapons and surrender before the security forces but they preferred to fight and their opening fire at the search party triggered the encounter.

They said that the identities of the slain militants are being ascertained. The injured Army jawans Ram Dev, Drug Singh and Raj Kumar have been hospitalised. The sources said that the condition of one of them is stated to be critical.

According to the officials, the fire fight continued till reports last came in. They said that the intelligence input suggests that a top militant commander has been trapped in the besieged house.

Kejriwal seeks vaccine for all

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on Thursday said the national capital's Covid-19 vaccine stock will last for the next four to five days.

"The vaccination drive is going well in Delhi. We received some vaccines yesterday. We have stock for four to five days. We have demanded more and we will get it," he said.

When asked about the ministry of health and family welfare letter to Punjab, Delhi and Maharashtra, asking them to undertake necessary corrective actions immediately for improving the Covid-19 vaccination drives in their state/UT, Jain said the Centre is doing politics over vaccination.

"Centre is doing politics over vaccination. We should fight the Covid pandemic together. The Centre was alleging that there was less vaccination of healthcare workers in Delhi. We can also say that

there was less vaccination at Centre's hospitals. This isn't an issue, the issue is that we have to vaccinate more and more people soon," he said.

Jain further said that out of the total vaccination done in Delhi, "only 30 per cent to 40 per cent was done in the central government's hospitals".

He also informed that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has written to the central government urging to open vaccination for all. "We have made two more requests that vaccination should be allowed at least for all adults. Secondly, it should be allowed even at camp settings and not only at healthcare facilities," he added.

In view of the rising Covid-19 cases, the Delhi government has imposed a night curfew in the national capital.

Delhi reported 5,506 new Coronavirus cases and 20 deaths on Wednesday.

The national capital has 19,455 active cases currently.

Weekend lockdown in MP urban areas

RABINDRA NATH CHOWDHURY | DC
Bhopal, APRIL 8

Amid surge in Coronavirus cases in Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday announced to impose weekend lockdown in urban areas in the state.

The weekend total shutdown will be enforced from 6 pm on Friday to 6 am on Monday in all the towns in the state, Chouhan said.

He said the state government was in the process of

setting up containment zones in major cities which witnessed sudden spurt in coronavirus cases in the last few days.

Chouhan said the state government has initiated the move to increase beds in the government hospitals for the patients, besides establishing Covid-19 care Centres in each district.

The state on Thursday reported 4,324 fresh cases of Coronavirus taking the tally of cases to 32,22,338 and recorded 27 deaths taking the toll tally to 4,113.

WORLD

DECCAN CHRONICLE | KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 9 APRIL 2021

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SHORT TAKES

LANKA ARRESTS 'MRS WORLD' OVER ASSAULT

Colombo: Colombo police on Thursday arrested the current "Mrs World" on charges of assault over an on-stage fracas in which she pulled the crown off the head of the new "Mrs Sri Lanka". Caroline Jurie yanked the crown off Pushpika de Silva minutes after she was declared "Mrs Sri Lanka 2020" in a Sunday gala at Colombo's Nelum Pokuna theatre.

Jurie was the previous year's "Mrs Sri Lanka" and had gone on to win the "Mrs World" competition organised by a California-based company.

De Silva needed hospital treatment after the incident, seen by stunned spectators in a packed venue as well as a live social media audience.

"We have arrested Jurie and her associate Chula Manamendra in connection with a charge of assault and causing damage to Nelum Pokuna (theatre)," senior police official Ajith Rohana said.

TURKEY BLAMES EUROPEAN UNION FOR 'SOFAGATE'

Istanbul: Turkey on Thursday blamed Brussels for seating arrangements that left European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen without a chair during a meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Turkish leader came under a torrent of criticism after images went viral of his Tuesday meeting with von der Leyen and European Council president Charles Michel in Ankara.

The room where the three leaders were hosted had only two chairs arranged next to the corresponding EU and Turkish flags.

Erdogan and Michel quickly seated themselves while von der Leyen—whose diplomatic rank is the same as that of the two men—was left standing.

"Ehm," she said as she spread her arms in wonder and looked directly at Michel and Erdogan.

UK OFFERS \$59 MN TO HELP HK MIGRANTS

Hong Kong: The British government said Thursday it is setting up a 43 million pound (\$59 million) fund to help migrants from Hong Kong settle in the country as they escape increasing political repression in the former colony.

The offer extends to holders of British National (Overseas) passports who have been offered special visas, opening a path to work, residency and eventual citizenship to up to 5 million of Hong Kong's 7.4 million people.

The integration program will provide funding to help arrivals access housing, education and jobs. Around 10 per cent of the funds will go toward establishing 12 "virtual welcome hubs" across Great Britain and Northern Ireland to "coordinate support and give practical advice and assistance," the British Consulate-General said.

CYCLONE SEROJA SET TO HIT AUSTRALIA

Sydney: Australian authorities on Thursday urged holidaymakers to evacuate a stretch of the country's western coastline in the path of a cyclone that has devastated parts of Indonesia and East Timor.

Tropical Cyclone Seroja is expected to hit Western Australia late Sunday or early Monday after tracking south.

It is forecast to bring "destructive winds with gusts of 150 kilometres per hour (93 miles per hour) and intense rainfall that could cause flash flooding" on parts of the coast, the Bureau of Meteorology said.

Emergency services warned holidaymakers—many camping or travelling in caravans—to leave ahead of forecast weekend storms that would be quickly followed by the cyclone. "If you remain in the area in a tent or caravan, you are at risk," said assistant commissioner Paul Ryan, adding that these structures were "highly dangerous" in wild weather.

Local residents were also urged to prepare emergency kits and ensure their homes were ready for the expected impact. The cyclone is forecast to make landfall in a relatively isolated part of Western Australia—a sprawling, sparsely populated state—as a category 2 or 3 system.

US may extend its troops stay in Afghanistan

U.S. RESUMES PALESTINE FUND CUT BY TRUMP

Washington, April 8: US President Joe Biden restored aid to the Palestinians to a tune of \$235 million, drawing a rebuke by ally Israel, as he promised to press for a two-state solution.

In his sharpest break on the conflict yet from the staunchly pro-Israel Donald Trump, Biden said the United States would resume funding for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees that his predecessor had severed.

The State Department said the United States would contribute \$150 million to the UN agency and offer \$75 million in economic and development assistance for the West Bank and Gaza as well as \$10 million for peacebuilding efforts.

—AFP

email exchange ON Wednesday. "The most prudent course of action feels like a six-month extension and an attempt to get the Taliban truly meeting their promises—essentially permitting a legitimate conditions based' withdrawal in the fall." There are crosscurrents of pressure on Biden.

—AP

NZ bans travel from India

Melbourne/Wellington, April 8: New Zealand has for the first time imposed a temporary ban on travellers coming from India, including its citizens, from April 11 to 28 due to a surge in Covid-19 cases among visitors to this country, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Thursday.

The travel restriction comes after New Zealand recorded 23 new positive Coronavirus cases in managed isolation on Thursday, of which 17 came from India, Director-General of Health Ashley Bloomfield was quoted as saying by media reports. While arrivals from India had triggered the risk assessment, Prime Minister Ardern said the government would be looking at risks posed by other Covid-19 hotspot countries.

The ban will begin from 4pm local time on April 11

and will be in place until April 28, she said. "This is not a permanent arrangement but rather a temporary measure," Ardern said, adding that the temporary hold would also help reduce the risk that travellers themselves faced.

The ban covers all travellers, including New Zealand citizens and permanent residents. While there have been previous travel bans on travellers from some countries, New Zealand has never suspended travel to New Zealand citizens and residents, Ardern said, adding that she "absolutely understands the difficulty that this temporary suspension will cause" for Kiwis in India.

"But I also feel a sense of responsibility and obligation to find ways to reduce risks that travellers are experiencing," she said.

—PTI

founding family hands over the premiership. He was expected to replace Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, son of the late founding premier Lee Kuan Yew, who oversaw the country's rapid economic development during three decades of sometimes authoritarian rule.

The power transfer is highly sensitive, as the country of 5.7 million's transformation into one of

Envoys loyal to junta 'seize' Myanmar's embassy in UK

Britain seeks info on row, junta hunts for 120 celebrities backing protests

London, April 8: Diplomats loyal to Myanmar's junta have seized the country's embassy in London, leaving the ambassador locked out in the street after he called for the release of ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The ambassador, Kyaw Zwar Minn, said on Wednesday the defence attache had taken over the mission in "a kind of coup", an extraordinary diplomatic standoff that comes two months after the military seized power in Myanmar.

Daily protests demanding a return of democracy have rocked the country and brought a brutal response from the armed forces, with almost 600 civilians killed according to a local monitoring group.

The coup prompted several high-profile diplomatic defections, including the country's ambassador to the United Nations.

The junta recalled Kyaw Zwar Minn last month after he issued a statement urging them to release Suu Kyi and deposed civilian President Win Myint.

Protesters gathered outside the mission with the ousted ambassador, who told the *Daily Telegraph* that "when I left the embassy, they stormed inside the embassy and took it."

"They said they received instruction from the capital, so they are not going to let me in," he added, calling on the British government to intervene.

Asked who had taken over, he replied: "Defence attache, they occupy my embassy".

According to *The Times* newspaper, the ambassador said the defence attache had sought to install Chit Kin, his former deputy, as charge d'affaires.

Britain has been a strong critic of the coup, hitting the military with several



A Woman looks at shoes displayed with flowers in Yangon's Myaynigone township, as part of the 'Marching Shoes Strike' called on social media to protest against the demonstration against the military coup in Myanmar. — AFP

sets of sanctions, and its foreign ministry said it was "seeking further information" about the embassy standoff.

Myanmar's security forces have struggled to quell protests and a civil disobedience movement aimed at stopping the military from running the country.

They have used rubber bullets and live rounds to break up rallies and used night raids to arrest suspected dissidents.

Diplomats loyal to the Myanmar military authorities seized control of the embassy on Wednesday, leaving ambassador Kyaw Zwar Minn locked out in the street.

The ambassador said the defence attache had taken over the mission in "a kind of coup", two months after the military seized power in Myanmar.

Daily protests demanding a return of democracy

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British foreign minister Dominic Raab tweeted his support for the ambassador.

"We condemn the bullying actions of the Myanmar military regime

in London yesterday, and I pay tribute to Kyaw Zwar Minn for his courage," Raab wrote.

"The UK continues to call for an end to the coup and the appalling violence, and a swift restoration of democracy." Protesters gathered outside the mission on Wednesday evening with the ousted ambassador, who told the *Daily Telegraph* that "when I left the embassy, they stormed inside the embassy and took it."

"They said they received instruction from the capital, so they are not going to let me in," he added, calling on the British government to intervene.

— AFP

UK condemns 'bullying'

China protests against US destroyer crossing Taiwan Strait, tensions rise

Beijing, April 8: China on Thursday protested the passage of a U.S. destroyer through the Taiwan Strait in the latest move as both nations increase their naval activity in the region.

China tracked and monitored the USS John S McCain throughout its passage on Wednesday, Zhang Chunhui, spokesperson for the Chinese military's eastern

theater command, said in a statement. The US move sent the "wrong signal" to Taiwan's government and "willfully disrupted the regional situation by endangering peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," he said.

China firmly opposed the move and Chinese forces will respond with "strict precautions and vigilance," he added.

China threatens to invade

Taiwan to assert its claim over the self-governing island democracy, which enjoys strong US support.

In a one-sentence statement, the US Navy said the McCain "conducted a routine Taiwan Strait transit April 7 (local time) through international waters in accordance with international law."

The McCain's transit follows China's announcement on Monday that its

aircraft carrier Liaoning and associated vessels were holding drills near Taiwan meant to help it "safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests." Terms often interpreted as being directed at Taiwan's leadership that has refused to give in to Beijing's demands that it recognise the island as part of Chinese territory.

— AP

Singapore PM-in-waiting bows out

Singapore, April 8: A prominent Singapore minister stepped aside on Thursday as the successor to the premier, in a shock move that upended the tightly-controlled country's carefully planned power transfer.

Finance minister Heng Swee Keat was in 2018 named to a key post in the ruling party that put him in pole position to take over when Singapore's

world's wealthiest and most stable societies is linked in many people's minds to the Lee family's rule. Heng was uncharismatic and, following his designation as Singapore's leader in waiting, the long-ruling People's Action Party saw its support fall in polls last year while the opposition made unprecedented gains.

Meanwhile, the premier started signalling he wo-

uld stay on longer to see the city-state through the Coronavirus pandemic. In a letter to the premier, Heng said he was stepping aside as head of the PAP's younger generation of leaders to give younger colleagues a chance to step up.

The next prime minister should have a sufficiently long runway — to master the demands of leading our nation," he wrote, noting Lee now planned to stay on through the virus crisis.

"I would have too short a runway should I become the next prime minister." In his response, Lee, 69, thanked Heng for his "selfless decision to stand aside". Heng will step down as finance minister at the next cabinet reshuffle but will stay on in the cabinet holding other roles.

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NOTICE

DECCAN Chronicle

9 APRIL 2021

With Russia, be measured, and keep an open mind

A realistic appreciation of the state of India's relationship with Russia — which remained high in areas such as military sales and energy, nuclear and space cooperation, even after the collapse of Communism, and while New Delhi's convergences with Washington took on strategic dimensions — can be gained when President Vladimir Putin visits India later this year. The compatibility between Indian and Russian political positions in the region, or internationally, is likely to be better in view then.

But there are straws in the wind that can be picked up at this stage. These were available during the visit earlier this week of Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, who held detailed confabulations with external affairs minister S. Jaishankar on a range of bilateral and regional issues, before embarking for Pakistan, with which Moscow has expanded its relationship in recent years, particularly in the field of fighting terrorism, sale of defence equipment and energy.

Moscow-Islamabad views on the peace process in Afghanistan, and the place of importance it given to the Taliban on the question of future power-sharing, appear convergent at this stage. More, they are not different from that of Washington and Beijing, which is happy to go along with Islamabad. The Indian position, although not fully articulated except on first principles, may be seen as differently nuanced on the Taliban factor and in the context of the relationship with the government of President Ashraf Ghani.

And yet New Delhi-Moscow ties have historically had a broad sweep. To what degree this changes, if at all, in the context of India's favourable positioning with the US, Russia's close proximity with Beijing and America's contentious relationship with both China and Russia, can be better understood after Mr Putin meets Prime Minister Narendra Modi later in the year.

But the observations of Mr Jaishankar and Mr Lavrov suggest that there is a desire on both sides to keep the bilateral relationship well-oiled. Will India go ahead with the purchase of the S-400 anti-missile defence system from Russia in the face of serious US reservations on this? This is a serious question for later, the answer to which could have a bearing on India-Russia as well as India-US relations.

In his remarks, the external affairs minister called the relationship "energetic and forward-looking". This is a speculative formulation, which leaves the door open for positivity. The Russian foreign minister said that the bilateral ties were "valuable, mutually respectful" and "not subjected to political fluctuations". The two formulations are far from being at odds. Perhaps they are at the stage of probing. The reference to "mutually respectful" is suggestive of differences at the tactical level in a variety of arenas. These will need to be ironed out or taken out of contention in mutually acceptable ways even while cooperating significantly in a range of areas.

Mr Lavrov noted that Russia-China ties are "at the highest" level, historically, but it is not a "military alliance". At the same time he expressed Moscow's unease with India being a part of the Quad, obliquely calling it the "Asian Nato". These observations are not adversarial, as is being sought to be made out in some quarters, but a reflection of the current state of play in the world. India and Russia both need to move with their eyes open and remain carefully calibrated.

Uphold media's right to report

The order of the Jammu and Kashmir police banning live coverage of encounters between the security forces and separatist militants and of "law and order situations", and the subsequent direction to senior police officers to take legal action in such situations, call for clarification by the governments in the Union territory and at the Centre. This has become all the more important since the police officer who issued the directive has quoted the constitutional rights of freedom of speech and expression, and life. The J&K media, which has been walking on the razor's edge for the last several decades, has already registered their strong protest against the new fiat.

The police are stating the obvious when it says it cannot allow live coverage of encounters; nobody has even a case that it should be allowed undermining the very operation the security agencies undertake. The police are right when it invokes Article 21 and says the right to life of men in uniform has to be protected. But how far is it justified when it talks of a media ban in "law and order situations" by which it obviously refers to the protests of the ordinary citizens that erupt in the streets of the Union territory? The same Indian Constitution gives the people the right to speech and expression, which is enjoyed by every citizen, not just journalists. They put that right to use when they protest; the journalists use the same right when they report it. The police can, of course, impose reasonable restrictions, of which the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the media there have quite a clear idea. The protection of basic rights of the citizens is as much the job of the state as the protection of the rights of the security agencies. The state just cannot barter one for the other.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER

Editor

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In 1952, like a bolt from the blue, came UP chief minister Govind Ballabh Pant's order abolishing zamindari. The abrupt drop in prestige and lifestyle caused a relative across the Ganga to hide his arsenal of a few rifles and 12-bore shotguns along with boxes of Eley cartridges.

Whenever courtiers in rags, with some previous pique, stoked his fragile ego with stories of rampant lawlessness in villages because "huzoor's" power had ended, "huzoor" would come out with his preferred shotgun. This sad, fake "dadagiri" lasted as long as the boxes of Eleys did.

This trans-Ganga tragic hero came to mind when my eye fell on a bold headline of a piece by Graham E. Fuller, formerly of the CIA, on the aggressive style of Joe Biden's and Anthony Blinken's early outings in *Foreign Affairs*: "Hell Hath No Fury Like A Superpower In Decline".

The subsequent utterances are subdued and moderate but the initial knee-jerk reaction was revealing.

Fuller writes: "The US leadership must have set some kind of new record in managing to personally insult the powers of the world within 48 hours of each other in these early days of the Biden administration.

President Biden called Vladimir Putin a 'killer' and lacking 'a soul'. Blinken was equally insulting on China.

"This country has some grounds for pride in its own-imperfect democratic order. Still, how much reflection does it take to acknowledge what the Chinese Communist Party has accomplished in the past 30 years? Is it more worthy to bring half a billion people out of poverty into middle class life in a mere generation? Or more worthy to maintain intact an American electoral system in which mediocre or bad leaders emerge as readily as good ones?"

Fuller's invective is focused on the Biden-Blinken opening salvos at Russia and China. I would have scoured anything Fuller wrote on the tenth anniversary of the Syrian crisis. Five Western powers observed the occasion with all the fire and brimstone of the past. Fuller knows the area backwards. A key policy document advising the Reagan administration in 1983 on military action against Syria for strategic reasons was his handiwork. I have had this document ever since it was released in 2008, having been in secret vaults for 25 years.

After visiting Damascus and almost all the trouble spots in Syria's neigh-

bourhood, I had written a paper "The Storm in the Arab Spring", the eye of the storm being Syria. I feel qualified to take a critical look at the statement the foreign ministers of the US, France, Germany, Italy and UK issued on the tenth anniversary of the beginning of the tragedy.

One allegation the ministers repeat is straightforward: President Bashar al Assad started the ghoulish operation against his own people who were rebelling against misrule, corruption, economic distress. Not true. I was in Damascus at the outset.

There were reports fairly early in the Obama administration leading the global effort to deploy "shadow" Internet and mobile systems which "dissidents" can use to undermine repressive governments that seek to silence them by shutting down communications network". James Glanz and John Markoff of the New York Times described one operation in a fifth-floor shop at Washington's L Street, where "a group of young entrepreneurs, looking like a garage band, are assembling deceptively innocent-looking hardware into a prototype 'Internet-in-a-suitcase'. It was all part of the big push for the Liberation Technology Movement, and how comprehensively it was applied against the Syrian regime".

The free run the US and regional allies like Saudi Arabia had to alter the ground realities in Syria ended

when the Russians arrived in 2015, boots on the ground.

A brief background to place Baghdadi in perspective. President Barack Obama was livid with Iraqi PM Nouri al Maliki for not signing the status of forces agreement before the US troops' departure. Washington wanted him out.

Just about this time, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi puts out a video from Mosul's main mosque on July 4, 2014, declaring the formation of an Islamic Caliphate. In August 2014, Mr Obama gave a significant interview to Thomas L. Friedman of the *New York Times*. Asked why he didn't order airstrikes against ISIS when it reared its head in June-July 2014, Mr Obama admitted that airstrikes on Baghdad in July "would have taken the pressure off Nouri al Maliki", Iraq's stubbornly anti-American Shia PM. In other words, the rapid march of ISIS from Mosul to Baghdad's outskirts was "facilitated" to keep the pressure on the PM. In September 2014, Mr Maliki was shown the door. Moral: Terrorists can be assets in certain circumstances!

The writer is a senior journalist and commentator based in New Delhi

Subhani



'Force majeure' can't be fig leaf for naked greed

 Mohan Guruswamy

All our big companies report significant profits. Reliance Industries Ltd has reported a post-tax profit of over ₹35,000 crores for the year ended March 2019.

of any government or government agency, having jurisdiction over the parties, provided that the affected party take(s) all reasonable action to eliminate the cause of the delay".

Even if a company claims that it may have become onerous to pay the contracted amount as a result of the Covid-19 related government notifications, no government notification has rendered it impossible for the companies to pay for goods and services availed or being availed of. The ability of a company to generate a monthly profit is not linked to the obligation or ability of a profitable public corporation to pay the contracted amount.

Despite the lockdown notifications, these companies continued using the premises for storing commercial goods that were for present or future sale. For instance, most retail verticals continued to take orders and payments online for all postal codes. During the nationwide lockdown too, in the absence of being able to complete the delivery of sale, they still continued to receive payments for products that were being stored in their premises.

Nothing renders the payment of rent impossible. Any kind of temporary business interruption is covered in the risk insurance that these companies are obliged to have. The burden of the rent can't be wriggled out of because of reduced business opportunities in the light of measures taken around the prevention of Covid-19.

With respect to a similar pandemic, SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) in 2003, the courts did not permit tenants to wriggle out of

their obligations of payment in lease agreements even when the tenant was not permitted to enter the leased premises due to the temporary isolation orders of the government. In that context, the courts held that a two-week period was insignificant in view of the long duration of the lease, and that while SARS was arguably an unforeseeable event, it did not significantly change the nature of the outstanding contractual rights or obligations" of the parties in the case.

The law of the land with respect to lease agreements is that "where the property leased is not destroyed or substantially and permanently unfit, the lessee cannot avoid the lease because he does not or is unable to use the land for purposes for which it is let to him". Additionally, the courts have held that even when the economic conditions are the product of a "force majeure" event, such financial hardship would not excuse performance if the party retained some level of control over its allocation of resources.

All our big companies report significant profits. Reliance Industries Ltd has reported a post-tax profit of over ₹35,000 crores for the year ended March 2019. Its annual report also highlighted that Reliance Retail became the first retailer in India to cross the ₹100,000 crore turnover milestone. Reliance Retail posted a profit of ₹2,727 crores just in Q3 of 2019. Incidentally, Mukesh Ambani's personal wealth went up by 60 per cent in the pandemic year.

It would be a travesty if these big groups should attempt to wrongfully wriggle out of their contractual obligations in such difficult times. Such attempts to renege on performance obligations particularly oppresses their smaller associates.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

LETTERS

VACCINE AT HOME

Vaccination at doorsteps will be more effective after vaccination at offices (Centre allows jabs at places of work, DC, April 8). It will help senior citizens and others who have no one to help to go to hospitals and stand in queue for the jab. It will also do away with online registrations, waiting for one's slot, fear of contracting the virus in a crowd and other related anxieties. Elected representatives could help in this process.

Rageer Usha Rani
Hyderabad

Vaccination at places of work was long overdue, especially school teachers. The Central government school teachers are taking online classes since June last and also assigned election duties. It is high time they are treated as education warriors. The managements and school heads must take proactive steps to get their staff vaccinated without delay.

N. Nagarajan
Hyderabad

HOLDING EXAMS

Amidst the increasing Covid cases, the education department has not given any clarity about conducting board exams. Students studying in government and local colleges have lost hope and are giving up on their studies due to the pandemic. Without completing syllabus and clearing doubts, how can students think of getting good grades?

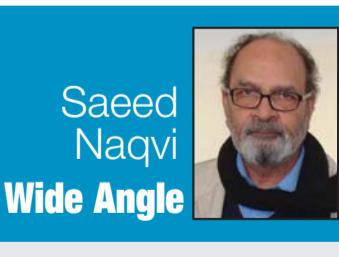
K. Lalitha
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Co-operatives must help weaker sections: PM

NEW DELHI, April 8
Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today assured her Government's fullest support to the co-operative movement in the country, and urged the co-operators to restore the faith of the people in the movement.

Inaugurating the sixth Indian Co-operative Congress, Mrs. Gandhi said and wondered though the movement was an ever expanding one, the community as a whole, did not appear to have gained greater confidence in it.



Syria is still in the eye of the storm even after 10 years

President Biden called Vladimir Putin a 'killer' and lacking 'a soul'. Blinken was equally insulting on China.

"This country has some grounds for pride in its own-imperfect democratic order. Still, how much reflection does it take to acknowledge what the Chinese Communist Party has accomplished in the past 30 years? Is it more worthy to bring half a billion people out of poverty into middle class life in a mere generation? Or more worthy to maintain intact an American electoral system in which mediocre or bad leaders emerge as readily as good ones?"

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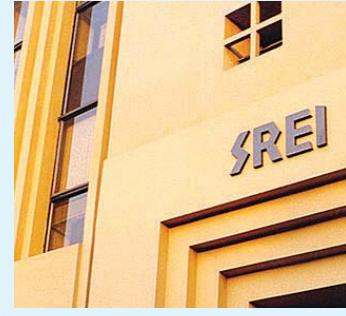
quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	49,746.21
Nifty 50	14,873.80
S&P 500*	4,094.14
Dollar (₹)	74.59
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.51
Euro (₹)	88.52
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	45,975▲182
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	63.05
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.031
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.640
	-0.014

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Srei Equipment to get \$250 mn capital infusion

Srei Equipment Finance said it has received expression of interest of up to \$250 million capital infusion from two international private equity investors. The PE funds are US-based Arena Investors LP, and Singapore's Makara Capital Partners, the subsidiary of Srei Infrastructure Finance said. The firm's Strategic Coordination Committee, chaired by independent director Malay Mukherjee, will engage with the PE investors, it said.



After eight months of outflows Equity MF schemes see ₹10,000 cr inflow

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

MUMBAI, APRIL 8

After almost a year of monthly outflows, equity schemes of the mutual fund industry saw inflows of over Rs 10,000 crore last month.

Total average asset under management (AAUM) of the industry for March also rose at a new all time high of over Rs 32.17 lakh crore, monthly data released by the Association of Mutual Fund in India showed.

Inflows of Rs 9,115.12 crore was seen across all growth/equity-oriented schemes. In hybrid schemes, which also invest in equities, there was inflow of Rs 6,210.05 crore.

Index funds saw inflows of Rs 2,126 crore.

Equity oriented mutual funds witnessed a month of



positive net flows after eight continuous months of net outflows. Net flows were witnessed across equity fund categories. While it's too early to make any conclusions, it seems like equity investors waiting on the sidelines for a market correction, have started making allocations, taking a long-term investing view on equities," said Kaustubh Belapurkar,

director - Research, Morningstar India.

"FY 20-21 has been net negative for equity fund flows, given the eight months of outflows from July 2020 to Feb. 2021 as investors looked to book profit and rebalance portfolios to other asset classes as markets bounced back sharply from March lows and made new highs," Belapurkar said.

Next victim of chip is home internet router

THOMAS SEAL, TAKASHI MOCHIZUKI & DEBBY WU

APRIL 8

Broadband providers are seeing delays of more than a year when ordering internet routers, becoming yet another victim of chip shortages choking global supply chains and adding challenges for millions still working from home.

Carriers have been quoted order times as long as 60 weeks, more than doubling previous waits, according to people famil-

iar with the matter.

Sharp coronavirus manufacturing shutdowns a year ago were exacerbated by a prolonged surge in demand for better home broadband equipment, said Karsten Gewecke, head of European regional business for Zyxel Communications Corp., a Taiwan-based router-maker.

Since January, it's asked customers to order products a year in advance, he said, because the lead time for components like chips from Broadcom Inc. doubled to

a year or more since then. Zyxel is a major supplier of routers, with customers including Norway's Telenor ASA and Britain's Zen Internet.

Adtran, a US network equipment maker picking up market share from China's Huawei Technologies in Europe, has also warned customers of supply chain risks and lead-time extensions in recent months. No carrier has run out of routers completely yet, but the supply chain looks strained.

—Bloomberg

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Sachin discharged from hospital

Mumbai: Former India captain and batting icon Sachin Tendulkar, who was hospitalised as a precautionary measure after testing positive for Covid-19, was on Thursday discharged and is now recuperating in home isolation. The former player, who will turn 48 later this month, posted a statement on Twitter to confirm the development. "I have just come home from the hospital and will remain isolated while continuing to rest and recuperate. I would like to thank everyone for all the good wishes and prayers. Really appreciate it," Tendulkar said. Tendulkar also thanked the medical staff for taking care of him during the hospitalisation. —PTI

Tiger was twice over speed limit

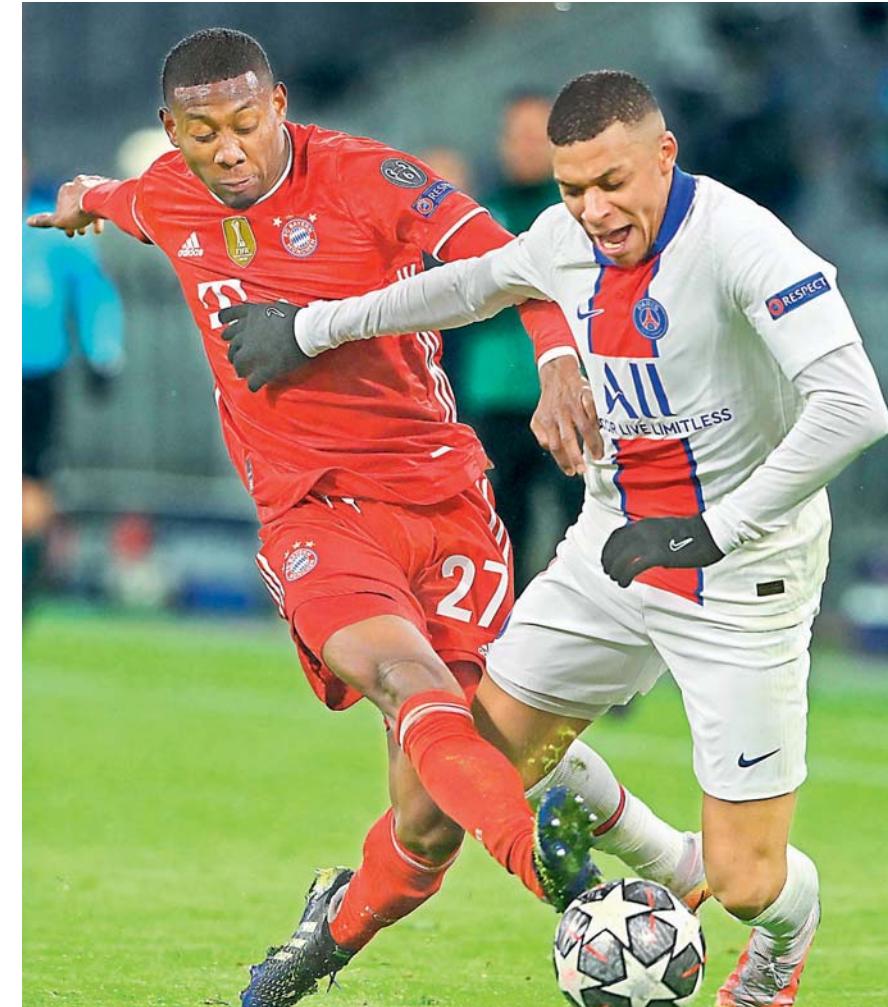
Los Angeles: Tiger Woods was driving more than 80 mph nearly twice the posted speed limit on a downhill stretch of road when he lost control of an SUV and crashed in a wreck that seriously injured the golf superstar, authorities said. Sheriff Alex Villanueva blamed the February 23 crash outside Los Angeles solely on excessive speed and Woods' loss of control behind the wheel. The athlete will not face any citations for his third high-profile collision in 11 years. No one else was hurt, and no other vehicles were involved. "Woods was driving 84 to 87 mph (135 to 140 kph) in an area with a speed limit of 45 mph (72 kph)," Villanueva said. —AP

French Open is delayed by a week

Paris: The French Open was on Thursday delayed by a week to May 30-June 13 in the hope that heightened Covid-19 restrictions in France will have eased by then to allow the maximum number of fans to attend the event. The French tennis federation (FFT) said the decision had been made in the wake of French President Emmanuel Macron's announcement last month that the government wanted some cultural venues to be back up and running from mid-May onwards, "subject to the improvement of the health situation". —AFP

Magical Mbappe stars for PSG

Kylian, Marquinhos dazzle to get past Bayern 3-2 in first leg of Champions League quarterfinals



Paris Saint-Germain's Kylian Mbappe vies for the ball with Bayern Munich's David Alaba during their UEFA Champions League quarterfinal first leg match in Munich, southern Germany, on Wednesday. PSG won 3-2. — AFP

THE RESULTS

(QUARTERFINALS FIRST LEGS)

Paris Saint-Germain
(Kylian Mbappe 3, 68, Marquinhos 28)
Bayern Munich
(Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting 37, Thomas Mueller 60)

Chelsea
(Mason Mount 32, Ben Chilwell 85)
Porto

was headed past Navas by Choupo-Moting to make it 2-1 at half-time.

Flick responded by bringing on Alfonso Davies to provide pace on the flanks and moved David Alaba into defensive midfield.

The hosts pulled a goal

with 22 minutes left.

BLUES PIP PORTO

A classy goal from Mason Mount on Wednesday helped Chelsea to a 2-0 first-leg win over Porto, whose wasteful finishing could have scuppered their hopes of springing another surprise.

upset in the quarterfinals. Mount's slick turn and shot in the first half would have been painful enough for Porto, who repeatedly lacked the precision to take advantage.

Instead, their misery was compounded by Ben Chilwell capitalising on a mistake at the back to score a late second that gave Chelsea another away goal and leaves them on the brink of the semi-finals.

They were away goals only in name given both these teams were playing in the unfamiliar Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan, where they will meet again next week, just with the home and away roles reversed.

— AFP

NCLAT stays further move against Oyo

SANGEETHA G

CHENNAI, APRIL 8

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Thursday admitted the plea of Oyo's subsidiary Oyo Hotels and Homes (OHHPL) against an insolvency move and ordered a stay on formation of a committee of creditors (COC).

Earlier, the Ahmedabad bench of NCLT had admitted a petition for initiating insolvency proceedings against OHHPL for recovery of Rs 16 lakh under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). Oyo challenged this at the appellate tribunal on Wednesday.

OHHPL, which operates the Weddingz.in brand, was dragged to the NCLT by its creditor Rakshesh Yadav for allegedly defaulting Rs 16 lakh.

The NCLT admitted the insolvency plea on March 30. The tribunal had also asked all creditors of OHHPL to submit their claim to the resolution professional by April 15, 2021.

"The NCLAT provided a stay for the formation of COC in IBC proceedings against OHHPL, a subsidiary of Oyo. OHHPL appealed the order in front of NCLAT and explained that a demand draft of Rs 16 lakh was issued to the claimant under protest and the claimant has willingly banked the DD," the company said.

MyHome aims at 8m sqft delivery by this yearend

FC BUREAU

HYDERABAD, APRIL 8

Hyderabad-based real estate major My Home Constructions on Thursday said that it would deliver eight million square feet space by the end of this year to hit the cumulative delivery figure of 35-million square feet to mark the company's 35th anniversary.

Speaking on the occasion of 35 years celebration, Dr Rameswar Rao Jupally, the chairman of My Home Group, said, "Commercial project of ours at Kokapet is coveted to be among the largest office spaces in Asia with over 27 million square feet of space. This is being constructed using



friendly sustainable city. The company plans to invest Rs 2,000 crore this year on its premium realty projects in Hyderabad.

Speaking on the impact of the Covid pandemic on the real estate, Shyam Rao Jupally, MD, My Home Constructions, said: "To aid our customers to buy new homes from the convenience of their own homes, we have fast-tracked the introduction of unique Digital Solutions (3D Home visualisation) and buying homes online. Homebuyers can now avail the digital solutions for My Home Tridasa at Tellapur. Very soon the facility will be available as an environmental-

better with the underperformance of 65 per cent and 67 per cent against the benchmarks, S&P Indices Versus Active (Spiva) said. In H2 of 2020 100 per cent of the large cap funds, 80 per cent of the ELSS funds and 53 per cent of the mid-/small-cap funds underperformed their respective benchmarks. —PTI

BUSINESS BRIEFS

CAR RETAIL SALES CLIMB 28% IN MARCH: FADA

PUNE, April 8: The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (Fada) on Thursday said passenger vehicle (PV) retail sales in March rose 28.39 per cent to 2,79,745 units compared with 21,7879 units in the year-ago period. But two-wheeler sales declined 35.26 per cent to 11,95,445 units last month from 18,46,613 units. Despite the lower base, overall vehicle sales across segments fell 28.64 per cent to about 16.49 lakh units, pulled down two-wheelers.

— Michael Gonsalves

LARGE-CAP FUNDS UNDERPERFORM

Mumbai, April 8: Four-fifths of Indian large-cap funds have underperformed when compared to benchmark indices in 2020. In the equity-linked saving schemes (ELSS) and mid/small-cap funds, the performance was marginally

MOHALLA BECOMES UNICORN

April 8: Mohalla Tech said it raised \$502 million from investors led by Lightspeed Ventures and Tiger Global, increasing its valuation to more than \$2.1 billion. Mohalla Tech, founded in 2015, has developed products like social media platform ShareChat and the short-video app Moj. Their user community numbers 280 million, the firm said. India's startups have scored a flurry of new fundings this year, with at least five reaching a valuation of \$1 billion or more just this week. They include Meesho Inc, Cred, Groww and API Holdings Pvt Ltd.

— Saritha Rai/Bloomberg

SNAP SHOTS

CAT rings bell over BCCI meeting

With the BCCI listing Telangana cricket on the agenda at its Apex Council meeting scheduled for April 16, the Cricket Association of Telangana is upbeat, claiming that the discussion on granting affiliation to a cricket body from the region is that of CAT as it is the oldest applicant of the same.

"We had applied for BCCI affiliation on July 22, 2014 soon after the Telangana was carved out of Andhra Pradesh... and have been involved in cricketing activity in the rural areas since 2011," says its founder secretary Sunil Babu Kolanpaka.

"Our application was strong and circulated to all the BCCI affiliated cricket bodies in the country then. During the 2015 AGM held in Hyderabad, I had met BCCI officials — including former BCCI president and then ICC chairman N. Srinivasan and secretary Sanjay Patel — who had promised a resolution. Later, there was no committee to decide on affiliation of new bodies as the Supreme Court appointed Committee of Administrators ran the BCCI," he said. "I am delighted that it will come up for discussion next week," he said.

Nizam College Principal Prof. L. B. Laxmi Kanth Rathod (second from left) hands the professional membership certificate to Mohammed Shamsuddin and institution membership citation to Sports Village Hyderabad. Also seen in the picture are Dr Avinash Jaiswal, Vice-Principal, Nizam Collage (right) and Prof. Rajesh Kumar (left), Principal, College of Physical Education, who also heads the Association.

Fitness body welcomes Sports Village

In a one-of-its-kind recognition, the International Federation of Physical Education Fitness and Sports Science Association (IFPEFSSA) gave membership for the first time to an Indian sports promoter and his entity in Hyderabad on Thursday. At a function held in Nizam College, its Principal Prof. L. B. Laxmi Kanth Rathod, granted professional membership to Mohammed Shamsuddin and institution membership citation to Sports Village Hyderabad, of which Shamsuddin is the founder-CEO. Shamsuddin said that this was a doubly memorable day as his efforts and those of Sports Village were recognised by a prestigious world body like IFPEFSSA.

Nayeemnagar, Rising Star draw 8-8

Goals galore in the Dhyani Chand Cup 5-a-side Hockey Tournament being organised by Gymkhana Hockey Club at the Gymkhana Ground in Secunderabad on Thursday. Nayeemnagar Nagar Warangal played and Rising Star Balamraij played out an 8-8 draw. Sujith got four goals, Rahul two, Lokesh and Rohit one each for Nayeemnagar while Sukhdev, Madhu and Manjunath scored two each while Kaushik and Zakeer contributed one for Rising Star. In another match, Huzurabad Hockey Club beat Kalsala Ameerpet 6-2 riding on Sajid's four goals while Arun and Nagaraj got one each.



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DECCAN CHRONICLE, KARIMNAGAR, FRIDAY, 9 APRIL 2021

pg 8

Off the field



Delhi Capitals' Shreyas Iyer poses for a photo after undergoing a shoulder surgery. — Twitter

Shreyas vows to return soon

Delhi Capitals' Shreyas Iyer on Thursday said he has undergone a successful surgery for a shoulder injury and vowed to return to action at the earliest. Iyer had hurt his shoulder during the ODI series against England last month, which ruled him of the IPL.

"Surgery was a success and with a lion-hearted determination, I'll be back in no time. Thank you for your wishes," tweeted Iyer and posted his picture with it. He had suffered the injury during the first ODI against England.

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Friday blockbuster

Champions Mumbai take on Kohli & Co. in opener

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, APRIL 8

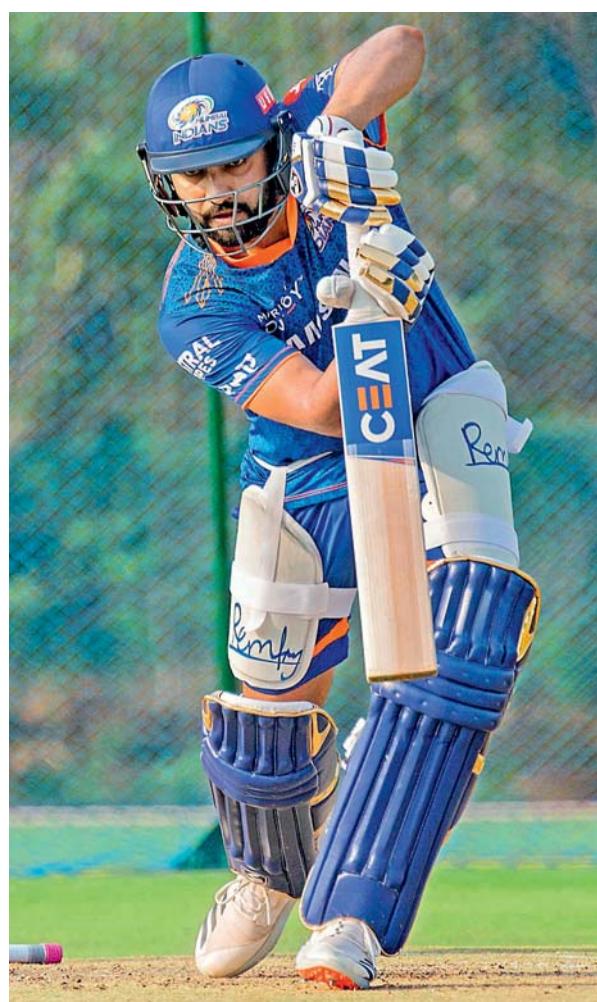
If the number of trophies won is a barometer for excellence in IPL, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are at opposite ends of the spectrum.

Having won six IPL crowns — five as captain of Mumbai Indians and one with the Deccan Chargers, Rohit is arguably the most decorated player. On the other hand, the RCB skipper is still chasing his maiden success. Within just five months of lifting last season's trophy in the UAE, Rohit is out to secure an unprecedented hat-trick as the 14th edition of the cash-rich league begins with a marquee clash between Mumbai and RCB here on Friday.

With an array of exciting T20 players in their line-up, Mumbai Indians, once again, are billed as the team to beat. And Rohit sure has a knack for getting the best out of his star-studded team.

The current form of Ishan Kishan, Surya Kumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya who all had an impressive limited-overs series against England make Mumbai a formidable unit. Royal Challengers have bolstered their squad by signing on new players such as Glenn Maxwell, Kyle Jamieson and Dan Christian. But it remains to be seen if Maxwell who was bought for a whopping Rs 14.5 crore lives up to the expectations. He didn't score a single six last season when he represented Punjab.

However, Kohli doesn't seem



Mumbai skipper Rohit Sharma during a training session in Chennai. — MI

"Personally, I feel relaxed with the resources we have, and strength of our team. Looking forward to being in the park and leading up to IPL is full of anticipation and nerves, looking forward to that first game on the ground as a team,"

Kohli said. For M.S. Dhoni's Chennai Super Kings, it's going to be redemption time. After failing to make the playoffs last season, for the first time in their franchise history, CSK have a lot to prove. It's also likely the last season for

Live on TV

Mumbai Indians vs Royal Challengers Bangalore from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, 2, HD, First

veteran Dhoni. He is touted to take over as the team's player-cum-mentor next year, but a lot depends on this year's performance. Another swash-buckling wicket-keeper batsman, Rishabh Pant will be itching to emerge out of Dhoni's shadows and cement his place in the squad when he embarks on his new role as Delhi Capitals skipper.

IPL provides an ideal platform for overseas players to prepare for the World T20 and some of them have already made their intentions clear.

"It will be a great opportunity to practise on some of the grounds we could be potentially playing in, in the Cup. We also get to see how different teams go about bowling in these conditions. Because, naturally with the dimension of the grounds and also wickets, it varies how attacks go about defending totals and batsmen go about setting them, so it will be an interesting competition," said Sunrisers opener Jonny Bairstow, a key member of the England team.

As a tournament with a reputation for spotlighting unknown talent every season, the Indian team management would be eager to see who will emulate the likes of T. Natarajan, Varun Chakravarthy and Rahul Tewatia.

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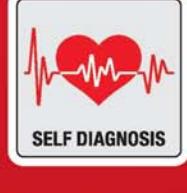
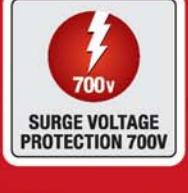
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